

**"Negotiating gender divisions of labour:  
the role of household strategies  
in explaining residential mobility in Britain"**

Thesis submitted for the PhD degree

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September 1997  
London School of Economics

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### Abstract

The profile and geography of employment in Britain is undergoing considerable change. This is demonstrated most visibly in terms of gender composition; in rising numbers of women in paid employment; the replacement of full time with part time employment; in de-regulation and the proliferation of temporary and insecure employment. With increasing numbers of 'wives' and 'mothers' in paid employment this restructuring is reflected in a new and changing geography of household divisions of labour. Paradoxically, this global push towards greater labour market flexibility has implications for reduced labour mobility. Conventionally, a mobile labour force is considered the mainstay of a flexible labour market. A paradox emerges from an understanding that, rather than being individuated, labour is situated within particular household structures. Moreover, within such structures the co-ordination of home and work imposes further significant (time-space) constraints. These constraints suggest that decisions concerning residential location must increasingly facilitate both male and female employment as well as daily household practices of consumption, production and reproduction. Frequently, such practices entail an intimate connection between the household and networks of paid and unpaid labour which are rooted in the locale.

This thesis provides both a conceptual and an empirical link between housing and labour markets. It draws upon multiple method research to consider the extent to which a causal relationship exists between household employment structure and relative rates of residential mobility. Secondary data from the UK Census of Population provides an extensive backdrop of trends for Britain in the 1990's. Qualitative biographical research provides insight into the processes of residential mobility such as those of 'bargaining power' in household decision-making. Evidence from the extensive research suggests that single earner households are more mobile than households with two full time earners. Household biographies demonstrate, however, that residential mobility behaviour is inadequately explained by economic factors alone.

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**List of acronyms**

CMU	Census Microdata Unit (University of Manchester)
LBS	Local Base Statistics (of the Census of Population)
LS	Longitudinal Study
LSM	Longitudinal Study Member
MCC	Manchester Computer Centre
MIDAS	Manchester Information Datasets and Associated Services
NHE	New Home Economics
ONS	Office of National Statistics
OPCS	Office of Population Census Statistics
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RoSE	Rest of the South East (of England)
SARs	Sample of Anonymised Records
SAS	Small Area Statistics (of the Census of Population)
SEGs	Socio-Economic Groups
SSRU	Social Statistics Research Unit (of City University)
UK	United Kingdom

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## Acknowledgements

There are a number of people whose help and support I wish to acknowledge. First, and foremost, I wish to extend my boundless appreciation to Dr Andy Pratt who has been generous both with his time and ideas in supervising this thesis (and my career) over the last two years. My appreciation also goes to Dr Mark Kleinman for constructive supervision. I wish to thank Dr Simon Duncan for first inspiring me to undertake this project and for guiding it through its first year. In the Department of Geography at the London School of Economics there are colleagues too numerous to mention who together generated a stimulating environment in which to do research. In particular, I wish to thank Dr Diane Perrons for her ideas and encouragement.

I would like to thank ONS for allowing use of the ONS Longitudinal Study and Rosemary Creeser of the LS Support Programme at SSRU, City University, for assistance with accessing the data. I am grateful to Clare Holdsworth of the Census Micro-processing Unit, University of Manchester and Jo Lampard of the University of London Computer Centre for their assistance in facilitating on-line access to the SARs. At the London School of Economics, Andrew Patterson provided invaluable technical assistance. On a more personal note, Denis Jarvis was a generous supplier of Trans-Atlantic computer 'surgery' and advice. The thesis experience is often lonely but I have been fortunate to have had the support of family and friends.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to the couples in Barking and Prestwich who allowed me into their homes and privileged me with their personal accounts of family life. Thanks also to Claire Beatson and Willie Wandera for their hospitality during my fieldwork in Manchester.

This project was funded entirely by the ESRC, provided by Studentship award reference: R004294382.

## Chapter one: Orthodox departures

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### 1.1.0 Introduction

The profile and geography of employment in Britain is undergoing considerable change. In the mid 1990's this is demonstrated most visibly in terms of gender composition; in rising numbers of women in paid employment; the replacement of full time with part time employment; in de-regulation and the proliferation of temporary and insecure employment. With increasing numbers of 'wives' and 'mothers' in paid employment this restructuring is reflected in a new and changing geography of household divisions of labour.

Paradoxically, this global shift towards greater labour market flexibility has implications for reduced labour mobility. Conventionally, a mobile labour force is considered the mainstay of a flexible labour market. A paradox emerges from an understanding that, rather than being atomistic, labour is situated within particular household structures for whom the co-ordination of home and work imposes significant time-space constraints (Tivers, 1985). These constraints suggest that decisions concerning residential location must increasingly facilitate both male and female employment as well as daily household practices of consumption, production and reproduction (Hanson and Pratt, 1988). Frequently, such practices entail an intimate connection between the household and networks of paid and unpaid labour (family child-care provision, access to skills and materials of self-provisioning, networks of knowledge) which are rooted in the locale. Together these practices of daily life provide the context from which households negotiate strategies of mobility, consolidation or inertia (de Certeau, 1988).

Arguably, moving house is one of the most stressful events in any persons life. The decision to move is rarely straightforward and the predisposition itself of people to leave a particular house or locale is unevenly distributed throughout society<sup>1</sup>. The decision to move is made all the more difficult for households balancing the location needs of more than one earner. The extreme case of decision complexity is that of the dual career household. In this case, if both male and female partner support an egalitarian career ethos (or joint mortgage), relocation required by one employment will need to be accompanied by either an equivalent career prospect for the second employment or a viable commute.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in terms of the effects of 'cumulative inertia' of duration of residence on household willingness to move as well as the effects of neighbourhood environment and social networks. These effects will be discussed briefly in Chapter Two. For a more detailed discussion refer to: Brown and Moore, 1970; Ermuth, 1974; Janis and Mann, 1977; Lin-Yuan and Kosinski, 1994.

In existing research, residential mobility is discussed in such a way as to treat the household as a closed unit. The decision to move or stay is simply read off from orthodox assumptions of rational utility maximisation. These assumptions determine household mobility from either the prospect of increased primary earner income or greater ascendancy up the housing ladder. This picture of residential mobility is at best partial. The geographic mobility of labour does not simply entail the movement of individuals from one location of low wages to another of higher, or the availability of housing at the receiving end. It involves the willingness and ability of whole households to move house and location (Jarvis, 1998).

Each household experiences some degree of preference negotiation before arriving at a group decision to move at a particular time. This is because group (family-household) decisions draw on a specific sort of preference formation which is excluded from orthodox economic theory. In practice, the preferences of each individual household member are reproduced and contested within the institutional environment of the decision to be made (different decision cases entail different preference negotiations and power relations) as well as between individual resources (local knowledge, social networks), material contributions (earnings) and bargaining power positions (England and Farkas, 1986; Fraser, 1989).

The degree of negotiation, or 'bargaining power', exercised by individual household members is to a certain extent implied by divisions of paid labour. In a rational sense, for instance, the mobility preference of a higher earner will be dominant because any house move is dependent on the breadwinner's income (Abbercrombie and Urry, 1983; Singell and Lillydahl, 1986). For this reason, participation in paid employment (divisions of paid labour) typically provides an approximate indicator of individual 'bargaining power' in household decision-making. But, a picture of decision-making based on material 'bargaining power' alone is at best partial. This is because the household is the site of multiple, diverse and competing preferences, power relations and gender role identities. Consequently, whilst this project acknowledges and develops existing research on gender divisions of paid employment it at the same time questions the legitimacy of reducing household actions to economic measures alone.

The scenario described so far is one in which macro-economic trends in housing and labour markets are mediated by a dynamic household micro-economy, in particular, through the impact within household decision-making of the spatial restructuring of gender divisions of labour. The decision to move or stay (which is only partially represented by 'revealed' patterns of residential mobility) suggests

the exemplification of this interdependency. Consequently, this thesis employs the vehicle of residential mobility to trace patterns and processes of household decision-making where these suggest the co-ordination of the housing and employment preferences of individual household members.

Whilst the substantive focus of the thesis generates new knowledge in terms of the role of household strategies in residential mobility, an equally significant contribution is made by the theoretical and methodological considerations which underpin this substantive research. For instance, by electing to explore residential mobility from a perspective within the household this project abandons the a priori assumptions of orthodox economic theory. In the absence of boundaries set by orthodox theory, this project entails, as a pre-requisite, the advancement of a theoretical and methodological framework capable of embracing the multiplicity of household experience.

### 1.1.1 Structure of thesis

This thesis is organised in four parts. The first part introduces the parameters and proposed contributions of the research. Chapter One presents a critical examination of orthodox economic theory. This serves as the first stage in developing an alternative theoretical and methodological framework, providing a conceptual link between housing and labour markets through the mediation of these spheres within the household. Chapter Two presents a review of current research in the substantive fields of residential mobility and household gender relations. This establishes the neglect, in existing research, of the role of household structure in explaining residential mobility in Britain.

The second part establishes the boundaries of intended explanation, sources of data and the means by which these are to be explored. Extensive empirical research is discussed in Chapters Four and Chapter Five. Both cross-sectional and longitudinal data are presented from the Census of Population to provide a geography of household divisions of labour (by employment type) and housing mobility (by distance moved) for Britain.

The third part provides insight into the processes of residential mobility behaviour from intensive qualitative research. In Chapter Six, biographical material is presented which combines the analysis of in-depth tape-recorded 'couple' interviews, work-histories and chronological mile-stone events. The application of a biographical approach to household research makes it possible to explore the ongoing negotiation of gender divisions of labour through time and space.

Together, the evidence provided by Chapters Four, Five and Six test the strength of causality between a range of household types, differentiated by the employment combinations of spouses/partners, and a parallel range of 'strategies' (movers and non-movers) adopted towards residential mobility through the life-course. The findings of these chapters are discussed in Chapter Seven. This final chapter indicates the implications of the research for a series of wider debates and establishes directions for future housing and labour market research.

### 1.1.2 Aims and objectives

In substance, this thesis considers the extent to which a causal relationship exists between household divisions of labour and relative rates of residential mobility. It proceeds from the hypothesis that relative rates of spatial mobility (strategies towards residential location) are differentially negotiated within households according to household structure. The question is asked, for instance, to what extent the proliferation of flexible labour market practices, and a concomitant restructuring of household divisions of labour, is reflected in the formation and negotiation of household preferences and decisions concerning residential mobility. Put simply, it is anticipated that 'traditional' male-breadwinner households will demonstrate a greater propensity to be mobile than households with more than one earner. This is because, in the latter, preference negotiation (and bargaining power) revolves around competing or complementary 'careers'. This may result in the consolidation of a particularly favourable location (catering for both careers) rather than a willingness to relocate to suit one career at the expense of the other.

The main objective of this project is to apply 'real life' insights from everyday household practices to an explanation of residential mobility in Britain. It has already been noted that a certain amount of theoretical and methodological ground clearing is required before this substantive objective can be tackled. Two issues of particular concern are outlined here. First, the epistemological issue of what it is that constitutes explanation. Clearly, a project which puts the internal workings of the household at centre stage is not seeking explicitly to predict future rates of residential mobility. In social science, the ability to predict is limited to empirical observation of past and present events, modelling the future on the basis of a repetition of observed causal conjunctions. This orthodox understanding of the world typically embraces a deductive-nomological theory of explanation and applies itself to large-scale quantitative studies of social events.

In contrast, the theory of explanation pursued in this project is one which recognises that there is not a single 'reality' which can be read off empirically from

observed events. Consequently, if prediction were to remain the prime objective of the project, the results would be at best ambiguous. In the course of this thesis it is suggested that a comprehensive explanation of household behaviour needs to consider non-events (thwarted house moves, postponed child-rearing, emotional attachment to place) as well as 'revealed' mobility behaviour. This entails the exploration of causal mechanisms (processes) and structures (tendencies, liabilities and dispositions) which are not necessarily expressed in observable social action. Within the structure of the household, for instance, "powers (to act in a certain way) exist whether or not they are exercised" (Lawson, 1997, p.21). Similarly, 'mechanisms' of decision-making (enshrined within social and cultural discourses) can be differentiated from economic 'signals' and events. Furthermore, properties of household action 'emerge' from processes of intra-household negotiation (Sayer, 1992). In summary, by recognising that 'reality' is 'multi-tiered' (Bhaskar, 1986; 1989) this thesis pursues a critical realist position and attempts to increase both the depth and breadth of existing explanations of residential mobility.

Second, consideration needs to be given to the principal actors in housing and labour market decisions; individuals and households. Whereas existing employment research focuses on the position of individuals, especially women, in the labour market, this project situates individuals within household structures. Similarly, whereas existing housing and mobility research focuses on the household 'unit', this project views the household not as a uniformly acting entity but as an institution with both individual (competing) and group (shared) identities and preferences. In the course of this thesis it is suggested that this 'duality' of household structure is best conceptualised by drawing, in combination, on institutional economics, feminist theory and the principles of structuration (Hodgson, 1988; Giddens, 1982; 1984; Folbre, 1994; Nelson, 1996a). In this way, the household is conceptualised as the site of both co-operation and conflict (Sen, 1991).

In summary, this thesis explores the causal powers and liabilities governing the formation of household 'strategies' towards residential mobility (Cheal, 1989; Anderson et al., 1994). Furthermore, it demonstrates the significance of the household, as a dynamic institution, as the mediator and co-ordinator of housing and labour market events (Allen and Hamnett, 1991; Pratt, 1996). It is argued that it is essential to look at labour market positions from the perspective of the structure of households, especially of divisions of paid and unpaid labour, gender roles and power relations. Equally, housing and labour market research needs to identify

opportunities and constraints to mobility which originate within the 'situatedness' of household structure (Schutz, 1970; Durrschmidt, 1996).

### 1.2.0 Formulating the debate

#### 1.2.1 Through the household looking glass

Central to this thesis is the belief that the household, rather than the individual, is the appropriate forum of housing and labour market research. The individual worker is situated within the household institution and, therefore, rarely makes a mobility decision outside of this context. To a large extent, this emphasis on the role of the household builds upon an established body of literature which rejects the orthodox economic treatment of the household as an unproblematic unitary consumer (Manser and Brown, 1980; Hindess, 1988; Wheelock, 1990; Hodgson, 1993).

The way in which the household is conceptualised is fundamental to explaining residential mobility behaviour. It determines, *a priori*, whether processes of preference formation and decision-making are either open or closed to observation and analysis. By defining the household as an unproblematic unit, synonymous with the individual consumer of housing wants and needs, orthodox theory denies the existence of preferences or objectives prior to their 'revelation' in action. Whilst orthodox economic theory takes seriously the existence of household preferences it denies access to observation or explanation of their formation.

In contrast, a sociological definition of the household, more specifically one coming from the perspective of feminist theory, conceives the household to be one in which men and women (and adults and children) at times hold antagonistic interests and priorities (Folbre, 1994; Creighton and Omari, 1995). Consequently, household mobility preferences are not reducible to the simple sum of the individual preferences of household members. The formation of these preferences, like gender role behaviour, is "fraught with issues of dependence, interdependence, tradition and power" (Ferber and Nelson, 1993, p.6).

By looking inside the household at preference formation and negotiation, this research seeks to open the decision-making 'black box', recognising that "there is a sense of group (household) objectives that differs from the sum of individual objectives" (Leibenstein, 1979, p.401). Sayer (1992) describes the existence of both individual parts and a shared 'glue' in terms of the "emergent powers" of the household which "cannot be reduced to (the powers) of their constituents" (p.118). To consider either the aggregation of individual preferences as a form of household,

or the household as a closed unit is to gain at best a partial view of how the household functions in housing and labour markets.

In summary, it is argued that the household is the appropriate arena for housing and labour market research, not as a scale of study but as a process (Wallman, 1984). By considering preference formation, decision-making and the structure and mechanisms of the household institution, this research sets out to disengage with the closed view of the household advanced by orthodox theory. Not only does the orthodox approach deny access to preference formation but it also assumes 'unreal' motives for household behaviour. In order to develop this argument further, the fundamental principles of orthodoxy<sup>2</sup> are introduced in the following section. These 'unreal assumptions'<sup>3</sup> of rational utility maximisation have been so widely appropriated across the social sciences that a critical review of existing housing and labour market research needs first to be situated within a critique of orthodox economic theory.

### 1.2.2 Economic theory and the household

The origins of orthodox theory (more specifically, neo-classical economics) reside in the eighteenth century philosophy of English utilitarianism. The utilitarians asserted that each individual 'maximises utility' as a universal function of "Bentham's two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure" (Hutchison, 1960, p.51). Subsequently, Adam Smith endowed modern neo-classical economics with the enduring postulates of; the rationality of individual preferences, the existence in individuals of stable, exogenous (given) tastes and preferences and the maximisation of these preferences both in their ordinal ranking and overall quantity (more of everything, ranked to promote certain preferences over others). These principles remain central to orthodox economic theory today. Firms and households (the principle 'units' of production and consumption) are assumed always to behave in a way which maximises profits, income, or 'utils' of other less definable material or psychic satisfaction<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> The aim is not to provide an exhaustive history of economic thought. It is sufficient for a non-economist to question the 'sacred cow' of 'rational economic man' in view of the wholesale export of the shibboleths of rationality and utility-maximisation to the wider social sciences.

<sup>3</sup> The use of unreal assumptions has been justified on the basis that they can yield realistic predictions by excluding what is inessential (Friedman, 1953). Furthermore, that "the lack of realism involved in the assumption of rationality is treated either as a necessary simplification or else as providing a paradigm for the analysis of human behaviour in general" (Hindess, 1988, p.11).

<sup>4</sup> The concept of 'utility' which has generally been adopted by neoclassical economics is that of the "narrowly self-oriented and straightforwardly hedonistic" interpretation espoused by Jeremy Bentham (Etzioni, 1988, p.24). The popularised image of the maximizer as a selfish pleasure-seeker, which is an overhang of utilitarianism, has to a certain extent been mitigated in

Not only does orthodox theory take theoretical purchase from the philosophy of utilitarianism but it also inherits the methodological legacy of positivism. Hollis and Nell (1975) note that:

"in economics the triumph of positivism was the triumph of utility. Man, illumined by the enlightenment and anatomised by the utilitarians, was an individual bundle of desires" (p.31).

Typically, 'individual bundles of desire' are squeezed into quantitative, mathematical models of human behaviour, a process requiring the substitution of static, unitary agents in place of free-thinking individuals and dynamic institutions. In effect, the household is viewed as if it were an individual consumer, rather than a collective (Gray, 1979). Where the internal workings of the household are considered it is in the terms, analogous to that of the firm, of a 'small factory' (Becker, 1981) rather than in terms of multiple, conflicting and contradictory desires.

Maximising behaviour can be described in terms of the ranking or ordering of all the possible consequences of actions or outcomes such that, for instance, action A is preferred to B is preferred to C. It is also assumed that preferences are both stable and 'given' (the constant conjunction between an underlying set of norms, beliefs and desires and the actors environment) (Hindess, 1988). Preferences are ordered, therefore, to suit transitive conditions and to cater for indifference between outcomes (Hargreaves-Heap, 1989). Orthodox economists have admitted that "the ordering of utilities is always tautological. Whatever is preferred (whether it seems selfish or altruistic from certain points of view) is assigned the higher utility" (Rapoport, 1960, p.122).

Hodgson (1988) cites two reasons why neo-classicists have maintained the 'extreme and untenable' position of assuming an overriding preference function which determines all choices through time. Firstly, this belief is fundamental to the ideology of individualism. "If preference functions are regarded as being affected by experience then individual aims and purposes can no longer be regarded as inviolable" (Hodgson, 1988, p.97). Secondly, he claims that the positivist methodology which underpins neo-classical theory demands that only

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recent neoclassical developments. For instance, maximising behaviour is said to be able to accommodate the readily observable human phenomena of altruism, gift-giving and self-less behaviour where 'moral' and 'pleasure' preferences are qualitatively different (Etzioni, 1988, p.71). Altruism in this sense is "explained by the suggestion that the pleasure of the person who benefits from this act has become a source of doer's pleasure, part of his or her utility" (Etzioni, 1988, p.25).

outcome action or 'ends-to-means' can be considered to be value-free whereas 'means-to-ends' (the formation of preferences) do not comply with this stipulation.

The maximisation hypothesis operates in tandem with the assumption that firms and households act rationally in their pursuit of utility maximisation. Thus, a discussion of maximising behaviour is also a discussion of rational economic behaviour. 'Homo economicus' will choose between alternative courses of action rationally, "selecting the course of action which is the most effective means to a goal (if it is a single goal) or selecting the course which leads to the most preferred goal (if there are many, equally attainable goals)" (Heath, 1976, p.3). In this way rational<sup>5</sup> behaviour is conventionally conceived by orthodox economists to signify maximisation of a consistent and transitive utility function.

Critics of a narrow conception of rationality suggest two examples of seemingly 'irrational' behaviour. Firstly, the observed behaviour of impulsive or erratic consumer choice and secondly, consumption based on inertia or habit. Becker (1976) acknowledges that "between these two extremes lies a wide spectrum of irrational behaviour, partly determined by the past and partly by current impulses" (p.158). Nevertheless, a tight definition of rational behaviour typically prevails. This is justified methodologically on the basis that household decisions are aggregated in a market model and impulsive and inert behaviour can be disregarded as 'outliers' around a 'core' of rational activity.

"The market acts as if 'it' were rational not only when households are rational, but also when they are inert, impulsive or otherwise irrational. Households may be irrational and yet markets quite rational" (Becker, 1976, p.161).

### 1.2.3 Preference formation: the neo-classical legacy

In practice, preferences are not stable or rationally determined but rather operate as social constructs (Kuran, 1991). Furthermore, in small group settings, such as the household, individual preferences are not only interdependently linked with those of other actors, but they are interpersonally negotiated in a manner which is likely to qualitatively affect the formation of both individual and group preferences. Preferences are not limitless, but cohere in socially viable combinations whereby

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<sup>5</sup> According to Hodgson (1988) "economists are much more cavalier in their use of the term 'rational' than their colleagues in other social sciences, often alleging that any statement of non-rational behaviour is derogatory of fellow humanity or absurd" (p.73). It is the former, purely economic, sense of assumed rational behaviour which prevails and it can be argued that it is this interpretation which is so damaging to social science research.

society endows them with their meaning and currency (Wildavsky, 1987; Kuran, 1991).

Although much interdisciplinary research, including that of residential location and housing choice (Lindberg et al, 1988), has taken seriously the notion of household preferences the subject remains under-theorised. Enquiry has been limited to the study of outcome actions or 'revealed preference' behaviour. The focus has been on individual rather than interpersonal decision-making with an emphasis on quantitative 'search' models (Loikkanen, 1982; Golledge et al, 1994) rather than qualitative decision-making processes. In current social science research respondents are typically asked such questions as "which partner decides what to buy?" (Van Raaij et al. 1988, p.263; Pahl, 1988). This approach, although qualitatively more interesting than the orthodox economic assessment of revealed preferences in consumer behaviour (Timmermans and Golledge, 1990), fails in equal measure to shed any light on significant processual factors. It fails to acknowledge unrealised preferences and "misinterpretations, flawed beliefs, accidental choices and coincidental interactions" in decision-making (Kuran, 1991, p.269).

The few attempts that have been made to conceptualise the process of household decision-making have simply aggregated individual preferences as a mathematical exercise (Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980). In effect, if family members do not unanimously agree on the utility of a specific commodity they need to harmonise their different preferences (Van Raaij et al., 1988). This is not the same, however, as the simple aggregation of individual preferences to form a unitary household utility function. Harmonisation implies a negotiation process whereby; "to reach an agreement, at least one of the involved parties must be willing to modify his or her subjective utility function or be able to persuade the other(s) to yield" (Van Raaij et al., 1988, p.264).

Preferences are popularly conceived in terms of 'tastes', 'choice', and as a conjunction of habit formation, past behaviour and interdependent preferences from the past behaviour of other actors (Woittiez, 1981; Pollak, 1976). Nagel (1975) stresses, however, that a preference is a disposition to make certain selections rather than the 'act of choice' itself. As Wildavsky (1987) aptly observes "preferences come from the most ubiquitous human activity; living with other people" (p.3).

Preference formation is closely associated with interactions involved with the process of decision-making. Blalock and Wilken (1979) note that husband-wife

(dyadic) interactions “provide outcomes with very high utility for the participants because they provide fulfilment of a multiplicity of important and recurrent goals” (p.176). Consequently, such interactions are “likely to become regularised, (and)..actors will anticipate each others actions with a high degree of certainty” (p.177). Whilst intimacy and repetition create a high degree of stability, preferences remain subject to change, shifts, and modification (Gowler and Legge, 1978; Hertz, 1986). Furthermore, individual and group preferences are interdependent in overlapping social contexts such as in the household, workplace, locale and wider milieu. As such, different preferences may be adopted interdependently to suit private and public ‘roles’ as well as particularly situated identities and interactions (Elster and Hyland, 1986; Sen, 1993).

#### 1.2.4 Preference formation: an interdisciplinary approach

In order to address the omission in current research of processes of preference formation and negotiation it is necessary to ‘plunder’ disparate disciplines. The aim of this section, then, is to generate an interdisciplinary approach, a workable start-point for conceptualising household preference formation in residential mobility. This cross-fertilisation of ideas, from a range of social science disciplines, reflects an accepted need for intellectual exchange between, for instance, economics and sociology (Swedberg, 1990).

First, it is important to clarify what is meant by process. The emphasis in this research is not on abstracting a formulaic sequence of stages to decision-making but rather on the fundamentally historical-geographical dynamic of the household institution and the household milieu. It is perhaps helpful, therefore, to refer to the definition of process provided by Lawson (1997). Processes are said to entail:

"the genesis, reproduction and decline of some structure, mechanism or thing, the formation, reformation and decay of some entity in time" (Lawson, 1997, p.34).

In this vein, it is argued that the constitution of the household is inseparable from this notion of temporal dynamic and changing spatial context. Households crystallise, grow in membership, transform, dissolve and reform in a flow-like movement (Somerville, 1994). This flow of household structure is not a linear or inevitable sequence of life-course stages but rather reflects ongoing negotiation within the household (Thorogood, 1987). Consequently, household research needs to recognise that processes of negotiation, decision-making and coping with uncertainty shape household structure and vice versa.

Processes of decision-making have typically been shunned in favour of outcome models of social action because the former are difficult to conceptualise and

operationalise (Strauss, 1977). The term 'preference' itself appears to assume methodological bias because it "connotes less about an actor's mental state and translates more readily into empirical operations" (Nagel, 1975, p.23). Not only is there a methodological requirement for greater qualitative investigation of preferences but it is important to consider the ways in which preference formation and negotiation may be conceptualised in terms of 'indirect indicators' of interpersonal interaction. The notion of gender-role preference, for instance, can be operationalised indirectly from discourses on child-care arrangements, domestic labour divisions and the career salience of male and female partners.

By way of example, Kirchler (1988) argues that consumer research needs to recognise that:

"the family needs to be studied in full, that is, purchase decisions ought to be perceived as transactions between all family members as well as embedded in everyday family life"  
(p.260).

Consequently, such research is increasingly embracing the approach of systems theory (Lloyd, 1976; Sprey, 1990) and switching from large-scale survey methods to small-scale intensive research. In substantive research this typically means that the consumption preferences of all adults in a household are sought in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of household tastes. Theoretically, this approach argues that when the family or household is viewed as a 'system' it is possible to focus "on the emergent qualities of the system as a whole, rather than on the qualities of the individual unit in the system" (Sprey, 1990, p.178).

From this perspective, it is frequently observed that households demonstrate decision-making specialisation and task differentiation. Decision-making specialisation, identified by decision subject and stage, is typically defined by gender (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Herbst, 1960; Pahl, 1988). In his US study of household decision-making, Wilk (1989) concludes that households:

"cope with disagreement by specialisation, with men and women each taking different roles at different points in the decision process, for example, initiator, shopper, gatekeeper, and information seeker" (p.29).

Similarly, Van Raaij et al (1988) note that much literature exists to support the notion that "spouses' roles differ considerably among decision topics, decision stages, and family composition characteristics" (p.265). Factors of life-cycle and gender-role preferences might be added to this outline. If decision processes are to reflect contemporary gender roles and household composition, the processes of power negotiation and conflict resolution must be applied to the more conventional

dyadic models of decision specialisation (Sprey, 1990). In this way, the need to consider processes of preference formation are overcome by determining differentiated household preferences from observable social cleavages. Consequently, The examination of decision-making pursued by this approach, sensitive to gender and demographic profile, clearly highlights the potential complexity of household preference formation (Lewis et al., 1992).

Finally, Scanzoni and Polonko (1980) devise a three-stage model of decision-making comprising; social context, processes, and outcomes. In this model it is evident that an understanding of processes is the least developed stage. In the decision-making literature, the role of social context is well documented in terms of the examination of household composition (Butler, et al., 1964; Stapleton, 1980), familial and institutional norms (Lee et al, 1994) and social networks (Bott, 1957; Milardo, 1988; Robben and Verhallen, 1994). Literature which focuses on the 'outcome' stage of decision-making is similarly abundant (Evans, 1973; Richardson, 1978; Kinsbury and Scanlon, 1989). It can be concluded, therefore, that whilst family studies theorists highlight the role of household decision-making there remains a continuing reluctance to challenge the material determination of gender roles.

#### 1.2.5 Preferences, cognition and household decision-making

In examining processes of preference formation and decision making it is important to recognise that these accommodate both imperfect information and partial information selection. Actors may be cognisant of only a limited range of decision options because information selection is limited, biased, misleading and dissonant (Lloyd, 1976; Brown and Moore, 1970; Sen, 1993). In effect, actors are 'cognitive misers' who use past experience and cultural or normative 'cues' to economise on their need to process new information in making choices and decisions (Meeker, 1971; Conover and Feldman, 1984).

There is here a potential incongruity, that preferences are both social constructs, thus subject to change, whilst being at the same time relatively inert because of their reliance on limited cognitive treatment. One way out of this conundrum is suggested by the conception that household preferences evolve incrementally (Kuran, 1991). For example, family and systems theorists draw the analogy between evolutionary change in household 'satisficing' strategies and the 'repeated games' of game theory (Meeker, 1971; Strauss, 1978). Moreover, in a decision situation which is quite atypical to day-to-day household affairs, the negotiations of

that decision may have to be repeated “over an extended period of time...before genuine consensus is achieved, if ever” (Scanzoni and Polonko, 1980, p.32).

Not only do individuals have a tendency to limit their information intake but they also tend to demonstrate a bias in information acceptance. They may deny or exclude information which contradicts a particularly held preference or cognitive bias. Examples of cognitive bias include a sense of over-confidence in personal ability or perception of risk (Etzioni, 1988), the pursuit of decisions motivated by self-esteem or personal status objectives (Margolis, 1987) and conspicuous consumption (Barras, 1994). In certain decision situations, once a person has committed themself to a belief, value, or choice, “there is less emphasis on objectivity and there is more partiality and bias in the way in which the person views and evaluates the alternatives” (Festinger, 1957, p.155). Consequently, decisions can be associated with cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1964; Akerlof and Dickens, 1982). For example, a woman’s apparent preference not to return to full-time employment after the birth of a child may be based on a pre-conscious belief that to return to work would be harmful to the child<sup>6</sup>. Dissonance theory would suggest that in such a case information would be filtered by the woman to support, rather than to dislodge, this belief<sup>7</sup>.

Another way of considering the negotiation of individual and household preferences is through an understanding of the hierarchical structuring of decision-making (Hicks et al, 1983; Blalock and Wilken, 1979; Louviere and Timmermans 1990; Van de Vyvere, 1994). Systems theory recognises that household decision-making operates within the boundaries of a hierarchy of decision rules. These are typically viewed in terms of the behavioural norms of altruism, egalitarianism, authoritarianism, reciprocity, status consistency or competition (Hicks et al., 1983). Furthermore, the decision rules adopted by a particular household may change according to decision subject, life cycle stage, or social context. According to Klein and Hill (1979):

“negotiating a common goal constitutes problem solving, but problem solving of a special kind, that is, a sort of ‘meta-problem solving’. The goal in such negotiations is the establishment of goal consensus” (p.496).

<sup>6</sup> This is a controversial belief but one which is widely held and frequently manipulated by policy makers in support of ‘traditional family values’. For a more detailed discussion refer to Brannen and O’Brien (1996).

<sup>7</sup> In a similar vein, Gergen et al. (1980) observe that both indebtedness and inequity, in power relations in social exchange, can be viewed as forms of cognitive dissonance. These explanations are not universally accepted by psychologists and sociologists, however, and there is much criticism of the behaviouralist and individualist assumptions on which dissonance theory relies.

Consequently, a household decision rule might act as overall arbiter in the negotiation of individual preferences to reach a final decision outcome (Meeker, 1971; McClintock et al., 1973).

Finally, the subject of decision-making has also received attention in existing literature on household divisions of labour. This body of sociological research typically interprets processes of decision-making from indirect 'implicit' indicators of 'bargaining power' based on resource contributions from paid employment (Geerken and Gove, 1983; Dex, 1985; Stamp, 1985) divisions of domestic labour (Berk, 1985) and 'who does what' with regard to the budgeting and spending of household income (Pahl, 1988; Wilson, 1987). Whilst this work fills an evident gap in the analysis of intra-household relations it typically does so without questioning underlying power relations (Eichler, 1989; Fenstermaker et al., 1991). It can be argued, from a feminist perspective, that a systems theory approach fails to take account of unequal power relations. 'Who does what' might in itself be the outcome or the mask of an on-going negotiation of gender roles and power relations (Burgoyne, 1990). In effect, explanations of household decision-making which are generated from 'revealed' preferences alone will be distorted by the omission of those decisions which remain unresolved, which are 'shelved' or which represent a trade-off or reciprocal exchange of decision outcomes between household members.

The preceding literature review suggests that family studies and systems theory offer some scope for operationalising the dynamic processes which underpin household behaviour. It is evident, for instance, that this research recognises the need to examine the household as a dynamic social group. Nevertheless, it is evident that the vestiges of orthodoxy remain (Hodgson, 1987). The notion of hierarchical decision-rules, for instance, appears to replace the unitary preference function of orthodox theory with the equally universalising notion of a meta-ranking of decision rules. Whether pursuing maximising or satisficing premises the way that household decision-making is modelled continues to be hampered by expectations of 'goal-seeking' rationality and of group consensus.

### 1.3.0 A critical examination of orthodox economic theory

Criticism is levelled against each of the precepts of orthodox economic theory from within and outside the discipline of economics (Lawson, 1997). First, the assumption of rationality is typically disrupted by evidence of non-rational behaviour. Frank (1988) observes that:

"many actions, purposely taken with full knowledge of their consequences are irrational.

If people did not perform them, they would be better off and they know it" (p.3).

Sen (1973) Similarly observes that :

"even some important decisions in life seem to be taken on the basis of incomplete thinking about the possible courses of action, and the hypothesis of revealed preference, as a psychological generalisation, may not be altogether convincing" (p.247).

It is concluded, therefore, that households rarely have sufficient information (given an understanding of search cost limitations) to act rationally or maximise utility in any meaningful sense.

Arguments surrounding the question of economic rationality focus on the apparent need for 'perfect information' in the model of 'rational economic man'. This typically reduces human behaviour to that of 'goal-seeking' and 'information processing'. In practice, however, individuals often make emotional selections which transcend their potential to maximise material gains.

"This apparent contradiction arises not because of any hidden gains (utility) from the impassioned actions themselves, but because we face important problems that simply cannot be solved by rational actors. The common feature of these problems is that to solve them we must commit ourselves to behave in ways which may later prove contrary to our interests" (Frank, 1988, p.4).

For this reason, it has been observed that human interests are served by the 'passions' rather than by rationality (Frank, 1988).

Second, the assumption of utility maximisation is tautological. By stating that all individuals (or households functioning as unitary consumers) maximise utility as an a priori statement, orthodox economic theory establishes the conditions for observing utility maximisation within the definition of human behaviour (Hage and Meeker, 1988). Where a household 'reveals' its preference for residential mobility, for instance, it is said to be maximising its utility and acting rationally within given income constraints. The preference of the household cannot be questioned as sub-optimal, irrational, emotional, contingent, or otherwise because to do so would contradict the 'fundamental assumption' of the maximisation hypothesis (Hutchison, 1960)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The assertion that the maximizing hypothesis is tautological is not new and orthodox economists have a ready reposte from within the positivist position. Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1947), for instance, claim that "the notion of utility is raised above the status of a tautology by such economic theories as make use of it and the results of which can be compared with experience or at least with common sense (p.9).

Third, the orthodox conception of preference denies that actors have a free will and "the capacity to change both behaviour and goals (including tastes and preferences) without external stimulus" (Hodgson, 1988, p.11). In practice, individuals and households make real choices in a way which is denied by the assumptions of orthodox economic theory<sup>9</sup>. By assuming preferences to be stable, exogenous and ordinally ranked actors effectively do not choose between a rational and an irrational preference because the outcome preference is, by definition, rational. Recognition is not afforded to the dynamic influence of socially and culturally constituted norms, customs and habit or of dispositions towards persuasion or compromise (Loomes et al, 1991). Where seemingly non-rational behaviour is recognised, such as with altruism or masochism, it is typically subsumed within the scope of utility and described in terms of a maximisation of the pleasure-of-giving/pleasure-of-pain. There is in this "all-inclusive expansion of the concept of utility" an obvious conceptual inadequacy. As Etzioni (1988) observes:

"once a concept is defined so that it encompasses all the incidents that are members of a given category (e.g. all actions in residential mobility) it ceases to enhance one's ability to explain" (p.27).

Finally, actors in orthodox models of economic behaviour are not only atomistic but sexless, ageless and spatially dislocated. Manser and Brown (1979) claim that household research which builds upon orthodoxy:

"contains no discussion of sex role differentiation; nor is there any indication of whether the neo-classical household utility function is an aggregate of the individual's utility functions or refers to the function of one member of the household, and the process by which the household preferences are derived is not spelled out" (p.3/4).

In defence of the orthodox assumptions reviewed in this section, Boland (1981) describes the maximisation hypothesis as an "all-and-some-statement" that "for all decision makers there is something they maximise (even perhaps an irrational element)" (p.249). As such, this premise is neither verifiable nor refutable. Furthermore, he argues that statements which are untestable are not necessarily tautologies because they may instead be metaphysical. In response, it is argued that simply making the assumptions of orthodox economic theory 'untouchable' does not grant them any legitimisation of realism and, consequently, their inclusion as the basis of social science research remains misleading (Elster and Hyland, 1986).

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<sup>9</sup> Although it is understood that the neoclassical model of stable tastes and preferences does not preclude the possibility of changes in preference sets it is argued that an external function of influence (both structure and agency) must be admitted to ensure a realistic dynamic to the notion of preference.

Furthermore, it can be argued that discussions concerning whether economic agents are rational or irrational offer "a false dichotomy" because human behaviour suggests itself to be "both rational and sub-rational at the same time" (Hodgson, 1988, p.110). Consequently, less rigid definitions of rationality have been fielded within economic discourse. For instance, it has been suggested that rationality is 'bounded' and that actors 'satisfice' rather than maximise utility (Simon, 1959, 1982). Alternatively, that rationality is limited to "the interaction of the situation (social and cultural environment) of action and the actor's more or less stable 'portfolio' of beliefs and desires" (Hindess, 1988, p.34). Nevertheless, concepts of 'bounded rationality', 'satisficing' and 'portfolio' rationality modify rather than abandon assumptions or rational utility maximisation so cherished by advocates of neo-classical economics.

In summary, the objectives at the heart of this research are irreconcilable with those of neo-classical economic theory and method in particular and orthodoxy in general. Criticisms of neo-classical economics are well rehearsed (Leamer, 1983, Bell and Kristol, 1981, Ormerod, 1994) and alternative models of economic behaviour have been promoted (most notably 'bounded rationality' and 'satisficing'; Leibenstein, 1976, 1979; Simon, 1959, 1982, Hindess, 1988; 'game theory'; Rapoport, 1960, Carling, 1991 and 'new home economics'; Becker, 1976, 1981). At this stage in the debate, however, it appears that the alternatives on offer remain squarely within mainstream, or orthodox, economics. In contrast, this project calls for a radical departure from the assumptions of unitary households, 'given' preferences and 'rational economic man' models of behaviour. From a widespread, multi-disciplinary, critical examination of orthodox economic theory there emerge two perspectives, institutional economics and feminist economic theory, which consciously depart from mainstream economics. Considered in tandem, and situated within an understanding of the principles of structuration, these alternative paradigms provide scope for examining the structures and mechanisms which underpin household behaviour in residential mobility.

#### 1.4.0 The application of alternative paradigms

##### 1.4.1 Institutional economics

Broadly speaking, the origins of institutional economics reside in the early twentieth century writings of Thorstein Veblen. Historically, Veblen differentiated between 'patterns of interactions between people' and 'collections of rules and beliefs' whereby the focus of institutionalism rested in the former (Seckler, 1975, p.88). Today, institutional economics more typically embraces institutions of thought and perception (customs, conventions, laws, morals, beliefs and norms) as

well as patterns of interactions between agents and structures. The historical link between Veblenian institutionalism and contemporary institutional economics is, therefore, not an unproblematic one. Institutional economics as it is popularly conceived today makes a quite pronounced departure from orthodox economic theory.

What has survived of early institutionalism is a 'selected Veblenia' of concepts which might usefully be applied to an investigation of the household (Seckler, 1975). For instance, the understanding that individuals do not necessarily experience a diminishing marginal rate of utility in consuming a particular good but rather that they emulate their neighbours or consume certain goods conspicuously as a means of demonstrating social status (Veblen, 1899, 1914) Thus 'needs' and 'wants', undifferentiated in neo-classical models, are endowed with independent recognition by this alternative interpretation of satiation in consumer behaviour<sup>10</sup> (Glennie and Thrift, 1992).

