GENDER INEQUALITY IN LONG-TERM MARRIAGES: Negotiation and Renegotiation of Gendered Responsibilities by Married Couples aged 50 to 70.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis adopts the kind of persective which investigates inequality in the 'personal' sphere of marriage by reference to links between the interpersonal and structural or patterned inequalities. It is based on a study of 18 couples aged between 50 and 70 who are in the process of negotiating various transitions in their lives. These have a disruptive potential for the ways in which inequality has been observed to be constructed in younger marriages, and form the focus for a discussion about negotiations and renegotiations of gender inequalities. Gendered responsibility is identified as the crucial structuring component of gendere inequality. It involves women's servicing of, caring for, and maintenance of the wellbeing of their husbands and families, and men's provision and protection for their families. Negotiations in the lives of the couples, although producing meaningful changes in gender divisions, did not challenge the relations of gendered responsibilities and hence did not overcome inequality. In fact, those responsibilities gained a new significance and priority in the light of the life course positions of the couples in the study. The couples were found to be making sense of the social material which formed the context of their 'private' lives through various commonsense ideologies. These ideologies helped to create an aura of inevitability and immutability about gendered responsibilities and helped to preclude their renegotiation. Essentially, these helped to sustain a taken-for-granted fabric of married life, encompassing a particular kind of gender division whose consequence was gender inequality.

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I came to Lancaster in 1986 to take up a full-time appointment on Janet Finch's 'Family Obligations Project'. I was warned by many people that completing a PhD part-time is rather tortuous, but I

have been fortunate that Lancaster has provided a welcoming, friendly and intellectually stimulating environment. Particularly in this regard, I would like to thank: members of the Department of Social Administration, also of the Women's Research Group, and of the Qualitative Methods Group. Special thanks are due to Janet Finch for facilitating the writing up of the PhD and for her enthusiasm, intellectual support and friendship. Working on the Family Obligations Project has been a stimulating and rewarding activity to set alongside the writing up. Also, thanks to Janet Hartley and Nichola Hetherington for taking on the onerous task of typing the charts and tables, and for doing them so quickly and efficiently.

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PART ONE - INTRODUCTION AND THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK

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Introduction and Structure of the Thesis

On the face of it, marriage represents a supremely private and autonomous domain of experience for those who are party to it. It is supposed to express the loving union of two heterosexual individuals, and the privileged opportunity for them to 'build a life together' based on their own exclusivity, away from the rest of the world.

However, marriage has long been recognised in the women's movement and in feminist scholarship as a principle site of women's oppression. "The personal is the political" was a slogan designed to highlight the centrality of the relationship between women's subordinate position within marriage (or cohabitation with men), and structural or patterned gender inequality apparently 'outside' of this so called 'personal' sphere. The idea was to show that however privately women and men might experience marriage, its underlying components and the power relationship which it mediated were part and parcel of men's privilege and women's disadvantage at the structural level. Part of the reason why gender inequalities were sustained was because they were individualised through marriage: power struggles over who did the housework or changed the nappies were seen as personal rather than political issues.

This thesis is about aspects of the links between gender inequalities within marriage 'in private', and patterned gender

inequality 'in public'. Broadly, my concern is with inequalities of long term marriage. More specifically, I aim to examine some of the links between gender inequalities at the level of structure, and the everyday or commonsense meanings, ideologies and practices through which long-married spouses organise and make sense of their domestic and social worlds. Meaningful practices in some senses <u>are the links</u> I seek to examine, and this means that it is more accurate to say that the conceptual focus of my study is on the construction of gender inequality <u>through</u> rather than within marriage.

Some contemporary researchers in sociology and social policy have had similar concerns, but their main focus has been upon 'young' marriage. They have demonstrated the importance for relations between spouses of structural inequality in, for example, the labour market, provision of social services, and the institutionalisation of a gendered division of childcare. However, there is little known about what happens to marital relations when children grow up and leave home, or do not leave home, when spouses retire from paid employment, and so on. I have chosen to study people in the age range 50 to 70 because of the occurrence during those years of various 'disruptions' to this existing structure/meaning dialectic upon which marital inequality in younger years rests, for example changes in employment and work, family composition, and aging. These kinds of disruption indicate that couples between those ages might potentially be negotiating and renegotiating, for example about new forms of domestic and social organisation, or about new rationales for established forms in the face of structural

changes which apparently negate legitimations used in the past. Put another way, something rather fundamental is likely to be happening to the links between inequalities and divisions of gender at the structural level and hence also at the 'personal' level. What is more this may lead us to question or redefine what is understood by gender inequality per se.

This means that my study was designed to shed light on the negotiation through everyday meanings and practice of structural change, rather than to distil and describe a picture of, for example, "post-parental" marriage, or marriages "in retirement". Nevertheless, insofar as the links between structural and 'personal' gender inequalities are likely to be temporally and historically specific, then they - and the negotiations surrounding them - will be grounded in particular sets of lifetime experiences and practices. Therefore the study is also essentially about couples aged 50 to 70, and does involve description of their experiences insofar as that is necessary for the understanding of negotiations.

The thesis is divided into four parts. The first, Introduction and the General Framework, outlines the purpose, approach, perspective and methodology of the study, and gives a critical appraisal of previous and existing forms of analysis. I will argue in this section that most compelling sociological analyses have been of the components of 'young' marriage, particularly couples with young children, and there has been a tendency for these to be universalised as though they were general canons of marriage per se. This means that there is a need for research

into the situations of older couples, both to provide exploratory data, and also to provide material for the critical assessment of apparently general processes and principles derived from the study of younger couples.

The second part, The Negotiation of Gender Divisions in Daily Married Life, is based mainly on empirical data gained from interviews with the 18 married couples aged between 50 and 70 who took part in the research. This section contains three chapters, 5, 6 and 7, and uses the research data to provide an analytical description of themes in the links between structural and personal gender inequality. Most importantly it introduces and develops the concepts of gendered responsibility, negotiation, and renegotiation, as well as questioning the established definitions of inequality.

The third part, Making Sense of Gendered Responsibilities in Daily Married Life, comprises chapters 8 and 9. It draws heavily on Part Two, but represents a different level of abstraction and analysis. By looking at everyday meanings and practices in relation to structural inequality, this section discusses processes of construction and maintenance of inequality through marriage.

The final part also contains a short conclusion, where themes from the body of the thesis are drawn together in a discussion of some of the general sociological implications and possibilities.

Chapter One : Marriage and the Construction of Gender Inequality

Introduction

In this introductory chapter I will begin by tracing some of the origins of what has become known as the public-private debate in sociology. I will argue that through this debate sociologists, and particularly feminist sociologists, have come to develop useful ways of looking at the construction of gender inequality, albeit there are some ambiguities concerning the precise conceptualisation of public and private. Most importantly for my purposes, they have established that the sociological investigation of marriage and gender inequalities 'within' it, must necessarily involve much more than a consideration of the psycho-dynamics of couples. One of the clearest reasons for this is that parties to a marriage are gendered actors, who occupy relative positions in a social hierarchy, and marriage itself is not neutral in the constitution of these positions.

Various pieces of empirical research have provided practical evidence of the nature of the relationship between structural or patterned inequality, and inequality 'within' marriage for women, and to a lesser extent for men. I will outline some of these, focusing on discussions about the centrality of employment, domestic and caring work, and leisure, to the construction and expression of gender inequality through marriage.

Although this work provides a valuable insight into the patterning and dialectical processes of gender divisions and

inequalities for 'young' women and men, it says little or nothing about what happens over the age of 40 or 50. Indeed, employment and childcare are central components of the pattern and, as we shall see in chapter 2, also of the ways in which married women and men make sense of inequality in their lives. Yet these two components are, in our society, age specific. Thus although a perspective which seeks to document the links between structural or patterned and personal inequality is analytically compelling, and has produced important data, it needs to be extended to the empirical investigation of other groups.

1. Some Origins of the Public-private Debate

Elizabeth Bott's pioneering study of the social and domestic relationships of 20 couples was of major importance to the sociological analysis of family and informal social relations for two main reasons which form a starting point for my own analysis. Firstly, Bott recognised and investigated differences in the nature of "conjugal roles" between men and women. Her analysis was in many ways a catalyst for a number of studies produced in the 1960's and early 1970's looking at conjugal roles or the differential experiences of men and women within marriage (Bott, 1971; also eg Bernard, 1973; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Pahl and Pahl, 1971; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971). These kinds of studies shared a concern to investigate rather than assume the nature of the relative domestic roles and power of men and women by focusing in on the everyday marriage relationship.

Secondly, Bott's work was important in contributing to a movement

stressing the need to look outside the marriage relationship for an understanding both of that relationship, and the ways in which it might pattern gender divisions in a wider sense. Bott's specific contribution in this regard was to emphasise the relevance of couples' "immediate social environment" by documenting links she found in her sample between conjugal role "segregation" and the degree of "connectedness" of the social networks of wives and husbands. This meant that apparently private domestic organisation had some relationship with the outside or public world. There was much subsequent criticism of Bott's particular analysis and conceptualisation (see Harris, 1977: 169-175 for a summary) which is of less relevance here than the point which Harris makes that:

> "Perhaps the really lasting significance of Bott's study is that she has made impossible the proliferation of studies of the internal structure of the family which take no account of its social environment".
>
> (Harris, 1977: 175)

These two points are central for the general kind of perspective I wish to suggest is necessary for investigating the relationship of marriage to gender inequality, or gender division: that is, firstly that it is necessary to give close scrutiny to the ways in which husbands and wives live their marriages at an everyday level; and secondly that this must be seen within a wider context since that is the backcloth against which marriage is experienced and constructed. Proponents of the former have not always given priority to the latter.

Of course Bott's work was only one beginning in the development of such a perspective. Oakley's subsequent sociological 'discovery' of housework and women's domestic responsibility as a factor in the construction of gender relations in our society was a vital step forward in ways which are significant here. Oakley too saw the relevance of the social environment to relations within marriage, but she sited her analysis of the role of housewives in the context of the more general social position of women. Her theme was inequality between men and women at both personal and structural levels; within marriage women were subordinate to men, and were constrained to perform alienating and tedious labour in service of their husbands and children. Outside marriage women were disadvantaged, particularly in the labour market, largely because they did not compete on equal terms with men who had wives to service their needs, and because employers discriminated against them on that basis. Women, she argued, were victims of a kind of commonsense popular view of biology which said that they were primarily childbearers, and until men could have babies gender inequalities were inevitable. Of course such a view was socially and ideologically constructed; it conflated biological and social motherhood, and sex and gender, but was nevertheless a strong tenet of popular wisdom.

But as well as labour market discrimination, Oakley argued that women's domestic responsibilities were a source of inequality in employment. She pointed out that women who achieved highly in professional employment careers were between three and four times more likely than professional men to be unmarried. Marriage

enhanced male careers but was an obstacle to female careers precisely because wives were responsible for providing domestic servicing for their husbands. Hence men were doubly advantaged on the one hand by being 'serviced', and on the other hand by not having to 'service' anyone else themselves (Oakley, 1974; 1976, 79-80; 1981). In the broadest terms, Oakley was showing that domestic responsibility and employment opportunity were crucially linked for women, and by implication for men as well.

Oakley emphasised (although she did not directly analyse) structural and ideological constraints on women to become and remain responsible for housework and domestic servicing. An historical tradition of employment disadvantage vis a vis men, together with public ideologies and moralities emphasising that mothers should care for their children, helped to limit the choices available to women.

But she went further than this by producing a qualitative analysis of what happened at an everyday level in certain aspects of the household. She gained detailed reports from the women she interviewed about housework, its routines, its pleasures, and its division. By asking the women to talk about it in this way she got rather further than, for example, Young and Willmott in their now rather inglorious study of the "symmetrical family" because unlike them she did not assume it possible to measure the division of domestic labour 'objectively' in simple linear fashion (Young and Willmott, 1973). Where Young and Willmott concluded that marriage was becoming more "symmetrical" largely on the basis of evidence showing that 85 per cent of the

professional and managerial husbands in their study helped their wives around the home, Oakley was concerned to look at more subtle aspects of dividing labour such as the ways in which husbands' domestic contributions were always spoken of as 'help' for their wives, reaffirming that it was women who were ultimately responsible for domestic labour. Indeed, the misleading nature of so called 'objective' measures of the division of domestic labour presented without consideration of qualitative dimensions is highlighted by Allan's comment on Young and Willmott's own rather value-laden observations:

"..their estimate of the proportion of husbands helping their wives with domestic chores was arrived at by asking respondents a single question: 'Do you/does your husband help at least once a week with any household jobs like washing up, making beds, (helping with the children), ironing, cooking or cleaning?' (Young and Willmott, 1973: 331). Given that this was the only question asked on the topic, that childcare and housework tasks are lumped together, and that the criterion of helpfulness is doing one activity only once a week, it is not surprising that a high proportion of husbands were found to 'help' their wives. Indeed it seems far more remarkable, given Young and Willmott's thesis, that a full 15% of the husbands give their wife no help and that a further 13% only help by washing up (1973: 95)"

(Allan, 1985: 87)

This does seem to say more about Young and Willmott's expectations and the ideological nature of their concept of symmetry than about any objective standard for measuring marital equality.

Blood and Wolfe's study of marital power suffered from similar problems. In their attempt to study the power of husbands and wives, they isolated a list of household decisions and asked the women they interviewed whether they were made by them or their

husbands. Again, the implication is that it is possible to investigate and understand the extent of inequality between husbands and wives by dividing off and objectifying an aspect of domestic organisation. Blood and Wolfe have been criticised for their simplistic scaling of decisions in relation to each other as measures of power - this forming an expression, like Young and Willmott, of their own value judgements - and for supposing it is easily possible to determine who exactly made a decision when decisions are the outcomes of complex processes (Saffilios-Rothschild, 1969, 1970; Gillespie, 1972). Even more significantly, they overlooked the possibility that inequalities in power for men and women grounded in structural relations outside the marriage might mean that certain issues were kept away from the decision making agenda altogether. In this case, the more powerful spouse would be the one who controlled the agenda, or in whose interests that agenda operated (Allan, 1985; Lukes, 1974).

By comparison, Oakley was able to examine the process of the division of domestic labour and childcare <u>conceptually</u> and in relation to patterned or structural inequalities. So she established that women were <u>responsible</u> for housework, childcare, and for servicing their husbands, and this responsibility was related to women's disadvantage vis a vis men in paid employment. In addition to saying that women were responsible for housework, servicing and childcare, she argued that women actually did <u>do</u> most of the work associated with these responsibilities. Men, she was able to claim, were not similarly constrained into domesticity and childcare, and could choose whether or not to

help their wives (which she claimed they did rarely) and what type of help to give.

Oakley has been criticised, for example, for paying too little heed to men's breadwinning/economic responsibilities, and indeed for not interviewing men (see Edgell, 1980) but it is not denied that she made a vital contribution by identifying the relevance of choice, constraint, and responsibility, and not least by documenting the sheer tedium and grind of housework itself as a form of labour rather than as a biological extension of motherhood and of being a woman.

Her work provided the grounding for subsequent studies of housework and childcare and the conceptualisation of the division of domestic labour as an essential aspect of the analysis of marriage. These more contemporary studies have continued to find that the women studied remain responsible for housework and childcare, that men's contributions are seen as voluntary help, and tend to be performed on a sporadic rather than routine basis. Men, as Davidoff has put it, maintain a freedom from "perceiving the boundaries" of domestic labour, that is, they are not obliged to notice when housework 'needs', to be done. In this sense, men are 'allowed' to have lower housework standards than women (Davidoff, 1976). Men's household work tends to be goal orientated, and/or infrequent, for example structural repairs to the home, home improvements, car maintenance. Whilst the precise division of tasks might vary amongst couples - although not much - the division of responsibility by gender remains the same. These findings hold true for both working class and middle class

couples, and couples where both partners are in full-time employment (Backett, 1982; Boulton, 1983; Collins, 1985; Edgell, 1980; Finch, 1983; Hunt, 1980; Leonard, 1980; Leonard and Speakman, 1986; Luxton, 1986; Mansfield, 1985a, 1985b; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971, 1976; Yeandle, 1984).

The implication from all of this is that domestic responsibility is equivalent to something more than the sum of domestic tasks, since men can be observed to help with the housework without taking on board full responsibility, and this is a theme to which I will return. In most cases, however, this research involves 'young' married couples with dependent children, so that we do not know whether there are differences between them and older couples.

Oakley's recognition that housework was labour performed in service of husbands in paid employment and dependent children undoubtedly provided impetus for what has become known as the "domestic labour debate". Marxist feminists in particular were concerned to establish that women's oppression did fit into a Marxist explanation - with women contributing to economic production through their domestic labour - and that they were doubly exploited by the capitalist system: firstly as unpaid domestic servicers and reproducers of the labour force on a day to day and generational basis through husbands and children, and secondly as a "reserve army of labour" as paid workers in their own right (Gardiner, 1976; Mackintosh, 1979, 1981; Rushton, 1979; Seccombe, 1974; Smith, 1973). The ensuing debate and criticism has centred around the validity of the analytical description

involved in this type of theorising, and on the issue that even if the organisation of women's domestic and paid labour looks like this empirically (which is itself disputed), Marxist theory has no way of showing why it is women who are subordinated, or why this particular system should serve the interests of capital better than another (Barrett, 1980; Hartmann, 1979; Molyneux, 1979; Mackintosh, 1981).

Despite the now rather hackneyed theoretical wrangles associated with the domestic labour debate, a marxist perspective did help to establish that women's domestic labour had an economic value and was not unrelated to men's labour power because it was involved in creating it. The debate has been followed by work which has highlighted the importance of establishing the mechanisms through which sexual divisions might benefit capital rather than simply assuming both that they do, or indeed that they were created for this purpose (Eisenstein, 1979; Mackintosh, 1981; Barrett, 1980; Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Hamilton and Barrett, 1986).

However, what is significant here is that the debate was held at all, because it is indicative of the fact that it has become indisputable that there are important links between the sphere of paid employment, and the domestic sphere which are central inter alia to the position of men and women within marriage. As Pauline Hunt has pointed out:

> "In modern capitalist society the world of industrial production is distinct from the world of domestic production. This distinction is the site of the separation between public and private domains. Each domain is not absolutely public or

private, for each is the condition of existence of the other". (Hunt, 1980: 32)

Discussion about the public and the private has progressed apace in recent years, and it is not always clear just exactly what either 'public' or 'private' is intended to portray. It has however been fruitfully used as a perspective to highlight what Finch has called "overlapping sets of dualities", most commonly: paid work-unpaid work, productive work-domestic work, workplace-household, men-women (Finch, 1984a: 14; see also Elshtain, 1981; Gamarnikow et al 1983; Imray and Middleton, 1983; Siltanen and Stanworth, 1984; Stacey and Price, 1981). For the time being, I wish only to advocate the kind of perspective which has come out of the debate; namely one which takes the boundaries and links between these kinds of overlapping sets of dualities to be socially constructed, and in themselves a *focus of investigation*. This means that it is more useful to adopt a public-private <u>perspective</u> as a research tool, and use it to ask questions about the complexity of overlap and construction of the kinds of dualities outlined above, than to use public and private as ways of *defining and categorising supposedly distinct* and separate domains, as though they were static, mutually exclusive and unproblematic.

Clearly, much of the research outlined so far does attempt to do the first task, since it problematises links and boundaries between (albeit differing) conceptions of public and private. Yet there is a danger that it also does the second, insofar as men tend to be associated with the public, productive sphere, and

conversely women with the private, domestic sphere. Ironically, there is a risk that this can simply reproduce the kind of separate spheres model it seeks to overcome.

2. Domestic Responsibility and the Structuring of Employment

Stacey argued at the beginning of the current decade that the consequences of sociologists analytically dividing off a public sphere associated with men and their employment, from a private domestic sphere associated with women:

> "have not only been to hide women from sociology, but to leave sociologists of the 1980s with inadequate conceptual, theoretical and methodological tools to analyse or explain the shifts in activities between the domestic and public arenas".
>
> (Stacey, 1981: 173)

One form of response to the type of challenge set by Stacey has been a welcome increase in empirical investigation into specific aspects of the links between gender relations in marriage, and in employment. These types of project have taken three main forms, each expanding on a different set of issues about links between public and private. I will briefly consider each of these in turn.

a. Patterns of entry to and exit from paid employment

A number of recent studies have set about examining the patterns and nature of women's labour market activity over the life course in relation to their domestic and childcare responsibilities (Hakim, 1979; Robinson and Wallace, 1984; Dex, 1984, 1985; Joshi, 1984, 1987; Martin and Roberts, 1984; Siltanen, 1986; Beechey,

1986; Gerson, 1985). Probably the most important of these has been the Women and Employment Survey by Martin and Roberts, involving interviews with a national sample of 5,588 women aged between 16-59.

Martin and Robert's data show that the majority of women construct their employment histories around the demands of domestic work, childcare and in the case of older women sometimes the care of elderly or sick relatives or friends. This is illustrated by the influence of marital status but, more precisely, by the presence or absence of children, and the age of children, on women's participation in paid employment and hours of work. Table 1.1 below illustrates these points. It shows that women with young children, particularly those under five, are the most likely to be either absent from paid employment, or in part-time employment. Martin and Roberts interviewed a smaller sample of husbands and found that their employment histories were not similarly constructed around this kind of domestic responsibility. Patterns of employment participation varied in their sample by, amongst other things, age cohort, because of social changes in women's employment patterns this century. Dex, in a further analysis of the data, has produced work cycle profiles for women in different age groups showing the work patterns over their lifetimes. Table 1.2 below shows the patterns for women aged 50-59 since theirs' are the nearest approximations to full lifetime data available from the study.

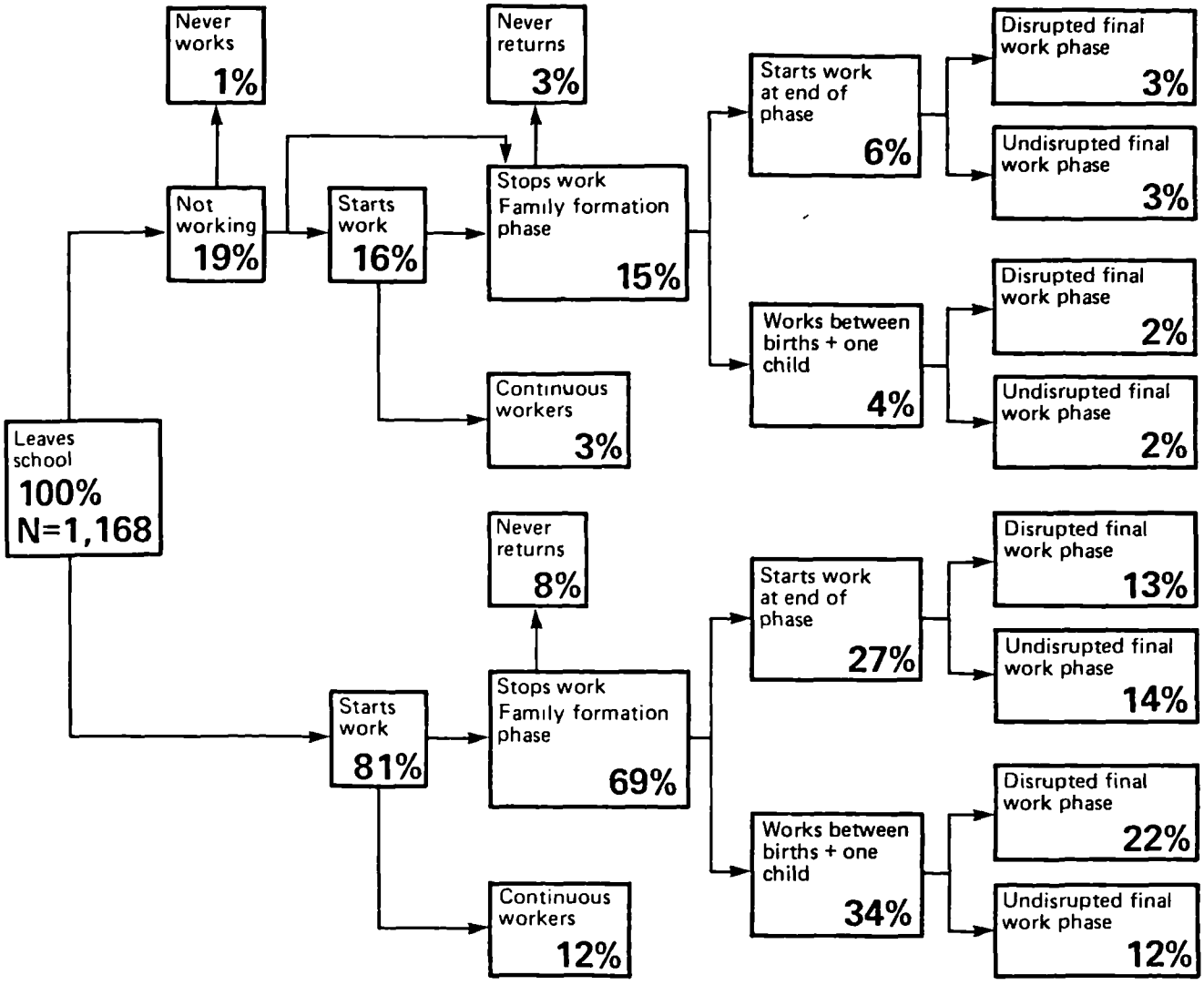
Joshi's work (Joshi, 1984, 1987), also analysing the Women and Employment Survey data, shows that family formation and

TABLE 1.1: Current Economic Activity by life-cycle stage (all women except full-time students)

Economic activity	Life cycle stage							All women except fulltime students
	Childless women aged:		Women with youngest child aged:			Women with all children aged 16 and over, aged:		
	Under 30	30 or over	0-4	5-10	11-15	Under 50	50 or over	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Working full time	82	67	7	16	31	40	27	35
Working part time	3	12	20	48	45	37	32	28
Total working	85	79	27	64	76	77	59	63
'Unemployed'	11	6	4	4	5	5	5	6
Total economically active	96	85	31	68	81	82	64	69
Economically inactive	4	15	69	32	19	18	36	31
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Base	887	414	1038	868	710	468	910	5295

(Source: Martin and Roberts, 1984: table 2.11, p.15).

Table 1.2: Frequencies of women aged between 50 and 59 in various work-cycle branches.



(Source: Dex, 1984: 92)

motherhood has profound implications for women's earning capacity in employment:

> "the effect of family formation is felt not only through the career break...but in terms of women's reduced participation subsequently when they work part-time and...are often occupationally downwardly mobile as a result. Thus family formation has a lasting effect for...it depresses women's lifetime earnings on average by between 25-50 per cent".
>
> (Martin and Roberts, 1984: 99)

Women are concentrated in different types of jobs from men. In 1979, Hakim noted the incidence of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation: that is where women were concentrated both in specific occupational orders and sectors, and also at the lower hierarchical levels of those occupations both as a result of discrimination at work, the operation of labour markets, and domestic responsibility at home (Hakim, 1979). This is still in evidence in the 1984 Women and Employment Survey. The three occupational orders with the highest proportions of women account for 69 per cent of all women's jobs: health, education and welfare; clerical; and catering, cleaning and hairdressing - all caring and servicing industries providing jobs in some senses not incompatible with notions of care and service bound up with domestic responsibility (Wainright, 1978). For men, the three orders with the highest proportions account for 43 per cent of men's jobs: metal processing, making, repairing; managerial; transport. Within occupational categories, women tend to be concentrated at the lower levels doing the less responsible and more poorly paid jobs (Martin and Roberts, 1984).

These types of findings show that women's employment is crucially related to their domestic responsibilities inter alia over the lifetime, although not necessarily in any straightforward way. By implication they also show that men's employment is related to their lack of domestic responsibility. However, very little attention has been directed to the ways in which men's employment articulates with any domestic responsibilities that they might have or domestic circumstances they may be in. The implicit and sometimes explicit assumption has been that men have no domestic responsibilities whatsoever.

Siltanen's work is a notable exception to this. She argues that the domestic circumstances of men, and particularly their domestic financial maintenance responsibilities, are related to their employment. She found in her research that men in "component wage jobs ... atypical for their sex" (p. 111) were also in distinctive domestic circumstances. When recruited to their jobs, they tended to be aged in their late teens and early twenties, single, and without household financial maintenance responsibility (Siltanen, 1986; see also Rimmer and Popay, 1982). Furthermore, Pahl and Wallace's work on the Isle of Sheppey has shown the importance of relating individual employment patterns of both men and women to household circumstances (Pahl, 1984). However, there is undoubtedly more work to be done on the nature and impact of male domestic responsibility. Otherwise there is a danger that sociological research and theory will reinforce rather than deconstruct the public/man-private/woman polarity.

Nevertheless, all of the work outlined in this section has in

common an attempt to ascertain the ways in which labour inside and outside the home affect each other, and how gendered responsibilities in both spheres are constructed and maintained. The implication is that there is no universal answer and that further detailed empirical investigation of specific shifts and links between labour inside and outside the home is warranted to understand the complexity of the patterns.

b. Home in relation to employment

The second type of project concerned with the gendered links between home and employment includes studies which have focused on everday domestic life, generally within marriage, in order to examine the types of negotiation and strategy in which women engage in pursuance of both domestic and childcare responsibility, as well as paid employment. Again, it is largely by implication, or by the absence of domestic responsibility, that men's relation to domesticity has been considered in this type of research.

Research which has supported and elaborated on Oakley's theme of domestic responsibility, that is that women are responsible for doing good quality, regular, domestic servicing for their husbands and children, has shown that this inhibits women's ability to participate in paid employment and also their feeling that it is legitimate to do so (Martin and Roberts, 1984; Hunt, 1980, Edgell, 1980, Green and Parry, 1981; Evans, 1984; Collins, 1985). Yeandle's work has shown how women engage in strategies over their lifetimes to combine paid employment and household responsibility, and that negotiations take place within families

about how female labour will be divided between these areas; the same has not been shown to follow for men's labour (Yeandle, 1984, 1986; also Gerson, 1985). As Land has pointed out:

"There is a conflict between a woman's responsibilities towards other members of her family and her activities in the labour market, whereas for men there is not. Women and men do not, therefore, compete on equal terms in the labour market...Women's domestic responsbilities, whether they be caring for children, sick or elderly relatives or healthy husbands, determine when women leave or re-enter the labour market. The number of hours and the times during the day when they are available to take paid employment, are also restricted".

(Land, 1981: 1-5)

Conversely, women's domestic and childcare responsibility actually enables the labour market participation of husbands and indeed may include taking on aspects of husbands' work in an unpaid or unrecognised capacity. Finch, for example, has shown that women often become incorporated into their husbands' work: from actually helping out and having a role, to organising domesticity to suit the nature and timetable of the husband's job (Finch, 1983).

Furthermore, given that low paid and poorly protected types of employment such as home-working and part-time working have emerged which exploit this situation, women may find themselves balancing and offsetting the competing demands of domesticity, childcare and paid employment at home (Allen, 1983; Perkins, 1983; Cragg and Dawson, 1981; Beechey and Perkins, 1985; Evans and Ungerson; Green and Parry, 1981; Beechey, 1986).

Of course, once married women are employed in low paid and

unprotected work, and especially after they have taken a break for childrearing, the material reality is likely to be that their husbands, and certainly husbands as a group in general, will be in better jobs and certainly are unlikely to be engaged in the same type of employment (Joshi, 1984). Behind all of this is a kind of circular logic and as Land has argued, the reality of women's overall disadvantage in the labour market vis a vis men can be and is used as a powerful legitimation for their taking prime responsibility at home (see also Hunt, 1980). This kind of process appears to be self-reinforcing, and will be discussed more fully in chapter 2.

Yet domestic responsibility does not mean that employment is either financially unnecessary or unimportant to women. Studies of the experience of unemployment for women constitute a form of antidote to this notion. Studies by Coyle, and Cragg and Dawson, show for example both that women take jobs mainly through financial necessity and also that unemployment is a problem for women which is rarely alleviated by any potential of domesticity to soak up the surplus time and energy (Coyle, 1984; Cragg and Dawson, 1984; Wacjman, 1983).

c. Workplace in relation to home

Finally, there are a number of ethnographies of women in the workplace (where that is out of home) (eg, Cavendish, 1982; Pollert, 1981; Wacjman, 1983; Porter, 1982, 1983; Westwood, 1984; West, 1982; Cockburn, 1983). These have focused on the shopfloor culture and working-class consciousness of women in manual occupations, as well aspects of male control of women in the

workplace, and women's counter strategies and potential for power. The main relevance of these ethnographies here is their tendency to emphasise or to imply that women retain a primary allegiance to the home and to domestic responsibility, and that their working consciousness or culture reinforces this, albeit the form it takes varies inter alia by age and race.

This is rather a crude simplification of *illuminating* and detailed ethnographic material but it serves to illustrate an important point. The nature of Stacey's 'challenge' regarding the analysis of the public and the private, concerned the relevance it had for sociology as a whole. Yet, as Beechey has pointed out, there is a danger that overconcentration on women's shopfloor culture, or class consciousness, and its conceptualisation as both separate from men's and rooted in domesticity, will reinforce the very boundary it seeks to transcend. She argues:

> "We need .. to allow for the possibility that both women's and men's consciousness of themselves as workers is affected by both their workplace and their familial experiences. This is not to say that women's and men' consciousness is the same. Far from it. But it is to say that we need to use similar concepts to analyse both women's and men's consciousness and not to use 'familial' concepts to analyse women, and 'workplace' concepts to analyse men".
>
> (Beechey, 1983: 39)

For, as Siltanen and Stanworth have pointed out:

> "the public man-private woman division obscures the extent to which the private sphere is constituent of men's relation to work and to political life. All too often, family commitments and home-based concerns are acknowledged to be significant for men except where comparisons with women are made or implied. The

evidence of Porter (1983), of Beynon (1973), of Goldthorpe, Lockwood, Bechofer and Platt (1968), of Nichols and Armstrong (1979), or Rubin (1976), all testify to the extent to which home and family provide for men the motivation to seek particular jobs, to remain at one place of work, to endure degrading conditions. It was a male assembly line worker at Ford's who said: 'I just close my eyes and stick it out. I think about the kids.' The demands of home and family enter into men's decisions about shift work and overtime, outweigh the calls of trade union activism and underpin instrumental attitudes to workplace militancy ... We are by no means suggesting that men share equally with women the burdens of domestic responsibility or the rewards of employment. We are simply insisting that we will never produce an accurate account of the relations between women and men in the public world, until we recognize that in part men are already defined and define themselves in relation to their 'private' commitments".

(Siltanen and Stanworth, 1984: 200-201)

Yet, they argue that researchers have persistently associated domestic and family concerns only with women. The links between gender divisions in 'public' and 'private' therefore remain only partially conceptualised. Nevertheless, that there are links has been irrefutably established and it is against this context that some exciting work has been done in two other areas significant to the study of marriage and gender divisions: leisure, and caring for health.

3. Leisure and Gender: boundaries between work and play

Feminist research into women's leisure in recent years has successfully highlighted ambiguities in the nature and definition of leisure, and in its relationship to 'work', which are incumbent in part upon the relationship of women's childcare and domestic labour to other forms of work. For example, Green, Hebron and Woodward point out that:

"Whilst men are generally seen to 'earn' leisure time through paid work, the amorphous nature of women's unpaid domestic work makes it hard to identify time which is unambiguously 'free' for leisure".

(Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987: 77)

Feminist scholars have therefore argued that the re-conceptualisation of leisure is essential to the task of understanding links between public and private, because it must involve a re-examination of the ambiguity surrounding the division between 'work and play' for both men and women (Deem, 1982a, 1986; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987).

As a starting point, a consideration of childcare and domestic responsibility is vital for an appreciation of the complexity between work and play at home. For example, Janet Finch explains the consequences of women's responsibility for fitting domesticity in around their husband's work as follows:

"..the effects of a husband's working and a wife's working are not symmetrical. In so far as the couple maintain a sexual division of labour, even in a modified form, a wife normally is assigned to 'covering' domestic tasks, especially childcare. This leaves her free to pursue other activities, at best, only when he is <u>not</u> at work, unless she is able to make alternative arrangements for discharging these responsibilities"

(Finch, 1983: 24)

And of course, when he is not at work there are meals to be prepared and his needs to be serviced. Therefore, not only must domestic work conform to the man's working timetable, but there are significant implications for women's leisure, since it becomes difficult for them to mark off a space - both physical and temporal - for free time. Pauline Hunt's study of marriage

emphasises this point too, and Hunt draws extensively on a more polemical piece of work by Lee Comer to make sense of her data (Hunt, 1980). For example Comer observes an evening spent by husband and wife as follows:

"While she is talking with her husband or watching TV she is minutely aware of her responsibilities - the ashtrays which must be emptied, the cups and glasses which must be washed, the husband's and children's clothes which must be sorted for the morning and she must break off a conversation to put a note out for the milkman and all the time she must remember what she has to do the next day - the child to the dentist, clothes which need mending, sugar which has run out, ad nauseam. She goes to bed and the evening which her husband enjoyed, or merely relaxed in has, for her, receded behind the weight of things she has done and things which she still has to do"

(Comer, 1974: 85-86)

This was the type of experience that the women in Hunt's study talked about. It means that time spent at home is not necessarily time off for women, since it is likely to involve not only the usual domestic work - often evenings and weekends are used by women in employment to 'catch up' on housework - but also facilitating the leisure or time off of their husbands and other family-household members (Hunt, 1980; Deem, 1986). The suggestion put forward by Deem that married women's leisure is at best qualitatively different from men's and, at worst, non-existent seems in the light of this well founded (Deem, 1982b; 1986). Certainly, domestic and childcare responsibilities mean that leisure for married women cannot be equated with 'time off work' in any straightforward fashion. Given that traditional definitions of leisure have cast it in relation to paid employment, Oakley teases out an apparent contradiction expressing well the conceptual confusion about women's leisure.

For she notes that popular assumptions that housewives who are at home full-time have 'nothing but leisure' are based on a view that women are their own bosses in the home. However, as she explains:

"..the autonomy conferred by the housewife role has a tendency to be fictional rather than real. Being one's own boss implies the necessity to supervise one's own work: to see that the housework gets done in other words..The housewife is 'free from' rather than 'free to'; the absence of external supervision is not balanced by the liberty to use time for one's own ends. The taking of leisure is self defeating. Housewives are sharply aware of the fact that, however much or little husbands may share domestic tasks with them, the responsibility for getting the work done remains theirs"

(Oakley, 1976: 92)

Green, Hebron and Woodward in their study of women's leisure in Sheffield also identify the ability of husbands to regulate their wives' out of home leisure in more explicit ways:

"strategies typically employed by male partners during the negotiation processes surrounding access to leisure can be viewed as points along a continuum ranging from petty forms of behaviour such as sulking or 'having a face on', through to the explicit exercise of male authority, actually forbidding the woman to go out"

(Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987: 85)

Of course domestic and childcare responsibility is not the only constraint on women's leisure. Many researchers have pointed to the social constraints on women's activity outside the home in the 'public' leisure domain: for example the male orientation and culture of public leisure provision which is enforced both formally and informally (Whitehead, 1976; Talbot, 1984; Stanley, 1980; Deem, 1982a, 1986; Imray and Middleton, 1983; Allan,

1986.) Allan sums up the types of informal mechanisms men use to control women's leisure in pubs as follows:

"Aside from the implicitly male character of the pastimes, like darts and pool, that are catered for, male control of pub life is most evident in the way unaccompanied females are often treated...the glances and stares, the private joking, the innuendo and bantering developing into teasing and horseplay, all serve to make women feel uneasy and out of place. Such forms of control are the more effective because they are wrapped up in what purports to be joking and good-natured humour. If women aren't prepared to enter into the spirit of such things, the argument goes, they shouldn't come in - which of course they don't, thereby legitimating the whole process. The result is that most women prefer not to take the chance of these situations arising so that public drinking remains something of a male or, at best, 'couple' preserve, offering women only limited opportunities for social integration in their own right"

(Allan, 1985: 66)

But, as Green et al point out, these types of control mechanisms are particularly effective precisely because underlying them is the threat of physical violence of which women are only too acutely aware.

Married women's domestic servicing responsibilities and the social control of their activities therefore add up to an important theme of inequality between husbands and wives as well as a way of conceptualising aspects of the links between gender divisions in public and in private. But another dimension of women's responsibility has been identified which warrants consideration in its own right rather than conflation under the generic term 'domestic labour'.

4. Caring for Health

In this section I want to introduce a variety of literature which has in common the observation that wives are responsible for what can be defined broadly as family health, as part of a broad remit for caring for the needs of their families.

Some of the most important and extensive contributions to this area have come from Hilary Graham in her work on women and family health (Graham, 1979, 1983a, 1984a, 1985). Graham's research on young women has demonstrated they are "providers, negotiators and mediators" of family health:

> "As the providers of health, women are responsible for securing the domestic conditions necessary for the maintenance of health and for recovery from sickness. Women's health work involves the provision of a materially-secure environment; a warm, clean home where both young and old can be protected against danger and disease, and a diet sufficient in quantity and quality to meet their nutritional needs. It involves, too, the provision of a social environment conducive to normal health and development. It is a woman's job to orchestrate social relations within the home, and to minimize the health-damaging insecurities and anxieties which can arise when these relations go awry"
>
> (Graham, 1985: 26)

Thus Graham is saying that women's domestic labour is not done simply for its own sake, but is inextricably tied up with women's responsibility for ensuring family health. Women have to ensure that their domestic labour helps to create an environment which will maintain the health and happiness of family members. Housework is simply one part of this. Facilitating the leisure of others is another.

Other work has supported this particular point. Perhaps the best example to illustrate the variety of activities that this

involves women in is Murcott's observations on the preparation and cooking of food as part of the division of domestic labour and the gendered relations between men and women. She discusses the concept of a "proper meal" as follows:

"Effectively a proper meal is a cooked dinner. This is one which women feel is necessary to their family's health, welfare and, indeed, happiness. It is a meal to come home to, a meal which should figure two, three or four times in the week, and especially on Sundays. A cooked dinner is easily identified - meat, potatoes, vegetables and gravy. It turns out that informants displayed considerable unanimity as to what defines such a dinner, contrasting it to, say a 'snack' or 'fried'."

(Murcott, 1983: 80)

Murcott goes on to explain that home is the arena for the proper meal and that it forms a kind of ritual celebration of homecoming from school and work for children and husbands. In this way the proper meal is symbolic in constructing and marking the threshold between public and private, and in doing so expresses the relationship of dominance and subservience between men and women because women cook dinners for homecoming men. Murcott explains that men help out to varying degrees - sometimes making a 'fried', but that women routinely cook the proper meals as part of their marital obligation. The fact that women tend not to cook proper meals when they are alone illustrates that this is part of a servicing and health care obligation from women to men. Similarly, research by Kerr and Charles shows that the distribution of meat by women to their family members is illustrative of status (Kerr and Charles, 1986; Charles and Kerr, 1987). They identify themes of male privilege and female denial as dominating patterns of food consumption:

"Most women were committed to the notion that men needed to eat more than themselves and in general their role as producers as well as consumers of family meals led them to put the needs and desires of other family members before themselves. This was not only a theoretical commitment; men were almost always reported as having larger helpings of food than women within families".

(Kerr and Charles, 1986: 155)

But as well as providing a form of "domestic health service" for their families, two other aspects of women's responsibilities for family health were identified by Graham: negotiating and mediating. As she explains:

"In labouring for their families' health, women are also teaching it. In setting standards of diet and discipline, women not only facilitate health in a biological sense; they transmit a culture in which health and illness can be understood. Women also serve as mediators of outside services. Their responsibilities within the domestic health service unavoidably bring them into contact with professional welfare workers; the doctor and health visitor, the social worker and the district nurse. Their caring role places them at the interface between the family and the state, as the go-betweens linking the informal health-care system with the formal apparatus of the welfare state"

(Graham, 1985: 26)

The perspective of researchers such as Graham, Murcott, Kerr and Charles therefore shows us that women are crucially, and morally, responsible for maintaining a happy and healthy home environment. Because the emphasis is on quality of environment, and the health of others, this clearly means more than the perfunctory performance of housework tasks. Indeed, it gives childcare and domestic labour a whole new and much more far reaching meaning: women are pivotal in maintaining a boundary between an apparently impersonal public world, and a private familiar world which is comfortable for the family, however illusory in analytical terms

that boundary might be. In some senses then, Graham's argument suggests that part of women's responsibility is to keep the private sphere private for their families.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to establish that inequalities 'within' marriage are related to those outside it. By adopting a public-private perspective, various researchers have investigated and documented aspects of the links between ostensibly public and private forms of gender inequality. Whilst this helps to show, for example, that the private sphere is a social construction and is not therefore as private as it might seem, the work of writers like Graham, Murcott, Siltanen and Stanworth, indicates that a public-private boundary is given symbolic credence by women and men in their practices and understandings.

In the next chapter I will examine more closely the ways in which husbands and wives have been observed to make sense of hierarchies and inequalities of gender through their everyday practices and understandings. Before turning to this, however, it is important to stress a cautionary point. We have seen that researchers have looked for the links between structural or patterned, and personal gender inequality via the medium of an analysis of paid employment, childcare and domestic responsibilities. Clearly, these factors have been shown to be crucial aspects of the links and boundaries between public and private. However, in our society these are also age specific:

the statutory retirement age is 65 for men and 60 for women. What is more, between the years of 1974 and 1984 over 98 per cent of live births were to women aged under 40, the vast majority between 20 and 35. During the same period, over 94 per cent of legitimate live births were to fathers again aged under 40, and mainly between 20 and 35 (OPCS, 1985: 31 and 36). This means that the construction of inequality through marriage outlined so far deals with a specific age group of married couples; the focus is clearly on 'young' marriage, where employment and the dependency of children are key components. Of course, this is not a problem in itself, except insofar as there has been a tendency for generalisations about marriage per se to be made from this data.

We will see in the next chapter that employment and childcare remain vital components of the ways in which these spouses have been observed to make sense of marriage and inequality. Nevertheless, some research as been conducted on situations which are structurally dissimilar from this apparent 'norm', which suggest this kind of approach to be a fruitful and important one.

Chapter Two : Making Sense of Marriage and Inequality: structure, practice and meaning

Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the process through which the patterns of inequality 'inside' and 'outside' marriage outlined in chapter one seem to 'make sense', or are rationalised, through practices and meanings at an everyday level by husbands and wives. I will show that those very meanings and practices help to reinforce the structural inequalities which legitimate them. Understanding this circular or dialectical process is of major importance to the study of gender relations and marriage, since it allows us to begin an investigation of the nature of gender inequalities per se, and the ways in they are both produced and legitimated. In the final part of the chapter, having established something of the mechanisms of this process, I will go on to discuss recent research which has taken as its focus the incidence of structural change or 'anomaly'. Given the ways in which sense is made through the relationship of structure to traditional gender divisions, this presents the opportunity to study the renegotiation of these divisions through the practices and understandings of the women and men involved. Furthermore, it represents an important broadening of focus for the study of marriage.

1. Gender and Responsibility: meanings and contexts

In the last chapter it was becoming clear that everyday meanings have a role in the construction of gender divisions. For

example, Oakley's work was compelling precisely because she looked further than 'who did what' in her analysis of the division of domestic labour, to the relations of domination and subordination within which spouses do what they do. She discovered that dimensions of responsibility and constraint effectively made a nonsense of any analysis of the division of domestic labour based soley on adding up and scoring domestic tasks. Responsibility for domestic labour meant more to women than the sum of its tasks, and the documentation of tasks alone could say nothing about the conditions of choice or constraint under which they were practised. Similarly, Graham's point about responsibility for health, Murcott's about gender obligations and cooked dinners and so on, are observations about meanings as well as practices - or rather, meaningful practices - and their relationship to broader patterns of control and inequality.

Theoretical and historical contributions from writers like Barrett and McIntosh, Stacey and Price, Davidoff, and Hall, have shown us that an ideology of appropriate 'familism' championing high standards of domesticity and childcare within a particular form of nuclear family, has developed within contemporary capitalist society (Barrett, 1980; Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Stacey and Price, 198 ; Davidoff, 1976; Davidoff, L'Esperance and Newby, 1976; Hall, 1979). Barrett describes it in the following way:

'a hegemonic definition of family life: as 'naturally' based on close kinship, as properly organised through a male breadwinner with financially dependent wife and children, and as a haven of privacy beyond the public realm of commerce and industry'

(Barrett, 1980: 204)

Historical accounts are useful because they outline changing material and economic conditions as well as developing ideologies. The point which these commentators seek to establish is that the normative championing of the home as a haven for weary male workers and as the proper centre for intensive childcare is part of an historical process with material roots, which has constructed domestic labour and childcare as privatised and gendered labour; it is performed by wives at home in service of their husbands and children. In a study of contemporary women's unemployment, Coyle has argued that this means that the division of labour in general cannot be wholly renegotiable within the confines of existing gender relations, because it has become, in essence, expressive of those relations:

"Domestic labour is more than simply looking after the house and children, it is the servicing of men. How can men participate in their own servicing? If men genuinely shared in the domestic work of the household, the very fabric of the relationship between men and women would be transformed".

(Coyle, 1984: 118-119)

Clearly these writers wish to argue that an ideology of familism is neither free-floating with no material referents, nor imposed upon passive dupes. It develops out of the efforts of women and men to make sense of their conditions of existence. What is more, the family-household as Barrett calls it, provides a nexus for the meshing of the material and the ideological, which are fused together dialectically in the process of the construction of social relations and inequality:

"The family-household constitutes both the ideological ground on which gender difference and women's oppression are constructed, and the material relations in which men and women are differentially engaged in wage labour and the class structure. Women's dependence on men is reproduced ideologically, but also in material relations, and there is a mutually strengthening relationship between them.

(Barrett, 1980: 211)

This implies that the empirical study of everyday meaningful practices engaged in by family-household members, is likely to shed light both on the ways in which the material and ideological intersect, and also on the relationship of apparently private realms of experience to social structure. Morgan has suggested that:

"It may be argued that the family is not only an interesting or special case in the attempts to relate the interpersonal and the structural, but that it is the institution in society which is centrally concerned with these interconnections".

(Morgan, 1985: 275)

2. Making Sense with the "Social Material"

I wish to argue that what is being discussed is less an ideology - albeit popular tenets of understanding which are ideological may be recognisable in different historical times - than a 'making-sense' process, which involves the construction and perpetuation of ideologies which tend to legitimate and reinforce material structures. In this sense, people actively carve out practices and understandings using what Morgan has termed the "social material" available to them (Morgan, 1981,1985).

This is obviously a loose formulation of a central sociological problem of (in an abridged version of Marx's language) how people make history in circumstances which are not of their own choosing. However, it is an adequate formulation for present purposes, because what is required is a perspective rather than a tight theorisation. Indeed, to aim to provide the latter in such a short space would be to ride roughshod over a great deal of detailed and complex theoretical work.

It is important for researchers to interpret the understandings of married men and women from a perspective of this kind, because to fail to recognise the significance of the social material, and structural or patterned inequalities on the construction of the marriage relationship, produces a misleadingly partial view. An example of this is Berger and Kellner's now well known study of the social construction of reality within marriage. Their argument is primarily that:

> "the plausibility and stability of the world, as socially defined, is dependent upon the strength and continuity of significant relationships in which conversation about this world can be continually carried on. Or, to put it a little differently: the reality of the world is sustained through conversation with significant others".
>
> (Berger and Kellner, 1971: 24)

Marriage, they go on, is one of the most crucial "validating relationships for adults in our society" (p. 24) and thus they argue that people make sense of the world through and within marriage. Initially, this looks compelling because it is concerned with the everyday, relational, making sense, type of

process which others like Young and Willmott in their discussion of household work, and Blood and Wolfe in their discussion of marital power, overlook (Young and Willmott, 1973; Blood and Wolfe, 1960). However, rather more in common with these researchers, the limitation of Berger and Kellner's argument lies precisely in their definition of marriage as a supremely private sphere within which the individual can "take a slice of reality and fashion it into his (sic) world" (p. 25). Of course, in doing this, Berger and Kellner are effectively forgetting that men and women may approach marriage on structurally unequal terms and hence that gender might make a difference to a spouse's ability to "fashion reality", but also that marriage itself may contribute to the development of those unequal terms. The following extract discusses the interrelationship of the individual and the private sphere in their schema and highlights well this omission of gender:

"It is here that the individual will seek power, intelligibility and, quite literally, a name - the apparent power to fashion a world, however Lilliputian, that will reflect his (sic) own being: a world that, seemingly having been shaped by himself and thus unlike those other worlds that insist on shaping him, is translucently intelligible to him (or so he thinks); a world in which, consequently he is somebody - perhaps even, within its charmed circle, a lord and master. What is more, to a considerable extent these expectations are not unrealistic. The public institutions have no need to control the individual's adventures in the private sphere, as long as they really stay within the latter's circumscribed limits. The private sphere is perceived, not without justification, as an area of individual choice and autonomy".

(Berger and Kellner, 1971: 25)

This seems to be an example par excellence of the danger of sociologists perpetuating the ideological division between public

and private by taking it for granted. It is a danger open equally to symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists, whose perspective can lead them to overlook structural content in favour of interactional style. Morgan (1981, 1985) suggests that this is indicative of an emphasis on the 'how' rather than the 'why' which:

> "seeks to demonstrate the processes by which members create their own sense of reality and by which they render their activities accountable and reasonable, rather than to ask questions about the social material with which persons construct their marriages, children, sexuality or whatever".
>
> (Morgan, 1985: 202).

Clearly, what is required is an emphasis on both the how and the why, because as Morgan points out, Berger and Kellner:

> "in seeking to highlight, ideal typically, some of the taken-for-granted features of contemporary marriage, fail to present one of the most taken-for-granted features of all, namely the inequality between men and women".
>
> (Morgan, 1985: 88-89)

More recently some researchers have studied marriage from within the kind of framework advocated by Berger and Kellner, but have added-on considerations of gender. Some of the insights from this type of work have been valuable, and will be referred to again below, but there remains the limitation that the observed processes of making sense or constructing meaning are not linked analytically to structural or patterned gender advantage and disadvantage. This means that the centrality of everyday meanings to the construction of a hierarchically gendered society (and vice versa) tend to be overlooked, and the apparent privacy of

the marital domain is maintained at the level of analysis (Backett, 1982; Askham, 1984). To "add women and stir" (Adam, 1986) potentially yields fascinating description but is not analytically compelling.

On the other hand, one of the most valuable contributions of empirical research like that of Hunt, Graham, Edgell, Murcott, Kerr and Charles, Luxton, Collins, and the others already mentioned in chapter one, is that they have charted aspects of the workings of the process through which structural and personal gender inequalities are linked through marriage in the practices and understandings of everyday life. For example, insights from the research have shown the ways in which a particular sexual division of labour - in employment, housework, caring, and money management, seems to be if nothing else the obvious way in which the relative structural positions of husbands and wives make sense. Put another way, constraints and social inequalities help to make traditionally gendered practices seem obvious. Each spouse is familiar with the rationale for this, and in that sense is an 'expert' or what Gramsci termed a "philosopher of commonsense" (Gramsci, 1971). As Voysey has commented, commonsense "is 'accurate' if it serves to make sense of action in a particular situation" (Voysey, 1975: 195).

For example, a major theme in the literature has been that of labour market disadvantage: the argument goes that wives are likely to be in lower paid, lower skilled, under unionised, more poorly protected and regulated forms of employment than their husbands, and they will probably - for at least some of their

lives - be working shorter hours in paid employment. Thus each married couple may make an explicit or implicit choice that the husband's job will take precedence and the wife will put family responsibilities before her own job. Clearly this is a choice constrained by structure as evidenced in part by the 'curious coincidence' that so many couples choose the same kind of system, and in most marriages it is likely to be less of an explicit choice than a post facto rationalisation. But it effectively makes the division of responsibility and privilege look sensible and fair, not least because there is a 'grain of truth' in it. Pauline Hunt among others has argued that ideologies 'work' precisely because at one level they are 'right'. That is, they incorporate aspects of reality, and a grain of truth. Simultaneously, of course, they help to conceal the fact that the 'grain of truth' is itself socially constructed, and is the result of inequality. What makes these kinds of meanings ideological then is not that they are false, but rather that they are partial and give the impression that certain aspects of the 'equation' are more determinate than they are (1). But once established and rationalised in this way:

"The reality of prevailing social practice reinforces the ideology of which it is the product".

(Hunt, 1980:26)

Emergent individual and generalised definitions of men as chief wage earners are central in this marital nexus:

'The ideological impact of the wage system has a decisive impact. The contribution of domestic work in the creation of labour power

as a saleable commodity is hidden. The wage seems to be earned by the industrial worker alone. This has the effect ... of providing legitimation for the wage earner's avoidance of domestic toil. According to this ideology not only has the wage earner put in a full day's work elsewhere, but that work is more like real work than housework could ever be. The latter appears to be merely a personal service of benefit to family members only, whereas the former commands a wage and is socially necessary'.

(Hunt, 1980: 82)

Edgell too has noted that the employment of the middle class husbands in his study took precedence over that of the wives and that this entitled the men legitimately to avoid domestic labour (see also Pahl and Pahl, 1971), and Luxton has noted a similar process combining what she calls 'valid reasons and invalid excuses' (Luxton, 1986: 47; see also Collins, 1985).

Of course the idea that husbands are in reality at all times the family breadwinners and women the dependants is entirely misleading (Land, 1976, 1980, 1986). Some research has focused on couples where women are in senior or equivalent labour market positions to their husbands. Nevertheless, the findings are that couples tend to maintain a largely traditional division of responsibility and this is justified by, for example, women's greater domestic competence and skill, or the importance for career women to preserve some aspect of a feminine identity via domestic servicing (McRae, 1986; Spencer and Podmore, 1982)

Furthermore, studies in the management of household income have indicated that the ways in which money is organised help both to reflect and preserve the ideal of male economic independence and female economic dependence as a kind of reality, whilst

simultaneously concealing the extent to which husbands too are economically dependent on their wives (Pahl, 1980, 1983, 1984; Gray, 1979; Hunt, 1978, 1980, Morris, 1983a; McKee and Bell, 1985, 1986; Ayers and Lambertz, 1986; Whitehead, 1981). What this means is that in the process of domestic budgeting as well as in household labour, men and women help to establish partial understandings and parallel practices which themselves have further ramifications for the division of labour because they appear to endorse the apparent reality of the male breadwinner notion, itself the rationalisation for this kind of practice.

Jan Pahl's work has made an important contribution in this area by helping to establish first of all that money is not necessarily distributed equally amongst household members, and that analysis should distinguish between the management and control of money (Pahl, 1980, 1983, 1984). She points out that women managing the household budget on a daily basis may not necessarily be indicative of power, which is more directly related to the control of money:

'Being able to off-load certain decisions and certain money-handling chores onto the other spouse can itself be a sign of power ... It seems that a high degree of separation between control and management is associated with a rigid separation of spheres in terms of the sexual division of labour'.

(Pahl, 1983: 256-257)

Pahl produces a classification of money management systems incorporating different divisions of control and management, yet as Graham has argued:

"While rooted in an awareness of gender divisions and male power, such a classification is strangely gender-blind and, as a result, it can obscure the very dimensions that it is designed to 'illuminate'".

(Graham, 1987: 62)

Graham goes on to point out that the two parent families in her survey of mothers, when reporting disagreements about money, centred on criticisms by women of men for controlling money, and by men of women for mismanaging money, whatever system was in operation. The implication is that within marriage money is controlled by men and managed by women, and this gains support from an earlier study by Hunt, who argues that behind the various different styles of managing money is a general principle: namely, wives do not feel they have the same rights of access to household income as do husbands, especially, but not solely, where they are not in paid employment themselves. She goes on to add that:

'The breadwinner's control of family funds does not seem to be greatly affected by the form in which the houseworker has access to money ... One couple had a joint bank account, another kept their spare cash in a tin, in a third case the houseworker was paid money to buy food and the wage earner took care of the bills, and in a fourth case the houseworker took care of all bills while the wage earner retained pocket money. In each case the wage earner had the final say as to how money would be spent, or more often in these inflationary times how money would <u>not</u> be spent.'

(Hunt, 1978: 558)

Therefore, this evidence suggests that as well as being excused from domestic labour, men as chief breadwinners - ideologically if not materially - retain control of household income. The practice of budgeting reinforces the 'logic' of this even where

both wives and husbands are earning:

'In most households the husband's earnings are reserved to pay for the necessities that had to be met before the wife returned to the labour market; that is rent or mortgage payments, food, basic clothing, heating and lighting bills. The woman's earnings tend to be used to purchase additional items which make life easier, more secure and more enjoyable... the effect of this practice is to reinforce the ideology that woman's place is in the home'.

(Hunt, 1980: 19)

Stamp, in a pilot study of women who earn more than their husbands, identifies a tendency to the adoption of more equitable money management systems precisely because wives in 'superior' employment do not exercise similar control over money as men in superior employment (Stamp, 1985). Hunt's data show that women who are at home full-time with children while their husbands are out at work find it particulaly difficult conceptually to separate their work identity of housewife and mother from any identity they might have as people in their own right, and thus they are unable to spend money on themselves without guilt (Hunt, 1980: 47).

These observations suggest that for women who are out of paid employment and looking after children, or in part-time employment, economic dependence on husbands and responsibility for domestic labour and childcare effectively make sense of each other. They become bolstered by practice in so far as women through experience generally develop greater skill and alacrity in housework than their husbands, and it therefore seems more reasonable for them to do what might take their husbands a lot more time and effort (Hunt, 1980, also Luxton, 1986; Collins,

1985; Davidoff, 1976). But for women who are in full-time employment, other practices such as household budgeting can become viable legitimations - by injecting the 'grain of truth' - for a traditional division of labour. What is more, Bell and Newby have shown that various tension management strategies employed by husbands - not necessarily in a conscious exercise of power - effectively smooth over hierarchical discrepancies between them and their wives. For example, the giving of gifts such as flowers, or more symbolically providing 'a living', and status reversals on for example mothers' day, are part of a "deferential dialectic": giving gifts is an expression of power, generating gratitude and through it obligation and subservience (Bell and Newby, 1976).

A major theme in this kind of research is the extent to which women's labour market disadvantage vis a vis men is tied up with their economic dependence on husbands. But this is also bolstered by the state and by employment legislation. For example, Hilary Land has shown very effectively that tax, social security and pension provisions both assume and enforce the economic dependence of many married women on their husbands (Land, 1976, 1978, 1979, 1981; 1984; 1986; also McIntosh, 1979; Morgan, 1985). Men's economic dependence on women continues to be concealed in this discourse largely because women's caring and domestic work is unpaid. She also points out that the lack of other kinds of provision, for example paternity leave from employment as a realistic alternative to maternity leave, have both material and ideological implications:

'Seeing the need to adjust only the employment pattern of women in order to take account of the demands of childcare reduces women's opportunities in the labour market and reinforces the existing division of labour within the home... Much lipservice is paid to the glories of motherhood but in reality as far as the labour market is concerned, women who have been full-time mothers are regarded as having acquired no new skills and are often treated as if they had lost those they had before they became mothers'.

(Land, 1981: 20 and 26)

We have seen that Joshi's work on the 'wages of motherhood' shows that women are penalised for full-time motherhood in terms of loss of earnings (Joshi, 1984; 1987).

In this kind of context it is not difficult for both husbands and wives to suggest that a traditional division of labour, both inside and outside the home, makes sense. Indeed, the one makes sense of the other and reinforces the ideological location of women to the private sphere, and men to the public sphere.

3. Making Sense with Changing Social Material

But there are situations where this really does not seem to make sense; where it is difficult on the face of it to see how a grain of truth can be traced in the process for legitimating a traditional division of labour between husbands and wives. Various studies have been undertaken recently with the remit of examining either the situations and practice of couples in clearly different circumstances to the idealised 'norm', or what happens in domestic practice when aspects of the basic structure of inequality 'outside' marriage begin to change. It is these latter which are significant here.

The most important research of this type for present purposes is that done on the domestic impact of unemployment, redundancy and of economic recession. This type of research aims to examine what happens to domestic relations and organisation when married men become unemployed and therefore is based on the assumption that structural change - in the full-time and *permanent nature of* male employment - is likely to have implications for gender relations. Clearly, we might expect this to affect the making sense process in some way. For example, domestic practice might change and bring along with it the construction of new meanings. Alternatively practice might be maintained suggesting that people may begin to work harder for new ways of making sense of the link between structure and their own practice at the level of meaning. Either way, whether there is change or continuity of practice, important processes will be opened up for investigation.

In fact in this country there is now a body of evidence that married women whose husbands become unemployed are likely to leave employment if they are in it, and if they are not employed they are very unlikely to take up employment at that time. Sixty-four per cent of the wives of unemployed men are economically inactive, and the figure is as high as 88 per cent for the wives of economically inactive men (that is, including retired as well as other categories) (OPCS, 1982: 26). Women, therefore, do not on the whole become the main breadwinners in these circumstances and this is chiefly because social security regulations actually provide a disincentive to do so (Pahl, 1984). However, an important study by McKee and Bell of the

domestic consequences of male unemployment in Kidderminster (McKee and Bell, 1984, 1985, 1986) indicates that there are also ideological or normative constraints preventing female breadwinning activity:

> "In many cases the traditional attitudes towards men's and women's roles seemed to harden and be reinforced in relation to breadwinning. The loss of the male economic provider role struck deep chords amongst both wives and husbands and a passionate defence of men's right to provide was invariably raised... Fundamental emotions concerning self-esteem, self-image, pride, views of masculinity, respectability and authority resounded in the expressions of both men and women. The constraining effects of these postures and beliefs in the face of structural change should not be underestimated."
>
> (McKee and Bell, 1986: 140-141)

And of course we might add that financial disincentives enforced by the state could be a powerful legitimation of the validity of these sentiments.

McKee and Bell have also attempted to untangle what negotiations take place around the division of domestic labour and childcare, as has Morris in her study of redundant steelworkers and their families in Port Talbot (Morris, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1985a, 1985b; Harris et al 1985). In fact, in terms of both 'who does what' and whose responsibility it is, it seems that male unemployment or redundancy occasions little change in the former, and no change in the latter (Morris, 1983a,1983b; 1985; McKee and Bell, 1984, 1985, 1986). Of course if it is the case that the domestic work which women do is inextricably bound up with servicing men, as argued earlier by Coyle for example, then we might expect that there would be no immediate reversal or

renegotiation of this relationship. But what is interesting about the research evidence is how an apparently outmoded-by-structure practice is legitimated by the men and women who maintain it, bearing in mind the salience of male employment to the way couples make sense of their division of domestic labour and responsibility.

Morris, for example, documents significant normative constraints on male participation in domestic labour. Although a minority of the men in her study, initially bored and with spare time on their hands, gave an increased amount of help to their wives with housework, this was on the whole irregular, and not comprehensive enough to jeopardise the traditional division of domestic labour. However, Morris notes differences in the flexibility and rigidity of divisions connected to a notion of social network similar to that developed by Bott (1971) and modified by Harris (1983). She concludes that:

"flexibility in the division of domestic labour will be negatively related to the extent to which the behaviours of individual members of a couple is subject to group pressure".

(Morris, 1985b: 337)

A greater degree of connectedness in social network enhances the likelihood of peer group pressure to conform to traditional divisions and to avoid negotiations for change. By virtue of their membership of a predominantly male social network, men were able to gain peer reinforcement of cultural definitions of appropriate male and female spheres of activity or, perhaps more importantly, were subject to sanctioning for deviance from these

definitions.

The implication of this is that the men gained a foothold in the public sphere despite their redundancy, and indeed Morris argues that male social networks provided both the opportunity and cultural legitimation for the men to develop "surrogate occupations", for example forms of work such as "odd jobbing", or "hobbling". These might be paid or unpaid, but Morris's point is that they took the place of paid employment in the making sense process: thus men were, or potentially might be, busy in surrogate occupations outside the home and hence it would be inappropriate to renegotiate domestic responsibility.

The ability of men to retain this kind of public space, and the form it takes is, however, likely to vary regionally but as yet we know little about the detailed and subtle domestic negotiations of husbands and wives in other locations. However, research by Pahl and Wallace on all forms of work on the Isle of Sheppey warns us in general to be careful in assuming that the unemployed have the means with which to engage in profuse odd-jobbing; households <u>with</u> wage earners are much more likely than households without wage earners to be able to deploy the land, labour and capital necessary for active participation in many forms of informal paid work (Pahl and Wallace, 1985; Pahl, 1984; Wallace and Pahl, 1986). However, whilst acknowledging the need for further research evidence from other localities on domestic negotiations, it is still possible to take Morris's point seriously without assuming frenzied informal economic activity by unemployed men if we focus more directly on the argument that the

idea of participating in informal economic activity gives men a public role.

This kind of point gains support from McKee and Bell's study as well. They identify "male based rationales" for an unchanging division of domestic labour and responsibility, which are actually mechanisms for relocating unemployed men in a public arena outside the home and domesticity:

> "Examples were cited of the man's high engagement in the search for work and absences from home due to job interviews or informal labour market activity were identified as real constraints. Opportunity and legitimacy of the men's preoccupations outside the domestic sphere were reported as opposed to motivation and disposition. In other words many couples felt that despite a severance from the labour market, unemployed men still had a public profile and purpose".
>
> (McKee and Bell, 1984: 22)

These kinds of examples seem to illustrate that the men and women were searching for new ways of making sense of established practices, rather than changing those practices. One very good reason for this, identified particularly strongly by Morris, was that the women did not want the men to take over domestic labour. Morris reports a kind of ambivalence, where women did not want their husbands to invade their domain (the home), found their presence a nuisance and their housework contributions at best not very helpful. Coyle has made similar points about the extent to which male unemployment is an intrusion on the female sphere, whereas female unemployment can enhance men's domestic lives (Coyle, 1984: 114). This is related to what McKee and Bell call "female based rationales" for continuity. Quite simply, these state that women do housework more efficiently than men; an

apparently logical justification for specialisation by sex despite structural change (McKee and Bell, 1984: 22, 1985: 144).

The tendency towards the maintenance of a traditional division of labour and responsibility in the face of this particular type of structural change extends also to the management of money. I have already pointed out that the evidence suggests that women rarely take over a 'male-breadwinning' role in these circumstances. Basing her analysis on styles of money management within marriage developed by Jan Pahl, Morris finds the following: although no single pattern of management necessarily follows male redundancy, the onset of low income tends to encourage unitary management (although she misleadingly calls it control) through some kind of "whole wage system", especially in larger families. This appears to happen because it is expedient; with little money to manage "families cannot afford the luxury of more than one manager". Given the traditional sexual division of labour, Morris maintains that women tend to become the unitary managers (Morris, 1983a). I have already noted that Pahl argues that the ability to delegate money management chores is a sign of power and, bearing this in mind, the following observation by Morris is particularly pertinent:

"the responsibility for deciding on priorities for spending whilst also trying to maintain a degree of marital harmony, weighs heavily on women...Control (sic) over household resources under these conditions is a source of stress rather than of power".

(Morris, 1983a: 14)

McKee and Bell also indicate that "making the money stretch" was

an increasingly difficult money management problem for the wives of unemployed men. They observe that:

"management of the money did not bring control for many women, with husbands insisting on their own personal spending money but without any equivalent allocation of personal money to wives".
(McKee and Bell, 1984: 20)

Changes, then, were being constructed within the framework of a relationship of domination and subordination between men and women, and practices and meanings were ensuring the maintenance of inequality. But both women and men were actively promoting this.

Another important theme, again established in both of these studies, and having a bearing on the maintenance of tradition, was the normative transience of unemployment and redundancy. It is mainly in this sense that this research cannot in any sense be generalised to older couples negotiating male retirement. Transience meant that people were able to rationalise continuity of practice because there would apparently be nothing to be gained from a wholesale renegotiation of responsibility following a temporary change of structure. It was also likely to be important in the ability of men to retain a public role during temporary anomaly. Coyle, in her study of redundant women, points out that unemployment continues to carry this normative transience despite evidence that for some groups of men it is clearly not a temporary state:

"Unemployment is structured as a temporary phenomenon and not one

that can and ought to be adjusted to. Restructuring cannot take place because men are actively job seeking. In many instances unemployment for men does assume a sort of permanence, as more and more men are becoming long term unemployed. Yet it is a permanent state of suspension. It cannot be the basis for long term change or new initiatives".

(Coyle, 1984: 114-115)

Male based rationales and the ability to maintain a public foothold are perhaps rather less likely after retirement, for example, which is likely be be imbued with a normative permanence. In that case, and on this basis, we might expect a more wholesale attempt at renegotiation.

In general, however, this kind of research suggests that identifying apparently relevant components of structural change and investigating everyday domestic practice is a potentially fruitful line of enquiry: not only does it provide data on groups other than the established 'norm', but it allows the sociologist to investigate processes of negotiation and renegotiation in material and ideological contexts.

Conclusion

In the previous chapter we saw that women's responsibility for domestic labour and childcare, and men's concomitant full-time and continuous commitment to employment, were important aspects in the construction of structural or patterned, and personal gender inequality. In this chapter we have seen something of the processes through which this is constructed and maintained in the practices and meanings of married couples. The economic dependence of women on men figures as both the producer and

outcome of wives' responsibility for domestic servicing within marriage and families, and consequently gender inequality becomes the product of an apparently self perpetuating process. Men's dependence on wives is obscured in a cash nexus situation.

However, the last section of this chapter outlined research aimed at examining the ways in which practices and meanings are negotiated in times of structural change, and whether or not change provides the opportunity for renegotiation of gendered responsibilities. In empirical terms we saw that in the cases reported it did not, for a variety of reasons.

However, in theoretical terms structural change does provide potential opportunity for renegotiation. I do not mean to suggest by this that structural change of any kind either 'allows' or determines complete reversal or renegotiation of practices. Clearly, the ability of individuals to make new kinds of sense with the social material available to them will continue to be constrained in certain ways. However, what is important is that structural changes in, for example, men and women's employment, or indeed changing family composition and childcare responsibilities, are likely to be of direct significance to the construction of gender divisions and inequalities. In theoretical terms this must at least open up the possibility for renegotiation of relationships of gender, therefore allowing us to investigate their extent and nature, and the consequent practices and understandings.

I have already suggested that what is largely, yet surprisingly,

rather hidden away in most of the studies outlined so far is that they rely on data derived from the marriages of people who are almost always aged under 50. In some ways this is obvious, because many of them highlight the significance of the care of young children and indeed the researchers do not keep the ages of the people in their samples a secret. However, given that structure and hence structural change is clearly important we might expect some major differences between, for example, the kinds of gender inequality manifest in marriages where the woman is looking after young children and her husband in full-time employment, and in those where children have grown up and left home and both spouses have retired. The danger is that the former has become the norm within sociological analysis - that is by investigating young marriage and calling it 'marriage' per se the components of gender inequalities in 'old marriage' for example are assumed to be the same.

In the chapter to follow I will set out in some detail the case for investigating the marriages of older couples, and critically assess some of the existing research evidence.

Chapter Three : Life Course Disruptions and Gender Divisions amongst the 50 to 70s

Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the incidence of a set of disruptions which are structural and biographical in character. They are based largely on employment and demographic trends, and I will argue that they mark out married people currently aged between 50 and 70 as a focus for study. This is because people in that age range are likely to experience structural change of the kind which might have implications for gender relations as discussed in the foregoing chapters, but which has been largely unresearched in these terms.

As I suggested earlier, this means that the choice of an age range is a theoretical one, and is less to do with investigating the marriages of older people per se, than with issues of negotiation, renegotiation, and the construction of gendered practices and meanings by people operating from within certain changing constraints. Put another way, it presents an opportunity to examine changing and uncharted links between structural or patterned and personal gender divisions. I will demonstrate that using such an approach is effectively to adopt aspects of the kind of framework developed by social historians concentrating on the concept of life course, rather than life cycle, although my study is not intended to represent a detailed social biography of the cohort concerned. However, an awareness of the intersections of three dimensions of time: family time,

individual time and historical time, underlies the logic of using disruptions as markers for a study group as well as providing elements of a perspective for analysis. The latter will be discussed more fully in the methodology chapter to follow.

Once the theoretical reasoning behind the choice of the age range 50-70 has been documented, I will then go on to outline some existing research evidence about gender relations amongst this group.

1. A "Modern Life Cycle"?

In the last chapter, I discussed two important studies of the domestic impact of male unemployment. These suggested that identifying structural change relevant to the dialectic of inequality within marriage should make it possible to observe people in the process of reconstructing practices and meanings. This should be the case whether or not people are renegotiating, or retrenching, the status quo. It therefore presents an opportunity to analyse the ways in which people make sense of social change 'on the ground', or in everyday life.

Anderson has been a central contributor to demographic knowledge about the dimensions of social change, particularly with regard to work and family 'life cycles'. Using secondary analysis of large scale data sets like the census, his method is to observe and document demographic and economic change, and to draw insights about the implications for changing everyday social practice. Anderson has argued that a "modern life cycle" emerged

in Britain in the 1960's and 1970's with "a number of clearly demarcated stages through which most of the population passed within a relatively narrow band of ages." (Anderson, 1983, 1985: 69). This life cycle was normative too, to the extent that most people planned their lives on the assumption that they would follow it fairly closely. He outlines some of the modern life cycle dimensions as follows:

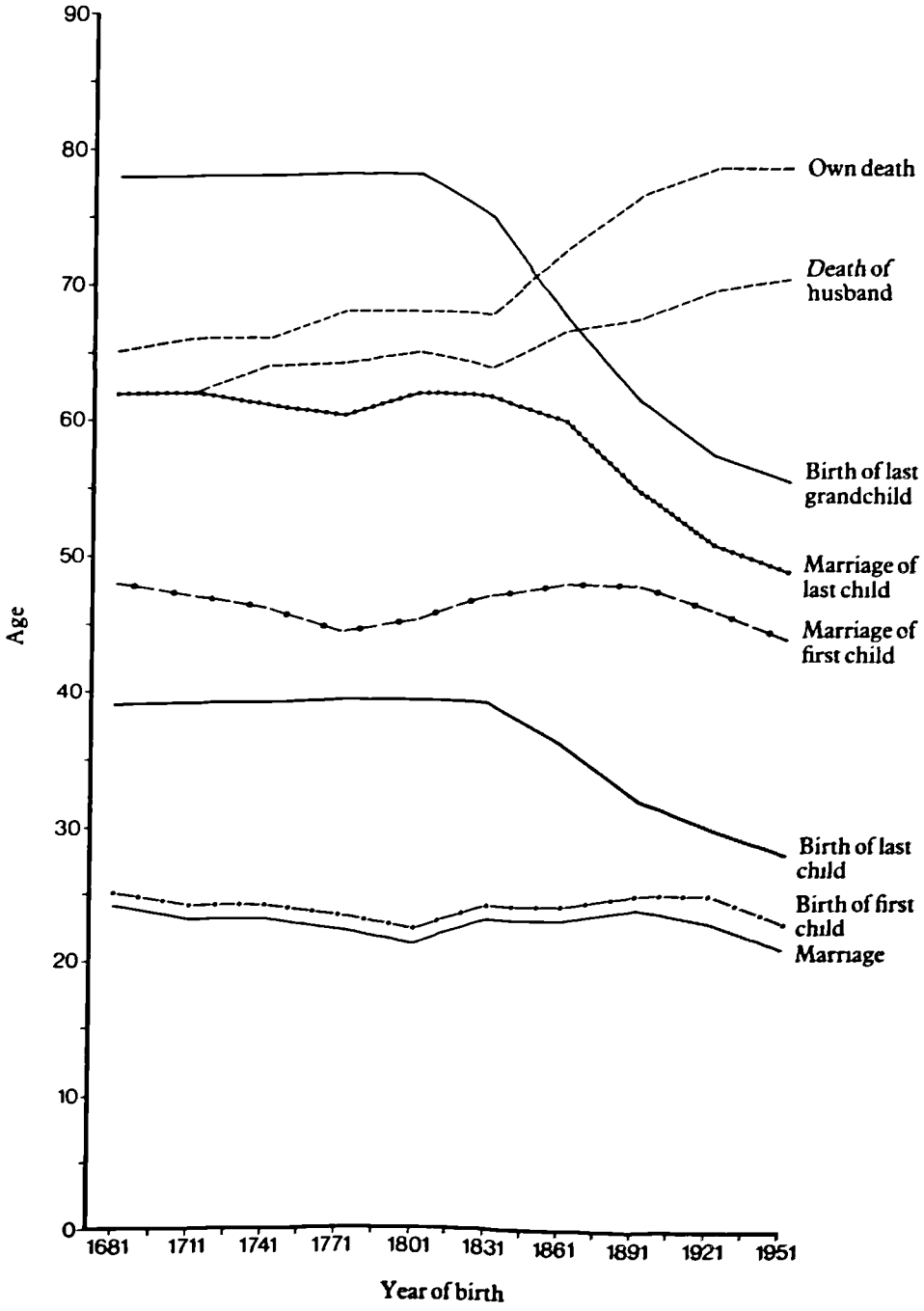
"Work, for the mass of the population, began at age 16...At the other end of the life cycle, retirement from work came equally suddenly; 73 per cent of men were still working at age 60 and 52 per cent at age 64, but at age 65 only 27 per cent were still in employment. Even for women, the pension age of 60 was a turning point; 52 per cent were in employment at age 59, 29 per cent at age 60... Most people of both sexes married during relatively few years of their very late teens or early twenties... and most left home and set up their own household at about the time they married. In 1979 at age 16 well over 95 per cent of children lived in their parents' homes, by age 27 over 80 per cent did not... The years of childbearing were few, on average, couples had their last child within seven years of marriage, and that child was married by their early 50s, and their last grandchild was born well before they were 60; most couples knew most of their grandchildren and, for women, at least, great-grandparenthood had become by the 1970s a statistically normal phenomenon".

(Anderson, 1985: 69).

Anderson shows that men could expect to live 14 years after the birth of their last grandchild and women to live 23 years - probably long enough to see all the grandchildren marry (Anderson, 1983: 8). Table 3.1 below, based on the charting of women's life courses, shows the stark reality of some of this in respect of family events.

Table 3.1 shows, inter alia, that Anderson's modern life cycle meant that women approximately between the ages of 50 and 70 would be likely to see the marriages of all of their children,

Table 3.1: Life Courses of Women by birth cohorts (medians)



(Source: Anderson, 1983: 9)

the birth of their grandchildren and, towards the age of 70 the imminent death of their husbands. When added to the observations about retirement from employment for both men and women, this indicates that, working on Anderson's assumptions, married people between the ages of 50 and 70 would be likely to be experiencing certain events in their lives for the first time; that is, these events would be biographically unprecedented in their lives. What is more, given the arguments in the preceding chapters, they are events likely to have some import for the construction of gender divisions and for inequality within marriage, since they are grounded in the central factors of childcare and paid employment.

But if this means that people aged between 50 and 70 will be dealing with biographically new experiences, Anderson is also able to show that the modern life cycle is itself historically specific. It represents a kind of squashing together of some events at earlier stages in people's lives, particularly family formation, but also the possibility of the common experience of certain events for the first historical time:

"The change also opened up enormous new slots in the life cycle to be enjoyed, exploited or endured - great-grandparenthood and also a long period before old age without childcare for women, growing periods when men who were still quite fit for work became compulsorily 'retired'".

(Anderson, 1985: 86)

This certainly indicates a new period of life, beginning somewhere around the age of 50, where married couples might be spending time together, without children, and without paid

employment. At least it might be anticipated that children will leave home (or will have left home), and/or employment will cease, when wives and husbands are aged approximately between 50 and 70. Anderson's work is vitally important, therefore, in showing the historical and individually biographical newness of events occurring between the years of 50 to 70 for both men and women (see also Eversley, 1982).

However, it is also important to remember that aggregate data based on median ages produces a pattern of event sequencing which can conceal diversity. It is for this kind of reason that demographers like Murphy have argued that the construction of a life cycle in this way has limited usefulness as a heuristic model. He points out that current British experience shows that at least 30 per cent of women fail to pass through sequential stages of marriage - childbearing - still-married after children leave home (Murphy, 1983: 55).

However, the problem is less with the analysis than with what we draw from it. Anderson's work clearly shows the experience of most people at particular ages and historical times, and he also points out that the normative aspect of this means that people are generally penalised for adopting 'deviant' timetables. All of this is very useful indeed as an indicator of the ages between which structural and biographical disruptions are likely to occur materially or normatively in most people's lives. For social researchers who wish to analyse the everyday negotiation of social change, it suggests a population frame from which to sample. Anderson does not advocate the building of a static or

eternally cyclical model because he never suggests that he has discovered a universal and omnipresent family cycle. Indeed, his association of the life cycle with historical change furnishes a good critique of just such endeavours.

Anderson's evidence that any modern life cycle is historically specific, and Murphy's that it is not universal or straightforward, brings us to a series of issues concerning the dimensions of time, age and biography. We need to ask the following questions: when we identify and evaluate demographic patterns for 'young', 'middle aged' or 'elderly' people, are we intending to say that what we find is attributable to numerical age alone? If so, then it would follow that studies of the family relationships of each of these three groups would tell us about a universal family life cycle which both Anderson and Murphy in different ways show is misleading. Interestingly enough, these are questions which come up most frequently in studies of 'elderly' people, as though age and life cycle considerations were only significant for them. However, whilst older people will in a sense have more age and life cycle behind them, this is no good reason to fail to ask similar questions in studies of younger people. Indeed, as indicated earlier, by studying only younger married couples, but failing to say that this is what we are doing, we are in danger of perpetuating the notion that they represent a universal experience of marriage. This is the sort of process by which younger people become 'people' and older people become 'the elderly'.

All too often in social investigation where 'age' is recognised

it is used misleadingly as an ascriptive or descriptive variable, as though it has its own explanatory power (Finch, 1986; Harris, 1986). It is true that clear patterns can often be discerned for example in age cross tabulations of survey material which can woo a researcher into acceptance of this idea. But as Harris has cogently put it:

"In itself (age) has no intrinsic significance and its meaning and importance derives from its being an indication of something else. It is an indirect associative measure".

(Harris, 1986: 3)

The arguments for this are perhaps better rehearsed for gender, where it is now fairly widely accepted in sociology that patterns within data by gender are not simply the result of physiological and a-social sex differences but are to do with the ways in which gender is socially constructed and experienced in people's lives. Similarly, when we make observations about differences between age groups, we are not simply talking about numerical age, but about historical and biographical experience: individuals live their lives through particular sequences of historical time, and have different experiences of that historical time depending upon their social and geographical position. Of course this is not to say that physiological aging does not take place, but to caution that it does not do so in a social vacuum. We only need remember the evidence of demographers and social historians like Anderson regarding historical change in mortality, longevity, age at childbirth etc, and evidence that health, illness and mortality are strongly related to social class as well as age and gender (Graham, 1984; Blaxter and Paterson, 1982), to realise that

these processes are not a-social or a-historical.

This is, of course, the underlying logic of cohort analysis, the assumption being that there may be meaningful differences between the experiences of groups of people born in different time periods (Synge, 1981; Ryder, 1977). Thus we cannot once and for all document the experience of 50 to 70 year olds and claim it to be universal, because those who reached those ages in 1985 will have lived through a different set of social and historical experiences than those who will reach that age in 2000. Fairly obviously, this approach is one which wishes to take account of social change, or changing social structure, as indeed should all sociologists (Thompson, 1981; Bertaux, 1981, 1982; Plummer, 1983). But it is also an approach which wishes to take into account the action of individuals in history. This means that individuals are not perceived merely as located in history, but contribute to the making of history. Giddens, for example, argues that action:

"does not refer to a series of discrete acts combined together, but to a continuous flow of conduct. We may define action ... as involving a stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-the-world".

(Giddens, 1979: 55).

Harris argues that the recent interest in oral history as well as the theoretical relevance of time shown by sociologists and social historians such as Plummer (1983), Bertaux (1981, 1982) and Thompson (1981):

"..is bound up with rejection of both sociology's natural scientific pretensions and tendencies still persisting in contemporary sociology to conceptualise individual actions as mere expressions of structural location and to conceptualise its field of study as the investigation of the structure of social objects, rather than the doings of historical subjects"

(Harris, 1986: 6)

This is important for the perspective I wish to take, and for this reason I want to reject any and a-historical notion of 'the life or family cycle' which assumes that certain pre-charted family stages will be universally and sequentially encountered or that various aging transitions will always and inevitably present themselves for negotiation (see Hill, 1964: 192; Levinson et al, 1978, Troll, 1971, 1982; Thompson and Streib 1961, for examples of the first approach; Neugarten, 1968; Sheehy, 1977; Eichorn et al, 1981; for the second). I do not wish to argue that my data has validity for the charting of some kind of "post-parental-post-employment" family stage.

Indeed, a much more fruitful perspective than that of the life or family cycle has been developed recently by a number of social historians in the study of the "life course" (Hareven, 1978, 1981, 1982; Hareven and Adams, 1982; Elder, 1977, 1981, 1982). This approach is useful because it is sensitive to issues of age, cohort and social change, and gives us an idea of how to begin unpacking these. Like Anderson, these scholars began their work by charting the pattern and timing of various life course events derived in this case from American census records - such as age at marriage, childbirth, starting and finishing employment, and so on - for various birth cohorts in their social and historical

context. As Foner has argued:

"..because each cohort cuts off a unique segment of historical time as its members age, the life course patterns of successive cohorts differ"

(Foner, 1980: 776)

This led Hareven to draw an analytical distinction between three interacting dimensions of time: individual time, family time, and historical time. She explains how these typify the life course approach as follows:

"It focuses on the interaction among individual and collective timing of family transitions as they are shaped by different historical conditions. It examines the synchronization of individual behaviour with the collective behaviour of the family unit as they change over time and in their relation to external historical conditions..It attempts to follow the movement of individuals through different family configurations and roles and is concerned with the determinants of timing patterns that affect these transitions"

(Hareven, 1982: 5)

Thus there is no preconceived notion of a set of family cycle stages, but rather an appreciation that individuals undergo life transitions which are incumbent upon the intersection of events between the three time dimensions.

Morgan has suggested that a life course approach:

"may show us the interplay between home and work and between the public and the private spheres, thus providing some useful linkages with some feminist concerns".

(Morgan, 1985: 179)

It is entirely in this sense that I wish to adopt aspects of a life course perspective. Yet there are issues of focus and manageability of data which need to be resolved at this point. Although I wish to argue that a biographical approach is important because people are actors in time, and that the separation of three kinds of time by a life course perspective provides a rationale for studying the 50 to 70s in the 1980s, I also want to focus most explicitly on negotiations and transitions in the here and now. This means that my study is not an oral history, and the use of biography is chiefly to show how people's pasts (conflating individual, family and historical time) affect their presents (1). The relevance of the presents being investigated derives from current intersections of time.

This task was begun at the beginning of this chapter. In the next section I shall go on to look at elements of current demography, structure and patterned inequality for the 50 to 70s.

2. Social Characteristics and Disruptions: the 50-70s

Therefore although the focus of my research was not the married lives of people aged 50 to 70 in 1985, but rather aspects of the links between public and private gender divisions, the study is nevertheless entirely specific to people in that group, because the currently changing links are incumbent upon intersections between the three dimensions of time in <u>their</u> lives. Anderson's data gave a general outline, but what more do we know about the variety of disruption, and the general social characteristics, of people currently between those ages? I will examine data

TABLE 3.2 Marital Status by Age and Sex

Great Britain

	Males				Females			
	Single	Married[1]	Widowed	Divorced	Single	Married[1]	Widowed	Divorced
AGE(percentages)								
16-24	88.9	10.8	-	0.3	77.3	21.9	-	0.8
25-34	30.0	64.8	0.1	5.1	18.0	74.5	0.3	7.1
35-44	11.1	81.3	0.4	7.3	6.0	83.8	1.3	9.0
45-59	8.9	83.5	1.9	5.7	6.1	79.8	7.6	6.5
60-64	8.4	82.7	5.5	3.3	7.6	67.6	20.6	4.3
65-74	7.6	78.3	11.6	2.5	9.5	49.3	38.1	3.0
75 or over	7.5	60.9	30.2	1.4	13.4	21.0	64.3	1.4
All aged 16 or over	28.8	63.4	3.7	4.1	21.9	58.8	14.4	4.9

[1]Including separated people.

(Source: CSO, 1986 Social Trends: table 1.5, p.21)

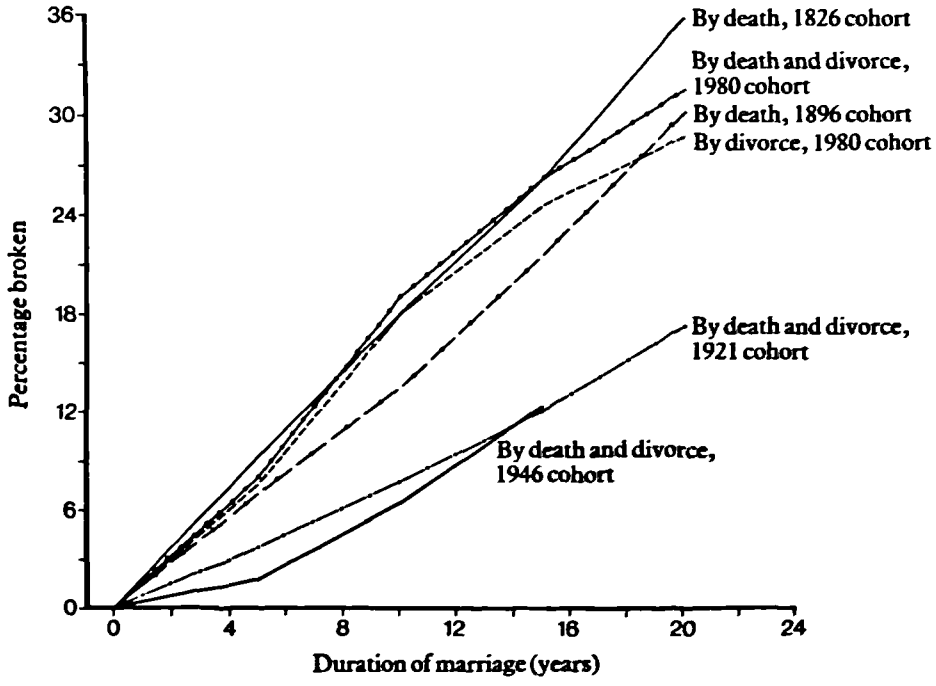
concerning the two broadly relevant areas of family and household; and employment.

a. Family and Household

Table 3.2 shows marital status by sex and age. As can be seen, the proportion of people currently divorced is the smallest in the older age groups (2). However the proportion of people married decreases with age and this decrease begins earlier for women than for men. It is almost completely accounted for by widowhood. It is only a small proportion who are never married in the older age groups. Taken as a whole, around 60 per cent of men and women aged between 50 and 70 are actually still on first, long term, marriages (OPCS, 1981: 5-6).

Table 3.3 below tells us something about changes in divorce rates over the years.

Table 3.3: Marriages Broken by Marriage Cohort (England and Wales)



Source: Anderson, 1985

Indeed, table 3.3 shows that for the 1921 cohort, only around 17 per cent of marriages had been broken by death or divorce after 20 years. They were both less likely to end marriages by death than previous cohorts, and by divorce than more recent cohorts. Therefore they are unusual in their proportion of long-marrieds.

Table 3.4 below shows family size by marriage cohort.

Table3.4: Family Size by Marriage Cohort (Great Britain)

Number of children live-born in first marriage	women married in period					
	mainly around 1860	1900-09	1920-24	1935-39	1956-60 (part estimated)	1961-65
0	9	10	16	15	10	8
1	5	14	24	26	17	21
2	6	18	24	29	39	41
3	8	16	14	15	22	23
4	9	12	8	7	12	7
5 or more	63	30	14	8		
	100	100	100	100	100	100
average number of children	5.7	3.5	2.4	2.1	(2.2)	(2.0)

(Source: Nissel, 1987: table 5, p.226)

Table 3.4 shows that the average number of children was between 2.1 and 3.5 for three relevant cohorts. Only 10 per cent, 16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively had no children.

Table 3.5 below shows household type by age. As can be seen, by stark contrast to younger age groups, the majority of those aged over 60 live in 2 adult households. The older age groups show a higher proportion living alone, accounted for mainly by widowhood. Table 3.6 shows that the over 45s are also distinctive in terms of housing tenure. They show a higher proportion of outright owner occupiers, and significantly fewer mortgagors than younger age groups. Also, unsurprisingly, very few live in homes provided with employment by comparison with younger groups. The overall picture is one of polarisation in the over 45s - between outright ownership on the one hand and renting on the other.

As far as these people's 'parents generation' is concerned, Anderson has pointed out that 'typical' people born in 1921 (aged 64 in 1985 when my research was conducted) would have been 41 by the time their father died and 47 when their mother died. He adds that:

TABLE 3.5: Household Type by Age

Household members: household type by age

All persons

Great Britain: 1984

Household type	Age								
	16-24	25-29	30-44	45-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75 and over	All
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Youngest person aged 0-4	15	42	26	3	1	1	1	0	21
Youngest person aged 5-15	24	10	46	19	2	2	1	2	30
2 adults aged 16-59	15	26	12	26	-	-	-	-	10
3 or more adults	42	13	9	35	19	11	8	8	16
2 adults, 1 or both aged 60 or over	1	1	2	9	60	61	59	43	13
1 adult only	3	8	5	8	18	24	32	47	9

(Source: OPCS, 1984, General Household Survey: table 3.19, p. 19)

Table 3.6: Housing Tenure by Age

Heads of Household — Great Britain: 1984

	Tenure						
	Owner occupiers		Renters				Total
	Outright owners	Mort-gagors	With job/ business	Local authority/ New Town	Housing Association/ co-operative	Private	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Age							
Under 25	0	4	14	5	10	24	5
25-29	1	13	15	6	13	15	8
30-44	8	51	33	19	20	15	27
45-64	39	32	30	32	20	17	32
65-74	30	1	4	21	20	15	16
75 and over	22	0	3	16	18	14	12
Base = 100%							

"It is a strange irony that the first generation of whom the majority can, as a result of the spread of owner occupancy (of housing), expect to receive a major inheritance, will have to wait to receive that inheritance not merely long after they have had to establish their own households and bring up their children, but actually after most of their children are themselves married. This is a modern pattern which has, in historical terms, arisen very recently indeed".

(Anderson, 1985: 76).

Although inheritance of this kind will be more significant for people younger than my chosen 50-70 age range, they are likely to have experienced the recent death of their parents and the possibility of a major inheritance.

Indeed, the chronic illness of aging parents - most probably elderly mothers - is another possibility. Research commissioned by the DHSS into carers of 255 elderly mentally infirm people showed that 72 per cent were aged over 50 (Charlesworth, Wilkin and Durie, 1984: 12). It is well documented that it is generally women who become liable for both performing and receiving this kind of care (Phillipson, 1981; Finch and Groves, 1980, 1982, 1983).

b. Employment

Unfortunately, the most thorough and detailed biographical analysis of women's employment - the Women and Employment Survey - did not investigate patterns around the final departure from the labour market, since the sample did not include women aged over 59. This is disappointing because employment in general, and women's employment in particular, is notoriously difficult to establish through 'official statistics' since it is well known

that the definition of what is and what is not to be counted as employment is by no means universally agreed upon. Nevertheless, economic activity rates do give a picture of at least some kinds of employment disruption, albeit the full and accurate picture is likely to be obscured. Tables 3.7 and 3.8 below show economic activity rates for women and men in 1971 and 1981.

For men, economic activity is proportionately lower in the older age groups. In 1981, this begins in the band 60-64 and is consolidated at 65-69, reflecting the statutory retirement age for men. In 1971 the proportions economically active were slightly higher in the older age groups, reflecting the increasing tendency towards early retirement in more recent years. In 1981 the vast majority of those aged over 65 are in fact retired. For women the picture is rather different. The earliest age at which proportionately fewer women are economically active is 55-59, although this is consolidated rather more dramatically at 60-64, reflecting women's statutory retirement age. However, by comparison with men, women are much less likely to be retired, the majority being categorised as 'other' including, for example, looking after the home. There is a similar, although not as striking, pattern of difference between the 1971 and 1981 figures for women.

Even at this crudest level of economic activity rates we can see that the final ending of employment is not always entirely straightforward however, with categories like 'permanently' sick assuming some importance in age groups immediately preceding the statutory retirement age. Indeed, Parker's work on men's work

TABLE 3.7: Economic Activity by Age (Males)

Great Britain 1981

	AGE						
	40-44 %	45-49 %	50-54 %	55-59 %	60-64 %	65-69 %	70-74 %
Economically Active (1971)	98 (98)	97 (98)	95 (97)	91 (95)	75 (87)	17 (31).	10 (11)
Full-time	88	88	86	81	60	7	3
Part-time	< 1	< 1	< 1	1	3	10	7
Out of employment	9	8	8	9	12	< 1	< 1
Econ mically Inactive 19 1	2 (2)	3 (2)	5 (3)	9 (5)	25 (13)	82 (69)	90 (89)
Retired	< 1	< 1	< 1	2	14	79	87
Student	< 1	< 1	< 1	nil	nil	nil	nil
Permanently sick	2	2	4	6	11	3	2
Other	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 1	< 1	1
ALL	1 0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

< - less than

Source: PCS 19 1) Census, Economic Activity Report Part I.

Table 3.8: Economic Activity By Age Females)

Great Britain 1981

	AGE						
	40-44 %	45-49 %	50-54 %	55-59 %	60-64 %	65-69 %	70-74 %
Economically Active 1971	69 (60)	69 (62)	64 (59)	52 (51)	22 (28)	8 (13)	3 (3)
Full-time	33	35	33	26	8	2	< 1
Part-time	33	31	28	25	14	6	2
Out of employment	3	3	3	3	< 1	< 1	< 1
Economically Inactive (1971)	31 (40)	31 (38)	36 (41)	48 (49)	78 (72)	92 (87	97 (97)
Retired	< 1	< 1	< 1	2	20	27	28
Student	< 1	< 1	< 1	nil	nil	nil	nil
Permanently sick	1	2	2	4	3	2	2
Other	30	29	34	42	55	63	67
ALL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

< = less than

Source:OPCS (1981) Census, Economic Activity Report Part I.

and retirement shows that the end of employment often comes sooner than expected, increasingly with early retirement or with either unemployment or redundancy which for older men tends to be final, or most often with 'permanent sickness' which turns into retirement (Parker, 1980; 1982; Jackson, 1984; Townsend, 1979). There is however some continuing full-time and part-time economic activity after the statutory retirement ages for both men and women and Parker's work shows that some of this at least is 'post main life's employment'. The precise definition of retirement is therefore rather slippery.

Less is known about the situation for women. Of course the statutory retirement age for them is 5 years earlier than for men at age 60. As Martin and Roberts point out in the Women and Employment survey, for men, employment until recent years has been fairly constant over the life course, that is, as Anderson noted, men started work at a young age after leaving school and remained in continuous full-time employment until retirement. For women the situation has been very different and has changed markedly this century. In 1921 only around 10 per cent of women aged 45-54 were economically active, compared to nearly 70 per cent in 1981 (Beechey, 1986: 81). Martin and Roberts show that women currently aged 55-59 have spent just over a quarter of their lifetimes since leaving school in paid work. What this means is that women in the broad range 50-70 are likely to be among the first married women this century to be experiencing the move from formal paid work to retirement in later life on any significant scale.

One of the most fundamental employment associated disruptions in later life is the sudden and marked decrease in income (A. Hunt, 1978). Although it has been shown that the disposable income for people over pension age has tripled since the 1950s, their income per head is only 70 per cent of non-pensioners (Fiegehen, 1986).

Table 3.9 below shows differences in gross weekly pay between manual and non-manual women and men, showing a definite hierarchy of privilege. Non-manual men are the highest in this hierarchy in the older age groups, followed by manual men, then full-time non-manual women, full-time manual women, part-time non-manual women and finally part-time manual women. There is also a clear tendency for men and women aged over 50 to earn less than those aged 40-49.

What is more, the concentration of women and men in particular employment sectors through occupational segregation remains salient for older workers. However, Parker has noted that:

> "As compared with main life jobs, proportionately more post-main life jobs were as junior non-manual and unskilled manual workers, and proportionately fewer as skilled and semi-skilled manual workers. Particular occupations which were more likely to be post main-life work than main life work included clerks/cashiers and charwomen/cleaners (sic), and the industries involved were likely to be services and distributive trades".
>
> (Parker, 1980: 36)

This indicates a very slight movement of men into services and distribution.

Despite the 'snapshot' nature of much of these kind of data,

Table 3.9: Gross Weekly Earnings of Women and Men, 1986

Age	Females				Males	
	Full-time		Part-time		(Full-time only)	
	Manual	Non-Manual	Manual	Non-Manual	Manual	Non-Manual
21-24	104.4	122.8	44.9	-	151.4	156.7
25-29	114.7	152.0	42.8	57.8	169.1	205.7
30-39	111.5	164.6	42.7	60.6	188.3	258.6
40-49	111.9	159.7	46.1	65.7	188.4	283.4
50-59	107.7	155.7	46.5	62.3	174.9	268.1
60-64	101.8	138.1	40.9	55.5	161.1	229.6
ALL	105.8	134.7	44.5	60.4	170.7	241.8

(Adapted from Department of Employment 1986 New Earnings Survey, Parts A and F)

taken as a whole they do tell us something about the current social patterns and contours of life for the 50 to 70s. For example, most married couples in this age range are likely to be long-married. Most of them will probably witness the marriage and departure of their children, and the birth of grandchildren when they are approximately between 50 and 70 years old. For most of them this will mean they are left alone in their households which they will either now own outright or rent through the local authority. They may receive an inheritance, and will almost certainly suffer a decrease in income associated with the departure of one or both of them from the labour market. Of course, as Murphy has warned, we must not expect that these types of transitions will happen to everyone, and in the same sequence. We certainly cannot read that off from these kinds of data. They are major life events and changes which may occur at different times, in differing numbers and constellations to different people. What this kind of analysis does tell us, though, is that a sample drawn from married people in this particular age range is likely to yield people who have experience of some of these disruptions.

I want to argue that these events have the status of <u>disruptions</u> precisely because of their disruptive potential for the dialectical process identified earlier. Even though, as noted, this has been worked out in the context of the marriages of those currently aged under 50, it gives an appreciation of the sorts of structural and social conditions which help to produce inequality through those marriages, and is in that sense a research tool. We saw that employment and childcare were important themes of the

dialectic and we can see now that simply at the level of what is happening in those areas there are disruptions: people are leaving the labour market or changing their position within it in a fairly fundamental way; children have grown up and are leaving the parental home. The unemployment studies sought to examine what happened to the dialectic in the light of the structural change of male unemployment. I wish to argue that the current constellation of these disruptions within the age range of 50 to 70 provides the opportunity to analyse how the people undergoing or anticipating disruption make sense of it all through their domestic practice and meanings. Whether the 'outcome' is change or continuity, the processes merit investigation.

3. Gender Divisions and the 50-70s: some key dimensions

Given the arguments about the three dimensions of time, it is important to establish how much is known about gender divisions in the lives of people currently aged 50 to 70, so that we can get an idea of the current nature at least of structural inequalities between those men and women. Clearly this is a necessary prelude to charting the links between public and private gender divisions.

a. Divisions and Inequalities in Marriage

In fact there is very little known about the gender relations of married couples who are currently in later life, and especially about inequality between husbands and wives and this would perhaps be reason enough to study marriage and the 50 to 70's. Townsend's important study of the family lives of old people is

now 30 years old. What is more, he focused on rather older people, and did not address gender inequalities in any systematic way (Townsend, 1957). Quite simply, the charting of the dialectic has not been extended to couples who are aged over 50, except perhaps implicitly by commentators who assume or suggest that inequality might decrease because women no longer have the burden of childcare nor men the "legitimate excuse" of breadwinning, within the dynamics of their domestic relationship (Collins, 1985). For example, Gillespie has asserted that:

"As a woman's children grow up, she gradually regains some power within the family"

(Gillespie, 1972: 145)

Of course this might well be the case, but it cannot be assessed using the mechanisms for understanding inequalities of power in younger married couples, and by observing that some of the central components are no longer present in the lives of older married couples. Indeed, in Gillespie's account there is no evidence for this other than assumptions made about the absence of childcare in older women's lives. This helps to illustrate the danger of generalising so forcefully from the components of the young marrieds' dialectic: the unspoken assumption is that once apparently crucial components of the process (for example male employment, female childcare) disappear then so too will the inequality.

Some, mainly American, studies have focused on 'couple satisfaction' and morale in later life, or indeed on the division

of household tasks. The 'satisfaction studies' variously find that the quality of marriage declines, or increases, or stays the same, in later life (see Anderson, et al, 1983; Orthner, 1975; Roberts and Roberts, 1980; Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Hicks and Platt, 1970; Deutscher, 1959, 1964; Gleen, 1975, Brubaker, 1985; Keating-Groen, 1977; Keating and Cole, 1980; Keith, 1982; Kerckhoff, 1964, Riddick, 1982; Richard, Livson and Peterson, 1968; Pfeiffer and Davis, 1983). Variations are probably due to the highly dubious methods and measures used to ascertain quality of life and relationship in large samples. These tend to rely on a-structural and supposedely objective 'measures' of couple satisfaction and morale, elicited through quantitative research where the meanings of such terms are taken as singular and unproblematic, and where inequality between spouses is either not considered as a possibility or not investigated with any thoroughness.

As far as the research evidence on the division of household tasks is concerned, there are again inadequacies because the assumption is generally that the counting of tasks alone is a meaningful measure of equality. Generally, the studies reveal little change in traditional divisions of household tasks (Szinovacz, 1980; Brubaker and Hennon, 1982; Dobson, 1983; Brubaker, 1985; Keating and Cole, 1980; Keating-Groen, 1977; Plonk and Pulley, 1977).

The main criticism of this type of work is that it fails to take account of the kinds of articulations between public and private inequalities of gender discussed in the preceeding chapters, or

to suggest what kinds of *substitutions or changes occur in this* area in later life.

Some of the studies already mentioned in earlier chapters have cast a cursory glance to 'life cycle considerations', but these invariably refer to stages in the employment 'cycle' which precede retirement and old age, and in the domestic 'cycle' which preceed the departure of offspring from the parental home. Harris has noted that one problem with the concept of 'the life cycle' is that it implies that the increasing number of years couples spend alone together after their children have left home form some kind of amorphous and undifferentiated block of time (Harris,1986). There is certainly a danger that sociological analysis itself might perpetuate this notion; it is difficult to find published social statistics which give a thorough breakdown of people aged between 50 and 70 for example, because the over 65s for men, and 60s for women, tend to be classed in one lump called 'the elderly'. Despite Anderson's observations documented above that a new age group or slot in the 'life cycle' is appearing - that is those who are older than 'middle age' but younger than 'elderly', and who are caught in the middle of kin groups by having elderly parents and adult children (see Eversley, 1982; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1977; Fogarty, 1975), many recent sociological analyses have failed to distinguish them. For example the important and systematic studies mentioned in chapter one of women's work over the 'lifetime' at home and outside stop at age 50 or 60 (Martin and Roberts, 1984; Dex, 1984; Yeandle, 1984). If little else is said it certainly could appear that sociologists believe nothing much happens after that

age despite the old commonsense adage that 'women never retire'.

Some quantitative studies of family and household have included married people aged over 50 in their respondents. However, aside for 'controlling for age' on various responses they have generally failed to analyse the dynamics of gender between older married men and women or indeed to discuss any differences in marriage between older and younger couples. An important exception to this is the recent study by Pahl and Wallace of households and work on the Isle of Sheppey. They included respondents aged over 50 in their large structured questionnaire survey, asking questions about whom within or outside the household performed various of 41 household and domestic tasks. From the responses received Pahl is able to show that older men are more likely to perform more domestic tasks than younger ones (Pahl, 1984). However, we cannot know the relational context of this, that is, the meaning and significance of this practice in relation to other marital practices past and present, and to the dynamics of power and control operating between the husbands and wives. Also, of course, it provides a cumulation of snapshots rather than longitudinal data, and hence does not tell us about the negotiation of biographical change. Hence although this should alert us to the likelihood of differences between the current marriage relations of younger and older people, we cannot hold it up as unambiguous evidence of a move to greater equality within marriages in later life.

b. Retirement and 'workending'

Of course we might assume that inequalities between older men and

women will be picked up by the retirement studies, but unfortunately most of the work done on retirement has been on men, with little systematic concern for the relational aspects of retirement between men and women (see eg Parker, 1980, 1982; Lazco, 1986; Guillemard, 1982, 1985). The very concept of retirement has been constructed in relation to men's experience of employment and its cessation, often without considering the possibility that this may not translate easily into women's experience. What is more there has been a tendency for the results of studies of men's retirement to be used to make generalisations about retirement per se, qualified sometimes only by a footnote about the different retirement ages of men and women. This means that women's experience has become either invisible within discussions of the retirement of <u>people</u> who are in reality <u>men</u>, or considered to be unrelated to the issue of retirement (Szinovacz, 1982; Beeson, 1976).

Some recent and continuing research has attempted to redress this by focusing on the process of "workending" of men <u>and</u> women (Schuller, 1986; Birchall, 1986). This is more useful, not least because it attempts to get round the restrictive definition of the end of work as formal, pensionable retirement. However, the problem remains that there is still a dearth of material which recognises that workending is likely to mean entirely different things for men and women, because <u>work</u> itself has been shown to mean entirely different things for them given their different responsibilities and the relationship of domination and subordination in which those responsibilities are constructed. We cannot simply assume that we can <u>include</u> women in surveys

whose questions are structured by male experience, or "add women and stir" (Adam, 1986). Rather we must consider whether the same structured questions and frames of reference are really appropriate to the experiences of, and dynamics between, men and women. Indeed, what little material on women's retirement there is suggests that the assumptions of the male-retirement studies, that retiring women become happily reimmersed in domesticity and in nurturing retired husbands, hence suffering none of the "disengagement" problems of men whose social contacts tend to cease with their employment (Atchley, 1976, 1982; Parker, 1980, 1982) are patently inaccurate. There is evidence that women do not uniformly look forward with eager anticipation to retirement. Their reluctance has in part been attributed to their limited eligibility for occupational pensions (Dex and Phillipson, 1986; Jacobson, 1974; Scinovacz, 1982; Beeson, 1976).

This is supported by the growing evidence that women's responsibility for domestic servicing is a central component of gender inequality, and that employment for younger women, as well as performing a vital economic function, is an escape (albeit a temporary one) from the oppression and social isolation of domesticity (Hobson, 1978; Oakley, 1974; Coyle, 1984). As Coyle argues in her study of the experience of unemployed women:

"Out-of-work women experience many of the problems that men experience. Women do still have household labour, but they are used to <u>combining</u> it with paid employment..Unemployment for women is often experienced as a crisis of autonomy, as a loss of independence, and here women's domestic role is no compensation. On the contrary, work for women has been their <u>route out</u> of domestic and financial dependence."

(Coyle, 1984: 118-121)

But in a relationship of inequality, the "disengagement" of a husband as described below by Parker, as well as expressing a loss of public role for men, might have more profound implications for the responsibilities of his wife than merely providing her with a new opportunity to nurture him as, for example, Keating and Cole (1980) suggest:

"Comparing the life of the retiree with that of the older worker, we are aware of how little extra seems to be put in the place of work. Though retired men are free to go out and about in the daytime, housebound activities claim twice as much of their interests as outside ones. However, men in the pre-retirement group, though going out daily to work, take a higher proportion of their pleasures outside the home"

(Parker, 1982: 144)

Indeed, one study found that older women are more likely to be encouraged to continue in employment by economic incentive, whereas men put more value on leisure in later life (Zabalza et al, 1980). This may well be related to the gendered construction of home based leisure, and women's responsibility to facilitate men's leisure.

I think we can infer two main points from this male-oriented work, neither of which tell us directly about marriage relations, and inequalities constructed through them. The first is that retirement continues to be seen publicly as an issue and a problem for men, and for male status. The reverse is not true: it is not an issue of public concern for women. The second is that the nature of the problem is seen to be chiefly one of managing one's time and remaining active on a reduced income

(Phillipson, 1987). There is an absence of analytically compelling investigation, for example of the shifting boundaries between public and private spheres, between power and control in the home and outside it, and so on.

c. Pensions and the dependence of 'the elderly'

Writers like Phillipson, Townsend, and Walker in Britain, and Guillemard in France, have done important work in showing how poverty and dependency in old age are socially constructed through pensions and retirement legislation and ideologies (Walker, 1980; 1986; Townsend, 1957, 1979, 1986; Guillemard, 1983, 1986; Fennell, Phillipson and Wenger, 1983; Phillipson, 1982; 1986). Phillipson's work, for example, has charted the coincidence of peaks and troughs in economy and retirement policies. Thus in periods of recession like the present, private capital and state initiatives combine to attempt to remove elderly people from the labour force, whereas in periods of growth such as the 1950's the reverse is the case (Phillipson, 1982). Walker has argued that since 1980 in Britain a series of measures designed to reduce the proportion of money going to the elderly have been introduced, such as the substitution of the prices index for the earnings index in uprating entitlements, and the government plans to abolish SERPS (state earnings related pensions scheme) which were abandoned in the face of a public outcry led by the CBI and the major private pension funds. He claims that this action is ideological as well as economic: notions of dependency and austerity are being socially constructed within our public policy (Walker, 1986). Largely because of measures such as these, elderly people experience a

fundamental change in their societal position in their later lifetimes, expressed mainly through a loss of social power vis a vis younger people (Elias, 1985).