Hodgson (1988) suggests that the institutionalist tradition, though broad in its theoretical spectrum, shares a common foundation in criticising neo-classical economic theory. Not only does this analysis focus on principles of rational utility maximisation but also on information processing. He explains that:

"information problems lead to questions concerning the nature of information and knowledge and the social processes involved in their acquisition. From developments in cognitive psychology, anthropology and sociology it is evident that these processes are closely related to the norms, conventions and routines of social culture and institutions" (p.8).

Information may be incomplete or unobtainable but agents are still forced to 'act' even in this uncertain world. Surveys conducted in experimental psychology indicate that in a world of risk and uncertainty agents resort to conformist or emulative behaviour or experience a cognitive dissonance when making difficult decisions (Akerlof and Dickens, 1982). Consequently, decisions and actions are more likely to be influenced by norms, conventions, habit, hearsay or propaganda than a rational, maximising computation of all available information about possible actions.

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<sup>10</sup> To a certain extent the 'emulation complex' and 'conspicuous consumption' have gained credence in orthodox theory in the form of the 'Veblen effect'. The orthodox interpretation of the 'Veblen effect', however, does not hold the explanatory power of Veblen's original behavioural observations in which 'economic man' is not driven by an urge to maximise rationally but rather is characterised by "the instinct of workmanship, of parenting and of idle curiosity which were social behaviours that allowed individuals to survive in economic society" (Stanfield, 1994, p.142).

The 'survival' and promulgation of particular institutions (patterns of behaviour), within different cultures over time and space, is viewed in a similar manner to that in game theory (von Neumann and Morgenstern, 1947; Carling, 1991; 1992). For instance, the 'transaction' as a unit of analysis in Veblenian institutionalism was deemed to:

"highlight the conflicts of interest between the various transactors and the potential roles of negotiation, persuasion, coercion and duress" where transactions are described as being either 'rationing', 'managerial' or 'bargaining'" (Rutherford, 1990, p.xxi).

This shift in approach is significant because:

"the entire basis of economic theory is changed when coercion, or aggression, instead of competition, becomes the dominant theme of economics" (Gambs, 1946, p.13).

In addition, this opens the realm of economics to concepts of evolutionary, processual influences (Langlois, 1986). Institutions can be seen to provide the 'rules' of the game whereby these "govern the stock of available actions" from which the agents select, the selection process itself being reflexive, influenced by social rules or norms (Hollis, 1977, p.118).

Contemporary institutionalism diverges from game theory, however, in its approach to realms of explanation and reality. Game theory views individuals as participating in games, strategies and pay-offs in the pursuit of an intended goal (Axelrod, 1984). In contrast, institutional economics recognises that actors operate within multiple realities including those of known eventualities and those of unknown or unintended consequences (Hodgson, 1988; Layder, 1981). The latter recognises that outcomes may not be known, possibilities may be too numerous and too complex to be considered 'strategically' and the agent may be ignorant of a range of possibilities (Evans, 1988). Moreover, human actions need to be differentiated, following the principles of structuration, between:

"those which are the result of extensive deliberations and computations by the agent, and those, on the other hand, which are habitual or even reflexive" (p.9).

The former actions describe the individual as a free thinking actor and the latter recognise the agent to be situated within institutional structures which impose conditions of opportunity and constraint which the agent may or may not be either aware of or able to exert control over.

This system of structure and agent interaction is subtly different from Veblenian institutionalism. Whereas the American institutionalists talked of the individual agent as an 'institutionalised mind' (Rutherford, 1990), for Hodgson (1992; 1993) human activity is not determined by institutions alone. Agents initiate and influence

institutions as well as being influenced by them. In a similar vein, Hollis (1977) notes that:

"nature must concede that institutions are not simply given. Men need social relations but social relations depend on the psychology of men" (p.27).

Consequently, 'nature' and 'nurture' are alone indeterminate as are individuals and institutions or structure and agency.

Institutional economics abandons the neo-classical model of 'economic man' as an 'information processor' and probes the psychological make-up of the individual to identify a 'stratification' of thought processing, perception and cognition whereby behaviour is 'indeterminate' (Clegg, 1989; Giddens, 1976; 1984; Hodgson, 1988). 'Indeterminate' or 'non-conscious' (rather than unconscious) behaviour might include (phenomenologically derived) 'instincts' and (socially acquired) 'habits'. Furthermore, it might be argued that in the place of 'rational economic man' there exists instead 'passionate economic agent' within whom:

"unconscious modes of cognition and emotional governance....resist being brought into consciousness" (Giddens, 1991, p.36).

The preceding discussion suggests a potential means of reconceptualising the household with internal household activities organised around the principles of structure-agent interdependency. Equally, institutional economics might provide a useful foundation for a feminist economics (Whalen and Whalen, 1994). This theoretical alliance, between institutional economics, feminist theory and the principles of structuration, is not without its tensions but it does appear to offer the greatest opportunity for a radical departure from orthodox economic theory.

#### 1.4.2 Feminist economic theory

Whilst institutional economics promotes itself as a 'gender conscious' theory (Peterson and Brown, 1994) it paradoxically subsumes individual women to the feminist institution. To a certain extent there is a concern that:

"the attention to 'wholes' causes feminist concerns to vanish, as women - indeed all individuals - leave centre stage and get replaced by an emphasis upon groups" (Whalen and Whalen, 1994, p.20).

This paradox is potentially eliminated where the individual agent and the group or institutional structure are viewed in parallel, recognising the emergent properties of interaction within and between structure and agency and pattern and process.

Feminist theory and institutional economics also share a common rejection of orthodox economic rationality whereby:

"In general, models of free individual choice are not adequate to analyse behaviour fraught with issues of dependence, interdependence, tradition and power. Tradition, in particular, may be a far more powerful force in determining the allocation of household tasks than rational optimisation" (Ferber and Nelson, 1993, p.6).

Individuals within the household, men, women, children, the elderly or disabled, are not equal or substitutable parts of the whole. The internal structure of the household captures (mechanisms) of power, knowledge and economic resource contribution as well as normative roles or labour specialisation. These mechanisms are not determined by economic rationality. The power of each individual to act, or to veto the action of another, is understood to be differentially constituted through time and space and, consequently, subject to ongoing negotiation between household members and between the household institution and the wider social and economic milieu.

The similarities between the two approaches have been described by Jennings (1993) as being such that:

"Both approaches view the acquisition of knowledge as a cultural enterprise, (both) challenge dualistic understandings of knowledge and social life, and have a high regard for historical context" (p.111).

Furthermore, both emphasise social structures within a multiple, rather than an atomistic explanatory framework and reject exclusionary 'meta-narratives' of social action.

In practice, however, feminist theory offers a more profound role for the household than does institutional economics. This is because the household is conceived not simply as a consumer agent in 'the market' but as a market in its own right. Not only does the household operate as a market of internal exchange (by voluntarism, altruism, reciprocity or coercion) but also as a market for producer and consumer exchange with exogenous agents and institutions.

"Voluntary exchange (as in orthodox economics) is part of the process of provisioning, but so are gift-giving and coercion. Organised, impersonal markets are one locus of economic activity, but so too are households, government and other more personal or informal human organisations" (Nelson, 1993, p.33).

Consequently, feminist theory offers, as an alternative to orthodox models of exchange, an emphasis on "the provisioning of human life, that is, on the commodities and processes necessary to human survival" (Nelson, 1993, p.32). This approach consciously differentiates between needs and wants. It also stresses

a holistic approach to human preferences and market behaviour which recognises the role of non-material, 'psychic' motives.

The radical departure which feminist theory makes from orthodoxy is best demonstrated in the context of its critique of 'new home economics' (NHE), a branch of mainstream economics unique in its emphasis on the household micro-economy. The origins of NHE lie in the seminal work of Gary Becker. Becker (1981) applies the language and tools of orthodox consumer theory, maintaining assumptions of rationality and maximisation, to 'non-material' behaviour such as marriage, child-rearing, divorce and housework<sup>11</sup> to consider the micro-economy of the household through a 'systematic analysis' of labour specialisation in the family (Becker, 1976, 1981).

At the same time that NHE provides an important focus on the household it does so by a rigid compartmentalisation of the activities of consumption, production and reproduction (Berk, 1985; Jennings, 1993; Folbre, 1994; Morris, 1989). Thus the household is viewed as if it were a 'small factory' (Berk, 1980). In effect, this model looks beyond the reductionist household 'unit' to focus on intra-household dynamics only to reproduce a static, biologically determinist model of domestic roles. Hannan (1982) points out that "Becker assumes that families are dominated by a single altruistic head (a 'benevolent dictator') who sets the tone (for household decisions)" (p.69). Essentially, the view taken of the household remains androcentric (Jennings, 1993; Kabeer, 1994). Furthermore, the household is assumed to be a consensually operating unit in which the precepts of individualism are perpetuated (England, 1993; Morris, 1990). The potential for inequity in resource distribution is largely ignored. Becker's household recognises only:

"a gathering of negotiators and perhaps manipulators, but the implication is that none has the ultimate power to coerce, or to impose their opinions or decisions on other members"  
(Morris, 1989, p.449).

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<sup>11</sup> One of Becker's endowments to a greater understanding of household processes is the introduction of the cost of time into decisions about non-work activities. His integration of production and consumption in a household 'productive consumption' model contrasts with the usual tendency for economists to separate production within firms from consumption in households (Becker, 1976). The household member (conventionally observed as the 'housewife') who undertakes these 'non-work' activities can be said to incur a shadow wage which is the opportunity cost of the wage she/he might occupy in the paid economy. This formulation has been criticised, however, by Manser and Brown (1979) for its lack of realism in that "the household is viewed as producing a single good which yields utility to all its members" (p.4).

In contrast, by conceiving the household to be the site of conflict and co-operation, feminist theory provides an effective means of making the connections between control over household resources (including those of household preference formation) and divisions of paid labour. Thus the emergent properties of gender relations transcend the boundaries of the household. With a diffusion of the boundaries between domestic and work spheres comes the opportunity to create a spatially and temporally dynamic economic model in which a restructuring of patriarchy and a restructuring of economic opportunity is seen to interact holistically, rather than atomistically, in households, firms and institutions. Wallman (1984) describes this diffusion of boundaries as being the 'household as process' whereby:

"the problem of the household (in social research) is not a matter of discovering how units of production, consumption and residence interrelate and change over time, because it cannot be posed in terms of bounded units at all. It concerns itself instead with processual themes" (p.53).

#### 1.4.3 Principles of structuration

An analysis of the household from a perspective of processual themes first requires that it be detached from a straight-jacket of dualism. Conventionally, the household is reduced either to a bounded unitary structure or to a collective of voluntary agents. These conceptions are incommensurable and the imposition of a dualism, between structuralism and voluntarism, undermines potential progress in household research. What is needed is a means of breaking down the dualism of structure and agency, a project which has been a preoccupation of the social sciences over many decades. In this thesis, it is suggested that Giddens' (1979) 'duality of structure' overcomes the dualism of structure and agency and provides a theoretical language from which to discuss the particular attributes and experience of the household institution.

The 'duality of structure' is a cornerstone of Giddens' far-reaching 'structuration theory' (Clegg, 1989, p.138). It represents a focal discussion from an extensive but somewhat eclectic library of subject matter (for instance, Giddens on social theory, 1977, 1979; on methodology, 1976; on ethnomethodology, 1984; on sociology, 1987; and on modernity, 1990; 1991). This thesis explicitly embraces Giddens' conception of the 'duality of structure', recognising this as a coherent analysis of the relationship of structure and agency, but it does not embark on a

wholesale commitment to structuration theory<sup>12</sup>. In some ways, the latter provides so great a synthesis of theoretical concepts that it suffers from the same limitations of any meta-theory. Consequently, it is often viewed as being detached from empirical enquiry (Archer, 1990; Gregson, 1989). In opposition to this, Pratt (1995) makes a strong case for the application of structuration and critical realism to empirical investigation.

In brief, the principles of structuration can be discussed in terms of reproduction, reflexivity, recursivity and power relations. These concepts provide the basis from which complex theorisation, such as 'the duality of structure', can be realised. A succinct exposition of the process of social reproduction is provided by Sayer (1992) when he observes that:

"Social structures do not endure automatically, they only do so where people reproduce them; but, in turn, people do not reproduce them automatically and rarely intentionally.... Hence, while certain actions are only possible within particular social structures, the existence of the latter depends upon the continued (contingent) execution of those actions" (p.96)

This passage describes social reproduction by drawing on conditions of reflexivity and recursivity in the day to day interactions of agents as they are situated within structures and meanings of their making. Agents reproduce and are reproduced by structures in a reflexive sense. In effect, human actions entail knowledge and skills which are both conscious and unconscious with consequences which are both intentional and unintended. The agent is recognised as being socially aware and individually conscious for whom:

"the mind is a dynamic zone of contact between embodied knowledge and contested evidence. It is a space of interaction between habituation and flexibility, between immediate knowing and unprecedented understanding. The mind, therefore, is only partly articulate" (Hastrup, 1995, p.181).

Furthermore, reflexive self-monitoring and co-ordination is recursive (self-recreating) across time and space in an ongoing, dynamic process. Consequently, structuration can be described in terms of:

"Structure, as recursively organised sets of rules and resources, is out of time and space, save in its instantiations and co-ordination as memory traces, and is marked by an

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12 It must be borne in mind that Giddens' attempt to overcome the dualism of structure and agency is not without its critics. For instance, refer to: Clegg (1979), Clegg (1989) and Urry (1982) for a critique of the 'duality of structure' and refer to Lukes (1974) for an alternative theorisation of this relationship in terms of a dialectic between structure and agency.

'absence of the subject'. The social systems in which structure is recursively implicated, on the contrary, comprise the situated activities of human agents, reproduced across time and space. Analysing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction. Crucial to (this) idea of structuration is the theorem of the duality of structure" (Giddens, 1984, p. 25).

It is also recognised within the principles of structuration that the rules and resources of social action are not reproduced in a world of consensus. Significant attention is afforded to the influence of conflict and unequal power relations in the day to day processes of social reproduction. It is understood that "action logically involves power in the sense of transformative capacity" (Giddens, 1984, p.15). Conventionally, this role of power is defined (structurally) as a property of society or of social community or interpreted (voluntaristically) as the capacity of agents to achieve desired and intended outcomes. In contrast, Giddens attempts to reconcile this dualism such that power is viewed as "the capability of actors to enact decisions which they favour on the one hand and the 'mobilisation of bias' that is built into institutions on the other" (Giddens, 1984, p.15). Consequently, Giddens views the relationship between power and structure as being, once again, a duality, whereby "power and structure are interpenetrated" (Clegg, 1989, p.139). The duality of structure is mirrored by a duality of power relations. According to Clegg, Giddens establishes this ongoing cycle by observing that:

"human agency produces structures which simultaneously serve as the conditions for reproduction of human agency in a continuing process. Human agency is ineradicably tied to power: without power there is no human agency" (Clegg, 1989, p.139).

It is through a recognition of the conditions of conflict and unequal power relations that an alliance can be drawn between the principles of structuration and feminist theory. This is an alliance which has yet to gain popular acceptance in academic discourse. Nonetheless, the emphasis in feminist theory on conflict, co-operation and interdependency allies itself to some extent with Giddens' notion of the duality of structure whereby social structures are reproduced reflexively and recursively through social interactions in which the power to bring about particular outcomes is unequally distributed. Indeed, by combining these approaches, feminist theory augments the framework of structuration and compensates it for its previously inadequate treatment of issues of gender in the reproduction of social institutions (Murgatroyd, 1989). The existing feminist critique of structuration, as being antithetical, assumes the experience of women to be essentially one of

exploitation. This is not the position adopted here, nor is it the current trend of much feminist economic theory (such as that pursued by Folbre, 1994). It is argued, therefore, that a theoretical understanding of stratified gender relations (masculinities and femininities) can be meaningfully integrated with the principles of structuration. In this way, neither the individual household member, as 'agent', nor the household as 'structure', has primacy; rather, "each is constituted in and through recurrent (day to day social) practices" (Giddens, 1982, p.8).

### 1.5.0 Summary

This chapter has introduced the objectives of this thesis, to provide both substantive and theoretical contributions to household research. A key objective is to consider the extent to which a causal relationship exists between household structure and the propensity for households to be residentially mobile. This objective encapsulates the search for trends, whether of difference or similitude, in the practices and 'strategies' adopted by households, according to their internal arrangements, in mediating housing and employment events. In support of this substantive enquiry, an exercise of theoretical ground clearing has been undertaken which situates a reconceptualisation of the household, in terms of a duality of structure, within a holistic interdisciplinary framework of housing and employment market interdependency.

Conventionally, residential mobility is discussed in such a way as to treat the household as a closed unit. In contrast, this project takes as its starting point the negotiation of mobility preferences within the household. Consequently, the a priori assumptions of orthodox economic theory are abandoned. The first objective of the project is to develop an alternative theoretical and methodological framework which reveals rather than obscures the functioning of the household. This open engagement with the subject requires that the household be recognised not as a uniformly acting entity but rather the site of multiple, diverse and competing preferences, power relations and gender role identities. Furthermore, that the household be reconceptualised as both a collective of individuals and an institution which is irreducible to this collective. A critical examination of orthodox economic theory suggests that the 'duality' of the household structure is best conceptualised by drawing, in combination, on the principles of institutional economics, feminist theory and the framework of structuration.

In order to understand the diversity of behaviour entailed in residential mobility, that is, experiences of immobility as well as motives for mobility, it is necessary to explore processes of household decision-making. Each household experiences

some degree of preference negotiation before arriving at a group decision to move or stay in a particular spatio-temporal context. To a certain extent the degree of 'bargaining power' that each individual brings to this process of negotiation is implied by relative contributions from paid employment. For this reason, a first stage of the substantive research is to identify patterns of household structure, that is, the changing geography of household gender divisions of paid labour. From this point of departure it is possible to examine the strength of causal association between patterns of household structure, based on employment compositions, and patterns of residential mobility. This broad picture will indicate whether 'traditional' male breadwinner households are inherently more mobile than households with more than one earner.

On its own, such a broad brush investigation would be inadequate as a means of generating a realistic explanation of residential mobility in Britain. An explanation based on divisions of paid labour alone would be materially determined, concealing non-material sources of mobility, immobility and non-mobility. In this vein, Savage and Warde (1993) observe that:

"In a world of fleeting encounters (deciding on an appropriate form of behaviour) requires a considerable range of repertoires of behaviour, strategic reflection and flexibility in mundane situations. Inventive and adaptive responses make for a huge variety of encounters, the content of which is not, or at least not easily, subject to generalisation" (p.193).

Furthermore, Sayer (1992) establishes that explanations based wholly on abstraction, generalisation or the 'false privilege' of actors' accounts are each flawed in their own way.

"From the point of view of the actor or participant, actions are not easily distinguished one from another, their goals are often unclear and their execution is always vulnerable to unexpected diversions. To the spectator, the risk and contingency are less apparent and, when repeated, the time dimension tends to be compressed or ignored altogether" (p.97).

The aim of this thesis, therefore, is not to establish abstract and generalised trends for the mobility prospects of a changing geography of household structure. Rather, it seeks to identify sources of differentiation within the household which then manifest themselves in cleavages between households which, in turn, stimulate a restructuring of housing, employment and, reflexively, household gender divisions of labour. This calls for the contextualisation of household strategies towards residential mobility. Consequently, the thesis adopts an ethnographic approach in the observation of daily household practices which together co-ordinate the negotiation of change in housing and employment events (de Certeau, 1988).

This thesis also contributes to a wider series of debates. First, it subscribes to discussions concerning the manifestation of local and regional gender 'cultures' (McDowell, 1986; Walby, 1989; Duncan, 1991, 1991a). The changing geography of household structure in general, and the expansion of dual-earner households in particular, is influenced by the local transmission of norms concerning socially sanctioned gender roles. Consequently, this project considers the extent to which there is a regional dimension to the participation of 'wives' and 'mothers' in paid employment as well as the relationship of this trend to regional housing and labour market variation.

Second, this thesis is associated with the social exclusion debate (see for instance Williams and Windebank, 1995). Divisions within the household both directly and indirectly influence social exclusion (Jarvis, 1997). Directly, intra-household conflict may result in the dissolution of family households and the creation of a typically marginalized category, lone parents. Savage and Warde (1993) note that:

"Both work done at home (self-provisioning) and that exchanged with friends, neighbours and associates contributes to household standards of living and thus can affect the nature of inequalities (between households)" (p.89).

Indirectly, whole households or individual household members experience differential location 'ties' whereby a voluntary house move is ruled out. Households requiring the income of more than one earner, for instance, experience particular forms of immobility.

Finally, this thesis contributes to discussions concerning the impact of globalisation on the household micro-economy (Morris, 1990, 1995; Breugel, 1996). It is evident that economic restructuring, the proliferation of flexible labour practices, is altering the context in which households negotiate change, make decisions and go about daily life (Ball et al., 1989; Savage and Warde, 1993, p.92). It is through a study of the way households adapt to these structural changes (in housing and employment markets) that some of the implications of globalisation are better understood. In contrast with (or in addition to) the conventional belief that rigidities in the housing market are responsible for 'bottlenecks' in labour mobility, the global push towards greater labour flexibility has implications for reduced labour mobility and, equally, as a source of rigidity in housing turnover. It has to be asked whether the cost to the household, of increasingly casualised and feminised employment, outweighs the advantage, to global competition, of deregulated flexible labour markets.

## Chapter two: Residential mobility and the household

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- 2.2.0 Existing residential mobility research
  - 2.2.1 Neo-classical 'trade-off' models
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  - 2.2.2 Ecological perspectives
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### 2.1.0 Introduction

The principles of orthodox economic theory have been widely appropriated within the fields of housing and employment research. Consequently, they have shaped the way residential mobility is explained whereby "the neo-classical equilibrium view still largely holds" (Salt, 1991, p.95). This is not to say that existing residential mobility<sup>1</sup> research draws on observations of housing and labour market behaviour in equal measure. Indeed, it is a central argument of this thesis (and expressed elsewhere, see Allen and Hamnett, 1991) that existing explanations of residential mobility inadequately articulate the overlapping spheres of housing, employment and household structure.

Housing markets and labour markets are interconnected, never more so than in the household decision to move or stay in a particular locale. It is in reproducing a particular propensity to be mobile that the key disjuncture between housing and employment is either realised or accommodated. As Randolph (1991) observes, "it is households who consume housing, but individuals who participate in the labour market" (p.37). Household mobility entails the co-ordination or sacrifice of the prospects of individual earners.

In the discussion which follows it is evident that existing explanations of residential mobility do not adequately capture the combined functions of housing, employment and household structure. The need to address these spheres, conventionally conceived as separate, as overlapping and interdependent, is typically circumvented by the adoption of orthodox economic assumptions. These preclude the exploration of the household as a zone of conflict and negotiation.

This chapter is structured in two parts. The first part presents a review of existing research on residential mobility. This demonstrates the inadequate articulation of the connections between housing and labour markets and of the key role of the household in realising this connection. It also establishes more conclusively the specious nature of explanations of social action grounded in orthodox economic theory. The second part provides a review of existing research on household

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'residential mobility' is used in preference to migration or labour mobility because it best conveys the direction of this research. Migration literature, typically produced within population geography, focuses on aggregate population movements in a way which does not emphasise household situatedness. Similarly, labour mobility does not denote the mobility of whole households. Residential mobility refers to a change of residence for a wholly moving household for whom some compromise has to be reached in the decision to move, whether that movement be local or distant, involving simply a change of residence or both a change of residence and employment. Clearly, residential mobility is a separate process to social or occupational mobility where physical relocation is not necessarily required for mobility to occur.

structure, that is, the association between divisions of labour and forms of exchange and bargaining power in household decision-making.

#### 2.2.0 Existing housing research: approaches to residential mobility

Conventionally, residential mobility research has fallen within the ambit of either housing studies or urban economic geography. The former emphasises the structural 'rigidities' imposed on labour mobility through the functioning of the housing market (tenure, planning regulation, construction cycles). The latter emphasises spatial factors of housing location (travel-to-work, local labour markets, neighbourhood environment). The former obscures the fact that "housing remains merely one among several barriers confronting the potential mover" (Salt, 1991, p.95). The latter fails to recognise that residential location is differentially experienced within and between households, contingent upon the co-ordination of individual preferences and divisions of labour in processes of decision-making.

In the following review of existing residential mobility research it is suggested that the compartmentalisation of housing market and labour market observations has resulted in a failure to recognise the impact of changing conditions of employment; the rising number of households with more than one breadwinner and increasing demand for a flexible work-force (mobile yet insecurely employed). The reality in Britain today is as Hanson and Pratt describe:

"The workplace is simply one end of the journey to work; travel time to employment depends on the location of home as well as of work. How much freedom do people have to move their place of residence to accommodate a particular job location? Where such freedom is abundant, short work trips could simply reflect the flexibility of residential location together with a desire to minimise travel. Such geographic manoeuvring can become a geographic juggling act however when one residential location has to accommodate access to more than one work place. And this is the norm" (Hanson and Pratt, 1995, p.105).

Clearly, explanations of residential mobility need to consider the home and work place relationship for all household members. This entails research which considers both housing consumption and employment participation together with conditions of household structure. The following review demonstrates that existing residential mobility research fails to make the connections between these interacting spheres of influence in the mobility processes (Allen and Hamnett, 1991).

### 2.2.1 Neo-classical 'trade-off' models

Since the 1960's, residential location has typically been viewed by urban economic geographers in terms of a 'trade-off' between housing consumption and land value, with the latter determined by distance and transportation costs from an idealised central place (Muth, 1969). Such models present a consumer household with perfect information, operating in perfect competition for housing and land and as having a unified preference function (Alonso, 1970; Evans, 1973; Hanushek and Quigley, 1978). This model asserts that:

"an individual is in reality a family which may contain several members (but) we are not concerned with how (family) tastes are formed, but simply what they are" (Alonso, 1970, p.18).

Preferences are simply assumed to be:

"more or less homogenous within certain groups defined by such characteristics as family size, occupation and race or ethnic origin" (Alonso, 1969, p.103).

Surprisingly, these rigid parameters continue to endure in current residential mobility research. Although the neo-classical model has been adapted to accommodate such variables as uncertainty (Loikkanen, 1982; Desbarats, 1983; Van de Vyvere, 1994) and limited information in housing search (Pickles and Rogerson, 1984; Louviere and Timmermans, 1990; Timmermans and Golledge, 1990; Clark and Onaka, 1983) the fundamental tenets of orthodoxy remain unchallenged.

It is quite easy to see the limitations of a 'rational economic man' model of residential mobility. Individuals and households are atomistically featureless and interchangeable. The household is viewed as a consensual unit of singular tastes and preferences and no scope is permitted for interpersonal relations of power and conflict. By giving primacy to an all embracing preference function, little or no recognition is afforded to the role of institutional constraint. In contrast, it is evident that households do not make choices in a vacuum. Rather:

"the preferences that they express and the constraints that they experience are moulded by the nature of the wider social structure and by the more immediate effects of the specific character of certain systems of housing production and allocation" (Bassett and Short, 1980, p.32).

To a limited extent, the unrealistic assumptions of a strict utility-maximising decision-rule have been addressed within the field of residential choice research. One response, for instance, is the introduction of a 'satisficing' element (Simon, 1983; Janis and Mann, 1977). This approach has been employed in 'probabilistic'

models of consumer behaviour (Louviere and Meyer, 1976; Louviere, 1984) as a means of extending the behavioural sensitivity of the residential choice model to encompass processes of cognition and judgement in the evaluation of environmental factors (Flowerdew, 1973; 1976; Louviere and Timmermans, 1990; Lewis et al., 1992). Such probabilistic, or stochastic, choice models assume "an invariant relationship between an outcome's value and an actor's preference for that outcome" (Blalock and Wilken, 1979, p.165). It remains evident, therefore, that the theoretical and methodological position assumed by neo-classical 'trade-off' models generate explanations of residential mobility which inadequately reflect contemporary housing, employment and household conditions.

### 2.2.2 Filtering theory and the gentrification anomaly

Firmly situated within the neo-classical trade-off model is the normative belief that market mechanisms are 'efficient' and distribute resources according to pareto optimality. For instance, that households which can afford to climb the housing ladder do so by purchasing new housing and that this action benefits those lower down the ladder by releasing ageing second-hand stock through a 'filtering' (trickle down) process. Belief in the distributive role of filtering, and the orthodox economic assumptions which underpin it, has been the mainstay of laissez-faire government housing policy since 1979.

Ratcliff (1949) provides one of the earliest discussions of filtering theory. He stresses the inexorable downward movement of housing quality and value which follows a 'natural' process of ageing, deterioration and obsolescence. At the same time, as household income rises, housing quality consumption will 'automatically' increase, creating a movement of better-off households from older to newer housing. It is believed that by introducing housing production at or near the top end of the housing market the needs of lower income households will be met by the 'trickle down' of existing, deteriorating properties (Baer and Williamson, 1988<sup>2</sup>).

In methodological terms there is some ambiguity as to whether the process under investigation is best understood by following housing 'careers' (Lansing et al., 1969; Kendig, 1984, Davies, 1991), households (Myers, 1983, 1990), or both (Baer and Williamson; 1988). In their study of housing turnover in Southern England, Forrest and Murie (1994) found little evidence of a 'trickle down' effect

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<sup>2</sup> The authors provide a comprehensive overview of both the proponents and critics of filtering theory.

from new housing construction. Indeed, vacancy chain research typically lends itself to a critique of filtering because shorter chains have been identified through it than would be predicted if filtering was taking place (Bourne, 1981) and mobility between income groups is limited (Marullo, 1985; Murie, Hillyard et al., 1976; Boddy and Gray, 1979). It is also based upon a given housing stock rather than upon any consideration of the means of housing production. Overall, empirical research demonstrates that filtering theory takes an idealised and unrealistic view of how both households and housing markets behave (Barlow and Duncan, 1994).

A general criticism of the neo-classical perspective equally well applies to the specific theory of filtering. Both can be viewed as ahistorical and aspatial (Smith and Williams, 1986). Filtering theory functions as a 'legitimacy device' in policy making (Boddy and Gray, 1979, p.119). It is ideologically biased in its idealisation of both the housing market and 'the family' (or household 'unit') (Barlow and Duncan, 1994). It is assumed (as a 'given') that households have an automatic preference for new housing (Nutt et al, 1976; Seek, 1983) despite evidence to suggest that this may be of inferior spatial and environmental quality to older property (Tu, 1994). The housing market does not operate in equilibrium between new housing supply, generated vacancies and housing demand (Kristoff, 1972). Furthermore, the downward filtration of dwellings is not inevitable (Nutt et al (1976). Dwelling units in different vintages, in different locations, in different neighbourhoods and with different maintenance histories are incommensurable. Obsolescence is to a large extent socially constructed and not confined to age (Henderson, 1985).

Filtering theory also fails to account for evidence of the uneven distribution of housing by gender and ethnicity (Leven et al., 1976; Marullo, 1983; Baer, 1988). It ignores the role of urban 'gate keepers' (Bassett and Short, 1980) and institutional structures (Ball, 1983). It assumes that all households try to get the 'best' housing they can afford which perpetuates the orthodox economic fallacies of narrowly defined rational maximising behaviour and stable preferences (Pickvance and Pickvance, 1994). In contrast, 'strategies' of disinvestment may take place. Equally, lower income households are often 'forced' to 'filter upwards' into inner-city owner-occupation and thus 'over-consume' housing because of a shortage of preferred accommodation in the public or private rented sectors (Myers, 1990). Pressure is exerted on housing availability by tenure, particularly by the extensive promotion of owner occupation in Britain in the 1980's. In spite of the increasingly fragmented and differentiated nature of the housing market, however, Forrest and

Murie (1994) conclude that "the imagery and language of housing ladders, trading up and filtering remains strong" (p.276).

Finally, not only is filtering theory criticised on the basis of its reliance on spurious behavioural assumptions and ideological bias but also through the existence of the obvious anomaly of the inner city revitalisation phenomenon known as gentrification. In the language of linear 'housing ladders' gentrification is a form of 'reverse filtering'. Run-down housing is upgraded and re-valorised by affluent owner occupiers who 'invade' traditional working-class neighbourhoods as a means of gaining access to centrally located employment and amenities (Bondi, 1991) (thereby realising capital value from the 'rent gap' - Smith, 1982) or a sought after housing vintage (Beauregard, 1986; Munt, 1987). In effect, neighbourhood revitalisation is highly selective:

"extensive upgrading is restricted to certain neighbourhoods that often are selected because of their architectural quaintness or proximity to other revitalised neighbourhoods" (Myers, 1984, p.352).

Evidence of gentrification, upward mobility and incumbent upgrading imply that the filtering process is by no means inevitable or unidirectional. For instance, large family dwellings may be converted or reconverted to suit changes in household composition requirements (Richardson, 1978; Baer, 1988). Similarly, 'upward mobility', described by Bourne (1981) as 'walking up a down escalator', has typically been ignored by housing economists because it violates orthodox economic assumptions. It is apparent that 'trading up' and 'trading down' not only occurs with income but also with various stages in the family life course (Leven et al, 1976; Vatardy, 1986). Increases in household income do not automatically flow up the housing ladder or follow a set pattern of tastes and preferences. Rather, factors of life-style change, relative attachment to place and idiosyncratic preference patterns underpin explanations of residential location and mobility.

### 2.2.3 Ecological perspectives

Research has been undertaken which seeks to distance itself from the rigid parameters of orthodox economic theory. The degree of distance achieved varies both with the underlying theoretical perspective and with the historical development of each alternative approach. It is increasingly evident, however, in reviewing the alternative approaches to residential mobility over the last half century, that our understanding of household decision-making has yet to be fully liberated from the bonds of utility maximising 'rational economic man'.

The ecological perspective in housing research typically attempts to release itself from orthodoxy by emphasising community and neighbourhood structures. These are described in terms of the evolution of biotic forms and exemplified in the work of; Park and Burgess, 1924; Park, 1936; Hoyt, 1939; and Hawley (1950). In particular, the early work of Park and Burgess (1924) draws heavily upon ecological analogies, and a social evolutionary process of the Darwinian and Spencerian order. This is evident in references to 'invasion' and 'succession' in residential location in which individuals and groups compete, as in the animal kingdom, for spatially determined resources. The language of housing ladders, filtering and neighbourhood invasion is typically sustained (Pratt, 1994, p.37).

The economy is understood to operate within a system of 'competitive co-operation', created by a 'struggle for survival'. Indeed, households, neighbourhoods and communities are seen to provide:

"an economy (which) involves a far more intricate division of labour than that with which the economist ordinarily deals (and) it is in this conception of the community that human ecology represents an extension of economics beyond its nominal scope" (Hawley, 1950, p.73).

Significantly, residential location is not considered to be a perfectly 'rational' calculation of a 'trade-off' between economic variables in an ordinal preference function, but rather as a complex interaction of social and cultural competition, pressures and stress (Richardson, 1971).

Whilst the ecological approach introduces greater depth of realism it continues to describe spatial patterns rather than explain social processes. Spatial patterns of residential differentiation are emphasised in contrast to the economic sectors of trade-off models. However, it is still the description and explanation of patterns which is provided, rather than an investigation of 'how' and 'why' groups in society are located where they are in the city (Bassett and Short, 1980). Furthermore, the approach can be criticised for viewing social norms and influences of emulation as being structurally determined by the social environment, a force beyond individual agency, rather than interdependently co-ordinated within social institutions (Pratt and Hanson, 1988).

#### 2.2.4 Behavioural Applications

Behavioural models of spatial choice, on the ascendant since the 1950's, emphasise 'satisficing' behaviour rather than a model of maximisation. This is evident in Rossi's (1955) enquiry into 'why families move'. It is recognised that agents 'make do' with imperfect information and imperfect processing and

cognition in household decision-making. This understanding runs parallel with Herbert Simon's theory of 'bounded rationality' (introduced in the previous chapter). By way of example, Walmsley et al. (1984) suggests that in 'satisficing' behaviour:

"the criteria for the ultimate choice are invariably relative, rather than absolute, and so the process of spatial choice involves an individual in comparing each alternative with every other one in order to select the one which gives the greatest expected satisfaction" (p.54).

Research founded on a behavioural tradition can be seen, in part, to fulfil Leibenstein's (1979) call for a 'micro-micro' approach to the household. Emmi and Magnusson (1995), however, note that in the development of a behavioural approach, principles of orthodoxy have been increasingly absorbed:

"(it) began with a search for explanation in terms of particularistic reasons like life-cycle change, job change or income change (but) it evolved into a concern with household decision-making and a focus on stress reduction and later on utility maximisation" (p.20).

Similarly, Clark (1981) identifies "a continuing trend towards the analysis of the individual migrant and his decision-making behaviour" (p.183). Thus, the opportunity to look at relations within the household institution, present in much of the early literature, is absent in the behavioural approach as it is pursued today.

The most influential application of a behavioural approach to residential mobility is provided in the seminal work of Julian Wolpert. Wolpert (1964, 1965, 1966) introduces such key concepts as 'place utility' 'context dependency' and notions of 'stress' and 'strain' in household decision-making. The concept of 'place utility' is employed as a measure of spatially derived satisfaction. In effect, it provides a "reflection of an individual's subjective evaluation of a place in terms of (perceived) satisfaction or dissatisfaction" (Lin-Yuan and Kosinski, 1994). Although measurements of satisfaction in many ways perpetuate a utility maximising, or 'satisficing', axiom (the subject of criticism in the previous chapter), concepts of 'place utility', social context and neighbourhood effects retain significance to a study of household decision-making (Ermuth, 1974; Lindberg et al., 1988). For instance, in a recent study, Timmermans and Noortwijk (1995) observe particular trends in the residential choice behaviour of divorcees in terms of the extent to which dwelling attribute preferences are dependent on neighbourhood context or 'attachment to place'.

Wolpert also develops the popular notion of 'stress' and 'strain' in the impact of the environment on relative attachment to place. This concept is similar to the economic theory of positive and negative environmental externalities in location.

Such externalities are deemed to be out of the immediate control of the individual or household such that they are environmentally determined. In this way, Wolpert argues that stress plays a role in applying constraints or 'boundaries' to the 'rational' decision-making process. For instance:

"stress may induce an underestimation of available (location) alternatives (such that) the perception of the individual is that 'one is forced to move'" (p.98).

Similarly:

"strain may induce additional bias into the migration decision by triggering off a hasty decision to move, encouraging a disorganised search for other places to go, or fixation on a single destination place when closer examination of several alternatives is more beneficial" (p.95).

The behavioural approach has also been influenced by analytical techniques traditionally employed by social psychologists. For instance, incrementalism or 'muddling through' in decision-making (Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1963) and 'mixed scanning' of choices (Etzioni, 1967; Janis and Mann, 1977). This body of literature further develops an understanding of 'symbolic' and 'status conferring' notions of place to consider the extent to which attributes and properties of urban neighbourhoods determine household propensities to move or stay (Lee et al., 1994).

Notions of 'place utility', context dependency and 'push' and 'pull' factors of residential location have been widely applied to residential mobility research (Brown and Moore, 1970; Golledge and Stimson, 1987). Mincer (1978), for instance, conceptualises a dependency relationship in terms of how 'tied' a household member is to location specific opportunities. 'Tied' persons are "those whose gains from migration are (in absolute value) dominated by the gains (or losses) of (another family member)" (p.753). The magnitude of a 'tie' reflects the positive or negative externalities of a particular location with regard to employment and associated market opportunity (Snaith, 1990).

More recently, the concept of relational 'ties' has been conveyed in discussions of the 'wife's sacrifice' (Bonney and Love, 1991; Breugel, 1996) and the (satisficing) decision strategies of dual career households (Green, 1995a). Mincer (1978) concludes that migration ties arise more often in families of dual earning couples than in single-career families. Consequently, there is evidence that dual-career households experience a degree of inertia although:

"wives are more likely to be tied movers in migrating families while husbands, if they are tied at all, are more likely to be tied stayers than tied movers" (Mincer, 1978, p.754).

In effect, the behavioural approach attempts to dismantle the underlying assumptions of rational utility maximisation and replace them with observations of imperfect information and partial or dissonant information processing. It is suggested, however, that this approach fails to conceptualise intra-household relations or to address the ways in which interpersonal preference conflict effects both the decision-making process and its outcome. Once again the household and individual are assumed to be atomistically interchangeable. Behavioural research can be accused, therefore, of reifying individual behaviour (cultural norms and instincts) at the cost of a wider understanding of structural or institutional constraints (Bassett and Short, 1980, p.36).

#### 2.2.5 Managerial approaches

Much existing housing and residential mobility research can be situated within a broadly defined managerial approach. Originally, the legacy is one of urban managerialism but, more recently, an institutional framework can be identified. In direct contrast to the voluntaristic agents which underpin the ecological and behavioural perspectives described above, managerial approaches significantly elevate the role of structural constraints and systems of distribution. Consequently, explanations of residential location and mobility are bound up with representations of social and spatial inequality (in access to and distribution of the resources of the built environment). In urban managerialism, for instance, the emphasis is on the allocative rules of institutional managers and professional 'gatekeepers' (Rex and Moore, 1967; Pahl, R. 1975). Moreover, this language is recognisable as the product of an inherently Weberian legacy.

Nevertheless, the impact of unequal power relations (as discrete from unequal resource distribution) remains under-developed in urban managerialism. This is a criticism which often leads to the judgement that, in urban managerialism, voluntarism is simply replaced with structuralism (Williams, 1982, p.98). In recognition of this critique, structural constraints based more directly on power, conflict, and office are given greater emphasis under the auspices of institutional economic theory. Here, the study of housing and residential location is approached through an explicit critique of the idealised exchange model of neo-classical economics. Not only is this a critique of neo-classical economics but also of the emphasis made in behavioural (voluntaristic) approaches on the omniscience of consumer preference and a demand-led housing market. In contrast, preferences are viewed in terms of limited choice, as a function of constraint.

Research undertaken within an institutional economic perspective explicitly seeks to avoid the economic, environmental and behavioural determinism of much ecological and behavioural research. It does so by highlighting the role played by differential opportunity endowments and structural constraints in generating uneven patterns of residential mobility. In effect, agents and institutions operating in the housing market provide a significant locus of study because their actions:

“mesh supply and demand (they are) the object of government policies and the generators of the mix of housing opportunities and constraints afforded and imposed on different types of household” (Short, 1982, p.16).