These findings are important because if elderly men lose social power and if aging people become an ungendered mass of 'elderly' as far as inequality is concerned, dependent on public money, then surely gender divisions become less obvious and significant too. However, there is a body of research which indicates that gender is an important line of stratification amongst elderly people. Finch and Groves, for example, argue that to treat the 'elderly' as a genderless group:

"Obscures not only the fact that the majority of the elderly (especially the very elderly) are women, but also that the prospects for one's lifestyle in old age are very different for men and for women, and different between women according to marital status"

(Finch and Groves, 1985: 96)

There are clear divisions written into legislation, such as the younger state retirement age of 60 for women and 65 for men. It has been argued that this means that married women's economic dependence on their husbands is likely to be accentuated at the same time as the notion that their employment lives are less fundamental than men's, hence allowed to terminate earlier, is publicly legitimated (EOC, 1978). Only recently has this begun to be challenged in the European Court. The underlying assumption continues to be that women's real jobs are at home. Ironically, this has become tangled up with an increasingly popular view that the retirement age for men should be lowered to 60 also (Jackson,

1984), and any argument that earlier retirement for women perpetuates their economic dependence easily becomes lost in moralistic debates about how long it is fair to expect men to work over their lifetimes.

Indeed, we are beginning to know the extent of women's economic disadvantage vis a vis men in old age. As Peace explains:

"In the hierarchy of financial security elderly couples fare better than lone men, who fare better than lone women, and amongst older women it is the older widow who fares worst of all". (Peace, 1986: 75)

We know that women who have been disadvantaged all their lives in employment rarely, at the age of 50 or 60, have the opportunity to reverse that situation. In fact it is precisely at that time, with accumulated disadvantages, that women would find economic independence most difficult to achieve. Women who have taken time away from employment to be full time mothers tend to be downwardly mobile on their return to the labour market (Martin and Roberts, 198 ; Evans, 1984; Joshi, 1984). So we might expect a similar picture as far as pensions are concerned. Indeed, recent research has documented how until very recently state retirement pensions have been based on the notion of a lifetime's employment, and have written in married women who stay at home to look after children as their husband's dependents (Groves, 1983; Masson, 1985; O'Rand and Henretta, 1982). For similar reasons, women have been disadvantaged in or excluded from occupational pensions schemes. Groves argues that ironically the roles of breadwinner and dependent housewife have become even more

entrenched through "the absence of general provision for widowers in state, public occupational and many private occupational pension schemes" (Groves, 1983: 59). She goes on to chart the 'league table' of women's pension rights:

"There is no doubt that the front runners in the Female Retirement Pension Stakes are that very small minority of women who manage to combine a substantial retirement pension based on their own earnings with continuing marriage to a husband whose own substantial benefits include maximum widow's benefit. Indeed, the ultimate winners must surely be those women who precede the above scenario by serial marriage to husbands who conveniently predecease them, leaving each time an excellent widow's pension not subject to remarriage or cohabitation rules. Straggling across the post come those unmarried women with little or no contributory record of their own and no entitlement to survivors' benefits. The consolation prizes in this case are means-tested 'supplementary pensions', subject to the cohabitation rule"

(Groves, 1983: 60)

So for women, social inequalities accumulated over the lifetime are particularly difficult to eschew at the age of 50, 60 or 70, and they are related both to previous employment history and to former marital status (Finch and Groves, 1985). Townsend, in his major study of poverty, found that four fifths of his sample of over 65s were living at or near supplementary benefit level, and that most of these were women. He explained that:

"Through the institution of marriage, women are both deprived of male privileges to certain individual rights to income, and entitled to a share of the financial prerogatives of men. After reaching pensionable age, some married women are cushioned from falling into poverty. Those whose husbands have already died or become separated from them, or whose husbands subsequently do so, are exposed to greater risks of both social isolation and financial loss".

(Townsend, 1979: 811)

Thus for women who have been married and economically dependent, at least to some extent, on their husbands, the safest bet and probably only viable option in financial terms is to remain married and indeed economically dependent in later life, but then probably become poor when their husbands die. However, observations based on household income tell us nothing of inequalities in the control and distribution of resources within households, so that we do not know that such women are not poor even while their husbands are alive (Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Glendinning and Millar, 1987).

d. Leisure and Sociability

Much of the literature on leisure and sociability in later life again focuses on 'the elderly' as an ungendered amorphous mass aged over 65, and is full of prescriptions about the merits of remaining active outside the home, and descriptions of how the majority of elderly people do not do so (Pfeiffer and Davis, 1971; also see Long and Wimbush, 1979 for a review, and Long, 1979). There is little recognition that leisure and time might have different meanings and entail different responsibilities for men and women, and that meanings and practice might be couched in an unequal gendered relationship.

There is however a small but developing literature which does confront these issues. Deem for example devotes a few pages in her recent book to the leisure of women in their sixties and seventies. She points out that there is a remarkable variation within this age range in terms of leisure:

"..whilst some women, particularly those still in their sixties, are very active, in a variety of clubs and organisations, bingo, evening and day classes and in-home interests, others are very socially isolated, have little money, are in poor health and have few interests of any kind, and ironically have far too much 'leisure time', which they are totally unable to fill. Once women are sixty they are eligible for OAP activities. Although some women hate the image that these often have..others are appreciative of what they offer".

(Deem, 1986: 130)

But what is most interesting about Deem's account is her observation that past aspects of gender inequality play a role in the current leisure practice of older women:

"It is often at this point in their lives that women begin to reap the consequences of a lifetime of playing subordinate roles. Low-paid employment, part-time jobs with no pension entitlement, motherhood of declining significance except vicariously through grandchildren, men dying earlier than women, lack of experience in being independent and fending for themselves, poor health; all contribute to a situation in which many women of over sixty have few resources (both financial and otherwise) with which to enjoy themselves...The ways in which male control over public places operates is such that it continues to be a major constraint for most women all their lives; also older women are often frail and feel more vulnerable than younger fitter women".

(Deem, 1986: 130)

Deem's account indicates that some older women have a tremendous and rather unexpected capacity for very active leisure pursuits, while others seem hopelessly constrained at home with time on their hands.

Material from other studies (eg Dixey and Talbot, 1982) supports this rather patchy picture of the leisure of older women, indicating as Deem suggests that what married women are able to do within the constraints outlined is likely to depend both on their class and their relationship with their husbands.

Importantly, though, it is recognised that the kinds of formal and informal constraints documented in regard to younger women's leisure do also apply to older women. Furthermore, men over 50 are three times as likely as women of that age to have driving licences (Allan, 1985), thus constraining one avenue of out-of-home activity for older women. What is lacking, unfortunately, is an account of the meaning of time and leisure at home for older women, and how all of this is negotiated within marriage, and related to the leisure of husbands. We can say that in some ways older women are constrained in terms of out-of-home activities vis a vis men, but the dynamics of how this is negotiated, and differences between women are produced, have not been clearly established.

e. Aging and Responsibility for Health

There are, however, other observations we can make about social and structural inequality between older men and women which we might infer, from what we know of the dialectical mechanisms of inequality within the marriages of younger couples, will help to condition the boundaries within which they construct their marriages. For example, there is evidence that women suffer social inequality compared to men in terms of the aging process itself. Increasing numbers of feminist scholars have argued that as a consequence of the sexual objectification of young women and the premium placed on youth in our society, older women become regarded almost as obsolete - having lost everything that women should have - and have to contend with ageism as well as continuing sexism (Macdonald with Rich, 1984; P. Long, 1979; Moss, 1970; Phillipson, 1981). A "double standard" of aging has

been documented: when men age they become 'distinguished', or 'rugged', and the term 'old man' is an amicable one. Conversely when women age they are given 'beauty tips' for preserving a youthful appearance, they are considered sexually ineligible at a younger age than men, they are not supposed to be rugged, are likely to be termed 'old biddy' 'old hag' 'old maid', and the term 'old woman' is a derogatory one when used to describe 'fussy' men. In sum, men are 'allowed to' age where women are supposed to hold on to youth; older men are more often 'allowed to' marry young women but in the relatively rare situation where this is reversed it is at best considered to be peculiar. At worst the morality of the older woman is called into question, or the assumption is that the young man is 'after her money' (Sontag, 1978; Keyworth, 1982; Hemmings, 1985). The kinds of normative timetables alluded to by Anderson earlier are thus clearly gendered.

What this inequality of aging might mean for the construction of inequality through marriage is not entirely clear. However, we might judge that it will increase the social dependence of older women on men or, more particularly for married women, on one man: their husband.

A further important area of research concerning aging is that directed to the assessment of recent government community care initiatives, pointing out that these tend to assume that 'family care' of sick and elderly relatives is the best and cheapest way of looking after certain categories of frail, sick or dependent persons. But underlying all of this is the assumption that women

will be available, or will make themselves available, to do the caring as part of their family health responsibilities. Ungerson has pointed out that we cannot know with any certainty the precise ways in which people react to policies intended to produce a particular effect, but there is a substantial body of evidence which shows that women do perform the bulk of this caring work for whatever reason (Finch and Groves, 1980, 1982, 1983; Finch, 1984b, Ungerson, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1985; Graham, 1983a; Allan, 1983; Walker, 1983; Oliver, 1983).

As we saw earlier, particularly 'at risk' are women in their fifties - more so because of increasing longevity - and these women are increasingly likely to be the daughters, daughters in law, wives and mothers of those needing care. As well as appearing to be an extension of women's responsibility for servicing and caring for the family, this work involves domestic and nursing tasks and skills which are seen as particularly suited to women. Thus if there is caring work to be done we can perhaps understand a little of why - in the context of current economic and social conditions - women and men might both tend to feel that women should do it. The studies reported often give poignant accounts of the conflicting emotions involved in a caring relationship: for example Oliver and Briggs have used carers' own accounts to illustrate the hatred, love, guilt, pity, exhaustion, that carers feel in relation to those they are caring for (Oliver, 1983; Briggs and Oliver, 1985).

Clare Ungerson has attempted to tease out the ideological and material components of the process which creates women as carers

(Ungerson, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1985). She concludes that women feel responsible for caring for close relatives if they know those relatives need care, and would certainly feel guilty about a relative being taken into institutional care. Exactly where the boundaries lie between which relatives a woman will feel responsible for, and how they are constructed, is not entirely clear, although there is work currently being done in this area (3). Ungerson claims that women's domestic and 'nursing' skills are a component in this process, as are taboos against men dealing with dirt and pollution, for example human excreta, and getting involved in intimate bodily touching. Thus, if men are involved in a division of caring labour, they are much more likely to perform tasks like lifting which do not involve intimate touching or nudity. But ideologies such as these are grounded in material conditions, argues Ungerson. "Opportunity costs" mean that, given women's disadvantage in the labour market vis a vis men, it is generally cheaper for them to give up their job than for their husband's to do the same. Of course, if women are at home anyway during the day, it seems all the more obvious that they should do the caring (Ungerson, 1985).

In her most recent study, Ungerson (1987) has shown that women in their middle fifties may well find themselves in a position to be able to take on caring, for example as their children leave home. What is more, she points out that caring can initially seem like a preferable alternative to paid work, or a legitimate excuse to leave employment particularly for women who anticipate or who are undergoing health problems. Given that women do work in mainly part-time employment which is not fully protected, and

therefore are likely to be ineligible for sick pay or appeals against unfair dismissal should they take long periods of time off work on health grounds, Ungerson explains that:

"women in their middle fifties who become ill are particularly vulnerable to 'persuasion' or even enforcement to leave their jobs altogether, just at the point in their life course when they are likely to have elderly kin becoming increasingly frail. Assuming that their husbands continue to work until the men's retirement age of 65, these women will have approximately fifteen years in which they have nothing to do but keep a largely empty house. The opportunity to care for an elderly relative may indeed appear as something of a godsend since it both legitimizes their apparent 'idleness', provides an occupation for their time, and may also, at least initially, offer some companionship in what would otherwise be a rather isolated and potentially boring life".

(Ungerson, 1987: 201)

What is more, women of this age may find themselves caring for sick and aging husbands (Oliver, 1983). Hilary Graham has suggested that we should view this caring work as a specific kind of labour which expresses women's position in a society where the twin forces of patriarchy and capitalism are at work. We can certainly see that this ties in with her notion of women being responsible for the "domestic health service" as outlined in chapter one (Graham, 1985) and also with Ungerson's points about perceptions of opportunity costs. Graham reminds us forcefully of what is a strong theme in all the studies of women carers: that we must not just write this caring work off as though it simply meant 'caring about' people, because the 'caring for' which women do involves hard labour: it is a labour intensive extension of women's responsibility for the health and happiness of family members (Graham, 1983a; Waerness, 1984).

Conclusion

What all of this material taken together tells us is that social inequalities between hubands and wives are not absent in the lives of people aged 50 to 70, but they are different from those currently affecting younger spouses. This is clearly going to be the case, given the extent and nature of the disruptions outlined in the earlier parts of this chapter, and is not surprising, given what a life course approach tells us. As Hareven comments:

> "Underlying a life course approach is the assumption that the family status and position that people experience in later years of life is moulded by their cumulative life history and by the specific historical conditions affecting their lives at earlier times".
>
> (Hareven, 1982: 1)

The biographical and structural disruptions identified open up at least the theoretical possibility of the renegotiation of the gendered relations of marriage, because they concern factors which have a clear salience for inequalities in the marriages of younger people. The social and biographical inequalities outlined will obviously circumscribe such a process of renegotiation, but to what extent and in what ways is largely unkown and cannot be extrapolated from social trends alone.

This means that a study of the everyday marital practices of couples aged between 50 and 70 is important for three main reasons.

(i) For pure investigation. We know very little about them.

(ii) To understand intersections of structure, practice and meaning in negotiations of structural change.

(iii) To shed light on apparently general principles of the construction of inequality through marriage.

The next chapter contains a discussion of the methodology used to conduct my investigation.

Chapter Four : Methodology and Research Design

Introduction

The preceeding chapters have been designed to establish the following four main conceptual points:

(i) The validity of a public-private perspective, that is one which investigates links and boundaries - for the study of the construction of gender inequality through marriage.

(ii) The demonstrated usefulness of this kind of approach in existing research, mainly on people aged under 40 or 50.

(iii) The centrality of key structural (and historical) components in the process of construction of gender inequality in 'young' marriage, and the salience of meaningful practices as ways in which men and women make sense with the social material.

(iv) The possibility presented by disruption in key structural components for the study of the meshing of structure, everyday practice and meaning in the negotiation of change. In theoretical terms, disruption makes possible the renegotiation of gender divisions, but close empirical research is needed to ascertain whether, in what form and under what conditions this occurs.

In this chapter I will outline what kind of research methodology is suggested by these conceptual issues. I will then go on to discuss the research design and process employed in my study.

1. A Qualitative Methodology

Much of the discussion of chapter 3 depended upon secondary analysis of material from large data sets, such as the Census and the General Household Survey. Anderson's work is a shining example of the kinds of sensitive and creative products which such secondary data analysis can yield, and of course these can generally be held up as originating from representative samples. However, a large scale survey involving (necessarily for a postgraduate researcher with very limited resources) tightly structured, possibly precoded questions, cannot adequately address in full the kinds of conceptual issues outlined above. Indeed, these were raised largely, although not entirely, by qualitative research. Considerations of everyday process, negotiation, practice and understanding involving nuance, subtlety, ambiguity and even contradiction cannot be traced without sensitive, flexible and indeed reflexive research tools. They are multi-dimensional issues which must be understood and conceptualised, rather than simply boxed and measured in linear fashion.

I suggested earlier, following Morgan, that research on marriage and gender relations should be concerned with both the 'how' and the 'why': that is, how people construct gendered meanings and practices as aspects of social reality, and why they construct these particular meanings and practices. We can begin to discover the latter by assessing the kinds of constraints, limitations, and opportunities with which different people

operate on an everyday basis, or rather, what social material is available to them. To discover the former we must observe or, where that is not possible, listen closely to accounts of everyday and often 'private' experiences.

This suggests a number of tasks, each with a pedigree, combining in the most general terms in a qualitative approach. Firstly, following certain tenets of ethnomethodology, we need to be able to elicit the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices of everyday life, and to question and deconstruct them in our analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983; Moore, 1972). This means problematising the everyday, and questioning the obvious (Douglas, 1971).

Secondly, and related to this, we need to be able to bring out into the open previously unknown or invisible experiences and understandings, and this is one of the central contributions and concerns of feminist methodology (Bowles and Klein, 1983). Oakley's sociological discovery of housework and the ensuing debate about the invisibility of women's labour, is testament to this, as is the focus of oral historians on lifetime experiences of 'ordinary' people (Thompson, 1981). Where a study is exploratory such as my own, this is clearly highly salient. It means, inter alia, listening to people's own stories and often biographies, rather than simply gauging their responses to our predefined questions (Graham, 1984b; Faraday and Plummer, 1979; Plummer, 1983).

Thirdly, and again related to this, we need to be able to listen to the language and discourse through which people construct meanings and accounts, and this has become a central theme of phenomenology as well as ethnomethodology and feminist methodology (Cicourel, 1973). If we are to investigate and understand everyday meanings, then listening to interviewees' own interpretations and explanations becomes essential.

For these kinds of reasons I combined my earlier, limited, analysis of quantitative material with a small scale qualitative study of wives and husbands. I talked with, listened to, and to a limited extent observed, 36 people through the medium of semi-structured tape recorded interviewing. This technique allows the combination of a degree of interview structure and direction, with a genuine facility for openness and flexibility.

Because a project such as mine is, in part at least, theoretically guided, it is not appropriate to have no interview structure whatsoever. A degree of structure is required for the sociologist to be able to follow through issues which her/his theoretical perspective suggests are likely to be important (and which interviewees might not spontaneously cover) whilst also allowing for and encouraging the emergence of data suggesting a different theory. This is the essence of what Glaser and Strauss have called "the discovery of grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1968). Of course it also provides a legitimate facility for the research to ask questions, most significantly about the obvious, which complete interviewee storytelling does not so readily allow.

2. Research Design and the Research Process

I will divide my description of the research process into sections for convenience and clarity, but wish to emphasise that the divisions do not conform exactly to a chronological chart of sequential stages in the research process. Therefore, although the pilot study came first, and it was in analysing the data it yielded that I was able to formulate ideas about sampling, data collection and analysis, it continued to help inform my decisions throughout. Similarly, data collection in the main study began before the sampling was finished, and analysis took take place in different forms throughout the entire research process.

a. The Pilot Study

In this section I am simply going to outline the mechanics of the pilot study, because evaluative comments will appear under the relevant sections to follow. However, I will follow the description of the procedures involved with an account of the centrality of the pilot study to my methodology.

The pilot study was done in the spring of 1984 and involved one tape-recorded interview with each of seven couples, and one with a woman whose husband did not wish to participate. The couples were interviewed together, and all the interviews took place in the interviewees' own homes, either during the daytime or in the evening. Interviews lasted from between three quarters of an hour to two hours. Interviewees were selected through two methods, neither of which were 'random', since there was no need or

possibility of gaining a 'random' sample of any kind. In the event, half were contacted as a result of colleagues of mine asking their friends and associates if they knew anyone in the appropriate age range who might be willing to participate. With one exception the four couples achieved in this way were not actually known to me, or to my colleagues. I felt it sensible to keep such a distance for confidentiality purposes. The other four were achieved through the electoral register from four Canterbury Wards in a method which I will discuss more fully in the next section. All the interviewees lived in the Canterbury area, were married, and aged between 55 and 65. I tried to achieve couples in a diversity of class positions, rather than imposing any rigid control in my selection.

I took a rough schedule listing topics I wanted to address and some specific questions I wanted to ask to the first interview. Topics included very brief biographical details and personal characteristics, the division of household and other labour, leisure, sociability, and relationships with kin. My reading of studies of younger marriage had indicated that these topics might be fruitful. The schedule was revised for the second, and third, and all the subsequent interviews and was not in any case rigidly followed. I told all the couples that it would be helpful to me if they could talk generally about the topics and about marriage as this was an early stage in my research, and of course they knew much more about the experience of married life in their age 'group' than I did.

I made fieldnotes about method, technique, nonverbal behaviour,

and notes towards preliminary analysis throughout. Subsequently I transcribed all of the interview tapes in full, developed analytical categories and crude (later to be revised) methods of cross referencing, and wrote a report on the division of domestic labour of the couples (Mason, 1985).

A pilot study was a necessary part of my methodology for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was important to develop the skills of interviewing and analysis, and also of selection procedures, in which I had virtually no experience. Reflexive or "creative interviewing", as Douglas has termed it (Douglas, 1985), demands that the researcher is not only able to ask questions, but also to listen, to analyse in a preliminary fashion on the spot, to ask subsequent relevant questions, to put the interviewee at their ease and create a non-threatening situation and so on. I felt it was important to gain some practice in these skills. Similarly, the analysis and writing up of qualitative data is a formidable and challenging task, and I wanted to ensure that I gained some experience of this by the time I began to write up the main study fieldwork.

But aside from the development of research skills I wanted to use the pilot study to test out some of my informed preconceptions about inequality within marriage, that is to see what types of question would make sense to interviewees, what types of topics would be important to discuss, whether interviewees felt I had asked the 'right' or 'wrong' questions, whether it was feasible and productive to interview couples jointly or separately, and so on. As Schwartz and Jacobs have pointed out:

"Your preconceptions give you things to do and ask immediately. On the other hand, they are not firm research orientations. They are used in order to be abandoned and are invoked only to help find aspects of others' lives that confirm, deny, or transcend your initial preconceptions".

(Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979: 28)

However, I felt it was important not simply to regard the pilot study as a 'practice run' which would then be formally separable from the 'main event'. It was a separate activity, and it was executed, analysed and written up in a report before the main study took place, but aspects other than experience were carried over. For example, some of the themes and categories developed in the analysis of the pilot study data proved useful in the main study, particularly those surrounding the issue of 'fairness' which is developed in chapter 8. Furthermore, five of the couples who took part in the pilot study also took part in the main study a year later (1). This means that data from their 'pilot' interviews is formally used in the analysis presented here, and I had the additional advantage of observing change and continuity in between the pilot interview and the others, so I gained a rather more detailed and fluid picture than I otherwise might have done.

My unwillingness to separate off one 'stage' of the research process such as the pilot study, from other 'stages' was a reflection of a more overarching strategy which forms part of Glaser and Strauss' style of discovering grounded theory. Although I had theoretical preconceptions, I wanted my theories to be driven by data as well, rather than merely being tested on

data. This means writing reflexiveness into the research process, that is, plenty of facility for modification, reflection, reassessment and so on, in the light of the emerging data. Put another way, it prioritises the making of informed (by both data and theory) decisions throughout the *entire process*, and the possibility of changing strategy in the light of them. This allows a cumulative sharpening of conceptual focus and the "double-fitting" of data and theory (Baldamus, 1972) in what is essentially a continuously creative exercise.

It is important to stress these issues because they mean that questions of research design are not necessarily best decided all at once before data collection begins. This kind of point can perhaps most fruitfully be illustrated by a discussion of my sampling practice in the main study.

b. Sampling

(i) Theoretical Sampling and Analytic Induction

I learned very quickly from the pilot study that the methods I was proposing to use had an inherent facility for generating huge quantities of data, and given that I felt that depth was an essential component of the method, I realised I would have to keep my sample size small. There would, I felt, be an optimimum number which one researcher working alone could handle and beyond which depth of analysis would risk becoming sacrificed for breadth of sample. I decided it would be inappropriate to sacrifice depth for breadth in this way, because it would jeopardise the validity of the analysis of what were likely to be complex processes.

I had decided that the underlying logic of my method must be analytic rather than enumerative induction. Znaniecki explained what this distinction meant many years ago:

> "Enumerative induction abstracts by generalisation, whereas analytic induction generalises by abstracting. The former looks in many cases for characters that are similar and abstracts them conceptually because of their generality, presuming that they must be essential to each particular case; the latter abstracts from the given concrete case characteristics that are essential to it and generalises them, presuming that insofar as they are essential, they must be similar in many cases".
>
> (Znaniecki, 1934: 250-251)

The issue here is really one of the merits of representativeness versus validity. Thus I knew that in order to gain valid data I could not undertake research with a sample statistically representative of the general population because the small numbers would make any such claims a nonsense. The sample, therefore, could only be representative of itself and indeed would be better called a study group. What instead I had to try to achieve from my analysis of that study group was the identification of themes or processes which might themselves be more generalisable because their mechanisms and components would be systematically documented. This is the essence of validity of process.

One way of doing this is to ensure a diversity within the study group of characteristics which the theoretical perspective (including continually data-driven theory) indicates might have some bearing on the process being investigated. Of course, this

kind of theoretical sampling had been at the basis of my decision to select from the 50 to 70 age range in itself. Instead of following the logic, for example, of identifying at the outset two groups of 50 to 70 year olds with specific characteristics and making comparisons between them, I decided to include in my study group people with a diversity of characteristics. By looking at the differences and similarities within the group I hoped then to be able to say something about the variable dimensions of processes common to all of them. The logic is thus that variation helps to throw into relief the differential mechanisms of common processes. Glaser and Strauss, in their discussion of theoretical sampling, make a similar point:

"Maximising differences among comparison groups increases the probability that the researcher will collect different and varied data bearing on a category while yet finding strategic similarities among the group".

(Glaser and Strauss, 1968: 55)

They go on to argue for a strategy of 'ongoing inclusion' whereby a wide range of groups, or types, can be included as the sampling continues with the purpose of developing the "properties of categories" (p. 51). Of course this is not the same as saying that diversity produces a representative range of characteristics or experiences.

What this meant in practice for me was that I began sampling in the knowledge that I wanted to ensure diversity on characteristics like social class, occupation, current economic status, family size and geographical location, household size, residence - ie tenure and location, marital status - ie married,

or remarried, length of marriage and so on. But precise decisions about relevant issues, and which to include, were made as I went along, in the knowledge of what I already had and what else might produce variation.

Also, of course, there are practical limits on the numbers of characteristics a researcher can manageably include, and decisions which may of course be regretted later have to be made in the research process (2). Practical limits are in part determined by sampling strategy; that is, it is not always (or rarely is it) possible to know in advance the characteristics of members of a sampling frame. I debated the idea of doing a fairly large number of short interviews designed to elicit information of people's social characteristics, so that I could use this at a later stage as a sampling frame. In the event I decided that this would be too costly in terms of interviewees' and my own time, although it was a strategy which I did not reject until I was over half way through the sampling; that is, I could have used it at a later stage to fill gaps. I decided to use the same two methods of selection used in the pilot study. Selecting via personal contact, and indeed selection from the pilot study interviewees, would at least mean that I might know in advance some of the characteristics of potential interviewees, even though - with a limited number of willing personal contacts - it would be more difficult to target particular characteristics. I selected six of the 18 couples in this way, and I did attempt to do so in the light of omissions I felt were created by the electoral register sampling method (3). Pragmatically, then, this was a rather more rough and ready

operationalisation of theoretical sampling than the text book ideal, but it was conceptually guided in a way that, for example, the random sampling of 18 couples could not have been. (Appendix A provides a fuller discussion of the sampling methods and procedure).

The eventual determination of a study group size was also part of this process. Bertaux in his study of French artisanal bakery has argued that we need only 'sample' as many lives as are necessary to illustrate the processes we seek to understand, and that we cannot know in advance how many that will be:

> "The first life story taught us a great deal; so did the second and third. By the fifteenth we had begun to understand the pattern of sociostructural relations which makes up the life of a bakery worker. By the twenty-fifth, adding the knowledge we had from life stories of bakers, we knew we had it: a clear picture of this structural pattern and of its recent transformations. New life stories only confirmed what we had understood, adding slight individual variations. We stopped at thirty: there was no point going further. We knew already what we wanted to know"
>
> (Bertaux, 1981: 37)

Bertaux calls this process the "saturation of knowledge" (p. 37). I will not claim to have discovered everything I 'wanted to know' by the time I finished sampling, but I did consider that I had evidence of certain processes and negotiations. I think we need also to add to the idea of the saturation of knowledge the logic of analytic induction to explain my arguments about including diversity in the study group. One of the primary rules of analytic induction is that we should proceed to the point where we feel we have some idea about the mechanisms of the processes we seek to examine, and then we should look for negative

instances. Hughes explains that analytic induction is:

"a strategy which calls for the investigator to search deliberately for instances that negate his (sic) hypothesis and, using these, to refine the hypothesis further...In practice, the process of analytic induction proceeds by formulating a rather vague generalisation and then revising it in the light of contrary evidence, so that there is a continual process of redefinition, hypothesis testing, and a search for negative cases until a point is reached where a universal relationship can with some confidence be established"

(Hughes, 1976: 128)

A study group size of 18 couples combined pragmatism - that is a manageable sample size - with these kinds of considerations.

The procedure described here starts with sampling but clearly continues throughout the research process into the final stages of analysis, and I will return to this discussion again in the 'analysis' section below.

(ii) A Note on Response and Non-response

The response rate in the main fieldwork study was 50 per cent, and none of the personal contacts refused or did not participate. In order to obtain eighteen couples, in other words, I had to approach 35. Out of the 17 non-responses, 14 were refusals. Two of these were by letter in response to my introductory letter (see appendix B) which in fact did not require a response but said I would be calling shortly to explain more about the study and to fix an appointment if the couple were willing to partipate. The letters, then, were to tell me not to call. The remainder were doorstep refusals, most people politely saying "no thank you very much", or that they were too busy, and some making

comments like "I don't know much about family life". Nine of the refusals were articulated by men, and 5 by women. Of this latter figure, three women explained that they would have been willing to help, but their husbands had refused. In two cases wives had arranged appointments with me to visit them and their husbands, but when I arrived in both cases the wife stepped out onto the doorstep (out of her husband's hearing) and told me in lowered tones that he had refused to take part. In the words of one of them: "I'm sorry to drag you back, but my husband won't approve of it. He says no. I'm sorry".

There is not much that can be said about refusals, because by definition we do not have access to data about those people who refuse. We can observe that more men than women appeared to have been involved in the decision to refuse but this is clearly not a generalisable trend because the study group was not constructed in this way. However, we might link this with observations made by McKee and O'Brien, and Cunningham-Burley, that to talk about family matters is less legitimate for men and to show too much of an interest - for example by participating in an interview about family life - might actually be at odds with their masculine status (McKee and O'Brien, 1983; Cunningham-Burley, 1984). It is almost too obvious to say that those who feel it is not legitimate to talk about their own family lives to an unknown researcher/stranger are unlikely to be included in a study such as mine, and similarly that those who are 'not coping', or perhaps in the process of marital breakdown might be likely to refuse. A lot of my observations to follow are about the public faces and glosses which men and women put on their private

married lives and therefore it must be acknowledged that this is a significant and problematic exclusion. My experience both with the woman in the pilot study whose husband refused to participate, and with the two women on the doorstep, convinced me that researchers can discover something about marriages involving reticent partners by interviewing only one of them (or indeed by interviewing other relatives). However, for my purposes the intellectual arguments in favour of interviewing both, which I will discuss in the next section (and more fully in Appendix C), were the most compelling.

The other side of this is that people are likely to have their own motives for participating. For example, the personal contact interviewees might have been more motivated by altruism - that is to help me out - than the others. Certainly they more readily articulated this. However, some people may be motivated by a feeling of pride in their family life, and a desire to publicise in small degree how well they are coping. Of course, others may feel insufficiently assertive to say no, although I tried to ensure that they had every opportunity to do so because I was conscious that I was asking for a lot of time and disclosure from them, and I did not want them later to regret their decision to take part. Others may simply not really mind, and feel that if it will do some good, then they will participate. I did not ask my interviewees about their motivations to participate and given that I myself was a central figure in the experience for them I believe I would have been unlikely always to have received full and meaningful answers.

c. Data Collection

Data collection for the main study began the moment I made contact with potential interviewees. At that point I began making fieldnotes because I regarded any contact with interviewees and non-respondents as potential data. Nevertheless, discussion of the data collection process can be divided up into sections, and it is to this that I now turn.

(i) Interview Design

Formally, data was collected via a series of semi-structured tape recorded interviews with 36 husbands and wives living in the Canterbury area in 1985. As with the pilot study, interviews took place in the interviewees' own homes. They lasted from between 45 minutes and three hours.

I noted earlier that the pilot study was an integral part of the process through which I began to define what questions I wanted to ask and in what context. I had tried to include too many questions in the pilot study interviews and therefore although I asked about many areas of married life I felt I only really had data beginning to approach a meaningful level of depth on the division of domestic labour. This meant that for the main study, one interview with each couple would not be enough, unless I was prepared to shorten the list of topic areas, or to lose some depth from each. Neither of these strategies was acceptable because my theoretical rationale was both that bits of marriage such as the division of domestic labour, cannot adequately be analysed in isolation from other aspects, nor from the public lives of spouses, and that depth was essential to understanding

process.

I had therefore to start making decisions about how to divide my labour, that is how to organise the interviews and what broadly to include in each although of course this was to be subject to variation and flexiblity.

The first question I decided to address was whether to interview couples in joint or individual interviews. I was committed to an approach of interviewing both parties to a marriage because interviews with only one spouse can yield only one version of the relationship. Indeed, many of the studies of younger marriage have involved only interviews with women and have suffered criticism for this. I had learned from the pilot study that joint interviews, especially where tape recorded, can produce marvellously detailed data on marital discourse and negotiations and hence capture something of the dynamic between spouses. Using such a technique, then, was clearly central to my aims.

However, I was also approaching my study with the knowledge that marriage is a structurally unequal relationship because men and women have different positions in our society. Whilst joint interviews might provide fascinating data on dynamics, those very dynamics might mean that one spouse's version would be suppressed and, perhaps even more importantly, individual versions - which might well differ from joint versions - would be inaccessible.

I am using the word 'version' here advisedly because I do not wish to suggest that my purpose was to reach some ultimate

'truth' through what Denzin has called the "triangulation" of methods (Denzin, 1970a and b). The perspective I was taking led me to believe that men and women would be likely both to express different versions of their marital meaning and practice from each other, but also that different versions would be expressed depending upon whether the other spouse was present or absent. This would not be a research error, but a finding, because these differences in part would be expressive of the relational dynamics of the process I was seeking to uncover. This meant it was necessary to adopt a strategy of using both joint and individual interviews (Appendix C documents advantages and disadvantages of joint and individual interviewing of spouses).

I decided that a reasonable request to make of my interviewees would be that I interview them once together, and once each separately, and that this would yield data of some depth from which to generate my analysis. Given the possible problems both of non-response and status inequality which might be associated with including an interviewee's spouse at a later stage in the research (that is making the first interviewed look like the 'principal' interviewee (Morris, 1983c)), I decided to conduct the joint interviews first.

I next had to decide how to divide the discussion topics between the joint and individual interviews. Given that I was anticipating the possibility of receiving different versions, I wanted to cover most of the topics in both sets of interviews, but going into greater depth and probably asking different sets of relevant questions in the individual interviews. But I also

did not want to arouse suspicion by appearing simply to be checking out the same topics with spouses jointly and then individually in order to 'catch them out'. Furthermore, I wanted to include a facility for generating limited details of each spouse's life history so that I could examine in what ways and contexts husband's and wives' life stories intersected. It seemed to me that this latter task was suited to the individual interview because life stories would be best reported individually, and the points of intersection between the husbands' and wives' stories could be charted later. Not only this but the focus on each spouse's own biography could provide an acceptable and non-threatening explanation of why I needed to speak to spouses separately.

The interviews therefore took the following form. The first interview began with a 'structured' section, comprising questions about personal characteristics and very general points about marital biography which I wanted to know about all the couples. The second part of the interview was semi-structured. I had an aide memoire with topic areas and issues, to which I added during the course of the interviews. Both sections of this 'schedule' are reproduced in Appendix D. The format of the subsequent individual interviews was completely semi-structured, although there were a few more standardised types of questions, versions of which I attempted to ask everybody. What was standardised about the individual interview 'schedules' was that they began with questions about the biography of the interviewee, coming on later to questions about the topics from the joint interview and a more general set of questions at the end. Again I had an aide

memoire - this time in the form of index cards - which was itself modified during the course of the interviews, but I also took along to these interviews specific prompts, follow ups and questions tailored from a preliminary analysis of the tape recording and fieldnotes from the joint interview with that particular couple. The aide memoire for the individual interviews is reproduced in Appendix E.

I was of course ready and willing to let these interviews go in different directions from that of the 'schedules' where appropriate and in line with my methodology, as long as most of the issues were covered at some point. Indeed, this is precisely what happened in the majority of interviews.

(ii) Interview Practice

There are a number of issues surrounding the interview practice and interaction which it is important to discuss. Indeed, this discussion will not be confined to the methodology chapter, but will be brought up again in the chapters which present the data. This is because, in common with some of the central tenets of symbolic interactionism, I see my interaction with the couples as data in itself which needs to be addressed in context (Rock, 1979). I mentioned before that fieldnotes were started at first contact with interviewees. These were indeed continued throughout the research process and, more importantly, were not restricted to observations about the interviewees alone, but also addressed issues of interaction between me and the interviewees in a rather 'autobiographical' style. It is mainly from these notes that the following has been taken.

The pilot study helped me to become more comfortable than I might otherwise have been in social interactions with older people. I was aged 27 at the time of conducting the fieldwork, and I was unused to chatting to people aged between 50 and 70 on a regular or daily basis. I have already commented that age is in essence and indicator of other things, and there is no need to get into a detailed discussion here of age, cohort and the construction of social skills. Suffice to say that the pilot study had been valuable in enabling me to become more familiar with appropriate forms of what Douglas calls "chit chat" to open the interaction and set the scene for the interview (Douglas, 1985) (4).

Douglas argues at some length that chit chat must be viewed as an integral part of the interview interaction, rather than something tacked onto the beginning and the end of an interview and to be dealt with as quickly as possible. Chit chat, claims Douglas, provides the time and opportunity for interviewees to develop a view of their interviewer before they are expected to begin disclosure. It thus allows them to make preliminary decisions about the types of disclosures they are willing to make. Therefore, not only should researchers ensure that this right of assessment is granted to their interviewees on grounds of ethic and equity, but they should also realise that it is an essential part of the development of the kind of 'friendly rapport' on which qualitative methods rely for their rather special data. It is particularly important to allow a space for this process in <u>interviews</u>, because decisions about rapport and disclosure have to be made quickly unlike, for example, in participant

observation which is likely to involve longer and more frequent interactions (Hockey, 1986). Of course this is not to say that the development of rapport is over and done with before the interview begins; clearly it is only carefully maintained throughout the interaction, and can be broken in a number of ways. Rather, through being committed and accustomed to a bit of social chit chat an interviewer can both encourage interviewees to take stock, make assessments and enjoy the occasion, as well as to improve the data elicting qualities of the interaction. This is a commonsense aspect of everyday life which we are wise to take into the research process.

Following from this is a related set of more autobiographical issues. Social anthropologists, symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists have encouraged us to reflect on our own status in the research interaction, suggesting that we should self consciously examine what sort of impression our interviewees might gain of us. We know, as researchers and as social beings, that we are able to present different versions of ourselves and select from co-existing sets of 'truths', when talking to different interviewees. So we must realise that our interviewees will also do that with us.

Finch's study of clergy wives shows that they were often anxious to "place" her in terms of marital status and in relation to their own position as wives of clergymen. They were more comfortable once they knew that she too had been a clergy wife (Finch, 1984c). My interviewees also were keen to place me, particularly in regard to my age. They often spoke of their

children and me in the same breath as the "younger generation". I was fairly obviously a younger university educated woman, less obviously investigating inequality within marriage through a feminist perspective. I cannot know which aspects of this were perceived by my interviewees; they knew I was from university, but I made no mention of feminism or inequality. However, they showed an awareness, on the whole, that some form of 'equal rights for women' was an issue associated with the younger generation. I will raise this issue again in chapter 8.

My gender was also significant in the interviews. Again, this is a theme to which I will return, but there is a point to make here to do with interactions between men and women. For example, Finch has argued that:

> "However effective a male interviewer might be at getting women interviewees to talk, there is still necessarily an additional dimension when the interviewer is also a woman, because both parties share a subordinate structural position by virtue of their gender. This creates the possibility that a particular kind of identification will develop"
>
> (Finch, 1984c: 76)

I made a similar discovery and one which became both an issue in the management of interaction in joint and individual interviewing and a source of data in itself. The nub of the problem was that I found myself wanting to interact differently with the men and the women. I started to develop fieldnotes on two styles of interaction which were almost the antitheses of each other, but which I felt were both demanded for successful interactions with women on the one hand and men on the other. I

gave the first style of interaction the working definition of 'collaboration'. This was meant to convey my experience of the relationship beginning to develop between me and some of the women by virtue of our being women. At the basis of this was the unspoken assumption that we shared certain understandings, and particularly that 'we knew' about men's domestic inadequacies. This style was therefore exclusionary towards men. It is however perhaps at the heart of those approaches to feminist methodology which suggest that women are in a privileged position to research women (Bowles and Klein, 1983).

I labelled the second style of interaction 'surrogate masculinity'. This was meant to describe the tendency for some of the men to accept me almost as a surrogate man by suggesting that I had a wordliness which women, or more particularly their wives, did not - for example in assumptions they made about my knowledge of current affairs, the economy, trade unions, politics and so on. In doing this the men were dividing me off from their wives, and this style was thus exclusionary towards women. To the extent that both of these styles seemed to me to be demanded in many of the joint interviews, I felt I was being pulled between being 'one of the lads' and 'one of the girls'.

This sort of interaction difficulty cannot be solved by textbook recommendations about interviewer neutrality. I could not fully take on board one style without jeopardising my relationship with the other spouse, because the two styles were in antithesis. My way of 'resolving' the problem was simply to try to bring the other spouse in, whilst at the same time moving the conversation

on, in the hope of keeping the impression of myself sufficiently neutral to be reconstructed in line with the appropriate style in the individual interviews. In some cases, however, my initial neutrality compromised the credibility of my subsequent attempt at collaboration or surrogate maleness.

It is important to note that the 'decision' to adopt a strategy of trying to avoid any appeals to my collaborator or surrogate male status was not a directly conscious or explicit one. Rather I was handling this as I would any other social interaction where two people seemed to be appealing to different aspects of my 'self', and where I did not want to compromise the relationship with either. What this meant for my behaviour was the underplaying of versions which I could then try to develop more fully in subsequent encounters with each of those individuals separately. What I am arguing is that my strategy for dealing with this was part of a general equipment of social skills which I was constantly developing throughout the research and other aspects of my social and working life. I am able to make this strategy more explicit now, and to throw it open to criticism and analysis, but it is vital to realise that one has to act quickly in interviews to such difficulties, responding, initiating, and analysing in a preliminary way on the spot. This is indeed what makes creative, qualitative interviewing difficult to conduct, but potentially special in its product. The 'interaction difficulty' I was encountering was itself expressive of some of the complexity of the processes which were my focus.

I found the most important skill to develop to facilitate this

kind of responsiveness was that of listening as well as hearing. It would have been all too easy to have simply done the latter - and from time to time of course I probably did - especially as I tape recorded all the interviews. There is a danger with tape recording that the researcher becomes complacent and forgets really to listen to what is said, and is therefore unable to respond and follow up issues in the essential manner of creative interviewing. However, a tape recorder does also allow a researcher to listen, unhindered by having to take detailed notes. Furthermore, given that the type of semi-structured interview I wished to achieve was to take the form of a loosely directed conversation, a tape recorder allows this to develop much more easily.

Nevertheless, I had to spend some time 'training' my interviewees as well as myself for this type of interaction: their expectations of 'an interview' on the whole were that they should give short, punctuated answers to questions, and had I been writing these answers down the interaction would have become very stilted. I needed to be able to maintain eye contact at times, to respond quickly to what they had said while they were still alive with the topic, to ask more about it and to give gentle prompts so that they would know I wanted them to keep talking and expanding. I firmly believe that much of the conversation which we did achieve would not have been elicited without a tape recorder. It certainly could not have been recorded in such detail, nor could it have been listened to and transcriptions read months after the interview had taken place with a new perspective in mind, hence allowing the 'new reading' of the data

in the search for better explanatory devices, negative instances and so on.

None of my interviewees made any objection to being tape recorded, although some were surprised that I should want to make a recording of them because they felt they had nothing out of the ordinary to say. I did notice that at some points in the interactions, especially where interviewees became conscious of a contradiction in their lives, some of them became aware of the tape recorder and made an issue of it. One couple (the Dawsons) for example were finding it difficult to agree on which one of them did the most housework, and Bill Dawson said jokingly "do you want to switch that off while we sort this one out". Again, this is data because it indicates that they are aware they are making a public account and that this is a contentious issue. It is of interest to note at which points in the discourse the tape recorder became an issue, and some brief observations on this have been included in subsequent chapters.

d. Analysis

I have already emphasised that analysis is continuous in the research process, and starts long before one begins to read, index, cut and paste the typed transcripts. However, there was a procedure which I undertook when transcribing the interview tapes and afterwards, which was systematic and is describable. In this final section of the chapter therefore I shall give an outline of this and end with a brief preliminary discussion on data presentation, evidence and the demonstration of argument. These latter issues are themes which I will take up again in Part III.

(i) The Transcription Process

I finished the interviews with a total of 54 tape recorded interviews, which I then fully transcribed. I made three copies of each transcript so that I would be able to organise them in different ways. I made notes as I progressed, also in triplicate, so that they could be added to the files I was planning to create. These notes actually formed starting points for the inductive themes I was subsequently to develop and substantiate. As I made more progress with the transcribing I began to create various cross-cutting files. The first set were what I called topic files, and there was one for each substantive area such as employment, leisure, kin, friends, domestic and household labour, health, and so on. I used these to file one copy of my notes, other comments, references of other relevant work etc. At the same time I began to develop theme files, although this was a much slower process because the themes related to everyday understandings and meanings and were not easily identifiable in advance as the topics had been. I began with a lot of theme files, and gradually refined and modified them, changing some of them completely, finishing up with four main themes which form the basis of chapters 8 and 9: old age consciousness, fairness, love and guilt. Also, there were other themes of a different order which appear in chapter 7. Ultimately I intended to file one copy of each set of notes relating to themes in those files, but I did not do so until I had finished transcribing.

I also began to chart out the interviewees' biographies,

developing in chart form a crude analysis of the synchronizations between historical, individual and family time. These were filed in interviewee files, along with complete sets of fieldnotes for each couple, detailing issues like which questions they found difficult to answer, at which points they changed the topic of conversation, which topics came up most, contradictions and inconsistencies between joint and individual interviews, impressions gained of both verbal and non-verbal behaviour in the interviews and so on.

Therefore during the process of transcription I was beginning to develop ways of categorising my data, and making it retrievable. I was also becoming extremely familiar with the interview tapes, and this of course is itself an important step in the analysis of qualitative data.

(ii) Post-Transcription Analysis

Once the transcribing was finished I began to make explicit to myself an interest which I had been developing throughout the fieldwork process: that in discourse and forms of talk. I was of course interested in how people construct meanings and practices in the light of structural constraint, and thus help to create what we call structure. But I had not fully realised until I had begun talking and listening to my interviewees the extent to which this process is observable in language and dialogue; that is, the way things are said can be as important as what is said and of course what is not said must be part of this too.

So I began to try to organise all this around ideas developing in

my mind and in my files of what topics and themes were about. As such, these were not self evident in the transcripts because, in the nature of grounded theory and analytic induction, I was organising the data around themes which were my construction. These were developing partly from my general reading and perspective but also, and most significantly, from my familiarity with the data together with my systematic organising of it into files.

I had purchased a personal stereo and would listen to the tapes while cooking my dinner, doing my shopping, travelling, and doing my housework. I had almost been living, eating and sleeping the data. I made theme files, recategorised them, made other files, modified them, in a constant refining, sharpening and "double fitting" process, back and forth between data and theory. What I was attempting to do was to look at the elements of situations where I had observed specific practices or meanings to see how they might be linked. I wanted to tease out the range of understandings of, for example, fairness, and the range of situations in which it had an importance in my study group.

This kind of enterprise helped me to develop new ideas and theories and with them to pose new questions of my data. During this process I filed, unfiled, refiled, all the notes I had made on themes and concepts, and found the physical act of putting a note in a file to be a good discipline in testing the validity of the file; if I could not decide where to file the note, then I rethought the file category and, usually, changed it. I indexed the transcripts for all the topics and themes. Only then could I

systematically check the data for negative instances of themes in the process of analytic induction, in order finally to refine them. I could then begin the investigation of appearance and non appearance of themes to examine exactly what this meant for the process I was studying.

I was thus able to begin to code different elements of each topic or theme so that I could develop a breakdown of these and their incidence in the study group, beginning to relate this to other characteristics and pattens within the group. I began to draw working-charts and tables where possible, so that trends and patterns could be distilled in my own mind to inform the analysis and to make comparisons. Some, but not all, of these are reproduced in the body of the thesis.

Conclusion: Presentation of Data and Demonstration of Argument: a preliminary word

I do not wish to say a great deal about this here, because it raises issues which are central tenets of the thesis, and to which I will return. However, it is important to mention some of the points at this stage.

There are practical problems in making qualitative data visible, which I discovered when I tried various forms of aggregation of my data. This kind of data cannot be made entirely visible through, for example, the presentation and interpretation of a series of tables, because it represents processes, stories over time and so on, which make little sense when chopped up and

boxed. The very fluidity and contextuality which qualitative analysis seeks to capture is generally edited out in this form of aggregation, yet comparison is vital if we are to generate meaningful sociological understandings of our data.

Specifically, there are at least three conceptual levels in my data which I felt it important to retain.

(i) Roundedness: that is, the various related aspects of experience which contribute to the construction of gender inequality in marriage, for example work, leisure, sociability and so on, in public and in private. Essentially, themes are contextualised in stories and make little sociological sense once abstracted from them.

(ii) Stories over time: that is, the ways in which meaningful practices are grounded in sequences of experience and what Giddens termed a "continuous flow of conduct".

(iii) Sequences of interaction: that is, sequences of dialogue between husbands and wives in the interviews themselves, and the unfolding of a story of interview interaction across my three encounters with members of each couple.

All three of these can be easily lost in straightforward aggregation, since that process tends to involve adding and comparing decontextualised slices, rather than sequences of reality and time. I do not claim fully to have resolved these issues: indeed that is a challenge for all qualitative

researchers and depends on the continued and cumulative sharing of research knowledge and experience.

However, the way in which I have sought to overcome the major problems is through a strong reliance on the case study as a way of seeing, and as a form of analysis of evidence and demonstration of argument. I am using the term case study in a broad sense, which entails different strands of the kind of conceptualisation which Gluckman intended in his term "extended case study" (Gluckman, 1961). Mitchell explains that this:

> "deals with a sequence of events sometimes over quite a long period, where the same actors are involved in a series of situations in which their structural positions must continually be re-specified and the flow of actors through different social positions specified..the extended case study enables the analyst to trace how events chain on to one another and how therefore events are necessarily linked to one another through time"
>
> (Mitchell, 1983: 194)

For my purposes and in the discussion to follow, case studies are used in three specific ways which are directly linked to the three levels in my data: as stories containing roundedness and context; as stories over time; and as sequences of interaction and discourse. Each performs a slightly different task of demonstration.

To adopt this approach is to follow inductive rather than enumerative logic, because the use of a case study is not dependent upon its representativeness for the whole group in terms of social characteristics, but rather upon its particular

capacity to identify a theme or process, whose incidence and boundaries can then be traced for the whole group. The choice of a case study for demonstration purposes is necessarily made by a researcher after her/his analysis is complete and is based on the knowledge that this particular case demonstrates a particular process well. As Mitchell has argued in an illuminating piece on case study methods:

"the extrapolation is in fact based on the validity of the analysis rather than the representativeness of the events".
(Mitchell, 1983: 190)

But the case study is not necessarily what Gluckman calls an "apt illustration" (Gluckman, 1961), although it may well contain such, and indeed these are used in the analysis to follow. To speak of an apt illustration is to say something about representativeness, whereas initially at least for the extended case study the issue is about validity, which hinges upon the theoretical reasoning underpinning it. In fact, for many purposes, far from expecting to find a typical case, we should seek more than one which are significantly different from each other in ways bearing on the process we are seeking to demonstrate. The value of this is that it will help us to find underlying themes in common, and strategic similarities as well as differences, across a range of circumstances. As Mitchell explains:

"There is absolutely no advantage in going to a great deal of trouble to find a 'typical' case: concern with this issue reflects a confusion of enumerative and analytic modes of induction. For general purposes, any set of events will serve

the purpose of the analyst if the theoretical base is sufficiently well developed to enable the analyst to identify within these events the operation of the general principles incorporated in the theory. There is, however, a strategic advantage in choosing particular sets of events for study or for exposition. It frequently occurs that the way in which general explanatory principles may be used in practice is most clearly demonstrated in those instances where the concatenation of events is so idiosyncratic as to throw into sharp relief the principles underlying them".

(Mitchell, 1983: 204)

But there is one other advantage of the extended case study, and this has to do with language and discourse. I have already explained that one of my uses of case study is in the presentation of sequences of interaction and discourse. However, that does not mean that it is possible or desirable to find a quotation from an interviewee to ilustrate every point of analysis and argument. That would indeed be rather facile and inadequate because it is simply an alternative means of chopping and boxing in a decontextualised way. This is not to say that what people say and the way they say it is unimportant, and indeed the analysis to follow places great emphasis on these matters. However, it is to say the following two things:

(i) That what is unspoken is also part of social processes and is sociologically important. This issue is taken up more fully in chapter 9. There is a danger that sociological research - especially where observation is difficult or impossible - only taps the articulate person's experience of the social world.

(ii) That there will be points in a sociological argument which cannot be illustrated by a simple quotation (although an extended case study may sometimes help to do the job), because they are at

a higher (or different) level of abstraction.

It is probably the last internalised vestiges of positivism which send qualitative researchers (including myself) furiously scanning their data for 'a quotation to prove every point', when of course a quotation alone can do no such thing. Serious recognition of the potentialities of case study analysis presents, at least in part, a way out of this double bind.

In the chapters to follow I will provide an introduction to the 18 married couples who participated in my research, and a presentation of data and argument in the terms outlined here.

PART TWO - THE NEGOTIATION OF GENDER DIVISIONS IN DAILY MARRIED LIFE

PART TWO - THE NEGOTIATION OF GENDER DIVISIONS IN DAILY MARRIED LIFE

Introduction

In this section I will provide an introduction to the 18 couples aged between 50 and 70 who took part in my study. I will present what is effectively an analytic description of aspects of their biographies, their practices, and the role of negotiation in the changing construction of gender divisions. The analysis will be divided into three chapters. Each of these in some ways represents a different level of analysis and abstraction.

Chapter 5 will introduce some of the social characteristics of the study group and will then go on to give a more detailed biographical view of three couples as extended case studies. The major purpose of this chapter is threefold: to detail the composition of the study group; to give an idea of what kinds of histories and experiences they have accumulated at ages 50-70 by reference to the detailed examples of three cases; and to introduce some of the ways in which change and continuity have been played out in the everyday lives of the three case study couples.

This latter point helps to provide a bridge into chapter 6. In this chapter I will describe some of the implications of structural and biographical disruption for the negotiation of everyday practices in the study group as a whole. Discussion will be organised around the implications of disruption for gender divisions in, for example, the division of work, money

management, leisure and sociability. Most importantly, the chapter will address the implications of change in these kinds of areas for gendered responsibilities, drawing a clear conceptual distinction between responsibilities on the one hand, and tasks or labour on the other.

Finally, in chapter 7, I will go on to examine the significance of the observed patterns of responsibility for a shifting of the boundaries between public and private domains, and of hierarchy and control particularly in the private. I will focus on negotiations about control of domestic time, space and activity between husbands and wives. This entails taking up the issue of how we as sociologists make sense of both diversity and similarity in those we research; whether we 'read' what we extrapolate from this kind of data as inequality, or as domination, or as difference, or whatever. I will argue that the particular kinds of negotiations and changes occurring in these peoples' lives raise important general sociological questions about what we understand to be the concept of inequality, and about how we interpret the nature of divisions of power, control and autonomy between men and women. This will lead the way into the final section, where I will outline aspects of the ways in which the men and women in the study were making sense of social and biographical change.

Chapter Five : An Introduction to 18 Married Couples

Introduction

I will begin this chapter with a brief profile of the 18 couples who took part in my study, documenting certain social characteristics as observed at the time of interview in 1985. However, as argued earlier, a 'snapshot' view such as this does not provide the necessary background for all that we want to know about the context for the negotiation of change and continuity in the gender divisions of daily life over time.

Therefore, in the second part of the chapter I will discuss the everyday lives of three of the couples in the study from a biographical perspective. In doing so I hope to illustrate the relationship between different aspects of married life, and some of the sequences and intersections which comprise the biographies of the people involved to show that we need an appreciation of pasts and synchronizations in order to understand presents. I will focus on their reported marital practices and responsibilities, documenting change and continuity between the past and present lives of each couple, whilst also saying something of the differences between them. I will conclude the discussion with a brief consideration of some relevant aspects of historically changing contexts. These are identifiable to some extent in the case studies and relevant in different ways to the whole study group.

Having become acquainted with the lifestories of three of the couples, the reader will be better equipped to approach chapter

6, where I will begin to develop a comparative and hence less individually contextualised view of the changing contours and responsibilities of daily married life for all 18 couples.

1. A Social Profile of 18 Couples

Table 5.1 provides a 'snapshot' view of some of the key social characteristics of the couples at the time of interview (and it may be useful to refer back to this chart during the subsequent discussion) (1). As can be seen, the interviewees ranged in age from 51-70. The average age calculated separately for men and women was 60 in both cases (women 59.7, men 60.3), but the majority of the men (15) were in fact an average of 1.5 years older than their wives (range 1-5 years). Three of the women were older than their husbands by 3, 4 and 5 years.

The couples had children ranging in ages from 13-44, and grandchildren from a few months old to 20. Only one couple, the Wheelers, had no children, although both the Barclays and the Carters had children only from previous marriages and none from the present.

Table 5.2 shows the pattern of birth and subsequent departure (and sometimes return) or otherwise of children from the parental home.

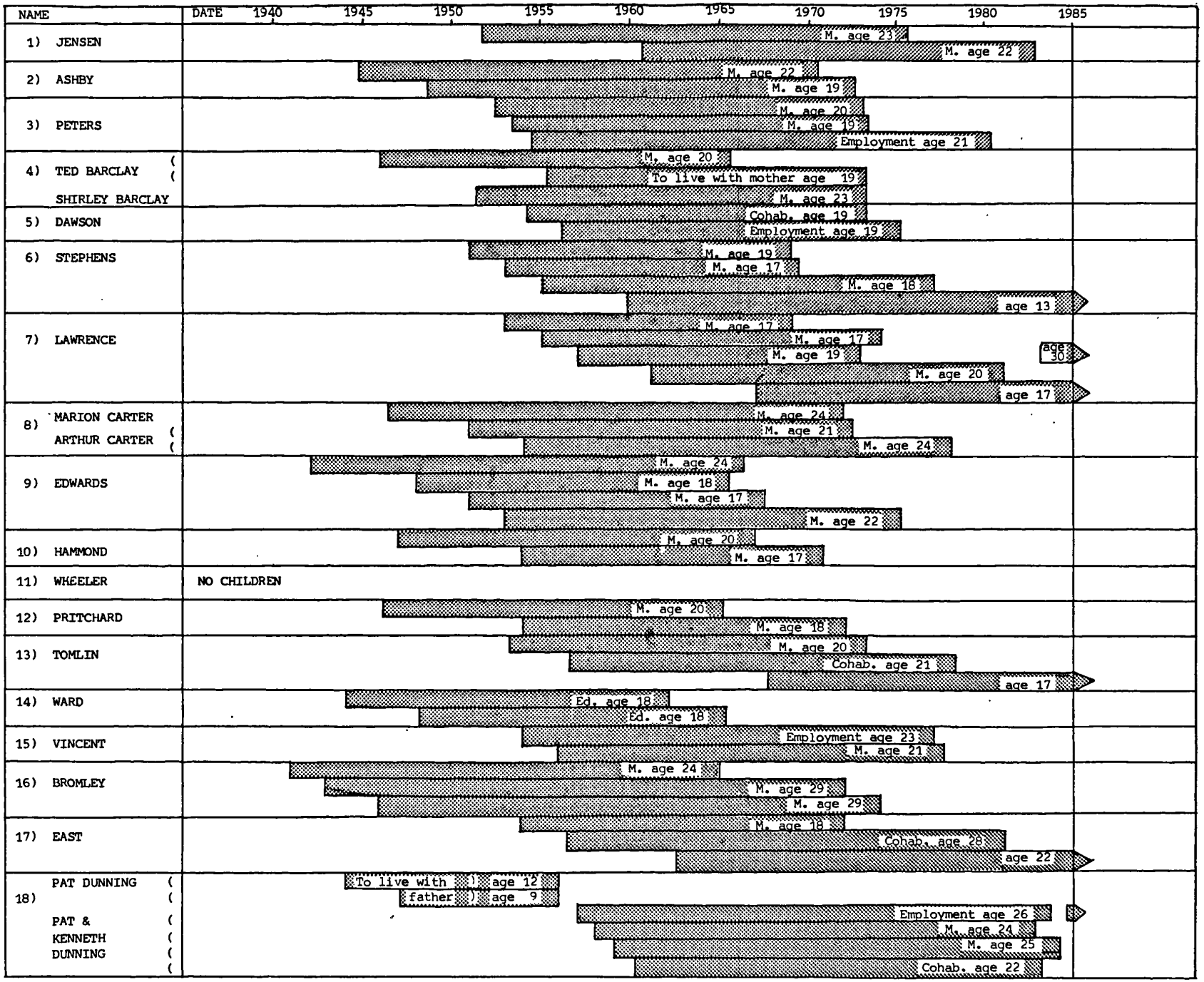
Twelve of the 17 couples with children were currently living with none of their children still at home, and had been doing so for between two (Jensen) and 20 (Ward) years (median 11 years). One

TABLE 5.1: KEY SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

	NAME	AGE	NO. YEARS MARRIED		CHILDREN		GRANDCHILDREN		HOUSING TENURE	CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS	MAIN LIFE'S EMPLOYMENT *
			PREV.	PRESENT	FROM PREVIOUS MARRIAGE	FROM PRESENT MARRIAGE	FROM PREVIOUS MARRIAGE	FROM PRESENT MARRIAGE			
1)	IVY JENSEN	64		37		2 AGED 32 & 24		3 AGED 1 - 7	COUNCIL RENTED	RETIRED	SCHOOL MEALS ASSISTANT (PART-TIME)
	FRED JENSEN	59								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	PAINTER (FULL-TIME)
2)	MARY ASHBY	65		42		2 AGED 36 & 32		5 AGED 2 - 8	OWN OUTRIGHT	TAKES IN LODGERS/ HOUSEWIFE	TAKING IN LODGERS/ HOUSEWIFE
	TOM ASHBY	65								RETIRED	FITTER (FULL-TIME)
3)	BARBARA PETERS	55		34		3 AGED 25 - 32		4 AGED 1 - 9	OWN WITH MORTGAGE	PERMANENTLY SICK/ RETIRED	OFFICE CLERK AND NURSING AUXILIARY (P-T)
	JIM PETERS	55								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER (FULL-TIME)
4)	SHIRLEY BARCLAY	60	16	15	1 AGED 34	NONE	NONE	NONE	OWN OUTRIGHT	PERM. SICK/RETIRED PLUS PART-TIME EMPLOY.	PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER (FULL-TIME)
	TED BARCLAY	62	22		2 AGED 39 & 30		7 AGED 5 - 18			SELF EMPLOYED (P-T)	SELF EMPLOYED - TREE WORK & FENCING (P-T)
5)	MARGARET DAWSON	62		35		2 AGED 29 & 31		3 AGED 1 - 8	OWN WITH MORTGAGE	EMPLOYED (P-T) TEMPORARY	SECRETARY (PART-TIME)
	BILL DAWSON	62								REDUNDANT PLUS CASUAL PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	ACCOUNTING EXECUTIVE (FULL-TIME)
6)	FELICITY STEPHENS	53		35		4 AGED 34 - 13		8 AGED 3 - 14	COUNCIL RENTED	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	SHOP ASSISTANT (PART-TIME)
	PATRICK STEPHENS	56								UNEMPLOYED	CLEANER (FULL-TIME)
7)	JANET LAWRENCE	51		33		4 AGED 17 - 32		10 AGED 1 - 15	OWN WITH MORTGAGE (EX COUNCIL)	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	FOSTER MOTHER (P-T) & FIELDWORKER (P-T)
	SID LAWRENCE	56								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	TELEPHONE ENGINEER (FULL-TIME)
8)	MARION CARTER	62	13	21	1 AGED 40	NONE	NONE	NONE	COUNCIL RENTED	HOUSEWIFE	MACHINIST AND FACTORY OPERATIVE (P-T)
	ARTHUR CARTER	58	14		2 AGED 34 & 31		4 AGED 2 - 12			SELF EMPLOYED (F-T)	FENCING CONTRACTOR (F-T)
9)	JOYCE EDWARDS	66		46		4 AGED 43 - 32		4 AGED 3 - 18	OWN OUTRIGHT	HOUSEWIFE	CLEANER (PART-TIME)
	REG EDWARDS	66								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	FARM FOREMAN (FULL-TIME)
10)	EVIE HAMMOND	57		40		2 AGED 31 & 38		2 AGED 17 & 20	COUNCIL RENTED	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	SALES ASSISTANT (PART-TIME)
	PETE HAMMOND	60								UNEMPLOYED PLUS CASUAL PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	MOTOR ENGINEER (FULL-TIME)
11)	CATH WHEELER	64		38		NONE		NONE	PRIVATELY RENTED	RETIRED PLUS CASUAL PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	CLERK-TYPIST (FULL-TIME)
	CHARLES WHEELER	64								PERMANENTLY SICK/ RETIRED	CHIEF DRAUGHTSMAN (FULL-TIME)
12)	JUNE PRITCHARD	57		40		2 AGED 39 & 31		5 AGED 7 - 19	OWN WITH MORTGAGE (EX COUNCIL)	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	BUFFET ASSISTANT (PART-TIME)
	FRANK PRITCHARD	61								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	BUFFET MANAGER (FULL-TIME)
13)	JEAN TOMLIN	52		33		3 AGED 17 - 32		3 AGED 1 - 10	OWN WITH MORTGAGE	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	CHILDMINDER (PART-TIME)
	JOHN TOMLIN	53								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	FARM LABOURER (FULL-TIME)
14)	PATIENCE WARD	66		43		2 AGED 37 & 41		6 AGED 2 - 20	OWN OUTRIGHT	RETIRED	CLERK (PART-TIME)
	DOUG WARD	67								RETIRED	ESTATE MANAGER (FULL-TIME)
15)	SARAH VINCENT	55		35		2 AGED 29 & 31		2 AGED 4 - 6	HOUSING ASSOC. RENTED	RETIRED PLUS PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT	LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER (FULL-TIME)
	BOB VINCENT	57								RETIRED	PRISON OFFICER (FULL-TIME)
16)	JANE BROMLEY	70		47		3 AGED 39 - 44		8 AGED 5 - 18	OWN OUTRIGHT	HOUSEWIFE	HOUSEWIFE
	HOWARD BROMLEY	70								RETIRED	POLICE INSPECTOR (FULL-TIME)
17)	MAY EAST	55		33		3 AGED 22 - 31		2 AGED 7 & 10	COUNCIL RENTED	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	CLEANER (PART-TIME)
	RICHARD EAST	56								EMPLOYED (FULL-TIME)	POSTMAN (FULL-TIME)
18)	PAT DUNNING	61	13	28	2 AGED 38 & 41	4 AGED 21 - 27	4 AGED 1 - 17	2 AGED 1 - 2	OWN WITH MORTGAGE	EMPLOYED (PART-TIME)	FIELDWORDER (PART-TIME)/HOUSEWIFE
	KENNETH DUNNING	58								PERMANENTLY SICK/ RETIRED	COALMINER (FULL-TIME)

* "MAIN LIFE'S EMPLOYMENT" IS BASED ON INTERVIEWEES' OWN DEFINITIONS

TABLE 5.2: Birth and Departure of Children



KEY: M. = Marriage Cohab. = Cohabitation Ed. = Full-time education away from home

of these couples, the Ashby's, had student lodgers (throughout the interviews referred to as Mary Ashby's students), but all the others were currently living alone. The women in this category were aged between 37 and 55 (median 47) when their first child left home, and between 43 and 62 (median 51) when the last left. The men were aged between 41 and 50 for the first (median 47), and between 46 and 59 for the last (median 51).

Five of the couples currently had (mainly adult) children living in their households, but all of these also had adult children who had begun leaving home from between two and 16 years ago (median 13 years). Pat Dunning, in addition, had two children, now married, from her first marriage who had gone to live with their father on Pat's divorce 29 years ago. In two of the cases (Lawrence and Dunning) adult children had returned to the parental household after absences of nine years and one year respectively. Women in this category were currently aged between 51 and 61 (median 53) and had been between 35 and 59 (median 40) when their first adult child left home. The men were currently aged between 53 and 58 (median 56) and had been between 40 and 56 (median 41) when the first child left.

All the couples, except the Wheelers, had grandchildren, although in the cases of Shirley Barclay and Marion Carter these were step-grandchildren since their own offspring had no children. In nearly every case the first grandchild had been born while the couple themselves still had at least one child under 18 (and in four cases under ten) and Felicity and Patrick Stephens have a son who is younger than their eldest grandchild. This helps to

illustrate the rather misleading nature of a family-cycle model which implies that grandparenthood occurs once the childrearing stage is over. Of course, remarriage can make the possibilities even more complex.

All of the interviewees had experienced the death of one or both parents, mostly within the last 10 years.

Fifteen couples had been married once only, for periods of between 33 and 47 years (38 average). The other three had been married to each other for 15, 21 and 28 years, and (with the exception of Kenneth Dunning) had all been married twice.

Current employment status and 'main life's employment' for husbands and wives in relation to each other are shown on table 5.3.

Biographical employment patterns and the negotiation of recent changes in employment status by couples will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it is simply necessary to give an outline of current employment status, although as we can see, this is not entirely straightforward.

Five of the men and six of the women had formally retired. With the exception of Ivy Jensen, all of these women had since that time engaged in paid work similar to their life's employment, from time to time on a part-time and mainly casual basis. Shirley Barclay reported that in some senses she had not really retired, because retirement for her had in practice meant moving

Table 5.3: Current Employment Status and Main Life's Employment (Paid work only)

(a) Husband Only Retired

Case No. and name	Husband's Employment				Wife's Present Employment
	Previous occupation	When quit	Reason	Subsequent occupation	
2) Ashby	SM f-t	under 1 year	Retired	none	Takes in lodgers (works at home)
18) Dunning	SM f-t	2 years	Retired/vol. Redundancy (ill health)	none	JWC casual/p-t
10) Hammond	SM f-t	2 months	Redundancy	USM casual/p-t	USM p-t
6) Stephens	USM f-t	1 year	Left voluntarily - unemployment	none	USM casual/p-t

(b) Wife Only Retired

Case No. and name	Wife's Employment				Husband's Present Employment
	Previous occupation	When quit	Reason	Subsequent occupation	
3 Peters	USM f-t	4 years	Ill health	none	IWC f-t
1 Jensen	USM p-t	3 years	Retired	none	USM f-t
8 Carter	USM p-t	1 year	Left voluntarily	none	Self employed f-t
9 Edwards	USM p-t	1 year	Left v luntarily	none	SM f-t

Table 5.3: Current Employment Status and Main Life's Employment (Paid work only) continued

(c) Both Spouses Retired

Case No. and name	Husband's Employment				Wife's Employment			
	Previous occupation	When quit	Reason	Subsequent occupation	Previous occupation	When quit	Reason	Subsequent occupation
5) Dawson	IWC f-t	7 years	Retired/vol. redundancy	USM casual/p-t	JWC p-t	9 years	Retirement	JWC casual p-t
11) Wheeler	IWC f-t	6 years	Early retirement/ ill health	none	JWC f-t	4 years	Left voluntarily	JWC casual/p-t
14) Ward	IWC f-t	3 years	Retirement	none	JWC p-t	3 years	Left voluntarily	USM casual/p-t
15) Vincent	IWC f-t	less than 1 year	Early retirement/ ill health	none	IWC f-t	1 year	Left voluntarily	IWC p-t
16) Bromley	IWC f-t	7 years	Retirement	none	SM f-t	49 years (on marriage)	Left voluntarily	none

(d) Neither Spouse Retired

Case No. and name	Husband's Employment	Wife's Employment
4) Barclay	Self Employed Within last year moved from f-t to p-t	IWC Within last year moved from f-t to p-t. Remains with the same employer but has officially taken early retirement
7) Lawrence	SM f-t	USM p-t changed employers (same occupation) 1 year ago
12) Pritchard	SM f-t	USM p-t
13) Tomlin	SM f-t	SM p-t
17) East	SM f-t	USM p-t changed employers (same occupation) 1 year ago due to privatisation of sch l cleaning services

Key USM - unski led manual
SM - skil ed manual in udes supervis ry
JWC - junior white co ar
IWC - intermediate and seni r white c l ar

from full-time to part-time work of the same status with the same employer. Hence she is classified as remaining in employment. Sarah Vincent had recently taken up a steady part-time job. Of these men, only Tom Ashby had taken on casual paid work.

Four of the men had made other permanent departures from their main life's employment: Patrick Stephens was unemployed, Pete Hammond and Bill Dawson had both been made redundant, and Kenneth Dunning had taken voluntary redundancy due to ill health. Stephens and Hammond were both seeking full-time employment, with little hope of success, although Pete Hammond had taken a part-time casual job as had Bill Dawson. Five of the women had also made permanent departures from their life's employment: Barbara Peters through ill health, Felicity Stephens to bring up her youngest child (now aged 13), Marion Carter to look after the home and a new puppy, Joyce Edwards because they had moved house and she was unable to find a job in the area or travel to her old workplace. Jane Bromley had not had a paid job since her marriage 47 years ago.

Other interviewees had encountered different types of changes. Ted Barclay had recently changed from full-time to part-time hours of work because of ill health, and planned to retire two weeks after my last interview with him. Arthur Carter, although still doing the same type of work, had recently become self employed. Janet Lawrence had recently changed part-time jobs, with a few months off in between, and had taken on longer hours. Pat Dunning had taken a part-time casual job three years ago which was continuing. May East who worked as a school cleaner

had recently had her hours of work and pay cut, and conditions of employment worsened (no sick pay, no holiday leave, no right of appeal for unfair dismissal) when the cleaning contract was put out to private tender.

The remaining interviewees were continuing in their main life's employment, although only three of these (Fred Jensen, Jim Peters and John Tomlin) planned to to be doing so for any longer than five years.

Main life's employment was recorded according to the interviewee's own definition and has been used as a component in ascribing social class/lifestyle positions to the study group. This raises the question of whether we should take main life's employment, or current employment status, as a criterion of classification. It has generally been argued that it is the biography of employment, rather than the snapshot view, which is significant in patterning the lifestyles and class positions of older people not least because it is connected to the accrual of resources - for example pensions, investments - for retirement or later life (Brown, 1982; Wilensky, 1968; Guillemard, 1982).

But if divisions in the accrual of employment based resources are viewed as important criteria of classification for older people, so too are other factors. It is for this reason that I deliberately use the Weberian term 'lifestyle' to connote the kind of classification to which I refer. Most importantly, it has been argued that once formal employment has ended then housing tenure becomes a particularly striking divider in the

lifestyles of elderly people. There is a tendency to polarisation between the privileged outright home owners, and those continuing to pay rent (A. Hunt, 1978) (2).

What I have done is to use the above criteria in a rule of thumb exercise to assign a working definition of class position to couples, because this allows comparison between couples. Of course, by doing this I do not mean to imply that husbands and wives have equal access to household resources, or that domestic labour for example is not a component in the production of the social class of both men and women. Indeed, these are very good reasons why a couple/lifestyle categorisation is an inadequate explanation of the social class per se of these individuals. But for my purposes it is sufficient for rudimentary comparisons between couples, because forms of inequality within the 'unit' of the couple, divisions of domestic labour and so on are the major foci of analysis in the chapters to follow. The couple class/lifestyle grouping of the study group is shown in table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Class/Lifestyle Breakdown of the Couples

Working Class	Upper Working Class	Middle Class	Upper Middle Class
1) Jensen	2) Ashby	3) Peters	4) Barclay
6) Stephens	8) Carter	5) Dawson	14) Ward
7) Lawrence	9) Edwards	11) Wheeler	16) Bromley
10) Hammond	12) Pritchard	15) Vincent	
17) East	13) Tomlin		
18) Dunning			
6	5	4	3

'Working class' includes men and women in unskilled and semi-skilled employment, and living mainly in council rented property for most of their lives. The Dunnings were an exception to this, having owned their own house (with mortgage) since their marriage. Indeed, theywere exceptional in further ways, Pat Dunning having come from upper middle class origins and only entering into 'working class occupations' such as manual work in the fields on her second marriage to Kenneth, a miner. Janet and Sid Lawrence were the only couple in this group to have recently taken out a mortgage on their formerly council rented house.

'Upper working class' is differentiated from working class on the following criteria: at least one partner (in effect always the man) had been in skilled or supervisory manual employment for most of their lives, the other partner being in similar or lower grade employment, either manual or white collar. The Carters were an exception, Arthur Carter having recently become self employed. Again with the exception of the Carters, these couples owned their own homes. The Edwards had been able to pay off their outstanding mortage with an inheritance from Reg's mother some 10 years ago.

'Middle class' includes couples where at least one partner has been in middle management level white collar work either for a substantial, or for the latter part of their employment history. Two of thse couples owned their own homes with mortgages outstanding and the other two were tenants. The Vincents had lived in accommodation provided with Bob Vincent's prison officer job until his retirement, and currently rented a house through a

housing association. The Wheelers had lived since their marriage in a luxury rented flat in Canterbury city centre.

'Upper middle class' includes couples where at least one partner had been in a senior management position for a substantial or the latter part of their employment history. All the couples in this group owned large homes outright in expensive suburban areas. This group included the Bromleys - the only couple where the woman had been out of paid employment for all her married life.

In terms of a very general division, we could say that between half and two thirds of the study group were working class (that is, 11 couples or 22 individuals) and that the remainder were middle class (seven couples, or 14 individuals). Although this middle-working class division was the clearest, the divisions within each class were apparently significant in differentiating lifestyles and indeed life chances.

It is also appropriate here to make some preliminary comments on the incidence of ill health in the study group. A fuller discussion of some of the qualitative dimensions of the responsibility for health care and wellbeing will be provided later but here it is helpful to give some idea of the reported incidence of ill health as part of the social profile (table 5.5).

Obviously, this rather crude description cannot be an accurate 'measure' of ill health in the study group, not least because people's definitions of what counts as ill health, or good health, are not universal (Blaxter and Paterson, 1982).

Table 5.5: Reported Incidence of Current and Recent Ill Health

Case No.	Name	Age	Symptoms/Condition
1	Ivy Jensen	64	Hiatus hernia.
	Fred Jensen	59	None.
2	Mary Ashby	65	Partially sighted.
	Tom Ashby	65	Arthritic hip.
3	Barbara Peters	55	Angina.
	Jim Peters	55	Glaucoma - partially sighted.
4	Shirley Barclay	60	Angina. Limited movement in one leg following a riding accident. Arthritis. Bronchial problems.
	Ted Barclay	62	Perforated ulcer earlier in current year. "Very near death". Doctors advise retirement.
5	Margaret Dawson	62	High blood pressure. Depression in menopause, but felt wonderful afterwards.
	Bill Dawson	62	Overactive thyroid. Non malignant lump in throat a few years previous - has left him with claustrophobia.
6	Felicity Stephens	53	Agorophobia. Hot flushes which she attributes to the tail end of the menopause. Allergy rashes, especially to detergent, dating from doing father's incontinent laundry until his recent death. Claustrophobia.
	Patrick Stephens	56	Sinus problems. Headaches.
7	Janet Lawrence	51	Hysterectomy last year.
	Sid Lawrence	56	None.
8	Marion Carter	62	Sinus problems. Neuralgia. Chronic anxiety.
	Arthur Carter	58	Dislocated shoulder. Recently amputated finger "Accident prone".
9	Joyce Edwards	66	"Plenty of health problems". Arthritis, angina, fainting fits diagnosed as epilepsy, but dating from her menopause. "I had a rotten time with the change".
	Reg Edwards	66	Stomach pains started 2 years ago - undiagnosed.
10	Evie Hammond	57	"Flu and ne thing after an ther lately". High blood pressure. "I did have a bit of a breakdown in the change. Had a r ugh old ti e". Recurrent depression.
	Pete Hammond	6	Asthma.
11	Catherine Wheeler	64	Hysterect my.
	Charles Wheeler	64	Coronary thrombosis 1 years ag . N w on strict diet, no strenuous activity, limited alcohol.
12	June Pritchard	57	Current y br ken arm and leg - acci ent at work place. D & C last year "but everything was negative so that was that".
	Frank Pritchard	61	Trapped nerves causing pins and need es in hands. "Kidney trouble".
13	Jean T lin	52	N ne.
	John Tomlin	53	Part'a y sighted - accident at w rkplace.
14	Patience Ward	66	Hysterect y "very early" be a se f ar accident.
	Doug Ward	67	eart urmer - pa e er.

15	Sarah Vincent Bob Vincent	55 57	Depressed in menopause but "happy release" afterwards. Car accident 5 years ago - dislocated pelvis. Angina. Heart attack 1½ years ago. Now no physical exertion.
16	Jane Bromley Howard Bromley	70 70	Has had a "heart condition" for most of her life. Diabetes. Partially sighted. Now no physical exertion. None.
17	May East Richard East	55 56	Bronchial asthma. No physical exertion (although she is employed as a cleaner). Depressed in menopause. "Ticker trouble". Palpitations and a description of symptoms which sound like angina, but undiagnosed.
18	Pat Dunning Kenneth Dunning	61 58	Low blood pressure. A series of "nervous breakdowns". Claustrophobia in recent years (he was employed as a coalminer). Industrial deafness. Bronchial problems - undiagnosed.

Nevertheless, it does indicate that almost without exception, 'limiting' ill health of some kind has affected all the couples in recent years, and in the majority of cases the conditions are associated with aging. At this level of understanding then, reported ill health in itself is less of a divider than a unifier in the study group.

2. Three Case Studies

My main purpose in giving these case studies is to provide a biographical and contextual picture of three marriages which can be used as a way into understanding all of the marriages in the study rather than as an exemplification of them. For three of the couples in the study at least, they help to illustrate some of the intersection of family, individual and historical time, and to personify some of the social characteristics outlined above. In line with the arguments developed in the previous chapter, the cases have not been selected because they represent 'the typical experience'. Rather I have chosen to describe the lives of three very different couples, in order to give a flavour of some of the variation of experience in the study group.

The life stories are constructed from the interviewees' own accounts and from the synchronization of events plotted on life charts drawn for each couple after the interviews (3)

a. Fred and Ivy Jensen (case 1: working class)

(i) Biographical Overview

Fred is currently aged 59 and Ivy is 64. They have been married

for 37 years, and have always lived in Canterbury - for the last 24 years in the same council house on an estate about one and a half miles from the town centre. They have two daughters aged 32 and 24, both of whom are married and living on the same estate along with their husbands and children. Fred is currently employed as a painter (full-time), and Ivy retired from a part-time job serving school dinners three years ago when she reached the statutory retirement age for women of 60.

Fred and Ivy were both born in Canterbury. Fred had three brothers and two sisters, and Ivy had two brothers. Their fathers were both farm labourers. Fred's mother was a cleaner and Ivy's mother having started her working life in domestic service had subsequently become a school meals assistant which she did for most of her life. Fred and Ivy met in their teens and married in 1948 when he was 22 and she was 27. On their marriage, Fred moved in with Ivy and her parents, where they lived for four years. Both had left school at the age of 14 with no qualifications, and Ivy had missed a year of schooling through a nervous breakdown at the age of 9.

At the age of 14 Ivy went into domestic service, as her mother had done, at a nearby "big house", and remained there past the outbreak of the Second World War until she entered the WAF at the age of 22 in 1943. The War had already started by the time Fred left school, and he went into the navy. One of Fred's brother's was killed in the war, and another was killed in an accident shortly afterwards.

Following the war, Ivy again following her mother's course, took a full-time job serving dinners at a local school, where she stayed until shortly before their first child was stillborn in 1948. She returned to the same job a month later. Fred got a job fruit picking on one of Kent's many fruit farms after the war, and he did that for about three years until, at the age of 24, he switched to being a painter on a building site. Not long afterwards, in 1952, they moved out of Ivy's parents' home into a council prefab and less than a year later in 1953 Fred and Ivy's first child Susan was born. Fred was still working on the building site at this time, and Ivy left her job and remained out of employment for five years to look after Susan.

In 1958 when Susan was five, Ivy took another job (part-time) serving school dinners in a local nursery school. Two years later when Fred was 34 he also changed his job; he became a maintenance painter (full-time) for a local haulage firm and has remained in the same job with the same employer ever since.

In 1961, when she was 40, Ivy visited the doctor because she thought she was pregnant, but was told that she was in fact beginning the menopause. Nevertheless, some months later Ivy's own diagnosis was confirmed and she gave birth to Gillian, having left her nursery school job two months before. She was to have another five year break from paid employment. Directly after Gillian's birth, Fred and Ivy were moved to a larger council house, and have lived there ever since.

In 1963 when he was aged 37 Fred had a hernia operation and also in that year Ivy's younger brother died of cancer aged 38. Ivy who was at that time at home full-time looking after Gillian - Susan was now 10 - found this a very difficult time. Three years later in 1966, when she was 45, Ivy began paid employment again - another a part-time job serving meals at a different local school. She stayed in this job until retirement at the age of 60 in 1982.

Also during 1966, Fred's father died, and both he and Ivy began "keeping an eye" on Fred's mother who lived about two miles away, doing odd jobs and shopping for her, helping her out at home and so on, two or three times a week. By this time Susan was aged 13 and Gillian was 5, so they were both at school. In 1973, at the age of 52, Ivy became ill with hepatitis and was off work for nearly 3 months. During the same year Ivy's mother, who was becoming increasingly frail, began to need help around the home and with odd jobs which Ivy's father was now unable to do. So Fred and Ivy became involved in giving the same type of support which they were already giving to Fred's mother.

In 1976 when Ivy was aged 55 and Fred was 49, Susan who was now 23 left home to get married. She, like her mother and grandmother, had been working in school meals, and had undergone no further or higher education.

Two years later Fred's mother died, and shortly afterwards so too did Ivy's mother, leaving behind only Ivy's widowed father. Also during that year, Fred and Ivy's first grandchild was born to

Susan. The following year Ivy's father also died, and Ivy herself became ill with what would subsequently be diagnosed as a hiatus hernia - a limiting condition which Ivy has to this day. Gillian was still living at home during this period, and working as a shop assistant in a local shoe shop.

Ivy was glad to retire in 1982 when she was sixty, because of her health and her family commitments, but also because her hours of work had recently been cut down against her wishes, and she no longer liked "the atmosphere of the place". She felt that her workmates were in a rather precarious position with redundancies on the horizon. She began to draw a state pension. A year after her retirement when Ivy was 62 and Fred was 57, their second daughter Gillian married and left home at the age of 22. By this time Susan had given birth to a second child. For the first time in their lives, with the exception of the few months in 1952 - over 30 years ago - before Susan's birth, they were living alone together.

Gillian had her first baby in 1985, shortly after her parents had taken part in my pilot study, and a few months before they would take part in my main study. Fred and Ivy had at that stage been living alone for two years, but with their two married daughters, two son-in-laws, and three grandchildren all living nearby. Fred plans to retire in five years' time when he will be 65. He will receive no occupational pension.

(ii) Responsibilities and Daily Life

Fred and Ivy have a clear view of their relative responsibilities

within marriage and they told me that these have not changed over time. They both explained that Ivy does all the housework and Fred is clearly seen by both of them as the breadwinner and provider, with responsibility for outdoor maintenance jobs. As Fred explained:

Fred: We've got a dividing line and everything that happens outside the door is down to me, the car and the garden, the allotments, and indoors is her..unless she's ill. (4)

Fred told me that he would help with the housework if she was ill, but went on to add that in practice when that is the case their daughters generally call round to do the things Ivy cannot do. When they were at home the daughters would do this too, such as when Ivy was taken ill with hepatitis and her daughters took charge of the cooking, cleaning and laundry. When she was younger and unable to do the domestic work, for example when she was in hospital giving birth to the children, Ivy arranged that either her own mother or Fred's would ensure that he had a meal, do his washing, and come and do some housework for him until Ivy returned. Ivy pointed out that she had always spent more time at home than Fred - and this was especially the case now she was retired - so obviously she would do most of the housework, and Fred added that anyway this had been the traditional way of doing things in their family. Fred thinks he probably does more to help in the home now than ever before; he washes up in the evenings, and he offered me a cup of tea saying "that is one thing I can do, make a cup of tea!". But he added that he enjoys coming home at night and having a cooked dinner waiting for him, and generally being looked after. Often the cooked dinners are made

especially for Fred, because Ivy's hiatus hernia imposes stringent controls on what she can eat. She told me that she is supposed to eat little and often, although she tends to have nothing much all day and then eats what she can of the evening meal with Fred.

Fred has two allotments which he works in during his spare time, although he explained that "its not work, its a pleasure to me". They therefore have a constant supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in season, and also of frozen vegetables because Ivy freezes them in their large chest freezer, bought for the purpose. Ivy, unfortunately, cannot eat fresh fruit and only a limited number of vegetables so does not reap the full benefits of this.

Fred and Ivy both regard him as the breadwinner and provider, both because of the way they regard his employment and also because of his vegetable providing activities. He explained he has never been out of work in his life and, although he has never been a high earner, he is proud to say he has provided his family with a regular income. His employment history certainly is stable; he has spent 24 years in his current job, and ten years in the one previous to that with no unemployment. No such claims about regularity of income were made about Ivy's employment, although she explained that she had gone out to work because they needed the money and there was no question of her doing anything else. She has always earned less than Fred, and for the last 25 years of her employment life has worked part-time, taking breaks from employment to look after the children full-time.

Nevertheless, she was one of the few women in the study who described herself as "retired" and who, for the time being, receives a state pension in her own right.

Fred and Ivy have made slight alterations to their money management system since she retired, as Fred explained:

Fred: Now that there's only me earning I give the wife a set amount each week which we agree on together you know that she can cope with plus a little bit and thats how we keep it. And I save, I er spend a few..mainly my money goes on the car and the rest is in the bank. Now what's in the bank is <u>ours</u>, its in both our names and we er use it to pay big bills.

Jennifer: And has that changed? You say now that its just you earning. Did you used to arrange it differently?

Fred: No, no the only thing was when she was earning, her money what she earned, she used to put it into the house, but she done with it as she wished then. I didn't have a say in what she done with her money, but she used to put it into the house, and it used to clothe the children and er that sort of thing. I still used to give her the housekeeping, a set amount..an agreed figure for the housekeeping.

Now that Ivy's income is reduced, it is simply added to the housekeeping budget. Interestingly enough, when I asked what was included under "big bills", this was only the telephone bill and the electricity bill. However, they then explained to me that they have a "telephone tin", and whoever makes a call puts some money in it, plus Fred puts a pound out of his pay packet in on a Friday night. In fact, Fred went on to tell me that there is usually enough in the tin to pay the bill anyway without having to go to the bank. "Housekeeping" on the other hand, included the rent, food, gas, household and personal insurances, small items

of clothing for Ivy and gifts for the grandchildren. Fred said he did not buy many clothes for himself, but when he did he would usually use the money from the bank. In fact, Ivy later told me that she usually buys Fred's socks and underwear from the housekeeping money, so that the bank is used only for larger items of clothing. When Ivy needs a more expensive item, that would come from the bank also.

However, it was clear that Fred and Ivy both regarded the money in the bank account as belonging to him, and reinforced this through their practice of paying only his income into it. Ivy explained the logic of having a joint account in the following way:

Ivy: Sometimes he can't always get to the bank you see when he's at work so that's why we've got a joint account. So that if he wants any money out I can go down and get it.

Fred and Ivy's lives are dominated by their children and their grandchildren. In all the interviews I was shown piles of family photographs, and I was given updates on Gillian's pregnancy and subsequent birth of a son as the interviews progressed. They loved to talk about this immediate family, but rarely talked spontaneously of brothers and sisters or more distant secondary kin. Every Saturday morning Fred goes to his allotments, and at lunchtime he calls at Susan's house to pick up her two sons. He then brings them back for the afternoon where Fred and Ivy entertain them either at home or by taking them out, and give them an evening meal. Ivy buys presents and snacks for the boys as well as providing their meal. She now also keeps a supply of

nappies and baby cream and so on for when Gillian brings the baby over each week. Both of the daughters call in, usually unannounced, two or three times a week to see Ivy and Fred. Both of them married men whom Fred works with, so he sees his sons in law daily, getting the family news and bringing it home to Ivy. Fred and Ivy go to their daughters' houses less often, because of the difficutly of dropping by unannounced where small children are concerned, but nevertheless go about once a week or once a fortnight. Ivy is beginning to babysit for Gillian but did not do so for some time because the baby has had to be monitored against cot death each time he sleeps, and Gillian was reluctant to leave him.

Fred explained that their close involvement with "the family" meant that he and Ivy did not have much of a social life; he felt that people of his and Ivy's age generally became very involved with children and grandchildren, and gradually less involved with friends. Both he and Ivy are glad that their daughters live nearby though so that they can maintain such an involvement. It is clear that their immediate kin, thus defined, form an organising principle of Fred and Ivy's daily lives. The Jensens have never entertained friends in their home, but used to go to the pub or for a meal occasionally with people they knew. Fred is a member of the Naval Association and goes to meetings one evening a month. He used regularly to go on their social functions, but he explained that they do not seem to have so many now. He feels that the younger members are not very interested. Ivy used to play bat and trap (5) and was in the women's team for a local pub, but has given this up because she hasn't enough time

and also because the tournaments now involve matches all over Kent yet she has no transport and is unable to drive. Most of this activity had taken place before the children had left home, and both Fred and Ivy felt that, other than seeing their family, they tended to do less now than in the past. Fred explained that he is at the age now where he is quite happy to come in at night and sit down to relax in front of the television, and Ivy's ill health forms a constraint on what she can do.

Ivy generally has less social contact since her retirement, although she *sometimes bumps into old workmates in the town, and* she does visit one of them a couple of times a month. She explained that three of them used to get together and go into the town looking round the shops, earning the nickname 'the terrible trio' (6). This has gradually ceased and although the woman she visits is one of the trio, she feels increasingly awkward about visiting because that woman's husband is now retired and is always there when she calls. Although he is "very nice", she feels she and her friend cannot chat freely, and she visits less and less.

Fred is neither eagerly anticipating his retirement, nor dreading its prospect. He hopes they will have enough money to live on and that he will remain as healthy as he is today; he is determined that he will keep active and not "become a cabbage like some men do". He said he would plan to spend most of his time in his allotments when the time comes.

b. Charles and Catherine Wheeler (case 11: middle class)

(i) Biographical Overview

Charles and Catherine are currently both aged 64. They have been married for 38 years and since their marriage have always lived in Canterbury. For the last 33 years they have lived in the same privately rented luxury flat in the city centre. They have no children but I was unable to ascertain whether or not this was by choice, and what kinds of negotiations it might have involved. Catherine has one sister, and Charles has two. His only brother died four years ago. Both Catherine and Charles have been retired for nearly six years.

Catherine was born in a village a few miles outside Canterbury, and shortly afterwards her parents separated. She believes her father was in the Royal Flying Corps, but is unsure because she lost contact with him after he left. She does not know whether or not he is still alive. Her mother took in laundry and did cleaning to keep Catherine and her sister. Charles was born some 20 miles away in a small market town where his parents were publicans.

Catherine left school in 1945 when she was 14 and worked full-time in various shops in Canterbury, also training for a year as a GPO telephonist - training that she considers was extremely valuable for her subsequent career. During the war she went into the WAF for two years during which time she met Charles who was in the RAF. Charles had left school at 16 and went to work full-time in the public health department of the then Canterbury Corporation. When he was 18 in 1938 Charles's father died, leaving his mother to run the pub on her own. At the beginning

of the war, Charles became a junior draughtstman still at the Canterbury Corporation, and did this for two years until joining the RAF in 1941 for the remainder of the war. His job was held open for him and he returned to it after the war. During the war Charles became engaged to another woman, but her parents did not approve of the marriage and the engagement was subsequently broken off. In 1946 his mother died, and the family did not continue with the pub.

A year later, when he was 27 and she was 26, Charles and Catherine married, moving directly into a rented flat in the centre of Canterbury. Catherine gave up her job when they married, because both she and Charles felt that she should look after the home on a full-time basis. Around this time Charles finished training as a junior draughtsman and became fully qualified.

A year after she had given up her job as a shop assistant, Catherine decided that she was not happy to be in the home alone all day, and she took another full-time job in one of the shops she had worked in before the war. She was rather vague about the sequencing of her jobs in the various shops, but was clear that she stayed in full-time shop work for nine years after that, before leaving in 1957 to train for secretarial/clerical work and pursuing a career in that direction.

In the meantime, she and Charles had moved to the flat in Canterbury where they have lived ever since. Catherine began working full-time as a clerk-typist for a local firm in 1958.

Charles was still in the same job, but in 1964 when he was 45 he left and began working as a draughtsman for Kent Water Company. He was promoted to chief draughtsman in 1969, and remained in that full-time job until he took early retirement in 1979. Catherine changed jobs in 1971, and began as a clerk-typist for the local authority, where she was to remain until her early retirement shortly after Charles's.

In 1973, Catherine's mother who lived about half a mile away became ill, gradually becoming virtually bedridden. Catherine, whose unmarried sister was working full-time as a nursing sister and living in London, began to visit daily to cook meals, clean the house and gradually to care for her mother. This went on for some five years before Catherine's mother died. When I asked about Catherine's sisters' involvement in this care I discovered it was minimal. Catherine told me, although not at all in a judgemental way, that her sister had a "career and a life in London", thus she was apparently excused.

During that time, in fact in 1975, Charles had a coronary thrombosis and was critically ill. He was off work for nine months, for the first part of which he was bedridden, and for most of which he was confined to their flat because he was unable to get down the two flights of stairs leading to it. Catherine kept her job, but returned home every lunchtime and at any other opportunity, spending the early mornings and evenings dividing her time and as she told me, her loyalties, to look after both her husband and her mother. During this time she too became ill, and had a hysterectomy in 1976. By the time her mother died,

Charles had recovered sufficiently to return to work, although he retired a year later. Catherine took early retirement about a year and a half afterwards because she felt she ought to be at home with Charles. However, she has still made herself available for occasional spells of temporary part-time work for the local authority. In fact, at the time of interview, she was dreading her approaching 65th birthday, because from that date she would no longer be eligible for this kind of employment. Charles has gained eligibility for both a state and occupational pension but is currently drawing invalidity benefit until he is 65; Catherine receives a small state pension until that time and a small occupational pension in her own right.

(ii) Responsibilities and daily life

Catherine and Charles's relative responsibilities seem, on the face of it, to be less clear cut than those of Ivy and Fred. This is mainly because Catherine and Charles worked out a new system for the division of domestic labour when they retired. Prior to that time, they told me that Catherine did "absolutely everything", but once they were both at home during the day they found they were "getting under each other's feet" as Catherine put it. They explained the situation as follows:

Jennifer: Which one of you does the most housework?

Charles: (laughing) you're going to laugh when you hear the story.

Catherine: (laughing) I have a very good home help.

Jennifer: (laughing) It's you is it? (to Charles)

Charles: Yes, I reckon to do the house right through once a week. And everything's moved. Everything. I don't just go round things.

Catherine: Oh he does it marvellously, much better than I do. When this started, I must say, when we were both working he didn't do anything at all, or very little shall I say. He only used to do the wash basin, toilet and bath, to help. But when he retired and I was working full-time he said 'well I'll do the housework'. 'Ooh' I said 'that would be marvellous, thank you'. I mean I don't care whether it's clean or not. So he took it on, so I was worried stiff that when I was going to retire, I thought crumbs I wonder if I've got to start doing that housework again (laughing). So he said, 'no I'll carry on doing the housework as long as you get out and leave me to it'. So of course I go out like a shot (laughing). I go and get the papers. So if its nice I sit in the little gardens over there and glance at the paper, and then I think 'oh yes he'll be out of the kitchen by now, I'll go back and make the coffee', and then I make the coffee and we sit and have that and probably do the crossword, don't we, and then I go off into the town. And then I come back at a quarter to one, when it's all done, and I say 'oh thank you, it does look lovely'.

The change took place, therefore, because Charles retired before Catherine who was still working full-time. Interestingly enough, though, the responsibility for the housework remains with Catherine, and this is partly illustrated in the way that they make a ritual and a joke of Charles's doing the work, and in the extent to which Catherine is grateful for his help. Furthermore, although Charles emphasises his thoroughness in housework, Catherine's comment that she does not care whether it is clean or not indicates that if she did care, she might have to do the work herself. Indeed, it emerged later in the interview that Catherine does all the cooking and deciding what to buy (although they go to the shops together), and the day to day tidying up and housework, and the polishing. She had in fact done

some cleaning before I came in honour of my visit and that of some dinner guests:

Catherine: I cleaned it yesterday because you were coming, and they were coming last night. I'd have a lot more to do if it weren't for Charles's cleaning, but I whipped through it yesterday.

Catherine's continuing gratitude for Charles's help, and her statement that she would have a lot more to do if he did not do it, are indicative of the dimension of responsibility outlined in earlier chapters. Charles is apparently at liberty to withdraw his help, legitimately, at any time and Catherine remains liable to be called to account for the housework, despite the fact that he has had no employment since retirement, but she has been intermittently employed in part-time work. Childcare, of course, has never been an issue for Charles and Catherine. So there was no requirement that one of them should tailor their employment career around the needs of the children. Furthermore Catherine's employment had clearly always been important to her, as had Charles's to him. She said she had loved going to work and pitied "the young" who seemed to have less commitment to their jobs. Indeed, except for a short break after her marriage, Catherine had worked full-time all her life until she took retirement early to spend time at home with Charles. She had retired specifically to be with Charles, so that they could spend their retirement together, but when I interviewed her individually it became clear that her strategy of making herself available for part-time temporary work after that date had an important function in maintaining her status as a worker in her

own eyes. She told me that she would shortly no longer be able to do temporary work because she would be 65:

Catherine: I've been a bit depressed to think that my working life has finished. All the time I've been retired, he (Charles) doesn't know this, but all the time I've been retired I've thought 'ooh I'm not finished yet' sort of thing, not knowing they would call me back, but knowing they might. But now I think, 'crumbs, I might as well go out to grass now'. It's a horrible feeling because I don't feel old, this is the trouble. It's a horrible feeling to think that your working life is finished. Because I've always loved work, this is the thing. And I keep threatening I'm going apple picking this year, I've got to do something, you know, because I shall feel awful if I know I'm absolutely finished, if I'm not going to work again. Because I started working at a very early age, at 14, but I've known nothing else and now I think its coming to an end and I think its dreadful. I think well what is it worth living for now, you know. I'm waiting to die.

This is the kind of sentiment associated with popular concern about men's retirement but, as argued earlier, not women's. Yet despite retirement being an issue of public concern for men, neither Charles nor any of the other men in the study spoke about it in quite this way. In fact Catherine had only been called back two or three times a year, for a few weeks at a time, to do part-time temporary work since her retirement. What was important to her was that she was able symbolically to maintain her status as a working woman. Being forced out of employment was clearly perceived as an untimely reminder of aging for Catherine.

Despite the importance of her employment, she and Charles had clearly always regarded his job as the primary one. Indeed, Catherine had never been a high earner, having spent her life in junior clerical positions, whilst Charles had earned status and a high salary in his job as Chief Draughtsman. What is more, for Charles and Catherine, retirement began when Charles took early

retirement because of ill health. A few months later Catherine voluntarily gave up her job to be at home with him. This meant that she was unable to tell him of her feelings about workending; she made the above comments in her individual interview. Her reasoning, despite her experience, was that his workending was more important and significant than hers and she would be both unthinking and unkind to complain. Thus in their case, although Catherine had no absences from the labour market for the care of children, other factors combined to make her job the secondary one.

Related to this is the question of money management, for just as Charles's ill health was a catalyst for change in their employment lives, so it was in their budgeting system. They explained their system, and its changes, as follows:

Charles: We have a very definite system, but ours is different to everybody else's. When Catherine went out to work, I said to her whatever money she earned, that was hers. I looked after all the bills and everything and I used to give her a small amount of pocket money, small amount, I will say small. But other than that, whatever she earned she spent. I mean alright you know in fairness to Catherine, a lot of the things we've got in the home were due to her, though of course she did and always has liked buying clothes.

Jennifer: What did you do about the housekeeping money then?

Charles: Oh well I paid for that.

Catherine: Charles gave me the housekeeping money, and paid the bills, but people think we're mad you know because, well friends say 'oh fancy you having your own money and that' and we've always had our separate banking accounts.

Jennifer: You still have those do you?

Catherine: We still have our own but Charles has got a joint one because, or at least we've got a joint one because when he was ill there was money coming in, and I'd never seen any bills before, and the bills started coming in and I thought 'crikey what do I do with these'. I mean I knew they'd got to be paid but I thought 'oh I don't know what to do, I suppose I'd better pay these' so I paid them. And he said when he came out of hospital we'll have a different arrangement, we'll have a joint account so you won't have to worry again and if the bills come in you'll be able to pay. So that's really when he started the joint account.

Charles: Yes, after 1975 I started a joint account so you know Catherine can go along and get some money out. I don't keep much in it.

Charles and Catherine, then, like Fred and Ivy, have a system whereby the husband has a joint account although in effect this is his money and his account. Charles's account differs from Fred's, however, in that it is neither his only nor his main account, and it was set up in response to Catherine's experience of being unable to draw on his earnings while he was ill in 1975. This in itself is significant in supporting the notion that Charles's job was primary and Catherine's voluntary: that is, Catherine had had no involvement in paying bills from her salary which she kept to spend on clothes and to supplement the housekeeping. Furthermore, their story is in line with Hunt's observations about the uses to which husbands' and wives' earnings are put, and the ideological construction of wives' earnings as supplementary and their work non-essential. Thus Catherine's earnings have been used for apparently 'extra' items for the home and clothes, as well as supplementing the

housekeeping, while Charles has always paid, and continues to pay, 'essentials' like the bills, as well as to provide her with housekeeping. What is more the rhetoric through which Charles explains that he gave permission for Catherine to keep her money helps to betray that the other money was his. Catherine's domestic responsibility and servicing does not emerge as relevant to this discussion of family economics and in this partial context the fact that Charles apparently shared 'his' money, and Catherine kept 'hers', looked a little unfair.

Catherine gave a fascinating account of the way in which the administration and inequality of pensions helps to perpetuate an ideology of female economic dependence on men. Yet her later comments make it clear that, despite the fact that she has always earned her own wages, her economic dependence on Charles is not merely a myth:

Catherine: I have two pensions in my own right. A small one, because I ceased paying insurance when I got married. So I get from 14 to 27, little pension from that, and I get a little pension from (the local authority). So that's all my money, and then um Charles as you know is on invalidity and he claims for me what he would get if I hadn't been working, they make up the balance, so it doesn't pay you to work really. So my pension from the state is made up through him to what it would be if I hadn't been working and he had drawn the full amount. He just gets the extra but he gives me that (laughing). (In a lowered voice because Charles is in the kitchen) I take it really because I think for the first time since we've been married he's pleased that he gives me money because I've always earned my own money you see, never had to ask him for anything. And now he'll say 'there's your pocket money' on a Monday when he goes and gets it and I say 'ooh pay day today, ooh that's lovely' and I think he's so thrilled now, to give me money. I don't ask him, you know, to have a pair of tights or something, because I don't think I could ever do that to a man. I'm so independent, but I think he feels now that he's the man of the house and he gives me the pocket money.

In some respects, Catherine is clearly privileged vis a vis other women who do have to ask their husbands for a pair of tights and she can thus perhaps be 'generous' enough to allow Charles the pleasure of now providing her with money. But the fact that her wages have always been low, and her pension entitlement is less than Charles would have received had she not been working, and that she retired early to be at home with him, together with their lifetime's routine of Charles giving her the housekeeping money, all underlines her economic dependence on him in practice.

Catherine: If you've done 25 years or something you get a very good pension, but I only did ten (with the local authority) and then I lost quite a lot of my superannuation because I retired voluntarily, you know, whereas if I'd gone on until 65 I'd have got a lot more, and my pension would have been larger of course.

And finally she came to the crux of the issue for her of her dependence on Charles's income: the fact that at this stage of life she could not conceive of how she would do without it. For example, when I asked her whether they had ever thought about buying a house:

Catherine: No we didn't because we hadn't got the money when we were first married and then, well I suppose, I was only thinking about that the other day. It was rather stupid on our part. We never gave it a thought because you see in those days the rent was so cheap that it didn't pay us to think about going to buy a house. Well now with the Rent Act, well its gone up and up and up and up and up, every two years you see they come, and up goes the rent every time. And what I was thinking, well..I would never be able to pay to keep this flat on if anything happened to Charles because although he gets quite a good pension now it would never pay the rent, well maybe the rent and rates it would but what could I live on. I've only got a little bit of a pension and that's started me thinking and of course now it's too late to try and buy a place. Charles says what's the point at this age? And all the rent officer says when he comes is oh well you'd go on DHSS but we saved for our old age so that we wouldn't be a burden to the country.

Catherine is in a position whereby she is dependent economically on Charles, and also where she has no power to persuade him to enquire about buying a house, or even the flat where they now live, both because the money needed would be his, and also because her anxiety stems from the possibility of his death. The latter is a difficult topic to broach with him.

Charles's coronary, together with Catherine's mother's simultaneous ill health, help to illustrate conflicts surrounding Catherine's responsibility for family health. She did not give up her job to care for them full-time, not least because she did not have access to Charles's income at that time. But for all but eight weeks of the nine months during which Charles was ill, she spent her non-employment time caring for them both and adjusted her hours of employment where possible to do so. Her mother lived alone nearby, and Catherine's only sister was nursing in London with a "career and a life", so Catherine felt it was her responsibility to look after her mother:

Catherine: I always think somehow you get the strength, even when you're dropping, you get the strength given you to carry on. I feel now I don't know how I did it. But when you know you've got to do it, you do it. And sometimes I was desperately tired, least little thing I would..well when I left mum's I was very torn with leaving her because she wasn't very well and coming home here and many times I've crossed that road leaving her and I've cried because I've shouted at her, and I thought oh you shouldn't have shouted at mum, you might find her dead at the bottom of the stairs in the morning. I thought well I daren't stay round there because once I give in I've got to stay there. I'd got no accommodation here and even if I'd turned this room into a bedroom for her, Charles couldn't have put up with the noise. And you know he can't bear a place untidy, so that would have worried him. So I was very torn what to do, duty to my mother or duty here, it was very difficult. And as I say I was desperately tired. And thats why..the social services got mum away. I was always sorry that ever happened because she only

lived for eight weeks after.

An evocative piece, and an impossible choice to make arising from the conflicting and contradictory demands of Catherine's responsibility for the health of her family. Any course of action - doing the caring and shouting in desperation at her mother, or not doing the caring - would inevitably make her feel guilty.

As indicated, Charles's ill health also predicated their retirement. Catherine told me that she and Charles had always felt that retirement was to be enjoyed together and although it had come a little earlier than anticipated there was no question but that Catherine would retire also. Unlike Fred and Ivy, Catherine and Charles had no children or grandchildren to occupy them, and felt proud to say that they had an active social life with lots of friends. They told me that they did "everything together" and always had done. In the past, before Charles's illness, they had participated in many sporting activities: badminton, tennis, swimming, watching cricket. In addition, Charles had played cricket and soccer. Indeed, the picture presented of the past through their descriptions was that for Catherine leisure activities were done together, but Charles had some independent activities. However, Charles had to stop all of this after his coronary but told me that he was lucky that it had come at that time and not before. He felt he had enjoyed a good sporting life, and was now happy to watch. Catherine gave up sport at that time too and she explained to me in her individual interview that:

Catherine: We used to play tennis, we had to give that up. I was hoping we'd go on with that until we were about 70.

Jennifer: Do you still play?

Catherine: No I didn't think it was fair so I got rid of my racket and things when I realised Charles couldn't play. Well so did he. So I got rid of mine, which was quite heart rending at the time. I had to give it up you know, which was quite sad but I don't think I ever showed that I was miserable about it. I just thought I've got to, its not fair if I do it and he can't, so that was the end of that.

Catherine and Charles now pride themselves on the range of their activities - they work in a charity shop, are in various local clubs and committees, and they have an allotment. Indeed, fixing interviews was quite a difficult task because they had to slot me into a space in the (joint) engagement diary which they keep. They have a car which Charles drives. Catherine used to drive but says she has now lost the confidence to do so.

c. Doug and Patience Ward (Case 14: Upper Middle Class)

(i) Biographical Overview

Doug is currently aged 67, and Patience is 66. They have been married for 43 years. They have a son aged 41 who is married with two children and living in Guildford, and a daughter aged 37, also married with four children, and living in Beckenham. Doug retired three years ago from his full-time job as the estate manager for a Kent based land, mining and estates conglomerate, and Patience gave up her part-time job as a general clerk at a local clinic at the same time.

Doug was born in Beckenham and left school at the age of 14. He had one sister, who is still living. His father was a milkman, and for a time ran a grocery store. His mother was a waitress and also helped to run the grocery store. Doug's father took him out of school before matriculation because he wanted him to go to work to bring in an extra income. Doug resented his father for this for the rest of his life. He began full-time work as a shop assistant and two years later when he was 16 in 1934, Doug's father left home. His parents were never reunited and his father subsequently married again.

Patience was born in Camberley and had one sister and one brother, both of whom are still living. Her father was an aircraft engineer, and her mother had no paid employment after marriage. Patience left school, having matriculated, at the age of 17 and took the civil service entrance exams. She passed the exams, and began what was to be a five year full-time career with the civil service. During the war she was evacuated with the civil service to Blackpool and shortly afterwards volunteered to go nursing full-time. She was sent to Middlesex hospital.

Meanwhile Doug had been called up. He started in the army, but then went into the RAF. In 1941 he was taken ill and sent to Middlesex hospital, where he was diagnosed as having TB. It was while he was in hospital and she was a nurse that Doug and Patience met. Doug in fact had pleurisy, and a few months later was out of hospital. They married a year later, in 1942 and moved into a rented flat in London. Patience left nursing at that time because she was unable to gain permission to take 61

days' leave coinciding with Doug's. Giving up her job enabled her to do this. She returned to the civil service where she stayed in full-time work for nearly two years, until the birth of their first child Timothy who was, they told me, conceived intentionally in haste in case Doug was killed in the war. Doug was overseas when Timothy was born, and two months later Patience was notified that he was "missing, believed killed". Shortly afterwards, their flat was bombed, and Patience moved, taking Timothy, to live with her parents who had been evacuated to Southport. She received a widow's pension for the last eight months of the war.

Patience told me that this fundamentally changed her outlook on life. "After that nothing else can be quite so bad. You no longer get het up about little unimportant things" she explained. However shortly after the end of the war Doug returned having been a prisoner of war. He managed with some difficulty to find Patience and Timothy at her parents' home. This was the first time he had met his son.

Doug was determined not to go back to being a shop assistant, and found a full-time office job at a quarry near Beckenham. He and Patience moved into rented rooms nearby. Patience was at home full-time looking after Timothy during this period, and a year later they bought and moved into a new house. A year after that their daughter Caroline was born, and during that same year Doug was promoted to manager of a small quarry. A year and a half after that, in 1949 when he was aged 31, Doug was given another promotion, this time to be transport manager at a large quarry in

Surrey. Doug and Patience subsequently moved - buying a house in Surrey. By this time Timothy was six and Caroline was two. Within two years Doug had been promoted again. His new position was manager of the firm's biggest quarry.

Doug remained in that position for nearly eight years. During that time, and when Caroline reached the age of six, Patience began doing voluntary nursing on a part-time basis. A year later, when she was 36, she was involved in a serious car accident and subsequently had a hysterectomy.