Notions of power and conflict are taken further still in Marxian explanations of the uneven distribution of housing resources. Here the emphasis is on structural divisions and endowments based on class and capital (Harvey, 1973; Chekoway, 1980). For instance, in the work of Harvey (1973), a key distinction is made between the use value and the exchange value (market price) of a property. The material (surplus) gains to be made from property exchange are conferred in relation to access to the means of production, namely, to the power and politics of land ownership and capital, rather than to the usefulness of (or need for) particular housing stock. Consequently, a Marxian approach makes a clear distinction between the production and exchange of housing as a capital good and housing consumption (Short, 1982).

This emphasis on supply-side economics is also fundamental to the Marxian concept of 'rent gap' whereby capital may be generated (and distributed through the power and politics of capital investment) from the realisation of a better use for a property. This better use generates a surplus rent as the difference between the current (real) ground rent and the potential ground rent. In this way, it is the surplus rent to be gained from inner-city renewal, rather than individual consumer choice, which is understood as the stimulus behind the manifestation of urban gentrification (Smith, 1979).

A broad conception of structural constraint is similarly employed within a political economic framework. In this body of research, housing markets are understood to operate through the interdependent influence of political and economic systems. Once again, attention is generally focused upon supply-side market mechanisms. Ball (1994), for example, provides a detailed study of the structural processes of housing production (organisation of the construction industry, land supply, planning process). Recognition is also afforded to the impact of macro-economic cycles of boom and recession. Economic fluctuations, or 'cycles', of various

durations are typically identified. A four year 'Kitchen' cycle relates to business inventory investments; the 'Juglar' cycle of 8-10 years duration is associated with long term investment which is tied up in capital equipment; and the 15-20 year 'Kuznets' cycle describes the periodic impact of housing investment expenditures (Amos, 1990). Housing, as a fixed stock on a long production and depreciation trajectory, is thus viewed as an atypical good. By focusing on the impact which Kuznets style building cycles have on housing construction, and hence residential mobility, further explanation is provided for the social and spatial unevenness of housing life-chances (Kuznets, 1973; Amos, 1990; Ball, 1994). Similarly, Short (1982); Whitehand (1987); Ball (1990) and Barlow and Duncan (1994) also focus on macro-economic trends in generating 'bottlenecks' and 'valves' in housing production.

The far-reaching and multiple... picture provided by this emphasis on structural constraint is appealing. It can be argued, however, that contrary to the micro-micro approach of behaviourism, individual preferences and particularistic detail are now entirely subsumed within macro-level structures. It is also evident that whilst the concept of the institution, as a set of social and cultural norms, is highly applicable to household research<sup>3</sup>, a 'unitary' solidity to the household is maintained. In this regard, Snaith (1990) observes that although:

"the role of institutions (both public and private)...have come to occupy a central place in the geographical study of human migration... (there has been, to date), the implicit assumption that household moves are made within the context of a single career" (p.155).

This said, there is scope within the 'umbrella' of structural theorisation to consider household and gender specific issues of distributional inequality. For instance, managerial concepts are identifiable in feminist housing research. This body of literature highlights the unequal access women experience with regard to housing finance and location (Watson, 1988; Wheelock, 1990) as well as to the impact of uneven divisions of labour (McDowell, 1983; England and Farkas, 1986).

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, the concept of the institution can be extended by this approach to develop the theory of cumulative inertia in residential location which might be founded on a social or cultural identification or familiarity with place or even the 'hassle' factor of moving house which, because of the monopoly power of agents in the owner occupied market, is a costly and bureaucratic process (Short, 1982; Merrett, 1982).

### 2.2.6 Summary

The preceding section provides a review of the contributions which have been made to residential mobility research from a broad range of theoretical perspectives. It has been suggested that, despite this variety of theoretical and methodological applications, explanations of residential mobility have yet to be fully liberated from the bonds of orthodoxy.

A continued reliance upon assumptions of unitary households and rational utility maximisation serves to desensitise existing research to the changing nature of housing, employment and household structure. By way of example, there is evidence that in the USA in the 1970's and 1980's the increased rate at which women participated in full time paid labour corresponded with declining rates of household mobility between local labour markets (Cadwallader, 1992). "Two worker households are less likely to move than their single-worker counterparts" (Cadwallader, 1992, p.154). The implication of this phenomenon in Britain, in terms of changing patterns and processes of residential mobility, has been neglected within the parameters of existing research.

It has been demonstrated that the orthodox language of 'ladders' 'filtering' the magnet of a central place (as a universal housing preference) and environmentally determined residential segregation are typically sustained within both neo-classical and ecological perspectives. Furthermore, that attempts made to escape the most rigid manifestations of utility maximisation (from a behavioural perspective) typically perpetuate the inadequacies of voluntarism.

Any number of 'escalator' directions would be insufficient to describe mobility in the highly fragmented UK housing market of the 1990's. The UK housing stock is fragmented by tenure and type, by uneven maintenance and development, by imperfect land markets and by preference differentials associated with household aspirations and architectural vintage. Households, as consumers in the mobility process, are not only fragmented by stage in the family life-course but also by a cohort effect whereby the context of exogenous economic cycles differentially impinges upon household survival.

The macro and quantitative thrust of neo-classical and ecological analyses (pursuing market signals and income determinants) is somewhat militated against by the micro-micro qualitative dimension of behavioural research. It remains the case, however, that the role of household relations, interpersonal conflict and

institutional constraints are subsumed to the determination of individual (or unitary household) choice.

Similarly, behavioural research makes an important contribution to explanations of residential mobility by exploring the decision-making process. It proceeds to do so, however, within a framework of assumed consensus-within households. Households remain typically atomistic. The adoption of a qualitative 'micro micro' methodology (in place of the quantitative study characteristic of neo-classical and ecological perspectives) simply replaces the determinacy of aggregate market signals with that of atomistic choice. The literature does not engage with the 'situatedness' of the propensity to move within the 'flow' of household structure (divisions of paid and unpaid labour), daily practices of family and work co-ordination and social and kin networks.

Research which addresses the topical issue of rising numbers of dual earning households typically does so from a perspective of institutional constraint. Consequently, changing patterns of mobility are presumed to be structurally determined such as with the patriarchal 'ties' experienced by a 'trailing wife'. Recognition is not given to the relation between a (spatially uneven) geography of household employment structure and household strategies of mobility or inertia. In effect, patterns of non-mobility and immobility, which are as significant to residential mobility research as overall rates of mobility, are neglected in existing explanations of residential mobility.

### 2.3.0 Existing household research

Reference has been made to the overlapping and interdependent spheres of housing, employment and household structure. The interconnectedness of housing markets and labour markets with patterns and processes of residential mobility is perhaps more immediately apparent than it is for household structure. This latter sphere requires further elaboration through the examination of a separate body of literature. The following section offers a brief review of an interdisciplinary literature from social geography, sociology and gender studies which together comprise the majority of existing household research.

In general, this thesis employs the term household structure (or household employment structure) interchangeably with household gender divisions of labour (or household gender divisions of paid labour). In the following section, however, specific references to household structure draw on a wider set of observations. In this way, household structure encompasses the elements of

divisions of paid and unpaid labour, the social construction of gender roles, social and kin networks, and relations of negotiation and bargaining power in the formation and reproduction of household strategies in housing and labour markets.

It is argued that it is not sufficient to consider the internal dynamic of the household, where this relates to preference formation, decision-making and mobility propensities, in terms of divisions of paid labour alone. Conventionally, decision-making bargaining power is 'read off' from paid labour contributions such that the 'primary' (male) breadwinner is assumed to hold greatest sway in household mobility decisions. It is suggested that this over simplifies the way power relations operate within the household. The representation of household decision-making and power relations as a zero sum game of 'breadwinner takes all' is misleading.

Many and varied resources, other than those of paid labour remuneration, are brought to the crucible of decision-making. Moreover, decision-making processes and contexts are not substitutable. Some decisions remain implicit, some adhere to patterns of specialisation or 'competency', others develop through incremental 'give and take' negotiation over time. By way of example, Brannen and Moss (1992) found in their study of women returning to work after maternity leave that this decision "was treated by women returners and their partners as the woman's individualistic decision rather than a joint decision of household strategy" (p.114). Thus, although such decisions affect the household, as Pahl (1984) observes, women's accounts do not define them as being made by the household.

### 2.3.1 Divisions of labour

It has long been understood that the labour force is divided; socially; sectorally; sexually (Bagguley et al., 1990); and spatially (Massey, 1995). Divisions in the relations of production arise through systems of socially constructed and institutionally sanctioned notions of competency and specialisation (Sayer and Walker, 1992). A 'weakly developed' form of these divisions of labour (productive and reproductive) operates within the household. Consequently, in household divisions of labour:

"individuals perform a variety of tasks, and insofar as there is an element of occupational specialisation on the basis of age or sex, it is usually sanctioned by custom or religion"  
(Wallace, 1990, p.17)

In an orthodox model, divisions of labour within the household conform to a 'partial economy' perspective (Borooah and Hart, 1995). In such a model,

divisions of labour (and interpretations of gender roles and bargaining power in decision-making) are determined from participation in paid employment.

In contrast, a 'whole economy' approach to divisions of labour within the household is growing in popularity (Williams and Windebank, 1995). This model sets out to examine various forms of paid and unpaid labour (Harding and Jenkins, 1989). For instance, in much feminist literature the attempt has been made to provide a broader conception of 'work' (Oakley, 1974; Blumberg, 1991; Ferber and Nelson, 1993). Similarly, in sociological research account has been taken of informal economic activities and the 'self-service' economy (Pahl, 1984; Harding and Jenkins, 1989) as well as the provision of child care through social and familial networks of reciprocity and exchange (Branner and Wilson, 1987; Morris, 1989a; 1990; Granoveter and Swedberg, 1992) and the management and allocation of money in households (Pahl, 1988).

Despite this expansion of the definition of household work, these accounts typically fall short of conceptualising the household from a 'whole economy' perspective. Savage and Warde (1993) note, for instance, that the methodological approach adopted by Pahl (1984), in his seminal text on divisions of labour, remains a search for abstract generalisations. Consequently:

"Pahl manages to contextualise household strategies to only a limited extent. Using structured interviews in hundreds of households means that only the barest bones of local context can be taken into account in explaining individual behaviour. Household decisions are examined at a distance and conceived as individual choice rather than as collectively constructed" (p.92).

In practice, a whole economy approach calls for, not only, the broadest examination of the household economy (divisions of domestic labour, child care provision, informal work and divisions of paid labour) but also the deepest examination of the functioning of the household institution (decision-making and power relations) (Watson, 1991; Hanson and Pratt, 1995). In this vein, Morris (1989a) calls for the realisation of the household as:

"the theatre of many aspects of the relationship between men and women, the obvious place in which to investigate the effects of male unemployment, and the impact of changing labour force patterns, especially the increased employment of married women" (p.377).

Furthermore, the approach taken by feminist household research can be criticised for its very diversity. For instance, there currently exists:

"a collection of non-comparable studies which tend to focus on specific areas of interest within the household: domestic labour, household finance, power and decision-making, self-provisioning and labour market position. The result is not 'a literature' on the relationship between the household, employment and social networks, but rather distinctive pockets of material" (England and Farkas, 1986, p.378).

This said, it is evident that within this literature the household finally achieves a credible locus of research, not as a unitary economic actor, nor as a 'small factory', but as a realm of negotiation, of conflict and consensus, between individual and group interests.

Nevertheless, it is argued that future household research needs to move beyond the study of divisions of labour to explore those aspects of internal household relations which evade detection by orthodox theory and method. Such an approach is exemplified in Sandra Wallman's study of 'eight London households' (1984). Moreover, a comprehensive understanding of how households make decisions calls for the consideration of all aspects <sup>of</sup> internal household relations; of gender role preferences, social and kin networks, strategies and power relations.

### 2.3.2 Gender roles

A comprehensive articulation of internal household relations requires consideration of the formation and reproduction of gender roles. These are understood from family studies literature to govern the conduct of daily household practices and negotiations. It is suggested that household research needs to be particularly sensitive to manifestations of gender roles in social action because:

"sex-role preferences and gender related behaviours are changing (in a broad social context and, consequently,) decision-making processes are becoming more problematic, more salient and significant" (Scanzoni and Szinovacz, 1980, p.45).

Gender roles can be differentiated from divisions of labour by defining the former as 'guiding philosophies' to the way in which partners negotiate participation in paid and unpaid labour (Scanzoni and Szinovacz, 1980). In a hierarchical fashion, gender roles underpin preference, or 'taste' variables to indicate the "strength with which actors prefer the sets of rewards and costs that flow from current patterns of gender stratification and division of labour" (Scanzoni and Fox, 1980; p.744). To a limited extent, therefore, gender roles reflect the degree of 'traditionalism' or 'modernity' (on a continuum) which an individual applies to his or her social relations. Viewed in this way, they are not spatially or historically fixed but contingent upon preferences towards self and other actors' roles. Consequently,

men and women are 'interest groups in conflict' along a broad spectrum of intra-gender role types (Scanzoni, 1972; Pahl, 1984).

According to Scanzoni and Fox (1980) there are three ways in which gender roles impinge on household decision-making. Firstly, there is the effect of 'spontaneous consensus' which stems from what Spiegel (1960) describes as the unspoken, 'implicit', normative assumptions which exist in household relations at a particular time. Secondly, the effect of a shift in preferences towards interchangeability in household divisions of labour (relating to stage in the family life-course). Finally, changes may occur in the underlying assumptions and 'guiding philosophies' which determine how the decision-making process is conducted and this would affect the likely outcome of household decision-making.

By way of example, the operation of 'traditional type' gender role preferences may ensure that certain issues never enter the decision process. Particular decisions relating to divisions of labour are understood 'implicitly' by both wife and husband to be an option ruled 'out of court' (Spiegel, 1960). Similarly, gender-role norms may influence perceptions of 'differential competency' in household divisions of labour and, subsequently, differential decision-making power such that certain ideas presented by an individual in the decision process may or may not receive a "serious hearing and fair appraisal" depending, in part, on this "conception of mutually exclusive areas of competency" (Klein and Hill, 1979, p.507). Gender roles are also believed to affect how household members function in the process of earning, controlling, managing and consuming material resources (Pahl, 1988).

Finally, gender roles influence the way husbands and wives negotiate in a decision conflict. For instance, gender-role modernity is believed to influence a woman's propensity to 'persist' in the pursuit of preferences which conflict with the preferences of her spouse. Employed women may draw upon the bargaining power of material resources but, equally, non-employed women may persist on the basis of the intangible 'moral superiority' of it being 'only right and fair' for the husband to change his behaviour in a particular situation (Scanzoni, 1978). Similarly, gender role traditional mothers may adopt negotiation strategies which assume group or altruistic goals, a tendency which is positively related to the number of children present (Scanzoni, 1978). In such cases normative values prevail to suppress conflict in favour of group solidarity (Blau, 1964).

### 2.3.3 Network analysis

Much sociological research has emphasised the ways in which individual behaviour, including that of decision-making, is shaped by the existence of social and kin networks (Bott, 1957). These networks are typically measured in terms of qualitative interdependency and reciprocal exchange (Gouldner, 1960) whereby the language of exchange frequently remains that of orthodox economic theory (Davies, 1970; Davies and Leinhardt, 1971). Where a rigid, unitary conception of the household is broken down it is with the introduction of a 'hierarchy' in the relative household power equation (Strauss, 1978). This is demonstrated by Granovetter (1973) in his employment of the concept as a means of bridging the gap between micro and macro levels of sociological theory.

In more contemporary research, networks are understood to provide a 'bounded' entity of social and cognitive interaction (Wallman, 1986). They are conceived in terms of the interpenetration of household strategies (the co-ordination of daily practices of home, work and family reproduction) with the wider social milieu. In this way, networks are viewed as "source(s) for the information necessary to make choices and know of available opportunities" (Pahl, R. 1984, p.8). In this vein, Hanson and Pratt (1995) describe the specific relationship between socio-spatially determined networks, relative 'rootedness', and the choices available to households in terms of home and work:

"Living in one place for a long time has important implications for how the housing and job markets function because residential stability nourishes the development of personal networks. Insofar as these networks of friends and acquaintances, relatives, neighbours, and co-workers are also tied to particular locations, they in turn foster rootedness. One way that personal contacts do this is by being lively conduits of information about housing and jobs" (Hanson and Pratt, 1995, p.190).

This approach to social networks, as 'conduits of information', can be further conceived in terms of a resource theory of networks. Local social networks are seen to provide the link between households, individual household members and different types of formal and informal employment resources (Harris and Morris, 1986; Ben-Porath, 1980). By providing information on 'suitable' job opportunities, local networks are a key source of normative sanction and motivation for women (re)entering paid employment. Furthermore, they facilitate this by providing the practical means, in terms of child care and domestic services, by which women may take up paid employment (Pahl, 1987).

Finally, although networks have an independent and continuous existence, they are inextricably linked, especially in periods of economic crisis, to the formation of household 'strategies', for instance, of coping, 'getting by' and 'making out' (McCrone, 1994). They generate 'peer-group' influences which impinge on the formation of household strategies by contextualising the gender-role norms from which patterns of domestic organisation are negotiated. For instance, Harris and Morris (1986) observe that:

"a man with an extensive sexually homogenous social network is more likely to adhere rigidly to a traditional sexual division of labour" (p.94).

Consequently:

"both position in household structure and the character of a person's social network are major determinants of the nature and extent of their participation in paid work" (p.94).

#### 2.3.4 Household strategies

The analysis of social situations in terms of 'strategies' is not new but it is persistently controversial. It is deemed that if households are to be understood to pursue 'strategies' then they must be held to behave strategically, as rational, goal-seeking information-processors. This position is taken up by Crowe (1989) when he claims that:

"in theory, strategic analysis applies to only certain types of action, one's which must...be in at least some senses rational, and take place within broadly predictable social situations" (p.2).

In practice, this interpretation of the concept of household strategies is overly narrow. Some authors have adopted such a determinate notion of strategies in social action (for instance Knights and Morgan, 1990) but more typically household research presents a model of behaviour which acknowledges unconscious as well as conscious actions (Watson, 1990; Massey, 1990). Strategies are not fixed programmes of action but rather the ongoing co-ordination of goals and aspirations within situations of changing exogenous socio-economic events.

Indeed, the concept of household strategies is a useful means of describing the apparent response of households to periodic economic crises, family life-course events and changes in the norms and values of household members and their social milieu. The strategy approach is typically applied, for instance, to individual respondents in the form of 'personal strategies' (Yeandle, 1984); work strategies (which operate interdependently with the gender roles and divisions of labour which they support) (Pahl, 1984; Yeandle, 1984); and strategies of financial

management and domestic organisation (Pahl, 1988). Strategies may be complex and varied, such as with work strategies which combine an employment resource 'portfolio' from formal work, informal work and self-provisioning (Pahl and Wallace, 1985). Furthermore, a multiplicity of household strategies may interact or occur in tandem because "household strategies can be arrived at undemocratically or involve members following individual strategies" (Pahl, 1984, p.7).

Household strategies may entail the entry or return of women to the paid labour force, the participation of household members in the informal economy or the temporary reliance on other households for financial or material support. In turn, the manifestation of particular strategies may hinge on access to and strength of social networks: as a source of information (Powell, 1990), as a site of reciprocal exchange (Gershuny, 1983), and of emotional and material support. In this regard, Pahl (1987) observes that:

"for those who lack economic resources there is said to be a kind of 'social capital' in long-established neighbourhoods and communities, such that those who encounter misfortunes are aided by those who have more resources, whether of time, money or goods and services" (p.39).

As with gender roles, household strategies often remain implicit or are subject to differential interpretation by members of the same household. For instance, the 'perception' by a couple of their adopted money management strategy often differs from the 'fact' of money distribution and financial control (Edwards, 1981). This occurs because "the 'rights' of ownership associated with having earned the income may remain hidden" (Burgoyne, 1990). A couple's professed income pooling strategy may appear to be egalitarian and yet in reality perpetuate uneven power relations in the control, as opposed to the management, of household income. Furthermore, Stamp (1985) suggests that "women think they ought to be less powerful than men because of cultural norms, and will see themselves that way whether they are or not" (p.554). Consequently, household strategies are problematic to empirical investigation. The strategies which actually operate in a household may differ from the image of them presented to the outside world. For this reason, Watson (1990) concludes that:

"the development of a strategy is unlikely to be fully comprehensible to the sociologist if he or she starts out modelling the process as a sequence of quasi-syllogistic chains of inference linking ends to means (p.495).

### 2.3.5 Power relations

Essential to any investigation of processual decision-making is a recognition of the role of inter-personal power relations. Power relations are 'multi-dimensional' (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970) and intrinsic to gender-roles, bargaining, negotiation and conflict (Scanzoni and Fox, 1980; Sprey, 1990). Furthermore, the subject of power relations is significant to household research because it assumes the position of a 'micro-sociology' of exchange (Heath, 1976).

In much of the sociological literature, power is loosely conceived as the ability of one actor to impose his or her will on another. This imposition of will is usually presented in a broad structural framework of relations of relative power between political states, classes and ethnic groups (Nagel, 1975; Foucault, 1980). It is typically reduced to economic or functional determinants (Blau, 1964). Where power has been applied more specifically to gender relations it has been from the perspective of patriarchy and the exploitation of women by men. This is a very narrow view of the transmission of power relations in contemporary household divisions of labour.

In contrast, it is argued that power does not 'exist' on its own, as a property of individual actors, or as intrinsic to material goods, but rather it operates as an emergent property of the household system as a whole (Cromwell and Olson, 1975; Giddens, 1987). Consequently, the processual dynamic of 'power-during-bargaining' (Scanzoni and Polonko, 1980) must be considered in such a way as to convey power in terms of the experience of context dependent power relations.

Household power relations are typically operationalised within the framework of resource contribution theory. This approach gained popular currency in Blood and Wolfe's (1960) study of Detroit couples. In this seminal text, spouse bargaining power in decision-making is attributed to the relative contributions of each partner to the common budget. In more recent research, Morris (1990) concurs that power is related to occupational prestige and level of earnings but claims that this relationship is not unproblematic. In effect:

"earning capacity, employment decisions, access to resources, power over expenditure, and benefit through consumption, all appear to be interrelated" (Morris, 1990; p.106).

The recent emphasis, in feminist theory, on exploring power relations in both provisioning and decision-making indicates that the operation of cultural influences and historical gender roles precludes a simple correlation between employment status and household power. By way of example, it is evident from research on

male unemployment conducted by Pahl (1987), on the Isle of Sheppey, that unemployed males do not increase their participation in domestic tasks or experience a diminution in household decision-making power as a consequence of their inability to contribute materially to the household budget, regardless of the employment status of their partner.

The emergence of this and other anomalies to resource contribution theory may be explained in terms of traditional patriarchal relations which determine the relative powerlessness of women (Holter 1984). Yeandle (1984) argues, however, that:

“a pure model of patriarchy is inadequate to explain the nature of intra-familial negotiations (because) it fails to explain variation between different family households, and variation within the same households over time (p.168).

In effect, the relative influence, or ‘bargaining power’ which husbands and wives bring to the decision-making process is dependent on a multiplicity of variables such as; duration of marriage, number and age of children and spouses’ education (Pahl, 1984; Golledge et al., 1994).

Alternatively, a distinction can be made between coercive power, based on negative sanctions, and ‘influence’, based on the rewards characteristic of exchange (Blau, 1967). Scanzoni (1972) argues that “every husband and wife are bound together in processes of reciprocity that do at certain times evolve into conflict processes, which in turn may not be resolved” (p.62). Peterson (1983) takes this point further, viewing conflict as both an inevitable and significant part of daily married life. Again this inevitability may be explained by the legitimisation of male power through the underlying structures of patriarchy whereby it is understood that “although not all men dominate all women, the relative dominance of men is systematised through marriage” (Haavind, 1984, p.142).

The exercise of male dominance is perhaps most explicit in incidences of male violence<sup>4</sup> whereby this is at the extreme end of a spectrum of asymmetry in interpersonal power relations. In this regard, Burgoynes (1990) notes that “the consequences (of a wife’s financial dependency) can range from loss of self-esteem to the more extreme situation of being trapped in a violent marriage” (p.638).

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<sup>4</sup> Estimates of the incidence of marital violence vary greatly, depending on the definitions of violence employed, the rate is generally believed to be as high as 16% of couples (Archer, 1994). However, there is not scope in this thesis to discuss the trend and circumstances of marital violence in great detail. For a discussion of the effect of male violence on household decision-making and conflict resolution refer to: Coleman and Strauss(1986) and Lloyd (1990).

In the family studies literature, power relations have been broadly conceptualised in terms of contextual influence and implicit, 'social power relations' (French and Raven, 1959). Power in this sense can be described as being either 'legitimate', 'referent', or 'expert' (French and Raven, 1959; Hallenbeck, 1966; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970). These dimensions of power, not contingent on external sanctions, recognise that "there is an element of voluntarism in power" (Blau, 1967, p.117). Similarly, Davis et al (1991) note that power relations can be either overt or covert. He argues that power mechanisms can be 'manifest', 'latent', or 'invisible'. Manifest power corresponds with coercion. Latent or 'invisible' power is demonstrated in gender-role-traditional interactions in which a high degree of 'implicit' behavioural expectations operate.

These 'contextual influences' are significant factors in understanding the particularity of the household dynamic. Afterall, the crucial factor in decision-making or bargaining power is the availability, awareness and perception of alternative actions (Lukes, 1974). Consequently in a relational model of the household institution:

"a relatively powerless position is reflected in the presence of many unchangeables or inevitables in the description of issues or areas of the relationship, relatively more grievances harboured when inevitability is suspended, and a weak relation between stated preferences and actual outcomes" (Lukes, 1974, p.39).

### 2.3.6 Power relations of household structure

It is evident from the preceding literature review that the connection between divisions of labour, gender roles and power relations has yet to be fully developed in household research. Furthermore, references to power relations typically reflect either, the perpetuation of orthodox economic assumptions or the problems associated with structural determinism. Consequently, it is argued that an alternative conceptualisation of power relations is required. It is frequently the case, for instance, that 'bargaining power' operates quite independently of economic status. Such 'intangible' resources as knowledge, networks, self-esteem, negotiation skills and emotion-work may cut across the 'power pie' represented by divisions of paid labour (Komter, 1989; McDowell and Court, 1994; Duncombe and Marsden, 1995).

At present, a theoretical literature which looks explicitly at household power relations does not exist. For a future project in this vein, it is posited that a Foucaudian conception of power might permit the interlinkage of local networks of knowledge, as the 'lively conduits of information' (Hanson and Pratt, 1995), with

the 'discursive practices' of power (such as talk, text, cognition, argumentation and representation generally) (Clegg, 1989, p.151). 'Constitutive' 'circuits of power' can be viewed as being deeply embedded within the duality of structure of the household and its situation within the milieu (Giddens, 1984, p.16; Clegg, 1989). The potential application of <sup>the</sup> conception of power relations to the particular nature of voluntary ties within the household is suggested by the following discussion.

"At base, the concern (of a Foucaudian approach) is with strategies of discursive power, where strategy appears as an effect of distinctive practices of power/knowledge gaining an ascendant position in the representation of normal subjectivity" (Clegg, 1989, p.152).

Furthermore:

"Power will be a more or less stable network of alliances extended over a shifting terrain of practice and discursively constituted interests. Points of resistance will open up at many points in the network. Their effect will be to fracture alliances, constitute regroupings and re-posit strategies (Foucault, 1984, in Clegg, 1989, p.154).

In this way, the conduct of 'discursive practices' allows for the interpretation of negotiated influence and the reproduction of relative power relations across time and space. In effect, socially constructed perceptions of 'competency' (of self and other) run parallel or counter to economic standing. Consequently, despite a more symmetric 'extrinsic' material exchange between male and female heads of household (as in dual career households) 'intrinsic' emotional investments and normative gender roles may remain unequal. Within this dimension of asymmetry, the perceived 'needs' (or 'neediness') of one partner (typically constructed as female) serves to undermine that partners position in household negotiations (Duncombe and Marsden, 1995).

In conclusion, power relations need to be recognised as being both constraining and enabling. In effect, actors in micro-social settings, such as the household, can 'resist' another's influence through 'co-operative conflict' (Sen, 1991; Bryceson, 1995). By way of example, women who, as mothers, adopt the socially constructed identity of advocates of child-welfare, may resist male dominance in certain decision contexts. It is common, for instance, for a mother's preference to subsume that of her children's and, therefore, for her to enter into household decision-making as the 'voice' of family welfare (Woollett et al., 1991). This effectively establishes greater 'moral authority' in certain negotiations where a male partner is perceived to be speaking from self-interest alone (Eichler, 1989; Bryceson, 1995).

### 2.3.7 Summary

The preceding section emphasises the interconnection of divisions of labour, gender roles, networks, strategies and power relations in the experience of household structure. It has been demonstrated that existing household research fails to make explicit these connections. Consequently, it is necessary to draw on a disparate body of literature from the social, behavioural and cognitive sciences to gain an understanding of the whole of household structure from these constituent elements. Figure 2.1 presents a summary overview of existing conceptions of household gender divisions of labour<sup>5</sup>.

Early references to household power relations appear in structural-functionalism (often biologically determinist) conceptions of divisions of labour. Power is viewed as a function of social constructions of 'instrumental' male and 'expressive' female sex roles (Parsons, 1956; reviewed in Segal, 1990). A similar degree of determinism is also found in literature explaining divisions of labour in terms of gender-role specialisation based on 'economic efficiency', 'time availability' and normative socialisation (Parsons and Bales, 1956; Becker, 1981; Hartsock, 1983; these approaches reviewed in Hiller, 1984). Much of the early feminist literature is also open to a criticism of reductionism and determinism by ascribing primacy to cultures of patriarchy such that women are 'always' seen to be exploited (Oakley, 1974; Hartman, 1981). To a certain extent, this criticism is redressed in current feminist literature which allows for 'alternative masculinities' (and, one assumes, femininities) (Edley and Wetherall, 1995) and emphasis on such gender difference leading to 'power struggles' in the home (Komter, 1989; Segal, 1990).

Finally, it is argued that the complex constituents and manifestations of power relations are left opaque in current literature on intra-household relations where the dominant voice of decision-making is a taken-for-granted adjunct of divisions of paid labour. Distinct hierarchical power relations exist between parent and child, for instance, which state and society sanction and oversee to a certain extent (Giddens, 1992). Particularly chaotic (and dynamic) power relations occur, however, in voluntary male-female household dyads for which, it is posited, no one overarching power relationship can be ascribed.

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<sup>5</sup> Manifestations of power and gender role ascription are suggested from the theoretical positions described above. These are not generally made apparent in the existing literature for these perspectives.

**Figure 2.1: Household gender divisions of labour:**  
an overview of theoretical perspectives of the household and a summary of connections between these and underlying conceptions of power

	SOCIAL DETERMINISM	MARXISM	PATRIARCHY	RESOURCE CONTRIBUTION THEORY	COOPERATIVE-CONFLICT
(key text)	Becker (1981)	Massey (1984)	Walby (1990)	Pahl (1984)	Sen (1991)
DIVISIONS OF LABOUR	gender 'tastes' for specialised labour division nuclear family as 'efficient'	gender division as part of the reproduction of labour	inequalities in paid and unpaid labour female 'double burden'	male 'provider' norm - decision outcomes can be 'read off' from divisions of paid labour	productive and reproductive labour contributions are negotiated across time and space
GENDER ROLES	'sex-roles' 'naturally' determined 'instrumental' male role 'expressive' female role	gender defined through symbolic and material reproduction	gender 'roles' develop as part of childhood 'socialisation'	gender 'roles' develop as part of childhood 'socialisation'	gender stratification and interaction 'self' and 'role' reflexivity as part of 'doing' gender
NETWORKS	networks of exchange based on optimum specialisation	networks of exchange based on relations of capital	systems of institutionally sanctioned exploitation	reciprocal exchange of material and non-material resources	overlapping/contested circuits of knowledge and learning (which situate the normal)
HOUSEHOLD STRATEGIES	'rational' unitary households - unified preferences	structural-functional determined - unitary households	male - breadwinner determined - unitary households	individual and group strategies intergral to 'self-service' and 'whole-economy'	duality of structure of the household - reflexive and recursive constitution of practices and preferences
(key text)	Coleman (1977)	Weber (1978)	Lukes (1974)	Parsons (1967)	Foucault (1980)
POWER RELATIONS	power as the rational and intentional control of group behaviour	power as prohibitive - the instrument of capital	power as definitional - 'sovereignty' institutionally sanctioned	power as money - the instrument of 'bargaining' positions	'discursive practices' of power, legitimised through negotiation

Source: derived by the author, with special reference to: Clegg (1989) and Fenstermaker et al., (1991)

#### 2.4.0 Conclusions

This chapter offers an overview of the two substantive fields of research from which this project draws its title: residential mobility and household gender divisions of labour. The former is presented in such a way as to make the connections between housing market and labour market events. The latter is presented within the context of household structure where this comprises relations of production, reproduction and socio-cultural situatedness within the milieu. Whilst the existing research in these substantive fields remains compartmentalised, it is argued that a reconceptualisation of the household is fundamental to explaining patterns and processes of residential mobility.

The spheres of housing, employment and household structure can be seen to operate interdependently, never so visibly than in patterns and processes of residential mobility. In turn, household decision-making (co-ordinating home, work and family reproduction through daily household practices) reflexively and recursively constitute household gender divisions of labour, embedded within overlapping networks of knowledge, through discursive practices of power. Hence, an explanation of residential mobility first requires an understanding of all aspects of internal household relations, not simply divisions of paid labour, including divisions of labour and resources from a 'whole economy' perspective, gender roles, networks, strategies and power relations.

Clearly, it is notoriously problematic to transfer these concepts from theory and put them into practice in empirical, ethnographic research. A first step for future household research, however, should be the demonstration of an awareness of contextual difference. Household decisions need to be researched from a point of understanding that the relative power relations and economic status of household members are specific to particular contexts.

A broad and deep exploration of household gender divisions of labour will thus militate against the continued ascription of a monolithic 'breadwinner-takes-all' manifestation of preference formation and decision-making from revealed action. Rather, it will be able to identify a multiplicity of co-operative conflict negotiations. Finally, it is claimed that research which captures the heterogeneity of negotiated household behaviour will better be able to describe the likely implications for the household institution, in terms of gender divisions of labour and patterns and processes of residential mobility, of the increasing presence of 'wives' and 'mothers' in paid employment.

## Chapter three: Theoretical and methodological frameworks

- 3.1.0 Introduction
- 3.1.1 Operationalising the research aims and objectives
- 3.2.0 The case for greater demographic specificity in household research
  - 3.2.1 Introducing a typology of 'idealised' household structures
  - 3.2.2 Combining cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives
- 3.3.0 Extensive secondary data analysis
- 3.4.0 Intensive primary qualitative research
- 3.5.0 The neighbourhoods
  - 3.5.1 The households
  - 3.5.2 The biographies
- 3.6.0 Summary

### 3.1.0 Introduction

There are several reasons why residential mobility continues to be explained in terms of the movement of atomistic households. These not only proceed from underlying theoretical assumptions but also from favoured methodology; the search for generalisable trends, a reliance on large-scale secondary data and a high level of abstraction. In effect, the assumptions made at a theoretical level determine the shape and scale of explanation and the means by which this is operationalised. It is argued in this thesis that the over reliance on large-scale secondary data, and concomitant perpetuation of atomistic households, is redressed by undertaking multiple method research.

In conducting multiple method research "the context of the analysis is crucial" (Lawson, 1997, p.228). In the first instance, in advancing a set of research questions and identifying particular causal mechanisms, a relatively high level of abstraction is appropriate. Consequently, a strictly limited view of the phenomenon of household mobility is drawn from the original context (in this case from the components of a variety of household structures, located spatially, together with revealed patterns of mobility). It is then the case that the causal mechanisms which are isolated and observed in this quasi test tube environment need to be subjected to a second tier of research which, in effect, puts these components back into context (individuals-in-households embedded in their milieu, constituted across time and space). The aim is to 'reconstruct' that which was abstracted in the first stage of research, as a synthesis of what is concrete. This is best attempted for a small fragment of the original research environment.

Existing explanations of residential mobility are typically limited to the search for generalisable trends. Only the first tier of research is conducted and the abstract results are inappropriately presented as concrete. A second tier of research is neglected because the observation of concrete data, as contextualised phenomenon, is peppered with diversity, contradictory evidence and disruption of predictable trends. The purpose of undertaking two tiers of research in this project, however, is not to conclude a position of explanatory impotence. Rather, the aim is to militate against the obvious weaknesses of large scale secondary data analysis by superimposing small scale, detailed, ethnographic research and to combine the benefits of each through the triangulation of abstract and concrete findings (Sayer, 1992; Lawson, 1997).

A multiple research approach is suggested by the complementarity of 'extensive' and 'intensive' explanatory models (Sayer, 1992). Extensive research produces

'broad brush' (frequently statistical) abstract generalisations between invariant objects. Intensive research, in contrast, aims to produce concrete research from these objects as "unities of diverse determinations" (p.236). This latter approach makes it possible to observe variations within and between households in a range of contexts and in different combinations of the variables under direct observation. Sayer describes the distinction between 'extensive' and 'intensive' research types as appearing 'superficially' to provide:

"nothing more than a question of scale or 'depth versus breadth'. But the two types of design ask different sorts of question, use different techniques and methods and define their objects and boundaries differently" (Sayer, 1992; p. 242).

The following chapter is structured in two parts. First, it establishes the means by which a two-tiered methodology is applied to this research. It sets out how the aims and objectives are to be operationalised through targeted enquiry, of the specific analysis of appropriate sources of data. In this regard, the case is made for greater selectivity in the use made of existing sources of data; through greater sensitivity to underlying demographic variation and the need to complement 'snapshot' images with a longitudinal trajectory of events. The two-tiered methodology is further explicated in terms of the actual conduct of extensive and intensive stages of the research. Second, a biographical approach is introduced. The rationale for selecting particular neighbourhoods and households for intensive research is discussed. It is argued that these biographies, compiled from unstructured interviews and event history material, provide the most significant means by which to capture the situatedness of household residential mobility behaviour.

### 3.1.1 Operationalising the research aims and objectives

This project employs the rubric of a two-tiered research design whereby extensive and intensive techniques are viewed as "complementary rather than competing" (Sayer, 1992, p.246). Both research types have specific assets and limitations. The extensive research draws on Census of Population data to separately 'map' the spatial arrangement of household gender divisions of labour and patterns of residential mobility. This exercise generates a measure of association between a variety of household structures and accompanying patterns of residential mobility. This descriptive approach is limited, however, by the lack of information and explanatory depth of large-scale aggregate secondary data sources. It would be impossible to address the aims and objectives of this project using existing secondary data sources alone. Consequently, interpretations of causality remain partial and abstract whereby:

"actual connections and interactions between objects...recorded in aggregate, in which the specific individuals entering into the relations cannot be identified, (are indeterminate)"  
 (Sayer, 1992, p.247).

The intensive research conducted for this project generates thirty in-depth household biographies which highlight the relations and interdependencies between the many and varied activities of daily household practices. The benefits of intensive research also create limitations. It must be recognised, for instance, that there is "no guarantee that the results (of intensive research) are representative even if they seem to provide satisfactory explanations" (Sayer, 1992, p.242). For this reason, the contributions of an intensive qualitative focus augment, rather than displace, the analysis of existing, geographically representative, household mobility data. It is important to shore up the assets and moderate the shortcomings of both quantitative and qualitative fieldwork methods. This 'triangulation' of research methods, scales and subjectivities is gaining increasing credibility in household research. For instance, Brunsdon et al. (1991) argue that although the local level provides:

"the most appropriate scale for portraying the market circumstances influencing the individual's decisions on house purchase" (p.263) "comprehensive analysis of the links between housing and labour market circumstances requires a ...systematic study of all Britain's localities" (p. 233).

It is suggested that to use one scale and scope of research singly would be to 'over extend' its function. Where Census of Population data is used to generate a nationwide picture of household gender relations, in correspondence with rates of mobility, little is revealed about the motives of individuals within these households. The nature of secondary data analysis perpetuates a neo-classical conception of unitary households. It is only through in-depth enquiry, within the household, that relations and negotiations between individuals can be investigated in any meaningful sense.

This project sets out, therefore, to temper the limitations of small-scale ethnographic household research with an aggregate framework of representative national data. Equally, it seeks to avoid the 'ecological fallacy' of inferring individual causality from aggregate populations by highlighting the existence of concurrent and contradictory events in concrete individual observations (Allen and Hamnett, 1991). Eyles and Smith (1988) note that:

"one way in which the researcher can try to get to grips with the complexity of the social world is by adopting a multiple research strategy (which may entail) multiple sets of data, requiring different methods" (p. 4/5).

Furthermore, that:

"the over-extension commonly associated with concrete research consists in the illegitimate extrapolation (or generalisation) of specific findings about a particular (contingent) conjuncture of a system to the rest of the system, when in fact it may be unrepresentative...Obviously, the more heterogeneous the system, the more hazardous the extensions" (Sayer, 1992, p. 240).

Finally, the merits of a two-tiered methodology can be understood from existing research undertaken by the sociologist Sandra Wallman. Wallman (1984) uses aggregate local area data in a first stage of fieldwork to "find out what the resources of the setting are" and the in-depth interviews with selected households in the second stage to "account for variations in the way (such resources) are used" (p.45). The author explains the complementary relationship of these two stages to the fieldwork by noting that:

"the value and validity of the first stage neighbourhood survey is limited to statements about the area or categories of household in it. The case material for the second stage household survey, by contrast, describes the resource systems of particular households that constitute sub-systems of the 'whole' neighbourhood" (p.46).

It would be spurious to generalise neighbourhood wide patterns from the second stage data, but equally, it would be misleading to infer behavioural processes from the first stage data.

### 3.2.0 The case for greater demographic specificity in household research

It is not always obvious from one study to the next what is meant by the term 'household'. The term is frequently used interchangeably with 'family' and yet, according to standard definitions<sup>1</sup>, households include single persons (who alone do not constitute a 'family') and may include unrelated persons. Edwards and Ribbens (1995) highlight this ambiguity by observing that:

"as units, families and households may or may not be separate entities - families may or may not form households and households may or may not consist of family members"  
(p.4).

Despite this ambiguity, it is largely irrelevant to debate the relative merits of studying 'families' versus 'households'. Once it is recognised that greater

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<sup>1</sup> The standard Census of Population definition of a household is: "one person living alone or a group of persons (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping" (ONS, 1993a, p.14).

demographic specificity must be applied to both of these terms before either of them are informative to the study of inter-personal relations, it is simply a case of selecting the preferred term and using it consistently.

Throughout this project the term household consistently refers to a population of 'nuclear family' households comprising two adult partners of opposite sex below pensionable age with a dependent child or children. This specific sub-group is selected for several reasons. Whilst 'nuclear family' households only account for one in four of all households they account for nearly four out of five households with dependent children. More significantly, by selecting a specific population of households sharing similar life-course characteristics (raising a family) the dominant effect of the life-course on household decisions and decision-making is greatly reduced<sup>2</sup>.

A sensitivity to changing as well as enduring gender roles and power relations in household decision-making requires that research be designed so as not to impose temporal regimes, such as the life-course, on household processes emanating from alternative social and cultural contexts. A balance needs to be struck between the elimination of heterogeneous life-course variables and the reification of individual life-course events. It is well documented, for instance, that the birth of a first child largely corresponds with a temporary or permanent change in female labour force participation (Henwood et al., 1987) and hence, with a restructuring of gender roles and household divisions of labour. A cross-sectional 'snap-shot' of the household experience of this event serves to reify the influence of the life-course, which is in itself simply a demographic shorthand, and disregards household strategies which cut across, postpone, conflict with, or reinforce such 'milestone' events.

In this project, a balance is struck between these two positions by differentiating between statements about the behaviour of households within a life-course cohort (such as the regional propensity for women within a 'nuclear family' population to undertake full time paid employment) and statements about movements into, and out of, particular household cohort types (such as with postponed partnering, postponed child-rearing and family-household dissolution through divorce/separation or remarriage). Longitudinal analysis best facilitates an analysis of these latter trends (Dale et al., 1993). In cross-sectional analysis, it is more

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<sup>2</sup> Although the ages of householders will potentially range from 16 to 59 or 64 (as the pensionable age for men and women respectively), the criteria that households under investigation have dependent children will, in practice, further reduce age variation.

appropriate to focus on a disaggregation of household employment structures, in terms of gender divisions of labour, to take account of the relations between household membership (such as single-person, lone parent, 'empty nester' and complex) and the differential impact of flexibilisation, feminisation and gender role cultures (Duncan, 1991, 1991a).

Wallman (1984) demonstrates clearly what is achieved by applying greater demographic specificity to household research. In her study of eight London households the author selects a survey sample which reflects homogeneity in demographic and socio-economic profile. As a result the variations observed in terms of 'survival strategies' are more realistically attributed to variables in access to, and exploitation of, the informal resources of local social networks rather than to variations in stage of the life-course. In corollary, it is suggested that the adoption of strategies towards residential mobility can be more realistically attributed to variables in household gender divisions of labour if life-course variables are minimised. Furthermore, by making longitudinal observations from a finite cohort rather than cross-sectional observations from a varied population, what is reflected is change over time rather than variation in time.

### 3.2.1 Introducing a typology of 'idealised' household structures

Throughout this thesis the selected sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households are further disaggregated by household employment structure and presented in a simplified form. Couples in sampling frame households are categorised by one of three 'idealised' employment structure types. These household types can be described in terms of; the 'traditional'<sup>3</sup> male breadwinner household consisting of a male in full time employment with an economically inactive female; the 'flexible'<sup>4</sup> household consisting of a male in full time employment with a female in part time employment and; the 'dual' earning household consisting of a male and female both in full time employment. Other possible employment combinations are excluded from presentation as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'traditional' is used here simply as a shorthand for the idealised nuclear family form. It does not connote normative gender positions, which reflect a degree of conventionalism or modernity (on a continuum) in the conduct of social relations (Scanzoni, 1972). Normative gender positions may or may not correspond directly with the gender roles implicit in household divisions of paid labour.

<sup>4</sup> Again, the term 'flexible' is applied to this household employment structure type for convenience. It refers generally to the flexible labour market practice of female part time employment which is the key identifying feature of this household type.

Figure 3.1: The 'idealised' typology of household structures

		Female employment status:		
		Full-time	Part-time	Houseworker
Male employment status:	Full time	'Dual'	'Flexible'	'Traditional'
	Part-time	no data presented	no data presented	no data presented
	Houseworker	no data presented	no data presented	no data presented

Where it is possible to do so, 'dual' earning households are further differentiated by the occupational status of full time employment. In this way, the 'dual career' household describes a type consisting of a male and female in full time professional or managerial employment (SEGs I & II). The 'dual earner' household describes a type consisting of a male and female in full time employment, neither of whom participate in professional or managerial occupations (employed in SEGs II, IV or V).

For the sake of simplicity, the occupational status of the couples in 'dual' earning households ('earners' and 'careers') is presented in the most frequently observed symmetrical form (where both partners are 'earners' or both in 'careers'). It is less typical for the occupational status of married or cohabiting partners to be asymmetrical (Dex, 1987)<sup>5</sup>. The derivation of 'dual career'<sup>6</sup> and 'dual earner' household types is illustrated in Figure 3.2. Throughout the thesis, if there is insufficient data from which to differentiate households with two full time earners by occupational status these are combined in a single 'dual' (earner/career) household type.

<sup>5</sup> In chapter four it is demonstrated that 70% of 'dual' households with two partners in full time employment are symmetrically arranged when these are disaggregated by occupational status according to 'earner' and 'career' categories.

<sup>6</sup> Dex (1987) notes that the term 'career' can be problematic because it has been used at different times to suggest a trajectory or 'progress' through a series of occupations, as a 'work history', and as a prescriptive term suggesting a qualitative standard of occupation. In this study the latter is the definition employed.

**Figure 3.2:**  
**The 'idealised' household structures: derivation of 'dual earner' and 'dual career' types**

		Full time female employment: occupational status SEG's I & II      SEG's III, IV, V	
Full time male employment: occupational status SEGs I & II		'Dual Career'	asymmetric - male career
SEG's III,IV,V	SEG's III,IV,V	asymmetric - female career	'Dual Earner'

**Note:**

SEGs I & II = professional and managerial occupations

SEGs III (M & N), IV, V = skilled manual & non-manual, sem-skilled and unskilled occupations

The selected household typology not only looks at a specific sampling frame cohort but it also focuses on an economically active population. Households with one or more member registered as unemployed are excluded from the population under observation. There are two reasons for electing to do this. First, this research aims to look inside the household at power relations in decision-making which, in the analysis of secondary data in particular, are interpreted through indirect indicators relating to divisions of paid labour. Despite the conventional association, between the registration of women as unemployed and a disposition towards an economically active role, this association is inadequate as an indicator of relative gender role and power relation. The use of unemployment data precludes the use of additional information such as 'hours worked' and occupational status which serve to reinforce the interpretation of gender roles from secondary data.

Second, when unemployment is included as an issue it is liable to dominate discussions of social and material differentiation between households. It is suggested, for instance, that differential housing and labour market prospects occur within a population of economically active households, associated with a variety of household structures, which are lost to existing research which considers an undifferentiated population of households. Furthermore, by focusing on 'nuclear

family<sup>7</sup> households for whom child-care provision is a factor in the negotiation of gender roles, this thesis looks at the most extreme realm of gender role conflict and, therefore, highlights the most significant implications for a wider understanding of decision making bargaining relations in the general population.

In brief, the aim of this section has been to demonstrate the importance of conducting demographically specific research concerning household divisions of labour. With this objective, this thesis works with a specific sampling frame population of nuclear family households which is then further differentiated according to a typology of household employment structures. Table 3.1 below describes the relative significance of each of the four 'idealised' nuclear family household types in relation to all household compositions in Britain in 1991.

Table 3.1: Profile of household composition in Britain, 1991

<u>Household composition type</u>	<u>%</u>
<b>Single Person</b>	14
non-pensioner	5
pensioner	6
<b>Couple</b>	28
non-pensioners	14
pensioners	12
<b>Nuclear Family</b>	26
'Traditional'	9
'Flexible'	11
'Dual Earner'	4
'Dual Career'	2
<b>Lone Parent</b>	6
<b>Mixed/Extended</b>	26
with dependent(s)	10
without dependents	16
	100

Source: CMU (1994) Codebook and glossary for the derived variables from the SARs.

### 3.2.2 Combining cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives

This chapter makes a case for multiple method (and multiple source) research not only as a means of extending the spatial boundaries but also the temporal boundaries of explanation. It is not sufficient to build up a broad and deep geography of residential mobility from snap-shot images even where these are taken

<sup>7</sup> No distinction is made between married and unmarried 'cohabiting' partners. For the purposes of this thesis, both constitute the adult opposite-sex partners of sampling frame households. Where the terms 'husband' and 'wife' are used it is as a shorthand for male partner and female partner.

with contrasting lenses and depths of field. It is equally important to build up a sequence of related snapshots representing change over time. For this reason, a longitudinal perspective is applied to both the extensive and intensive stages of the research.

A case can be made for combining cross-sectional and longitudinal perspectives by considering the results of two recent US studies. The two studies arrive at different conclusions regarding the impact on residential decision-making of increasing female participation in paid employment and the proliferation of dual earner households. The divergence of results can be attributed to the ambiguities of a single stage 'snap-shot' of aggregate analysis. In the first study, Singell and Lillydahl (1986) focus on the relationship between travel-to-work patterns and residential location decisions to conclude that "residential location is chosen with respect to the man's job, whereas the woman searches for employment from an established residential base, especially if she works only part time" (p.239). The second study, by Hanson and Pratt (1991), uses occupational types, which identify women in female-dominated and male-dominated occupations, as indirect indicators of 'traditional' and 'modern' gender role aspirations. The authors conclude that "women in female-dominated occupations (are) less likely than other employed women to voice a willingness to move to improve their own employment" (p.249).

The first study presents a straightforward analysis of resource contribution theory, using cross-sectional survey data, to determine the economic status of male and female partners. Power relations in decision-making (in residential location) are understood to follow from 'primary' male and 'secondary' female economic positions. Relative economic status remains undifferentiated in terms of employment duration or life-course trajectory. Consequently, variations in long term gender role and career salience are precluded from consideration. In practice, more egalitarian household strategies concerning residential mobility are less likely to be disrupted by a temporary 'career break' than by a permanent change in gender role (Brannen and Moss, 1987). Strategies and decisions relating to long-run gender roles and career salience may endure through fluctuations in divisions of labour and economic status.

The second study makes greater allowance for this potential disjuncture between underlying gender roles (and power relations in decision-making) and cross-sectional positions of economic status. This is because a distinction is made

through consideration of the relative gender role ascriptions associated with particular forms of employment.

Whilst it was noted above that only one in four households are 'nuclear families', it must be recognised that the majority of individuals pass through this household form in the course of their lives (Somerville, 1994). Consequently, household structures, divisions of labour and gender roles all 'flow' across time and space. Given that household structures flow in this way there appears little justification in ascribing power relations or mobility propensities to households on the basis of divisions of labour viewed as if frozen in space and time 'when the music stops' as it were. In order to avoid the ambiguous inference of normative gender roles (and decision-making power relations) from snap-shot divisions of paid labour, this project combines cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Moreover, the biographical approach adopted for intensive investigation generates an intrinsically longitudinal perspective of household experience.

### 3.3.0 Extensive secondary data analysis

The aim of the extensive research is to consider evidence of a causal relationship between a variety of household structures (household divisions of labour) and relative rates (strategies) of residential mobility. It is intended not only to explore the influence of household structure in terms of the differential negotiation of mobility decision outcomes, between household structure types, but also the influence of regional gender role cultures on the spatial distribution of those types and their ensuing propensity to be mobile. A parallel aim, therefore, is to test the contingency of local cultural contexts in explaining the adoption of different strategies, by households of the same household division type, over a spatially differentiated cultural terrain.

Locally constituted histories of employment, and cultures of patriarchy, will impinge upon the negotiation of gender roles within the household such that interdependent relations of reproduction not only operate within the household but also between the household and its local or regional milieu (Duncan, 1994). At present, reliance on secondary data alone typically confines residential mobility research to unitary household variables such as those relating to tenure, housing conditions and car ownership (Piachaud, 1987; Noble et al., 1994; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995). A similar criticism can be levied against existing gender divisions of labour research which describe the existence of regional gender role cultures using aggregated rates for the economic status of women.

By relying solely on secondary data sources, underlying geographical trends of household formation are typically conflated with those representing putative gender role cultures. Of course, it is acknowledged that data at a sub-regional scale is of limited availability. Where it is not possible to incur the time and expense of primary research the degree of detail available does not permit an ideal level of disaggregation. This said, it is suggested that the limitations of existing secondary data does not justify the perpetuation of atomistic households and misleading conceptions of behaviour in housing and labour markets. It is true that there are distinct benefits to the secondary analysis of large national data sets (Hakim, 1992). At the same time, it is important to maximise these beneficial features by identifying and eliminating routes to potentially anomalous interpretations. With this in mind, the argument is made in this project not only for the supplement of secondary data with primary research but also of the application of demographic specificity to both.

Within the extensive research the objective is to 'map' relative gender roles, that is, what men and women 'do' in terms of paid and unpaid labour (Duncan, 1991). This provides a broad snap-shot of household gender divisions of labour, highlighting regional variations in the spatial distribution and predominance of particular idealised structure types. Similar 'geographies' already exist for employment patterns by gender (Duncan, 1991; 1991a; Forrest and Gordon, 1993; Fielding and Halford, 1993) occupational choice (Vella, 1993) and trends in occupational segregation (Hakim, 1992) for a general population. Once again it is asserted, however, that spatial and temporal variation in female employment needs to be considered in the context of household structure before it is possible to consider the relationship of these with patterns of residential mobility.

Boyle and Halfacree (1995) note that gender differences in migration trends have been widely recognised (see also Champion and Fielding, 1992) but the lack of detail inherent in aggregate data precludes any observation of the interaction of these gender differences, over time and space, in household migration and mobility. To address this gap in the research, use is made of microdata from the Sample of Anonymised Records (SARs) of the 1991 UK Census of Population. The household SAR is a 1% sample of households (and the individuals in each) released as abstracts of anonymised records, with details of the housing and employment characteristics of these households (CMU, 1994a). This is a rich new resource which makes it possible to present a regional profile of specific household employment structures rather than as aggregations of individuals in the labour force. The geographic basis of the household SAR is the Registrar General's Standard Regions plus Wales and Scotland.

The first tier of data collection and analysis (the results of which are presented in Chapters 4 and 5) generates a national overview of the relative association between a geography of household gender divisions of labour and a geography of mobility, by distance. This association is first drawn from aggregate data at County level from 100% and 10% files of the 1991 Census of Population (Openshaw, 1995). It is intended that these separate geographies be read in parallel to identify the relative 'fit' between the two. The same correlation is then derived as an actual, rather than an aggregated, regional association between a variety of household structures and particular rates of mobility from SARs microdata. It is expected that this exercise will identify those regions conventionally described in terms of a dominant culture of patriarchy as predominantly supporting 'traditional' household structures and that, in turn, these structures correspond with above average rates of residential mobility. In those regions conventionally associated with more egalitarian gender roles, where 'dual' earner/career household divisions predominate, it is expected that rates of residential mobility will be low. In summary, the hypothesis being tested here is that households which support more than one 'breadwinner' from a single location experience a degree of inertia which is attributed to the trade-off between mobility for one earner and the maintenance of employment opportunities for another.

Finally, longitudinal data is employed in the extensive research. Data is presented for 1981 and 1991 from the ONS Longitudinal Study (LS), a large and complex dataset based on linked census and event data for 1% of the population of England and Wales (comparable data is not available for Scotland for this mapping exercise). This data is used to trace the shifts in household structure and location, by region, for the same sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households represented throughout this thesis.

Not only does the LS represent a continuous sample of the population of England and Wales, but it also provides census data for all those living in the same household as the LS member (Menard, 1991; Rosenthal, 1991). The LS holds the census derived variables on migration, at local district level, of wholly moving households as well as for temporary moves by individual members of these households, between censuses (Dale et al., 1993). Despite the significance of this source of data, in terms of presenting change over time, it offers limited explanatory power. In effect:

"the census asks for no information on reason for moving and it is not possible to distinguish job-related from housing related mobility (beyond the simple inference) that

housing-related mobility is (generally) confined to moves within a local authority" (Dale et al., 1993, p.1393).

Once again this limitation, inherent to data obtained in a large scale coded questionnaire form, needs to be compensated for by in-depth data gathered in the second 'intensive' stage of the proposed research.

### 3.4.0 Intensive primary qualitative research

The key objective of the intensive research is to apply 'real life' insights from everyday household practices to an explanation of residential mobility in Britain. A comprehensive picture of household decision processes requires an understanding of non-events as well as events, of that which is taken for granted as well as that which is discussed and contested. It is only through intensive primary qualitative research that these more elusive facets of household behaviour are made apparent.

Kabeer (1994) suggests that:

"The elusiveness of gender power within the household is the greater because of its embeddedness in the most intimate arena of human relationships, that of the family... It is frequently the 'silences' and 'absences' within the research encounter, the information that is withheld rather than that which is volunteered, which signals the presence of disempowering relations" (Kabeer, 1994, p.134/5)

The insufficiency of secondary data analysis in forming a realistic impression of household behaviour in housing and labour market research is well rehearsed (Forrest and Murie, 1991; Green, 1995; Piachaud, 1987; Noble et al., 1994). There is an increasing recognition of the vital contribution of primary qualitative research as well as for the employment of complementary multiple methods (Sayer, 1992; Dex, 1987; Bryman, 1988; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Mason, 1994; Edwards and Ribbens, 1995; Hanson and Pratt, 1995). Given this methodological climate it is perhaps surprising that intensive ethnographic data, such as that generated in the compilation of household biographies, has not been applied to housing and labour market research.

There is a notable absence, in both existing methodological discussions and substantive research, of change over time in family household relations. Furthermore, of the spatial situatedness of the household in terms of social and kin networks, rooted in the locale, as well as household interactions and exchanges embedded within the wider social and economic milieu. This is despite the fact that the micro-economy of the household suggests itself as a prime candidate for the application of primary qualitative research. Wallman's (1984) ethnographic study of eight London household remains the closest proximation to this mode of

investigation. It is argued that by tracing the ordering and interplay of joint and individual housing and employment events through the medium of dyadic discourse, a biographical approach makes it possible to advance existing theory and debate concerning the effects of economic restructuring on household practices (Morris, 1989; 1990; Snaith, 1990).

A biographical approach describes the application of in-depth primary qualitative research (unstructured interviews, work-history charts, chronologies of 'milestone' events) which aims to "gain appreciation of the intentions implicated in the migration decision" (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, p.343). In this project, it is suggested that such an approach makes a particularly valuable contribution to housing and labour market research because it is capable of exposing both cross-sectional and longitudinal diversity. Nevertheless, there is little precedent for the application of a biographical approach. To date, applications are confined to discussions of its potential contribution to population geography (Findlay and Graham, 1991; Halfacree and Boyle, 1993); explorations of personal experiences of place and the local environment (Wolpert, 1965; Rowles, 1978; Rodaway, 1988) and the life-course events of migrants (Rossi, 1955; Forrest and Murie, 1987; 1990, 1991; Mayer and Tuma, 1987), especially in the developing world (Radcliffe, 1990; Skeldon, 1990; Chant, 1992).

By adopting a biographical approach it is possible to contextualise current household structures, employment compositions, social networks, informal economic activities, child care arrangement and domestic divisions of labour within a more realistic spatial and temporal framework. Short term fluctuations in divisions of labour can be differentiated from longer term transformations. Martin and Roberts (1984), for instance, note that "women's lifetime employment is known to be more extensive than cross-sectional data suggests" (p.2). Moreover, perceptions of preferred (voluntary) actions are differentiated from those which are associated with constraint. In effect, a biographical approach has the capability of exploring family households "situated within everyday life" (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993, p. 338) rather than abstracted as static members of demographic groups and socio-economic types.

### 3.5.0 The neighbourhoods

The advantage of a two-tiered methodological approach has already been established. An additional, frequently overlooked, benefit of combining large-scale secondary analysis with primary qualitative research is that the former facilitates the

selection of local study areas suitable for intensive investigation. For instance, Duncan (1991a) notes that:

"information presented (in secondary data) provides a means of choosing case study areas for research in the processes by which gender roles are created, and geographical variations in this, based on comparative similarities and differences" (p.421).

The selection of the neighbourhoods which form the subject of intensive research is made from data generated by the extensive research.

In this project, intensive research is conducted in two contrasting regional survey areas. By establishing a comparative research design it is possible to highlight the contingency of local cultural contexts as a factor in explaining the adoption of different 'strategies', by households of the same employment composition type, over a spatially differentiated cultural terrain. This considers the extent to which distinct contexts; of regional employment traditions, normative gender role ascriptions, and social networks, affect the way in which household gender divisions of labour are reproduced, renegotiated and reinforced (Crowe, 1989; Saltzman and Chafetz, 1991). In this way, the biographical material explores observations of similitude and difference within and between the same idealised household employment composition types, within and between two (north-south) regional survey areas.

Neighbourhoods are selected on the basis of data concerning the propensity for women in 'nuclear family' households to be found in full time paid employment. The aim is to compare a 'traditional' neighbourhood dominated by male breadwinner households with a more egalitarian neighbourhood dominated by 'dual' earning households. The expectation is that this comparative exercise will highlight: "different 'cultures', for instance ideas and expectations about gender roles and hence the nature of households" (Duncan, 1991a, p.423). For this reason, the neighbourhoods are also selected to provide comparability in terms of general characteristics other than those relating directly to household gender divisions of paid labour. Again, the extensive research provides sufficient data, for all regions, on housing, employment and household structure to make it possible to select neighbourhoods on this basis. As with the extensive research described above, all the household respondents are selected to fall within the sampling frame of two adults of opposite sex below pensionable age with dependent child(ren).

Existing research suggests that locations in the north-west of England and East London demonstrate a suitable contrast in gender role dispositions, in terms of historical employment practices and family relations, at the same time as

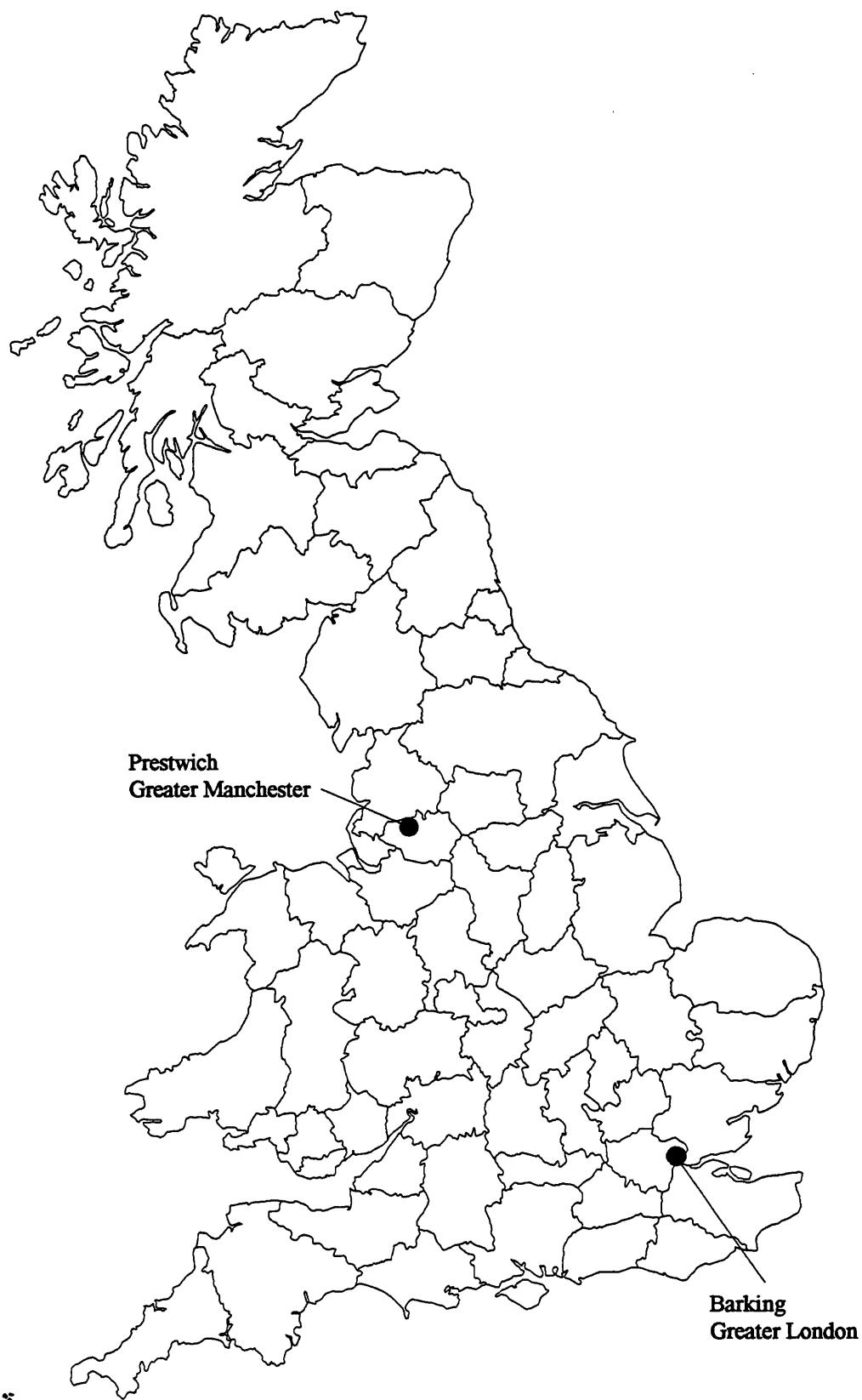
maintaining comparability in terms of local conditions of housing, employment and household structure. On this basis, neighbourhood study areas are selected in Barking (East London) and Prestwich (North Manchester) as the subjects of detailed intensive research (for background data relating to these neighbourhoods see: Duncan, 1991; Poynter, 1996, for Barking; Bury Metro, 1992 for Prestwich).

Barking lies on the eastern fringes of London (in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham). It offers one of the most pronounced examples of a locale in which households support the 'traditional' images of 'homemaker' and 'breadwinner'. Duncan (1991a) notes that "the financial pressures (pushing women into the labour market) do not..extend to the suburban east of Barking" (p.103). This is understood to be due, in part, to the relative security of well paid skilled manual jobs for men in the local vicinity as well as to historically strong patriarchal influences of the male breadwinner as a 'macho' status symbol. A particularly strong culture of masculinity in Barking appears to reinforce traditional gender divisions of labour. Furthermore, as an area for intensive research Barking has several advantages over other 'traditional' employment markets. It has been the subject of previous scrutiny (Willmott and Young, 1957; Willmott, 1963; Barking and District Historical Society, 1988; O'Brien and Jones, 1996) and it is characterised by a large proportion of older second hand housing, considered to be the most appropriate site for household research for the purposes of this thesis.

Prestwich lies on the northern outskirts of Manchester (in Bury Metropolitan Borough). In this area, comprising the former cotton towns of the north-west of England, the effects of a long tradition of women in paid employment remain evident (Massey, 1994). Manchester and its environs, though experiencing a changing and in many ways declining employment profile from that of the nineteenth century, maintains a distinctively high level of female wage labour. Massey (1994) notes of this area that "the long tradition of women working in factory jobs, and their relative financial independence, has continued" (p.206). The location of the neighbourhood study areas is identified in Figure 3.3.

The Study areas of Barking and Prestwich were selected from district level Census data. The selection was made to satisfy the key research requirements: a north-south comparison; evidence of contrasting normative gender roles (inferred from proportional rates of traditional versus 'dual' earning household structure types) and comparable socio-economic characteristics of the type best suited to this research project (low unemployment, predominance of home ownership). See Appendix 20 for further details.

**Figure 3.3 % Location of the two neighbourhood study areas**



In comparing these two historically distinct areas it needs to be asked what role cultural distinction plays in the formation and negotiation of household gender relations and how such local or regional patterns manifest themselves in the formation and reproduction of household strategies to fulfil housing and employment preferences. In order to isolate characteristics pertaining to gender role differentiation, it is important to ensure that the neighbourhoods share comparable underlying socio-economic conditions. This appears to be the case for Barking and Prestwich. Both demonstrate an equivalent representation of 'nuclear family' households (35%) as a proportion of all households (ONS, 1991, Census of Population). Furthermore, housing market conditions are similar in terms of tenure and stock profile (illustrated in Table 3.2).

It has been stressed that the aim of this thesis is to reveal the interdependency of the individual agent and household structure in mediating housing and employment decisions. This aim precludes the pursuit of a conventional analysis of socio-economic 'class' positions where these are read off, assuming a unitary household, from the occupational status of a single (male) head of household. A conventional analysis of class in this research would deny the role of occupational and class differences within households. For this reason, the role of individual and household class positions is not addressed systematically in this research. Consideration is limited to observations of occupational status profiles (defined in terms of SEGs, as in Figure 3.2) in 'dual' earning households. Within the scope of this project, it is not be possible to embark on a wider discussion of social and cultural class practices (Crompton, 1993, p.36) although such issues emerge implicitly in the intensive biographical research.

In brief, this thesis does not extend the typology of household structures to take account of potentially cross-cutting cleavages associated with class and ethnicity. The focus is on the relationship between household gender divisions of labour and patterns and processes of residential mobility. This is not to say that gender relations are not deemed to be articulated in terms of class and ethnicity (Crompton, 1993; p.93). Rather, it is to identify the changing geography and profile of divisions of labour as a point of departure in order to re-direct existing theory and explanation of household action.

Table 3.2 includes an outline description of the socio-economic profile of the two case study areas. Prestwich (represented at local authority level as data for Bury) demonstrates a greater proportion of households headed by individuals in professional and managerial occupations compared with Barking (represented as

data for Barking and Dagenham). Barking demonstrates a relatively high rate of semi-skilled and unskilled employment. At a finer geographic scale the differences in social class between the two areas are less because of the specific criteria of housing and household sample selection. Nevertheless, a different research project might focus specifically on household occupation types to provide greater insight into the role of the geography of class in reproducing spatially differentiated patterns and processes of residential mobility. Indeed, the extent of the class (SEG) differences of the two case study areas is suggested in Chapter Six and, more particularly, in the profile of interviewee occupations set out in Appendix 25.

Table 3.2: Barking and Prestwich: housing and employment characteristics

<u>Housing Tenure %</u>						
Barking	Buying	5	4	14		
Prestwich	75	7	2	17		
<u>Housing Profile %</u>						
Barking	Detached	Semi	Terrace	Flat		
10	34	40	16			
Prestwich	16	44	36	4		
<u>Employment (Women in 'couple' households) %</u>						
Barking	Full time	Part time	Economically inactive			
12	28	60				
Prestwich	20	34	46			
<u>Household Structure (employment composition of 'nuclear family' households) %</u>						
Barking	Both employed	One employed	Neither employed			
43	43	12				
Prestwich	62	33	9			
<u>Socio Economic Groups (SEGs)</u>						
<u>Social class of economically active family head %</u>						
Barking	I	II	III(N)	III(M)		
2	18	18	36	18		
Prestwich	7	32	15	29		
			IV	V		
			13	4		

Key to SEGs:

I = Professional; II = Managerial; III(N) = Skilled non-manual; III(M) = Skilled manual; IV = Semi-skilled; V = Unskilled. Members of the armed services have been excluded.

Source: ONS Crown Copyright, 1991 UK Census of Population, (100% file) and ONS (1994) Key statistics for local authorities. London. HMSO.

Significantly, Table 3.2 establishes that a contrast exists in household employment structure in the two areas. Barking demonstrates a low rate of sampling frame women in full time employment ('married' with one or more dependent). It demonstrates a similarly low rate of sampling frame households with two earners

(undifferentiated by hours worked). In Prestwich the opposite trend is evident with 62% of 'nuclear family' households having both adult partners in paid employment. From the evidence of district census data it is suggested that the neighbourhoods maintain broad socio-economic comparability in characteristics such as; rate of home ownership, the proportion of households with modern housing amenities, rates of unemployment, ethnic profile and population representation of 'nuclear family' households. In summary, the populations of the intensive research can typically be described in terms of economically active (employed) white 'family' households living in relatively comfortable owner occupied housing.

In each regional survey area several streets of housing are identified (approximately 100-200 dwellings, the size of a single enumeration district), by means of physical observation, where the presence of single family homes (as opposed to flats or houses of multiple family occupation) likely to be in owner occupation (rather than privately or publicly rented) of equivalent size, vintage and environmental amenity is suggested.

Owner occupied housing is sought as a means of confining household variations in residential mobility opportunities to those of a single tenure. Similarly, older second hand housing (inter-war - 1914-1944 - three bedroom semi-detached) provides a typically uniform basis from which households may elect to undertake structural or decorative home improvements which may form part of an attachment to place or strategy of inertia<sup>8</sup>. The selection of only one housing 'type' for investigation is considered appropriate for the purposes of comparison although it is understood that the non-substitutability of housing makes equivalence imperfect.

Both Barking and Prestwich demonstrate above average rates of owner occupied housing of a good condition. This said, the older second hand stock selected is generally 'affordable' relative to alternative local housing markets elsewhere in the metropolitan regions of Greater London and Greater Manchester. For instance, the price of an inter-war semi-detached house in Barking is 50% cheaper than the equivalent property in Ealing, the same distance (West) from the city centre<sup>9</sup>. Whilst housing in Barking is more expensive than the same in Prestwich, the relative cost of living in these areas compensates for this difference. This is illustrated in Table 3.3. In 1995 the price of the average three bedroom inter-war

<sup>8</sup> In Barking the typical stock represents substantial terraced housing meeting this same spatial and environmental amenity.

<sup>9</sup> Halifax Price Indices, 1996.

(1919-1944) semi-detached house was 29% higher in Barking than in Prestwich. At the same time, the cost of living in Barking (allowing for housing costs relating to a mortgage on the above property) was 21% higher than for Prestwich.

Finally, despite the existence of older, cheaper housing in Barking and Prestwich these are not local housing markets which would be described as undergoing any visible process of gentrification. Both neighbourhoods are long established residential areas which (despite both being directly linked to the city centre by rapid transport; the 'underground' and the 'metro') are culturally detached from 'city' life.

Table 3.3: The neighbourhoods: relative costs of living in 1995

<u>Barking</u>		<u>Prestwich</u>
78,524	House Price Comparison (average cost of an inter-war 3 bed semi) (a)	55,337
23,451	Cost of Living Comparison (income required for a family of four in property above) (b)	18,635

Notes:

- (a) Halifax Price Indices (1996) Prices for last quarter, 1995
- (b) The Reward Group (1995) UK Regional Cost of Living Report

### 3.5.1 The households

The households are identified from a drop-off/mail-back questionnaire, issued to each house in the housing samples described above. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 illustrate the layout and appearance of these neighbourhood samples. The distribution of this questionnaire, estimated on the basis of a 'pilot' postal survey, is intended simply to yield the required number of households<sup>10</sup> matching the parameters of the research (Oppenheim, 1992); 'nuclear family' households in owner occupation with one or more household member in employment, for a particular range of household structures, willing to participate in in-depth research (see Appendices 1 and 2 for reference to the questionnaire and explanatory letter).

<sup>10</sup> The names and postal addresses of the occupants of these housing samples were gathered from the appropriate electoral registers. Addresses were eliminated where either a single voter or multiple voters were registered where it was probable that the household did not meet the sampling frame criteria of a 'nuclear family'. Essentially, the households to whom questionnaires were directed were those from the selected housing stock, noted as having two registered voters (generally with the same surname).

Figure 3.4: Location of Barking neighbourhood sample

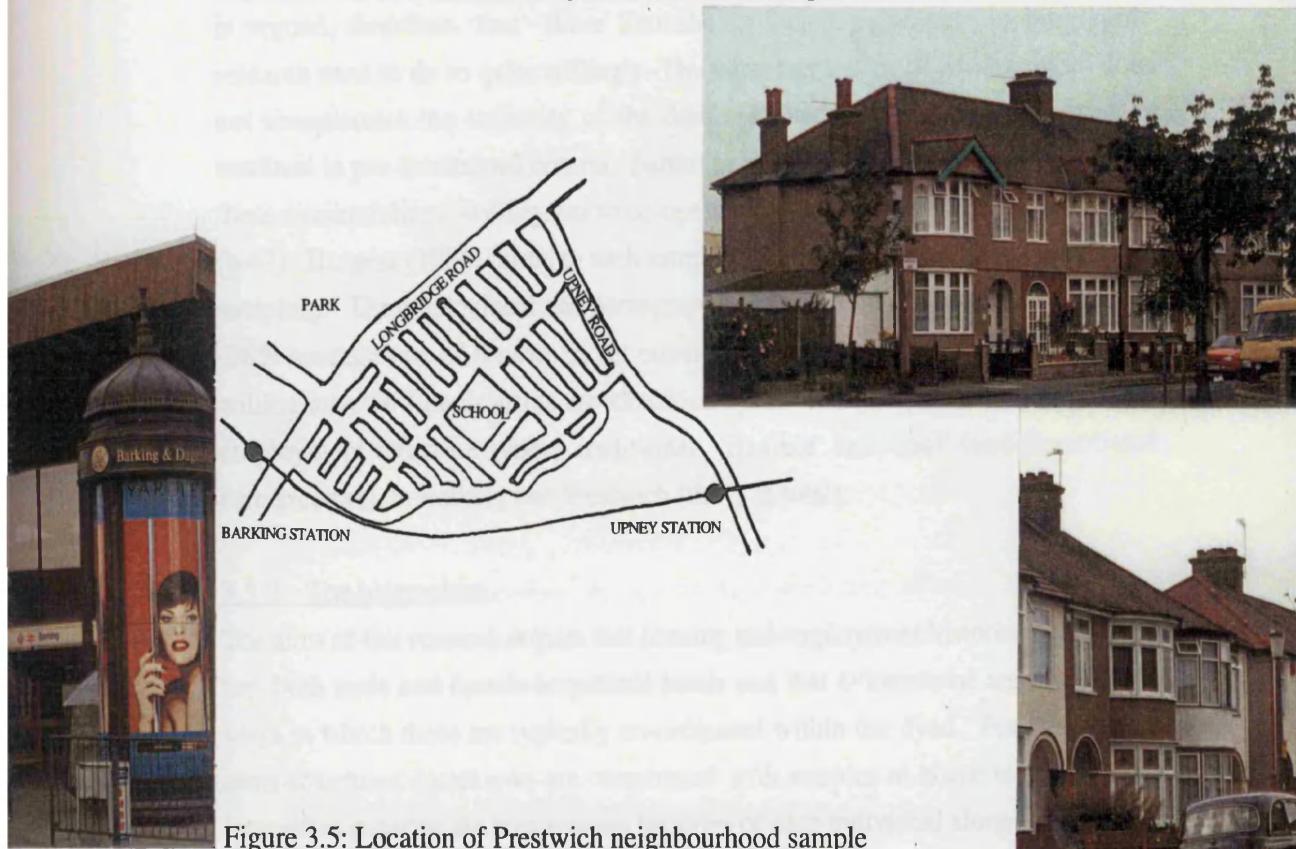
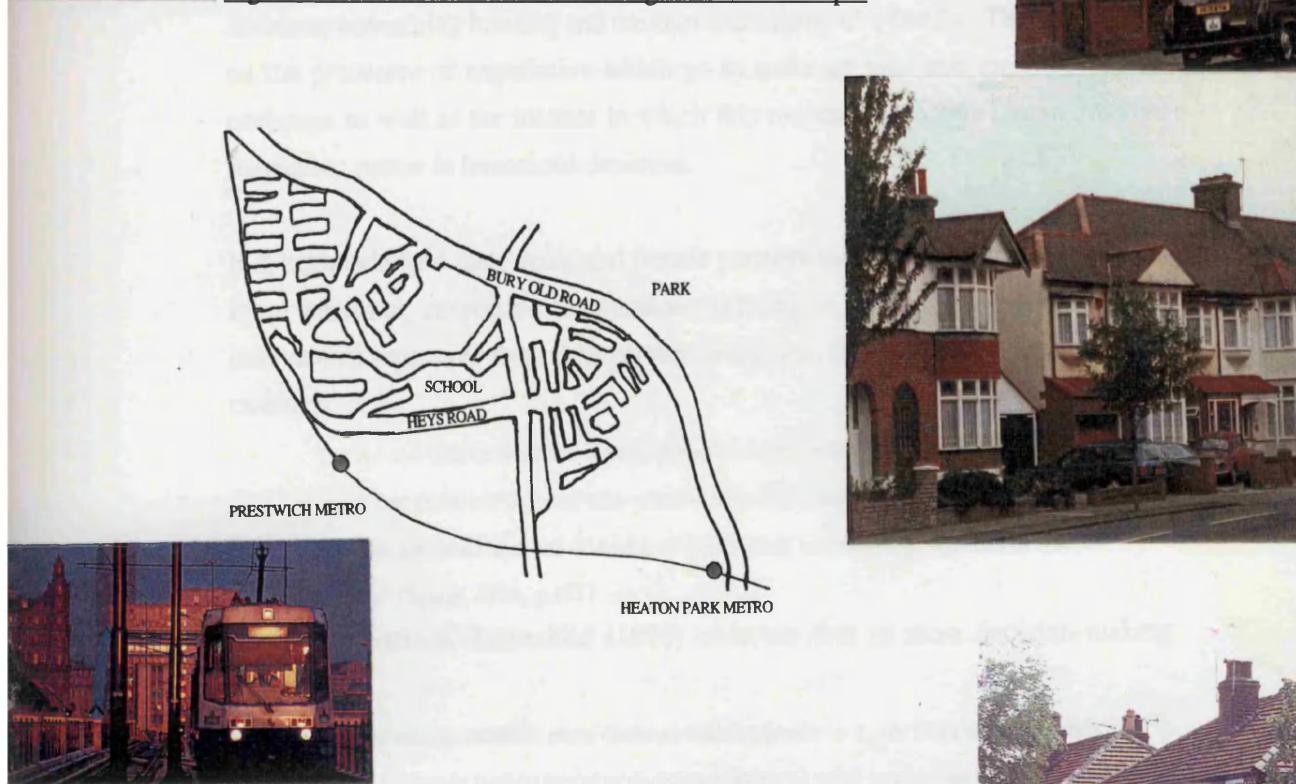


Figure 3.5: Location of Prestwich neighbourhood sample



Source: Author

Maps are schematic - not to scale

Finally, it is a requirement of this project that the selected households are required to invest a considerable amount of time and effort in recalling biographic detail. It is argued, therefore, that those households which participate in biographic research need to do so quite willingly. The voluntary nature of participation does not compromise the authority of the data collected since sample selection is confined to pre-determined criteria. Furthermore, Wallman (1984) suggests that in these circumstances "willingness to co-operate (is) sufficient ground for selection" (p.47). Burgess (1984) refers to such sampling as 'judgement' and 'opportunistic' sampling. The employment and demographic profile of the returned questionnaires (38% average rate of return) is set out in Appendix 3. The desired number of willing interview participants are identified by this means: five from each of the employment structure types; 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' (undifferentiated earner/career), in Barking and Prestwich (thirty in total).