In 1958, the firm Doug worked for was taken over by a larger concern, and Doug "fell out" with the new people. He left and immediately got another job as manager of a smaller quarry for a company based in Faversham, Kent. By this time Timothy was aged 17 and Caroline was 13, and neither they nor Patience wanted to move. Doug told me that he gave them an ultimatum; either they would all go with him or, on a certain date, he would go anyway. They went with him.

The move meant that Patience gave up her voluntary nursing, after seven years, but shortly after moving to Faversham she got involved in some WRVS voluntary work, which ultimately led into more voluntary nursing. After they had been in Faversham a year, Timothy left to go to a college about a hundred miles away. Around this time Doug began to suffer the symptoms of an undiagnosed stomach ulcer.

In 1963 Doug's mother, who had been living alone, was taken ill

with cancer. She moved in with Doug, Patience and Caroline - who was by then aged 16 - for the last eight months of her life. Towards the end of this period, Patience became heavily involved in caring for her.

A year after Doug's mother died, in 1965, Caroline went away to university. A few weeks after she left Doug and Patience learned that she was pregnant. She had the child, and continued her university course with the help of Doug's sister who lived nearby and provided childcare. A year later, when she was 19, Caroline married the father of the child, and went on to gain a first class honours degree in mathematics. Shortly afterward Timothy, who had never returned home to live having left to go to college, married. A year after that, Caroline's husband left her and their child.

In 1970 Doug gained another promotion. This time he was made estate manager of his company, and he remained in this full-time job until his retirement 12 years later. Three years after his promotion, his ulcer was diagnosed and removed.

In 1974, Doug and Patience found a plot of land in a small village outside Canterbury (about seven miles from Doug's work in Faversham), and began to design and build a house. They had always planned to build a home to retire to and now, at the ages of 57 and 56, they felt it was time to do so. The house - a large, detached bungalow in about an acre of land - is the one in which they currently live. It was completed in 1975, and they moved in during the summer. Also in that year, Caroline

remarried, and Timothy's wife had a child.

Patience was able to find a job when they moved. For the first time in her married life - except for her wartime spell in the civil service - and at the age of 56 she took a paid job, as a part-time general clerk in a clinic. She continued with her voluntary nursing, also on a part-time basis. Two years later, in 1977, she was persuaded by a group of 'keep fit' friends to go apple picking (part-time paid work) with them on a local fruit farm for three weeks in the summer each year.

Caroline subsequently had another child, as did Timothy's wife, and in 1982, when he was aged 65, Doug retired. Patience left her job at the same time, so that they could spend retirement together, although she has continued her voluntary nursing, and her seasonal apple picking. During that same year Patience's mother and father died leaving her and Doug an inheritance which they invested, Doug became a Parish Councillor, and Caroline had twins. Doug and Patience now had six granchildren. In 1984, Doug's father died. He and Doug had had little contact since Doug was a teenager, but a few years before his death his father made an effort to patch things up, and when he died he and Doug were on speaking terms. Doug was amazed to receive an inheritance from his father, whom he thought had no money, and this too was invested.

Doug now receives both a state and an occupational pension. Patience receives no money in her own right, except for the wages she earns for her annual 3 weeks' apple picking.

(ii) Responsibilities and daily life

Doug and Patience have always, and continue to maintain a traditional division of tasks and responsibilities. Thus Doug's employment has always had primacy. Doug talked enthusiastically about his work and about his own social mobility. Patience has spent most of her life out of paid employment despite having undergone training before marriage and having left school with qualifications. After her children left she took up a part-time paid job but gave this up when Doug retired, hence moulding her employment first to the children's 'needs', then to her husband's. They told me that she does all the housework, and always has done. The apple picking job she does annually is seen by them both as an extension of keep fit, as the whole of her keep fit class go together, and her voluntary work is seen as a hobby or as a leisure time activity. Neither count as jobs as far as they are concerned.

Doug's retirement made no difference to this domestic practice. Partly this was because Patience left her part-time job at the same time and was thus both manifestly around to do the housework, and reinforcing the primacy of his job by allowing it to determine when their retirement would begin.

Similarly, their money management practice has not altered, and they have been 'fortunate' in latter years to be affluent enough to have no need of rigid budgeting. They have paid off their mortgage. They explained their system as follows:

Patience: We don't budget.

Doug: Budgets just frighten people. We run a joint account, always have since we've been married. I make it my responsibility to see that the essential bills are paid, the gas, lights, rates. I don't concern myself with the housekeeping, and Patience just takes..er gets what she wants for housekeeping. I do the business side of things if you like, insurances, that sort of thing.

Patience: He's never queried a penny that I spent, ever, he's very good

Doug: No. And you've (to Patience) never known what I've earned.

Patience: No, no well I haven't worried about it. And also the subscriptions and things that you've had, I never even..it doesn't worry me.

Doug and Patience are clearly betraying a view here that the 'essentials' are those items which Doug administers, and that the money actually belongs to him. Also, there is the implication that their joint account is, like the Jensen's and the Wheeler's, more his account, since Patience has never known what he earned. Presumably this means she does not have sight of the bank statement, or that he had his salary paid into a separate account. Patience has no income, except for annual apple picking money which she keeps for herself, in her own right. She is appreciative of his never querying her household expenditure and told me that she knows a lot of other women "aren't so lucky". They both draw personal spending money from the account. Their system, and the way they talk about it, is illustrative of what we might assume would, in practice, be a much more inequitable

arrangement for Patience either if they actually had less money or if Doug were less willing to 'lay open' the bank account to her. We might conclude that a structurally unequal situation is eased for her because of these two interpersonal factors. In other words, the structure of their situation offers no imperative that money will be divided or controlled equally: quite the contrary.

Both Doug and Patience say they are very active socially. They do most things together, but also each have a range of independent activities. Thus they are members of the sailing club, they play badminton, are highly involved in village community activities, have dinner parties etc. Doug also plays cricket with his ex-firm's team, bowls, is a parish councillor, and a Freemason. Patience goes swimming with friends, and also to keep fit, and is a member of both a formal and an informal "ladies group" in her village. Doug's activities tend to keep him slightly busier than those of Patience. There is a range of sporting activities which Doug has gradually given up as he has got older, but he feels he in some ways is more active now than before, for example his parish councilling, and bowls, are activities he has taken up since retirement. Patience feels her activities really took off when they moved to the village where they live, although she goes out rather less during the daytime now that Doug has retired, and spends more time at home on her own in the evenings when he is out. They now share a car whereas before Doug retired they had one each.

They see less of their children and grandchildren than they would

like. Doug told me that Patience felt this particularly strongly. The children visit only once or twice a year, and Doug and Patience are rarely invited, particularly to their son's. Patience told me she was disappointed that her children both left home at 18, and never returned to live there full-time again, because she had been looking forward to going on family holidays and the like with them once they were adults. Patience would gladly sacrifice some of her social life to spend more time with her children if that were possible.

Although Doug told me that Patience was more concerned about this than he. She told me in her individual interview that "it hurts him too, although he doesn't talk about it much". It clearly was an issue for him; he recounted a story to me about having a heart murmer develop a year ago, and being fitted with a pacemaker. His son knew that the monitor had been fitted, but has to this day not enquired about the outcome of the tests and about his father's health. Similarly, both Doug and Patience told me bitterly that neither of the children had ever asked about his experience as a prisoner of war. This is clearly in stark contrast to the observation that close kin are an organising principle of the daily lives of Fred and Ivy Jensen for example.

3. Changing Biographical Contexts

Perhaps one of the strongest themes coming out of all three cases as far as the construction of gender inequality is concerned, is the adherence to traditional gender roles despite 'intervening' factors over time like the upsurge in women's employment, the

second world war and so on, as well as more recent disruptions like retirement, departure of children and ill health.

Indeed, all of the couples were aged between 50 and 70 in 1985, therefore having been born between 1915 and 1935, and aged between 4 and 24 at the outbreak of war in 1939. All had some recollection of the war, and the post-war period when many of them were building their homes and families. Two of the women and 13 of the men had served in some division of the armed services during the war. For many, like Fred Jensen, a death in the family or amongst friends became a commonplace. Patience Ward's account of her husband's reported death and her subsequent reordering of priorities, and their anticipation of the possibility in the conception of their son, is indicative of the kinds of harrowing near death experiences others encountered and a variety of strategies adopted to deal with them.

The war of course brought with it a number of drastic social changes for those who remained 'at home' as well, for example evacuation, the acceptance and indeed promotion of women's employment, the extension of state domestic aid such as in childcare and 'socialised' cooking partly to enable this employment, scarcity of household resources and so on (Evans, 1984).

Yet this was followed by the reasserted home-centredness of the 1950s and early 1960s, when 'we had won the war'. Couples in my study group were at that time in the early stages of their marriages, family formation and home building. Housing, planning

and education policies and provision enshrined notions of the ideal home, with women firmly entrenched within it in a traditional sexual division of labour (Roberts, 1984; Evans, 1984; Stacey and Price, 1981; Wilson, 1980; Rowbotham, 1977; Birmingham Feminist History Group, 1979). Of course this period also witnessed the beginnings of the post-war increase in women's paid employment, particularly the part-time employment of married women, as well as the possibility of 'full employment' for the majority of men. This is reflected in the employment patterns of my study group as we shall see in the next chapter. Along with all this went a mood of optimism: an expanding welfare state, higher living standards, the championing of democracy and equality.

This was followed by what Evans has called "the dream turned sour" in the 1960s and 1970s. The sanctity of the home, and women's place within it, together with gender inequalities in general, began to be questioned by the Women's Liberation Movement. Poverty, inequality and women's subordination to men were all 'rediscovered' (Evans, 1984). During these years the couples in my study were approaching or entering middle age and they had growing children who were becoming adult and beginning to leave home, perhaps for their parents as embodiments of a new generation for whom ideals of equality were at least as salient as home-centredness. Of course, economic recession. bringing unemployment on a major scale was on the horizon, together into the 1980s with an assertion of conservative values and the appropriateness of a traditional sexual division of labour against the backcloth of a contracting welfare state. It is

against this rather ambiguous period that the couples were entering retirement and old age.

Conclusion

As noted, it would be a different kind of study which documented historically the negotiations and construction of gender inequality through marriage, unpacking where possible the interplay between structure, practice and meaning over time. My focus is on negotiations taking place in the here and now for the study group couples. But their biographies, and the historical backcloth against which they have been lived are, as suggested, both constituents of aspects of current inqualities and, more generally, part of a cultural, material and marital heritage with which they were approaching later life and current negotiations.

The main purpose of this chapter has been to establish something of the flavour of this, by detailed reference to three case studies, as well as to provide an aggregate and comparative picture of some social characteristics for the whole study group. The case studies have helped to indicate in some detail the kinds of diversities which exist between the couples, as well as hinting at more common themes which will be developed later. They allowed a degree of biographical and contextual depth which is inevitably lost in more aggregate analyses. Therefore they form a prelude for the next chapter where I will broaden the biographical picture through a discussion of the contours and responsibilities of daily married life for all the couples.

Chapter Six : The Contours and Gendered Responsibilities of Daily Married Life

Introduction

In this chapter I will broaden the biographical discussion begun in chapter 5 to take account of all the interviewees, and I will draw out themes of diversity and similarity. Where the last chapter outlined the social profiles of all the couples at the broadest level and introduced three biographical case studies, this chapter will develop an aggregate and comparative view of the contours and gendered responsibilities of daily married life, with particular focus on recent change and continuity. The chapter will be divided into three broad interrelated sections concerned with: work, money and leisure.

There is no doubt that some of the divisions in the study group outlined in chapter five both expressed and produced variations in current experience. Thus for example some people were approaching or had encountered the end of employment as grandparents, with their own children in their forties. Others, although grandparents, were approaching or encountering the end of employment with children still living at home and dependent on them. Others were now the "first generation", their parents having died, but some had parents living albeit generally frail or in ill health and so on. The purpose of this chapter is to go on to consider the nature of some of these divisions, and of changes and continuities over time, but also to tease out common themes surrounding gendered responsibilities.

1. Work Outside and Inside the Home

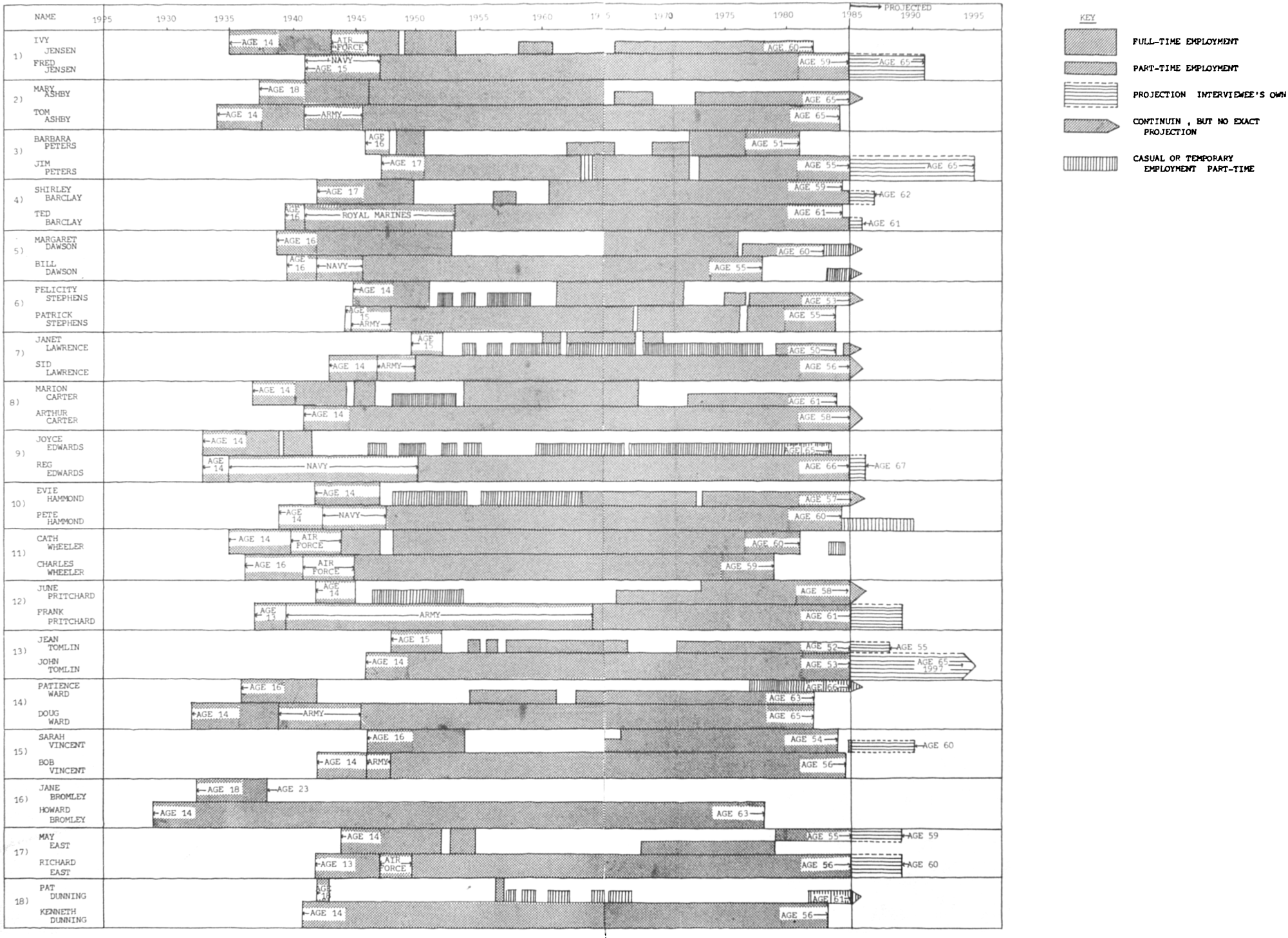
a. Paid employment and domestic responsibilities

Given that one of the central disruptions whose signficance I wish to examine is in the sphere of paid employment, this is an obvious place to start. One of the major forms of work undertaken over the interviewees' lifetimes had been employment (including self employment), and this had almost always taken place outside the home. Chart 6.1 below gives an outline of lifetime patterns of employment in the study group. It is immediately striking firstly that gender forms a significant division in this area, and secondly that change and disruption affects men as well as women in later years.

As can be seen, there is variation in employment histories across the study group, but some patterns can be discerned. Ten of the women left school and started employment at the age of 14 or 15. The others were all out at work by the age of 18, seven of them having either attended a grammar school or done some other form of training (Dunning, Bromley, Vincent, Ward, Barclay, Ashby, Dawson). Fourteen of the men had left school by the age of 14 (two at 13) and started employment virtually straight away. The others were all out at work by 17, three of them again either having attended grammar school or having done other training (Wheeler, Dawson, Peters).

It is striking that all of the men have virtually full employment histories . For 13 of them (and two of the women) this included spells in the armed forces either during or immediately after the the war. Only Patrick Stephens and Jim Peters had periods of

TABLE 6.1: LIFETIME PATTERNS OF PAID EMPLOYMENT



unemployment before the age of 50; some of the other men simply having a week or two between jobs. This clear pattern of men entering employment at 14 or 15 and remaining continuously in paid work at least until the age of 50 is undoubtedly reliant in part on economic conditions which were historically specific, and is unlikely to be reproduced for today's generation of school leavers.

The women's patterns of employment are markedly different to those of their husbands. Having begun their employment lives in full-time jobs they all went on to have at least one complete break from employment sometime after marriage for (with the exception of Catherine Wheeler) childrearing. Seventeen of them subsequently re-entered employment, and for 15 of these re-entry was on a part-time basis, often of a casual or temporary nature. Catherine Wheeler and Margaret Dawson re-entered on a full-time basis, and seven other women subsequently took full-time employment (Peters, Barclay, Stephens, Lawrence who had two part-time jobs totalling full-time hours of work, Carter, Pritchard, Vincent).

Patterns such as this are not devoid of meaning, and warrant some interpretation. For example, for every couple the man had always been regarded as the chief worker and breadwinner. Employment was essentially seen as always having been more fundamental for men than for women. Indeed, when I asked interviewees to talk me through their life stories in their individual interviews, all of the men chose to hang their stories on their employment histories, thus establishing employment as a structuring

principle both of their lives, and of the interviews. Periods of unemployment, where applicable, were spoken of as problems and, as we saw with Fred Jensen in the previous chapter, it was often a matter of pride to have "never missed a day's work" and always to have provided a regular family income. Indeed, without exception the men overlooked the dates of their marriage and birth of children in their stories, and I had to ask them at what point these events had occurred.

Conversely, most of the women hung their early life stories on employment history, but once they got to the point of marriage and childbearing, family events became the structuring principle. Four of the women, (Felicity Stephens, Patience Ward, Mary Asbhy and Pat Dunning) actually forgot to tell me about particular jobs they had done, or felt that certain jobs "didn't count", even when I asked specifically for their employment histories. I only found out about these with subsequent probing or because they came to light in another part of the interview. We saw in the previous chapter that Catherine Wheeler had forgotten some of the exact sequencing and duration of her early employment history, and this was not uncommon. The point is that this did not happen in reverse. The men generally remembered the exact sequencing of their jobs, if not the precise dates, and what each involved.

This does not mean that employment was unimportant to the women, or to the economic maintenance of their households - indeed most of the women had been in paid employment for most of their lives - but rather that its performance had always been in relation to

domestic and childcare demands of the family. Two women in particular - Janet Lawrence and Joyce Edwards - were keen to impress upon me that they had been in employment for just about all of their adult lives. Both had taken their young children to work with them, Janet Lawrence to local farms fruit picking, and Joyce Edwards to the houses where she was employed privately as a cleaner. The development of a strategy for combining personal childcare - that is, it was important that they did not leave their children in someone elses' care - with the doing of a job and earning of a wage, was clearly a matter of pride.

In fact, as many as eight of the women (Felicity Stephens, Janet Lawrence, Marion Carter, Joyce Edwards, Evie Hammond, June Pritchard, Jean Tomlin, Pat Dunning) were able successfully to combine casual or long term 'temporary' paid employment with the care of children under five either taking the children (often in prams) with them to private cleaning jobs or, more commonly, to work in the fields fruit picking. The latter was generally but not always of a seasonal nature. Fieldwork of this type is clearly specific to fruit and vegetable growing areas such as Kent, and this aspect of the local labour market is likely to have been a factor contributing to these women's long employment histories. This does indicate the kind of variation that local labour market conditions at certain historical times can sustain, but the underlying principle of importance here is that the women did tailor their employment around their families' requirements, fruit and vegetable picking being suitable precisely because it enabled this to be done.

Catherine Wheeler, whom we met in the last chapter, was the only woman without children. Nevertheless she gave up her job following her marriage. Although she did return to full time employment after a year, we have seen that her jobs were always of a lower level and status than her husband's and her hours of work malleable to family demands where his were not. This culminated in her readiness to leave employment when her husband retired. Charles Wheeler took no breaks from his employment. Similarly, we saw that Patience Ward and Ivy Jensen, although in rather different patterns, tailored their employment to the requirements of husbands and children, and in Patience's case this also involved reluctantly moving house when Doug received a promotion.

Two of the women had been in jobs on a career ladder, both in 'female' kinds of caring profession: Shirley Barclay had been a principal hospital social worker, and Sarah Vincent a senior housing officer. Both told me at some length about their work, their progressions and promotions, and both emphasised their view of the social value of their work as being an essential component in their decision to follow a career. Shirley Barclay for example championed the role of hospital social workers in providing an interface between the medical concerns of powerful hospital consultants and the social realities of the outside world. Sarah Vincent emphasised what she believed could be done within bureaucratic boundaries to alleviate some of the problems of homelessness and inadequate housing. Even so, these women had not begun their careers until after having taken breaks from employment of 11 years in the case of Sarah Vincent, and six

years in the case of Shirley Barclay, to bring up their children. Furthermore they, like the other women, did not overlook family events in their life stories.

These practical examples are illustrative of the extent to which all the women's biographies had been about tailoring their employment to the demands of their families in a way which the men's had not, albeit the mode of tailoring had taken different forms dependent in part on class related, educational and local labour market resources and constraints together with historically specific legislative and administrative controls on women's employment and labour market discrimination in general: Jane Bromley for example had to give up her job as a hairdresser when she married a policeman because at that time policemen's wives were not permitted to be in employment. All of these factors combined to produce a situation where women's employment seemed appropriately secondary to their husbands' and where indeed in material terms it generally was. Evie Hammond summed up the situation for most of the women when she said: "I've had various little jobs, that's all. To fit in with the children and that."

The women could remember more readily than the men the synchronization of family and employment transitions because for them these had some relationship to each other - that is they had involved some form of negotiation at the time - whereas for the men they did not. The women unlike the men had always had to think about the servicing needs of the family before entering employment and of course labour market discrimination generally

reflects this underlying expectation. In none of the cases had this division of responsibility ever been reversed, even where the men had encountered spells of unemployment, although Barbara Peters and Felicity Stephens had strategically taken jobs just before their husbands became unemployed. Furthermore, partly because the combining of family and employment responsibility had in practice been a job for the women and not the men, the women's employment histories tended to be more complex, often involving a large number of short term casual and part-time jobs with frequent gaps in between. The exact details of these could be easily forgotten.

This type of account is of course not at odds with those of younger women given by researchers mentioned earlier or with Joshi's work on the economic costs of motherhood, albeit we might expect some differences of form for women living through different historical periods (Hunt, 1980; Green and Parry, 1981; Yeandle, 1984; Martin and Roberts, 1984; Dex, 1984; Joshi, 1984, 1987). This is a general point to which I will return later. But young children had not been the only reason for this employment and family tailoring in my study. One couple - Arthur and Marion Carter - told me a different type of story about tailoring, and this was initiated by Arthur explaining that when they were first married 21 years ago they had "marriage troubles". They had both been married before, and brought three adult children between them to the marriage and into the new family home:

Marion: I think a lot of the trouble was I was too tired.

Arthur: Well she was overworking, that's the trouble. She wouldn't pack in that damned job.

Marion: I was getting dragged down because I had a full-time job, a house, and five of us to look after. I put it down to overwork. I was tired and I had to keep going. I was forcing myself, you see, so everything sort of gradually got on your nerves, you know.

Arthur: I didn't want her to work. Not that we didn't need the money, we did, but it was too much for her.

Arthur and Marion explained to me that their problems finished once she gave up her job as a machinist which she did within four years. This is much more about tailoring to ensure family and marital wellbeing than it is about tailoring for childrearing. It appeared that the question of Arthur giving up his job as a timber and fencing worker had not reached the agenda for discussion. Marital disharmony was attributed to Marion's wanting to combine going out to work with her family responsibilities.

Furthermore, a number of the women had been involved in tailoring their employment around the job of caring for an elderly or infirm relative. None of the men had been involved in this way and this pattern is indicative of that identified by Graham, Ungerson, Finch and Groves, and so on in earlier chapters. Indeed, although three of the men - Bill Dawson, Fred Jensen, and Howard Bromley - had at some time been involved in doing odd jobs for either elderly parents or neighbours, this had never interfered with their employment and had never involved physical

caring.

However, 11 of the women (Ashby, Peters, Stephens, Lawrence, Wheeler, Pritchard, Tomlin, Ward, Vincent, East, Dunning) had been involved in intimate physical caring for elderly people (mainly relatives, sometimes husbands), and a further four (Jensen, Carter, Edwards, Bromley) had undertaken tasks such as visiting, shopping, cleaning, and running errands for elderly relatives. In all of the cases of physical caring except for that of Catherine Wheeler whom we met in the previous chapter, the women either gave up jobs to do it, or in Sarah Vincent's case took leave, or were 'able' to do it because they had part time jobs or were at home looking after children. Some took on the caring at a time when they had no job but were subsequently unable to take a job because the caring was long term and increasingly labour intensive. Indeed, this accords with Ungerson's proposition mentioned earlier that caring may be a legitimate alternative to paid work at certain points in the life course (Ungerson, 1987). The 'solution' for Catherine Wheeler, as we saw in chapter 5, was to come home from her job whenever possible to visit her sick husband and her elderly mother who lived nearby and, eventually, to have her mother taken into residential care - a decision for which she has felt guilty ever since. Three of the women - Mary Ashby, Jean Tomlin and Patience Ward - had parents-in-law move permanently (until their deaths) into their homes so that they could care for them. For Jean Tomlin and Patience Ward this lasted less than two years but for Mary Ashby the caring went on and became intensified over a period of 15 years.

Four of these women had their own sick or elderly relatives living with them while they were caring for them: Cath Wheeler as we saw cared for her husband for nine months, June Pritchard cared for her mother for a few months following a gall bladder operation when her mother refused to eat in hospital, Sarah Vincent cared for her husband at home for a few months following his heart attack, Pat Dunning cared for her mother while she was dying of cancer and has at various times cared for her husband who has suffered both nervous breakdowns and chest complaints. June Pritchard was in part-time employment, Sarah Vincent took leave from her job, and Pat Dunning was not employed at the time of her mother's illness, and the subsequent job she has taken is clerical work which she does at home.

The remainder of the women involved in caring - Felicity Stephens for her dying father, Barbara Peters for two elderly neighbours, Janet Lawrence for an elderly aunt and uncle, lived near to those they cared for, and visited them daily.

I will return to a more detailed and contextualised discussion of the relations of women's responsibility for caring and family wellbeing in general in the next chapter. The point to grasp here is the extent to which the women's responsibility for performing this close physical type of care was both allowed by, but also partly a determinant of, their tangential labour market positions vis a vis their husbands. This supports the kinds of theorisations developed by Ungerson, and outlined earlier.

This points inter alia to the inadequacy of attempting to conceptualise paid employment in isolation from other kinds of labour and family responsibilities. Yet at a commonsense and superficial level this is precisely what was happening. In retrospect, and from the vantage point of marriage, it looked as though during the course of their lives the women had been able to make more choices about employment than the men. They had taken into consideration the domestic, health and servicing demands of their children, husbands and sometimes elderly relatives in deciding when and whether to take paid employment, and what type of employment would be appropriate. And looking back, their biographies showed that they had tailored their jobs to fit their domestic responsibilities, meaning that their consequent employment histories were more intermittent than those of their husbands. For a married couple with partners both aged 50-70 this apparently constitutes a lot of empirical evidence of the non-essential or voluntarily chosen nature of women's employment compared to the essential and continuous nature of that of their husbands, even though women's employment was reported to be financially necessary for most of the couples.

Of course this does not actually mean that women have more choice than men even though on the surface it may look that way to husbands and wives. This could only be the case if it could be claimed that decisions made by women and men about whether or not to be employed can be assessed on the same criteria. But circumscribing factors for these decisions, like domestic and family responsibilities, and discrimination in the labour market itself, are clearly not equally constraining on women and men.

This means that the construction of choice is ideological.

Of course one of the major biographical disruptions in recent years for these couples was the permanent ending of employment, either through retirement, permanent ill health, unemployment, redundancy or other kinds of departure from the labour market. Most of the interviewees were beginning to spend much less time out of the home in paid employment. Earlier in the chapter I gave an outline of the interviewees' employment positions, and table 6.1 showed the timing of the main employment disruptions in later life for the group. Most importantly, it illustrated the timing of disruptions for husbands and wives in relation to each other.

It is instructive to follow the theme of the tailoring of employment to family-household demands - particularly where that now means the demands of husbands - when examining the relationship of wives' and husbands' exits from the labour market to each other. Without exception, it was taken for granted by both the women and the men that the wives should either retire before their husbands, or at the same time: women would not, or should not, continue in paid employment after their husbands had finally left it. It was assumed that retirement for the couples should be defined by the husband's departure from the labour market, and that retired men should not be left at home on their own while their wives went out to work. Just as employment had been constructed as more fundamental for the men than for the women, so too now was retirement; and just as women had apparently been able to make gender specific choices about their

employment participation in relation to childcare for example, so now it was considered that they should choose to leave the labour market when their husbands did so. Indeed, other studies have shown a pattern of women continuing in employment up to, but not after, husbands' retirement (Peace, 1986; Crawford, 1972).

Some interviewees, like Catherine Wheeler, mentioned financial disincentives for women to continue in paid employment after husbands' retirement, and there is a parallel here with the situation regarding male unemployment and disincentives to female employment outlined earlier. However, this was not given priority in those few accounts where it was mentioned.

The empirical reality of the pattern of employment ending did not always match up to this however. As table 6.2 shows, six wives retired before their husbands; two retired at around the same time; five planned to retire with their husbands; but in five of the cases the husband had actually ended his employment first.

Table 6.2 also shows abbreviated versions of explanations offered in the interviews (joint and individual) for each couple's specific pattern of employment ending, and these are particularly instructive. In the five cases where husbands made their exit first, unsolicited explanations of <u>why the wives had not left employment</u> were given in every instance, and interestingly these included financial <u>in</u>centive. However, in the six cases where wives had made the first exit, <u>no explanation of the husbands' continued employment</u> was deemed necessary. In the seven cases where couples had retired together, or planned to do so, the

Table 6.2: The Sequencing of Retirement* for Husbands and Wives

Case No.	Name	Reason for retiring	Justification given for situation
Husbands Retiring before Wives			
5	Dawson	redundancy	her employment financially necessary, and he found part-time casual employment quickly.
6	Stephens	unemployment	her employment financially necessary, and he now accompanies her to work. She says "it's not a real job", because it is part-time.
10	Hammond	redundancy	her employment is continuing only as a temporary financial measure while he is job searching.
18	Dunning	sick/early retired	she works at home in her part-time employment.
2	Ashby	retired	she takes lodgers, i.e. works at home.
Wives Retiring before Husbands			
1	Jensen	retired	statutory retirement age.
3	Peters	permanently sick	ill health
8	Carter	left employment	to look after home and new puppy
9	Edwards	left employment	the Edwards' moved out of their tied cottage and Mrs Edwards could not get to her old workplace.
15	Vincent	early retired	she retired so that he would take early retirement: she was worried about his ill health but knew he would not retire first.
16	Bromley	not employed since marriage	she left her job on marriage because husband was a policeman and police wives not allowed to be employed. Subsequently her ill health prevented employment.
Husbands and Wives Retiring Together			
14	Ward	retired	she retired early because he was retiring at the statutory age.
11	Wheeler	retired	she retired early because he retired early through ill health.
Husbands and Wives Anticipating Simultaneous Retirement			
4	Barclay	sick/retirement	Both have already reduced their hours of employment due to ill health and anticipate ceasing employment simultaneously.
7	Lawrence	)	In all these cases the wife will retire early at the same time as the husband re ires at statutory age.
12	Pritchard	)	
13	Tomlin	) retirement	
17	East	)	

* Retirement here means the ending of main life's employment

pattern was always that the woman would give up her job on her husband's retirement.

It is important to add a footnote here that some of the women were economically active in retirement, but always in jobs which were reported in the following kind of way: "it's not a real job", or "it doesn't really count as a job". These particular explanations were from women who had continued in employment past their husbands' retirement, but explanations from women who had subsequently taken up paid work also functioned on this level. Sarah Vincent, who had taken up part-time employment as an estate agent since her retirement, told me that "it's more of a hobby really", even though at other points in the interview she explained that she takes her work very seriously. Catherine Wheeler had also since her retirement made herself available for "odd bits of temping" as she put it. The potential of this practice of devaluing paid work as a strategy for 'retired' women, as well as men, to gain or maintain some of the benefits accruing from employment should not be underestimated. With the exception of Pat Dunning and Mary Ashby, whose paid work was done at home, this would also provide a legitimate reason for spending time away from home. This is a point to which I will return in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, this kind of strategy is dependent upon the availability of low paid, unprotected, part-time jobs, exploitative of women's accumulated positions, so any gains for women must be offset against the disadvantages of being confined to this type of employment. Furthermore, it is not likely to be

a strategy open to all women, since it seems at least partially dependent on negotiations with husbands reaching a consensus that it "doesn't count", and/or the devaluing of the job, as well as the ability to find a job in the first place. But, this type of evidence should make us cautious in accepting patterns of husband-wife retirement at face value (see Phillipson, 1987).

b. Domestic Labour and other Household Work

The case studies in the previous chapter gave some indication of the potential for variation in patterns of domestic labour in the study group. Nevertheless, there were also clear similarities within the group, as well as common patterns of change over the life course.

Firstly, the nature of domestic work had changed over the years: on the whole it no longer involved child or teenager care although this had been a key aspect of it more recently for some couples than for others. As noted, five of the couples had offspring living with them, and the Ashbys had student lodgers. None of these extra household members did very much housework, but they clearly did generate it. Furthermore, all of the 17 women with grandchildren were involved to varying degrees in their care and entertainment. The degree of involvement was dependent partly on their geographical proximity, itself related to social class, (as we shall see shortly). As we have also seen though, domestic labour in its broadest sense was increasingly likely to involve the care of the elderly or infirm, meaning that the relative absence of child and teenager care did not leave a vacuum. Equally, ill health and advancing age can make housework

more arduous than before, even if there is less to do because of the relative absence of children (Deutscher, 1959) and the increasing availability of supposedly labour saving household equipment (Thomas and Zmroczek, 1985). Nevertheless, such equipment, together with better cleaning materials, household fabrics and work surfaces which are themselves easier to clean, were mentioned by most of the women and some of the men as factors which had eased the grind of housework over historical time.

Without exception throughout the bulk of their lifetimes the couples had operated a traditional division of domestic labour: the women had both held responsibility for seeing that domestic labour and childcare was done, and also had performed nearly all the tasks connected with this. The men had held responsibility on the whole for household maintenance and repairs, and again had performed nearly all the tasks involved. As we have seen, all of the women tailored their employment around domestic tasks and responsibilities, and none of the men did the same. Where physical care of an elderly relative was required, it was almost entirely performed by women rather than men.

Yet as well as changes in the nature of domestic work, some couples reported a change in its division, most usually related to the end of employment, although not all of the change fits neatly into boxes carved out by stratifying principles based on later life employment disruption.

We saw, for example, in the previous chapter that Charles

Wheeler's retirement was given as the reason for his beginning to do housework one day a week which he had continued to do since Catherine's retirement shortly afterwards. Catherine had been worried, however, that once she retired she would have to take back on board these household duties, but Charles decided he would continue. But we also saw that Doug Ward retired without similarly taking over any household tasks. Although Patience Ward had retired from her part-time job at the same time, she continued to do voluntary part-time work, and to do seasonal part-time paid work picking apples. Men's retirement therefore did not essentially mean their increased involvement in domestic labour.

In fact, ten of the husbands by their own account and that of their wives had begun to do more housework in the last ten years than they had done before. The tasks involved in this change were mainly washing up, vacuuming, helping with the preparation of food and accompanying their wives to the shops.

Four of these men were those in the group where the husband only had left his main life's employment: Tom Asbhy, Kenneth Dunning, Pete Hammond and Patrick Stephens. These comprised all the men in this group. In addition, Howard Bromley, whose wife had had no paid job since marriage, had also begun to give more domestic help since his retirement and since his wife's health had begun a more serious deterioration in the last two or three years.

One - Jim Peters - was in the group where the wife only had retired. He began to do more housework when his wife became ill

with angina which was the cause of her retirement. The Barclays in some senses also belong in this group, because Shirley has formally retired although she continues part-time employment of the same status and with the same employer. Ted began doing more housework before Shirley retired (early - due to ill health) because his business had reached a point where he could afford to take an extra day off a week. The original purpose of the day was not to do housework, but Shirley was at that time in full-time employment and he did begin to vacuum the house through on that day. However, since she has retired, she reported that she has begun to do most of the housework again. The other couples in the group where the wife only had 'retired' - the Jensens whom we met in chapter four, the Carters and the Edwards, had not changed their division of domestic labour.

The other three couples to have changed their division were all in the group where both had left their life's employment - the Dawsons, the Wheelers, and the Vincents. In fact, both Bill and Margaret Dawson were involved in part-time employment, she working longer hours on the whole than him. But when Bill Dawson had first been made redundant Margaret was still in paid employment, and he took on most of the housework. Since then, they reported, the division has gone back to a more traditional one. Sarah Vincent, having retired before her husband, has now taken part-time employment and he remains at home. The only other couple in the 'both retired' group were the Wards and, as we have seen, they had not changed their division of domestic labour.

Except for the Barclays, whose case was discussed above, there was no change in the division of domestic labour reported by any of those couples where neither had left their life's employment.

It does seem, therefore, that the ending of employment, or the illness of one of the spouses was a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for a negotiated change in the division of domestic labour. Furthermore, it appears that it was the ending of the man's, employment and the illness of the woman, which were applicable here even though men could leave employment, and women could be ill, without change in the division of domestic labour taking place.

The relations under which this was taking place will be discussed fully in the chapters to follow, but before leaving the topic of domestic labour I should say something about the level of change taking place. For example, in the case of Charles and Catherine Wheeler we saw that although he now does the housework once a week, Catherine continues to perform daily aspects of the work which he does not do, and to do extra housework when it is required. She is the one who assesses when extra housework will be required, and she continues to express gratitude to Charles for helping her once a week with what she sees as her work. Charles is in practice at liberty to withdraw his contribution to domestic labour at any time, because the ultimate responsibility for it remains effectively with Catherine.

The point is one which was common to all of the ten couples who exhibited changing divisions of domestic labour: namely, husbands

'helped' their wives - generally a lot less than Charles helped Catherine - and the responsibility for getting the domestic work done, and done properly, remained with the wives. Blurring of task divisions was never so fundamental or routine as to begin to challenge overall responsibilities. But being responsible for something is more than the sum of its tasks, as suggested earlier. It means being liable to be called to account for it, and in every case the woman maintained this level of domestic responsiblity. Indeed, couples felt it necessary to justify deviance from, but not maintenance of task divisions, and the effect of this was to establish that they did not constitute a reversal of responsibility. We saw in the previous chapter that Charles and Catherine Wheeler made jokes about Charles's domestic role, she referring to him as "a very good home help". This kind of joke cropped up in interviews with other couples, but jokes were never made about the reverse situation, that is, about the wife being a very good home help to the husband. Thus although changes were real and made a genuine difference to the interviewees' lives, they were at the level of tasks not of underlying domestic responsibility. Within these general parameters, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, there was sometimes a degree of negotiation or even dispute between the husbands and wives as to the degree and standard of men's domestic contributions.

There was even less evidence of change in the division of more traditionally male household tasks - such as decorating, home improvements, car maintenance, and, more ambiguously, gardening. In fact, both women and men had always done gardening, although

the growing of vegetables in allotments seemed to be mainly a male preserve in the study group. Nearly all of the couples had divided the task of decorating too, although women, with the exception of Ivy Jensen, always were instrumental in the choice of colours and furnishings (1). This suggests that the women did hold some degree of responsibility for seeing that the house looked presentable or 'nice', and this would be commensurate with domestic responsibility which enshrines similar principles. However, just as women had held domestic responsibility and husbands' contributions to housework were seen as help, so men held responsibility for decorating and wives helped out, with apparently no formal obligation to do so. In the more general area of home improvements and maintenance, the men very clearly had the responsibility. Only Shirley Barclay claimed any major involvement in this type of task, and she explained that she had acquired some expertise in this area when living as a single parent after her divorce. Nevertheless, she too 'helped' her husband.

Although some of the men still in employment anticipated an increase in their activities in this direction on retirement, and some who had left employment reported that they had initially become more active in this area, it appeared that women generally did not change their involvement very much and the general division of both tasks and responsibilities remained fairly constant. This is perhaps not surprising since - unlike the situation with men and domestic responsibility - there is no evidence that women's avoidance of such work is legitimated by reference to structural factors being disrupted at this time.

More often, women are viewed as somehow biologically incapable of this kind of work, as though the facility to bear children somehow prevented it (Reed, 1985; Oakley, 1972). Certainly, Ted Barclay echoed this kind of sentiment whilst also reaffirming that the responsibility for household maintenance was his when he said with regard to Shirley "I can't bear to see a woman wavering about on top of a ladder, or swinging an axe, for instance. They're just not built for it. They're not safe" (2).

Women, for example, who had not been involved in decorating before any structural and biographical disruption, did not seem to take it up, and in areas like gardening where many of the women had played a major role in the past there was little change reported. Responsibility for gardening appeared more diffuse than in the other areas: this is probably because it was mainly seen as a pleasure and a hobby, and also encompasses ideal 'male' and 'female' aspects, for example heavy and dirty work versus 'making it look nice'. Only the Wests found it tedious, and they divided the labour: Richard West told me that he mowed the front lawn and "she does the back. We both hate it". Several of the couples reported that in later years they had begun to employ outside help - either paid or unpaid - for maintenance and outdoor work around the house, chiefly because of the husband's ill health or incapacity. But, with the exception of gardening, men continued to carry the responsibility - if not for doing the work then seeing that it was done - as part of a generalised responsibility for providing for (financially through 'breadwinning') and protecting (maintaining a roof over their heads) the family-household (3). In some ways the symbolic

significance of gender, in the sense that men are supposed to be strong, or to be capable of swinging an axe in Ted Barclay's terms, means that this responsibility to protect carries with it the implication of men's physical protection of women, despite the realities of research evidence on male domestic violence (Pahl, 1985; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987).

It has often been observed in studies of domestic labour and household work that this kind of maintenance responsibility, or what I have termed more globally the responsibility to protect, tends to involve tasks which are goal oriented, infrequent and inherently more satisfying than routine and unending housework. The former tend to be more visible, where the latter is generally only visible by its absence, that is when the house becomes untidy, or there are no clean sheets, and so on. What is more though these 'male' kinds of tasks appear to have a more ambiguous status, lying somewhere between the camps of work and play, than domestic labour which (certainly in my study group) was never referred to as a hobby, or as play. Owing to this ambiguity, I will return to a discussion of some of these issues later in this chapter in the context of the analysis of leisure practices and understandings.

2. The Management and Control of Money

The management and control of money was clearly affected by disruptions, and expressive of the construction of gender inequality. This might have been expected, given the salience of these issues to younger marriage outlined earlier. However, I

found it difficult to talk to nearly all of the interviewees about money. In the early stages of interviewing I found both men and women becoming embarrassed about the topic of money, and dealing with this by giving evaluative or imprecise answers, sometimes quite clearly in attempts to close the topic. Barbara Peters for example said "oh I've never had any complaints about money you know". To avoid too much mutual embarrassment I began to tailor my questions to this type of answer, that is by asking evaluative and relative questions like "do/did/will you or your wife/husband get the bigger/better wage/salary/pension?". To push for more specific answers about amounts of money would, I felt, jeopardise the rapport of the interview and in the process the quality of the data on other topics as well as this one (4).

What this means is that the data I obtained regarding money were strongest on the following points: sources of income but not amounts; the ways in which husbands and wives evaluated wages and pensions in relation to each other; the symbolic construction of economic dependence; and systems of the management and control of money. These themes therefore lie behind the discussion to follow.

a. Incomes and Assets

All of the couples were either anticipating, or had already encountered, a decrease in their income and a change in its source due to the ending of employment. They were clearly divided, however, in ways I am unable to document in the extent of this decrease and in the standard of living they would be able to construct from the decreased amount.

The major change in sources of income was for those couples where one or both had retired or left employment and begun either to receive a pension, other benefits, or nothing at all. In fact the pattern of pension entitlement in the whole study group generally reflected what had effectively been a lifetime or part of a lifetime of female economic dependence on men (at least as far as the assumptions behind pension provision are concerned), and were not out of line with observations cited earlier by Groves and others. For most of the women economic dependence had been established through their intermittent employment histories. As we have seen, even Shirley Barclay and Sarah Vincent, both latterly in full-time 'career' jobs, for some years tailored their employment to their domestic responsibilities. Even for them, economic dependence was in some sense established symbolically if not wholly materially in their employment lives.

These women had lived through an historical period when state and occupational pension provision has rewarded full-time, continuous and formal employment histories, and the result of this was that in 17 of the cases - all but the Barclays who were an ambiguous case - I was informed that the men were already receiving, or anticipating, better pensions than their wives. In fact eight of the women (Stephens, Lawrence, Dunning, Ashby, Edwards, Tomlin, Peters, Ward) told me that they were expecting or receiving no pension at all. The others received or would receive a state pension, although in most cases I was told this would be a nominal sum, and would be paid in conjunction with the husband's

pension when he retired.

Three of the women, however, were privileged in pension entitlement vis a vis the other women: Sarah Vincent, Cath Wheeler and Shirley Barclay were all entitled to occupational pensions in their own right. As noted, Bob Vincent and Charles Wheeler's pension entitlements were reported to be better than those of their wives, but Ted Barclay was rather reticent about his, save to say that "I've made provision. We won't go short, but of course things are going to be harder".

With the possible exception of Ted Barclay, and by comparison with the women, all of the men expected or received a state pension, and an additional eleven expected or received an occupational pension.

b. Management and Control

I have not produced a quantitative statement of the systems of money management operated by the couples. The main reason for this is that when I tried to do so, using Pahl's categories, I found that couples did not sit happily in the apparently appropriate boxes. For example, we saw in chapter five that joint banking accounts may not necessarily be expressive of joint control of money.

Indeed, my findings are more in line with those of Hunt and Graham on younger women outlined earlier: namely, whatever the system, women tended not to exercise control. However, before considering this point in more detail, let us first consider something of changing budgeting practices.

As we have already observed in the division of domestic labour, the ending of employment and ill health were necessary but not sufficient conditions for changing practices. This time, however, it was the ill health of husbands, and the ending of the employment of either spouse, which were significant. The illness of a husband provider could initiate the development of a new strategy for women to be able to access the household money. Couples with decreased incomes tended to talk about the development of new strategies to cope with the smaller amount, and where this was not the case, it seemed to be because the previous system was considered adequate, or because the couple had not yet anticipated the problem, or as in the case of the Wards, relative affluence enabled the continuation of the old system. For women, the ending of employment and receipt of a consequently reduced income generally meant that they were more dependent on husbands to give them money. On the whole, though, the kinds of changes taking place meant that husbands were becoming more involved in day to day household budgeting than they had been in the past, although this usually took the form of familiarising themselves with or overseeing what was spent on groceries for example, rather than a daily involvement in domestic spending. Without exception the wives had always in the past been responsible for managing the housekeeping, whatever its source, and the men for providing the regular family income whether or not this had been supplemented by the wife's earnings.

In sum then, behind a variety of changes and systems were some

common themes. Changes in the sources of income - most significantly from wages or salary to a pension - meant as in the case of the Wheelers that the economic dependence of wives, and the husband's status of having fulfilled the duties of providing, were becoming even more firmly established. Symbolically, the entitlement to a full state pension, and even more perhaps an occupational pension, appears as a reward for a lifetime's labour now completed, and a responsibility which has been discharged. Of course in material terms and set against the cost of living, a state pension may be far from adequate, and couples, as well as women and men, will be divided in this respect. But viewed from the ground, the tendency for specific husbands, as well as husbands in general to get 'proper' pensions and their wives, as well as wives in general, to get 'component' pensions does help to construct retirement as a symbolic celebration of the end of a husband's working life and duty to provide.

Although most of the wives technically had a share of the married couples' state pension and where applicable their husbands' occupational pension, both of these had most visibly been earned by the husbands' breadwinning labour. Women's intermittent employment and continuous domestic labour became virtually invisible for most of the couples in a system rewarding 'proper' paid work - ie that which is full-time and continuous - with 'proper' pensions. Paradoxically, what this meant was that although in some senses and especially after retirement income was becoming more 'joint' through 'shared' pensions and a shared concern about money management, it was simultaneously becoming more wholly the husband's property. The wives retained

responsibility for creating the best possible standard of living for the family on a daily basis, but the implication was more than ever that they were doing this with their husband's money. In none of the cases did the husband take over responsibility for household budgeting in terms of buying all the food, cleaning materials, and generally doing the housekeeping. Yet what was absolutely clear was that the men continued to be regarded as the providers, and where a regular family wage turned into a regular family pension this was easy to maintain.

But even in those cases where the husband had left employment but the wife continued, or where both were employed part-time but the wife's income was greater, this notion was maintained. These men and women both recognised that the husband's job has always taken primacy and that he had always been the breadwinner, as evidenced in the women's interrupted employment histories. Arrangements which seemed now to contradict this were explained away as temporary expediencies and casual jobs, or as simply undesirable, and whilst they might have given the women control over a greater proportion of the family income - generally to be spent on housekeeping - the assumption that the man had earned most of the family's income and provided their accumulated standard of living did not seem to be contradicted. Indeed the tendency for the women in the study group to keep their income as 'theirs' - with the exception of Shirley Barclay and Sara Vincent whose larger salaries had been pooled with their husbands' - whilst almost invisibly spending most of it on housekeeping, and often on grandchildren, helped to sustain the impression that this was 'pin money' and that the household money, or the 'our money' was

that provided by the husband's labour.

One man in the study gave a clear, if extreme, illustration of the significance of this for the distinction between the control or ownership, and the management of money. Pete Hammond had recently been made redundant and was now employed in part-time casual work. Evie Hammond continued to be employed in her part-time job as a shop assistant and was earning more than him. They were both at pains to tell me that this arrangement was temporary: Pete was looking for full-time employment, and Evie was waiting until he got it to take early retirement herself. They had not changed their overall system of money management although Pete now accompanied Evie to the shops and took more of an interest in the domestic budgeting. He explained to me that:

Pete Hammond: I've got my wife here and she's very good with money, and always has been, so I leave it to her. She handles it marvellously I think. I don't know how she does it. I don't want to know really, you know. I'm lucky, I mean a lot of chaps couldn't trust their wife with any money, but I mean only yesterday wasn't it she brought 30p from the bedroom, says 'here you are, you must have dropped some money out of your pocket'. 30p under the bed. What worry have I got? I'd never have known if she'd put it in her pocket.

The implication of this is clear: Pete was viewed as the money owner and controller despite his wife's earnings and management activities, and it was he who could thus potentially be swindled by her.

What is more, none of the wives talked of deciding to treat their husbands to a night out, or a new item of clothing, but several

of the husbands, including Pete Hammond talked of treating their wives in these ways. It was clear that the husbands had the power to decide when it was legitimate to be generous or even frivolous with the family money. The other side of this is that they could criticize their wives for being extravagant, as a number of them did. One particularly striking example of this was provided by Arthur Carter. He told me a long story about an incident when his wife had spontaneously and frivolously bought a clock for eight pounds. As our conversation progressed, however, it transpired that this example of profligacy had occurred over 16 years ago, yet it was recollected with considerable detail and, we might surmise, regularly rehearsed.

In sum, as with the division of domestic labour, changes in practices over time which were real enough in themselves, and differences between couples, were effectively obscuring underlying similarities of gendered responsibility. Men were responsible for the provision of money, albeit the labour associated with that responsibility was coming to an end. Women were responsible for constructing a standard of living.

3. Leisure, time and space

Differences between the couples in this general area were much more clearly class related than the others, although familial and employment disruptions also marked out divisions and changes over time. Much of what needs to be said about leisure, refers to the relations of domestic servicing and providing and the ways in which they were being negotiated, which will be discussed fully

in the next chapter. As a prelude to this, the discussion here will therefore be fairly brief and descriptive.

We can begin with some examples of difference and change. We saw for instance in the last chapter that the Wards who are upper middle class have very active social lives. They both claimed to be involved in many social activities, and to have a number of joint friends. Patience Ward also told me she had several independent friends. Their children left home some 20 years ago and do not live locally, and they see comparatively little of them. Both Doug and Patience have left their main life's employment, yet claim to be almost as active as before.

Fred and Ivy Jensen, on the other hand, who are working class, claimed to do little socially and certainly less than they used to in the past, having few friends and rarely going out. Ivy does have a couple of independent friends, but she has retired and this has curtailed some of her sociability. Fred is still employed but sees little of his workmates - except for his son-in-laws - sociably. They see their daughters more than once a week and are heavily involved in sociability and support with them.

Charles and Catherine Wheeler are middle class, and have no children. They claim to be very active socially, although Charles' ill health caused them to give up a number of activities. They both felt that they were as active if not more so than they had been before they retired, having a number of joint friends, and Catherine having several independent friends.

With this kind of potential variation, what patterns and divisions can be discerned from the study group as a whole? I will consider these issues in the context of two related leisure locations: outside the home, and inside the home.

a. Outside the Home

In principle, the ending of employment together with the departure of children should allow more time for leisure activities outside the home. In practice few of the interviewees who had permanently left the labour market and/or whose children had all left home reported either taking up new out of home activities, or spending a great deal more time in previously established activities, although the latter was more common. This finding accords with those of other researchers who have looked at leisure after (generally men's) retirement (Long, 1986; Long and Wimbush, 1979). This also means that both the Wards and the Wheelers were highly exceptional in my study group.

For virtually the whole study group the majority of leisure was home based and is to be discussed subsequently, with very little out of home leisure activity reported. Nevertheless, a minority of the men (of whom Doug Ward was one) regularly engaged in sporting activities outside the home and, as we saw, Patience Ward did this too both with Doug and with women friends. Other outdoor or hobby type activities were sometimes mentioned by both women and men, such as painting, riding, swimming, birdwatching, but it turned out that these were generally engaged in irregularly and infrequently, or had simply been done once or

twice in the past.

There was evidence amongst the couples of membership of clubs and societies, and of participation in voluntary organisations. In the working class couples the women tended not to do these things, but several of the husbands were in work or ex-work associated clubs, or in organisations such as the Territorial Army, the Naval Association - membership usually dating back to the war. In the middle class couples the situation was a bit more varied, so that a minority of the men were extremely active in, for example, the Freemasons, the local council, the church, sailing clubs, cricket clubs and so on, but most were relatively inactive in these sorts of areas and, with the exception of Doug Ward's cricket club, did not belong to work associated clubs as the working class men did.

On the whole the middle class women were much more active than the working class women in these ways; it was common for them to be engaged in fundraising activities for local charities and the church, for example jumble sales, whist drives and the like, and Sarah Vincent was a Freemason. A minority belonged to formal or informal women's associations such as the Women's Institute or local housewives' groups. Only Patience Ward belonged to a women's group which had no charity focus, but was solely a social and support group for the ten women involved.

Margaret Dawson gave one of the rare examples of women reporting an increase in this type of activity due to disruptions. She explained very lucidly that she had been "charged with a new

vitality" when her children left home and after her menopause. She told me "I felt I could do anything. I was me and not mum anymore". Indeed, at that point in her life she took up birdwatching and theatre going with a group of female friends. Her part-time employment as a secretary financed her new activities, as well as holidays which for several years she took separately from her husband. Although he was in employment at that time, he was made redundant shortly afterwards and then Margaret began to curtail her out of home activities. At the time of interview she told me that she could no longer afford her own holiday and rarely found the time or money for visits to the theatre. Also, her closest friend has moved away.

But the other women and the majority of the men in the study were mainly doing the same, or indeed rather less, in the way of out of home leisure activity than they had in the past, although they were clearly constrained in different ways dependent on various aspects of their positions, and the transitions they had encountered.

For example, ill health was to some extent a constraint on their activity, although the connection was not always made explicitly in the interviews except for comments like "I don't do as much now you know, I'm not as young as I used to be". As noted earlier, virtually all the women and their husbands had encountered some form of limiting ill health, and complaints were generally, although not always, associated with aging. Ivy Jensen, for example, had a hiatus hernia, high blood pressure and was heavily overweight which meant she could engage in little

physical activity. Catherine Wheeler, whose health was reportedly "very good" had given up sport because of her husband's ill health. Furthermore, she said she was unable to go out and stay up late at night as she had done in the past. Of course those women who had been involved in the direct physical care of elderly relatives and neighbours had found their activities circumscribed accordingly.

But another way in which out of home activities were enabled or constrained, and along which there were gender divisions, was in husbands and wives relative degrees of access to money. Out of home leisure activity often requires money, for example clubs and societies require subscriptions. Cinema, pubs, theatre and so on all involve the spending of money. The tendency already noted for men to be the major money-owners, and to have the power to decide what is legitimately frivolous, clearly has implications here. Although this meant different things for women in different class positions and with different husbands, there were common themes. Thus at one end of the extreme was, for example, upper middle class Patience Ward, whose husband had a good company pension, investment income, and they owned their house outright. The ability of Patience to be very active in out of home leisure is clearly related to this. In her case out of home leisure was easily financed, and by her own account her husband was very good in always providing enough money. What is more, he respected her wish to have some independent activities, although this was a bit more difficult now that they shared a car, having sold one on his retirement. In practice Doug generally had first call on the use of the car because "he needs it most".

Another example of relative affluence was Shirley Barclay. She and her husband had their own cars, although they planned soon to sell one. She did engage in individual out of home leisure pursuits, more in fact than did her husband Ted. She had received her own professional employment income and was shortly to receive an occupational pension. However, she did add that spending money on her personal interests made her feel "a bit guilty although Ted would never get on at me about it".