### 3.5.2 The biographies

The aims of this research require that housing and employment histories be obtained for both male and female household heads and that evidence be amassed of the ways in which these are typically co-ordinated within the dyad. For this reason, semi-structured interviews are conducted with couples at home together. The interviews generate the employment histories of each individual along with 'couple' decisions concerning housing and the start and raising of a family. They also focus on the processes of negotiation which go to make up paid and unpaid resource exchange as well as the manner in which this resource exchange shapes relative bargaining power in household decisions.

It is acknowledged that male and female partners may proffer different, perhaps more personal, responses to questions relating to household relations when interviewed separately from their partner (Burgoyne, 1990). This said, it is also the case that:

"wives and husbands do not always perceive events within their marriage in the same way (such that those researchers) who acknowledge this discrepancy and collect data from both spouses are faced with the dilemma of interpreting two different versions of marital reality" (Spade, 1994, p.171).

Similarly, Safilios-Rothschild (1970) observes that in most decision-making situations;

"wives tend to attribute more decision-making power to themselves than husbands do, while husbands tend to perceive decision-making as more egalitarian than their wives" (p.542).

From a practical point of view it is difficult to contrive interviews in a home setting with each partner individually. It would necessitate separate visits or the banishment of one partner to another room of the house, either of which is likely to reduce levels of co-operation and exposition. Moreover, it is preferable for this research to interview couples together in order to observe the manifestation of power relations in the 'performance' of the interview. A sense of relationship dynamics can be gained by recording responses made to joint questions. It might transpire that one partner typically speaks on the others behalf or that partners contradict each other or seek reassurance that their interpretation of events is 'sanctioned' by the other as being the 'shared reality' of the couple.

Furthermore, it is suggested that the home provides the 'natural' and appropriate setting, from both an ethnographic and a practical perspective, for household interviews (Burgess, 1984). The home is:

"comfortable and apparently neutral territory....in which the respondent feels inclined to express his or her natural opinions and feelings rather than distorting or suppressing them"

(Robson and Foster, 1989, p.51).

The home is also the actual site of co-ordination for home, work and family reproduction. At the same time that certain 'ground rules' are established for an uninterrupted interview with both partners (see Appendix 4) a home setting allows the interviewer some insight, as a participant observer, into domestic practices and arrangements (who answers the door, answers the 'phone, makes tea, attends to the baby).

Much of the data sought in the interviews is retrospective in nature and therefore subject to problems of imperfect recall and the distortion of past events to suit current opinions. To minimise these potential weaknesses reference is made to current research concerning the promotion of respondent recall in life-history analysis. It is understood, for instance, that it is easier for interview respondents to remember biographic details by working backwards from the present and to relate changes in employment to other life events happening at the time (Campanelli and Thomas, 1994; Martin and Roberts, 1984; Wallman, 1984). From this understanding, a life-history chart (a 'curriculum vitae') is provided to each interviewee to be completed in advance of the interview itself (Appendix 5). This advance exercise not only provides a valuable outline chronology of 'milestone' events but it also aids recall. It provides 'thinking time' for the respondent before the interview (Sheskin, 1985) without jeopardising the desired spontaneity of replies to the open-ended questions.

The interviews<sup>11</sup>, each lasting approximately one hour, are conducted along similar lines to that of the Working Lives Development Research by Campanelli and Thomas (1994). The tape-recorded unstructured interviews aim to combine:

"flexible qualitative and cognitive techniques, such as probing, reviewing and cross-checking (to maximise the completeness and accuracy) of employment, housing and milestone event 'biographies' (Campanelli and Thomas, 1994, p.ii).

Each interview follows a topic guide (Appendix 6) structured loosely around the four substantive themes of; housing, employment, family and relationship. The interviews are then conducted in such a way as to flesh out these subjects in a flexible, non-linear manner to pursue the train of thought of each respondent (Holstein, 1995; Walker, 1985).

In the course of the interview, all subject areas are covered, together with in-depth probing, regardless of the order in which they are tackled. It is apparent from this approach that each interview will be a little different from the last, that the practice of interviewing is a 'craft' skill (Martin and Roberts, 1984) to be honed and perfected along the way and that, to an extent, the latter interviews will be reflexive of the insights gained from former interviews (Merton et al., 1990; Silverman, 1993). In setting up and conducting the interviews the intention, therefore, is to strike a balance between the potentially negative effects of, on the one hand, a rigid adherence to a set interview style which would prevent this fruitful learning curve and, on the other hand, altering the substance of each subsequent interview so significantly as to negate the possibility of establishing trends between the biographies.

The themes of the household interviews set out to identify all forms of work undertaken by household members. It is considered important to explore the nature of employment (relative job security, casual and home-working and dependency on over-time or productivity related bonuses) as well as the extent and duration of paid employment undertaken by both men and women. Massey (1994) points out, for instance, the bearing that different forms of employment has on 'the domestic labour burden'. Some forms of employment entail excessive amounts of laundry or meals at irregular hours such that:

"The length and irregularity of shift-work (makes) it problematical for the other partner in a couple also to seek paid employment outside the home" (Massey, 1994, p.188).

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<sup>11</sup> Thirty interviews are conducted in total, fifteen each in Barking and Prestwich. In each neighbourhood study area five interviews are conducted each from the household structure types: 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earner/career. All of these households are selected to conform with the sampling frame criteria.

By considering both the nature and extent of all forms of household employment in this research it is hoped that a 'deeper explanation' will be generated of the co-ordination of gender roles, labour divisions and household strategies. Similarly, attention is paid to the nature and extent of self-provisioning activities such as 'do-it-yourself' home improvements, domestic production and informal economic activities. By exploring the negotiation of strategies surrounding these household practices it is possible to gain greater insight into the situation of the household within the locale.

Furthermore, it is through the biographical method that households are viewed in context, in the situations of their locale and milieu. Households presenting ostensibly similar compositions of gender divisions, socio-economic characteristics, generational profile and residential resources are seen to hold differential attachments to place and to pursue alternative (often seemingly non-rational) strategies to housing and labour markets. It is apparent that a plurality of cultural meanings and identities (Fielding, 1992; Pratt, 1991) underpin household action. This plurality manifests itself in narratives of lifestyle, gender role identities, generation, childhood residential mobility experiences, as well as identification with preferences of security, risk or novelty (Beck, 1992, p.8).

Nevertheless, the emphasis which is made, in interpreting the biographies, on "the intimacy of everyday people-place relations" (Clore, Philo and Sadler, 1991, p.59) does not reify individual voices and idiosyncratic reflection beyond the realms of thematic generalisation. The objective of deepening intra-household research is to demonstrate the inadequacy of reducing discussions of household behaviour in housing and labour markets to uniform responses to economic stimuli. In this way, it is stressed that an explicitly humanistic framework is not attributable to the household biographies described here. People are brought to the fore as narrators and interpreters of their situatedness in local, national and global socio-economic structures rather than as entirely self-conscious agents writing their own scripts (Sartre, 1948, p.49).

### 3.6.0 Summary

This chapter posits that, in the same way that there is not a single 'reality' which can be read off empirically from observed events, there is not a source of data which, by itself, captures 'reality'. The representation of a multi-tiered reality needs to be built up from multiple, complementary, overlapping sources of data. As with visual or literary forms of representation, the breadth and depth of lived experience is not fully captured in a single sitting or from a single angle or

subjectivity. Thus, a methodological framework is required which is capable of embracing the multiplicity of household experience.

A powerful two-tiered methodological framework suggests itself in the complementary application of 'extensive' (broad brush secondary data) and 'intensive' (primary qualitative) explanatory models. The purpose of the extensive research is to determine the existence of an abstract, generalisable relationship of causality between a variety of household structures (household divisions of labour) and relative rates (strategies) of residential mobility. Beyond this overview, it is argued that a comprehensive and concrete explanation of residential mobility requires consideration of non-events as well as 'revealed' mobility behaviour. This entails the intensive exploration of discourses concerning actions and non-actions as well as observable action itself. In this respect, it is suggested that a biographical approach provides the means by which to capture the situatedness of household residential mobility behaviour.

The research design establishes the strict targeting and specific application of several secondary data sources. As a consequence, no attempt is made to generate explanations of residential mobility which would pertain to a representative sample of the general population. A sampling frame is adopted throughout which isolates a cohort of 'nuclear family' type households. Furthermore, this selected population of households is further disaggregated by household employment structure and presented in 'idealised' form. Once again, by focusing on an a typology of 'idealised' household structures it is easier to concretely conclude a level of diversity in the strategies and negotiation of households sharing an equivalent employment structure.

By restricting the population from the original 1% sample of a general population to a sampling frame which represents a more invariant object of study (in terms of life stage and demography) heterogeneity of gender divisions of labour can be isolated from heterogeneity of demographically determined opportunities and constraints in residential mobility. In addition, it is posited that by focusing on 'nuclear family' households, for whom child-care provision is a factor in the negotiation of gender roles, this research looks at the most extreme realm of potential gender role conflict and, therefore, highlights the most significant implications for a wider understanding of bargaining relations in a general population.

## Chapter four: Household divisions of labour

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#### 4.1.0 Introduction

This chapter draws on secondary data from the UK Census of Population to provide a backdrop of trends for Britain in the 1990's. This generates a geographically extensive representation of the distribution of household gender divisions of labour. The value of this exercise is twofold. First, it generates a new geography of paid labour divisions. By establishing labour force participation for both males and females by their membership of a specific household type (from a sampling frame of 'nuclear families'<sup>1</sup>) gender divisions of labour are considered from a household perspective where previously these have been interpreted from aggregate populations of females in paid employment. Second, this new geography, for which a typology of 'idealised' household employment structures was developed in the previous chapter, forms the basis for an exercise of comparative analysis with an equivalent geography of residential mobility rates in Chapter Five.

It is hypothesised that relative rates of spatial mobility are differentially negotiated within households according to employment structure. Consequently, it will be argued that the degree of 'bargaining power' which individual members exercise in household mobility decisions is to a certain extent implied by divisions of paid labour. According to this 'resource contribution theory' of 'bargaining power' (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Manser and Brown, 1979; Pahl, 1989), decision-making in dual earning households is shared more or less equally between male and female spouses, whereas in 'traditional' male-breadwinner households mobility is directed by male spouse employment (Pahl and Wallace, 1985). Dual-earning household are anticipated to demonstrate reduced rates of spatial mobility as a consequence of the resistance by wives of mobility which is personally disadvantageous (Madden and White, 1980).

In order to investigate this causal relationship it is necessary to first consider the degree of alignment between the distribution of household structures and the distribution of relative rates of mobility, for Britain. Consequently, this chapter and that which follows constitute a parallel analysis. Little can be said about the degree of causality between household structure and relative mobility from

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<sup>1</sup> A sampling frame population of 'nuclear families' provides a particularly appropriate subject for mobility research because it focuses attention on decision-making where this entails the co-ordination of employment and child-care. It also represents the greatest potential source of gender relation conflict, the study of which lies at the heart of this thesis. Moreover, it is suggested that issues of mobility constraint for this 'idealised' household structure are likely to represent the least pronounced conditions of constraint whereby research focusing on lone parent or extended family households might reveal extreme cases of mobility constraint.

distributions of household structure alone. This comprises one half in a pair of distributions in this measure of association. Nevertheless, this chapter also serves an independent purpose. It situates observations of labour market restructuring within the context of a variety of household structures and challenges existing theories of patriarchy and housing consumption.

Existing research and debate suggest three significant contributors to spatial variation in the distribution of particular household employment structures (Barlow and Savage, 1991). Broadly speaking, these underline mechanisms of: labour supply, labour demand and costs of living. Whilst each of these explanations are promoted in existing research as having particular significance for a changing geography of gender, it is also generally acknowledged that they operate interdependently (Boyle and Halfacree, 1995).

It is not disputed that the uneven effects of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living influence the formation and reproduction of household structure, but it is suggested that these insufficiently endorse the interpretation of regional 'cultures of patriarchy' and housing consumption orientations. In existing research, an understanding of gender roles and consumption norms rely on the assumed correlation of these with material indicators such as positions of paid employment and housing tenure (Saunders, 1990; Arber and Marsh, 1992; Fielding and Halford, 1993; Green, 1995). The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that normative behaviour is inadequately inferred from aggregate data, especially where this is presented for atomistic individuals rather than for individuals situated in household structures.

The distribution of gender divisions of paid labour is typically explained in terms of an uneven supply of female labour (Duncan, 1991; 1991a). The relative propensity for women as 'wives' and 'mothers' to participate in paid employment is theorised in relation to regional 'cultures of patriarchy' (Walby, 1986; Walby, 1989; Duncan, 1994). More generally, it is understood that normative behaviour concerning divisions of labour, parenting and the constitution of masculine and feminine identities are transmitted through the practices and discourses of spatially situated social and kin networks. These practices are viewed in terms of regional traditions and trends concerning female labour market participation (Massey, 1994: pp.185-190 and pp.193-201).

Spatially uneven divisions of labour are also explained in terms of spatially differentiated rates of labour demand (Bagguley and Walby, 1989; Sayer and

Walker, 1992). High absolute rates of labour demand (low rates of unemployment) and relative skill shortages (by sector, occupation, sex-typing and flexibility) influence the reproduction of particular household structures. For instance, the availability of particular employment opportunities, such as part time work, is argued to contribute to the concentration of 'flexible' household employment structures in that locale (Beechey and Perkins, 1987; Horrell et al., 1994).

Finally, uneven costs of living (especially housing) are understood to impinge on the formation and reproduction of particular household structures by pulling additional household earners into paid employment (Barlow and Savage, 1991). The perceived 'need' to have one, one and a half or two earners is understood to be spatially differentiated according to the relative availability, tenure and cost of housing experienced in local housing markets (Forrest and Murie, 1991).

The ways in which household divisions of labour are interpreted, whether from aggregate populations or from household structures, has a significant bearing on explanations of gender (and decision-making) relations (see Kabeer, 1994, ch.10 for this discussion in a developing world context). It is not possible to infer from secondary data the degree to which labour market participation reflects voluntarily preference (the propensity for 'wives' and 'mothers' to seek a role outside the home) or structural constraint; "the extent to which individuals find themselves either victims of the labour market or, at least, unable to utilise the labour market as they might wish" (Main, 1994, p.134).

Motives for employment participation and the negotiation of household structure remain the preserve of primary qualitative research. Nevertheless, it is frequently the case that 'cultures of patriarchy' and housing consumption (implicitly concerned with subjectivities) are interpreted from large-scale secondary data analysis (Duncan, 1991, 1991a; Green, 1995). This chapter also works with the analysis of secondary data, a methodological approach it attempts to criticise. It does so, however, for the express purpose of highlighting the problems associated with making observations about household events from a general rather than a specific population and of concluding normative gender role and 'bargaining power' positions from material indicators alone.

The research presented in this chapter contributes to existing knowledge of gender divisions of labour in two ways. First, by applying the method (secondary data analysis) and material indicators (divisions of paid labour) of existing gender

divisions research, it is possible to examine critically this theoretical framework from within the same paradigm of an extensive approach. It is possible to directly compare the results of a geography of household gender divisions of labour, where this is generated from labour force participation rates for both male and female spouses in 'nuclear families', with existing geographies of gender interpreted from an aggregated population of females in paid employment. Second, it is also possible to demonstrate the continued inadequacy of a geography of household gender divisions of labour which is reliant on material indicators from secondary data. This argument is reinforced in Chapter Six where orthodox interpretations of gender divisions are critically examined from outside the paradigm of extensive analysis, in intensive biographical research.

#### 4.1.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of this chapter is to 'map' for Britain the spatial distribution of household gender divisions of labour for the typology of 'idealised' household structures introduced in the previous chapter. This exercise is undertaken for a sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households and it is derived from the paid labour participation of male and female spouses, by hours worked and (where possible) occupational status.

As a pre-requisite of the research, the spatially differentiated effects of labour supply and labour demand, as well as costs of living, are isolated from underlying effects of demographic variation. This defines and maintains a sampling frame of 'nuclear family' households or, at least, of individuals identified by their attachment to a married or cohabiting partner, in the presence of one or more dependent child.

It is argued here that research which seeks to explain associations between divisions of labour and particular patterns of behaviour (such as that revealed in patterns of residential mobility) should do so from a platform of demographic specificity. Consequently, the findings in this chapter counter the frequently misleading way in which divisions of labour are represented in existing housing and labour market research. By working with a homogenous sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households, greater validity is provided to explanations of causality in the distribution of particular household employment structures.

A geographically extensive representation of household gender divisions of labour is only achievable from secondary analysis by the imperfect overlay of a

series of separately derived individual and household variables. It is not technically possible to combine sampling frame men and women with comprehensive, or equivalent, employment data within a single cross tabulation. Used individually, data files from the Census of Population suffer from weaknesses of either lack of detail or incommensurability between male and female populations. Used together<sup>2</sup>, however, it is possible to identify, from a correlation of variables, the spatial distribution of the idealised household structures.

In order to overcome some of the problems of ecological fallacy associated with drawing correlations from aggregated populations, this chapter considers two sets of cross-sectional data. Each stage of analysis works within the constraints of the secondary data available, in order to provide overlapping snap-shots of the spatial distribution of the 'idealised' household structures.

First, data for the sampling frame population is arranged according to membership of one of the three 'idealised' households; 'traditional', 'flexible' or 'dual' earning structure types. This exercise is undertaken at county scale from the 10% cross-sectional file of the 1991 UK Census of Population<sup>3</sup> (England, Wales and Scotland). A map of the spatial distribution of each of the three household structure types is derived from a composite of two variables; the economic position of sampling frame women ('mothers' employed part-time, full time or economically inactive) and the structure of sampling frame households (one earner or two earner households).

Second, a more accurate examination of actual household structures is conducted at the crude spatial scale of the standard region. Cross-sectional data is presented from the Sample of Anonymised Records (SARs) of the 1991 UK Census of Population<sup>4</sup>. This rich new resource makes it possible to identify a regional employment profile of specific household compositions rather than aggregations

<sup>2</sup> These are not the same population samples (although they are based on comparable sampling frame conditions) but tandem analysis is justified in terms of measuring associations of causal relationships.

<sup>3</sup> The advantage of the Local Base Statistics (LBS) of the UK Census of Population over household panel surveys and, to an extent, the SAR's 1% Household, is that it provides demographic and employment data for a large representative sample of the population and at a fine geographic scale to suit presentation in map form.

<sup>4</sup> It is because of this level of detail, however, and the threat it poses to household confidentiality, that the smallest geographic area for which this data is released is the Standard Region. Clearly this implies a sacrifice of 'mapping' potential, of spatial divisions, to the accuracy of household relations. For this reason the individual level data of the Local Base Statistics still performs a vital function in generating evidence of spatial differentiation.

of individuals in the labour force. Data is derived from a file representing 1% of the household population of England and Wales. The analysis of SARs micro-data not only provides the means to verify the trend of spatial distribution of household structures from aggregate data, but it also provides details of occupational status whereby it is possible to differentiate 'dual earner' from 'dual career' households.

#### 4.2.0 Extensive household research

Throughout this project, the household is recognised as the appropriate forum of research. The individual worker is attached to a household structure and rarely acts outside of this context. Divisions of paid employment are intimately bound up with domestic relations and vice versa. This recognition of the household as the principle site of labour reproduction requires that observations about divisions of labour be presented, at the very least, in terms of individuals as members of households and of households as compositionally variant. Typically, research which investigates social and economic behaviour in housing and labour markets is obliged to extrapolate this from aggregations of individuals. Consequently, household level information is only imperfectly derived from secondary data sources. Nonetheless, these data sources still provide the largest scale of analysis for national housing and labour market trends and remain a valuable frame of reference for research in this field.

It has already been noted that distinct advantages accompany the secondary analysis of large national data sets (Hakim, 1992) but that it is important to maximise these beneficial features by identifying and eliminating routes to potentially anomalous interpretation (Jarvis, 1997). Existing research on gender divisions of labour seldom controls for regional demographic variation. It is liable to conflate two discrete causal mechanisms (profiles of household composition and profiles of household employment structure) into one. This occurs when gender divisions of labour are simply read off from rates of female participation in the labour force. The omission of a deeper analysis of male employment, and the failure to recognise the impact of male employment on household relations, is partly a result of, and certainly exacerbated by, the failure of census data to recognise the significance of family life stage for both men and women. Dorling (1995), for instance, notes from SARs data that almost half of all men working more than sixty hours a week live in families with young dependent children. The implication is that long-hours male employment impinges on household structure through the limited time available for fathers to contribute to day to day child-care (Hood, 1983; Hochschild, 1990).

Similarly, in their study of gender-specific social and spatial mobility, Fielding and Halford (1993) note that the unique characteristics of the south east, which make it an 'escalator region' for women's occupational mobility, are influenced by the fact that this region has the highest proportion of childless women. The authors go on to speculate whether "the special properties of the London labour market" (p.1430) are as advantageous to women with children. Clearly, unless women in the labour force are considered in terms of those life-stage variables which are fundamentally associated with constraints to employment it is impossible to ascertain whether a spatially differentiated 'geography of opportunity' operates for a specific, as opposed to a general, population of working women.

#### 4.2.1 Sampling frame households

A strong case can be made for focusing on a specific household population by looking at the demographic profile of Britain<sup>5</sup>. Demographic variation occurs in accordance with the relative attraction of a place to different population groups such as; 'pensioners', young families, single professionals, 'empty nesters' and the like. These population groups, by the very nature of the opportunities and constraints of their career stage and life course, exhibit markedly different, well established, patterns of residential mobility (Champion & Fielding, 1992). In his census map for Britain, for instance, Dorling (1995) highlights a clear distinction between city centres, which stand out as areas with a dominant population of single-person or non-related person households, and most rural areas, especially at the boundaries between counties, where over 90% of the population live in family households.

In effect, the more heterogeneous the population of households under observation the more hazardous the conclusion of causality between them and patterns of residential mobility. For this reason, this project works with a specific sampling frame population of households (or individuals attached to specific households) comprising two adults (one male, one female) living with one or more dependent

<sup>5</sup> There are also technical factors which impact on a general population more than a specific population. The 10% LBS tables, which provide the richest source of material on household relations, do not compute by a factor of 10 to match counts in the 100% tables. This is because of the elimination from the 10% tables of imputed households and the use of a population base of residents in usual residence. Discrepancies exist between 10% and 100% counts and between total household counts in different tabulations. This is not considered to be problematic to the descriptive statistics presented here where data is always proportionate. The same is true for the validity of presenting relative spatial comparisons between counties of unequal population size although, clearly, caution must be applied to the relative position of sparsely populated outliers where the sampling frame population at 10% level is too small to permit a reliable normal distribution (ONS, 1991; 1993; 1993b; 1994).

child. This sampling frame of 'nuclear family' households is then further disaggregated by household employment structure according to the parameters established in the previous chapter.

At county level, the representation of sampling frame 'nuclear family' households as a proportion of all resident families in Britain ranges from 29% in the Isle of Wight to 44% in the Shetland Islands<sup>6</sup>. Sampling frame households are under-represented in the Isle of Wight and Inner London (29%) as a reflection of a 'mature' life-stage and a 'young' life-stage profile respectively. In contrast, Western Scotland and the home counties demonstrate a strong presence of 'middle' life-stage sampling frame families<sup>7</sup> (see Appendix 7 for a complete profile of sampling frame population distribution).

The case for applying demographic specificity to household and gender research is further reinforced by the data presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below. Female participation in the labour force can be seen to vary considerably in relation to different stages in the life-course. Table 4.1 describes the movement of economically active women from full time to part time employment in association with marital status and the presence of dependent child(ren). More detailed longitudinal analysis would highlight further variation in hours worked by females with dependants where this is influenced by the number and age of dependants (Buck et al., 1994; Ekinsmyth, 1996).

Moreover, Table 4.2 illustrates the potentially anomalous interpretation of household employment (and income) structure where this is based on a general rather than a specific population. For instance, the suggestion of a polarisation between 'work-rich' (multi-earner) and 'work-poor' (no-earner) households differs markedly according to whether the population under consideration includes single-person households. Consequently, research which examines the social implications of global economic restructuring, such as the hypothesised 'drag' on housing and labour market mobility of an increasing number of households

<sup>6</sup> Census data makes an important distinction between families and households with the latter being the most commonly expressed population breakdown. In terms of household representation, the sampling frame population accounts for 19.79% of a total population of 21,897,322 households in Britain. High rates of single person households, characteristic of Metropolitan areas such as Inner London, will not show up in family counts because 'households with no family', as they are defined, are only counted at 'family unit' or, more commonly, household level (ONS, 1992; 1993a; 1994a).

<sup>7</sup> The potential hazards of comparing household data from an 'elderly' Isle of Wight with a 'youthful' Shetland Isles are avoided here by the analysis of data for households in a specific life-course stage, and not as a proportion of spatially variant family or household profiles.

comprising multiple, flexible and insecure employment structures, should do so by first controlling for regional demographic variation.

**Table 4.1:**

**Female participation in the labour force (economically active women), by hours worked, at key life-course stages**

	<u>Full Time</u>	<u>Part Time</u>	
	%	%	%
<u>All</u>	61	39	100
<u>'Married'</u>	48	52	100
<u>'Married' with dependent child(ren)</u>	30	70	100

**Source:** Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 Census of Population. Data derived from Local Base Statistics via MIDAS

**Table 4.2**

**A comparison of household employment composition profiles for three different population bases**  
**% Household**

Population base:	Household employment structure:			
	'Multi-earner' <sup>(b)</sup> %	Single earner <sup>(c)</sup> %	'No-earner' <sup>(d)</sup> %	%
<u>'Nuclear families'</u> <sup>(a)</sup>	55	36	9	100
Sampling frame: couples with dependent child(ren)				
<u>All Households</u> (includes single person and couple households - with or without dependents)	47	28	25	100
<u>All Families</u> (excludes single person households)	51	29	20	100

**Notes:**

- (a) Although 'nuclear families' constitute only one in four households in a snapshot of all households in the UK today, most people inhabit this household composition at some point in their life-course (Somerville, 1994)
- (b) Two full time earners or one full time and one part time earners
- (c) One full time earner with an unemployed, retired or economically inactive partner
- (d) Unemployed, retired or economically inactive

**Source:** Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 UK Census of Population MCC/Census Microdata Unit (1994) Codebook and glossary for the 1% household file of the SARs

#### 4.3.0 Household divisions of paid labour

##### 4.3.1 Working mothers

As a first exercise in generating an extensive geography of household gender divisions of labour it is necessary to consider the economic status of sampling frame women, as mothers, recorded as either economically inactive ('traditional') in part-time employment ('flexible') or full time employment ('dual'). Whilst this exercise might appear to replicate existing geographies for aggregate rates of female employment, the individuals plotted here are indentified by their situation in a specific household structure.

In existing gender divisions research, economically inactive mothers are typically ascribed a 'traditional' gender role disposition (Duncan, 1991). In corollary, the full time employment of mothers is understood to suggest a 'non-traditional' (egalitarian) gender role disposition. It is also conventional practice to interpret a traditional gender role disposition for 'income dependent' women in part-time employment (Ward et al., 1996). Figure 4.1 illustrates the relationship between the economic status of 'mothers' and the conventional inference of traditional versus egalitarian gender role positions.

Figure 4.1: Inference of gender roles/'bargaining power'  
from paid employment positions

		Female employment status:		
		Full-time	Part-time	Houseworker
Male employment status:	Full-time	'Dual' gender role egalitarian - shared decisions	'Flexible' gender role traditional - male decisions	'Traditional' gender role traditional - male decisions
	Part-time	no data presented	no data presented	no data presented
	Houseworker	no data presented	no data presented	no data presented

The rates at which mothers are in full time paid employment range from 19% in Tayside to 11% in Cornwall. At 17%, Inner London exhibits one of the highest rates of sampling frame women in full time employment. At the same time, Inner

London demonstrates the highest rate of economic inactivity (56%). The lowest rate of economic inactivity is recorded in the Borders county of Scotland (39%). Rates of part time employment vary significantly across the country, with the highest rate recorded in Gloucestershire (38%) and the lowest rate recorded in Inner London (17%) (see Appendix 8).

Counties recording high rates of women in full time employment tend to register low rates of economic inactivity (and vice versa). Part time employment is generally the dominant category accompanied by either an above average rate of full time employment or an above average rate of economic inactivity. This suggests that the role of part-time female employment is not so easily ascribed a traditional gender role, supporting a male-breadwinner norm, as is stated in existing gender divisions research, and illustrated in Figure 4.1. The picture of female labour force participation for Inner London suggests a disruption of the conventional interpretation of gender roles. Here, one of the highest rates of 'mothers' in full time female employment (implicitly describing an egalitarian gender role) coexists alongside the highest rate of economic inactivity (implicitly describing a 'traditional' houseworker and child-carer role).

In contrast with highly differentiated rates of female employment participation, male employment rates are relatively uniform at 80-90% in Britain (Duncan, 1991, p.425). Data from the 1991 Census of Population indicates that this rate is higher still for sampling frame males who experience the highest cohort rate of economic activity. The lowest rate of full time male employment for the sampling frame population is 88% in Inner London and the highest rate 95% in Central Scotland.

This relative uniformity of male employment is often used as justification for the exclusion of male labour force participation from research on gender divisions of labour. It is argued here, however, that whilst male employment might appear to be conceptually uninteresting in aggregate overview (Duncan, 1991, p.428), it needs to be recognised as contributing to the spatially uneven distribution of particular household structures. By way of example, in sampling frame households, differential rates of female employment reflect the negotiation of gender roles and divisions in the context of differential rates, work-histories and perceptions of security for male spouse employment as well as issues surrounding child-care provision.

#### 4.3.2 Working parents

A second exercise in generating an extensive geography of household gender divisions of labour considers the employment structure of sampling frame households. The closest representation of economic relationships within households at county scale is described by the numbers of earners in sampling frame households drawn from the total population for Britain. Whilst this household level data offers an important insight into household employment structure it would be insufficient without the support of more detailed individual level data on the employment of sampling frame women. As Green (1995) observes, this large-scale household data does not provide information about the employment status and occupational position of individual household members. It is not possible to differentiate the nature of employment undertaken by individual partners in household 'couples', for instance, whether full time or part time, or whether households with a single earner are headed by a male or a female<sup>8</sup>. Household structure is defined simply as being that consisting of either no-earners, one-earner or two-earners from a population of sampling frame family households.

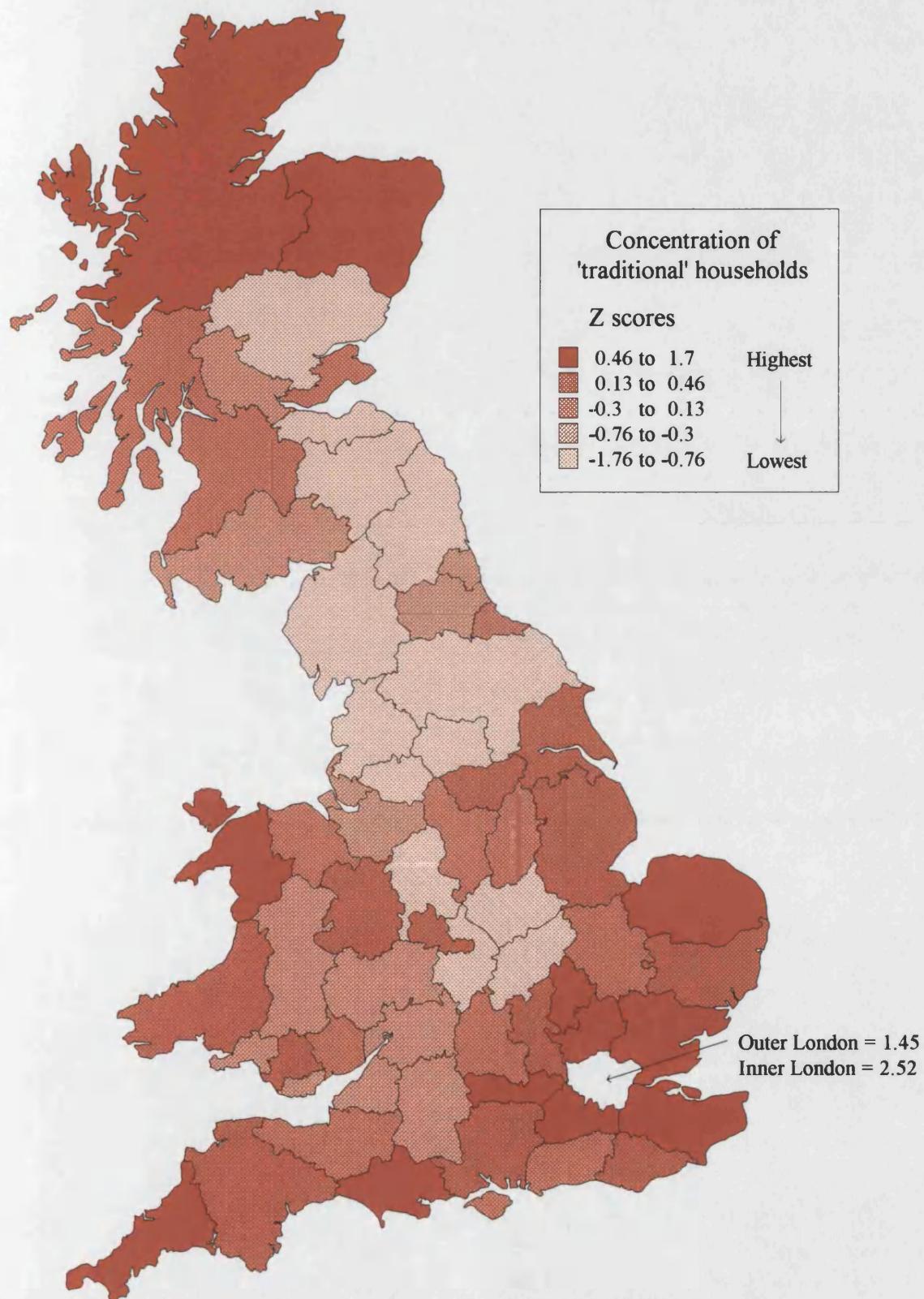
Lancashire demonstrates the highest rate (60%), and Humberside the lowest rate (50%), of sampling frame households in which both spouses are in some form of paid employment. The highest rates of single earner households (suggesting the 'traditional' male breadwinner type) occur in the Scottish counties of the Orkney Isles, Shetland Isles and Grampian (45%) followed by the Southern English 'home counties' of Surrey, Suffolk, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire (42%). The lowest rates of single earner households typically occur in those counties demonstrating the highest rates of two-earner households, generally in Scotland and the North of England. In cases where low rates of single earner households are accompanied by relatively low rates of two-earner households it is in the context of high rates of no-earner households such as in Tyne and Wear, Merseyside and Mid Glamorgan (12% representation of no-earner households) (see Appendix 9).

It is possible to combine the two snap-shot images of household divisions of labour generated in the above exercises. This is done by plotting the sum of the Z scores (standard deviations) of these two variables to produce a map for each of the 'idealised' household structure types; 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earning. The results are presented in Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

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<sup>8</sup> Although role reversal female breadwinner households are a small minority, it would be useful to be able to look at the spatial representation of those that do occur.

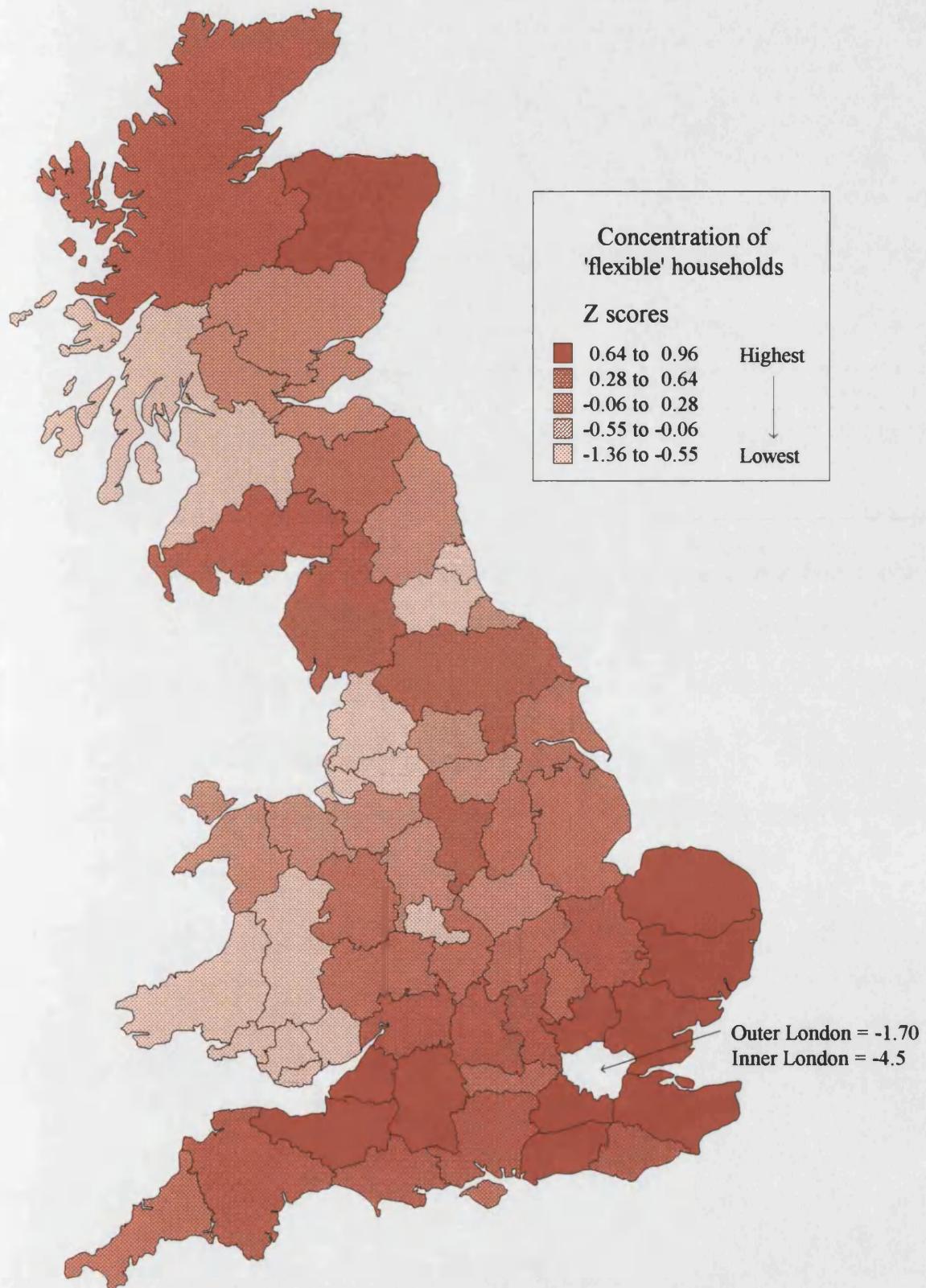
Figure 4.2 % Distribution of 'traditional' households - counties in Britain



Note:

Shaded values describe the sum of the Z scores divided by 2 for two variables: rates of sampling frame 'households with one earner' and rates of sampling frame 'economically inactive women'.

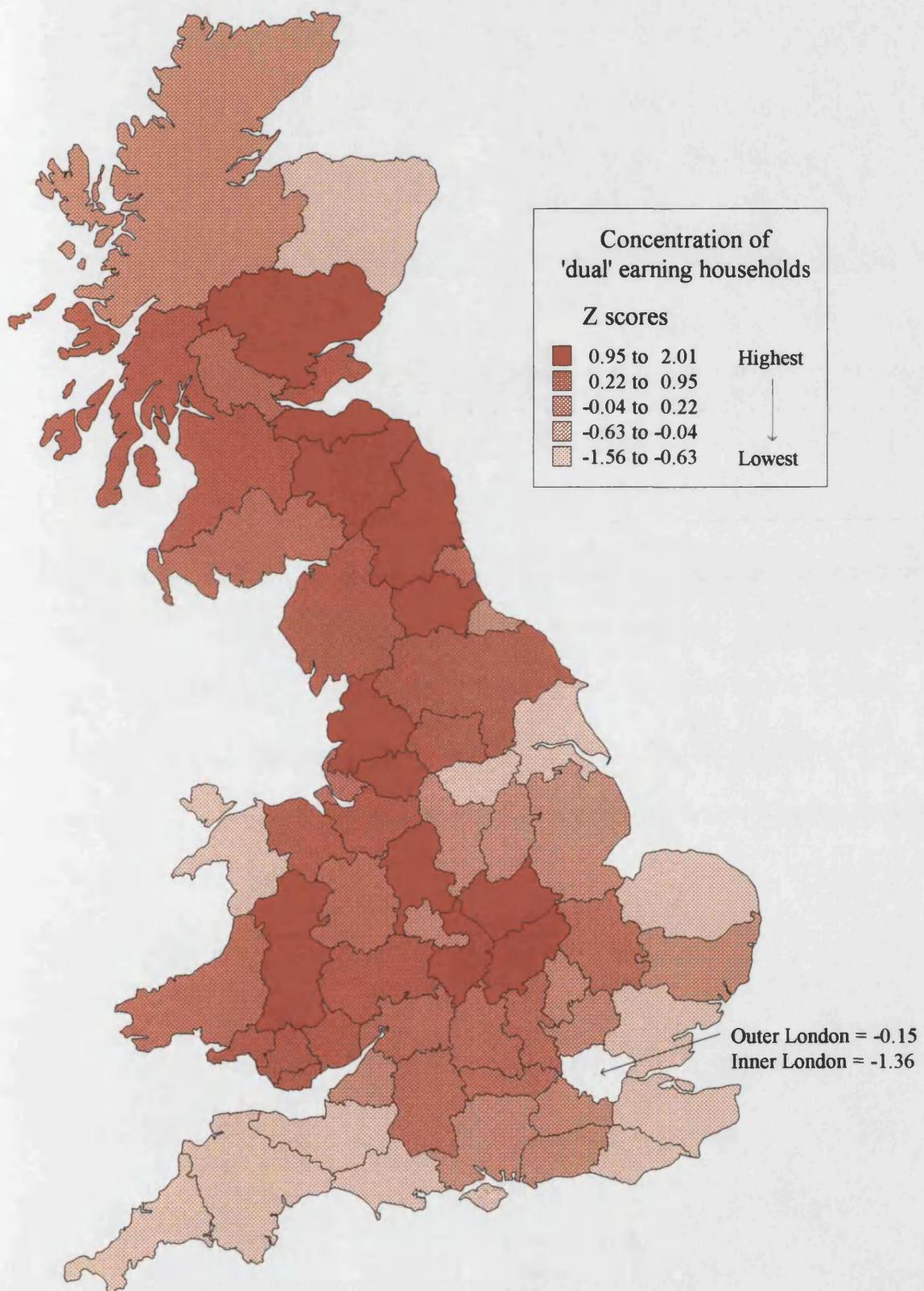
**Figure 4.3 % Distribution of 'flexible' households - counties in Britain**



**Note:**

Shaded values describe the sum of the Z scores divided by 2 for two variables: rates of sampling frame 'households with one earner' and rates of sampling frame 'women in part-time employment'.

Figure 4.4 % Distribution of 'dual' earning households - counties in Britain



Note:

Shaded values describe the sum of the Z scores divided by 2 for two variables: rates of sampling frame 'households with two earners' (undifferentiated by hours worked) and rates of sampling frame 'women in full time employment'.

Using a Spearman's rho test to measure the correlation between the two variables it is possible to assess the degree of overlap, for instance, between the spatial distribution of economically inactive sampling frame women and one-earner sampling frame households, as presented in Figure 4.2, to describe the distribution of 'traditional'<sup>9</sup> households ( $r_s = 0.55$ ). Similarly, the correlation between the spatial distribution of mothers' in part-time employment and that of one-earner households, in Figure 4.3, describing 'flexible' households ( $r_s = 0.56$ ). Finally, the correlation between 'mothers' in full time employment and two-earner sampling frame households, in Figure 4.4, describing 'dual' earning households ( $r_s = 0.41$ ) (see Appendix 10 for the Spearman's rho calculations).

#### 4.3.3 'Traditional' households

Figure 4.2 indicates that the distribution of 'traditional' households describes a distinct coastal arc from the North-East through Eastern and South-Eastern England to the South-West together with a further flung concentration in the Scottish Highlands. Inner London (unshaded and omitted from the Z score index as an 'outlier') has the highest combined incidence of one-earner households together with economically inactive females. 'Traditional' households are least in evidence in Scotland, Mid-Wales and in the English counties of the North, North-West and East Midlands.

Evidence of a concentration of 'traditional' households in both Inner and Outer London as well as the South East is significant. Existing research which focuses on rates of full time female employment from a general population points to Inner London in particular as supporting a 'non-traditional' pattern of employment (high rates of women in full time employment) and the South East as an 'escalator region' for female career opportunities (Duncan, 1991; Fielding and Halford, 1993). In contrast, a pattern of gender role polarisation emerges from this research for a specific population of women living in 'nuclear family' households. Inner London is dominated by 'traditional' households at the same time that it supports a significant minority of 'dual' earning households (illustrated in Figure 4.4). This observation is discussed below as a source of disruption to the argument that a spatially uneven distribution of household divisions of labour is historically reproduced through the operation of regional 'cultures of patriarchy'.

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<sup>9</sup> On average 'role reversal' households where male unemployment or male economic inactivity is partnered in a household with a female in full time employment, accounts for just 1% of all household combinations. Regional variation is limited between a rate of 0.88% (Yorkshire & Humberside and East Midlands) and 1.27% (North, West Midlands and Outer London) Source: Data derived from the SARs from MIDAS.

#### 4.3.4 'Flexible' households

Figure 4.3 describes the distribution of 'Flexible'<sup>10</sup> households. These appear in greatest concentration in the North of England (Cumbria and North Yorkshire), the Midlands (Gloucestershire, Hereford & Worcester), parts of the South west (Avon and Wiltshire) and Southern and Central Scotland. The highest rates of 'flexible' households correspond with local labour markets dominated by employment in tourism and agriculture, a sector which is typically associated with irregular (seasonal) and low paid work, especially for women for whom occupations such as hotel catering tends to be the low paid extension of a domestic role.

In contrast, low rates of mothers in part-time employment are recorded for the South East and Wales where rates for two-earner households are also low. Inner London demonstrates the lowest rate of part-time female employment together with low rates of two-earner households but a paradox exists in the co-existence of a high rate of full-time female employment. Here, the proportional incidence of both two-earner and one-earner households is squeezed by a disproportionately high incidence of no-earner households (see Appendix 9).

#### 4.3.5 'Dual' earning households

In Figure 4.4 the counties demonstrating the highest rates of 'dual' earning households (darkest shading) are recorded in the North West, Central Scotland, the Midlands and Mid Wales. Three counties record particularly high Z scores for the two variables; 'mothers' in full time employment, and two-earner households. These are Lancashire (4.03), Tayside (3.46) and Greater Manchester (2.73). A low rate of 'dual' earning households is indicated for both Inner London and Outer London and for contiguous counties within commutable distance from London (the exception being Berkshire and Buckinghamshire). As suggested previously, however, the picture for Metropolitan London is particularly complex. The analysis of more detailed SARs data (below) indicates a distinct pattern of polarisation in Inner London between 'traditional' and 'dual' earning households.

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<sup>10</sup> Households in which a male in part time employment is partnered by a female in full time employment (a 'role reversal flexible' household) constitute on average less than 0.5% of all household employment combinations. The highest presence of such households occurs in the South West (0.41%) followed by East Anglia (0.40%) and the lowest in Scotland (0.19%). Similarly, households in which both male and female partners work part time constitute on average 0.5% of all household employment combinations. Source: Data derived from the SARs from MIDAS.

The observation of the co-existence of household structure extremes is significant to discussions of gender role cultures. However, the limitations of mapping household employment structures at this geographic scale must also be taken into account. It is possible, for instance, that gender divisions of paid employment which are particularly differentiated at an urban or city scale might be obscured by the analysis of aggregated populations at county level. Were it technically possible, a geography of household gender divisions of paid employment might be better explained on the scale of travel-to-work patterns, transport infrastructure and urban occupational segregation.

For instance, Duncan (1991) observes particularly low rates of full time female employment in London's outer commuter areas, where "long distance commuting by men demands greater inputs of domestic work by women" (p.426). At the same time, particularly high rates of full time female employment are associated with new or expanding towns around London, where occupational features exist to influence the take up of female employment. It remains the case, however, that where a finer geography of employment is attempted in secondary data analysis it necessarily incurs the sacrifice of essential information relating to the position of male and female employment within particular household employment structures. The argument for multiple method research, complementing secondary data analysis with primary qualitative research, is thus further reinforced.

#### 4.3.6 Summary of findings

The data presented above illustrates the uneven spatial concentration of particular household gender divisions of labour across Britain. This is expressed in terms of the effects of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living in isolation from underlying demographic variation. Whilst a distinct regional geography is apparent, suggesting, for instance, a crude 'north-south' gender role divide, it is equally evident that the degree of correlation between household structure indicators is imperfectly realised. It is not possible to achieve the degree of specificity from aggregate secondary data required to be able to determine regional gender role cultures or decision-making 'bargaining power'.

In those counties where a strong correlation does emerge (from the application of Spearman's rho) it is possible to observe the degree to which the 'idealised' households are concentrated. Those counties which demonstrate a close association between the variables used to plot Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 are

recorded in Appendix 10. This concluding exercise serves to bolster the spatial trends noted above.

Concentrations of 'traditional' households occur in the south and South East; in Kent, Essex, Outer London, Bedfordshire, Dorset and East Sussex. Concentrations of 'flexible' households are noted in the north in areas which are characterised by economies dominated by agricultural and tourism; Cumbria, North Yorkshire, Borders, Hereford and Worcestershire. Finally, 'dual' earning households are concentrated in the north and north west; in Tayside, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Northumberland and Cheshire. To a lesser extent, they are also disproportionately found in the 'silicon fen' areas; of Cambridgeshire, Shropshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

#### 4.4.0 Contributions to existing debates

The spatial distribution of gender divisions of paid labour presented above, in which employment positions are associated with particular household structures, contributes to existing research and debate in several ways. First, it questions the validity of identifying regional 'cultures of patriarchy' from distributions of female employment participation. It suggests that household divisions of paid labour reflect the negotiation of spouse employment in the context of relative perceptions of economic uncertainty rather than a direct correspondence with normative gender roles. This is not to say that gender role preferences do not form part of the strategies which are negotiated but, rather, that spatially situated norms, practices and discourses relate to a multiplicity of approaches to household structure which are inappropriately reduced to cultures of patriarchy alone.

Second, it is suggested that the material indicators available from secondary data analysis provide an inadequate means of interpreting an association between the distribution of particular household structures and uneven patterns of housing consumption. Differential rates of housing consumption are not reducible to tenure structure or relative housing costs. Indeed, contrary to popular rhetoric, housing tenure suggests itself to be a particularly poor indicator of relative material 'advantage' or 'disadvantage' (see Saunders, 1990, p.65 for details of the ideological support of home ownership and its expansion). Rather, differential household perception of economic stress, such as that which might pull additional household earners into paid employment, needs to be understood from non-material variables which are beyond the scope of secondary data analysis.

#### 4.4.1 Cultures of patriarchy

Whereas differential rates of male spouse economic activity can be attributed to spatially uneven patterns of unemployment, this is not typically the case for the greater diversity in female spouse employment. The spatial differentiation in rates of female employment are typically attributed to a combination of regional influences; the effects of an historic and ongoing restructuring of the labour market and the relative presence of patriarchal norms governing the social and cultural climate in which women enter, remain in, or leave the paid labour force at key life-stages (such as marriage or the birth of children), as well as opportunities pertaining to occupational status<sup>11</sup>.

It is argued here that this understanding of regional 'cultures of patriarchy' (Walby, 1986; 1989; Duncan, 1994) reifies the opportunities and constraints facing individual agents without considering the situatedness of these agents within particular household structures and particular housing and labour market contexts. The different ways in which 'nuclear family' households are composed in terms of employment participation reflect strategies of coping with uncertainty as much as they do the negotiation of individual gender role preferences.

Furthermore, it is misleading to assume that part-time female employment sustains a fundamentally 'traditional' homemaker role. Duncan (1991), for instance, views part-time female employment as being "more integrated with a homemaker role than indicating departure from it" (p.426). In contrast, mothers in part-time employment in this research are observed to co-exist alternately with both concentrations of male-breadwinner and dual earning household structures. The apparent departure of part-time work from a patriarchal role is suggested by evidence of counties with above average rates of full time female employment where these also have above average rates of women in part-time employment (Tayside, Greater Manchester, Durham, Strathclyde, Fife).

This geography of household gender divisions of labour suggests that the role of female part time employment can be seen to differ, in terms of gender role and 'bargaining power', according to interaction with both male spouse employment

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<sup>11</sup> Clearly, a consideration of the economic status of women living in sampling frame households is by itself insufficient as a source of determining either household divisions of paid labour or the gender role dispositions these divisions imply. Such data says nothing about the household earning 'pie' to which women are, or are not, contributing to or the decision-making 'bargaining power' which might be attributed to the relative economic contribution of male and female spouses. These remain subjects for further qualitative research (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971; 1976).

and local housing and labour market conditions. Rather than simply extending a male-breadwinner gender role, part time female employment operates as a component of differential household strategies (Horrell, et al., 1994).

In brief, household structure describes the ongoing negotiation of interdependent effects of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living effects. Household strategies combine the negotiation of gender role identities with perceptions of employment security and opportunity and orientations towards particular life-style and consumption orientations. Consequently, it is argued that gender divisions of labour are inappropriately presented in terms of the gender role preferences of regional 'cultures of patriarchy' (voluntaristic determinants) or in terms of housing costs and labour demand (structural determinants).

A comprehensive interpretation of divisions of labour (operating within and between households) needs to take account of both paid and unpaid labour, material and non-material resource contributions and qualitative welfare issues (leisure time, family time) as well as monetary income and material amenities. By way of illustration, it is suggested that conditions of male employment, such as working in excess of 40 hours per week, are liable to impose particular constraints on the take up of female spouse employment (Massey, 1995a p.493).

In Britain, of the married (or cohabiting) men in full-time employment, 28% work more than 40 hours per week. For the equivalent population of women the figure is 7%. Of the working population of Britain as a whole, 5.5% regularly undertake more than 50 hours of work per week<sup>12</sup>. In dual earner households this trend of over-employment is potentially magnified. There is a qualitative debate here about long working hours, the value of leisure time (and parenting time) and the stress of insecure employment (Harrop and Moss, 1995; Massey, 1995; Jarvis, 1997). Consequently, the 'ideal' picture of household gender divisions of labour requires contributions from both secondary data analysis (to provide a spatial representation of material indicators) and primary qualitative research (to provide in-depth detail of non-material resources and constitutive processes).

#### 4.4.2 Housing costs and labour demand

Despite a significant expansion of owner occupation in Britain, following the introduction of the statutory Right to Buy in the 1980 Housing Act (Emms, 1990,

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<sup>12</sup> Source: ONS, Codebook and Glossary of the SARs, Computer Micro processing Unit, University of Manchester.

pp.10-59), a spatially uneven profile of housing remains (Barlow and Savage, 1991). For sampling frame households, rates of mortgagee owner occupation range from 46% in Inner London to 79% in Bedfordshire<sup>13</sup>. Outright home ownership ranges from 4% in Hampshire to 24% in Powys. Social renting (local authority and housing association) ranges from 9% in Lancashire to 39% in Inner London. Rates of private renting remain low across the country (see Appendix 11). Clearly, relative housing opportunities, where these are defined by tenure, are spatially uneven.

It is tempting to associate uneven distributions of household structure with the uneven distribution of relative housing opportunities (tenure and cost). For instance, high rates of no-earner households typically occur in areas demonstrating high rates of social renting. This is evident for Inner London (Appendix 12). In existing housing research the implication is that 'advantaged' 'work-rich' households are positively associated with owner occupation (Hamnett, 1984; Forrest, 1987). Indeed, high rates of two-earner sampling frame households, for instance in districts of Greater Manchester, are typically accompanied by relatively high rates of owner occupation (Appendix 13). At the same time, however, high rates of owner occupation also occur in districts of Outer London where low rates of two-earner households are evident (Appendix 14).

It is widely recognised that housing costs in the South are particularly high, relative to average earnings, and for this reason high rates of owner occupation might be expected to draw greater numbers of 'additional' female earners into paid employment. In contrast with this orthodox expectation, the data presented in this chapter suggests a particularly weak association between household employment structure and housing tenure<sup>14</sup>. Despite the considerably higher housing costs experienced in the South East this is not where either 'dual' earning or 'flexible' households are concentrated.

It can be argued that orthodox material indicators of household housing market position, such as tenure, are misleading (Barlow and Duncan, 1987). As the tenure share of owner occupation has expanded, the heterogeneity of its

<sup>13</sup> Rates are for England and Wales from county level LBS files of the 1991 UK Census of Population accessed via MIDAS.

<sup>14</sup> A Spearman's rho test of association was conducted for the two variables: rates of owner occupation (housing tenure for sampling frame households) and rates of two-earner households (sampling frame household employment structure) for all counties in England and Wales. A very weak positive association of 0.14 was measured.

membership has increased. In addition, it is suggested that household perceptions regarding the 'need' to maintain one, one and a half or two full time earners in paid employment are only indirectly related to local housing costs and labour market demand. Moreover, households can be seen to be situated within socially and spatially constituted networks of 'consumption orientation' (Anderson et al., 1994, p.6).

In effect, consumption preferences and expectations and attitudes towards risk and uncertainty are likely to have a profound bearing on the formation and reproduction of spatially differentiated household structures. These subjectivities, which are beyond the scope of secondary analysis, appear to disrupt a pattern of correlation between spatially uneven rates of employment participation and spatially uneven effects of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living.

#### 4.5.0 Household micro-data from the SARs

In this section, the extensive (county level) geography of household divisions of paid labour described above is complemented by the application of cross-sectional household micro-data from the SARs. This 1% sample of households from the 1991 Census of Population provides data for actual (rather than aggregated) household employment structures and intra-household relations. With this data it is possible to scrutinise with greater accuracy the spatial distribution of each of the 'idealised' household employment structures at the scale of the standard region for England and Wales.

Table 4.3 describes the spatial distribution of 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earning households. This table generally reinforces the trends described in the three maps above at county scale for Britain. This regional scale distribution from micro-data has a distinct advantage over the aggregated census data used previously. It is now possible to accurately differentiate between 'dual' and 'flexible' households where part-time female employment was previously caught up, to a certain extent, with rates of two-earner households in the mapping exercise above.

The highest concentration of 'traditional' households occurs in the south: Inner London (46%), Outer London (40%), RoSe (38%) and the South West (36%). Inner London is an outlier in this regard with 9 out of the 12 regions having 33-36% 'traditional' nuclear family households. Perhaps surprisingly, the highest concentration of 'dual' earning households also occurs in the south: Inner London (31%) and Outer London (26%). Nevertheless, a crude north-south divide is

discernable, with generally higher rates of 'dual' earning households in northern than southern regions.

Indeed, it is possible to further highlight this observation of a crude north-south divide in the spatial distribution of household gender divisions of labour. In an exercise in which the Z scores (standard deviations) for rates of 'dual' earning households are subtracted from those for 'traditional' households (computing the statistical difference between these distributions) northern regions come out as the least, and southern regions as the most, supportive of 'traditional' employment structures (Appendix 15). This picture of 'traditionalism' in gender divisions of labour remains limited, however, to that inadequately defined by positions of paid employment. Consequently, it is argued that whilst a regional trend is apparent in the relative concentration of particular household employment structures, it is inappropriate to infer from this a pattern of regional difference in relative gender role dispositions.

'Flexible' households are most concentrated in a south to east coastal (agricultural) arc: in the South West (46%), Yorkshire and Humberside (45%) and East Anglia (45%). The lowest rate of 'flexible' households occurs in Inner London (23%). This rate is notably lower than for all other regions and accounts for the extreme range of rates for this household type (the next lowest rate is 34% for Outer London).

The picture of household gender divisions of labour for Inner London (and to a lesser extent Outer London) is highlighted as one of distinct polarisation between the two extremes of 'traditional' and 'dual' household types. It is not possible to determine from the material indicators of secondary analysis whether this polarisation is attributable to labour market demand effects (the absence of opportunities for part time female employment) labour supply effects (the preference by women who work to do so full time) or alternative socio-cultural cleavages. It is suggested below, however, that this polarisation is explained, at least in part, by trends relating to occupational status.

**Table 4.3: Regional distribution of three 'idealised' household structure types**

REGION	HOUSEHOLD TYPE		
	Traditional (a) %	Flexible (b) %	Dual (c) %
North	33	44	23
Yorkshire & Humberside	33	45	22
East Midlands	33	43	24
East Anglia	36	45	19
Inner London	46	23	31
Outer London	40	34	26
RoSE	38	41	21
South West	36	46	18
West Midlands	34	42	24
North West	30	42	28
Wales	34	39	27
Scotland	35	42	23
MEAN	35	41	24

Population: economically active 'nuclear families' with household employment compositions comprising: full time, part time and economically inactive employment combinations

Notes:

- (a) Male spouse in full time employment, female spouse economically inactive
- (b) Male spouse in full time employment, female spouse in part time employment
- (c) Both male and female spouse in full time employment

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 Census of Population  
derived by author from the 1% Household SAR's accessed from MIDAS

#### 4.5.1 Occupational status

The unique characteristics of the SARs micro-data facilitate the further disaggregation of households with two full time earners in terms of occupational status. This makes it possible to consider the 'idealised' household structure types 'dual earner' and 'dual career' together with existing 'traditional' and 'flexible' households in accordance with the parameters established in Chapter Three. It would be technically possible to apply information on occupational status to both full time and part time employment, and in this way impose conditions of occupational status on each of the 'idealised' household types. Attempting this, however, would exponentially increase the number of possible household structures under consideration. Such an increase in the number of categories to separately observe would be unwieldy and produce unsatisfactorily small cell counts.

Table 4.4 describes the regional distribution of the four 'idealised' household employment structure types; 'traditional', 'flexible', 'dual earner' and 'dual career'. 'Dual earner' households constitute households in which both partners are in full time employment associated with any one of Social Economic Groups (SEGs); IIIN skilled non-manual; IIIM skilled manual, IV partly skilled, V unskilled, and members of the armed forces. 'Dual career' households constitute those in which both partners are in full time employment in professional or managerial occupations, SEGs I and II. Asymmetric, 'cross-class' households are excluded from this table but they are re-introduced in Table 4.5. 'cross-class' households, in which husband or wife hold a higher level occupation than their spouse, typically constitute 10% of the economically active population (McRae, 1986). Within the specific parameters of this research, however, asymmetric households constitute less than 8% of sampling frame households.

Inner London once again demonstrates a pattern of polarisation. Not only does it support a sampling frame population divided between 'traditional' male-breadwinner and 'dual' earning household structures (in Table 4.4) but 'dual' earning households are further polarised by a cleavage of occupational status. Indeed, a crude spatial cleavage is suggested between career type occupations in the south (emanating from a strong service sector) and earner type occupations in the north (manufacturing). At the same time, however, this trend is frequently disrupted. For instance, by the high 'dual earner' rate in Inner London and East Anglia and the high 'dual career' rate in the North West and Wales.

The data presented here indicates that rather more households with two full time earners are occupied in non-career work than they are professional or managerial careers. It is the latter which is associated with high levels of remuneration. In existing research, two earner households are discussed in terms of an apparent polarisation between 'multi-earner' and 'no-earner' households (Pinch, 1993; Buck et al., 1994) whereby this category is typically undifferentiated by hours worked and occupational status (Williams and Windebank, 1995). In contrast, the data presented in this chapter differentiates between households with one and a half earners ('flexible') and households with two full time earners ('dual'). It further differentiates the latter by occupational status.

Table 4.4: Regional distribution of four 'idealised' household structure types

REGION	HOUSEHOLD TYPE			
	Traditional (a) %	Flexible(b) %	Dual Earner(c) %	Dual Career(d) %
North	33	44	14	9
Yorkshire & Humberside	33	45	13	9
East Midlands	33	43	16	8
East Anglia	36	45	11	8
Inner London	46	23	17	14
Outer London	40	34	14	12
ROSE	38	41	10	11
South West	36	46	10	8
West Midlands	34	42	15	9
North West	30	42	17	11
Wales	34	39	15	12
Scotland	35	42	14	9
MEAN	35	41	14	10

Population: economically active 'nuclear families' with household employment compositions comprising: full time, part time and economically inactive employment combinations

Notes:

- (a) Male spouse in full time employment, female spouse economically inactive
- (b) Male spouse in full time employment, female spouse in part time employment
- (c) Both male and female spouse in full time employment, neither employed in 'career' SEG's I or II
- (d) Both male and female spouse in full time employment, both employed in 'career' SEG's I and II

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 Census of Population, Data derived by author from the 1% Household SAR's accessed from MIDAS

Arguably, the position of material advantage which is conventionally attributed to 'multi-earner' households may be true for 'dual career' households (with two relatively high incomes) but it is misleading as a blanket assumption for 'dual earner' and 'flexible' households. Yet existing research fails to make this distinction. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that 'dual earner' households combine long-hours working with low hourly pay (Breugel and Lyons, 1997). The ubiquitousness of part-time female employment also subsumes a whole spectrum of pay, conditions and occupational status (McDowell & Court, 1994).

A more general spatial trend is observed in the relative distribution of male and female spouse career employment. Sampling frame women living in the regions characterised by suburban rather than urban development ('home counties' and RoSE) appear less likely to pursue an independent career than those in regions of

extensive urbanisation. Literature on trends of urban gentrification support this idea (Smith, 1987, p.156). Suburban wives are understood to experience greater 'ties' to locally available employment and to the logistics of child-care provision where husbands are involved in lengthy commuting (Camstra, 1996). Once again, these observations indicate the need for further qualitative research as well as for research to consider the associations between rates of male and female employment, by household structure, and travel-to-work patterns.

Table 4.5 presents 'dual career' and 'dual earner' households both in their typically symmetrical form as well as in their less common asymmetric dyadic combination. Outer London and the South East score highly for both dual career and asymmetric male career households (in which the female spouse is in non-career employment). It is particularly interesting to identify those regions in which 'husbands' are asymmetrically partnered with 'wives' in professional or managerial employment. This is typically where 'feminised' service sector employment provides greater opportunity for female spouse careers (North West and Wales).

As with inferences concerning normative gender roles, however, it would be spurious to conclude a 'feminisation' of household bargaining-power in female-career households simply on the basis of relative positions of occupational status. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the case that the earnings of the male partner are less than those of the female. Nevertheless, in a more detailed analysis of cross-class families, McRae (1986, ch.3) suggests that occupational status may be a greater determinant of decision-making 'bargaining-power' than gender. The implication is that the assumptions of resource contribution theory, that 'bargaining power' can be read-off from positions of paid employment, fails to recognise significant non-material resource contributions of skills, knowledge and prestige relating to occupational status or particular conditions of employment.

**Table 4.5 : Regional distribution of 'dual' households, symmetric and asymmetric career status**

REGION	HOUSEHOLD TYPE			
	Dual career (a) %	Male career (b) %	Female career (c) %	Dual earner (d) %
North	25	18	15	42
Yorkshire & Humberside	27	17	15	41
East Midlands	22	18	15	45
East Anglia	29	16	13	42
Inner London	33	12	14	41
Outer London	30	21	14	35
ROSE	34	20	13	33
South West	29	17	16	38
West Midlands	27	14	15	44
North West	27	17	16	40
Wales	28	15	20	37
Scotland	27	12	19	42
MEAN	28	16	16	40

Population: economically active 'nuclear family' households with two full time earners

Notes:

- (a) Both male and female spouse in full time professional/managerial careers
- (b) Male spouse in full time professional/managerial career with female in full time (non-professional/managerial) work.
- (c) Female spouse in full time professional/managerial career with male in full time (non-professional/managerial) work.
- (d) Both male and female spouse in full time (non-professional/managerial) work.

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 Census of Population

Data derived by author from the 1% Household SAR's accessed from MIDAS

#### 4.5.2 Summary of findings:

Micro-data from the household SARs further reinforces the pattern of distribution of 'idealised' households described at county level from aggregated data. Robust claims can be made concerning the uneven reproduction of actual household gender divisions of labour. This geography of gender relations, focused on household structure, differs from existing geographies of gender which identify female employment participation from an undifferentiated population of individuals. It has been demonstrated that household structure has a significant bearing on rates of employment participation. It is for this reason that whilst particular patterns of household structure are evident between north and south, between regions and counties, these patterns are also frequently disrupted.

The disaggregation of full time employment in 'dual' households by occupational status suggests a crude north-south divide between full time professional and managerial 'career' employment opportunities in the south and full time 'earner' jobs in the north. This evidence suggests the influence of occupational status as a contributor to the uneven distribution of particular household structures.

#### 4.5.3 Future SARs research

Whilst the SARs data provides valuable insight into the employment configurations of actual household structures there remain many questions which it is not possible to address. Similar limitations remain to those of the analysis of any form of large-scale secondary data. In attempting to increase the degree of specificity, in terms of demography and employment parameters, for instance, this research comes up against the limitations of inadequate sample sizes. This makes some forms of statistical analysis unviable. Furthermore, statements about the spatial distribution of household gender divisions of labour are problematic at the crude scale of the standard region. Once again, were it technically possible, this form of analysis would be better conducted in relation to travel-to-work areas or local labour markets.

Moreover, questions remain outstanding with regard to the motives behind which households form and reproduce particular employment structures. It remains beyond the scope of secondary analysis to clearly differentiate between mechanisms of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living. Where a correlation has been attempted in existing research, such as with the suggestion of 'cultures of patriarchy' and structures of housing consumption, the observation of causality is imperfect. It is inappropriate, therefore, that the ready availability of material indicators (divisions of paid employment and positions of housing tenure) in secondary analysis should determine the course of household research.

Detailed information from the SARs on actual household employment combinations makes it possible to look not only at the interaction of male and female spouse employment (non-participation, part time, full time) but also at other aspects of work regime interaction. For instance, it was suggested at the start of this chapter that male spouse work regimes, such as long-hours working, irregular working hours and 'demand-led' occupations can impose additional strain on domestic organisation (Horrell et al., 1994, Massey, 1995a). This typically entails a greater sacrifice of female spouse employment.

Future research might consider an even wider variety of household employment structure types. For instance, to focus on the impact of male unemployment and self-employment on female spouse rates of employment. It is not uncommon, for example, for the wives of men working in family enterprise self-employment to act as an unpaid bookkeeper, or administrative assistant. There is also evidence to suggest that "in achieving high status it is useful for men to be supported by female domestic workers" (Duncan, 1991a, p.100) (see also Pahl and Pahl, 1971). In such cases the label of 'economic inactivity' provided by secondary data is clearly a misnomer. Furthermore, the relationship between occupational status, class and gender roles is at times contradictory.

Whilst it is beyond the scope of the SARs to probe deeply into the qualitative nature of spouse employment interaction it would be feasible to look at the quantitative impact of particular male spouse work regimes on rates of female spouse employment. Considerations of the processes of sacrifice, compromise or negotiation which reproduce particular household structures across time and space remain the preserve of qualitative research.

Clearly, greater emphasis on the nature, extent and conditions of both male and female employment, within a variety of household employment structures, calls for an increasingly specific and focused application of SARs micro-data. Future research also needs to draw more heavily on qualitative insights into household domestic organisation and working-time regimes (Horrell et al., 1994) in order to expose the many 'hidden' sources of household gender divisions, such as the unrecorded female support of male self employment, in recognition of the fact that neither aggregate nor panel quantitative data are adequate in the exploration of these areas of interest.

#### 4.6.0 Conclusions

This chapter presents a new geography of household gender divisions of labour which puts the interaction of male and female spouse employment at centre stage. In doing so, questions are raised regarding the validity of defining geographies of gender and patriarchy on the basis of female employment status. For instance, it is suggested that it is inappropriate to conclude what is a panoply of behavioural dispositions (career salience, modes of parenting, decision-making 'bargaining power') from positions of economic status alone. Differential rates of female employment reflect the differential negotiation of household structures rather than an historic legacy of labour market conditions and transmission of particular masculinities and femininities. Furthermore, the spatial distribution of particular

household structures reflect differential ways of coping with uncertainty in housing and labour markets such that issues of labour supply, labour demand and costs of living are interdependently negotiated.

It is possible to generate, from secondary data, a disaggregation of household employment structure based on the interaction of male and female spouse employment by hours worked. A more comprehensive understanding of household relations, however, calls for the observation of divisions of unpaid labour and non-material indicators of gender roles and bargaining power relations. A 'whole economy' approach, including both material and non-material resource contributions; paid and unpaid labour divisions as well as informal economic activities is beyond the scope of secondary data analysis.

Consequently, the picture of the household presented in this chapter, based as it is on secondary data, must be viewed as a broad brush sketch upon which smaller fragments are subsequently rendered in far greater detail by the application of intensive local survey research. It is only in the final analysis, when material from Chapters Four, Five and Six (comprising cross-sectional, longitudinal and biographical explorations of divisions of labour and household events), are pieced together for joint interpretation, that it is possible to view a comprehensive picture of household structure.

Further primary qualitative research is needed to consider the ways in which regional housing and labour market prospects are negotiated and articulated within households. By looking more closely at intra-household divisions of labour and resource contributions greater insight will be gained for research into the manifestation of inter-household cleavages. Thus, the informed use of a qualitative biographic methodology (combining unstructured interviews, work-histories and chronologies of 'milestone' events) will ensure that more appropriate use can be made of existing secondary data sources. Ultimately, it is only through multiple method research that it is possible to view the household as an arena of potential conflict in which men and women (and adults and children) can sometimes hold antagonistic interests and priorities (Creighton and Omari, 1995; Sen, 1990; Folbre, 1994, pp.22). Before embarking on in-depth qualitative research, however, it is important to consider a further quantitative material dimension: that of household movers. This is the topic of the following chapter.

## Chapter five: Geographies of residential mobility

- 5.1.0 Introduction
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- 5.2.0 Rates of mobility for general and specific populations
- 5.2.1 A geography of residential mobility
- 5.2.2 High rates of dual earning households - low levels of movement
- 5.2.3 High rates of male breadwinning households - high levels of movement
- 5.3.0 Rates of mobility for the 'idealised' household structures: data from the SARs
  - 5.3.1 The ambiguous role of female part-time employment
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  - 5.4.2 Transformation of 'traditional' male breadwinner households 1981-1991
  - 5.4.3 Inertia in 'dual earner' and 'flexible' households 1981-1991
  - 5.4.4 Relative mobility prospects: 'local' and 'distant' movers
  - 5.4.5 Further observations: life-course mobility trends
- 5.5.0 Summary of findings
- 5.6.0 Conclusions

### 5.1.0 Introduction

This chapter draws on secondary data from the UK Census of Population to develop a national framework of relative rates of residential mobility. This 'geography of movers' is equivalent to the 'geography of household structure' introduced in the preceding chapter. By assessing the degree to which the spatial distribution of wholly moving households mirrors that for household gender divisions of labour it is possible to examine the hypothesis that relative rates of spatial mobility are differentially negotiated within households according to employment structure.

It is suggested that there are multiple and overlapping explanations for the uneven distribution of relative rates of residential mobility<sup>1</sup>. The degree to which a region or locale is characterised by relative dynamism or inertia is interdependently associated with local labour market differentiation, uneven capital investment and underlying demographic variation. Capital, institutions and labour are not uniformly attracted to a place. Local labour markets can be identified with particular employment sectors and occupations. In turn, the relative attraction of labour (age and skill profile) to a particular place further shapes this local labour market differentiation.

Uneven rates of residential mobility are typically explained with reference to orthodox economic analysis. In continuous labour market theory it is understood that rates of mobility vary spatially in accordance with underlying rates of employment demand. Households move from locations of low employment to locations of high employment in a longitudinal movement towards equilibrium in the labour market. A variant of this approach suggests that mobility responds to the relative demand for a particular skill rather than absolute rates of employment. In segmented labour market theory it is recognised that labour demand (and, concomitantly, labour mobility) is differentiated along sectoral and occupational cleavages according to skill, qualifications and experience (Fielding, 1993; Green, 1995). These cleavages may be further defined along lines of gender, race and class.

Differentiation in local housing markets is also recognised as a source of differentiation in patterns of residential mobility. Existing research emphasises the role of housing tenure and price in establishing and sustaining local housing market

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<sup>1</sup> Residential mobility is defined in terms of wholly moving households, by distance moved, from the UK Census of Population. ONS 1992.

differentiation (Saunders, 1990, p.324). The age and type of housing stock is also considered to be influential (Evans, 1991, p.855). Whilst housing market conditions clearly contribute to the set of circumstances from which households either move or stay it is suggested that these sources of variation have been reified in residential mobility research to date.

In summary, existing research typically interprets residential mobility in terms of movements towards greater equilibrium whether this be through the operation of a continuous or a segmented labour market. This assumes that households respond to economic signals such as those of differential wages and house prices in such a way as to rationally maximise their utility. In practice, patterns and processes of residential mobility are much more complex. Labour is not atomistic but rather embedded in a variety of household structures. The employment prospects of the individual may run contrary to household labour reproduction. Furthermore, housing is a positional good which is insufficiently defined by tenure and price alone. Consequently, household actions are inappropriately defined in terms of rational goal-seeking and maximising behaviour.

The legacy of orthodox economic theory has denied recognition of the situatedness of labour within a variety of household structures<sup>2</sup>. The spatial distribution of household gender divisions of labour reflects, to a certain extent, the operation of a segmented labour market. As the demand for labour is not general or uniform so the movement of a variety of household structures is not general or uniform. Not only does existing research deny recognition of the role of household gender relations in reproducing uneven rates of residential mobility, but also the role of non-material (non-maximising) preferences rooted in household attachment to locale. In this project, the household is recognised as a site of conflict and negotiation; both in terms of labour supply (employment preferences) and labour demand (employment opportunities and constraints) as well as attachment to place.

#### 5.1.0 Aims and objectives

The aim of this chapter is to compile a geography of residential mobility to mirror that produced for household gender divisions of labour in Chapter Four. By comparing these two discrete spatial distributions it is possible to describe the extent to which relative household mobility is determined by processes operating within

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<sup>2</sup> A parallel economic geography and sociology is only latterly recognising the situatedness of labour in relation to firms and their situatedness within networks of information and skills. For instance, see in particular: Granovetter, 1985 and Grabher, 1993.

households of a particular employment structure over and above spatially uneven housing and labour market conditions.

In order to focus attention on the role of household structure, patterns of residential mobility are identified for a specific population of 'nuclear family' households. This controls for the fact that in a general population rates of mobility which might be attributable to a particular type of household employment structure are lost within rates of mobility associated with underlying demographic variation. By working with a specific sampling frame population and combining the scale benefits of aggregate individual data with the detailed information made available from household level micro-data this project is able to extend and develop existing residential mobility research.

The data presented below demonstrates that particular household employment structures ('idealised in terms of 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' households) correspond with particular rates of mobility. This correspondence is not sufficiently explained by local variations in housing or labour market conditions. The question asked is whether increased female participation in paid employment is reflected in a restructuring of the spatial distribution of wholly moving households. Furthermore, whether concentrations of 'dual' earning households are accompanied by lower rates of mobility than those experienced in locations where 'traditional' male breadwinner households are concentrated. Where this is the case, it is suggested that increasing female employment participation, a dominant feature of current employment flexibilisation, (and, concomitantly, increasing numbers of dual earning households) imposes conditions of relative inertia upon local housing and labour markets.

Whilst this project focuses on the role which household employment structure plays in contributing to uneven rates of residential mobility, it is clearly not possible to isolate this causal relationship from the contingency of household housing and employment positions. It is recognised, for instance, that the spatially uneven distribution of household structures is an interdependent function of differentiated markets for housing and employment (Fielding and Halford, 1993).

Nevertheless, some measure of the unique impact of household structure can be gained by comparing rates of mobility for sampling frame 'nuclear families' with

those for a general population<sup>3</sup>. The impact of particular household structures appears to stand out consistently above underlying characteristics which are shared generally between household structure types. Typically, 'dual' earning households experience lower rates of mobility and 'traditional' households experience higher rates of mobility at county level than other households sharing similar housing and labour market conditions in a general population (see Appendix 16).

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, the spatial distribution of wholly moving households is plotted, both in relation to 'intra-urban' (local) and to 'inter-regional' (distant) moves. The resulting maps are then compared with those produced in the previous chapter. Second, household micro-data is introduced which describes the actual rate of mobility for each of the idealised household employment structure types. Finally, Longitudinal Study (LS) data<sup>4</sup> is used to trace household relocation and household structure transformation (either or both) over the period 1981 to 1991.

These three sets of data are discussed in terms of the contribution they provide to existing research. It is argued, for instance, that inadequate attention has been paid to the dynamic nature of household structure. This chapter introduces longitudinal secondary data in order to examine the changes occurring in rates of mobility and household structure over time as a means of addressing this gap in existing research. The importance of interrogating both a temporal as well as a spatial dynamic is discussed together with particular problems encountered in combining cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. It is concluded that a more comprehensive exploration of the key association, between household gender divisions of labour and patterns of residential mobility, needs to consider the 'flow' of household practices and processes across space and time. This requirement ultimately extends beyond the scope of secondary data and calls for the contribution of primary qualitative research.

<sup>3</sup> This is achieved by calculating the difference in Z scores (standard deviations) between rates of mobility for the two populations. In counties where the sampling frame population demonstrates a higher or lower rate of inter-urban mobility, than for the general population, it is suggested that this is influenced by the relative concentration of that household structure composition which experiences mobility or immobility significantly differently from other households sharing similar housing and labour market conditions.