These two instances of relative affluence and 'easy-going' husbands help to illustrate that even here women were dependent on the goodwill of husbands to gain access to money for their own interests. They encountered the problems identified earlier for younger women of ever feeling the right to money for themselves as opposed to for the family-household. But at the other extreme - where household money is less abundant and/or where husbands are less 'reasonable', the inequalities were sharpened in a set up where the men owned and controlled limited household money.

Another related issue, highlighted tangentially here, is that of access to personal transport. Patience Ward and Shirley Barclay were the only women in the study with personal access to a car and able to drive, as compared to 17 of the men (except Patrick Stephens). As Ivy Jensen explained, the inability to drive is a severe restriction on many out of home leisure activities:

Ivy Jensen: I used to play that game called bat and trap, used to play for a pub just down the road.

Jennifer: Don't you play anymore?

Ivy Jensen: No, well it's not...when I played it just used to be round Canterbury. Now you've got so much travelling to do you see you've got to go to Ramsgate, you've got to go to Nonington. I can't get there.

Also being unable to drive meant that the women could not pop out of the house spontaneously, for example to anything other than local shops, without relying on husbands or others to give them a lift. Public transport is not conducive to spontaneity.

Women were also subject to social controls from which men were exempt. Most of them talked of feeling uncomfortable, or frightened, going out alone particularly at night. This could be either simply to walk down the road, or to go for a drink in a pub without their husbands. Most of the women never did the latter. These sorts of factors militated against women's extensive leisure activity with other women, and husbands did not always approve of wives going out without them. Again, these kinds of findings are paralleled in studies of younger women (Hanmer and Maynard, 1987; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987; Imray and Middleton, 1983).

One way out of the household for some of the women which seemed perfectly legitimate, however, was to visit kin. Table 6.3 below shows the geographical proximity of adult children by class position of parents.

Women like Ivy Jensen in particular who had adult daughters

Table 6.3: Geographical Proximity of Adult Offspring by Class of Parents

	Under 15 miles	16-50 miles	Over 50 miles
Working Class			
1) Jensen	all		
6) Stephens	all		
7) Lawrence	all		
10) Hammond		1	1
17) East	all		
18) Dunning	all		
Upper Working Class			
2) Ashby	all		
8) Carter	all		
9) Edwards	3		1
12) Pritchard	1		1
13) Tomlin	all		
Middle Class			
3) Peters	1	1	1
5) Dawson			all
11) Wheeler		NO CHILDREN	
15) Vincent	1	1	
Upper Middle Class			
4) Barclay		1	2
14) Ward			all
16) Bromley	all		

living nearby regularly engaged in daytime sociability with them and the grandchildren, although this was not always discernable from kin support in the form of babyminding. Those women who did have adult children living nearby were mainly, although not exclusively, working class, and generally fairly inactive in terms of other forms of out of home leisure. It is of course difficult to determine cause and effect here, that is whether involvement with kin limits other activity or vice versa. Some women, and men as well, clearly pointed up the lack of 'spare time' left after involvement with their families, and indeed for these people relationships with kin were really, as in the case of the Jensens, an organising principle of their daily lives. This does imply that this kind of kinship solidarity is at least a visible inhibitor to other activity, or a legitimate reason for giving a short list of hobbies and activities to an interviewer. But the enthusiasm with which some of the women talked of sociability with adult children, together with the chagrin of some (but not all) of the mainly middle class women whose children had moved away, implied that this was an important source of out of home activity and sociability for a proportion of the women. Middle class women tended more often to visit their geographically more distant kin in the company of their husbands. However, for Shirley Barclay, visits alone to her son to "dogsit" while he was away, and stay a few days when he came back, were becoming a regular occurrence. Sometimes she took two or three female friends with her.

The problems of defining and evaluating what involvement with kin actually means in terms of leisure brings us back to the grey

area between work and play mentioned earlier. This is because one major component of women's work has to do with family responsibilities: hence it is not always easy to discover whether inter-household contact between women and their adult children is a form of work or play. And of course if we are recognising that family members can make all sorts of demands on women's time, it is important to remember that there is existing evidence to suggest that husbands play a part in constraining women's out of home activity (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987; McKee and Bell, 1986). Time spent with husbands is equally ambiguous: 'his leisure' either in home or out of home may well be facilitated by 'her work' (Comer, 1974; Deem, 1986). I will discuss this more fully in the chapter to follow.

This brings us round to a series of issues associated with time and activity at home in the light of later life disruptions, and the ambiguous definition of leisure itself in this context.

b. In the Home

The most commonly reported leisure activities for both the women and the men were home based and generally a great deal of time was spent at home. The women most frequently mentioned reading, watching television, gardening, knitting, and sewing (these latter often engaged in at the same time as watching television or listening to the radio) as leisure activities. Their husbands most frequently mentioned gardening (in gardens or allotments), watching television (often specifically to watch sport) and reading. With the exception of watching television, these kinds of home based activities were generally undertaken separately by

wives and husbands, although the territory in which they took place was on the whole a 'shared' one. The issue of sharing and contesting space is of central importance and I shall return to it in chapter seven.

It was in their 'at home' activities that people reported or anticipated the most change in the light of disruptions. Most people said that the departure of children made an enormous difference to the home environment, or they anticipated that it would. Generally, the women expressed a mixture of regret and relief at the instantaneous increase in both temporal and physical space. Teenagers, it appeared, had provided plenty of domestic work for their mothers, and together with their friends had physically taken up a lot of room. Two of the couples - the Wards and the Dawsons - had taken the opportunity to move to 'retirement' bungalows.

Both the men and the women noticed a changing sense of time and of time norms at home, which was generally dated back to the departure of children where applicable, although the ending of employment (generally, but not always, coming later) was important too. However, this changing perception of time was evaluated differently. Some women said they did not know how they had managed to fit everything into their lives before, because they felt just as busy now with less to do, but most acknowledged a change of pace; a slowing down. Some women, like Margaret Dawson, described a new spontaneity and freedom from some of the more restrictive routines and timetables of daily life with children, or when everything had to be organised around

an employment day. Catherine Wheeler explained to me that she and her husband now sometimes do not have lunch until 3 pm, and that she finds this flexibility a tremendous relief. Nevertheless, her life was not without routine or structure - in fact she and Charles both regularly did certain activities on specified days of the week - and she described lunch at 3 pm as a "late lunch", the adjective "late" implying that she had not entirely escaped her previous normative timetable of daily life. What is more, it was Catherine not Charles who prepared the meals. It was indeed common for the women to explain that having husbands around full-time had, or probably would, extend the domestic timetable, for example in necessitating the preparation of food at lunchtime.

None of the women, but a majority of the men, regretted a loss of cohesiveness of time structure and described a kind of normlessness: that is, a general feeling of purposelessness and of somehow and regrettably not having good routines anymore. The vagueness of just exactly what it was they used to do, and when, made this sentiment akin to a general nostalgia (Cornwell, 1984: 43-44), and it was significant that none of the women expressed it. Either they seemed happy to have some spontaneity, or they maintained an ordered routine to their daily lives, albeit the composition of the routine might have changed. As we have seen, even spontaneity could be fairly well ordered.

However, the most important change concerning at home activity was simply that people were spending (or anticipating spending) more <u>time</u> - whether or not this was defined as work or play -

there. Not only that, but husbands and wives would be spending more time in each other's company than before. Indeed this was a stated pleasure of many of the men in the research, for whom a "lifetime's slog" in employment, as Patrick Stephens put it, was to be rewarded by a comfortable retirement spent at home with his wife. The overwhelming pattern was for the men to look forward to this, to slowing down, to no longer having to go out to work, to spending time at home, and to doing things with their wives once the children were off their hands. Indeed, the popular image of retirement emphasises this version (5) although perhaps with a little more activity added, as does popular concern for those men who find it difficult to make the adjustment and become "disengaged" (Parker 1982; Phillipson, 1987).

The husbands' aspirations were to some extent tempered by a concern, evident in the majority of them, to remain active and not to "stagnate" or become "like a cabbage" in retirement. On the whole, the men described a keenness to use their time to keep physically active through "doing things to the house", "getting out into the garden", "going down the allotment". This does not mean that all the men <u>were</u> active in these ways, but instead that they generally expressed a concern to be so. One man, Tom Ashby, who was rather more active than some of the others in this way, had actually used the time immediately following his retirement a few months before the inteview to do various home improvement jobs which he had been saving up. At the time of his interview he was concerned to carry on with this type of activity, although he explained that the lists of potential jobs was finite, and his arthritic hip and "general aches and pains" were becoming a

limitation. He was unsure what he would do when one of these factors prevented him from continuing.

It is difficult here to draw a concrete line between work and play again, since Tom Ashby and most of the others claimed to be doing this type of work because they wanted to keep busy, because they enjoyed it, and in some cases because it was "like a hobby". This pattern of intense home improvement activity immediately following retirement, and the saving up of jobs to do at that time, was a common one, although I gained the impression from some of the couples that there was sometimes less activity than wishful thinking. Bill Dawson, for example, told me that "there's plenty to do but somehow I still don't seem to have time to get it all done, and I'm not working full-time now. I just don't know where the time goes". I should add that this was all to his wife's frustration. Most of the men too talked of frustration when they were unable, often because of poor weather, to engage in outdoor household jobs. On these occasions it seemed that they found their time hung heavily.

The situation for the women however was qualitatively different. Although 17 of them had been in employment for some period since their children reached school age, they were not seen to be retiring in quite the same way. As argued earlier, the construction of women's employment as secondary also meant that retirement was unanimously defined as beginning when the husband retired. The women did not unanimously describe looking forward to it however. For all of them the enthusiasm of having more time at home to spend with husbands was tinged with anxiety or in

some cases even dread, of potential conflict and friction. In part, at least, this is easy to understand because retirement for women is not publicly constructed as a social problem of disengagement and dissimilation as it is for men (Szinovacz, 1982). Thus the women were concerned at one level about their husbands' adjustment to retirement in a way that the men would not be expected as a matter of course to be concerned about their wives. In a sense, because of men's renewed focus on the home, and their desire to keep physically active, they in part at least became their wives' responsibility and problem on retirement. This is an issue I will take up in the next chapter.

Interestingly enough, the wives for their part expressed more anxiety about becoming mentally rather than physically inactive. Their talk was less about "doing things", than about "keeping (my) brain active". For example, Pat Dunning explained to me that when her children left home she had taken a clerical job which she does from home, involving two to three days' work every calendar quarter, precisely because she did not want her "brain to rot". In fact, one of her children has now returned home following a divorce, and Pat's husband has taken voluntary redundancy from his job as a miner because of ill health, so there is little likelihood of her becoming physically inactive at least for some time. Similarly, Mary Ashby started taking in student lodgers when her children left home "to keep me young. I don't want to get out of touch".

For those women who did want to broaden their minds and initiate mental stimulation, the home was neither a new environment, nor

necessarily the most appropriate one for the task. For husbands wanting to keep physically active however, the home with all its potential for improvement, alteration and repair would be ideal, albeit the tasks might in the end prove finite.

What all of this means is that we cannot merely view retirement or the departure of children as factors which facilitate or enable leisure without having mind to the relative positions of husbands and wives. We need to direct our attention to issues like the extent of women's responsibility for their husbands, for facilitating leisure in retirement, and the implications of this for women's and men's own access to time and space. This also means unpacking the relationship between in home and out of home activity. Thus for example, although the issues of health and responsibility for wellbeing, access to money and other resources, and so on outlined earlier are key factors in limiting the women's out of home activity, it is all the more significant that this has the effect of confining the women more fully to the home at a time when their husbands are beginning to become more homecentred themselves. But what does all this mean for the men and women's ability to mark out time and space for themselves? It certainly implies that we cannot equate time spent at home with leisure in any simple way. Rather, we need to look at negotiations going on between husbands and wives at home, and to assess to what extent the home itself is becoming a contested domain for these couples.

Conclusion

This chapter has been designed to show something of the diversity in the study group as a whole and also of the nature of changes in their married lives over time, using what we learned from the case studies as a 'way into' making sense of aggregate patterns.

One of the main messages has been that although there were differences within the study group in a number of areas, and also changes which had occurred over their lifetimes, there were important areas of similarity and continuity based on the respective gendered responsibilities of husbands and wives. The most clearly articulated aspects of these responsibilities have been that the women were responsible for domestic servicing, and the men for domestic providing and protecting. Despite changes in the nature of associated tasks, and to a lesser extent the division of tasks, a continuity of these responsibilities was observed. However, for the men, responsibility for providing tended to be fulfilled symbolically on retirement, with the reward of a 'proper' pension. For the women there was no assumption that domestic responsibility would cease at that time. What is more, the tendency for the husbands to be spending more time at home might have implications for the women's responsibility for caring for their health and wellbeing.

Throughout the chapter, and particularly in the final sections, issues concerning the ways in which the women and men involved negotiated these responsibilities have been an important undercurrent. What is more, it is becoming clear that the boundaries between the experiential domains of home and out of home were undergoing changes in the light of structural and

biographical disruptions, for example in the siting and nature of work and non-work. Material changes which have a symbolic significance such as the transition from a wage to a pension, should alert us to the apparently shifting boundaries between public and private.

All of these kinds of issues warrant a closer examination, and in a sense this chapter has posed rather than addressed questions for analysis by providing empirical material. It is therefore to this analytical exercise that I now turn.

Chapter Seven : The Negotiation of Responsibilities and Domestic Control (1)

Introduction

The last chapter pointed to a series of disruptions which meant at the very least that most of the husbands and wives were beginning to spend increasing amounts of time in their homes, potentially alone together, or that this could be anticipated in the near future. More than in the past, the home was becoming the site not only of married life, but of work and play on a much more full-time basis for both the women and the men.

In this chapter I will discuss the extent to which this constitutes a shifting of the boundaries between the public and the private. I will go on to examine the implications of this for women's and men's access to time and space at home, and what this means for the control and organisation of the home. I will argue that we need a conceptual understanding of negotiation and of the construction of gendered responsibilities in order to begin to deconstruct the relational dynamics of change and continuity.

1. Reconstructing the boundaries between the public and the private

I want to argue that what was going on between the couples in the study group was a reconstruction of the boundaries between the public and private domains, with both women and men being active in this process but participating from different positions. This

reconstruction was premised on the disruptions caused by the intersection of individual, family and historical time, meaning that change was unprecedented historically as well as biographically in the lives of the people in the study.

There is some conceptual ambiguity regarding the notions of public and private as indicated earlier. Clearly, in experiential terms there were significant changes taking place for the men and women in the study group in what they were doing at home and away from home. But in conceptual and analytical terms we have seen that these two spheres are interdependent. For example, for the women participation in paid employment over the life course was always by reference to domestic labour. Responsibility for the latter helped to condition their participation in the former; intermittent participation in employment then helped to reinforce the 'logic' of the women's domestic responsibility and so on. So too for the men there was a connection between employment and domestic responsibility: their full-time and continuous participation in the former and the concomitant responsibility to provide, was itself allowed by their exclusion from the latter. The logic of this exclusion was thus itself reinforced by their primary participation in employment.

As noted in chapters 1 and 2, this kind of dialectical relationship has been much theorised in relation to the role of the domestic labour of younger women in economic production. However, there has been a tendency in these debates on the one hand to view domestic responsibility as a constant and uniform

set of activities concerning domestic labour and childcare, and on the other to focus mainly on 'its' relationship to the structuring of women's employment, almost as though it has no relevance to the structuring of men's. Clearly my findings indicate that not only are the tasks emanating from domestic responsibilities likely to change over the individual life course and over historical time, but also that both the women and the men in a broad sense both have domestic responsibilities albeit of a fundamentally divergent nature: the men to provide and protect; the women to service and care.

What this means is that it is necessary to investigate rather than assume the nature of the links between any kind of public and private spheres for both men and women. However, we must expect to find that the nature of the links are not only both differentiated by gender, but also that in examining the links we begin to lose sight of any one static boundary between two definable locations, even at any one time. As Redclift has pointed out, one of the problems of the notion of a domestic domain which is separate from a public domain is that:

> "The common sense of everyday usage makes the domestic domain an elusive concept. Its location seems obvious, yet this privileged terrain keeps changing its ground when we examine it more closely".
>
> (Redclift, 1985: 95)

Indeed, the issue becomes even more muddied if we suppose simply that 'private' is synonymous with what is done at home, and 'public' with what is done away from home. Although this might

make sense in commonsense terms, it is undermined not only by the essential and gendered links between the two, but also by the fact that men and women tend to do very different things in each 'location'. This of course is one of the main issues which is dangerously overlooked in ideas of the home as a private haven for comfort, solace, leisure and relaxation away from the toils of work. But what is more, according to Imray and Middleton:

> "The association of the private sphere with what is done inside the household and of the public sphere with what is done outside the household ... has been instrumental in (the) devaluation (of the concept) as a possible explanatory tool since it perpetuates the assumption that it is the activity which characterises the sphere rather than the actor. Activities in themselves have no absolute and unchanging value, be they economic, political, cultural. Rather, value accrues to activities by virtue of who performs them and more importantly who controls their social meaning and importance... It is not work per se which is valued and which is part of the public sphere, but rather it is work done by men".
>
> (Imray and Middleton, 1983: 16)

Imray and Middleton wish to argue that men construct what is public, and hence what is important, in relation to their own activity and through the effective policing of the public/private boundaries to keep women out. There is a danger of tautology here, in suggesting that male = public and female = private. However, it usefully directs attention to the boundary defining and controlling processes, and the relative access of men and women to the public sphere (itself demarcated by these very processes). It is certainly the case that to focus sole attention on the nature of the public or private spheres, whatever your definition of what they comprise, is in effect to direct attention away from the more fundamental issue of the

construction and shifting of boundaries between public and private.

I wish to argue that boundaries have been constructed in the lifetimes of the couples in my research through the primacy of husbands as expressed in large part by gendered responsibilities. These responsibilities have meant that the husbands and wives have made different public-private calculations and connections in the past, and that the boundaries are currently under major reconstruction. What is more, what is at issue is less what Imray and Middleton rightly identify as crucial, namely the ways in which women's trespassing on the public sphere is policed, but rather the invasion of the private sphere by men.

Conceptually it is responsibility rather than the tasks or work associated with it which is the key to understanding the changing boundaries. This is partly because, as Imray and Middleton argue, the actor doing the work or in our case having the responsibility is signficant but also, and more importantly, because of the relationship gendered responsibilities have to each other and what they thus say about the hierarchical relationship between their holders. I will now go on to discuss this.

2. The Relations of Domestic Servicing and Providing

As argued in chapter 6, the nature of responsibilities means that they are more than the specific sum of tasks. To be responsible for certain kinds of domestic duty means being liable to be

called to account for it. But the labour associated with responsibilities may change over time and, what is more, people other than the responsibility holder may perform some aspects of the labour without assuming the responsibility that lies behind it.

I want now to go on to argue that it is vital to conceptualise gendered responsibilities relationally. Indeed the reason why I am suggesting responsibilities are gendered rather than simply women's or men's is because they do not merely happen to be carried out by women or men but are constructed through and expressive of relationships of gender both on a societal and interpersonal level. If we look at the components of the two kinds of responsibility and recent changes in them this becomes clearer.

a. Responsibility for servicing, caring and wellbeing

It should be clear by now that servicing a provider involves more than housework. It involves a moral obligation to do the work well and properly and, as we have seen, to think about one's commitment to service the family-household before taking on potentially conflicting commitments like paid employment. In this sense it involves making and sustaining particular kinds of public-private connections in one's own life. We have also seen that for the women in the study it involved the subordination of their own employment to considerations of husband's wellbeing on retirement. These latter points touch upon the kind of global responsibility for family health identified in the discussion of Graham's work in earlier chapters.

Specifically, building upon the notion that women are responsible for family health, I want to argue that the women in my study were responsible for caring about and for the wellbeing of their husbands.

Graham has quite rightly argued that 'caring about', and 'caring for', should not be conflated because the latter involves women's labour and is distinct from the mere expression of affect (Graham, 1983a; see also Waerness, 1984). Indeed, we have seen that the women in my study cared for their husbands and households in the sense of servicing their domestic 'needs' properly, and also that some of them had become or at some time been responsible for caring for or nursing sick or elderly relatives. In their life stories the women frequently used the illnesses of children, husbands or parents as reference points as well as the dates of their marriages, birth of children and so on, in a way that virtually none of the men did. This indicates that over their lives the women had sustained a close involvement in these experiences, and one which was relevant for the construction (and hence recounting) of other aspects of their lives. These kinds of labour were clearly part of the women's responsibility for providing conditions conducive to family health.

However, I want to argue that for these women, 'caring about' the wellbeing of husbands also involved labour intensive responsibility. What is more, it was a responsibility which was taking on a new meaning and priority in the light of disruptions

and the tendency for men and women to be spending more time together at home, not least because it was becoming a more full-time one. The women were responsible for worrying about whether their husbands would stagnate in retirement, and indeed for trying to ensure that they did not; for preventing them from being bored, lonely, inactive or lazy, as well as providing the more domestic kinds of servicing like cooking meals throughout the day now as well as in the evenings. Even for the women whose husbands had not yet retired, it was clear that they held responsibility for husbands' comfort and wellbeing at home.

This labour intensive 'caring about' the wellbeing of husbands could be observed in a number of ways. First of all, the women on the whole tried to make sure that their husbands were only rarely at home on their own. We have already seen that the women tended to retire with their husbands, and for those who had not this was seen as problematic.

Whilst they had been in full-time employment the men had been used to spending their at home time in the company of their

wives. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that many of them viewed retirement as a time for togetherness, as noted earlier, since home was likely to be associated with this in their experience. For those men who had retired the majority of their time at home continued to be spent jointly with wives although for some of them, especially where wives were still in paid work, there was an increase in the amount of time spent alone at home. Conversely, the women had been used to having more time, to varying degrees dependent mainly on their own hours of employment, at home without their husbands. It seemed that for all of them, this time had been interspersed with out-of-home time, generally associated with domestic labour, for example spent on going to the shops, the post office, the bank, the dry cleaners, and for some of them to meet children or grandchildren from school, and so on. In a sense, this accords with findings of other researchers who argue that younger women occupy 'communal spaces' during the daytime to a greater extent than do men (see Cornwell, 1984; Finch, 1984a; Allan, 1983). As Cornwell observes of the women in her study of East London:

> "Women...occupy a much wider range of communal spaces - the shops, the street, the school gates, their relatives' houses - and they have a much wider variety of contacts, not only with shopkeepers and other mothers, but also in the schools, pubs and blocks of flats where many of them are employed as cleaners".
>
> (Cornwell, 1984: 50)

Although privileged in having few constraints on their out of home activity, husbands, by their own accounts, did not appear so readily to strike up conversations in grocers shops, or with neighbours met in the street, as their wives, whose accounts were

often interspersed with this kind of detail. However, once retired, the women spent much more time in their husbands' company at home even where the men were involved in casual employment.

Clearly there were differences in the extent to which the interviewees welcomed this increase in togetherness and this must in part be dependent on the quality of their relationship. For example, June Pritchard and her husband had spent many years apart when he was in the army. Now she has a part-time job at the station buffet where he is manager, and is looking forward to their retirement. She told me: "We had such a long time apart...it's going to be nice to be able to do things together". Catherine Wheeler told me that: "We do everything together now we've retired. That's what we felt the idea of retirement was". On the other hand, Margaret Dawson explained: "We grate on each other. I'm never more happy when he goes out, and him for me, you see".

But despite these kinds of differences, the women's underlying responsibility not to leave their husbands unoccupied at home was common. For example, most of the women explained that they felt bound to modify their own activity when their husbands were at home, and for those whose husbands had retired this was particularly striking. Several explained that they no longer called in to see friends or neighbours for a coffee as they had before because it meant leaving their husbands at home alone. What is more, friends were less likely to visit them since husbands retired. Indeed, we saw this vicariously in chapter

five where Ivy Jensen used to visit a friend for coffee - one of the 'terrible trio', but had curtailed her visits since her friend's husband retired. They used to go for walks but now when she visits they stay in, and her friend's husband "makes the tea and listens to our talk". There is certainly a parallel here with research on younger couples. For example McKee and Bell in their study of the domestic impact of unemployment found that men's presence in the home curtailed their wife's activity, and Green, Hebron and Woodward have pointed out that men may use various forms of control to do this (McKee and Bell, 1986; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987). However, for women whose husbands are permanently retired, and who are themselves likely to be approaching or beyond an age at which they can get paid employment to take them out of the home legitimately, this is more than a temporary annoyance; it is a structuring principle of daily life and responsibility.

Significantly, women's domestic labour associated activities in the communal spaces were also curtailed or modified. The extent of curtailment is hard to ascertain precisely because these activities tended on the whole to be performed spontaneously and idiosyncratically rather than on a routine basis, so that changes were difficult for the women to evaluate. Nevertheless, one of the most important changes was precisely in the spontaneity of the activities. For example, Mary Ashby explained that she used to pop into town to go "mooching around the shops on my own". She did not generally buy anything, or go with any specific purpose in mind, but enjoyed the activity and the opportunity it gave her to "please myself" very much. Her husband has now

retired and she told me that if she tells him she is going to the shops, he generally wants to join her. For her, his company would spoil one of the purposes of the activity - to gain personal space - and his tendency to ask her what it is she is going to buy makes her feel rather foolish because she has no answer. She feels that this turns "something I just used to do into a major event". However, to say "I don't want you to come" would seem confrontational or unkind, so nowadays she rarely mooches, instead going to the shops only when she has something to buy and generally being accompanied by Tom. It was general for the retired husbands to accompany their wives to the shops. What is more, even Margaret Dawson, who reported that she and Bill were never more happy than when the other one is out of the house, is clearly not exempt from the responsibility for worrying about his wellbeing:

Margaret: I like spending time alone. It's been forced upon me over the years and so I've got used to it and I quite enjoy it. Because I was a cricket widow all my life you see, so I <u>was</u> lonely. And I think I've just got used to being on my own and doing things, and now I've got conditioned to it, I quite like it now you know (laughs)...But I've had to adapt to his being at home instead of being at work. That's been quite difficult. I've had to adapt to living in smaller quarters and one's had to adapt to having less money..

Jennifer: What sort of adaptations do you have to make to your husband being at home?

Margaret: It's the fact that I'm not free to do what I want to do when I want to do it, even to sort of doing a room out, or painting or something. If they go away you can get on with it, but when they're around you can't and so those are the sort of frustrations in a way, things don't get done, which otherwise might have done. Similarly when you're on your own you think 'oh well I think I'll go and do so and so now, I'll go and have coffee with so and so or do this', and when there's somebody else there you don't do that, because you don't feel free to go off

and leave them, you know. They wouldn't mind of course if you said you'd like to, he wouldn't mind in the least, but somehow you just have a slight sort of conscience about it you know. Because you're not free. You have a conscience.

This extract provides a poignant contrast to research on younger women which suggests that confinement to the domestic sphere is a source of isolation and loneliness (Hobson, 1978). For Margaret, it clearly has been like that, but she had managed to seize some forms of compensation and autonomy. Another important component of what she says implies a kind of social dependence of her husband on her. Other women in the study were clearly aware of their husbands' social dependence, and Shirley Barclay described her husband in his non-employment time as being like "a fish out of water". Yet none of the men expressed a conscience about leaving wives alone at home after retirement or appeared to worry about them being displaced in quite the same way. In any event, as stated, on the whole they were keen to spend more time on that terrain with their spouses.

Many of the women subsequently became involved in the routine structuring of their husbands' time as part of their responsibility for wellbeing. The circumscribed autonomy of being a housewife means that women generally become very good at structuring their own time, balancing out and coping with competing demands on that time (Oakley, 1976; Graham, 1982). There was evidence that they did this for housebound husbands, by generating lists of tasks, jobs, or ideas for entertainment. Other researchers have noted that women often nudge their husbands into home improvement activity (Pahl, 1984), and where possible a public role where no longer provided by employment

(McKee and Bell, 1986; Morris, 1985a). As noted in chapter six, most of the husbands felt a sense of anomie, or a loss of routine on retirement. Generally they talked with gusto about their outdoor home improvement type of activities, but they also spoke of frustration when the weather was bad, or during the winter, when they were unable to work outside. This affected men who were still in full-time employment as well as those who were not, although it was a problem of greater magnitude for the latter. Fred Jensen, for example, explained in reply to my question "do you ever feel bored?":

Fred: No, not bored. Well I'm at work all day, sometimes that's boring, you know. But no, frustrated more often, like at weekends when the weather's like it has been lately (cold and raining) because I can't get down me allotments then. I don't know what to do with myself then.

This means that the extent of labour associated with the wife's responsibility varied according not only to her husband's employment status, physical health, and general orientation to outdoor activity, but also according to the weather and the seasons. This is generally associated with an agrarian mode of subsistence and is perhaps an interesting life course reversal or recasting of some aspects of industrial time norms in our society with its own implications for women's as well as men's lives (Thompson, 1967). Furthermore, of course, a wife's activity (although not responsibility) in this area will vary according to how much she is personally worried about her husband's self esteem and post retirement stagnation.

Indeed, this relates not only to worry about husbands, but to

upholding in some public sense the status of the family-household. Papanek has identified "family status production" as a crucial aspect of women's labour in this connection (see also Jerrome, 1984):

"Particular kinds of work that I call family status production maintain and enhance the family's social standing, although they do not necessarily enhance the woman's status within that unit".

(Papanek, 1979: 775)

Most importantly, Papanek describes the "politics of status maintenance" as follows:

"..activities explicitly linked to family status that require a woman's time, energy and organizational skills..this is hard to delegate to others. Examples of this kind of work include the formal and informal gift exchanges between families that accompany ceremonies; conveying information - 'gossip' - that establishes or injures family status or that is crucial to economic affairs; preparation and management of feasts that validate family status in the community and discharge obligations to others."

(Papanek, 1979: 778)

I want to argue that the women in my study were engaged continually and routinely in this kind of work as impression management (Goffman, 1971) for the family. Status in later life is crucially and publicly measurable by the husband's 'successful' adaptation to retirement. For instance, many of the men and women told me 'horror stories' about male friends, neighbours and colleagues who had become "cabbage-like", "not interested in anything", who "stay in bed half the morning and don't shave or wear a collar and tie", who had "gone completely downhill", "lost their marbles", and sometimes even died shortly

after retirement. These images are indeed popular and familiar, and were generally invoked by the male interviewees as examples of what was not going to happen, or had not happened, to them. But they are also images which champion a fairly rigid routine and high standard of domestic life, and the keeping up of appearances for the outside world. Pete and Evie Hammond told me about a neighbour who became confined to a wheelchair shortly after retirement, and Pete made clear what he felt the gender divisions of such situations to be:

Pete: The poor man right opposite, he retired and now he's in a wheelchair. He's gone just like that, what was it, arthritis.

Evie: er rheumatoid arthritis.

Pete: First his hands went, and he's a striking looking man too, and just as they thought he was gonna enjoy life like, that struck him, and now he's in a wheelchair.

Jennifer: How awful. What sort of age is he?

Evie: Er, he's about 65.

Pete: This is why I say I've got to find a job and keep active. It's so easy to become a cabbage you know. I'll be quite honest, if I can't find a job that's going to give me a wage, I'll have to do something voluntary, just to have something to do, let me get out for a start. Because I mean, let's face it, I hate the cold, so if I had nothing to make me go out once the winter sets in that would be it. I'd hibernate. Once you hibernate for about 4 or 5 months you wouldn't want to move.

Evie: It's not good for you.

Pete: Yeah, but I think this is the biggest difference between man and woman. I mean a woman can fully occupy herself in a house all day long, so she couldn't become a cabbage could she? I mean a woman's not going to sit in a chair like a man would, a man would just sit in a chair and expect to be waited on hand and foot, but I'm being quite honest being a man. But a woman's got to get a meal, she'll still do the washing, she'll still do a certain amount, even if I help she's still got to do it.

Evie: You see my husband's got a greenhouse out there and he likes to grow his own plants and do the garden, well he..it's alright in the summer, but it's the winter. But I mean I knit and I could always find something to do, and I mean if you...like a woman she can go and have a browse round the shops and things like that.

This excerpt is from their joint interview. When I went back to interview them individually some two months later, Pete had found casual part-time employment only, which he felt was really not enough, but after numerous job applications he had lost hope in getting anything more full-time because "my age goes against me". He made no mention at that stage of his idea about voluntary work. Evie told me that Pete had gone through a "very bad spell, he's been very depressed" and although he seemed a little better now she told me she was very worried about him. Given Pete's graphic observations about their neighbour, and Evie's knowledge that the neighbour's decline was public, she described feeling the burden of responsibility rather heavily. She had been suggesting jobs for him to do around the house - he was currently redecorating the kitchen - and had been "trying not to get on at him too much, although he does get under my feet". She told me she felt uncomfortable about going out to work and leaving him at home, but that they needed her income.

This kind of routine worrying about the wellbeing of husbands was illustrative of the fact that it was the wives who had become attuned to the social situational dynamics of daily life, picking up cues about whether people (and particularly their husbands) were happy, getting along with each other, seeing enough friends and so on. This is not to suggest that women have a biological predisposition to do this, or that men cannot do it too, but merely that these wives had grown accustomed to doing it as a matter of daily routine through years of childcare and domestic servicing. This aspect of the women's responsibility extended to the social interaction of the interview itself, and was manifest in the extent to which some of the women engaged in ego-boosting for their husbands.

Indeed, other researchers have noted that women do tend to engage in strategies which boost the esteem of their husbands, and especially where that esteem might be in question as, for example, in McRae's study of husbands who are occupationally inferior to their wives (McRae, 1986: ch. 7). However, I want to suggest that boosting their husbands' esteem was for some of the women in my study an inherent part of their responsibility for wellbeing. Seven of the women - Vincent, Peters, Barclay, Carter, Wheeler, Tomlin, Dunning - explicitly, conspicuously and frequently in the joint interviews engaged in this practice whilst simultaneously being rather self-effacing. For example, Pat Dunning told me that her husband was: "A wonderful father. Much better with children than I could ever be. In all sorts of ways he really is quite an exceptional man". Or, Shirley Barclay addressed the following remark to her husband "You've given me a

great gift. Your knowledge of the countryside. I will never know as much as you, or in so much detail, but you've helped me to appreciate a whole new world". Significantly, none of the men made similar esteem-boosting or 'loving' statements in their wives' presence indicating not necessarily that they were not appreciative of similar qualities in the women, but that it was not part of an acceptable or everyday discourse for them (2). Yet this kind of discourse and the intimate monitoring of others which it involves, is a form of mental and verbal labour. Again, it is significant that lying behind this is a kind of dependence of men on their wives for the generation and maintenance of self esteem.

But another aspect of responsibility for the social situational dynamics became clear in the extent to which nearly all the men adopted a kind of teasing or ridiculing banter with me in the interview. I wish to argue, along with anthropological observations of Douglas (Douglas, 1975: ch. 7), that joking or teasing is bound up with power. We have already seen that joking or teasing in public places is a form of social control; specifically, however, for the men in my study the ability to tease and ridicule <u>without worrying about the social situational dynamics</u> was a result and show of power. Their wives, on the other hand, tended to try to smooth any consequential embarrassment over. In most cases, this banter was good humoured but slightly cheeky like, for example, when Jim Peters replied "what do you want, a divorce!" when I asked who did most of the housework. Barbara Peters replied "don't take any notice of him Jennifer". As well as highlighting that housework was a

contentious issue - a point I will return to shortly - this kind of teasing was clearly gendered, that is the women never adopted it in their dialogue with me, and probably to do with my status as a young female researcher interviewing older men. Indeed, Cunningham-Burley found similar responses amongst her sample of grandfathers (Cunningham-Burley, 1984). Sometimes it was more overtly sexual as, for example, when John Tomlin (in the context of a general discussion of marriage) said "you women are all the same, wanting to catch a husband and train him. Men have other things on their minds". Howard Bromley was perhaps less good humoured in his teasing, often failing to answer questions, getting up and going out of the room, raising his eyebrows in disdain and so on. Again, Jane Bromley was clearly embarrassed, laughing nervously and telling me to "pay no mind to him, carry on asking your questions".

Related to this, two of the women, Shirley Barclay, and Margaret Dawson, told me that their husbands were "anti-social". Both used this same term, and went on to describe in similar ways how their husbands did not enjoy being in company. A third woman, Barbara Peters, described her husband in a similar way. None of the husbands contradicted this view in their own accounts. Shirley told me that Ted was "a bit of a loner, who doesn't suffer fools gladly". Margaret told me that "people get on his nerves". Barbara said "he likes to keep himself to himself. It's just the way he is". This perhaps would not be significant it itself, except to the extent that all three women were concerned about it, and recounted instances when episodes of their husbands anti-sociability had embarrassed them in front of

friends. It seemed that they had on these occasions felt responsible for their husband's behaviour, or for his absence, in a way which none of the men had for their wives. Indeed, none of the men reported having anti-social wives. Yet what is also significant is summed up in Barbara Peters' comment that "it's just the way he is". All three of the women attributed their husband's behaviour to factors of personality rather than social (or anti-social) behaviour.

In sum then, what I am suggesting about the women's responsibility for servicing and caring for their husbands is that it involves maintaining a routine concern for husbands' wellbeing, status and sociability, which is translated into various kinds of labour dependent on the couple's specific situation. Once husbands retire, the timetable of housework is potentially stretched out to cover the whole day, albeit men may help with certain tasks. More importantly domestic servicing and caring responsibility means that the women thus become involved in all kinds of other tasks - mental and physical - which are largely specific to their life course positions and that of their husbands.

b. Responsibility for Protecting and Providing

There is less to say here about men's responsibility, since most of its contours have already been established in chapters five and six. What is important is that the women's and men's responsibilities were relational: the women were responsible for servicing and caring for the wellbeing of their providers, the men were responsible for providing for and protecting their

servicers and carers. The very nature and concerns of women's responsibilities stem from the supposed 'needs' of the male-breadwinner-provider for home comforts, and for a smooth transition from the weary task of providing for a family to a relaxing retirement. Public concern about this transition is based largely on assumptions about the damage to esteem and social contacts that loss of breadwinner status creates for men, and this is of course a valid concern (Parker, 1982) (3). Men's responsibility to provide, is premised on the notion that women are partly or wholly economically dependent on their husbands, and the male ethos of provision and protecting is bound up with ideas about men's physical superiority. As discussed, the men's responsibility to provide was in some senses discharged on retirement. Although it was maintained symbolically where the male wage became a 'proper' pension, the daily labour associated with it tended to cease. Responsibility for protecting their households was nevertheless maintained.

However, another aspect of the relationship between gendered responsibilities which is central concerns their relative value, visibility and social worth. Servicing and caring were clearly not felt to be the real 'nitty gritty' of what life was about. Breadwinning and providing were talked about and dealt with as fundamentals, housework and servicing having had to fit around their strictures. However, paradoxically the home was spoken of as the pleasant and comfortable sphere of life. Hence responsibility for that sphere in terms of servicing its members and creating a happy home environment was simultaneously less fundamental but nicer, than responsibility for providing.

As we have seen, Pete Hammond thought his wife rather lucky to have domestic labour and the servicing of him to occupy her in the home after retirement. What is more, we saw in chapter six that the women were viewed as having had more choice than the men about whether or not to work, responsibility for domestic labour and servicing becoming invisible in a kind of cash nexus. Related to this was a framework for the articulation of men's sacrifices for wife and family, as providers, where women's sacrifices for husband and family were concealed because their lives and responsibilities had been intrinsically about sacrifice and service anyway. Ironically, men could be seen actually to have given things up, or to have missed opportunities, on behalf of the family, because their responsibility for providing and protecting more readily gave them a legitimate life and access to privilege outside the home. The women on the other hand, with no equally legitimate public role, and largely as a consequence of existing social inequality, on the face of it appeared not to have missed much through devotion to home and family.

For example, the husbands were not reticent on the topic of their own employment, nor about the "hard graft" it had involved. Although they did not necessarily do this in a belligerent or pedantic way, the point about hard graft was made by men in most of the interviews in some way. For example, Arthur Carter explained that: "We've got more financially comfortable. You don't work 68 hours a week and not have some benefit". It was he, not Marion Carter, who had been employed for 68 hours a week. In a similar vein, other husbands made it clear that they had not

enjoyed their jobs, only working through financial necessity rather than working through 'choice' as their wives had done. Two common themes were regret about job opportunities foregone because wives had been reluctant to move house and inability to remain in the armed services after the war because it was unfair to the family. The men were thus easily able to articulate sacrifices they had made 'for the family', but none of the wives similarly spoke explicitly of having sacrificed anything for the family. What we might conceptualise for example as women's sacrifice of employment careers to look after their families - involving husbands, children and elderly relatives - looked instead like choosing whether or not to go out to work. In a fundamental sense, the wives were constructed as 'the family' for whom their husbands had made sacrifices. This is significant, because to sacrifice 'for' is commensurate with the responsibility of providing 'for'. It implies a detachment between you and those for whom you provide.

Consequently responsibilities had been constructed in such a way that the women appeared to have had the better deal out of life than their husbands. This was explicitly articulated by a number of the women, and implied by a number of the men:

Mary Ashby: Well I think people tend to say that men have an easy time of it, but after all they are the breadwinners aren't they, they've got to work from say 17 or 18 right up until they're 65...um, no I think women really have the best of it. From my point of view I would think so.

Felicity Stephens I think women get a better deal really, at least I think men have to work hard all their life, and it's not always fun working for someone else. A woman could perhaps give

up and stay at home if she wanted to. A man's got to provide and it must be a worry to provide for a family.

This is not to suggest that neither the men nor the women had any perception of inequality, but merely that their public discourse offset womens' choice against mens' sacrifice, and placed a higher value and importance on what men do whilst simultaneously implying that it is harder and more wearing than what women do.

Other researchers have noted similar kinds of issues about the relative values of men's and women's work (Imray and Middleton, 1983; Phillips and Taylor, 1980; Wainright, 1978), and Bell and Newby have suggested that the providing work of husbands has a symbolic status as a gift given to dependent wives (Bell and Newby, 1976). For her part, Papanek has pointed out that women's labour, and particularly their status production work:

"is less visible, less clearly rewarded in concrete terms, than the work of men, and it is more likely to be seen simply as a source of private comfort and welfare.

(Papanek, 1979: 781)

Haavind, in a study of young marriage, argues that the construction of value is incumbent upon an "invisible standard marriage contract" which provides an interpretational frame for exchanges between husbands and wives. She suggests that:

"For the wife all of her actions in relation to her husband are evaluated according to whether or not they take precedence over her actions in her other social relations. The marital relation is supposed to have top priority to the wife. For the husband the reverse is true. His behaviour towards his wife is evaluated on the basis of the fact that all his other relations come before the marital relationship. This is not just a description of how

it is, but rather the basis from which the couple is operating. This contract functions as an implicit frame for interpreting the spouses' actions. When he does the dishes it is a personal tribute to her, when she does, it is only her obligation. If he only to a modest degree allows his relationship to her to be more important than his other relationships, this is nevertheless experienced by both parties as if he is making a sacrifice. And if she trieds to get him to accept her having some consideration for her other relations, it seems as though she is getting something if he goes along with it, or is using force if she is insistent when he is reluctant to do so".

(Haavind, 1984: 153. Emphasis in original).

What Haavind says certainly seems to have some descriptive merit for findings such as mine. For the women and men in my study a notion that men had made sacrifices throughout their lives helped to make sense of the construction of retirement around their wellbeing, because retirement was for them a 'well earned rest'.

However, what is more important here is what all of this says about the possibility of renegotiating gendered responsibilities. In summary, they are practised, valued and defined relationally and therefore, fundamentally, for the couples in the study, they currently only make sense in terms of their genderedness. What this means is that for these couples a necessary condition of the renegotiation of gendered responsibilities would be the radical reorganisation of the relations of domestic servicing/caring and providing/protecting rather than a simple redistribution of some of the tasks involved. In other words, if the 'contract' requires that women will service men, then men cannot do it without changing the terms of the contract. This is not a theoretical tautology, but a commentary on prevailing gender relations. The negotiation of tasks within the existing general framework of gendered responsibility thus cannot be a sufficient

condition for renegotiation of that responsibility as long as it leaves unchallenged the relational context.

3. Negotiating for Control?

What I am suggesting is that negotiations about divisions of work and time amongst the husbands and wives did not constitute renegotiations of gendered responsibilities. Indeed, precisely because changes were being worked out within an underlying and taken-for-granted framework of gendered responsibility, the negotiation of change actually legitimated and reaffirmed that framework. But before assessing why renegotiation was not occurring in the face of disruptions, and if it was not, what was going on in terms of power and control between spouses, it is necessary to establish the nature of the conceptual distinction between negotiation and renegotiation.

a. Negotiation and the Construction of Responsibilities

In chapter two I outlined some of the ways in which young couples make a traditional division of labour make sense through their practices and understandings. Central to this kind of approach, although not explicit within it, is the theorisation of gendered responsibilities as the outcome of negotiation and construction. This is clear in my study, although different levels of negotiation can be detected. Most couples did not report having planned and discussed, for example, their division of domestic labour, or which spouse should go out to work and which should stay at home. However, when I asked them why they had arranged things the way had, they all made comments indicating that they

perceived their arrangement had been worked out or negotiated to suit their own needs. For example, Joyce Edwards explained that "it's a system that suits us. I don't know what other people do". Or Sid Lawrence: "I think it just happened like that, we didn't plan it, but it works alright". Or Sarah Vincent: "I think it's something that each couple works out because everybody is an individual". Others, like the Wheelers whom we met in chapter 5, did indicate that at least at certain times in their lives they had discussed the division of housework appropriate to their situation at that time.

The way in which 'fair' meanings and practices were established through negotiation is an issue to which I will return in the following chapter. The point to grasp here is that in retrospect over the life course, gendered responsibilities had a negotiated character. That is to say, all of the couples specified that their division of responsibility was individually suitable to them, and hence implying that potentially it could have been different. Conversely, none of them suggested that inequalities of gender constrain men and women to perform their relative responsibilities.

Of course, as we saw in chapter two, this kind of meaning makes sense for younger couples because it contains a 'grain of truth'. Men and women do carve out their own practices and understandings, albeit from gendered social material, and in that sense they do negotiate gendered responsibilities. The latter are not simply imposed on an unsuspecting or passive population. But from the point of view of those involved in the negotiations,

the constraining potential of the social material can become cast ideologically simply as a series of factors which helps their practices and understandings to make sense. The negotiated character of responsibilities highlights choice, flexibility and individuality, and what is less apparent are the constraints which produce similar outcomes in terms of traditional divisions. Therefore, although conceptually and analytically it is clear that negotiations have not been individual and private, experientially and retrospectively they have been.

In times of major change, such as those premised on the structural disruptions, negotiation is likely to become more overt and indeed, the changes documented in the previous chapter - where for example housework and money management became, for some, topics of discussion - are indicative of this. But as long as the boundaries of responsibility remain intact, as we have seen that they did, then renegotiation has not occurred, since by its very definition it requires the recognition and transformation of the gendered relations which responsibilities express and sustain.

b. Explanations for the Absence of Renegotiation

What reasons can be discerned then for the continuity of the framework of responsibility, or of gendered relations, in the light of disruptions? In a sense, these are already implicit in the material so far presented, but they now need teasing out and pulling together in the demonstration of an argument.

I wish to suggest that it is unlikely that husbands would want to

renegotiate gendered responsibilities which would probably entail a loss of social and private privilege, such as legitimate access as far as wives are concerned to the 'public' world, and the benefit of being serviced and cared for. However, having lost some means of access to that public world, for example on the severance of employment, husbands might, and in fact on the whole did, want to become more fully immersed in the private domain of the home and some of the tasks associated with the running of it. This means that the question we need to ask is why did the women not initiate further renegotiations?

Firstly, there are a series of issues which add up to inhibitors against women's potential action to initiate renegotiation.

(i) Shared biographies and traditions: Many of the couples made comments indicating that they had, as Reg Edwards put it "come through a lot together". In their life stories they talked of the war, of poverty, of social change and so on, often in rather romantic terms as parts of a shared biography. Clearly this was true; they had each lived together through the same chunk of historical and family time for a long period. Sid Lawrence said "we've come through bumps and scrapes, and we're still together." and Janet Lawrence replied "they said it wouldn't last, but here we are, still going strong". Sarah Vincent told me that:

Sarah: When we married we left our families behind and we made *our own lives together.* We worked very hard and were very reliant on each other. And we loved each other very much. Got on very well together. We've shared out troubles and strifes, being terribly short of money and sort of having to meet the mortgage, all that sort of thing.

What is more despite the level of 'romance' or 'quality of relationship', during that time spent together the couples had all negotiated and established now longstanding routines which formed part of their divisions of responsibility. They all had many years of practice in this, and in that sense it is possible to speak of them having established personal traditions. The mere weight of tradition, in shared routines and practices, forms part of the establishment of a commitment to continuity, and a form of bonding between husbands and wives (Becker, 1960; Turner, 1970). This of course is consistent with the notion outlined earlier of social action as a continuous flow of conduct rather than an isolated moment or slice of reality. At the very least, 'old habits die hard'. To initiate renegotiation at this stage and in this context would constitute a breaking of a commitment, or of a tacit bargain or contract, which had been apparently freely entered and established through shared experience.

The negotiated character of responsibilities is clearly relevant here, because it implies that parties could have developed alternative systems in the past, but chose not to. This is particularly the case with the responsibility for caring for wellbeing where a woman's attentions often appear to be unsolicited by the partner because they are a result of her monitoring of him, rather than of his voicing explicit demands. We saw earlier that Margaret Dawson has a conscience about leaving her husband at home alone, even though she knows if she told him she was going out he would not mind. In this sense, it is easy for Margaret to feel that it is her own fault that she worries, rather than conceptualising that concern as part of a

responsibility which is gendered and which could be renegotiated.

(ii) The nature of responsibility for caring for wellbeing: This leads directly into the second inhibitor, which is that the very responsibility which women have for caring for and about their husbands gains a new priority on their husbands' retirement. In other words, the contours of the responsibility itself militate against being confrontational and upsetting displaced husbands with suggestions for radical renegotiation of gendered responsibility.

(iii) Women's choice versus men's sacrifice: To the extent that the relative responsibilities have been constructed with different values and importance, and women therefore appear to have had the better deal, a radical renegotiation at this stage would look rather ungrateful. In Bell and Newby's terms, the construction of men's providing responsibility as a gift to dependent wives helps to reaffirm the power and superiority of the giver, and to command gratitude in the receiver (Bell and Newby, 1976).

(iii) Togertherness: We have seen that a normative view of retirement based on 'togetherness' was generally accepted by the men and women. This provides a clear distinction between the couples in my study and those in the research of McKee and Bell, and Morris, where male unemployment was undesirable, perceived of as temporary, and not a basis for togetherness. Couples, and husbands and wives, were clearly divided, although I do not claim to be able to discern exactly how, in the extent to which they

desired and enjoyed togetherness. However, whether togetherness was normative or experiential, confrontation and radical renegotiation is at the least disruptive to it.

Added to these is another series of issues which cast women in a rather less passive light but which are also important. Rather than emphasising the immediacy of constraint, these issues highlight reasons for the women's active resistance to renegotiation, whilst they initiated or sustained the negotiation of changes.

(i) Women's control of the domestic domain: This is the most crucial issue, and it relates to the shifting boundaries between public and private, that is, particularly in the extent to which husbands were apparently beginning gladly to leave their public role, and to invade the private domain. Other researchers have noted that younger women value the 'autonomy' and control they have of domestic matters in the home, and that they resent intrusions by husbands especially during the daytime (Finch, 1983; Coyle, 1984; Morris, 1985a; Luxton, 1986; Oakley, 1976).

I wish to suggest that the women in my study, over the years, had established control of the domestic domain albeit most of them had also been in employment for most of their lives. They had exercised control in the doing of domestic labour, the organisation of housework, general running of the home, in childcare, and so on. For this reason they had a great deal invested in ensuring that husband's domestic contributions were defined as 'help', and that they as women retained the

responsibility from which this control emanated. Although they might initiate negotiations about housework - in attempts to get husbands to pull their weight a little more - especially in the light of disruptions apparently removing paid employment as a legitimate excuse for husbands to avoid domestic toil, these women would have a real interest in maintaining the existing structures of responsibility.

(ii) Access to the public domain: But central to this is the relative access of men and women to public and private domains of experience. We have seen in earlier chapters that the structures within which the men and women were constructing their lives had not somehow become more 'equal' at this 'stage' of life and in this particular historical time. What this meant was that the women were not beginning to gain the right of admittance to a public domain on equal terms with men, and the men, however much they may have wanted to, could not individually give up the right to that domain and its attendant privileges - even on retirement - because it was a social right. The men's public advantage vis a vis the women was part of a set of circumstances over which they had little individual control. The women remained disadvantaged vis a vis the men in structural terms, constrained economically from leaving marriage, and controlled by men in public, for example in out of home sociability and leisure. This meant that for these couples, exchange of responsibilities was not a possibility.

Furthermore, the nature of the disruptions meant that issues of negotiation were increasingly focusing around the domain of the

home. As we shall see shortly, there were negotiations and even struggles taking place in these couples' lives in this sense, and the women were active participants in these, but the process involved two contradictory elements for them. On the one hand the women were trying to get their men to lessen the domestic burden by helping more at home, but on the other hand the women were keen to retain the responsibility for and control of the domestic domain. The fact that their years of domestic servicing had engendered a form of dependence in their husbands was one which helped them to retain control. Yet the fact that struggle and negotiation was centring on the home is significant because it meant that in some senses the domain of women's control was both 'up for grabs' in a way which the public domain could not be, and women's 'private' lives were becoming open to the scrutiny of their husbands in a way which the men's 'public' lives had not been open to their wives.

Again, this was rather contradictory, because on the one hand husbands could seem like rather helpless and dependent 'fish out of water', yet on the other as potential invaders. This means that for most of the women, and potentially for all of them, the situation was rather ambiguous: glad to see more of their husbands, yet resentful that husbands were encroaching on their domain and space; worried about husbands' health and wellbeing around the difficult time of retirement, and about their sociability especially since the social contacts of employment were cut; and worried about public opinion as to husbands' adjustment. It was against this context that the women were negotiating both for their own personal time and space, and the

organisation of domestic labour. In sum, this meant that overt renegotiation was neither desired nor occurring, but that negotiations certainly were.

We have seen some of the ways in which men's presence in the home established informal constraints on women's activities, but let us now examine some of the negotiations and strategies adopted by women to gain personal time and space without losing control of the domestic domain.

c. Women's strategies for negotiating personal time and space

There are conceptual problems in differentiating personal time and space from, say, loneliness. However, using the women's own evaluative frameworks, it appeared that most of them valued "time for myself", or the kind of "mooching" time mentioned earlier. Yet there were different degrees to which they could acquire it either at home, or out of the home, the danger with the latter being that wives might lose control of the domestic domain because of their absence as well, of course, as neglecting their responsibilities by leaving husbands at home alone.

Nevertheless, most of the women did gain some kind of personal time or space, through a variety of strategies. Although popping out to the shops spontaneously for example was becoming more difficult, Mary Ashby, who liked "mooching", told me that:

Mary: I'm going to start going when he's up the ladder. I'll wait until he's at the top, get my coat and bag and shout 'bye dear', and be off like a dose of salts before he can get down and come with me.

It is likely that this is the tip of the iceberg of a mixture of conscious strategies and subconscious practices, which are probably fuzzy and unreportable in their proponents' minds.

Of course, I argued earlier that some women were able to take or continue with jobs after their own and their husbands' 'retirement' in a way which was not threatening to notions of male-providing because they were mutually defined as jobs that "don't count". To the extent that this is possible, it clearly gives an exit and income to women, although also renders them susceptible to the exploitation of unprotected and low paid employment.

Another important strategy was the establishment of personal space in the home before retirement. Three of the couples had explicitly designated rooms, or parts of the house, which were 'theirs': Barbara Peters had a sewing room and Jim Peters a workshop, and the Barclays and the Dawsons each had rooms which were clearly either the husband's or the wife's. Of course the ability to do this depends in part of the size of one's house, but the disruptions are also relevant here. For women who have not before their husband's retirement established personal space in the home, or indeed have not felt the need perhaps because their husbands have spent less time there than they themselves have, to do so afterwards is potentially confrontational. Interestingly, a majority of the men had personal territory, general outside the home, in the form of a garden shed, a workshop, a basement, or an allotment - perhaps remnants of a

public/outdoor status -, and their wives had not. The implication was that the home - and indeed the community spaces - were the wife's domain but, as we have seen, disruptions put that into jeopardy.

d. Domestic Control: 'nagging wives' and joking husbands

All of the interviews were full of evidence for women's ambivalence between wanting to negotiate for more domestic help, and for superficial change, but not wanting to renegotiate responsibilities. The women used and displayed domestic power in these negotiations; simultaneously expressing the contradiction whilst also creating the impression that they were ultimately more powerful than their husbands.

Some of the studies of younger married women have shown that husbands' domestic contributions are not always up to the standards required by wives. Sometimes women feel it is easier and quicker to do it themselves (Luxton, 1986; Morris, 1985a). I wish to suggest that this was at the basis of the struggle over the domestic domain for the husbands and wives in my study. There was an implication not only that the women controlled the home, but that they were lucky to do so. This was underlined in the extent to which husbands were able to make a ritual of their wives' apparent power, for example in complaining of how their wives were "bossy", or "always nagging". In all of the interviews was an assumption that in some sense wives were generally in charge of the marriage. When I knocked on Fred Jensen's door to ask if he and his wife would participate in my study, he said "hang on I'll go and ask the boss". This kind of

image was often reinforced while its reality was subverted through joking or ridicule. As Douglas has argued:

"Whatever the joke, however remote its subject, the telling of it is potentially subversive. Since its form consists of a victorious tilting of uncontrol against control, it is an image of the levelling of hierarchy, the triumph of intimacy over formality, of unofficial values over official ones".

(Douglas, 1975: 98)

In cases where the husbands had begun to help more with housework for example, this help was clearly not seen as being up to scratch, sometimes as a result of a carefully cultivated incompetence on the part of husbands. Men either tended to do things the "wrong way", or at "the wrong time" and in "the wrong place". Tom Ashby, for example told me: "I put things that are supposed to drip dry in the spinner sometimes, or so I'm told". Margaret Dawson told me she would rather be out when her husband helps with the housework because he does not do it properly:

Margaret: I notice that he doesn't clear up the boiler ash properly and sort of things like that you know. They'll wash up and go away, then you take the washing-up bowl out of the sink and you find all the tea-leaves round it because they haven't cleared up after themselves. And sort of splashes down the fronts of cupboards and things. They don't see those...I wipe it up after me you see. The men don't notice it so its, all the bits are still there.

Pete Hammond told me that his wife is "far too fussy with housework. She's a maniac". He reported that she has a ritual of tidying up the house before they go to bed at night "in case a burglar breaks in and thinks she's untidy". Thus although many wives wanted help in the home, they struggled actively to retain the power to direct that help, hence contributing to the image of

bossy wives and helpful but clumsy husbands who "can't do a thing right". As John Tomlin put it:

John: I always find with you women, whatever you do, it's not right. Either you haven't done it right, or put it back right, or something".

It is not insignificant that these types of statement were generally made in the presence of the other spouse, and indeed often formed part of an apparently good humoured marital banter whose effect was to construct an image of women in this age range as dominating rather submissive, displaced husbands. Sid Lawrence, for example, reported that: "I don't consider I've ever acted in a dominant way" to which Janet Lawrence replied "No, he's always done what I've told him!".

As stated, other researchers have noted that women do, on the whole, have control of the domestic domain. However, it has also been pointed out that this control is in a sense delegated to them by their husbands, it involves the servicing of others, and is therefore dependent to an extent on women's subservience to men (Bell and Newby, 1976; Davidoff, 1976; Johnson, 1975; Pahl, 1983). As one of my interviewees, Frank Pritchard, put it: "I wouldn't want to be lord and master of the house. I'd rather <u>let her do that</u>" (my emphasis).

This is rather paradoxical because having been made a manager, and having been delegated the responsibility for day to day domestic matters, the wives really have seized a form of circumscribed autonomy, and an area from which they have been

able to legitimately exclude their husbands in the past. The home is the wife's domain. She is in charge. Hence we can appreciate the development of popular images of the nagging wife or mother-in-law (Harris, 1977) and the trammelled, downtrodden husband, which seem particularly pertinent at this 'stage' of life. The point is that by their nagging and their husbands' joking complaints, both wives and husbands are celebrating the legitimacy of women's control of the domestic sphere. However, through the payment of lipservice to women's domestic power, the ultimate 'orchestration' power of husbands over their wives, stemming from their socially advantaged position, can be concealed whilst also being reinforced. Domestic power appears to be more immediate and vital.

This means that the wives' domestic nagging was not threatening for husbands, although they may have found it very irritating, because by vocalising and symbolising her domestic power through nagging a wife is helping to conceal the unequal social positon she has with her husband. Furthermore, a result of the construction of women's domestic power as nagging is to trivialise further what it is that women do. The implication is that what is being nagged about is not a necessity at all, but just one of the wife's idiosyncracies. Indeed, in the face of retirement, some husbands in the study carried this through to suggesting a reordering of their wives' priorities. As well as developing a renewed interest in "doing things together" they sometimes tried to persuade their wives to defer some of the housework in favour of joint leisure activities, or to do things in the house a bit less thoroughly so that they could go out

together. Added to this, they made it know that if they were in control of domestic organisation, they would have different priorities. Thus in losing a bid to reorder his wife's priorities a husband could legitimately avoid the 'fussy details' of housework, whilst setting her up as a nagging wife. If he were to win the reordering bid, the wife might feel that her control of the domestic sphere had been challenged and, as others have noted (Oakley, 1976), she would still have the housework to do tomorrow.

McRae has suggested that nagging is an outcome of the work it refers to - that is, housework - rather than the gender of the nagger (McRae, 1986) so, given that negotiations for these couples were centring on the domestic domain, how far did husbands start to nag their wives about housework? Some husbands did begin to take an active interest in the daily routines of the domestic sphere but, as mentioned, this did not involve taking over responsibility. In fact, rather than taking over all the labour involved, husbands' interest in domesticity tended to take the form of monitoring or overseeing the work of wives: helpfully suggesting "more efficient" ways of doing things. With a minority of the husbands, this almost took the form of a professionalisation of domestic labour, whereby they installed and developed expertise in new household technology, such as microwave ovens, which their wives felt unable or unwilling to use. Interestingly, one of these was Tom Ashby, who as noted earlier had problems sorting out what should be drip dried and spun dried. This suggests that there is a male definition and construction of skill going on here, and a devaluation of women's

labour, and women's household control.

What is most siginficant about this however is that the wives involved did not trivialise their husbands' interference in domesticity as nagging, but rather perceived that they were encroaching, criticising or "taking over". This is a clear expression of the implications of the gendered nature of the relations of domestic servicing and providing, and does suggest that nagging was inherently gendered. The women were beginning to have to be accountable to their husbands in a way that they had not been in the past, and this was partly because the women's sphere at this time was becoming observable to the men in a way that men's public sphere never becomes fully observable to women (see Imray and Middleton, 1983; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1987). Given the structure of social inequality, and given the women's perception that they could only lose control in one sphere without ever gaining power in the other, it is perhaps easy to understand why men nagging women about domesticity is more threatening, although probably no more irritating, than women nagging men.

The main point is that nagging is only nagging, as opposed to monitoring, interfering or taking over, insofar as it is considered to be talk about something inconsequential rather than the really important 'nitty gritty' of what life is about. Of course, being aware of and attempting to control a husband's social interactions can also sound like nagging in this sense; it is therefore significant that the women were seen to be 'nagging' and there are jokes tailored for these occasions, when the men

were 'taking over'. Those who have the power to say that others are nagging are, in the process, helping to define the agenda and priorities of marriage in private by determining what is and what is not important.

Conclusion: Gender Inequality and Domestic Dependence - who has the power?

There clearly had been changes in the married lives and domestic organisation of these couples over time, but gendered responsibility was an important area of continuity. What responsibilities actually meant in practice had changed for the couples, and particularly important was the extent to which domestic servicing relations involved different types and amounts of work as well as new conflicts and negotiations. Struggle or negotiation for these couples had become centred around the domestic domain in a shifting of the boundaries between public and private. Women appeared on the face of it to be more powerful because they continued to direct the help that husbands gave in the domestic domain, whilst asserting their authority over it and resisting any potential takeover bids. It is important to stress that this was a source of real control for the women. But, the men and women both ritually reinforced this notion, through men treating women as domestic "bosses", and through women nagging their husbands. What this meant was that by keeping marital discourse at the level of domestic power, renegotiation of domestic servicing and providing relations was kept off the agenda and attention was being directed away from at least major characteristics of gendered responsibilities:

(i) Firstly these women had been disadvantaged vis a vis their husbands throughout their lives in terms of employment and pay as well as social and cultural inequalities of the kind outlined in chapter three, and this remained the context for the marriage relationship.

(ii) The domain whose control the women were hanging on to was actually one giving responsibility for servicing the needs of others, and ensuring their wellbeing. To the extent that we can conceptualise this as subservience, then women's power was dependent on their subservience to their husbands. What is more, there was no-one to similarly monitor and service the wives' daily wellbeing needs, or to ensure the maintainence of their self esteem.

(iii) The husbands' association with providing and the public sphere meant they were in a position to be able to trivialise what the women did at home, by saying that they were far too fussy and nagged too much, or even by reordering their priorities.

For the women and men in the study the disruptions heralded permanent changes in their lives, and therefore could not be cast off as temporary problems not requiring domestic solutions in the way that we saw unemployment and redundancy could be. This meant that the shifting and negotiation of the public-private boundaries would be ongoing.

All of this indicates that we should question the use of a static

term like 'inequality' to convey the dynamics of these processes and relations. The situation looks much more like a struggle for control, or for self determination, between unequal bargaining parties. Women were clearly exercising power, although, we would want to maintain a term which expresses the inequalities of the situation.

Yet this is further complicated when we consider the issue of dependence, for in important ways the husbands and wives were mutually dependent on each other. It is wrong simply to view the women as economically dependent on their husbands, without recognising that the husbands have been economically dependent on their wives' unpaid labour and, equally importantly, socially and emotionally dependent on their wives' wellbeing work. Given the nature of this work, men are likely to become dependent on their wives for succour, for esteem, for comfort, and generally for being looked after. Of course it is likely to be difficult to ascertain the extent of dependence, but the point is that the way responsibilities were constructed in relation to each other made men's dependence an inherent possibility. In fact, five of the men (Ashby, Peters, Jensen, Hammond, Barclay) told me explicitly in their joint interviews that they were somehow dependent on their wives. As Fred Jensen pointed out: "I'm dependent on her for my home comforts". That is indeed likely to be an underestimate: given the invisible nature of the wellbeing work that women do, men are likely to be unaware of the extent of their dependence, as well as unused to talking in the self disclosing kind of language which would express it.

Of course I do not wish to suggest that this meant that the men were more disadvantaged than the women, for clearly in some ways it is a privilege to be able to be dependent in this way. What is more, it is an outcome of privilege to be able to negotiate a high normative value or label for one's position and, significantly, not to have it publicly defined as dependence precisely because of the public invisibility of the labour which supports it. As suggested above, the women could not similarly depend on being looked after and serviced, yet women are publicly assumed to be dependent on men (Land, 1986). As Eichenbaum and Orbach have argued:

"Men's emotional dependency needs are, in fact, more consistently catered to than women's and this fact has a direct correlation to men's ability to be more 'independent'"

(Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1984: 17)

If the men are dependent on the women's wellbeing and caring work, what does this mean for the conception of gender inequality? Clearly, again it highlights some of the complexity and fluidity of the issues in question. It illustrates that the women are not completely powerless, and that the men can only be independent and autonomous because of the women's responsibilities (Grimshaw, 1986: ch. 5). It certainly takes us a long way away from notions that inequality can be measured by how many dishes each spouse washes up, partly because that takes no account of issues of negotiation and control, of what each spouse stands to gain or lose, and what relative bargaining power they have. My findings show that an increase in men's dishwashing activities - although probably a marker of

negotiation between spouses about domestic tasks - cannot be a simple measure of an increase in equality.

On balance, however, it is acceptable to retain the use of the term inequality, since we can see clear privileges and disadvantages for men and women, and divisions in their relative power and control. But it must be used as a generic term which allows variation, fluidity and complexity as well as struggles and negotiations, and the possibility that privilege and disadvantage are not always distributed simply one way or the other, to men or to women.

Overall, this part of the thesis has been designed to illustrate precisely this kind of complexity and ambiguity in the construction of gender inequality amongst all the couples, through a discussion of some of the contours of change and continuity in their everyday lives. In the next part I will focus on some of the ways in which the women and men concerned were making sense of all this, and the ways in which their actions and understandings produced meaningful practices.

PART THREE - MAKING SENSE OF GENDERED RESPONSIBILITIES IN DAILY MARRIED LIFE

PART THREE - MAKING SENSE OF GENDERED RESPONSIBILITIES IN DAILY MARRIED LIFE

Introduction

1. Everyday Understandings and Meaningful Practices

I suggested earlier that meaningful practices form the links between personal and structural or patterned inequalities. In this section I will show some of the ways in which the wives and husbands in the study constructed meaningful practices in their everyday lives, and some of the consequences of their actions and understandings.

In Part Two I identified and developed the outline of a dynamic and relational process through which responsibilities were being constructed and maintained by couples in the study group, and I documented in chapter 7 the distinction between negotiation and renegotiation of domestic responsibility, together with the underlying logic and constraints which meant that it did not make sense for the women to initiate renegotiations. It was established that, although negotiated in character, responsibilities are real and binding in the lives of the people concerned: the more so precisely because people have apparently created them themselves.

Part Three essentially builds on that analysis, developing in more depth the ways in which different couples made sense of gendered responsibilities. I will show that commonsense ideologies were being constructed, whose effect was to create an aura of inevitability and appropriateness of the status quo, thus

helping to make the absence of renegotiation meaningful.

In some ways, of course, absence of renegotiation seems obvious. That is, it might be argued that one would hardly expect a fundamental and radical renegotiation of routines into which couples had been 'socialised' over a lifetime. Yet the disruptions have some import for the extent to which continuity of practice can be made meaningful. This means that obviousness is not inherent in the situation: it is socially constructed and, as we have seen, is supportive of inequality. It helps to conceal the possibility of radical renegotiation, by establishing in commonsense terms (which we have seen that some sociologists have perpetuated) that negotiation within responsibilities itself can overcome inequality. Relations of responsibilities become obscured behind a focus on tasks associated with responsibilities.

This section therefore represents a further and more detailed unravelling of the everyday and taken-for-granted: a questioning of the obvious, which I have emphasised earlier is a vital part of this kind of research endeavour. There are, of course, research traditions which are based upon the questioning of the obvious, particularly ethnomethodology and phenomenology. Yet, as argued previously, there is a tendency in these, and other related traditions, to overlook the questioning of the social material and history as components in the way the obvious is constructed in people's lives. I wish to explicate the why and the how in the context of each other. I will argue that the commonsense ideologies which I will identify represent some of

the practices and understandings carved out by the men and women in the study from the social material available to them. These practices and understandings expressed and reinforced a taken-for-granted fabric of married life.

The commonsense ideologies and practice to which I refer are necessarily perceived as private matters, because they are carved out in the private homes of men and women who are married to each other. This does not mean of course that they are private practices in the sense of having no relation to the inequalities of the 'outside' world, or nothing in common with practices of other married couples. Indeed, as we have seen, the 'negotiated character' of gendered responsibilities conceals a startling similarity of practice within marriage. What it does mean however is that they are likely to be expressed in the context of the minutiae of the practices of everyday 'private' life and this was indeed part of my logic in asking couples in depth precisely about these issues.

Because the ideologies are in essence a part of this everyday private yet common process, they are both personal and also recognisable and familiar. They are grounded in everyday life, and in 'commonsense', because they are the medium through which people 'make sense' on a daily basis of structure through practice constructed as private, and of practice through structure.

One of the most important things that phenomenologists such as

Schutz have told us is that everyday meanings are likely, upon examination, to be contradictory and nebulous (Schutz, 1971). These familiar yet ambiguous, vague and apparently individualistic qualities have been captured in Gramsci's notion of commonsense: everyone is a philosopher contributing to it. Gramsci argues that commonsense:

> "is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the "folklore" of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is".
>
> (Gramsci, 1971: 419)

Gramsci's association of commonsense with the social positions of actors is clearly important here. Graham has made an important contribution to sociological understanding of this kind of making sense with the social material process. She puts forward the concept of "coping" as one which is particularly salient for the analysis of motherhood. This is because coping makes commonsense, that is, discourse about mothers involves statements like "I don't know how she copes", as well as experiential sense for mothers whose daily lives involve coping with often conflicting demands. Yet coping also reaffirms women's responsibility and culpability, and militates against action to alleviate them, since such action is defined as, and apparently constitutes, a public admission that a mother is failing to cope (Graham, 1982). The point is that coping makes both common and, when deconstructed, analytical sense, precisely because it is expressive of meaningful practice carved from social material.

Voysey has also made a valuable contribution to this kind of theorising. In a study of the families of disabled children, she shows how parents incorporate public or official moralities in their understandings and accounts of their own situation, as a way of making sense. She argues that:

> "What they 'are doing' is 'linking' actions to motives or intentions which are culturally defined as 'possible' for parents to hold, as part of the biography of a normal parent, thus displaying the relevance of that category of interpretations of their actions and enabling others to recognise that parenthood is still going on".
>
> (Voysey, 1975: 196)

She uses inverted commas to emphasise that this process is not necessarily a purposive one. It means that a facility for legitimating or justifying is a part of commonsense understandings and ideologies, that is, you must be able to make them make sense to others. A way of 'ensuring' this is to draw on apparently publicly defined norms and understandings as frames of interpretation. What is more, we might expect people to draw acceptable definitions and moralities in part at least from their own experience of the family life of others such as their own parents, or adult children and so on, or of themselves at different 'stages' (Cunningham-Burley, 1985). Like Voysey, I would not wish to suggest that people premeditate a need for justification of their practices, and purposefully sift and select appropriate meanings, but rather that these form part of the general social material with which people routinely make sense.

However, the meaningful practices to be outlined in this section are not mere expressions of levels of understanding. They are also ideological. What I mean by that is that they all involve some kind of distortion or transmission of only partial understanding, and that they help to construct and reinforce the inequalities already identified in previous chapters (1).

2. The Spoken and the Unspoken Ideology

I suggested earlier that listening to spoken discourse is a vital part of this kind of sociological endeavour. As Spender has argued:

"Language is our means of classifying and ordering the world: our means of manipulating reality".

(Spender, 1980: 2)

Studies in the detailed analysis of discourse have been founded on the assumption that we can learn about social relations from word and text. Ethnomethodology, in many ways the sociological tradition most closely associated with investigating the ways in which people make sense of the social world has been described by Cicourel as viewing:

"meanings as situated, self-organizing and reflexive interaction between the organisation of memory, practical reasoning and talk".

(Cicourel, 1974: 100)

I wish to argue here that, for some of the commonsense ideologies

at least, their 'effectiveness' was due to the very fact that they were spoken of in a marital discourse provided for a third party. Practices were understood and explained through meanings which legitimated and reinforced them; the articulation of the meanings helped to reify them, and give them credence in the context of that marital discourse. Appeals to structure and apparently inevitable factors were an inherent part of this practice and three of the ideologies to be discussed in chapter 8 - old age consciousness, love and fairness - could be seen operating in this way. The ideologies were not simply about following rules or norms, but were integral to the process by which sense was made, actively, of structure, and structure was made in part of commonsense.

I suggested earlier that to focus exclusively on talk as, for example, with discourse analysis, not only overlooks the role of structure and history in social relations, but also that which is unspoken. I do not mean by this simply non-verbal behaviour, some of which can be gleaned through observation, although that too is important. Rather I wish to posit the existence of commonsense ideologies which operate at an unspoken level because, for example, they are considered to be secret or absolutely private. Sociological research on the 'private' domain tends often to overlook this possibility, perhaps unsurprisingly because it is not easy to see how it can be tapped using conventional research methods. What is more, theorisations of, for example, the subconscious tend to be very unsociological. However, my research directed me to a fourth commonsense ideology which was of fundamental importance, yet which was largely

unspoken: women's guilt. In chapter 9 I will take up, but not entirely resolve, the challenge for sociology of *demonstrating* this particular kind of unspokenness. It would have been too easy to have left guilt out of my analysis because of lack of quotable 'evidence'. Instead I have attempted to demonstrate the reasons why guilt is important as well as relevant, and why it 'makes sense' for it to be unspoken.

All four ideologies were generated inductively from the data through the 'theme' files referred to chapter 4. However, even where articulated, they did not always appear in "bite-size" pieces of data (Graham, 1983b). This means both that the terms, that is 'old age consciousness', 'love', 'fairness' and 'guilt' are essentially my construction, and also that the demonstration of their operation depends upon a theoretical argument generated from data. What this meant was that I did not ask interviewees explicitly about the ideologies in any straightforward way. My identification of them came from the data. But this identification was a result of my teasing out relevant aspects and putting them together in what was my own construction of an argument about these ideologies. I was making theoretical sense out of what my data said about everyday life. Nevertheless, some people did actually use the words 'old age', 'love', 'fair' and 'guilt', and in this sense the terms did appear to have a commonsense salience. Therefore, in line with Graham's arguments about coping, I have retained, but deconstructed, commonsense and everyday concepts.

Chapter Eight : Old Age Consciousness, Love and Fairness: commonsense ideologies of everyday life

Introduction

In this chapter I will outline the ways in which three verbalised commonsense ideologies were used in the discourse of the couples in the study. Their outcome was to make sense of the division of gendered responsibility, and to maintain it. This represents a different level of analysis of the same process described and documented in part two. This is an important, point to note, not least because it helps to reaffirm that the construction of meanings and practices, as developed in this chapter, were taking place within the kind of structural and relational context already described. I will focus on each of the three ideologies in turn: old age consciousness, love and fairness, before drawing the discussion to a close with some observations on the role of moral values in the construction of inequality.

1. Old Age Consciousness

A consciousness of 'old age' and the 'inevitability' of what that meant for domestic practice was the most immediately striking of the commonsense ideologies articulated in the interviews. In a sense it lay behind the other understandings, ideologies and practices to be discussed in this chapter. It constituted a language which was used frequently, and by all the interviewees, to signify their position in the life course, how much (or how little) time they would be likely to have left, and what kinds of practice were appropriate to this 'time of life'.

In fact, the very disruptions which formed the initial and underlying logic for my study, also constituted cues for the development of old age consciousness. Events like retirement, death of parents, adulthood and/or marriage of children, birth of grandchildren, death of friends and peers, age-associated ill health, general decrease in energy or physical capacity, menopause, and so on actually did mark out very clearly for the people in the study an inevitability of their place in the life course. This means that their particular intersections of individual time, family time and historical time had normative as well as structural implications.

It would be possible to give a number of quotations from each interviewee to illustrate their consciousness of aging, or their sense of their own and their spouse's time running out. For example, nearly all of them made some comment about "slowing down a bit recently" or "I'm not as young as I used to be". Shirley Barclay, when telling me about her husband's recent serious illness and her own angina, said that: "illness like that really gives you a jolt. You become aware that you're not going to live forever". Tom and Mary Ashby agreed that their parents' deaths marked the beginning of a new stage in their own lives because as Tom remarked "you become the first generation then you see. There's no-one ahead of you anymore".

Although the precise constellation of the cues varied amongst the study group, the overall effect of establishing an old age consciousness was general. There was however a tendency for

those who had themselves, or their spouses, suffered serious ill health to appear more acutely aware of this than those who had not (1).

However, I do not mean to suggest either that all the interviewees thought of themselves as elderly, or that they were all resigned and fatalistic about old age. There was a tension and sometimes an apparent contradiction between on the one hand a recognition of having not much longer to live, but on the other hand distancing oneself from 'the elderly'. This was probably not unrelated to the stigma and negative stereotypes of aging, particularly for women, outlined in chapter 3. Sara Vincent for instance told me about an "elderly" 90 year old friend of her's who was "marvellous for her age". Mary Ashby told me that she preferred the young to the old, although she added "I suppose I shall be old myself one day". Their view of "elderly" seemed to be people who would be old enough to have been of their parents' generation.

Yet some of the couples had taken the opportunity presented in the process of aging, with children leaving home, retirement and so on to move house, or to buy their council rented houses in a conscious prepartion for retirement and old age. Others prepared for retirement in different ways, for example:

Sarah Vincent: Over the last few years we've known that we're going to retire anyway and we've tried to sort of get things together that would help us to remain independent for a long time, and that's the important thing. If you have things which will help you, you can remain independent in your home. Not labour saving in the sense that you wouldn't want to do it, but labour saving in the sense that...well it's time and effort now.

Because there are some things that you simply cannot do so easily.

Bob Vincent: But not only that, Sarah. We provided for..like buying towels and sheets and things like that. Don't wait until you need them, you buy them when you've got the money available so that you don't have to buy this later on. And this is why we've got all this sort of thing, so that it would be less strain and not only that, we had the money then to buy these things, whereas once you're on a pension you've got to be careful. Just a matter of a little bit of forethought really.

Sarah: Yes, and we were concerned about whether we would be able to manage financially but at the end of the day, as you get older, your needs are less.

There were clearly divisions between couples in each of the four social classes in access to the resources to be able to provide for retirement in this way (only Doug Ward received pre-retirement training from his employer), or to buy their council houses, or whatever. Upper middle class couples tended to be more privileged than middle class, upper working class more so than working class. As noted earlier, housing tenure was important, although not necessarily determinant, in developing this line of stratification and once established in later life, tended to further consolidate pre-existing inequalities and polarities.

However, if there were material and normative differences between couples in the approach to old age and retirement, there was a common theme related to the general old age consciousness in the study group. In effect, the awareness of their own mortality and finiteness was translated into a continuity in the division of gendered responsibility as though the latter were as inevitable

as the former. What this meant was either that this 'time of life' was seen as inappropriate for the initiation of change in gendered responsibilities, or that the consciousness of it actually made continuity seem non-negotiable. Later life disruptions, once articulated in a language of age consciousness, in a sense constituted rationalisations and justifications for not renegotiating, as well as explanations of aspects of social life. To best understand the ways in which age consciousness became ideological in this way it is necessary to turn to a discussion of the role of the ideologies of love and fairness, since it was in conjunction with these that continuity apparently made sense.

2. Love and Caring

One of the interviewees who took part in the pilot study, Margaret Dawson, pointed out to me that marriage is about more than housework and finances. "There's also love and all that side of it" she reminded me. Of course she was quite right and her point is all too frequently overlooked by sociologists as a valid topic for analysis. I do not mean that sociological endeavour should aim to examine 'how much' husbands and wives love each other, nor to define 'what love is', especially since psychologists who have attempted such tasks have produced rather sterile accounts based on 'quality of life' or 'marital satisfaction' scales of the kind outlined in chapter 3, which are analytically dubious (see Ryff and Migdal, 1984; Cancian, 1986). Nevertheless, marriage is the institutionalisation of heterosexual love in our culture, and people who engage in it

recognise it as such (Leonard, 1980; Mansfield, 1985b). In other words, it is well known that there is supposed to be an association between love and marriage, note the old 'horse and carriage' adage. People who are married are likely at the very least to be susceptible to what Hoschild has called the "ought to feel" dimension of affection (Hoschild, 1979). Given this association between love and marriage, we must expect gender divisions and inequalities to be related to people's understandings of love in some way or another. Of course it has been suggested that the particular ways and mechanisms through which women are oppressed are grounded in affective yet hierarchical relationships between men and women (Bell and Newby, 1976; Rowbotham, 1973: 34-5; Sullerot 1971; De Beauvoir, 1972; Millett, 1971).

For the couples in the study, the ideology of love was intricately bound up with old age consciousness and with the construction of a 'special' or at least qualitatively different later life stage in the affective marital relationship. The case of Bob and Sarah Vincent gives an example of what this specialness looked like and meant in practice for them. In their joint interview I asked whether either their relationship or they themselves had changed over the years:

Sarah: Yes, er I think apart from the obvious phsycial changes which go on, but inside I think...um it's hard to just describe it but if I can just say it very simply like this: When you're younger you tend to take lots of things for granted. You're quite sort of self assured in some respects and sort of very frightened and insecure in others. I think as you go through life and you sort of learn all your lessons and each one sort of helps you to adjust, and having got to this point I wouldn't want to be younger anymore, and go through all the hurts and upsets and the little things that happen to you that you take so much to

heart. Because now, at this stage, somehow you see a reason for all this happening. It's helped to make you a more complete person//

Bob: I think the biggest change is when the children go//

Sarah: And I'd like to think that I've got more peace of mind now than I had then, so that's certainly a big change. I'm more afraid in other respects than I was then because I think, er, suddenly...some things become more precious. I don't mean material things, but your relationships probably become more precious at this point in life//

Bob: yes

Sarah: than they did when you were younger, because when you were younger you're very outgoing and you knew lots of people, and therefore it's all sort of hail and farewell and this is how relationships go on. And as you get older, you become...you judge situations, you become more critical, more wary, more withdrawn very often//

Bob: This is because of experience over the years

Sarah: That's right

Bob: But I think that once children leave home it's like courting again, it's going back to courting.

Sarah: Well I think that's because you haven't got any distractions and other people to consider. In a sense the relationship becomes more special then. You think, 'ooh, isn't it marvellous'. Perhaps I shouldn't say this (laughing). When things are good you think 'oh please god let them go on' you know, 'don't let them stop now. Let everything last forever'.

Bob: But obviously when the children are becoming adult there are tensions that are there. They're feeling their feet and they want to do this and you're being a bit restrictive with them still//

Sarah: Which causes tensions within the family

Bob: Which causes tensions, and of course when this goes it's a happy release because you realise that you've done all that you can do to prepare them for the outside world and they've got to find their own level outside. And it's like a weight off your shoulders, like a lot of responsibility's gone, and so you feel free.

Jennifer: Do you think everyone sees the children leaving as freedom?

Sarah: No. I think you never really stop feeling responsible, you know.

After the 'interview' was over and the tape recorder was switched off, Sarah told me that she believed all marriages went through three sequential stages: "courting, childrearing and companionship". She said that the last stage was different from and better than the first because the partners had the benefits of a lifetime's experience to bring to it, and it was "more precious" because of the awareness that it could end at any time through the death of one of the partners.

The biographical context of this is relevant. In 1979 when Bob was 51 he suffered a heart attack, but afterwards continued in his job as a prison officer. Sarah, at that time a senior local government officer, was worried about his deteriorating health and in her individual interview she explained what she did:

Sarah: One of my friends had an operation in hospital. I went up

to see her and while I was there one of my colleagues at the office, about Bob's age, had had a heart attack and was in the intensive care unit. So I said to Bob, oh I'll just pop along and see James. And when I got there I looked at him and I thought, good heavens. Bob had been quite ill you know at times, especially at night times, having come home after the stress of the day..and as I stood there and looked at James I thought goodness me, he's in the intensive care unit and Bob looked ten times worse than he did. And it was <u>such</u> a shock I hardly slept that night. The next morning I went in and I went to my chief officer and I said 'look I'd like to take early retirement' and I explained why..and I said 'I stayed up all night, I couldn't sleep just thinking about it, and I do really want to go, because I know that if I go and am at home, then Bob will retire'. Because he would have gone on for another four years, and I could see that at the rate he was going..well I didn't think he would last the four years, it was as simple as that. And so I had to make up my mind which was more important. Was the work more important, or was the fact of his health more important and the fact that he could relax. And so it wasn't really too difficult a choice because he was more important to me in the end.

This extract helps to highlight some themes which were apparent throughout the interviews with the Vincents. Neither Bob nor Sarah wanted any "upsets" at this stage of life, Sarah because she felt her relationship with Bob has become especially precious, and Bob because he was enjoying a new kind of freedom and a relationship which was like courting, but also because his illness has made him feel that time was more precious too. For him the important point of departure was the children leaving home, but for Sarah it was Bob's near death experience. Sarah, however, had expressed the preciousness of their relationship through particular forms of practice: noticing, worrying about and ensuring the wellbeing of her husband on an everyday level and, on one occasion, through the 'altruistic' action of retiring from her senior level job. Given that her responsibility for wellbeing was itself manifested in the expression of love, it is perhaps not surprising that she did not liken this newly "companionate" stage to courtship as her husband had done, for

love at this time of life carried a different set of responsibility associated work for her.

Shirley Barclay told me a not dissimilar story, which expressed the significance of her responsibility for caring for her husband's wellbeing through a discourse of love combined with old age consciousness:

Mrs. Barclay: I'd done my job for years and it hadn't been a worry and it was suddenly becoming one. So I knew I should go. I think everything tells you that its right and the same with him you see. Because you know he was very ill last year and um, the same things were happening with him. Things at work were really getting on top, and it had never bothered him before. But you know I could see all the signs, all the things I knew that I was having the year before. And when you say to yourself what's the most precious thing, the most precious thing to us is being here, being together. What good is it if that isn't there. And that's the way I put it to him actually, because that's the way I feel. And I'm sure again the decision's right. You can adjust your spending accordingly. You can't adjust anything else because you haven't got the power to.

Few of the women, and none of the men, were as ready as Sarah Vincent or Shirley Barclay to talk about love, or about the preciousness of their relationship in such explicit terms. Nevertheless, there was a general view that this stage of marriage was special, or at least different. It meant a focusing-in on the couple and, even if this relationship was not prioritised in affective terms, it was seen as central in a way it had not been in the past. This seemed to be the case even where children remained in the parental home. Felicity Stephens, whose 13 year old son still lived at home, said in a more typically down to earth tone than Sarah Vincent (in her individual interview): "I think as years go on you get close and you don't want anything to happen to either of you". Clearly,

couples would be differentiated by the quality of their relationship, and I do not intend (and indeed would be unable) to assess this. However, even in the case of the Dawsons where it was admitted - at least by Bill Dawson - that the relationship had become at best mundane, there remained a clear recognition that it had become more couple-centric:

Margaret: I think really the great difference is to do with the children leaving home. When they've gone you've got the place to yourselves and you haven't got the hassle of teenagers and over living around in the place and wanting to be at the sink when you want to be there and having their friends in and out, you know, four people fitting in together. Four or more people, whereas when they've gone there's just the two of you and life becomes much easier doesn't it, you know, within the house because there's only two people in it instead of four.

Bill: But of course you're then faced with//

Margaret: coming in, girls coming in late at night and not being able to sleep because they're not back yet and all this sort of thing. You haven't got any of that now. You can...its much more relaxing.

Bill: That's true. That's perfectly true. But then also you then have the position that because everything is so different, changed in fact, shall we say a period of 15 years, nearly 20 years, you've had a family round you and so on and so forth, and you suddenly unload. Therefore you two, the two people who are left, then suddenly will probably find they have to make adjustments again.

Jennifer: What kind?

Bill: Well I mean you're then much more conscious of each other, there aren't the children there to, you know, widen the circle if you see what I mean and so irritations are just between the two of you, if there are any irritations. That's right isn't it? (to Margaret)

Margaret: Yes I think you're right.

Bill: and you suddenly realise that whereas you know you met somebody and married them, you then had a family and then the life progressed in a certain manner for all those years and, you know, you're then faced with a partner that you in fact don't recognise.

Margaret: Yes it's true. I was going to say that.

Bill: You see you might not recognise them at all because they aren't what they were 20 years ago, and they're not now what they have been for the last 20 years, and you've suddenly got to say, 'well who is this, who is this person'?

Interestingly, although Bill and Margaret were apparently constructing a joint consensus account in this section of dialogue, in their individual interviews their accounts were discrepant. Bill reported that:

Bill: Yes our marriage has changed. It's got harder and harder. You've got to work harder not to get the screaming abdabs with your partner. Marriage is very hard work, and the longer it goes on the harder it is.

Whereas Margaret, for her part, told me that:

Margaret: In the beginning you just lived for the other person because you're in love and you just live for them. And you think they just live for you. But you find out later they don't. Disillusionment sets in, and then of course it must change when you've got the children because they (ie partner) then rather take a back seat as you're bringing them (ie children) up...so that relationship does change.

Jennifer: And then when the children leave?

Margaret: And then when they leave I think it more or less carried on in its changed way, but underlying that there is still that sort of tie, that sort of bond between you. But I mean it's not all kind of frantic love's young dream sort of thing. All intense and that sort of thing. It all quietens down, becomes a different sort of feeling.

What is significant about the case of Bill and Margaret Dawson, aside from the obvious couple-centricity, is Margaret's perception of some kind of continuing affective bond. More specifically she was not immune to worrying about Bill's wellbeing, about leaving him at home alone and so on, in common with the other women. She told me she had a "conscience" about going out when he was at home, and she was also clearly worried about his rather terse and teasing replies to some of my questions. On my last visit to her, she explained after the interview that she had been "really worried about his behaviour in the first interview you did". Shortly after that apparently Bill had an operation for an overactive thyroid, but Margaret had been embarrassed and concerned about his "throwing his arms around, gesticulating, being ridiculous". In other words, Margaret felt very clearly the responsibility for her husband's wellbeing and adequate sociability and, what is more, it will be remembered that she was the one who reminded me of the importance of love in research on marriage.

In general, these kinds of observations help to establish that the women's responsibility for wellbeing was closely bound up with the way they are supposed to love. I argued in chapter seven that for women, 'caring about' as well as 'caring for', involves labour intensive activity and that both were part of

the women's responsibilities. Graham has argued that the conflation of caring for with caring about, for example in psychological approaches to why women care, obscures the labour intensive nature of women's caring work (Graham, 1983a). In my study, it appears that both 'caring about' and 'caring for' were work, but were invisible as work, because they were constructed through discourse as the expression of love.

What is most significant, however, is that the idea that the women were apparently simply showing love through caring made the division of responsibility seem a low priority for debate. If the labour intensive aspect of women's responsibility for wellbeing is invisible, thought only to be an expression of emotion, then to argue about or instigate renegotiations of gendered responsibilities makes it look as though women are on the one hand simply arguing about the housework, and on the other are unloving of their husbands. Given the significance of this 'stage of life', that would seem petty indeed. One woman in particular, Joyce Edwards, was almost confrontational with me - in her tone of voice and expression, although not directly in her words - when I asked her why she did most of the housework. She had just finished telling me that she was worried about her husband's health, and I felt that she took it almost as an affront to her responsibility for his wellbeing that there should be any question of his doing any of the housework.

Catherine Wheeler was one of the women whose current financial dependence on her husband caused her to be concerned about her future financial and housing status should his death precede her

own. We saw in chapter five that Catherine was worried about living in rented accommodation. However, she had little power to renegotiate the terms of her dependence, and scarce opportunity to negotiate with her husband about these issues whilst also maintaining responsibility for his health, wellbeing and happiness. Catherine found that her husband would not willingly be drawn to discuss the possibility of his own death, and she knew no acceptable way to bring the subject up without appearing rather callous or unloving. I certainly encountered the social inappropriateness of such topics of conversation in my own inability to ask interviewees about whether they had made a will and so on. But it is because it was the women's responsibility to take care of the men and certainly not remind them of their approaching death that this was particularly difficult.

Conversely, the men in the study tended to articulate the ideology of love through a discourse which emphasised not, as the women's had, caring, a responsibility to do, to ensure, but instead a responsibility not to do, not to hurt. We had a glimpse of this in the previous chapters when the extent to which men's public role helps to construct what they do 'for their families' as sacrifice, for example in not taking a promotion, not moving or, in the case of John Tomlin and Reg Edwards, not staying in their tied cottages past a certain age, but moving into their own homes because, as Reg Edwards said "I promised the wife we would". What is more some of the men talked (in joint and individual interviews) about their avoidance of infidelity (none of the women mentioned this), John Tomlin for example saying "I've looked at plenty of other women. And don't think I

haven't been attracted to them. But I've never done anything about it". This was completely unsolicited by me, as were other similar comments by men, but did indicate that for them an acceptable public discourse of love took the form of articulating what they would not, or had not, done to hurt their wives. Indeed, in this context, inequalities stemming from men's social advantage, for example such as the ability of husbands like Bill Dawson regularly to attend a cricket club without any kind of social censure, could be internalised and personalised by wives like Margaret Dawson as a husband's lack of love for her. As Haavind in her study of love in younger marriages has pointed out:

"A gender-based difference in the <u>way</u> the parties love each other may, in conflicts between them, become a quarrel over <u>how much</u>. Love problems have been brought into focus instead of male dominance".

(Haavind, 1984: 145)

In my study it was the gendered nature of this <u>discourse on love</u> (I do not suggest this is a measure or style of emotion) which was therefore expressing something of the differences in the women's and men's responsibilities, at the same time as rendering invisible a large part of the women's. For Sarah Vincent, for example, it was reportedly love rather than responsibility or gender inequality, that made her retire from her job for the sake of her husband's health, or meant that the situation even arose in those terms. For women to confront the husbands for whom it was their responsibility to care, with ideas for renegotiations of responsibilities apparently involving only housework, would

have been in direct opposition to the nature of that responsibility. Furthermore, it would have seemed unloving at 'this time of life' to withdraw the invisible labour and expose a husband's vulnerability or dependence. Even worse would be for women to point out that their love for husbands is composed largely of labour intensive responsibility.

The women's responsibility for husbands' wellbeing had effectively become newly prioritised by the inevitability of time running out. We saw in chapter six the predominance of tasks associated with this responsibility like preventing stagnation in retirement. Because the men did not carry the same kind of responsibility for family wellbeing, the particular practice of maintaining a happy and healthy home for the remaining years of life was of less concern to them.

What is more, the women on the whole appeared to have thought about and anticipated some of the future problems of incapacity more than the men. This was evidenced in the tendency for women to say that they might move house "when we can no longer manage the garden", or "when the stairs are too much". None of the men made this type of comment, but six of the wives did: (Barclay, Stephens, Edwards, Ward, Hammond, Vincent). Pete Hammond's response that "we'll cross that bridge when we come to it" seemed typical of the sentiment amongst the men.

Of course this does not mean that couples suddenly became happy with previously unhappy marriages and for women no-one else mattered except their husband, although Sara Vincent and Shirley

Barclay did express it in this sort of way. Neither does it mean that the husbands did not care about their wives. But it does mean that the basis and responsibilities of marriage and their renegotiation did not appear to be the most important issues in life. As already suggested, it is in some senses 'obvious' that this would be the case, but the ideology of love was important in constructing this obviousness. What is more, it concerned the relational aspects of responsibilities and hence the fact that it was precisely this kind of wholesale renegotiation which would be required for the transformation of inequality. Yet it is clear that the women did not and would not in this context suggest radical alterations to the basis of their marriage and its underlying responsibilities.

3. Fairness

The commonsense ideology of fairness was evident throughout the interviews, but by far the most common usage of it was in relation to the division of domestic labour. This is likely to be related in part to a growing public awareness over the last decade or so of the sharing of domestic labour as an expression of equal rights as well as of feminist concerns (Mansfield, 1985a, 1985b). These kinds of issues have been enshrined in a kind of public or official morality through, for example, equal opportunities legislation and the expansion of women's employment opportunities as well as the various divorce acts. Morgan suggests that sociology, as well as feminism, may have had an impact here through:

"the egalitarian family model in its many variations disseminated through countless undegraduate courses, extra mural classes, televsion and radio discussions and articles in popular journals and newspapers".

(Morgan, 1985: 94)

Certainly, the 1985 British Social Attitudes report showed that across a range of 'traditionally female' domestic tasks (shopping, cooking, washing up, cleaning, washing, ironing), 50 per cent of their sample said that women and men should share them equally (Witherspoon, 1986: 59).

However, the ways in which the commonsense ideology of fairness was used in the interviews differed, generally according to the practices whose effect it was to justify or rationalise. For example, Fred and Ivy Jensen whom we met in chapter five, have a traditional division of domestic labour. They explained it in the following way:

Fred: I would say that I really don't do nothing, not in the domestic line. I will, again, if she was ill, I'd cook the dinner, but I don't normally. Normally I don't do nothing inside. I would do it all <u>outside</u>. I think more men do less than say I do in the garden and a little bit more perhaps indoors. I don't think, now anyhow, that there's the need for both of us in here you know.

Ivy: Well now that, well we have er, it's only the two of us, there's not much. You know, once you've cleaned a room upstairs you know, we've only got the one room to keep clean now sort of thing.

Fred: A lot of men on a Sunday perhaps hoover for their wives, and then probably their wives are out full-time during the week so that's, I think a lot do that. People say to me you know, cor you've gone off down the, now every Sunday morning I go down the allotment, that's from say 8 o'clock till 12, it's down there

growing the vegetables. But to me it isn't a chore you know.

I proceeded to ask Fred and Ivy who did each task on a list of housework tasks (reproduced in Appendix D). She did virtually everything, although sometimes Fred volunteered that he had helped with things in the past. Again, he said that he would do things if she was ill, even though what generally happened then was one of his daughters came round to help. In his individual interview, Fred's story was much the same, but in her's Ivy said "we sort of do things together you know".

Their case illustrates a number of themes relevant to other couples. First of all, the general message being communicated is that a traditional division of labour is fair in itself. What is more, Fred was making comments similar to those made by younger men and women in Backett's study of parents, along the lines of 'it is fair because I could do it, I would do it if necessary, or I have done it in the past' (Backett, 1982). In other words, for Fred and Ivy, Fred did not actually have to do very much housework for the situation to be fair, as long as he would be prepared to do it. What is more, his outdoor activities, and indeed, his employment, were factors brought in to establish the fairness of the division. For her part, Ivy agreed that in any event there was not now very much to do - albeit her physical activity is limited because of ill health - and later on she claimed that they do things together anyway.

In other couples where the husband was employed for longer hours than the wife, or where she was retired, there was a similar

tendency for them to establish the fairness of the traditional division of domestic labour in these kinds of ways. One man, Richard West, was more reticent about it, even in the context of the household task list, whose effect generally was to produce 'fairness statements' - as explanations for apparently unequal contributions - from most of the couples:

Jennifer: Why do you organise housework in that way?

Ricky: (laughs incredulously) Well it's not why so much, it's just, that's it, isn't it. I mean don't get me wrong. I mean if there's anything wrong, or she's ill, or something like that say. But all the time she's home, fair enough, when things are right of course.

May East is a part-time cleaner for 16 hours a week, so she is not home all the time. Quite simply, the arrangement was presented as being fair in itself by appeal to the relative status positions of breadwinner and housewife, and no suggestions about renegotiation or sharing had even reached the agenda. His implication that he would help out if she was ill, and further information May gave in the context of the household task list that "he cooks a good curry from time to time", were the only kinds of balancing statement deemed necessary in the construction of a fair account. Research on the cooking of food amongst younger couples has indicated in a similar way that although men do cook, this is generally limited to 'his special dishes', like curry or spagetti, or prestigious Sunday dinners (Wilson, 1987; Murcott, 1983).

The Carters also provide an example of a similar appeal to

fairness here:

Jennifer: Which one of you does the most housework?

Marion: Well I do.

Jennifer: Why is it, do you think, that you organise it in that way?

Arthur: Well because I'm at work

Marion: Because I'm at home.

Arthur: If my wife gets up to do anything of an evening, <u>if</u> she does mind, because she does the housework during the day you see. But if she does, I can't sit while she's doing it. I have to go and do something. Er, if she's not well, I'll do it all. I'll even cook the meals. Anything. Um, if we've got company coming I'll help her to prepare it sometimes. But otherwise, you know, I'm out at work all day. But if we're both here together I might suddenly clean the windows for her, or run the sweeper round for her, or dust for her, or I'll say 'do you want me to peel the potatoes'. I'm not averse to it. But normally I'll only do housework on Mothering Sunday. If my wife was working full-time, well the way I look at it, she's got her job to do in the home and if she can do it in the time while I'm at work then I think she should, and she thinks she should. But if she was out working in a full-time job, then I would expect to share the housework.

What both of them omitted from this account, but told me later, was that Marion had given up her full-time job because she had become tired coping with the double responsibility of home and work and this was putting a strain on their marriage. This excerpt shows how, in the construction of a fair account, Marion's responsibility was reaffirmed. For example, when Arthur did housework it was "for her".

The Asbhy's provided a slightly different kind of example of the use of the ideology of fairness. There are similarities, but it is different mainly because Tom Ashby had retired and therefore did not legitimate the traditional division of labour as fair in itself, but rather explained how their particular division was fair because he helped out his wife. There are traces of this in the example of the Carters, but for them the relations of paid and unpaid work formed the overarching fair justification in themselves. The Ashbys also had a largely traditional division of domestic labour even though Tom had started helping Mary out around the home a bit more since his retirement. He told me that he makes his own breakfast, and Mary explained that washing up was a "combined effort. I dry, he washes. He doesn't like drying up". Again, these kinds of comments were most marked at the point in the interview when I used the household task list. It is likely that this list presents a particularly stark view of asymmetry - even though it included 'male' kinds of work and was not intended as a measure of equality - which couples feel needs balancing, or else explaining in fair terms. For example:

Jennifer: Who does the washing?

Mary: Ooh my husband <u>can</u> do that as well but I mean, well

Tom: Yes, <u>we</u> do it.

Mary: We do it between us, but I mean I do the, put it in the washing machine, that's all it wants.

Again, Tom and Mary are clearly constructing a joint, consensus account of fairness about a 'familiar' topic, negotiating it, with one or two ambiguities, as they go along. In fact he does not regularly do the washing, but he can do it, and that is enough to make the account appear fair. Mary is clearly collaborating in the construction of this account and indeed, for most of the women in the study, it seemed in their interests to do so; partly because of the reluctance to renegotiate and partly, I suspect, so as not to look foolish or downtrodden in front of a young female interviewer.

Tom went on to tell me that he had done more housework in the past, at times when Mary has been ill, and when the children were younger because there was more to do then. Like Fred Jensen, he explained that outdoor tasks often meant he was unavailable for domestic work. He added: "I could get it done, that's the point, if it's necessary". The Ashby's also pointed out that there was less housework to do now, and Mary said: "It's no big deal now because there's so little really that needs to be done, and either of us could manage it". In reality, it is Mary who manages the bulk of it, but the knowledge that Tom would, or could, is good enough to make it seem fair. But an important undercurrent of this common tendency for male ability to do housework to be a central tenet of the construction of fair accounts, is the undermining of the skills content of traditionally women's work.

The Ashbys also stressed a theme that most of the couples seemed in sympathy with; namely that the younger generation lived their

marriages equitably, and shared the housework. What is more, they felt that their own marriage had been much more equitable than those of their parents, where in Tom's words: "father was lord and master". It was as though they were pointing to a generational continuum of appropriate levels of fairness. They were in the middle, and the younger generation who had sorted it out were at the opposite extreme from their parents. Mary had brought in the evidence about the younger generation as though to justify the fairness of her own arrangement; in other words, it was alright because the younger generation had resolved the issue. Shirley Barclay said "I don't think sharing the housework is terribly common in our age group. It's the younger people really". This ties in very much with old age consciousness, and the sense that somehow it is too late to make far reaching changes.

The Peters provided a different kind of example, because Barbara Peters had been forced to accept her husband's help with the housework when she became ill with angina some years ago. She felt quite strongly that it was unfair that he should have to help, but could do nothing about it. Jim Peters, for his part, explained that:

Jim: Ten years ago we used to be very traditional. Now we just muck in together. Partly that's because Barbara's not always been well enough, and partly because the children aren't here anymore. We've sort of progressed to that.

The implication that for a husband to help with housework when a wife was ill was <u>more than</u> fair was echoed in the case of the Bromleys:

Jane: I'd say before I was ill I did everything didn't I. In the house.

Russell: Ooh yes.

Jane: And then when I was ill it had to change and then you took it all over didn't you.

The point is that as with the other women, both Jane Bromley and Barbara Peters reported in the more specific context of the household task list that they actually did most of the housework as well as continuing to hold responsibility for it, yet also implied at other points in the discourse that in more general terms their husbands did it all, or most of it.

This issue - although not related to ill health - was also salient in the Dawson's account. Their way of presenting their division of domestic labour as fair was to explain how they had consciously renegotiated it when Bill was made redundant. In fact, what is interesting is the way they initially negotiate a consensus, or what Cunningham-Burley calls a "united front" (Cunningham-Burley, 1984), where they agree that he does virtually all the work, but where subsequently in the same interview, and consequent ones, it becomes clear in more specific terms that his contribution is minimal:

Jennifer: Between the two of you, who would you say does the most housework?

(long pause)

Margaret: That's difficult isn't it. Because it changes doesn't

it. Sometimes I...No, you do practically all.

Bill: Yes I do, basically

Margaret: At least you did when you first retired, but now you don't

Bill: Well no, no. we don't have a...do you want to switch that off whilst we sort this one out? (points to tape recorder and laughs)

Jennifer: (laughing) if you like.

Bill: Basically, I do, personally I would say, I do more of the day to day, each day type of stuff, right?

Margaret: well, er..

Bill: But um Margaret would do, shall we say the...er...OK...one day would suddenly do...pfff type of thing, right, which would counteract my bits and pieces on the other five days, if you see what I mean

Margaret: This is going to sound lovely on tape!

Bill: I mean, I would, I would, if I can put it like this. I would always for instance get the coal in and things like that, the fuels right?

Margaret: Yes right.

Bill: I would do all that sort of work wouldn't I?

Margaret: Yes right, but if you go away then I do it.

When I went on to ask about the household task list it emerged that Margaret did most of the tasks, or else they were done "50:50". Again, the kinds of balancing or justification statements used by other couples came out at this time. For example, when I asked who made lunch, they replied:

Margaret: Well that doesn't enter into it really because we only have a piece of cheese and an apple or something like that

Jennifer: Do you each get your own?

Bill: Well, no, well Margaret would get the sort of piece of cheese because I would probably be working splitting logs or something.

And again, when I asked who did the ironing:

Bill: Oh we don't do that

Margaret: No we don't do that. Well I do iron your work shirts.

Bill: If it was left to me I'd just hang them up to dry.

Later on it emerged that Margaret found Bill's housework standards too low, and often went back over things that he'd done. As we saw in the last chapter, Margaret became one of the "nagging wives" in this respect.

In their interview, then, Bill and Margaret were negotiating a

joint account of fairness in their division of domestic labour. First they agreed that Bill did practically all of it, then 50:50 on some household tasks, but the overall impression conveyed was that it was fair, especially since he was often splitting logs or something. In her individual interview, Margaret stuck firmly to the theme of fairness, concluding her comments with: "If I was a widow I'd have to do everything, so what he does is a bonus".

Here too we see then an example where the man does not have to do very much for the account to be constructed as fair. Of course, in itself this is not indicative of inequality, because to argue that it was would be to suggest that the adding and scoring of household tasks can provide an objective measure of equality. However, insofar as the effect was to legitimate and rationalise the existing relations of domestic servicing and providing responsibilities, it can be argued to be so indicative. Ironically, however, as observed earlier, men's fair contributions were not always seen as being of the appropriate standard, thus illustrating an apparent ambiguity, or even contradiction, in the ideological conception of fairness. Perhaps this is not surprising, because fairness in the division of domestic labour is on the agenda precisely because of women's public and private struggles against inequality.

Although mainly constructed within discourse about the division of domestic labour, fairness also emerged in other parts of the interviews in related ways. I have already argued in earlier chapters that women who earned their own money and kept it gave the impression of being slightly unfair, and that men appeared

fairer because their money was apparently 'our money'. This kind of ideology of fairness, or sharing, helped to conceal the fact that it was generally men who owned and controlled the 'our money'. Lee Comer in a commentary on younger women, has pointed to some of the ambiguities in the 'our money' concept:

"The myth of 'our money' is...emphasised by the ideal of joint discussion. It sounds nice in theory but what it amounts to in practice is the means whereby the woman talks her husband round, gets his permission to buy a washing machine, vacuum cleaner and so on".

(Comer, 1974: 125).

The point is one which is central to the discussion of fairness: that different contributions from or rights of men and women were built into the concept-in-use of fairness or, put another way, this constitutes the ideological construction of fairness as a moral value which reflects and reinforces male privilege as couched in gendered responsibilities. Because they are 'fair' it creates an aura of inevitability as well as appropriateness about gendered responsibilities.

Sharing household tasks, and mucking in together, generally meant husbands helping wives with one aspect of a task, for example peeling the potatoes for dinner, or being present at the execution of a task, or taking wives to the shops in the car. It did not require a regular, sustained commitment from the men. Neither did it require contributions of equivalent standard to those of the women. Yet it was a popular image, as Tom Ashby asserted: "If we can't share and share alike at this time of life, when could we?". It was as though having spent many years

together was itself a guarantee of fairness. What this means is that the inititiation of renegotiations, even about simply the division of housework on retirement, would be inhibited by the use of a discourse which helped to establish that the status quo was fair.

Conclusion: Moral Values and Inequalities

There are a number of general points which can be made about the use of the commonsense ideologies of love and fairness in conjunction with old age consciousness.

(i) Both fairness and love were being deployed as moral values. They were ideological in the sense that their effect was to add a morally acceptable gloss to the division of gendered responsibilities, even though as we saw some changes in the division of tasks had been mediated through fairness. This morally acceptable gloss itself made sense in terms of official or public understandings. As moral values with 'public' credence, yet concerning 'private' arrangements, they were in some senses known to everybody, yet at the same time vague and imprecise.

Others who have commented upon the concept of fairness have noted that it has those moral yet vague qualities (Allatt and Yeandle, 1984, 1986; Backett, 1982; Hyman and Brough, 1975; Wetherell, Stiven and Potter, 1987). Hyman and Brough, for example, describe the role of fairness in negotiations between unequal bargaining parties in British industrial relations as follows:

"Simply because moral values are typically abstract, ambiguous and even contradictory, they are open to interpretations which equate morality with expediency. Religious ideologies, for example, may be so flexible as to be utilised both in support of radical attacks on inequality and as a means of endorsement of the existing social and economic order. The rich and powerful may thus select an interpretation which permits them to cling to wealth and power with good conscience - and persuades others of their moral integrity. Thus the distribution of power and resources in a society is likely to ensure that the prevailing interpretation of moral values is conservative in character; or at least that any radical implications bear only marginally on the fundamental structure of the social order".

(Hyman and Brough, 1975: 193)

The general climate of a democratic society, based on a kind of moral individualism, is significant here as a context within which fairness (in the division of domestic labour in particular, and in marriage in general) makes official or public sense. Lukes, for example, has argued that:

"The principle of respect for persons, as 'ends in themselves' in virtue of their inherent dignity as individuals, is at the basis of the ideal of human equality".

(Lukes, 1973: 125)

To conceptualise for example men's domestic labour contributions as fair, rather than as say obligatory, is to express the validity of the recognition of individual human rights - that is of both women and men. Fairness is particularly appropriate in this context as the following extract from Rawls, writing on "justice as fairness", helps to illustrate:

"The question of fairness arises when free persons, who have no authority over one another, are engaging in a joint activity and amongst themselves settling or acknowledging the rules which define it and which determine the respective shares in its

benefits and burdens. A practice will strike the parties as fair if none feels that, by participating in it, they or any of the others are taken advantage of, or forced to give in to claims which they do not regard as legitimate. This implies that each has a conception of legitimate claims which he (sic) thinks it reasonable for others as well as himself to acknowledge".

(Rawls, 1971: 88)

When taken in conjunction with my earlier observations on the negotiated character of gendered responsibilities, and the construction of male sacrifice versus female choice, it can be seen that the commonsense ideology of fairness was operating to create exactly the kind of picture - except an ideological one - which Rawls describes.

It might indeed be argued that the very construction of the moral value of fairness, as one based on respecting the rights of others, rather than recognising interdependence and responsibility for others, is in satisfaction of male interests as well as dominant notions of philosophy and morality (Gilligan, 1982; Grimshaw, 1986). This is an issue to which I will return in chapter 9.

Just as fairness makes a particular moral sense in a liberal democratic society, so love makes moral sense in a society where only long term heterosexual unions premised on love are institutionalised through marriage. Yet again, other researchers have noted that 'love' is also vague and nebulous. As Haavind, in a critique of love as ideology, points out:

"Love is distinguished first of all by the fact that it is at the same time both stable and vascillating, both reasonable and contrary to all dictates of reason. Such emotions may be so

> strongly felt that they seem to fill the entire person. Love might also be there like a secure undercurrent one does not have to be consciously occupied with. The feelings might disappear completely, pushed away by anger and disappointment, only to return as something that has really been there all the time, 'beneath' everything else. Love might also be something one hopes and longs for all the time, or something painful when threatend with loss or separation. Although the emotion of romantic love is accessible to everyone, it is nevertheless a scarce good. Such contradictory emotional qualities can hide the oppressive character of a relationship and make it attractive to both parties.
>
> (Haavind, 1984: 144-145)

From a potential stock of these kinds of publicly available or official versions of love, the precise effect of the on the ground or practical ideology of love in my study was to obscure the relational and unequal nature of gendered responsibilities, by reducing what the women did to the status of mere emotions and styles of love.