<sup>4</sup> The LS is utilised in this project in preference to other large-scale longitudinal household studies for Britain (such as the British Household Panel Survey) because it is the largest of the national studies and covers the greatest span of time. As with the Sample of Anonymised Records (SARs) the Longitudinal Study (LS) of the UK census can be used as a means to investigate particular relationships within households (Wright and Lynch, 1995; Openshaw and Turton, 1996). The LS provides the additional benefit of tracing the movements (regional, residential and occupational) of the same Longitudinal Study member (LSM), together with all other household members, between discrete points in time.

### 5.2.0 Rates of mobility for general and specific populations

It has been noted previously that there are multiple and overlapping explanations for the uneven distribution of patterns of residential mobility. Most significantly, these are generated from observations of demographic composition (stage in the life-course), housing market structure (tenure, equity, location) and labour market structure (occupation, sector, number and type of household employment) (Champion and Fielding, 1992). In this project, the geographically uneven influences of demographic composition and life-course stage are eased out of the frame by the selection of a specific population of 'nuclear families'. Relative mobility propensities differ for particular stages in the life-course. To demonstrate this, Table 5.1 compares the proportion of households which moved the previous year (wholly moving households) for populations representing different household compositions such as single person, couple or couple with dependants.

Table 5.1 indicates that, in contrast to the mobility of 'early career' single person households, pensioner single person households are disproportionately immobile. Couples with dependants (from the sampling frame 'nuclear families') are more inclined to move than couples without dependants but they remain considerably less mobile than single person households. The least mobile household composition is the multi-person, or extended household, for whom it can be hypothesised there exists the greatest number of place-based ties associated with meeting the needs of diverse members and generations.

**Table 5.1**  
Proportion of households which moved the previous year - presented for a comparative range of population bases for Britain:

<u>Household population base</u>	<u>Wholly moving households</u>	<u>Proportion of total population</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Single pensioner	7	15
Single person (working age)	28	11
Lone parent	10	4
Couple without dependent child(ren)	25	32
Couple with dependent child/ren	25	21
Extended family	5	17
	<hr/> 100	<hr/> 100

Source: ONS 1991 UK Census of Population: data derived from 10% file for Britain from MIDAS

This exercise indicates that single person (non-pensioner) households provide a disproportionately large component of wholly moving households when compared to their membership of the general population (see Hall et al, 1996 for an in-depth study of single-person household mobility). Perhaps surprisingly, lone parent households are also disproportionately mobile in relation to their overall representation. This household type is typically dynamic in its formation, frequently resulting from divorce or other forms of household dissolution. It remains the case, therefore, that there are severe limitations to the interpretation of explanations of residential mobility from secondary data alone.

It can be argued that the ability of a household to make a voluntary house move confers opportunities of occupational advancement and increased housing or environmental amenity. The inability to make a house move has the opposite effect. Rates of wholly moving households do not reveal whether a house move is voluntary (and hence indicative of either employment advancement or increased material well-being) or whether it is involuntary, the result of divorce/separation (the formation of a lone-parent household), or eviction. More significantly, rates of wholly moving households do not reveal situations of non-mobility.

Furthermore, it is unreasonable (though commonplace), to determine the cause of residential mobility from the conditions in which mobility occurs. This practice is misleading because non-mover households may share the same characteristics of household employment structure and local housing and market conditions as mover households. The non-movement of particular households is not picked up in secondary data where evidence is limited to those households having undertaken a change of residence. In practice, it is possible to have a cause and no effect as well as a cause and various effects (Sayer, 1992, p.105). It is only through in-depth primary research that the incidence of non-mobility is observed and, as a consequence, that causal powers and mechanisms of mobility can be disentangled from the pattern and event of mobility.

### 5.2.1 A geography of residential mobility

It is possible to generate a basic national framework of rates of residential mobility at county level from the Small Area Statistics of the 1991 UK Census of Population. Wholly moving household data is restricted to that for a population of 'nuclear family' households and disaggregated by distance moved. For the sake of simplification the range of distances moved from the Census of Population variable are grouped together and divided into two categories. Distances moved of less than 14km are recorded as 'intra-urban' or 'local' (housing) moves and

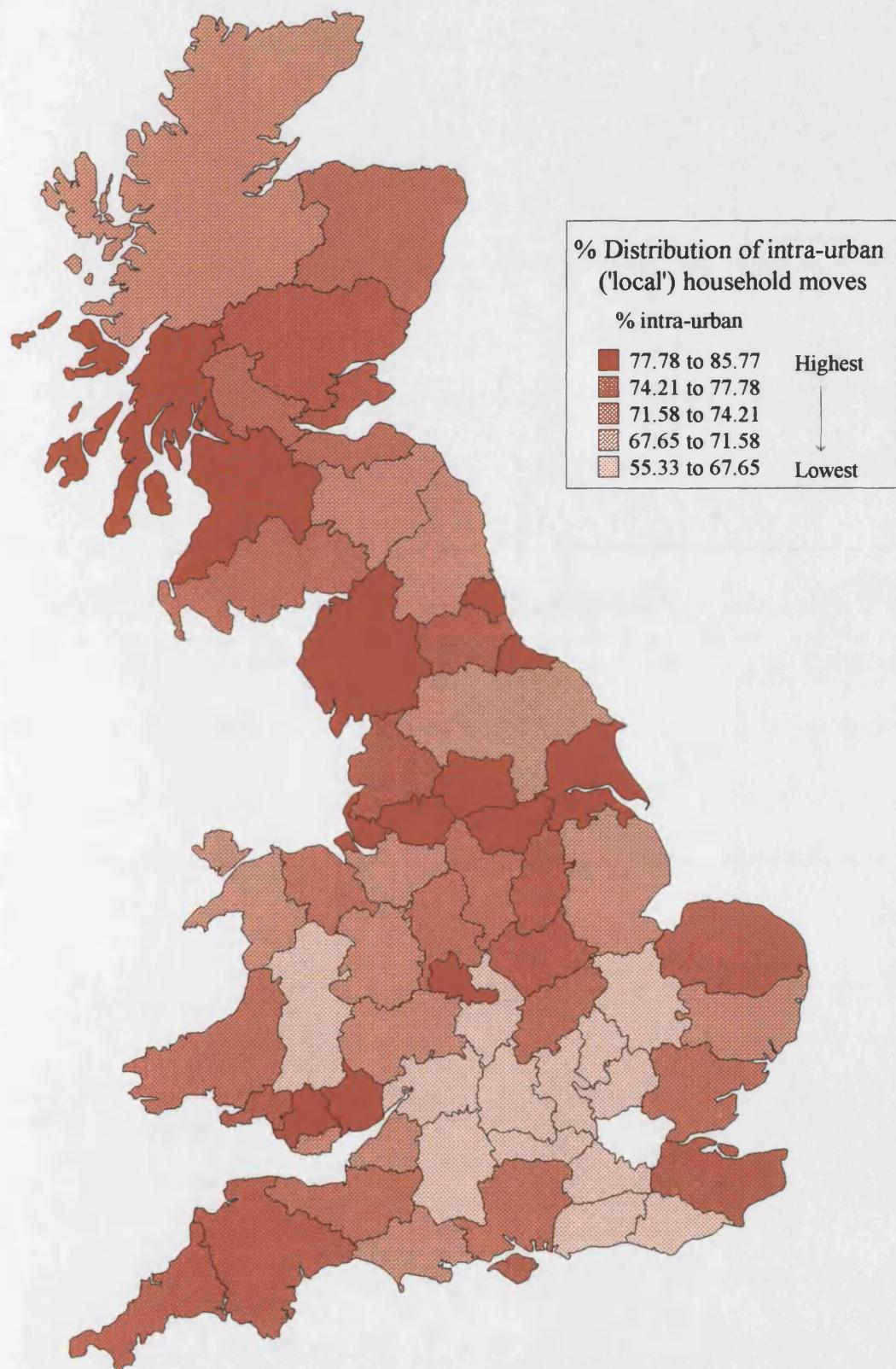
distances moved of more than 15km are recorded as 'inter-regional' or 'distant' (employment) moves<sup>5</sup>. In Britain as a whole, a rate of approximately 7% of households are recorded as wholly moving in the year leading up to census night and of these 65% are 'local' movers by the definition employed here.

The framework generated from this county level data describes the spatial distribution of intra-urban and inter-regional 'mover' households as a proportion of all wholly moving households in the sampling frame population. This data is presented in the two maps; Figure 5.1 (local movers) and Figure 5.2 (long-distant movers) by county of origin. These are then compared with the spatial distribution of 'idealised' household employment structure types; 'traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earner/career, presented in the previous chapter.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Local' moves are defined here as those which occur in the range 0-14km, assumed to be undertaken for the motive of improving housing rather than for a change of employment. 'Distant' moves are taken here to be those of 15km or over. It is acknowledged by Owen and Green (1989) that most migration research has to accept that "it is notoriously difficult to separate out migration streams with different motivations" and that as a result "in the crudest terms, interregional moves (are) assumed to be employment related and intraregional moves housing related" (p.109). It is possible that data for 'distant' moves of 15km and over will include households moving for housing reasons but it is less likely that 'local' moves data will include households moving to new employment.

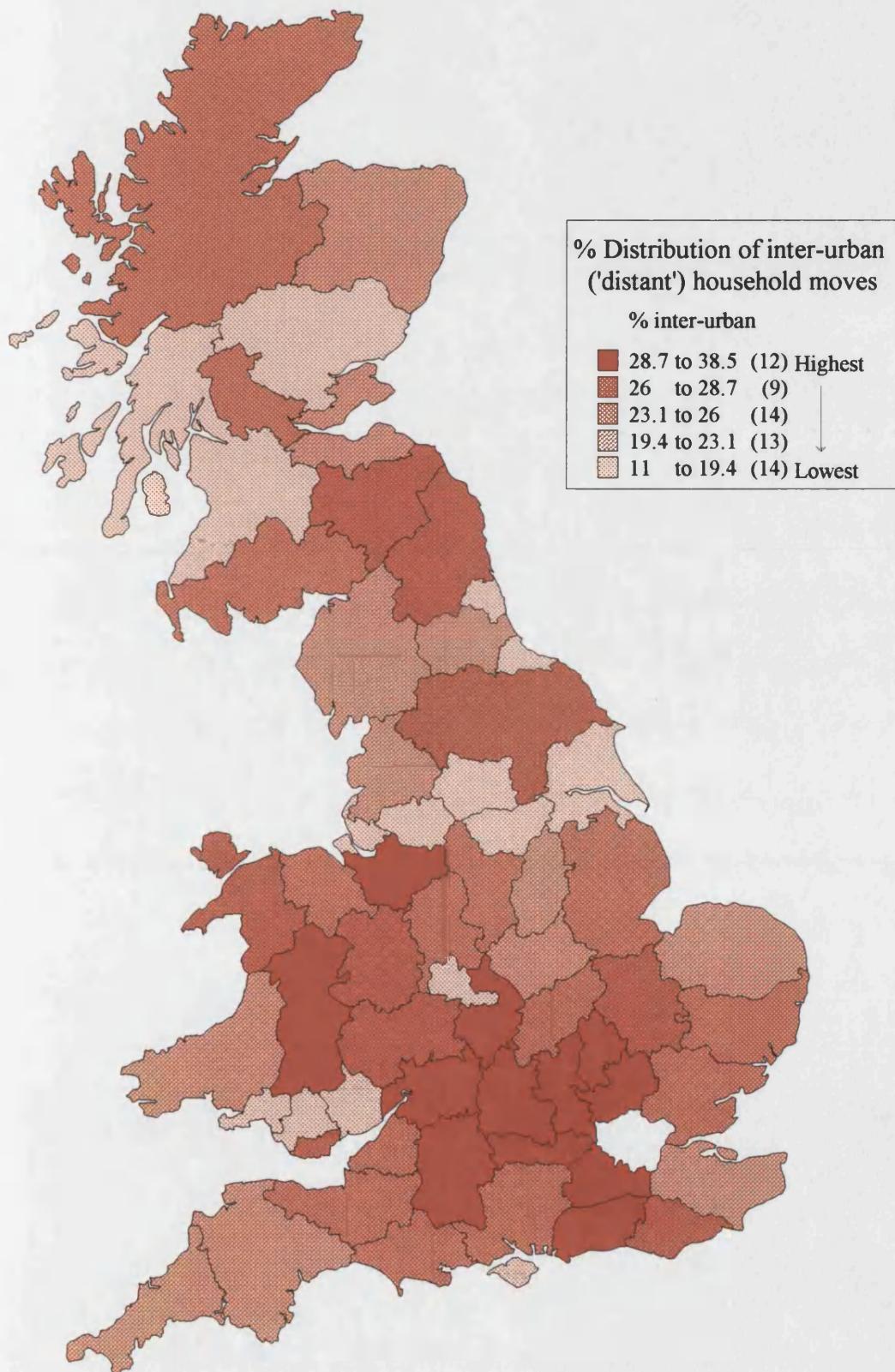
Figure 5.1 % Distribution of intra-urban ('local') household moves - counties in Britain



Note:

Shaded values describe the percentage of wholly moving sampling frame households making 'local' moves

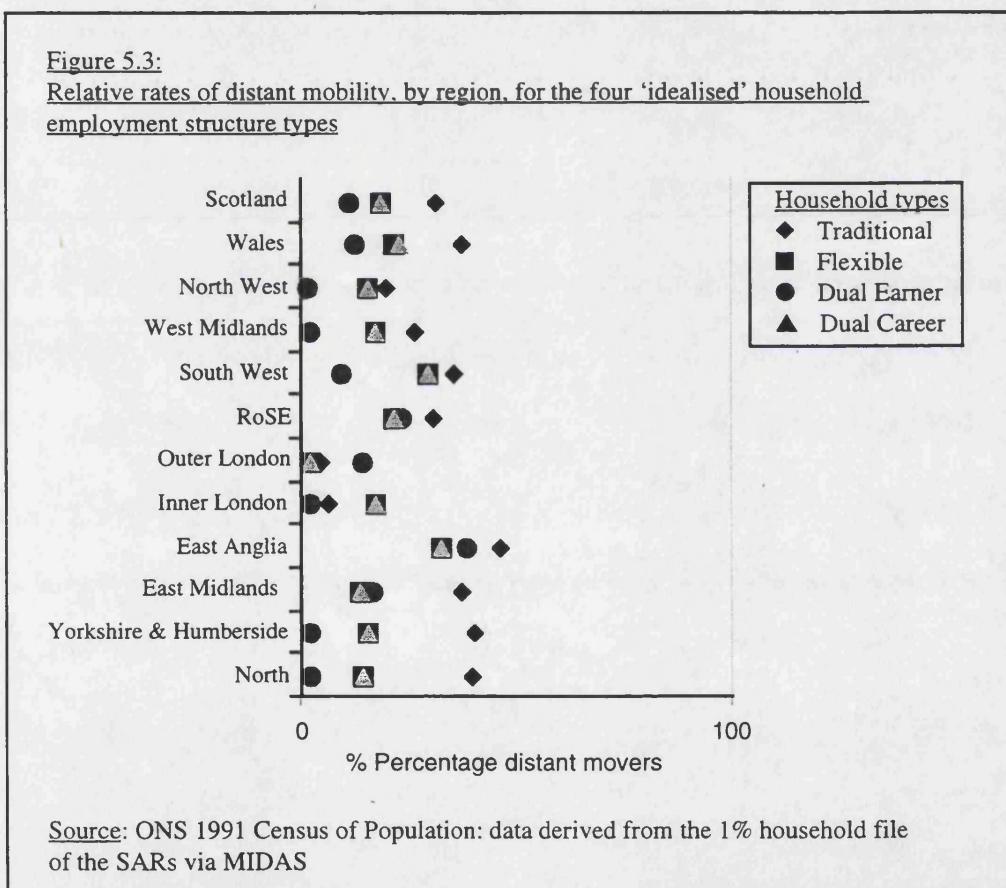
**Figure 5.2 % Distribution of inter-urban ('distant') household moves - counties in Britain**



Note:

Shaded values describe the percentage of wholly moving sampling frame households making 'distant' moves

As a general guide to the following discussion of Figures 5.1 and 5.2 it is useful to consider in overview the association observed between relative rates of mobility by household structure type. This is illustrated at the level of the standard region in the chart below. Figure 5.3 plots comparative rates of distant mobility for each of the 'idealised' household structure types. Despite a widespread regional variation in rates of distant mobility it is evident that 'traditional' households (represented by the diamond graphic) are consistently the most mobile household structure type where it is suggested that relocation is accompanied by a change of employment (moves over 15km). 'Dual earner' households (represented by the circle graphic) are consistently the least distantly mobile.



### 5.2.2 High rates of dual earning households - low levels of movement

Figure 5.1 shows a concentration of intra-urban 'local' movers in Scotland, and the North and North West of England. Figure 5.2, understandably, describes the reverse of this. Inter-regional 'distant' movers are concentrated in an Eastern coastal arc, in Wales and the South West. In crude terms there is an apparent match between the spatial distribution of 'local' movers in Figure 5.1 and the spatial

distribution of 'dual' earning households introduced in the previous chapter in Figure 4.4. Similarly, between the spatial distribution of 'distant' movers in Figure 5.2 and that for 'traditional' households in Figure 4.2.

There is a clear association between counties which record high rates of sampling frame women in full time paid employment and a low propensity for movers to make 'distant' inter-regional moves (lightest shading on Figure 5.2). The counties recording above average rates for sampling frame women in full time paid employment (Appendix 8) typically correspond with below average rates of wholly moving households making distant moves. For example, 18% of sampling frame women in Greater Manchester are in full time paid employment (around a mean of 14%) with 17% of wholly moving households in this County making distant moves (around a mean of 22%) (Appendix 17).

In counties where the sampling frame is less distantly mobile, the dominant household employment structures are 'flexible' and 'dual' earning households (darkest shading on Figures 4.3 and 4.4). This suggests that inter-regional household movement (that typically associated with employment relocation) tends to be inhibited in the presence of more than one household member, especially where the additional earner is in full time employment.

### 5.2.3 High rates of male breadwinning households - high levels of movement

There is also a clear association between counties which demonstrate low rates of sampling frame women in full time paid employment and a high propensity for sampling frame moves to make 'distant' moves (darkest shading on Figure 5.2). Furthermore, 'traditional' households are typically the dominant household employment structure in those counties which record the highest rates of distant movement<sup>6</sup>. This trend is further reinforced by the observation that the majority of counties with below average rates of sampling frame women in full time employment (Appendix 8) demonstrate above average rates of wholly moving households making distant moves. For instance, Surrey has a rate of 12% of sampling frame women in full time employment (mean: 14%) and 35% of wholly moving households making distant moves (mean: 22%) (Appendix 17).

It is also worth noting that those counties demonstrating high rates of sampling frame women in full time employment together with low rates of wholly moving

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<sup>6</sup> In the two cases in which this trend is disrupted (Tayside and Strathclyde) mobility rates for the general population are particularly low.

households making distant moves are typically characterised by interconnected urbanised local labour markets. These locations offer greater opportunity for employment within commuting distance for two partners from a single housing location. Equally, counties in the lowest quartile of women employed full time, where rates are concomitantly high for households making distant moves, are characterised as areas of dispersed settlement. In areas of sparse urbanisation, there are fewer opportunities for female spouse employment where it is understood that women with dependants typically undertake employment closer to home than is the case for male partners (Camstra, 1995).

Clearly, not only will the density of local employment opportunities play a part in defining household situations but so too will occupational profile. For instance, two partners seeking full time employment in occupations which are relatively ubiquitous, such as in accountancy, financial services, retailing, school teaching or general-practice medicine, are likely to both find employment from a single housing location. In contrast, two partners seeking full time employment in occupations which are either geographically specific or which are restricted to a limited labour market (university lecturing, medical specialism or senior civil service/local government) are less likely to be able to make a distant house move without incurring the sacrifice of one employment or the prospects for advancement of one or both careers.

### 5.3.0 Rates of mobility for the 'idealised' household structures: data from the SARs

There is an obvious paucity of explanatory detail in any geography of residential mobility in which patterns of household employment are derived from aggregated individual level data. This can be addressed in the first instance by considering the household employment structure of wholly moving households from SARs micro-data. The SARs data provides the most powerful insight available from secondary data into actual (rather than aggregated) relations between household structure and household movement. However, the drawback is that it limits the presentation of this data to the scale of the Standard Region. Consequently, this richness of detail is gained at the cost of the fine geographic scale available with the data introduced above.

A comprehensive picture of household movement still requires that multiple sources of data be analysed in tandem. Whilst this approach extends the advantages and militates against the weaknesses of each set of data it ultimately limits the degree to which causal associations can be established. This is true for any secondary data

analysis. It is for this reason that the search for causal explanations of residential mobility requires the input of primary qualitative research. The overlapping cross-sectional, aggregate household, and longitudinal snap-shots of residential mobility represented in this chapter can only be blended via the intensive research of household biographies in the following chapter.

Using the household SARs micro-data it is possible to identify rates of mobility, defined by distance, in terms of local and distant moves for each of the idealised household employment structures; 'traditional', 'flexible', 'dual earner' and 'dual career'<sup>7</sup> for the sampling frame population. The results of these derived variables are presented in Tables 5.2 to 5.5 below. Movers are first recorded as a proportion of the total sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households and then described in terms of the composition of local and distant movers as a proportion of wholly moving households for each region.

A comparison of the rates of mobility presented in these four tables indicates that 'traditional' male breadwinner households are consistently more residentially mobile than either 'dual earner', 'dual career' or flexible households. This trend was first introduced in overview in Figure 5.3 above. What is also suggested is that, with the exception of the South East and Outer London, 'dual' earning households are less mobile than flexible households. Dual earner households are marginally more mobile than dual career households but dual earner mover households are the least disposed of all four types to make distant moves. Dual career households are less mobile than either 'traditional' or 'dual earner' household types but within this reduced rate of overall mobility they are the most disposed of all types to make a distant move.

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<sup>7</sup> With the level of detail available from the SAR's it is possible to disaggregate 'dual' earning 'mover' households by occupational status to establish separate rates of mobility for dual career (both partners in professional or managerial employment) and dual earner (neither partner in professional or managerial employment) idealised household types according to the definitions of this thesis.

**Table 5.2: 'Traditional' wholly moving households**

REGION	TRADITIONAL WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS		
	MOVERS % of nuclear family households	LOCAL <sup>(a)</sup> % of movers	DISTANT <sup>(b)</sup> % of movers
North	10	61	39
Yorkshire & Humberside	8	60	40
East Midlands	9	63	37
East Anglia	15	54	46
Inner London	13	94	6
Outer London	8	96	4
RoSE	11	70	30
South West	13	65	35
West Midlands	8	74	26
North West	9	81	19
Wales	9	63	37
Scotland	12	69	31
MEAN	11	71	29
General Population	7	63	24 <sup>(c)</sup>

**Notes:**

- (a) 'Local' = a short distance move of less than 15km, typically understood to indicate a move made for housing/environmental purposes
- (b) 'Distant' = a longer distance move of anything between 15km - 250+km, typically understood to suggest a move made together with some form of employment change/relocation
- (c) % of Movers do not add up to 100%. The remainder either moved outside Britain or were from an unstated area of origin.

**Source:** ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 1% household file of the SARs via MIDAS

**Table 5.3: 'Flexible' wholly moving households**

REGION	FLEXIBLE WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS		
	MOVERS % of nuclear family households	LOCAL <sup>(a)</sup> % of movers	DISTANT <sup>(b)</sup> % of movers
North	3	86	14
Yorkshire & Humberside	4	85	15
East Midlands	4	87	13
East Anglia	5	68	32
Inner London	3	83	17
Outer London	5	98	2
RoSE	6	79	21
South West	7	71	29
West Midlands	5	83	17
North West	3	85	15
Wales	6	79	21
Scotland	7	82	18
MEAN	5	82	18
General Population	7	63	24(c)

**Notes:**

- (a) 'Local' = a short distance move of less than 15km, typically understood to indicate a move made for housing/environmental purposes
- (b) 'Distant' = a longer distance move of anything between 15km - 250+km, typically understood to suggest a move made together with some form of employment change/relocation
- (c) % of Movers do not add up to 100%. The remainder either moved outside Britain or were from an unstated area of origin.

Source: ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 1% household file of the SARs via MIDAS

**Table 5.4: 'Dual Earner' wholly moving households**

REGION	DUAL EARNER WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS		
	MOVERS % of nuclear family households	LOCAL <sup>(a)</sup> % of movers	DISTANT <sup>(b)</sup> % of movers
North	5	100	0
Yorkshire & Humberside	4	100	0
East Midlands	6	84	16
East Anglia	12	62	38
Inner London	6	100	0
Outer London	6	86	14
RoSE	7	77	23
South West	11	91	9
West Midlands	5	100	0
North West	5	99	1
Wales	5	88	12
Scotland	9	90	10
MEAN	7	90	10
General population	7	63	23 <sup>(c)</sup>

**Notes:**

- (a) 'Local' = a short distance move of less than 15km, typically understood to indicate a move made for housing/environmental purposes
- (b) 'Distant' = a longer distance move of anything between 15km - 250+km, typically understood to suggest a move made together with some form of employment change/relocation
- (c) % of Movers do not add up to 100%. The remainder either moved outside Britain or were from an unstated area of origin.

**Source:** ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 1% household file of the SARs via MIDAS

**Table 5.5: 'Dual Career' wholly moving households**

REGION	DUAL CAREER WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS		
	MOVERS % of nuclear family households	LOCAL <sup>(a)</sup> % of movers	DISTANT <sup>(b)</sup> % of movers
North	5	67	33
Yorkshire & Humberside	7	71	29
East Midlands	6	22	78
East Anglia	7	60	40
Inner London	8	100	0
Outer London	7	85	15
Rest of S. East	5	74	26
South West	3	25	75
West Midlands	11	74	26
North West	4	50	50
Wales	4	40	60
Scotland	6	83	17
MEAN	6	63	37
General population	7	63	24 <sup>(c)</sup>

**Notes:**

- (a) 'Local' = a short distance move of less than 15km, typically understood to indicate a move made for housing/environmental purposes
- (b) 'Distant' = a longer distance move of anything between 15km - 250+km, typically understood to suggest a move made together with some form of employment change/relocation
- (c) % of Movers do not add up to 100%. The remainder either moved outside Britain or were from an unstated area of origin.

Source: ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 1% household file of the SARs via MIDAS

### 5.3.1 The ambiguous role of female part-time employment

Flexible households are, perhaps surprisingly, the least mobile household employment structure type. This is contrary to the expectations of neo-classical theory in which female part time employment is conventionally viewed as 'secondary', providing household 'pin-money' (Reid, 1934; Becker, 1981). If income from part-time employment is purely supplementary to the payment of household overheads it might be expected that this additional income would translate into increased housing amenity (spatial or environmental) realised through higher rates of 'local' housing moves. This is not the case. The low rate of overall mobility for this household type is a more significant feature than the breakdown of local to distant moves, relative to the other household types<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> In Britain as a whole: 6.6% of all households are recorded as 'wholly moving' according to the SARs of the 1991 Census of Population for a general population. Of these migrant households; 63.40% are 'local' movers (0-14km) and 23.50% are 'distant' (15km and over), the remainder either moved from outside Britain or were from an unstated area of origin (CMU, 1994).

In part, this evidence reflects an ongoing transformation in the role played by part-time female employment in household survival (Hewitt, 1996). Changing patterns of household employment structure are reflected in recent theoretical development but less so in research design (where household earner employment is not disaggregated by hours worked) and the rhetoric of policy-makers who perpetuate the myth that income from part-time employment is supplementary rather than essential.

It can be argued that contrary to earlier research assertions, the part-time female wage is increasingly important to the economic viability of a significant population of households (Pinch and Storey, 1991). In flexible households it may be the case that female part time employment does not confer equal sway in residential mobility decision-making (since, the 'bargaining power' of part time employment is unlikely to take precedence over that of the 'primary' male earner). Equally, it is unclear to what extent changes in the economic requirements of a second household income are reflected in equivalent changes in the perceived normative gender role of part-time female employment.

Nevertheless, the low level of mobility experienced by these households suggests that decision-making operates from a more extensive range of opportunities and constraints than that implied by orthodox (monetary) exchange models. The degree of participation in (or remuneration from) female spouse employment may not impose a significant 'drag' (through the impact of career salience or employment conflict) on relative mobility for this household type. It is clear, however, that 'flexible' households experience a degree of stress which results in abnormally low rates of residential mobility. This stress, which is insufficiently explained by orthodox 'bargaining power' models of decision-making, might in turn reflect financial constraints, employment co-ordination, or reliance on local networks of childcare support.

### 5.3.2 Male employment security and changing gender role cultures

Tables 5.2 to 5.5 also demonstrate that the correspondence between the 'idealised' household employment structure types and particular mobility propensities is stronger than the correspondence across regional housing and labour markets. If regional housing or labour market effects were to exert a pronounced influence on rates of mobility this would be expressed through universal trends across household types in particular regions. Indeed, there is a weak pattern of a regional pan-household local market influence in the regions of the North, North West, East Midlands and South West. These regions, together with Yorkshire and

Humberside demonstrate relatively similar, below average, rates of mobility for all the household types. The more pronounced pattern, however, is that which emphasises the high mobility of 'traditional' households such as those in East Anglia, Inner London, Outer London and the South East. This echoes the spatial distribution described above at County level in Figure 5.2.

It is not possible to consider the motives which give rise to the process of household decision-making from the patterns of residential mobility described in this section. What can be said is that particular distributions of household gender divisions of labour correspond with distinct patterns of residential mobility which can in turn be related to household structure types. For example, where reduced rates of mobility, especially that of 'distant' mobility, exists for households with more than one earner the implication is that female participation in the labour market applies friction to household mobility opportunities where conventionally it is assumed that these coincide with male (breadwinner) employment prospects.

The data presented here suggests that the greatest impact on relative household mobility is likely to stem from differential rates of regional male employment security (sectoral and occupational) rather than from increasing career salience or mobility prospects for female career employment. This echoes the understanding of existing labour market mobility research (Morris, 1989). It is simply not possible to say more from cross-sectional secondary data whether, for example, the reduced mobility experienced by dual earning ('dual' and 'flexible') households is the result of financial labour supply effects; the entry or 'early' return of women to paid employment in the context of reduced male employment security or increased costs of living; or gender preference labour supply effects; increased female career salience though the life-course.

Biographical research introduced in the following chapter suggests the existence of long-term, enduring, female employment trajectories (past and future career plans) the effects of which are not be picked up in cross-sectional snap-shots of a specific stage in the life-course. Moreover, beyond (and interdependently with) the influence of regional restructuring of male breadwinner employment, which is the subject of much recent debate, it remains credible to argue that changing gender role cultures and a restructuring of systems of patriarchy are bound up with the spatial distribution of differentiation in household gender divisions of labour and patterns of residential mobility (Henwood et al., 1987; Massey, 1995, p.187).

#### 5.4.0 The 'flow' of household structure

In existing residential mobility research, the application of longitudinal analysis is typically limited to an examination of aggregate populations of individuals or to migration patterns for unitary households. The specific examination of households defined by their internal employment structure is underdeveloped. Not only does residential mobility research need to recognise cross-sectional variation in household gender divisions of labour but also the dynamic nature of these structures. The household is not static but rather 'flows' across time and space. To a limited extent, this 'flow' is captured in longitudinal secondary data, from a sequence of overlapping snap-shots, as the observation of household structure transformation. Clearly, a more comprehensive representation of this 'flow' of household structure is gained from qualitative life and work history analysis (Dex, 1991). This approach is pursued in Chapter Six.

Within the framework of secondary data analysis, a strong case can be made for the application of longitudinal data to household research. For instance, by considering the transformation which has occurred in the profile of household employment structures for the sampling frame population over the period 1981 - 1991. Table 5.6 describes the extent to which the 'norm' of the 'traditional' male breadwinner household has been eroded. The absolute number of 'traditional' households in the sampling frame more than halved over the decade. The greatest gain has been in dual career and dual earner household types indicating that an increasing number of 'mothers' are participating in full time employment. Without more detailed consideration of longitudinal and qualitative household research it is not possible to speculate on the process of this transformation or what this impact it is likely to have on relative rates of household mobility.

The growing trend for married women with children to remain in, or re-enter, paid employment is likely to have a bearing on both absolute and relative patterns of residential mobility. For instance, it is demonstrated in this chapter that locations recording high rates of dual earning households experience low rates of residential mobility. Counties and regions recording a high concentration of 'traditional' male breadwinner households experience relatively high rates of residential mobility (especially 'distant', employment related). At the same time that the employment structure and residential location of dual earning households appears resistant to change across time and space, those of 'traditional' households are not. Not only are 'traditional' male-breadwinner households particularly spatially mobile but they are also likely to 'flow' into and out of alternative employment structures through the life-course. Following the logic of this correspondence, a continuing rise in the

number of dual earning households is likely to reduce absolute rates of mobility at the same time that a continuing 'stickiness' in the concentration of dual earning households is likely to perpetuate the uneven relative distribution of rates of residential mobility.

**Table 5.6**  
**Changing structure composition of national household employment type profile: 1981 and 1991**

	Dual Career	Dual Earner	Flexible	Traditional	TOTAL
1981	3,916	3,992	18,818	27,832	54,558
1991	9,599	7,737	24,110	13,112	54,558
Actual change	+ 5,683	+ 3,745	+ 5,292	- 14,720	
proportional change (1991)	1.46	0.94	0.28	- 0.53	

**Source:** Crown Copyright, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University.

What the preceding discussion suggests is that longitudinal analysis represents the spatial and temporal flow of household structure whereby particular household employment structures are associated with particular trends of spatial mobility and structure transformation. Moreover, longitudinal analysis offers the possibility of disengaging these two, potentially contradictory, patterns of residential mobility which are conflated in cross-sectional secondary data. It is possible, for instance, that high rates of mobility may be recorded for wholly moving 'traditional' households as the result of the temporary or permanent formation of this type as relocation occurs. Thus, 'traditional' households may not necessarily generate higher rates of mobility but rather may be themselves the result of the 'wife's sacrifice' in moves which originate in 'flexible' or 'dual' earning household types (Bonney and Love, 1991; Bruegel, 1996). It is only through the longitudinal analysis of household micro-data that it is possible to differentiate a house move made by a stable household type from a house move which coincides with household type transformation.

By combining cross-sectional and longitudinal research it is possible to 'triangulate' observations about household mobility where data from one source alone is potentially distorted by its definitional parameters (Hage and Meeker, 1988, p.182). This is especially true of household mobility research in which time and

space are key mediators of causal associations. Moreover, temporal patterns which are highlighted by the analysis of longitudinal data generate specific questions which can be taken up for detailed probing in primary qualitative research. In this way, the combined use of cross-sectional and longitudinal secondary data analysis provides a comprehensive platform from which to launch specifically targeted questions about household mobility.

Finally, as a note of caution, it must be borne in mind that the 'triangulation' of observations from complementary secondary data-sets is imperfect. Cross-sectional and longitudinal data offer fundamentally different perspectives of the same research question which, whilst usefully viewed in parallel, need to be understood in terms of their separate advantages and limitations (Congdon, 1992; Nicholson, 1992; Hattersley and Creeser, 1995). It is possible to provide closely proximate conditions for the derivation of equivalent sampling frame populations, census variables and household definitions from both cross-sectional and longitudinal Census of Population data. These two sources of data are not, however, directly commensurable (Creeser, 1994)<sup>9</sup>.

#### 5.4.1 Changing rates of household mobility: data from the Longitudinal Study

The analysis of household micro-data from the SARs makes it possible to address explicitly the hypothesis that an association exists between household gender divisions of labour and patterns of residential mobility. A clear association does exist and it appears that it imposes a 'drag' on rates of mobility, particularly with regard to 'distant' moves, for households with more than one earner. In addition, cleavages in mobility rates operate between full time and part time female employment and between 'career' (professional and managerial) and non-career employment.

Despite the high degree of specificity built into a picture of mobility from household micro-data (mobility by distance moved for employment structures by gender, hours worked and occupational status) this representation is confined to a snap-shot of household behaviour. Using data from the LS it is possible to trace the movement of a specific population of sampling frame households by the 'idealised' employment structure types; 'traditional', 'flexible', 'dual earner' and

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<sup>9</sup> This is, in part, because of basic technical differences between the 1981 and 1991 census files which, for reasons of consistency, influence the LS in ways which can not be reconciled with the 1991 SARs. For instance, the LS sampling frame does not include those 'nuclear family' households which are headed by a cohabiting couple (Dale et al., 1993). The LS also tends to overrepresent large households (over 10 members) relative to the SARs because of the exclusion of these, for reasons of confidentiality, in the latter (Openshaw, 1996).

'dual career' at the level of the Standard Region between 1981 and 1991. This is a decade in which significant changes occurred in housing and labour market conditions in Britain<sup>10</sup>. Movements within this period are recorded as being either a transformation in employment structure ('traditional' to 'dual earner', for instance), a local house move, a relocation (to a new region) or both a change of residence and a concomitant transformation of employment composition<sup>11</sup>. The spatial distribution of each of these movements is presented for each of the 'idealised' household employment structure types in Tables 5.7 to 5.10.

#### 5.4.2 Transformation of the 'traditional' male-breadwinner household 1981-1991

Overall, the data in Tables 5.7 to 5.10 indicates that half of the population of 'nuclear family' households, defined as such in both 1981 and 1991, maintained a 'status quo' position over the decade, remaining both in the same region and the same household type. Proportionally, of all household types, 'dual career' and 'flexible' households are the least likely and 'traditional' households the most likely to be found in a new employment structure type or region in 1991. The widespread transformation of sampling frame households from the 'traditional' male-breadwinner norm in 1981 to one and a half or two earner households in 1991 was first introduced as a national trend in Table 5.6 above. In Table 5.7, Outer London is alone in maintaining a relatively stable base of 'traditional' households over the period. 'Dual career' and 'traditional' households demonstrate the highest rate of inter-regional 'distant' movement, almost double that of 'dual earner' and 'flexible' households. However, a considerably higher proportion of 'traditional' households than 'dual career' households are in a new type category in 1991.

Of all households in 1981 those in the 'dual career' type in Table 5.10 made proportionately more inter-regional 'distant' moves than the other types. In half

<sup>10</sup> It is particularly important to generate an overview of household divisions of labour and patterns of mobility from the largest available household level sample in this project because further restrictions are imposed in terms of the disaggregation of a specific population by region and employment composition type. Sample size remains a limitation, even for a 1% large-scale study, and this militates against the application of complex multi-variate statistical analysis (Hamnett and Randolph, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> Under investigation here are not demographic questions such as the formation and dissolution of families and households over the period but rather the mobility prospects of households, sharing similar demographic and life stage characteristics, which occupy particular employment composition types and regional locations at the start of the period. For this purpose, households which are 'nuclear family' households in 1981 but dissolve before 1991 (either through death, divorce or by the 'loss' of the presence of 'dependent' child/ren) are excluded from the study as are households which form 'nuclear families' after 1981. This is a quite different application of the LS to more conventional 'input-output' audits of household population change (Penhale, 1990).

of these, a transformation in household employment structure either accompanied or followed this relocation. Similarly, 'traditional' households demonstrate a high rate of inter-regional mobility over the period. In the majority of cases, a transformation to 'flexible' or 'dual' household employment structure either accompanied or followed this.

It is significant to note that whilst the rate of transformation (of household structure type) of 'traditional' households is comparable for movers and stayers alike it is considerably higher for 'dual career' mover households than it is for 'dual career' non-mover households. 'Dual career' distant movers tend to lose household employment or occupational status (interpreted as the 'wife's sacrifice') by a transformation into either a 'dual earner', 'flexible' or 'traditional' household type. This trend is especially notable for households moving out of Inner London.

#### 5.4.3 Inertia in 'flexible and 'dual earner' households' 1981 -1991

Both 'flexible' (Table 5.8) and 'dual earner' (Table 5.9) household types demonstrate a low rate of inter-regional mobility. These are the most stable types overall, both in terms of mobility and household structure. Where inter-regional moves occur they are generally no more likely to have been accompanied or been followed by a transformation in household structure than is the case for households which stay within the region. Once again, those households which moved out of Inner London in 1981 are disproportionately more likely to have experienced a transformation of household structure than the same type in other regions. In contrast with 'dual career' households, however, it is not clear whether this transformation of 'dual earner' and 'flexible' households (on or after relocation) is associated with a reduction (to flexible or traditional type) or an increase (to 'dual' career/ earning type) in female labour force participation.

Table 5.7: 'Traditional' households in 1981: movement/household type recorded in 1991

REGION	TRADITIONAL			
	Stayers		Movers (c)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
North	33	60	2	5
Yorkshire and Humberside	33	60	2	6
East Midlands	32	59	3	7
East Anglia	32	59	3	6
Inner London	31	34	6	19
Outer London	36	46	6	11
ROSE	33	58	4	6
South West	31	59	4	6
West Midlands	34	59	2	5
North West	32	60	3	5
Wales	34	60	2	4
MEAN	33	56	4	7

Notes:

(a) No change in household employment structure 'type'  
 (b) New household employment structure 'type'  
 (c) 'Distant' Inter-regional movers

Source: Crown Copyrights, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University

Table 5.8: 'Flexible' households in 1981: movement/household type recorded in 1991

REGION	FLEXIBLE			
	Stayers		Movers (c)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
North	55	42	1	2
Yorkshire and Humberside	57	38	2	3
East Midlands	52	43	2	2
East Anglia	50	44	2	4
Inner London	38	41	8	13
Outer London	45	42	5	8
ROSE	49	45	2	4
South West	53	41	3	3
West Midlands	55	41	2	2
North West	52	44	2	2
Wales	52	43	2	3
MEAN	51	42	3	4

Notes:

(a) No change in household employment structure 'type'  
 (b) New household employment structure 'type'  
 (c) 'Distant' Inter-regional movers

Source: Crown Copyrights, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University

Table 5.9: 'Dual Earner' households in 1981: movement/household type recorded in 1991

DUAL EARNER				
REGION	Stayers		Movers (c)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
North	50	46	2	2
Yorkshire and Humberside	51	46	2	2
East Midlands	54	42	1	3
East Anglia	47	49	3	1
Inner London	39	29	12	19
Outer London	49	42	2	7
ROSE	45	48	1	5
South West	53	43	1	3
West Midlands	53	43	2	2
North West	52	45	1	2
Wales	51	45	1	2
MEAN	49	43	3	4

Notes:

(a) No change in household employment structure 'type'  
 (b) New household employment structure 'type'  
 (c) 'Distant' Inter-regional movers

Source: Crown Copyrights, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University

Table 5.10: 'Dual Career' households in 1981: movement/household type recorded in 1991

DUAL CAREER				
REGION	Stayers		Movers (c)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
North	55	35	4	6
Yorkshire and Humberside	60	32	3	5
East Midlands	60	28	8	4
East Anglia	54	36	5	5
Inner London	32	24	17	27
Outer London	47	27	17	9
ROSE	52	41	4	3
South West	40	45	6	9
West Midlands	57	35	6	2
North West	57	34	6	3
Wales	67	27	3	3
MEAN	53	33	7	7

Notes:

(a) No change in household employment structure 'type'  
 (b) New household employment structure 'type'  
 (c) 'Distant' Inter-regional movers

Source: Crown Copyrights, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK 1991 Census of Population, SSRU, City University

Finally, there is once again the suggestion of a crude north-south divide in patterns of change over the period. Regions in the north; Yorkshire & Humberside, East and West Midlands, the North West and Wales demonstrate the greatest degree of stability. A disproportionately high rate of all households in these regions remain in the same region and in the same household employment structure over the period compared with regions in the South. A disproportionately greater degree of change, in terms of both household employment structure and regional relocation is characteristic of households in East Anglia, Inner London, Outer London and the South West.