(ii) A further indication that love and fairness dialogues were operating as morally acceptable ideological faces for inequality is based on reference to the points in the discursive structure, as well as the circumstances of the couples, which generated them. For example, we saw that the mode of expression of fairness was related in part to 'structural' factors like the husband and wife's employment status. Also, that fair explanations were most often given in the context of the household task list - an apparent display of inequality which needed to be balanced or rectified. In these senses, the purpose of the appeal to fairness was explanation, and the effect was the glossing over of the issue as fair.

Furthermore, there was a tendency for fair accounts to be

constructed jointly through negotiation in the joint interview and then upheld in general terms especially by the women in their individual interviews, despite contradictory specific information or emphasis on the poor quality of men's domestic contributions. It seemed especially important for women to retain the notion of fairness as a way of making sense of and rationalising their practice. Burgoyne has suggested that public moralities emphasising egalitarianism in marriage are likely in part to mean that although women will probably continue to do the housework, they are less likely to admit it (Burgoyne, 1986).

The commonsense ideology of love emerged chiefly in joint and individual interviews with the wives, again as a morally appropriate and understandable way of making sense of particular aspects of the women's wellbeing work. It constituted a way of describing that work which underplayed its labour intensive nature.

(iii) The three ideologies taken together - old age consciousness, love and fairness, provide examples of the way in which explanations of practices were sliding over into justifications and rationalisations for them. Again this is related to the moral and ideological character of love and fairness, and the priority accorded them by old age. For it meant that an explanation, because it was couched in publicly recognisable, taken-for-granted moral terms, was simultaneously a justification.

In these related ways, then, old age consciousness, love and

fairness provided rhetoric, rationalisation and justification for gendered responsibilities. In helping to conceal the inequality inherent in the relations of domestic servicing and providing, they simultaneously reaffirmed and maintained it, albeit fairness sometimes mediated a limited challenge to it. Moral values like love and fairness are potent because in one sense 'everybody knows what they mean', and is conversant with their language, and yet of course they cannot be pinned down and defined because they are fundamentally concepts-in-use.

In the next chapter I will discuss the implications of this and the analysis of previous chapters, for the commonsense ideology of guilt. Far from providng a familiar and acceptable language or rhetoric, the essence of guilt was that it was not verbalised.

Chapter Nine : The Social Construction of Women's Guilt

Introduction

In the last chapter we saw some of the ways in which three commonsense ideologies - old age consciousness, fairness and love - provided rhetoric, rationalisation and justification for the continuity of gendered responsibility, helping to inhibit radical renegotiation by husbands and wives within the study group of the fabric of their marriages. This chapter both depends on these ideologies for its argument, and also forms something of a conclusion to them in the thesis by illustrating in some ways what they add up to. I will argue that a consequence of the other three ideologies, which made sense of the apparent negotiation, but not renegotiation, of responsibility within the marriages, was the social construction of women's guilt.

But guilt is not an ideology of similar status to the others, nor was it generally publicly articulated as were old age consciousness, fairness and indeed love. Rather, guilt was particularly potent largely because it was unspoken. This does not mean it was 'subconscious', nor to be located solely within the domain of psychology rather than sociology simply because it was to do with feelings and emotions. Guilt was socially constructed in the experience of the women, and is of central concern to the sociological analysis of marriage. It is, however, more of a challenge to demonstrate because of its unspokenness.

Therefore, this chapter will both develop arguments around the

social construction of women's guilt, and take up the issues of the demonstration of argument and the presentation of evidence begun in chapter four.

1. Presentation of Evidence and Demonstration of Argument: a further word

Barbara Peters: When I was ill, you know, I wouldn't ask him to do anything. You know, housework and that. I know he'd want to do things, want to help, and I'd get impatient, because that was my way, you know. Terrible really. And I think back now and think my god how awful I was.

Jennifer: What did you feel like when he did do things?

Barbara: I think I'd be quite happy, sort of. But I'd think oh dear, he shouldn't be doing that. It was a funny feeling, or if he'd go shopping. I'd feel guilty, that's the word, I'd feel guilty.

Barbara Peters was talking to me in her individual interview about her husband Jim, and the period a few years ago when she had to leave her job permanently because she was taken ill with angina, and Jim started to do more housework to help her. She told me that before that time she had never let him do a thing "not even carry the coals in".

What Barbara said about guilt struck a chord with me. I knew exactly what she meant because I had encountered precisely the same sort of feeling myself. It made me realise that my study, and the sociology of everyday life in general, must be about psychology, because the powerful guilt feeling with which I could identify was to do with the common fact of Barbara's and my own

position as women - despite differences in our ages and experiences - in a gendered society. Guilt was socially constructed but we both knew exactly how it felt, as a 'gut feeling' and this shared knowledge was an expression of a collaboration, of the kind referred to in chapter 4, between us. I began to sift through in my mind the close scrutiny given to women's feelings by novelists like Olive Schreiner, Rosamond Lehmann, Kate Chopin, Barbara Pym, together with some of the writings of the Women's Liberation Movement, and particularly Friedan's identification more than 20 years ago of "the problem with no name" (Friedan, 1963). These gave me confidence that guilt was part of women's experience, although it had not yet formally been thematised, let alone demonstrated within social science.

Yet guilt had been recognised in, for example, some of the studies referred to in earlier chapters. Time and time again guilt crops up, so that we are told that women would feel guilty, and unloving of their husbands or families, if they did not cook proper family dinners (Murcott, 1983), do the housework properly (Davidoff, 1976), care for their children (Sharpe, 1984), care for their sick or elderly relatives (Ungerson, 1982, 1983b, 1985), or if they spent the housekeeping money on themselves (Hunt, 1978, 1980). Furthermore, it is reported that women do feel guilty if they take employment and neglect their household or childcare 'duties' (Pollert, 1981, Sharpe, 1984), or when they do care for sick or elderly relatives but feel angry or resentful about it (Oliver, 1983; Briggs and Oliver, 1985), or when they do spend what they see as the household money on themselves (Hunt,

1980), or if they leave their husbands in charge of domestic labour during an absence from the home (Hunt, 1980), or take too much time for themselves (Deem, 1986), and so on.

These kinds of insights gave me more confidence, and I began to realise that the sort of guilt I was conceptualising might be related to contradictions specific to women's lives, for example the conflicting demands of employment and family. However the studies, with the exception of Ungerson's work on caring which I will consider shortly, give little systematic analysis of the construction or mechanisms of guilt in the process of gender inequality in general, and within marriage in particular.

What Barbara Peters had said had alerted me to something so fundamental that I began actively to look and listen for similar statements in interviews with the other women. Very few of them were able to articulate guilt verbally in the way that Barbara had, although some did - always in their individual interviews that is, in the absence of their husbands. For example, we saw earlier that Shirley Barclay felt "guilty" about spending money on her own interests, where her husband did not on his. Margaret Dawson expressed having "a conscience" about going out and leaving Bill Dawson alone in the house. Catherine Wheeler felt "guilty" when caring for her elderly mother and sick husband because of the conflicting demands and her divided loyalties. She reported often shouting at her mother, then feeling guilty lest she should find her dead at the bottom of the stairs the following day. These kinds of reports are, as we have seen, not at odds with those of other women in the study group, but are

distinguishable by the fact that they use an explicit language of guilt. Nevertheless I came away from each of the other interviews convinced that the woman I had just spoken with shared this sort of feeling, and indeed perhaps even more deeply so that she could not, or would not, articulate it. Clearly, this is rather irritating for a researcher who is thus prevented from neatly tape recording the appropriate utterance, and reproducing it packaged as a quotation in a part of a thesis. But I understood this silence too. I myself had not deconstructed explicity that particular part of my consciousness, and I also knew that guilt can seem so terrible, and paralysing - even though at the same time it is part of everyday life - that it cannot possibly be spoken.

At that time I began to discuss my feelings about guilt informally with close female friends. Each time I did so, women retorted with statements like "I know exactly what you mean", or "I experience guilt all the time", or "guilt is really what women's oppression is all about". Gaining confidence about the validity of the experience, and feeling it was important to 'go public' on it I began to talk to a wider group of women and sometimes men about guilt, and I gained a series of validations from women of different ages and backgrounds.

The methodologies of anthropology, of ethnomethodology, and also of feminism, together with their related strands and interconnections, have prioritised the immersion of the researcher into the meaning systems of the researched and the sharing of culture as an important way of gaining valid data.

Clearly, I had discovered an example of precisely that. I recognised guilt because I shared it with the women, and what Barbara had said had been the catalyst in causing me to question my own taken-for-granted assumptions about everyday life. Guilt was so much part of my everyday approach to life, but also so private and unspoken, that I had never before fully articulated it, or recognised its role in the construction of gender inequality. Although there were clear differences between my position and experiences, and those of the women in my study, I remained convinced that we had something fundamental in common: an overall responsibility to care for and about others in the most continuous and everyday ways, although our particular practices of this had been divergent. I became convinced that it was the experience of the various kinds of practice of this caring responsibility that was at the basis of our shared understanding. When later reading a piece by Hilary Rose concerned with women's caring work, I discovered support for this type of thinking:

> "Alienated or unalienated, freely exchanged in reciprocal caring, given as a labour of love, enforced by an individual man or by the state, internalised by duty or the fear of gossip, women's caring labour is, and is much more than, the formation of feminine identity. As a profoundly sensuous activity, women's labour constitutes a material reality that structures a distinctive understanding of the social and natural worlds".
>
> (Rose, 1986: 72)

The specific form and occasioning of both our ideas of morality in general, and of guilt in particular, would obviously differ between myself and the women in my study largely because of our different circumstances, biographies and the experiences from

which we had constructed them. But nevertheless we would, and did, have a way of seeing and experiencing guilt in common.

This was an important step in formalising my intellectual thinking on guilt, for it meant the recognition not only of shared understandings, but of the sociological elements of the situation which produced them. This was part of the task of the demonstration of argument.

Yet, guilt also caused me to question my approach to sociology. For how was I further to demonstrate the role of guilt when it did not appear in the interviews in quotable chunks of presentable evidence nor even in easily identifiable inductive themes as, for example, had old age consciousness, fairness and love. Thus I began to formalise my thinking further. Guilt was important, it was gender specific, and it was socially constructed. It was not, therefore, simply a 'feeling' which women were biologically predisposed towards, and which should be studied by psychologists with no reference to women's structural position. Nevertheless it was a private domain of discourse. The challenge was therefore to establish a method of demonstrating first the existence and nature of this private and unspoken domain, and secondly to establish that although private, it was socially constructed. I concluded that the demonstration of argument and the presentation of evidence for guilt and its role in the lives of the couples in my study depended on three main strategies.

(i) It would be vital to make explicit my identification with

guilt. I do not believe this is unscientific or unsociological. It was, after all, the reason that what Barbara said assumed an importance as data and as a theme in this thesis. It was too my credential for going on and recognising signs of guilt in the interviews with the other women, even where they did not articulate it so explicitly or conveniently as Barbara had done. Giving legitimacy to one's own experience is a traditional part of the sociological and anthropological enterprise (Wright-Mills, 1959)

(ii) I had to resift and recast my evidence. The tendency of guilt to be unspoken and not immediately obvious meant I needed to look in my data for the cues which had demonstrated to me that these women did feel guilty.

(iii) I then had to use my data, including the biographies and structural contexts of the couples' lives, in a demonstration of the structural and biographical plausibility of guilt. In other words, I had to identify aspects of structure, and then in turn of the dynamic process by which gender inequality was created and sustained over time, which would demonstrate that women in these particular positions would be likely to feel guilty. This is something like the logic of gaining circumstantial evidence, because it meant demonstrating theoretically the case for guilt, and then using the data I already had to show the ways in which it was indicative of this.

The first task, that of identification with the subject, has been done, and therefore the following comments will be aimed mainly

at fulfilling, at least partially, the other two criteria.

2. What is Women's Guilt?

I want to suggest that the kind of guilt I was observing is one which is, by and large, specific to women. In the first instance, what that means is that it was rather different to prevailing definitions of guilt. In fact, sociological definitions of guilt are scarce, and one has to look more to literature in philosophical or psychological tradition for existing definitions. However, in both of these cases, the main focus is not on the construction of guilt in everyday life, but rather on grand types of guilt, or what whe might call 'special occasion guilt'; namely that which is brought out and agonised over following occasions of dramatic or desperate wrongdoing, such as murder, violent crime and so on (Amato, 1982, Smith, 1971; Lynd, 1958; Morris, 1971). Of course Freud has been influential in psychological thinking about guilt, but again the focus is less on the everyday and mundane than upon issues surrounding sexual repression, socially unacceptable impulses and desires (Sayers, 1986).

Such accounts are indeed not at odds with the Chambers dictionary definition of guilt as "the state of having done wrong, the state of having broken a law". Yet this literature, especially that of a philosophical nature, appears to have been written mainly with a view to understanding men's guilty anxieties, by men, as is well illustrated in a book entitled Guilt: man and society (Smith, 1971). But such grand moral theorising seems to bear

little relation to everyday guilty dilemmas of the kind I seek to illuminate, that is, of women who have not committed heinous crimes or broken laws.

Perhaps guilt is the wrong word? Various scholars have suggested that the concept of shame should be differentiated from guilt. For example, Piers and Singer have argued that:

"Whereas guilt is generated whenever a boundary...is touched or transgressed, shame occurs when a goal...is not being reached. It thus indicates a real 'shortcoming'. Guilty anxiety accompanies transgression; shame, failure".

(Piers and Singer, 1953, cited in Lynd, 1958: 22)

For her part, Lynd defines shame essentially in individualistic terms, associating it with "loss of honour and of self respect" (Lynd, 1958: 26).

The kind of conceptualisation of guilt which I was looking for involved elements of both guilt and shame so defined, but neither in its entirety. However, in some senses it appeared closer to shame, where the focus is away from the breaking of a law. Yet guilt had struck chord with me, and with the women I had spoken to in interviews and outside them, and I was convinced therefore that it had a commonsense credence which it would be important to retain and deconstruct. Indeed, if women and men actually have fundamentally different understandings of guilt, and if men's understanding of it had become dominant, then this would be one explanation of the public invisibility of women's guilt. As Gilligan has noted:

"Men and women may speak different languages that they assume are the same, using similar words to encode disparate experiences of self and social relationships. Because these languages share an overlapping moral vocabulary, they contain a propensity for systematic mistranslation".

(Gilligan, 1982: 173)

For the women in my study, and for me, guilt was fundamentally bound up with gendered responsibility. Either they felt guilty because they were not doing something which they should do, or because they were doing something which they should not do, as part and parcel of their everyday lives. Indeed, the work of Gilligan is instructive here. She develops notions of gendered morality and responsiblity from a critical psychological and philosophical perspective. Her supporting data are rather limited, but she suggests that for women, morality is grounded in notions of <u>responsibility for</u> others, and caring. Hence responsibility for them means both perceiving and then doing what others are counting on you to do. For men, on the other hand, morality is grounded in notions of the individual <u>rights</u> of others, and non-interference with those rights, so that responsibility for them means <u>not doing what you want because you are recognising the rights of others</u> (Gilligan, 1982: 38). Specifically for women, Gilligan claims:

"The problem then becomes one of limiting responsibilities without abandoning moral concern".

(Gilligan, 1982: 21)

Clearly, there are some parallels here with my earlier observations about fairness. Indeed, Gilligan goes on to argue

that men's moralities have tended to be dominant and to set the boundaries for what is and what is not considered to be morally mature. Issues of interdependence and responsibility for others do not figure high in scales of moral maturity. Gilligan adds that:

"While women have...taken care of men, men have, in their theories of psychological development, as in their economic arrangements, tended to assume or devalue that care".

(Gilligan, 1982: 17)

Some of these insights certainly seem useful. However, Gilligan takes a rather unhelpfully essentialist position. She asserts early on in her thesis that these moralities are not innate or biologically determined, and that although the morality of responsibility is empirically associated with women it is not in principle inevitably so. Unfortunately, however, other than providing a discussion of socialisation in childhood she says nothing more about links between structural position and gendered moralities, leaving the reader wondering where the moralities come from (see Auerbach et al, 1985; Grimshaw, 1986).

Gilligan also seems in the end to accept that women are morally immature until they have learned how to overcome the dilemma of 'limiting responsibilities without abandoning moral concern', again overlooking the importance of both structural components and the possibility of irreconcilable contradictions existing in the responsibilities of women (Graham, 1982).

Nevertheless, Gilligan's work is useful for my purposes because

it does make some sense in the light of my data, and it does show ways in which responsibilities and moralities may be linked and, I want to suggest, form the basis of guilt.

In particular, Gilligans notion of women's responsibility for perceiving the needs of others, and then administering to these, seem particularly relevant to my identification of the women's responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their husbands. The men, on the other hand, did not have this kind of responsibility: rather, their responsibility was not to do wrong to others. Now Gilligan does not consider specific responsibilities between husbands and wives, or the dynamics of their construction, but we might suppose that the sort of responsibility she attributes to women might be particularly difficult always to live up to. Because it is about perceiving the needs of others and caring for them, the failure to fulfil such responsibility might give rise to the sort of everyday guilt identified by researchers such as Murcott, Ungerson, Hunt, Deem and so on. That is, not a kind of guilt which follows a gross wrongdoing, but that which is about somehow not quite having done right, or not having done all one should.

In the light of empirical evidence it thus becomes plausible that women's guilt might be the result of responsibility dilemmas to which they women are exposed on an everyday basis, and from which, by virtue of women's responsibility for worrying about these, men are largely protected. Other researchers, also identifying a link between responsibility and guilt, have gone on to assert the relevance of <u>ideals</u> of what women should do for

their consequent guilty feelings:

"Normative expectations imposed upon women, the definitions of feminity as love, devotion and self-denial express and also safeguard male dominance. They force women into their dependent status and govern their exploited and generally disparaged work...Moral condemnation safeguards compliance to the principle of feminity...The attribution of guilt is effective because women share in it".

(Haas, 1985: 337)

Haas goes on to describe the implications of the articulation of responsibility and guilt for women on an everyday basis:

"..when we partially disobey the commandment to be loving, devoted and self denying, when we do not always want to exist for others and to be at everyone's disposal, when we try to articulate an interest in our own lives, we also juggle with a thousand explanations and excuses, doling it out in tiny, pleasingly sugarcoated doses. We do not do all this merely to elude the threat of censure, but also in order to escape our own guilt feelings."

(Haas, 1985: 338)

This is clearly compatible with Gilligan's notion of a morality of responsibility for women, and a conflict for them between limiting responsibilities without abandoning moral concern. Berenice Fisher develops a similar argument to this of the imposition of ideals of responsibility on women, and argues that we should speak of the consequence as shame, not guilt:

"Basically guilt entails a judgement of wrongdoing, while shame entails a judgement that we have failed to live up to some ideal"

(Fisher, 1984: 187)

At a descriptive level, the observations of both Haas and Fisher

seem useful, but their focus on the imposition from outside of ideals on women is problematic, just as is Gilligan's failure to explain where moralities come from. The implication is that in order to be free from guilt or shame women need only reject this kind of imposition, that is to reject the ideals. The oppression of guilt is in this sense conceptualised at the level of ideas only.

I would argue that we need a deeper appreciation of the construction of responsibility in its structural and biographical context if we are to understand the role of guilt in married women's lives. I want to suggest that the very reason that guilt was powerful for the women in my study was because they themselves were involved in constructing their responsibilities. They were not simply imposed from outside and the women did not simply passively and unquestioningly accept their lot.

Although the foregoing chapters have shown that in fact gendered responsibilities have been markedly consistent over time in the lives of the couples in the study, they have also demonstrated that these responsibilities were constantly being negotiated, recreated, and reinforced, within a dynamic relationship between active women and men. Structural and social disruption were throwing new aspects of the responsibilities into relief, and new types of task were being generated, but these changes took place within a continuity of responsibility made possible by the collaboration of both the husbands and the wives in the articulation of new sets of meanings which 'explained' this continuity of responsibility, or the absence of fundamental

renegotiation. In this way, gendered responsibility was constantly being forged, reforged, and underlined: it had not been decided once and for all at the beginning of the marriage, nor imposed by a dominant ideology, but was constantly evolving and being negotiated in a context of structural inequality which it simultaneously contributed to, and made sense of. In short, the women felt guilty precisely because they had participated in the construction of the responsibilities which they found they could not entirely fulfil. This is essentially different from saying or implying, for example, that women unlike men have a tendency to internalise blame as one of their psycho-social characteristics (Hansen and O'Leary, 1985).

Of course, as I have been at pains to point out, I do not wish to argue that the negotiation of responsibility takes place in a social vacuum where men and women are equal negotiating partners. Furthermore, the work of researchers like Land and Rose, and Ungerson, have helped to identify aspects of social policy which both rely upon and consequently help to create altruism as part of women's responsibility and guilt as a consequence of failure adequately to fulfil that responsibility (Land and Rose, 1985; Ungerson, 1983b). Land and Rose for example in an examination of the Beveridge Report argue that:

> "..women were centrally located in the family and there was no question of giving a woman the choice of <u>not</u> devoting herself to her family"
>
> (Land and Rose, 1985: 7-8)

What writers like this are arguing is that the state helps to

structure altruism into women's lives and out of men's lives, by allowing, for example, institutional care of the sick and elderly to remain inadequate, and by upholding the primacy of men's employment, so that women generally quite rightly perceive that if they do not do the caring, nobody else will. However, of course this is not a totally determinist view, as Ungerson explains:

> "..responses to state intervention and its ideology are complicated, and under researched. While state intervention in family life is wholly consistent and ideologically based, there is not necessarily a simple link between the existence of that particular set of assumptions and the perpetuation of that ideology in recipients' minds".
>
> (Ungerson, 1983b: 44)

We might also wish to question whether state intervention itself is wholly consistent, but the point to grasp here is that it does have a role in the negotiation of responsibility between men and women.

3. Why Women and Not Men?

I wish to argue that guilt was operating in the following way. The husbands' and the wives' relative responsibilities were, as we have seen, on the one hand real and constraining, but on the other they were negotiated in character. Thus people felt that they had developed their responsibilities to suit their particular circumstances over time, that they were fair, and that change would be both inappropriate at this time of life, and for the women an apparent denial of love for their husbands. We also

saw that women were active in these construction processes: they were concerned to maintain responsibility for the domestic domain and control over it. Much of the negotiation currently taking place in their lives was to do with a new focus on the home and a struggle over the domestic domain and the women were in part happy to collude in ideologies permitting the continuity of their responsibility for that area. The women thus appeared to be powerful, because they were concerned to retain domestic control, albeit, as argued, that control is both dependent on subservience and is a central component of gender inequality.

It is only within this context that we can appreciate more fully the social construction of guilt. Women had in part negotiated - or chosen - their own responsibilities yet, where husbands were giving more help with the housework for example, and especially where the women did not concomitantly help with the outdoor jobs, it began to look as though the women were not pulling their weight, or fulfilling those responsibilities. Men had, as argued, most visibly made sacrifices for the family and their wives: the women's sacrifices for the family and husbands being obscured because they in a fundamental sense <u>were</u> the family. Some women would feel guilty for not feeling as fulfilled and grateful as they should. The apparently calculated desire of women to have help with the housework, but only under their direction, might appear rather ungrateful to men who had spent their lives providing for the family and home. Many women indeed as we saw earlier expressly articulated a view that they in particular, and women in general, had a better deal out of life than their husbands.

Furthermore, this desire to retain domestic control, together with its personal space and autonomy, would look both like a rejection of husbands and an unfair unwillingness to let husbands enter their own homes on equal terms at the end of their working lives. Indeed, I have argued that many of the men were becoming newly inward looking and home centred, wanting to 'do things together'. Wives were ambivalent: many of them welcoming the opportunity to spend more time together but less keen to lose domestic autonomy. This was important because the interactions were increasingly beginning to take place on the wife's 'space' and the issue was whether or not this was now to become 'joint space'.

What is more, husbands and wives would be exposed to each other's company for longer periods thus wives' job of worrying about health and happiness would become more full-time than ever, whilst at the same time their 'good deal' at home would become observable and open to scrutiny. Comments from men that they could do any domestic task, and that it really does not seem that difficult, would help to heighten this. In this context particularly, a wife could feel guilty for complaining too much about her own sacrifices and hard work.

The central and most important contradiction of this lies in the wives' retention of the responsibility for caring for their husband's health and happiness. This meant that they would be especially finely attuned to these issues in the light of structural and social disruptions which would confine the

husbands to the home, and endanger their male-provider status. The women had, as argued, become accustomed to perceiving the physical and social wellbeing of their husbands on a routine and daily basis as part of their negotiated responsibility, and would continue to do this: witness here the accounts of the women's concern for their husbands' health, their regular ego boosting activities for their husbands, the continued view of the man as provider, and so on. The men, on the other hand, had not as part of their lifetime's responsibility practised this everyday, routine and all embracing caring for the health and happiness of others, albeit of course many of them clearly cared about their wives. The responsibility for provision does not pervade the minutiae of everyday life in this way, and does not involve the close scrutiny of others in a search for clues as to satisfaction and wellbeing. Therefore, women were on the one hand likely to 'nag' and to assert their domestic authority, and on the other hand likely to feel guilty for doing so because it contradicted the strictures of their responsibility for making the home happy and healthy. But also related to this is the women's constant exposure to their husband's private vulnerability and dependence. Constantly perceiving the needs of others involves the use of quite extensive imaginative capacities, that is, you constantly go through in your minds lists of possibilities about what people want or need, how they are feeling and so on. The visual image of the dependent or needy other is itself conducive to guilt, precisely because women have an involvement in it.

For example, many of the women felt that their husbands were inadequate to the task of domestic labour or, more importantly,

of taking care of themselves properly, but they were also conscious that this inadequacy was in part cultivated by their own practices of a lifetime's 'doing for' their husbands. In other words, the women were keenly aware of their husbands' domestic, social and emotional dependence on them, and both embarrassed and guilty about this vulnerability. Men are not supposed to be like that and the sight (actual or imagined)of a 60 year old man trying to cope rather unsuccessfully is both pitious and demeaning despite its surface humour as, for example, Mary Ashby told me:

Mrs. Ashby: Sometimes I see him trying to cope and my heart goes out to him.

This is guilt inducing insofar as she felt hopelessly involved with and responsible for his plight; that is, she did not merely feel sorry for him. the women were keenly aware of the dependence of their families, not just their husbands, on them. We saw earlier for example that Catherine Wheeler had an impossible choice to make between caring for her sick husband or her elderly mother, and eventually her mother was institutionalised. Within a few weeks she had died, and Catherine clearly carries a burden of guilt resulting from the contradictory and conflicting demands.

Hence, guilt was emerging, because the wife had partly cultivated this and because time was running out. Articulating the division of domestic labour in the language of fairness helped to hide this vulnerability from public scrutiny, but does nothing to

alleviate the contradiction. Indeed, the husband might become a widower and have to cope without the wife. The ideologies of love and timing are particularly important because, as argued, the women's responsibility for keeping the home happy and healthy gained a new poignancy in the light of the notion that this was the last stage of marriage, and to withdraw support would be to deny love. It is absolutely central to guilt that women's servicing responsibility is in this way conflated with, and articulated as an expression of, love.

4. Conclusion: Why Was Guilt Unspoken, and What Was its Effect?

I wish to argue that this kind of guilt would, generally, be unspoken. Unlike fairness, for example, which makes sense in the context of the language of a democratic society - everybody should be fair - or indeed love, which makes sense in a society where love is institutionalised in marriage - husbands and wives should love each other - guilt was somehow illicit. Although it too is a moral concept, it is one which is not publicly championed, or acceptable, in the same way. To talk about guilt would be inappropriate because one should not be guilty. Publicly to admit guilt is either to admit you are at fault, or to claim that it is the fault of the person making you feel guilty.

Given that the women's guilt was so intricately bound up with worries about men's dependence, and was consequent on their relationship with their husbands, they could not voice it, particularly to their husbands. If they were to do so, it would

no longer be guilt, for women's guilt must necessarily unspoken to the men who are its focus if responsibilities for those men are to be maintained. Once articulated, and particularly in the presence of husbands, guilt becomes more like a manipulative strategy or a strategy for change rather than an admission of personal fault, for it is effectively to say 'I feel guilty, you are making me feel guilty'. The everyday guilt which remains unspoken on the contrary is inhibitive of change, because it both expresses and reaffirms women's responsibility.

It is significant here that the few explicit articulations I received were all from women in the absence of their husbands - that is in a conversation between 'collaborators' - and for Barbara Peters, concerned an incident in the past. For interview interactional purposes this could in some senses be treated as less relevant (although in reality it appeared very relevant), hence more easily articulable, now.

Guilt, then, was dependent upon women's responsibilities which were in turn dependent upon a process involving the articulation of structure, practice and meaning. It was gender specific because gendered responsibilities are socially constructed.

I wish to argue, then, that guilt of the everyday type was specific to women, not because of biological predisposition but because of the construction of gendered responsibilities. Men, on the whole, were free from the daily worrying about and for family members which women's responsibility involves. This responsibility is difficult to fulfil, and often involves

competing and contradictory demands, but a failure adequately to fulfil it and the making of choices between demands is likely to invoke guilt. Furthermore, I wish to add that the very nature of women's responsibility, involving as it does the routine perception and taking on board of other people's needs, worries, happiness, health and so on, evokes in women pity or guilt whether or not it also involves contradiction or unfulfilment of responsibility. In other words, the very practice of always being sensitive to the psychology of others can be terrible in itself and the distinction between pity for others, and guilt because you know their weaknesses and dependencies, becomes a very fine one.

Guilt was largely unspoken, being instead the silent expression of the caring work that women's responsibility involves, and the contradictions thrown up by that responsibility, for the study group, particularly in the light of social and structural disruptions. If it were spoken to husbands, it would be rather of the status of a manipulative tool, because it would be more like an accusation: you are making me feel guilty, you are oppressing me. Guilt, rather, is the language of silence. The wives in the study were feeling guilty about what we might describe in Gilligan's terms as the desire to limit responsibility without abandoning moral concern in the context of a struggle over the domestic domain. This is clearly impossible without a redefinition or renegotiation of gendered responisibilities, because women's responsibility is itself about moral concern, and the ideological interpretation of disruptions through a language of fairness, timing and love make that concern

for husbands all the more important at this particular time.

There would clearly be more to discover about guilt, and in a sense all I have been able to do here is to open up a possibility for debate rather than to have anything like the final word. Guilt was a discovery I made in the light of my data, rather than an organising principle in the research design and methodology. Yet at the very least it presents a challenge for research and analysis, as well as feeding into debates about feminist methodology, namely: how do we as sociologists gain access not only to private, but to secret and unspoken domains of experience?

Concluding Comments

There is little to say here, because Chapter 9 provided a partial conclusion to the thesis, building on interim conclusions outlined in chapter 7. I will now simply make a few concluding comments.

In sum, we have seen that the the crucial structuring component of gender inequalities in the study group was gendered responsibility. Involving women's servicing, caring and wellbeing-maintenance of their husbands, and men's provision and protection of their wives, it expressed the gendered relations, and the taken-for-granted fabric of married life. Negotiations in the lives of the couples were producing meaningful changes in gender divisions, but were not challenging the relations of gendered responsibility and hence did not overcome inequalities. Women's caring and wellbeing responsibility, in particular, was taking on a new significance and priority in the light of their husbands' permanent withdrawal from the labour force, and was more specifically focused on husbands than others in the light of the departure of children from the parental home.

It was against this context that, for example, men washing more dishes in the home, might make the situation worse rather than better for women. This is putting it too crudely, but what is important is that the boundaries between public and private were being reconstructed, and hierarchies within the private 'sphere' were being challenged. What is at issue is not amounts of housework contribution, but the negotiation and indeed struggle over control of the domestic domain.

Yet it is important to restate the sociological elements of this situation. The reason for this can be made clear by reference to the following comment by Segal:

"A startling feature of some of the most popular feminist writing today is its denial of any significant change in women's power in the world and control over our own lives...Men, it has been suggested, can always turn any apparent change to their own advantage".

(Segal, 1987: xi)

This is precisely what I do not wish to imply. It is not that men are inherently, or essentially powerful, just as I have argued it is not that women inherently or innately feel guilty. Power and guilt are outcomes of particular sets of circumstances.

For the men and women in my study, we saw that a shared biography, which had always expressed male advantage and female disadvantage, helped to construct men and women as unequal bargaining parties during their current negotiations. Again, gendered responsibility was central here. Furthermore, given that accumulation of biography, we have seen that the women had a very definite interest in attempting to retain control of the domestic domain, and apparently contradictory practices or meanings were crucially expressive of this. Both the men and the women were actively making sense through their practices and understandings, which means that women were neither completely subservient to men, nor that they were dupes of false consciousness. Furthermore, men were not completely independent of women as women's caring responsibility crucially highlights.

The significance of the style of some of the negotiations taking place between the women and the men was centrally embedded in gendered responsibilities, and more patterned gender inequalities. This means that, for example, we might find similar styles of negotiation over domestic issues in single sex partnerships, or indeed between parents and dependent children, but that the relational context would mean that these were not related to patterned or structural gender inequalites in quite the same way. In other words, control in the home is sociologically significant (rather than simply interpersonally) insofar as it is related in specific ways to patterns of inequality. It is the very fact that, between the men and women in my study, the negotiating styles expressed and maintained gendered responsibilities, that means that negotiation in 'private' contributed to public or structural inequality. That is, negotiations legitimated and fuelled its mechanisms.

Although my study did not involve interviews with a representative sample, it is in these senses - that is in the charting of links between structural and personal inequality - that some of the observations have a wider sociological validity. This is because we can see the sociological components of the situation. Indeed, I have argued that we need to extend sociological analysis to apparently 'psychological' private or secret concepts like guilt. Women's guilt is a social construction, with identifiable sociological elements, as well as being a set of feelings or emotions.

But given that the sociological validity of my study is inevitably specific to people in the age range 50 to 70, what observations can be made about the likelihood of the processes observed being reproduced in the future, that is when other age cohorts reach the age of 50?

Of course, my approach suggests that to assess this would require a detailed analysis of the structural and interpersonal components of the married lives of the couples in question. We cannot know what these will be in the future. Nevertheless, insofar as I have also argued that pasts are involved in the construction of presents, then an analysis of these aspects of the current lives of younger people might illuminate the issue of their futures. Of course, this is not the place for such an analysis, and it is not a task which should be undertaken casually. For example, we might be able to suggest that, given observations about young marriages and the construction of inequalities, and the evidence that today's young newlyweds adopt many traditional practices (Mansfield, 1985a, 1985b), together with 'work-cycle' evidence showing that younger women - albeit in different ways - recognise domestic responsibilities in their employment participation (Dex, 1984), that the situation appears set to continue. Perhaps rather depressingly, Backett's study of young couples showed that they rationalised a traditional division of labour by saying it was "fair" because it was short term, that is, confined to the childrearing phase (Backett, 1982). Yet my findings were that the older couples in part rationalised their situation by saying that younger couples had sorted it out and produced equitable arrangements.

But such a casual analysis of course overlooks inter alia the importance of prevailing social conditions, that is, ones which will be prevailing in the future, and is therefore invalid. One crucial social change, for example, is in duration of marriage. Those who are currently 50 to 70 are probably the last cohort for whom long-term marriage has been the norm. Another vital change is in employment and unemployment, full employment histories from the age of 16 to 60 or 65 becoming increasingly unlikely.

In the end, the question of what the situation will be for today's 'generation' tomorrow remains an open one. However, we know the kinds of factors, or tracers, of inequality to look for; namely structural inequalities, and the distribution of caring work and responsibility. These, as argued, are the sociologically significant elements in the marriages of the 50 to 70 year olds studied here.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. I will return to a discussion of the status of commonsense ideologies in part III below.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. A different kind of study, such as an oral history, would obviously do different things. Furthermore, it would be possible and valuable to do an historical study using two cohort groups - perhaps newlyweds and the 50-70s - who are currently involved in some kind of negotiation, as comparisons. This would provide a step forward in the unpacking of the salience of historical structure and the three dimensions of time. Existing work which has taken this kind of perspective suggests it is likely to a be fruitful one (Yeandle, 1986; Evans, 1984).

2. Divorce is a disruption I have not examined.

3. The family obligations project currently being conducted by Janet Finch and myself in the Dept. of Social Administration, Lancaster University (Finch, 1987 in press).

Notes to Chapter Four

1. These were: Ivy and Fred Jensen; Mary and Tom Ashby; Shirley and Ted Barclay; Margaret and Bill Dawson; May and Richard East.

2. For example, for purposes of manageability my study group includes only white, long-married, residentially stable interviewees.

3. These six couples included three who took part in the pilot study (Barclay, Dawson and Ashby) and additionally Pat and Kenneth Dunning, Catherine and Charles Wheeler, and Patience and Doug Ward.

4. Clearly, I do not wish to argue that there is an appropriate mode of chit chat for people aged 50 to 70, as though age were the only variant. This would be both demeaning to my interviewees and also sociologically inadequate. However, my daily sociability and contact at that time was so rarely with people in that age range, that any opportunity for me to engage in conversation with older people was clearly valuable. Significantly, my sociability and interactions are not similarly limited now, although I have maintained no contact with my interviewees.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. All names are pseudonyms.

2. A thoroughgoing stratification system for older people might well be premised on the ownership and non-ownership of property, particularly in the light of housing tenure and divisions in inheritance from generation to generation. However, there would be problems in identifying in any quantitative way the relative access of husbands and wives to apparently jointly owned property. It is of course beyond the scope of my study to develop the general principles of a social classification for elderly women and men.

3. Life charts were drawn as working research tools for all of the couples, and were used in the drawing up of the aggregate tables presented here and in chapter 6. Biographical data for the other couples of course appears in various forms throughout the analysis.

4. The following abbreviations apply in transcription excerpts:

// - interruption

<u>word</u> - emphasis in speech

(word) - explanatory information added to the text

5. Bat and Trap is a traditional Kentish pub game. Pubs generally have single sex and/or both sex teams, and engage in local tournaments.

6. This is a pseudonym for a similar name.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. Ivy's husband, Fred, was a painter by occupation and she told me she was happy with whatever colour of paint he could bring home from work!

2. As the interview progressed it was clear that Ted meant that women, rather than axes and ladders, were not built for it!

3. Willis's work on the importance of the wage form to the construction of masculinity lends a limited form of support to this (Willis, 1979).

4. Of course this is in some ways data in itself and indicates that further research into money practices and attitudes in different age cohorts would be illuminating.

5. See for example the retirement magazine 'Choice'.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Some of the themes developed here have been introduced in Mason, 1987.

2. McKee and O'Brien, 1983; Brannen and Collard, 1982; Cunningham-Burley, 1984; all suggest that this kind of self disclosure is socially problematic for men and at odds with the management of their male status.

3. The letter and reply reproduced below appeared in the Daily Mirror, 22nd June 1987. Marje Proops' reply provides an illustration perhaps of public concern for retiring men's self esteem.

Fed up with her know-all husband

Dear Marje..

I OFTEN wonder how many wives have a husband like mine?

He retired early, at 55, seven years ago. I have always been a housewife looking after the home and children, now both happily married.

Our marriage was happy, too, until his retirement. He was always cheerful and kind. Now he's moody and bad-tempered and just sits watching TV for hours.

I do everything, including the garden. He always helped with the chores, but not any more.

And he's become such a know-all. He argues about everything and *never gives me the right*, in fact he shouts me down when I open my mouth.

My life is utter misery. I'm hoping that if you print my letter he will see himself as I and others see him, and he might change back to the lovely man he was.

I'VE printed your letter because, as you surmise, there are a lot of other wives in a similar situation.

But I'd hate you to fool yourself into thinking that if he reads what I'm saying to you, a magical change will occur.

Of course it won't. If I say he should take a long, look at himself and admit he's become a *bigot*, he'd simply turn this page.

He wouldn't recognise himself. But I think you, too, could do with a bit of self-analysis.

Here's a man, forced to leave a presumably interesting job—and what has he got to compensate?

A wife who expects him to be another pair of hands around the house and garden. He feels resentful. He takes it all out on you and he feels he has to win all the arguments. That helps to restore his self-esteem.

I do sympathise with you—and with him. And I suggest you arrange to stay with one of your married children for a couple of weeks, leaving your husband to manage on his own. The break will be good for you both.

And when you get back home, you'll probably decide that life with your old man may be difficult, but it's much better with him than without him.

I hope he didn't turn the page. If you recognise yourself, sir, please take action to make your wife happy again. It'll make you happier, too.

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

Write to: Marje Proops, Daily Mirror, Orbit House, 1 New Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1AR, for a personal reply.

Notes to Introduction to Part Three

1. Miller (1972) uses a similar conceptualisation of ideology.

Notes to Chapter Eight

1. However, it may have been the disproportionate discussion of ill health in the interview with those who had experience it, rather than the experience of it per se, which lay behind the accentuated verbalisation of an old age consciousness.

APPENDIX A : SAMPLING METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Sampling

I used the two methods used in the pilot study to achieve the study group. The first of these was to ask colleagues and friends whether they knew any couples who might be willing to participate. I made it clear that this would not mean that my colleagues had committed their contacts to anything whatsoever. In fact in all of the six (including three from the pilot study whom I approached direct this time and who also took part in the main study) couples gained in this way the particular colleague approached their contacts first to ask whether they would be willing to having their names passed to me, so that I might contact them to explain the nature of the study and what participation would involve. In all instances my colleagues, three of whom were women, put me in touch with the wife rather than the husband. Once I had made contact with the couple, the third party's involvement ceased entirely.

The method used to select the remaining 12 couples (including one from the pilot study) was to identify families from the Canterbury electoral register who had had a child come of voting age (18) in 1971 and apparently no other children reaching voting age between 1971 and 1985. This would mean that the child in question would have been aged 32 in 1985 when the fieldwork was to be conducted, and this would thus hopefully throw the parents somewhere in the midst of the 50 to 70 year old disruption period. Although my original logic was that this 32 year old child would probably be the last born, this happily turned out

not to be the case. In making this assumption I had almost imperceptibly slipped into a life-cycle rather that a life-course framework, and indeed the variety of 'family characteristics' detailed above which actually emerged helps to underline some of the inadequacies of the former.

The main disadvantage of the personal contact method relates to the question of confidentiality and the involvement of third parties. Douglas has noted that one of the advantages of the interview situation for facilitating the disclosure of intimate and 'private' discourses is that the relationship between interviewer and interviewee usually ends there. Therefore this is qualitatively different from a first or second meeting with someone the interviewee is getting to know because what is said need have no implications for the future development of the relationship between them (Douglas, 1985). Where there is a third party involved there is clearly also the dimension that the interviewee and interviewer have someone in common and this is accentuated when the interviewer is also interviewing one's spouse. This latter point is discussed in Appendix C. As far as having a third party in common is concerned, it is especially incumbent upon the researcher to make meaningful and thoroughgoing assurances about confidentiality, to explain that what is said in interviews will not be reported to the third party, and that pseudonyms will be used throughout. In addition I have changed some of the identifying characteristics of the participants in a manner which does not affect the analysis, to further ensure confidentiality.

Of course these practices concerning confidentiality have been applied to all the couples who participated, but I felt it was important to spend even more time explaining this - particularly in relation to the third party issue - with those couples gained through personal contact. In the event I think all the couples took what I said about confidentiality seriously and in that sense took me on trust, not least because of their readiness to disclose 'private' aspects of their lives to me.

Another problem about gaining a study group through personal contact is that a researcher has little or no control over the way in which both they and the research are introduced to prospective interviewees. Indeed, it is also impossible to know whether and in what ways the quality of the relationship between the third party and the contact affects the process. I asked my third parties to introduce me by saying that I was doing a PhD thesis which involved researching into the family lives of married couples aged over 45 although in fact I actually wanted couples aged over 50. I chose this age for the introduction for two main reasons. The first was that I wanted to keep it fairly general so that people would not assume that my research was about aging alone, which I felt they would do if the ages 50 to 70 were specified. But the rather more important point was that the third parties expressed anxiety about approaching people having obviously assumed that they were over 50. In some cases this was because they were not sure whether their contacts were over 50, but more often I believe it was because they felt it would be insulting to imply that they had made such assumptions about their contacts' ages. My colleagues felt more comfortable

with the age band commencing at 40. Indeed, this was an interesting and unexpected confirmation of some of my observations about ageism and the youth-centredness of our society outlined in chapter 3.

The only other information that I asked my third parties to pass on to their contacts was that my research would involve a series of three strictly confidential interviews to take place in the couple's own home. I wanted to keep the information given to the third parties at a minimum to ensure confidentiality, but a problem with this is that I had no control and little knowledge of what third parties actually said to their contacts. When I approached the couples concerned they appeared to know only this, or less, about the research, and I gained the impression that introductions had been much more concerned with me, what I was doing at University, and whether or not I was the sort of person the couples would be happy to invite into their homes. In this sense, I believe that both the third parties and their contacts regarded the introduction as a personal recommendation from the former to the latter about me. I clearly also therefore had a responsibility to the third parties to ensure that the interview experience was acceptable.

These couples did appear to take a particular interest in me and the development of my research from the point of view of how it might affect my career. They were generally more ready than the others to ask me personal details about myself, my life at university, my family etc. I gained the favourable impression that these interviewees had more power in the interview situation

than is often the case (see Oakley, 1981b), because the experience had been constructed as one in which they were helping me to achieve a particular goal, rather than one in which I was extracting information from them.

Getting in touch

My initial contact with all but two of the couples - the Dunnings and the Dawsons - was by letter. The Dunnings, who were personal contact interviewees, asked the third party involved if I would telephone them to tell them about the study. I did so and spoke to Pat Dunning, who invited me over to talk more about the study and their potential participation in it. The Dawsons took part in the pilot study as well as the main study, and the third party arranged a meeting between myself and Margaret Dawson where I told her about the research and we fixed an appointment for interview with her and her husband.

The other couples were all sent the letter reprinted in Appendix B, and I called round to see all of them a few days after sending the letter to explain more about the research and to fix an appointment for the first interview if they agreed to participate. As indicated, I made no effort to persuade obviously unwilling people to participate. This was partly because it is ethically unacceptable to bludgeon unwilling people into giving their time and trust in the name of social research, but also pragmatically because, given the demands of qualitative methods on interviewees - ie it involves a good deal more than a question and answer session, it is likely to be unproductive to interview unwilling people (Oakley, 1981; Cornwell, 1984: 12-13).

I told the couples that ideally I would like to make three separate visits to their homes: to interview them first both together and then each individually so that I could talk to them about their own biographies. Usually agreement or refusal was decided on the doorstep, although sometimes the spouse who answered the door went inside to consult the other spouse and/or brought him/her to the door too before agreement was reached. In one or two cases I was invited in for a few minutes. None of the couples who took part dropped out at any stage of the research.

APPENDIX B : CONTACT LETTER TO POTENTIAL INTERVIEWEES

UNIVERSITY OF KENT AT CANTERBURY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
HOUSEHOLD WORK STRATEGIES RESEARCH PROJECT
(SUPPORTED BY THE JOSEPH ROWNTREE MEMORIAL TRUST)

PROFESSOR R. E. PAHL M.A PH.D.
PROJECT DIRECTOR
CLAIRE WALLACE. B.A.
RESEARCH FELLOW

BEVERLEY FARM
THE UNIVERSITY
CANTERBURY
KENT
TELEPHONE (0227) 66822 EXT. 7611

1985

Dear

I am working at the University as a member of the Household Work Strategies Research Project team. I am involved in research into the family lives of men and women who are over 45 years old, and who have grown-up children. My work depends mainly on my being able to talk to married couples in the Canterbury area about their experiences of family life.

I wonder whether you would be willing to help me by allowing me to come and interview you both, in your own home at any time of the day or evening convenient to you. Naturally, any information you might give me will be treated in strictest confidence.

I will call on you soon when I will be pleased to tell you more about myself and about the project, and to answer any questions you may wish to ask. I hope at that time that we can arrange a convenient date for interview. Your help would be very much appreciated and I shall look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Jennifer Mason
Postgraduate Researcher

APPENDIX C : ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF JOINT AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWING

Joint Interviewing

Advantages

1. They provide an opportunity to observe some of the dynamics between couples at first hand, their discourse and dialogue with each other as well as with the researcher.

2. They provide an opportunity to corroborate factual information, because husbands and wives can confer about events - dates and locations and so on (Allan, 1980; Morris, 1983c)

Disadvantages

1. Individual versions are suppressed, and one spouse's version may dominate.

2. As a method used on its own it is not entirely sensitive to the fact that couples are made up of gendered and empowered individuals. There is a tendency to treat the couple as the unit.

3. It is fairly difficult in terms of technique to conduct a joint interview, for example to whom you should address questions, how to manage eye contact, what to do if you are involved in a difference of opinion.

Individual Interiewing

Advantages

1. They allow a real insight into versions, points of view and perspectives of individual gendered spouses.

2. It is generally easier to manage an interview interaction with only one interviewee.

3. They provide an opportunity to follow up that particular spouse's biography and topics which are particularly pertinent to her or him.

Disadvantages

1. It is not always easy to explain why you should want to interview spouses separately given that you are studying their marriage without arousing suspicion. Some people may find it threatening.

2. Decisions of tactic such as which spouse to conduct an individual interview with first are problematic and can again arouse suspicion (Morris, 1983c).

3. It is much more difficult to analyse different versions than it is to analyse the presentation of one version.

Some of the disadvantages of both approaches are clearly overcome when the strategies are combined. Problems of tactic and analysis remain, but are research problems which will produce their own data, rather than reasons not to pursue a particular strategy.

QUESTIONNAIRE

STRUCTURED SECTION

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND RESIDENCE

1. How Long have you lived in this house?

2. Where did you live before that?

3. How long did you live there?

4. Why did you move into your current house?

5. Where did you live before you moved to your previous house?

6. How long did you live there?

7. Why did you move from that house?

8. Did you live in any other houses prior to that?

yes/no

9. If yes, could you give me a list of where these were, how long you lived in them, and why you moved on each occasion.

10. Getting back to this house now, do you:

own outright
own with mortgage
rent privately
rent from the council
other (specify)

11. Do you plan to continue living in this house?

yes/no

12. If no, why not?

If no, when do you plan to move, and where do you intend to go?

13. Does anyone else live in your house with you? | yes/no |

14. If yes, who lives in your house with you? (Probe for relationship to respondents)

If yes, how long have they lived with you?

15. Has anyone else ever lived with you? | yes/no |

If yes, could you please tell me who they were, and when and why each of them left.

Rel. to Resp.	When left	Why left

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

	H.	W.
16. How old are you?		
17. How long have you been married?		
18. Have either of you been married before?	yes/no	yes/no
19. If yes, for how long were you married?		
If yes, were you:	div widowed other	div widowed other
If yes, were you married before that?	yes/no	yes/no
For how long were you married that time, and why did you separate?		
Any previous marriages? Please could I have the same details.		
20. Do you have any children?	yes/no	yes/no

21. How many from:

	this marriage	this marriage	
	1st marriage	1st marriage	
	2nd marriage	2nd marriage	
	3rd marriage	3rd marriage	
	4th marriage	4th marriage	

22. Now, I'd like to ask you a bit more about your children. Could we take each child in turn please.

Whose?	jt/h/w		jt/h/w		jt/h/w		jt/h/w		jt/h/w		jt/h/w		jt/h/w	
Sex														
Age														
Residence														
Marital Status	marr cohab single div wid other		m c s d w o		m c s d w o		m c s d w o		m c s d w o		m c s d w o		m c s d w o	
How many years left home?														
Grandchildren	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f	m	f
Ages														

	H.	W.
23. Are your parents still alive?	mum/dad	mum/dad
24. <u>If yes</u>, where do they live?		
25. <u>If no</u>, how long ago did they die?	mum dad	mum dad
26. What type of work did/does your father do?		
27. What type of work did/does your mother do?		

22. Do you have any brothers and/or sisters?

	b	s	b	s
nos.				
ages.				
residence.				

23. Do any other members of your family live within, say, 50 miles of you?

yes/no	yes/no

24. If yes, what is their relation to you, and where do they live?

MISCELLANEOUS

	H.	W.
25. Do you drive?	yes/no	yes/no
26. Do you own/have access to a car?	yes/no	yes/no

27. If yes, which of the following categories applies to you?

Husband and wife share 1
Husband only
Wife only
One each
More than 2

If yes, has there been an increase/decrease in the number of cars either of you has had access to in the last 10 years? Please explain the circumstances of this.

If yes, do you:

(if shared, specify who owns, whose company etc)

	Shared	H.	W.
own your car company car other			

If a company car, will you lose it on retirement?

yes/no	yes/no

28. If no, have you ever owned or had access to a car?

yes/no	yes/no

If yes, which of the following categories applied to you?

Husband and wife shared 1
Husband only
Wife only
One each
More than 2

When did you lose access to a car?

Why was this?

29. Do you have any pets?

Whose:	yes/no	What:
Husband's		
Wife's		
Share		

WIFE/HUSB. EMPLOYMENT

30. Do you have a paid job? — yes/no

31. If yes, what is it?

If yes, are you an: — employee / employer / self employed

If yes, is it: — full-time / part-time

If yes, how long have you had this job?

32. If yes, and if no, what was your last job?
(ie if not in paid emp't now, last job done;
if in paid emp't now, previous job)

33. Were you an: — employee / employer / self employed

Was your job: — full-time / part-time

How long did you have that job?

Why did you leave?

34. Did you have any jobs prior to that one | yes/no |

If yes, how many | |

If yes, please could you tell me:

Job Title	f/t.p/t	ee.er.s/e.	duration	when and why left

35. If you do not currently have a paid job, how would you describe your employment status? (probe ret'd, u/d, red, sick etc)

36. How long have you been ... (ret'd, u/d, red.etc)

Why?

Do you want a paid job? yes/no

Are you looking for one? yes/no

37. (All respondents) have you had any gaps of over 6 months between jobs at any time in your life? yes/no

If yes, please could you give me brief details of these, ie when were they, why were they?

38. What did you do during the war?

39. How would you describe your main life's work?

AIDE MEMOIRE SECTION

Housework and Home Maintenance

1. Who does most?
   Why?

2. Does anyone else help?
   Who?

3. Household task list.

4. Regular routine? What is it? Who decides what needs doing?

5. Segregated tasks?

6. Standards.

7. Changes - past and future in: division of housework & home maintenance
   Amount of housework & home maintenance
   nature of housework & home maintenance
   standards of housework and home maintenance

   When and why?

8. Similar to peers, neighbours, kin?

9. Fairness.

10. Carers.

Financial Management

1. Sources of income (prompt for wages, pensions both company and state, other state benefits, interest on savings, inheritance, other)
   Ownership of property.
   Differentiate by husband and wife. Other household members.

   Check past and future changes.

2. Household spending list.

3. Better/worse off than past and future?
   Why? (prompt for essential spending and luxuries)

4. Organisation of money and budgeting - what method? Who does it?.

5. Personal spending money list.

Leisure

1. What does leisure mean to you? Further questions in light of answer.
   Amount of free time - changes past and present?

2. Going out socially. Where, how often etc, with whom.

3. Time spent with friends. Where, how often etc.

4. Time spent with relatives. Where, how often etc.

5. Holidays.

6. Time spent on own. Territory etc.

7. Christmas 1984.

8. Happiness/dissatisfaction with leisure and free time.

Children and Grandchildren

1. Location and frequency of contact.

2. Purpose of contact eg social, practical help.

3. Changes in relationships past and future. Happiness/dissatisfaction with relationship.

General views of Marriage (Affective rels.)

1. Major changes past and future.
   Reasons.

2. Similarity/differentness with parents, and children.

3. Generally, what is marriage about for you? - past and future.
   Obviously more to it than the topics of this interview ie housework, leisure, money. What? What have I left out?
   What does it mean to be married and aged ... ?
   Is it different? Why?

FIX UP INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

FINISH

Household task list

HH Tasks

Task	H.	W.	Our own	Other
Breakfast				
Midday meal				
Evening meal				
AM/PM tea/coffee				
Washing up				
Main Shopping				
Checks what needs buying				
Washing: wife's clothes				
Husband's clothes				
other hh members				
sheets & linen				
goes to launderette				
Ironing: wife's clothes				
husband's clothes				
other hh members				
sheets & linen				
Vacuuming				
Dusting and cleaning				
Cleaning bath & toilet				
Cleaning cooker				
Tidies house				
Feeding pets				
Exercising pets				
Cleaning car				
Checking oil & water in car				
Other car maintenance				
Mowing the lawn				
Weeding the garden				
Improvements/repairs in home				
Decorating				
Cleaning windows: inside				
outside				
Other				

HH Spending list

	H.	W.	Jt.
Do you have a bank account?	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no

Who buys each item or pays each bill?

	Neither	H.	W.	Joint account
Rent/Mortgage				
Food				
Rates and Water Rates				
Electricity, coal and gas				
Telephone				
HP Payments				
House Insurance				
Life Insurance				
Clothing and Shoes (wife)				
Clothing and shoes (husband)				
Purchase of car/van/bike				
Repairs/decorating/DIY				
Washing machine/fridge				
Presents for family				
Presents for friends				
Presents for grandchildren				
Meals or drinks out/cinema				
Papers, magazines/books				
Holiday expenses				
Donations to charities				
Paid help in the house				
Christmas expenses: Food				
Drink				
Outings				
Drinks to keep in house				

Personal spending money list

What about personal spending money for things like cigarettes, tights, a drink out with friends, a present for your spouse, getting your hair done, etc. Do you

	H.	W.
Take it out of your own earnings/money		
Take it out of the housekeeping allowance		
Have a separate amount set aside for this		
Take it out of the common pool		
Other - specify		

APPENDIX E : INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW AIDE MEMOIRE

Early Biography: where born and brought up etc.

Education: when, where, qualifications.

Employment history: (and spouse's, ie hers/his in relation to yours). Effect on self and others. Enjoyment. Negotiations.

Health: (and spouse, and other family members if applicable) incidence of ill health and good health, effect on self and others, changes over time.

Housework and other Household Work: (and spouse) divisions, changes over time, enjoyment, negotiations, standards, frequency.

Money: (and spouse) budgeting system, sources of income, pensions, changes over time.

Kin: (and spouse's) contact, frequency, support, residence, changes over time.

Friends: (and spouse's) meaning of friendship, descriptions of friends, social characteristics, frequency and location of contact, changes over time.

Leisure: (and spouse's) meaning, activities, access to time and space, changes over time.

General: (and spouse) changes in marriage and relationships over time, general changes over time, specific probes. Any other points about marriage and family you think important?

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