#### 5.4.4 Relative mobility prospects: 'local' and 'distant' movers

Despite the temporal insights which longitudinal analysis make possible, it remains the case that secondary data, whether cross-sectional or longitudinal, does not shed light on the different potential motives for household relocation or type transformation. It would be desirable, for instance, to differentiate between transformations of household employment structure imposed by financial constraints (the 'need' for a second income) from personal career preferences and household economic changes associated with childrearing. It is recognised, for instance, that the difficulties (and costs) of child care arrangements will decrease over the course of the period<sup>12</sup>.

Given these technical limitations, the direction taken with the analysis of the LS is simply to consider the relative residential mobility prospects, defined in terms of 'local' and 'distant' moves, as a proportion of wholly moving households, for each household type over the period. Table 5.11 describes at a national scale the relative rate of wholly moving households for each household type in 1981 and again in 1991. Table 5.12 describes at a national scale the breakdown of distant mobility for each household type. The results of a regional distribution of this exercise are presented in Appendix 18. Together these two tables describe the extent to which the mobility prospects of particular household employment structure types can be seen to increase or decrease over the period.

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<sup>12</sup> In order to meet the sampling frame criteria couples need to have at least one child born to them in April 1981, consequently, the age of the youngest dependent child in the sampling frame households in 1991 will be at least 10.

**Table 5.11**

Relative rates of mobility: proportional change in wholly moving households by household employment structure, 1981 and 1991

WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS

	Traditional %	Flexible %	Dual Earner %	Dual Career %
1981	3.0	2.1	2.9	2.7
1991	3.4	2.1	2.5	3.1
Proportional Change	0.13	0	-0.13	0.14

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK census, SSRU, City University.

Table 5.11 indicates that the mobility prospects of 'traditional' households improve and those for 'dual earner' households decline over the period. In Table 5.12 a second trend indicates that within a proportionally greater population of wholly moving 'traditional' households in 1991 a smaller proportion of 'distant' moves are made by this household type than was the case in 1981. Within a reduced rate of overall mobility for 'dual earner' households the proportion of movers making 'distant' moves fell by 6%. 'Dual earner' households not only consistently demonstrate the lowest rate of distant mobility compared to other employment structures but also demonstrate a reduced propensity to be distantly mobile over the decade.

The reverse trend is indicated for 'dual career' households. Rates of mobility for this household type increase by 9% and of this increased rate, a slightly greater proportion of movers in 1991 made distant moves than was the case in 1981. Nevertheless, rates of mobility and the proportion of movers making distant moves remains lower for 'dual career' households throughout the period than for 'traditional' households. Finally, the rate of wholly moving households for 'flexible' households is stable over the period. A slightly higher rate of 'flexible' movers made 'distant' moves in 1991 than was the case ten years earlier. This breakdown of 'local' to 'distant' moves still indicates clearly that 'flexible' households made fewer 'distant' moves than 'traditional' or 'dual career' households throughout the period.

Table 5.12

Relative rates of mobility: proportional breakdown of 'local' and 'distant' mover households by household employment structure, 1981 and 1991

DISTANCE MOVED: WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS

		Traditional %	Flexible %	Dual Earner %	Dual Career %
1981	'local' moves	76	81	85	77
	'distant' moves	24	19	15	23
1991	'local' moves	75	79	86	75
	'distant' moves	25	21	14	25
1981 - 1991 Proportional Change: distant moves		+ 4 %	+ 10 %	- 6 %	+ 9 %

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK census, SSRU, City University.

#### 5.4.5 Further observations: life-course mobility trends

Within this national framework there are some pronounced regional trends which, whilst less distinct than those which characterise particular household types, provide several observations of interest. For instance, the greatest degree of stability, in terms of the breakdown of 'local' to 'distant' movers for both 1981 and 1991, consistently occurs in the North West and to a lesser extent regions in the north of England. When rates of household structure transformation are compared at a regional scale for 1981 and 1991 (Appendix 19) it is clear that those regions which demonstrate above average rates of 'dual earner' and 'dual career' households at the start of the period (North West, Wales, East Midlands, West Midlands) also experience the lowest proportional increase in these types as well as the lowest decrease in 'traditional' households in the period up to 1991. This constancy suggests the underlying influence of 'non-traditional' 'egalitarian' normative gender roles.

In corollary, the regions of East Anglia, the South East (RoSE) and South West demonstrate the lowest rates of dual earning households at the start of the period but the greatest proportional increase in 'dual earner' and 'dual career' households and the greatest decrease in 'traditional' households by 1991 in a 'catching up'

process of household employment structure transformation (Appendix 19). These regions also demonstrate the greatest increase in rates of distant mobility over the period. The sustained mobility of households undergoing transformation in the south suggests the ongoing underlying influence of 'traditional' normative gender roles in which a 'wife's sacrifice' to household mobility is not strongly resisted.

The combined occurrence of a significant increase in rates of dual earning couples together with increased rates of distant mobility suggests an apparent contradiction. It is suggested, however, that high rates of distant mobility in East Anglia, the South East and the South West signal the movement of households after family formation into regions with booming economies (in the late 1980's) which are also characterised by high housing costs. For example, the combination of reduced child-care constraints (school age dependents) and high costs of living often translate into increased female spouse participation in paid employment, reflected in a proportional increase in rates of dual earning households, following distant moves into these regions<sup>13</sup>. In these cases increased female employment participation would not necessarily be expected to translate into more egalitarian gender roles or greater resistance to male dominated employment mobility. Previous 'traditional' gender role associations are likely to be enduring. Once again, it must be stressed that questions concerning the correspondence of normative gender roles with positions of paid employment remain the preserve of in-depth primary research. The observation of a crude north-south divide in patterns of female employment participation provides insufficient evidence to conclude the operation of regional cultures of patriarchy.

In order to explain the suggestion of a life-course effect it is important to first note the particular way in which the LS is applied to this research. It is important to recognise that the population of households presented in 1991 is the same population, ten years on, from that presented for 1981. This restriction to membership of the sampling frame necessitates that the population recorded for 1981 are all households with at least one child born to them and a youngest child not older than six. This is such that in 1991 all households have at least one dependant child living with them, not older than sixteen. Consequently, rates of mobility and household employment structure membership which are recorded in

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<sup>13</sup> Clearly, this observation is speculative, based as it is on the limitations (potential ecological fallacy) of the LS from which it is not possible to determine beyond inference the chronology or causation of household transformations and relocations where these are occurring in close association but in an unknown sequence over the same time period.

1981 occur in the context of a 'family formation' stage of the 'nuclear family' life-course and those which occur in 1991 do so in the context of a 'young family' stage of the 'nuclear family' life-course.

From the data presented in this section it is suggested that those regions typically associated with gender role 'traditionalism' demonstrate a low rate of dual career and dual earner households in the presence of pre-school aged children. These regions then demonstrate a marked increase in the rate of dual career and dual earner household types in the presence of school-aged children. In contrast, those regions typically associated with 'non-traditionalism' sustain high rates of female spouse participation in paid employment throughout the period and demonstrate the lowest propensity towards household employment structure transformations and the lowest overall rates of distant mobility.

Finally, it must be noted that Inner and Outer London deviate pronouncedly from the 'northern' and 'southern' trends described above. Both Inner and Outer London experience a notable reduction in distant mobility (relocation to these areas) for all household types over the period. Furthermore there is a suggestion that occupational status imposes a discrete influence. Within a reduced rate of distant mobility in Inner London the greatest expression of this trend occurs for 'dual earner' and 'traditional' households. In contrast, for Outer London the greatest expression of reduced mobility occurs for 'dual career' and 'traditional' households.

#### 5.5.0 Summary of findings

In summary, the data presented above supports the hypothesis that an association exists between particular household employment structures and relative rates of residential mobility. A close correspondence exists between the spatial distribution of 'traditional' male breadwinner households and the spatial distribution of above average rates of wholly moving households, especially those making 'distant' moves. Moreover, areas which demonstrate a high rate of sampling frame females in paid employment and high rates of 'dual' earning households typically demonstrate below average rates of mobility. 'Distant' mobility (that typically associated with employment relocation) appears to be inhibited for households with more than one partner in full time paid employment. These findings are visually represented in the correspondence between Figure 5.2 (the spatial distribution of 'distant' movers at county level) and Figure 4.2 (the spatial distribution of 'traditional' households) in the previous chapter.

Household micro-data from the SARs provides actual (rather than aggregated) evidence to support these general findings. 'Traditional' households are seen to be consistently more residentially mobile than either 'dual earner', 'dual career' or 'flexible' households. 'Dual earner' households are the least disposed to be distantly mobile. 'Dual career' households, whilst being less mobile than 'traditional' households in overall rates of mobility, are more disposed to be distantly mobile. 'Flexible' households consistently demonstrate the lowest rates of mobility of all the household types.

The findings described from cross-sectional data are further reinforced by longitudinal analysis. In addition, a trend in rates of mobility is observed in relation to two discrete stages in the 'nuclear family' life course. These can be defined in terms of 'family formation' (pre-school dependants) and 'young family' (school aged dependants). 'Young family' households are typically less mobile than those with pre-school aged children. This is, in part, because it is well documented that parents minimise disruption to their children's education by electing to move either before or after, but not during, the key school years.

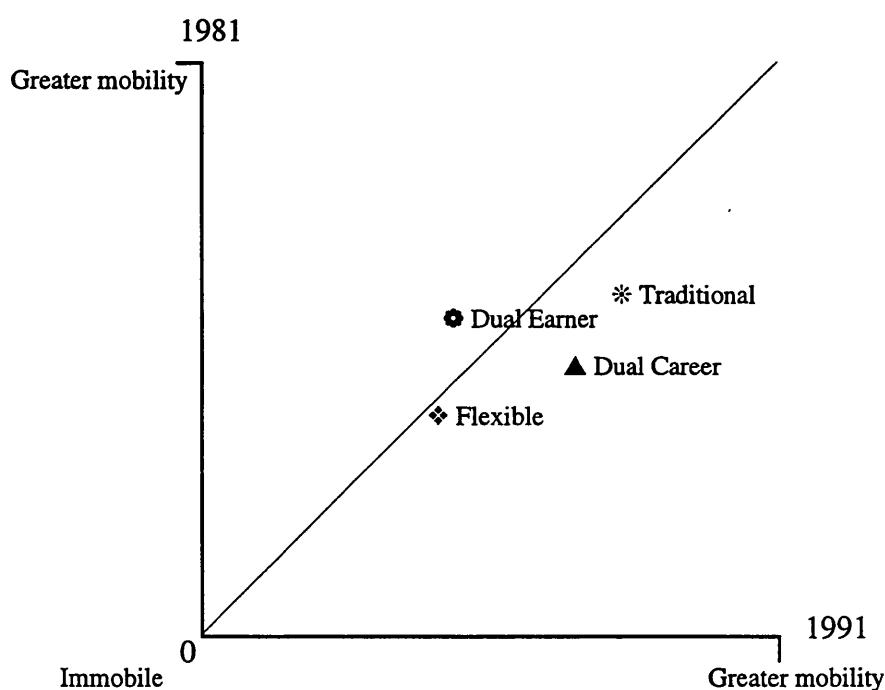
Significantly, this research indicates that households which maintain a 'traditional' employment structure during family formation (concentrated in regions associated with gender role 'traditionalism') are increasingly disposed to transform into 'dual' earning households in the presence of school aged children. These 'late entrant' 'dual' earning sampling frame households typically maintain higher rates of overall mobility than households in regions associated with gender role 'non-traditionalism' where 'dual' earning households are sustained throughout the life-course. There remains a general trend, however, in the rising rate of 'dual' earning households (averaged over the life-course) which is being met by a corresponding decline in the rate of 'distant' residential mobility.

Figure 5.4 below provides a summary of the relative mobility prospects of the idealised household employment structure types over the period 1981 to 1991. It is evident that not only are 'traditional' households more mobile than 'dual' earning households but their position in 1991 represents an improvement in mobility prospects on the preceding decade. 'Dual career' households demonstrate an improvement, and 'dual earner' households a clear deterioration, in mobility prospects over the period. The mobility prospects of 'flexible' households remain unchanged.

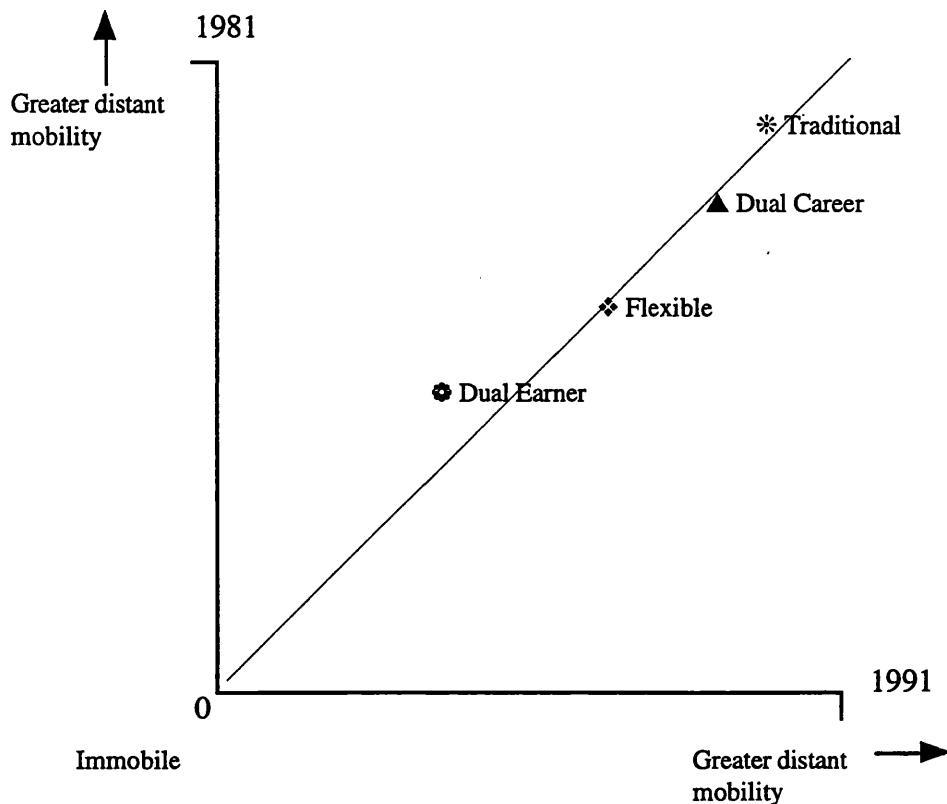
Figure 5.5 illustrates the relative mobility prospects of each of the household types in terms of their propensity to make 'distant' moves over the period 1981 to 1991. There is a less significant change over the period in the proportion of moves which are 'distant' than there was for rates of wholly moving households. This is indicated by the simulation of a 45° angle between the position of each of the types in 1981 (y axis) and 1991 (x axis). Nevertheless, it is evident that not only do 'dual earner' households maintain the lowest overall rate of mobility (in Figure 5.4) but they also experience a reduction in distant mobility. This suggests the cumulative 'rootedness' of this household structure to a particular residential location. This question, why 'dual earner' households experience greater rootedness than single earner and two earner professional/managerial households, is the subject of further qualitative research.

Figure 5.4:

Relative rates of household mobility 1981 and 1991: schematic representation



Source: Crown Copyright, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University.

**Figure 5.5****Relative rates of distant mobility 1981 and 1991: schematic representation**

**Source:** Crown Copyright, ONS: data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University.

#### 5.6.0 Conclusions:

This chapter has interrogated three discrete sets of census data. The evidence assembled from these complementary sources has built up a series of more or less overlapping explanations and representations of the association between patterns of household gender divisions of labour and patterns of residential mobility. It is clear from the research that, at the same time that there exists a general trend towards the increasing participation of 'mothers' in paid employment over the period 1981 to 1991, households with more than one full time earner are typically less likely to be residentially mobile than traditional male-breadwinner households. The implication is that there is an overall decline in rates of mobility (for nuclear family households), especially with regard to 'distant' moves associated with relocation.

Why do household gender divisions of labour exert such an influence on rates of residential mobility over and above the uneven effects of local housing and labour market conditions? It has been demonstrated that different mobility propensities originate within specific population groups (based on generation and family life-course stage). Once demographic (population specific) controls are built into residential mobility research a new and significant pattern of mobility differentials are observed. These can be clearly attributed to particular household employment structures; described in this research in terms of 'traditional', 'flexible', 'dual earner' and 'dual career' household types.

Moreover, by undertaking longitudinal analysis it has been possible to demonstrate the way patterns of residential mobility disrupt the reproduction of household employment structure whereby a 'sacrifice' of female employment is typically associated (at least in the immediate term) with distant mobility. In contrast, non-movement appears to maintain or improve the position of female spouses in terms of paid employment and occupational status.

Households with more than one spouse in paid employment are less likely to be residentially mobile than traditional male-breadwinner households. This said, the picture is rendered more complex when occupational status data is applied to dual earning households. It is apparent that greater spatial inertia (especially over distance) is generated in households with two 'earners' than in those with two 'careers'. When occupational status is taken into account 'dual earner' households tend to demonstrate a mobility propensity more akin to 'flexible' households than to either 'dual career' or 'traditional' households. 'Flexible' households consistently demonstrate the greatest stability (by their relative resistance to household structure transformation) and the greatest inertia (by their low rate of residential mobility).

It is posited that the relative immobility of 'dual career' households can be attributed, at least in part, to processes of the negotiation of gender roles and divisions of labour within the household and of the influence this has on household strategies towards residential mobility. For instance, a typical strategy for a 'dual' earning household might be to maintain a permanent housing location within a metropolitan city labour market where employment opportunities are available for more than one employment and occupation. These processes of inter-personal preference negotiation are not sufficiently explained by functions of career salience or monetary bargaining power.

If it were the case that residential mobility followed economic signals of income or occupational advancement then 'dual career' and 'dual earner' households would be unlikely to demonstrate markedly different rates of mobility to other household types. Much national data exists to confirm that incomes earned by females, even in professional and managerial positions, continue to lag behind those of males in the same occupations (Hakim, 1992). Consequently, even in 'dual career' households male spouse earnings will typically be higher than female spouse earnings (though not high enough to cover the loss of this second income). As such, orthodox theory would anticipate the continued determination of household mobility from the opportunities of male 'breadwinner' employment. This is clearly not the case. Not only do earnings from female spouse employment remain significant to household survival (as a second, if lower, income) but there also appear to exist multiple factors of household employment structure and mobility which are negotiated within the household beyond those reducible to material or economic variables.

The low level of mobility experienced by 'flexible' households suggests that decision-making operates from a more extensive range of opportunities and constraints than that implied by orthodox (monetary) exchange models. It can be suggested that each household employment structure type experiences a degree of stress, whether this is in terms of financial constraints, employment co-ordination, or reliance on local networks of childcare support. The expression of this stress is not sufficiently explained by orthodox economic theory or 'bargaining power' models of decision-making.

This chapter demonstrates the importance of introducing both a spatial and a temporal dynamic into explanations of patterns of residential mobility. Research which considers the relative 'traditionalism' of regional cultures of patricarchy needs to do so in a way which is sensitive to differential trends of household gender divisions of labour across the life-course. A longitudinally sensitive description of 'egalitarianism' in household gender divisions of labour would be one in which it is noted that family formation, the presence of infants or pre-school aged children, affords little disruption to the long term maintenance of dual earning partners. The importance of making this distinction longitudinally is that in the long term as far as household 'strategies' of behaviour are concerned there may not be a significant difference in the way households actually negotiate housing and labour markets.

In conclusion, it is the objective of a biographical approach to ascertain the extent to which latent female career salience or particular gender role power relations are

challenged by, or remain enduring through, periodic transformations in household employment structure (women leaving paid employment with a plan of returning after a 'career break'). Clearly, existing research which infers regional cultures of patriarchy from the position of women in paid employment potentially ignores the possibility that this masks latent female career salience, and a spectrum of gender role dispositions which are negotiated through the life-course in a way which does not correspond with cross-sectional household gender divisions of paid employment (see Gershuny, et al., 1994). Furthermore, whilst a clear association has been drawn between 'dual' earning household employment structures and reduced rates of mobility it is suggested that the process of balancing (negotiating) more than one set of household location preferences is evident, but not clearly articulated, within the limitations of secondary data. Consequently, there remains a clear requirement for the further exploration of this association through primary qualitative research.

Chapter six: The household biographies

- 6.1.0 Introduction
- 6.1.1 Applying a biographical approach
- 6.1.2 Evolution, interdependency and household lived experience
- 6.1.3 Male and female spouse work-histories
- 6.2.0 Multiple narratives: questioning orthodox theory
- 6.2.1 Housing, employment and household structure
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- 6.5.0 Negotiating gender divisions of labour
- 6.6.0 Summary and conclusions

### 6.1.0 Introduction

"It would mean longer hours and more time away from the home, which we're not happy about with a second child on the way and I wouldn't be able to take a second job because he wouldn't be here to watch the children. So I said, well if that's the case, that you have to move, then they'll have to make you redundant because we're not prepared to hinge everything on that job (...) Although he's the major breadwinner, I don't want, it's like all your eggs in one basket, and that's what we'd become. He'd be on a higher salary, more time away from home and I'd just become a wife at home and I don't want to do that" Mrs Mellor ('flexible')<sup>1</sup>

This chapter further explores the relationship of household gender divisions of labour to patterns and processes of residential mobility. It reinforces the argument, set in motion in the preceding chapters, that it is not possible to reconcile orthodox economic predicates with the evident association between household divisions of labour and residential mobility. Furthermore, that the expectation of orthodox models of exchange; that monetary 'bargaining power' is the prime determinant in household decision-making, conflicts with evidence from household biographies of the ongoing negotiation of household gender 'power' relations. As the interview extract above clearly illustrates, household decisions about whether to move or stay hinge on a diverse range of contested individual preferences beyond those of material utility maximisation.

The chapter draws once again upon a framework of three idealised household employment structure types ('traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earning) and two regional survey areas. The imposition of this template usefully exposes those household narratives which break the bonds of typological conformity. Indeed, the application of a biographical approach endows this research with evidence which is inherently particularizing (Calhoun, 1993, p.431).

At the same time that the biographies generate particular disruptions to typological conformity, it is possible to strip away variations in biographic "plot" structures (Calhoun, 1993; Angrosino, 1989, p.98) to make thematic observations between household employment structures and regional cultural variation. By considering overlapping narratives, of idiosyncracy and conformity both within and between household structures, this research critically examines the conventional correlation (made in secondary data analysis and much feminist literature) between household

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms are assumed for the interviewees. For convenience, couples are referred to as "Mr" and "Mrs" to denote gender. Surnames starting with an 'L' refer to London households and those starting with an 'M' refer to Manchester households.

divisions of labour and normative gender roles (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Walby, 1986; Arber and Marsh, 1992). It is argued that the way in which household divisions of labour are interpreted, whether through secondary data or qualitative biographies, is fundamental to reaching an understanding of intra-household processes (decision-making and power relations) which constitute residential mobility behaviour.

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, interview material is introduced which, by describing multiple and diverse narratives of residential mobility, disrupts the meta-narrative of orthodox economic theory. Second, the interview material is discussed in terms of its 'fit' within the template described above. For this purpose a thematic analysis is undertaken of the descriptions of daily practices from the thirty household interviews (amounting to some 350 pages of verbatim transcription) to identify patterns of typicality and idiosyncracy. By focusing on the degree of consistency between domestic practices and household structural or situational characteristics, it is possible to identify the dominant group cleavages around which household mobility 'strategies' might be explained.

Finally, multiple and diverse narratives are explored in terms of substantive household practices as well as the way couples talk about and negotiate these ways of living. By unravelling what is a complex web of practices, which together constitute lived experience, it can be recognised that networks of social interaction and knowledge form the web which binds together these interdependent spheres. This deeper exploration of the interview material addresses the question of why individuals and family groups sharing equivalent characteristics are so frequently observed to behave differently towards housing, employment and household structure.

#### 6.1.1 Applying a biographical approach

Throughout this thesis it has been argued that in order to consider both patterns and processes of residential mobility, research needs to be conducted through a multiple method approach. Not only is the analysis of secondary data unable to shed any light on the motives behind a revealed event, such as a house move, but the representation of a straightforward correspondence between two variables, such as household structure and rates of mobility, remains inadequate as a means of describing causality. It is only through in-depth primary qualitative research that it is possible to investigate the process of action whereby capabilities of residential mobility may or may not lead to the event of a house move.

Chapter Three established the basis for undertaking a biographical approach in making a qualitative research contribution. A biographical approach to household research, looking as it does at the life and work-histories of the household group and its individual members, builds a temporal dynamic into research which is typically time-restricted. In an ideal world, a series of in-depth interviews (or participant observations) would be conducted with the same household periodically over many years (in a form of intensive and focused panel ethnography). Given the reality of time-restricted research, such as that for a PhD thesis, a biographical approach (combining in-depth unstructured interviews, work-history charts and chronologies of 'milestone' events) provides the best alternative.

The household biographies generated in this thesis are constructed along similar lines to those of the Working Lives Development Research by Campanelli and Thomas (1994). Tape-recorded unstructured interviews<sup>2</sup> combine "flexible qualitative and cognitive techniques (probing, reviewing and cross-checking) to maximize the completeness and accuracy" of employment, housing and milestone events (Campanelli and Thomas, 1994, p.ii). In addition, a self-completion 'curriculum vitae' of life events and employment histories, distributed before the interview, provided interviewees with 'thinking time' and aided recall (Sheskin, 1985). Interviews were conducted with both partners/spouses together although questions were directed to each individually to generate full employment histories for each<sup>3</sup> (see Appendix 20 for further notes on fieldwork methodology).

A topic guide was employed which focused on four substantive themes; housing, employment, family life and the couple relationship. The interviews were then conducted in such a way as to flesh out these subject areas in a flexible, non-linear manner to follow the train of thought of each respondent (Holstein, 1995; Walker, 1985). This makes the interview particularly appropriate to the interviewees life experience and hence the best media through which to gain access to it. It is also apparent from this approach that each interview is a little different from the last, that

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'unstructured' interview is sometimes used ambiguously. Here it represents an interview which is interactive, operates from a flexible, broadly defined, 'topic guide' and follows the tradition of 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> Spade (1994) observes that because "wives and husbands do not always perceive events within their marriage in the same way..those (researchers) who acknowledge this discrepancy and collect data from both spouses are faced with the dilemma of interpreting two different versions of marital reality" (p.171). To interview two partners separately in their own home environment is difficult to contrive. It necessitates separate visits or the banishment of one partner to another room of the house, either of which is likely to reduce interviewee co-operation. In this study it was important to interview couples together in order to capture cooperation and contradiction between partners in the narration of shared events to which both contribute individual interpretations.

the practice of interviewing is a 'craft' skill (Martin and Roberts, 1984) to be honed and perfected along the way and, to an extent, that the latter interviews are reflexive of the insights gained from former interviews (Merton et al. 1990; Silverman, 1993). The aim of the primary research undertaken here is to strike a balance between the potentially negative effects of, on the one hand, a rigid adherence to a set interview style (which would both prevent this fruitful learning curve and inhibit access to the interviewees life experience) and, on the other hand, altering the substance of each subsequent interview so significantly as to negate the possibility of establishing trends between interviews sub-sets (Eyles and Smith, 1988).

In-depth qualitative research provides access to a plethora of observations. This very richness of detail (both trivial and obscure) could be viewed critically, as a barrier to the generation of meaningful explanation. Kvale (1996) suggests that qualitative interviews serve to describe and interpret themes from the subject's lived world whereby description and interpretation are viewed on a continuum (p.187). In this chapter, themes are not randomly plucked out of the interview transcriptions generated from thirty interviews. Rather, they represent reflexive<sup>4</sup> evolution through all stages of the research; through hypothesis formulation, interview design, each individual interview 'performance' and, finally, the interpretation and analysis of interview and biographical material.

The biographical material presented in this chapter constitutes a synthesis of interview transcriptions and work-histories which were subjected to qualitative analysis, the techniques of which are described in Appendix 22. Biographical research is noted for the attribute that it can facilitate the synthesis of a vast array of causal conditions. In effect:

"the capacity of the life-history method to elicit specific data of an intensely personal nature that sheds light on the details of large-scale social and historical events, as well as the individual personality...taken in the collective, the personal narratives of people related in time and by circumstances can provide an impressionistic mosaic of a society"  
(Angrosino, 1989, p.103).

The interview extracts which are selected for quotation (presented in 'boxes' for the sake of clarity) are used to illustrate particular themes of interpretation. They

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<sup>4</sup> It is essential that qualitative research is reflexive to address the inherent reflexivity of the knowledgeability of human agents (Giddens, 1984, p.3). Reflexivity and recursivity (or continuity) operate together in a mutually reinforcing way whereby discourse and practices are repeated across time and space in an evolutionary process of ongoing self-monitoring (self-consciousness). The continuity of discourse and practices implies an unchanging environment at the same time that self-consciousness introduces adjustment and change.

represent the synthetic encapsulation of a recurring theme of the interviews or of a sub-category of the interviews rather than the totality of cases of a particular inference. The selection and interpretation of particular discourses clearly represent subjective constructions of household lived experience. However, so too do individual and household accounts of these personal histories (Kohli, 1981). It is for reasons of intrinsic positionality that 'reality' is best understood as multi-tiered. Nevertheless, the essential, but elusive, contributions which the household biographies provide to explanations of residential mobility are reinforced in this project; by the foundation of biographical analysis within multiple method research as well as within a clearly articulated theoretical and methodological framework which is consistently applied through every stage of research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

#### 6.1.2 Evolution, interdependency and household lived experience

**Box 1: "Life was so different then"**

Mr Leicester: I think at that time (sixteen years ago, when first married) the men went out and, but things have changed now, what with the mortgage and the situation with money

Mrs Leicester: for housing

Mr Leicester: people need two incomes and I think the women can command more money at the moment, quite honestly, don't you?

Mrs Leicester: Yes. (...)<sup>5</sup> I don't think you've consciously made the adjustment (...) but, there's no housing anywhere, and you can't, I remember when I went to the housing advice centre, we were living in a two bedroom house and we'd just had (third child) and we were renting, and I went up to see them about the chances of a council house and, literally, it was twenty odd years, and you're lucky, unless you're actually homeless they're not interested, so unless we both worked

Mr Leicester: and buy somewhere, we had no chance.

Mrs Leicester: we had no chance of having room enough for our family. I think that's true. (...) One of us couldn't get by with working, it's both of us. We need both of us to work. We couldn't get by with one earner now. It makes you wonder how we got by in the beginning. But life was so different then.

<sup>5</sup> The notation: (...) is used to indicate where the interview transcript has been cut. This is typically done for the sake of brevity and clarity. Care is taken to avoid a distortion in the way the interview extract 'reads' as a result of editing it from the verbatim form.

When husbands and wives talk about how they live out their daily lives it is conventionally expected that they will do so by explaining the decisions they have made about where and how to live, which of them could or would earn how much doing what occupation, how they would spend their money, if and when they would start a family and how they would manage their lives around the constraints imposed by childrearing. The above is how orthodox theory views preference interaction. In practice it is more messy. The household biographies presented in this chapter do not reflect a 'tidy' catalogue of preferences and goals. Indeed, not only are preferences not clear-cut (or necessarily consistent), but they are also arrived at in different ways. In orthodox analysis, households might appear to hold similar preferences through their revealed action. In contrast, this thesis emphasises the formation of preferences. Differences in the way households negotiate decisions and preferences feed into the evolution of household strategies. Consequently, households with similar outcome preferences at a particular snapshot moment will employ different ways of accommodating change and uncertainty and hence different strategies in the long run.

Couples like Mr and Mrs Leicester (both employed full time and living in Barking with their four school age children) tell elaborate and sometimes ambiguous stories about their housing, employment and residential histories. For instance, In Box 1 Mr and Mrs Leicester describe their current division of labour in a manner which cannot be materially or conceptually divorced from spatially and temporally constituted housing and labour market events (Allen and Hamnett, 1991). What are 'dismissed' in the (auto)biographies as routinised (taken for granted) practices amount to inter-subjectively constructed representations of past, present and future "lived experience" (Durrschmidt, 1996; Maffesoli, 1996, p.22).

Consequently, the biographies provide a tapestry of discourse and narrative<sup>6</sup> which captures the way individuals and household groups construct their identities and the boundaries of their milieu, in "co-operation and conflict" with others (Eade, 1997, p.30; Schutz, 1967; Harre, 1979, p.94; Bourdieu, 1987, p.41). Household practices appear to 'evolve' within particular (rather than universal - 'rational

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<sup>6</sup> The interpretation of narratives in this chapter does not directly employ the sociolinguistic techniques of conversational or discourse analysis (the analysis of subject positionings and sub-text) (Potter and Wetherall, 1987; Shotter, 1993). It is important to note, however, that while the research does not mobilise a formal deconstruction of voices 'behind' the narrative, in the manner currently popular in social psychology, an appreciation of this body of literature permeates the conduct and analysis of the interviews. An almost theatrical personal role-play of the interview psychodynamic can be recognised as an important stage of doing qualitative research (Potter and Wetherall, 1988). For a deeper theoretical discussion of the application of discourse analysis to realism and structuration, refer to: Pratt, 1991; 1995 and 1996.

economic') networks of knowledge, learning and experience (Johnson, 1992; Lundvall, 1992; Hodgson, 1993). These particular forms of knowledge are not necessarily "tacitly grasped" by individual actors (Giddens, 1984, p.22). Knowledge is unconscious as well as conscious and can take many forms beyond the material or economic (for instance; emotional, moral, cultural, psychological, historical, ritual).

Moreover, individual knowledge is embedded in overlapping and interdependent institutional structures (relations of gender, class, ethnicity and politics). Indeed, it is through the unfolding of the biographies that it is possible to operationalise these key elements of the duality of the structure of the household:

"Analysing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors, who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction" (Giddens, 1984, p.25)

Particular rules and resources are available to individual household members (as 'holders' of different forms of knowledge) and household institutions (as mediators of networks of knowledge reproduction). Moreover, networks not only provide access to a variety of forms of knowledge but they also exclude or screen out alternative sources of information. Networks of knowledge, learning and experience can be seen to function on multiple and interconnecting levels; the parochial scale of the babysitting circle; the 'local' level of housing and employment markets; the cultural terrain of shared history or religion; the national surveillance of government regulation; the 'global' impact of international divisions of labour and capital. These forms of knowledge and sites of knowledge reproduction can be seen to shape in turn the ongoing construction and negotiation of household practices and strategies.

In the context of housing mobility, for instance, whether or not a particular house is perceived to be a permanent place of residence will be shaped, in part, by collective and contested forms and networks of knowledge. It might be that the boundaries of knowledge concerning house maintenance, for instance, pertain to particular types of home improvement or familiarity with specific physical housing attributes or to the ability to muster skills and materials through social and kin networks. Furthermore, this web of knowledge and learning will reproduce and be reproduced by collective and contested household housing histories and dispositions of relative mobility or risk-aversion (Beck, 1992, p.44). Equally, household "attachment to place" can be recognised, not as attachment to 'a place'

but rather, as a form of resistance to the expansion of a familiar milieu ('stranger' knowledge; 'other' sites of experience). Here, the relative impermeability of interaction boundaries is negotiated by individuals within the household as well as between the household and its contingent environment.

#### 6.1.3 Male and female spouse work-histories

Figures 6.1 to 6.6 provide annotated work-histories for the thirty couples interviewed. These provide a visual overview of the changes which have taken place over time to each household employment structure in the context of family events (the birth of a child, a house move) as well as exogenous 'shocks' to individual careers (redundancy). For the sake of consistency, the annotated work-histories of each couple are arranged by region, by their membership at the time of the interview of one of the three idealised household structure types ('traditional', 'flexible' and 'dual' earning).

From these illustrations it is immediately apparent that male spouse work-histories, regardless of household structure or region, retain a greater degree of consistency over time than do female spouse work-histories. Within this overall uniformity, however, it is also evident that males in 'flexible' households experience the greatest incidence of redundancy<sup>7</sup>. In Barking, experience of redundancy is typically associated with males (in unskilled and semi-skilled manual occupations) in 'flexible' and 'dual' household types (see Appendix 25 for a profile of interviewee occupations). In contrast, redundancy is experienced by both males and females equally in Prestwich, typically in professional and managerial occupations, in 'traditional' and 'dual' households.

Female spouse work histories are differentially articulated in the two regional survey areas for each household type. This differentiation coincides with the construction and reproduction of household divisions of labour through a family formation life-course stage (Duncan, 1991; Fielding and Halford, 1993). In 'dual' households in Prestwich it is typical for wives to have maintained an uninterrupted full time work history whereas in Barking the same household type today has typically moved through a 'traditional' or 'flexible' stage during pre-school childrearing. The uninterrupted nature of female spouse employment in Prestwich suggests the widespread acceptance of 'non-traditional' gender roles for mothers in this region.

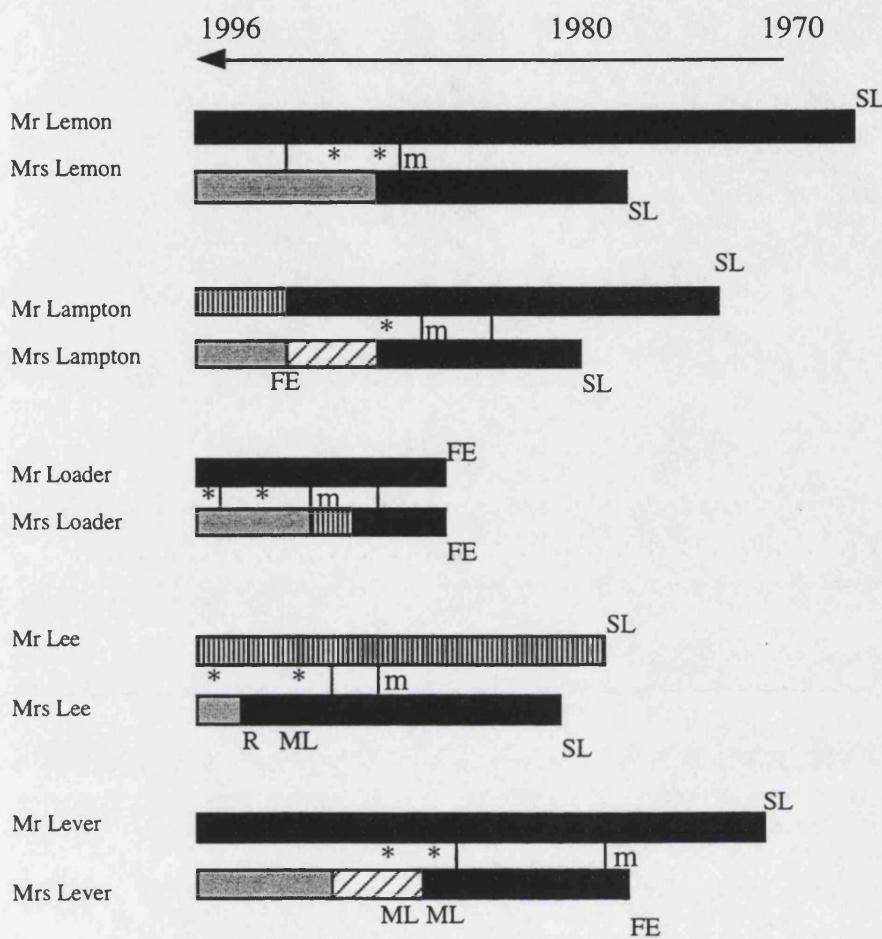
<sup>7</sup> It is not possible to incorporate sufficient detail on these diagrams to describe the relatively high incidence for males in 'flexible' households of redundancy, periodic unemployment and changes in employment.

In Barking, the majority of wives not only had an extended career break ('parking' in a 'traditional' household position) when they started a family but they first re-entered the paid labour force in part time employment. Furthermore, this trend is reinforced by the uneven effects of membership of particular generational cohorts. It is suggested that households in the 1980's school leaver cohort<sup>8</sup> (shortest bars on Figures 6.1 to 6.6) demonstrate a greater disposition towards maintaining full time female employment through the stage of family formation. This cohort ('thirty somethings') also experience greater incidences of redundancy than households whose members left school or further education in the 1970's ('forty somethings') (see Appendix 21 for the age profile of households interviewed).

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<sup>8</sup> The 1980's school leaver cohort (which describes greatest experience of monetary insecurity) is over represented in Prestwich compared to the Barking sample.

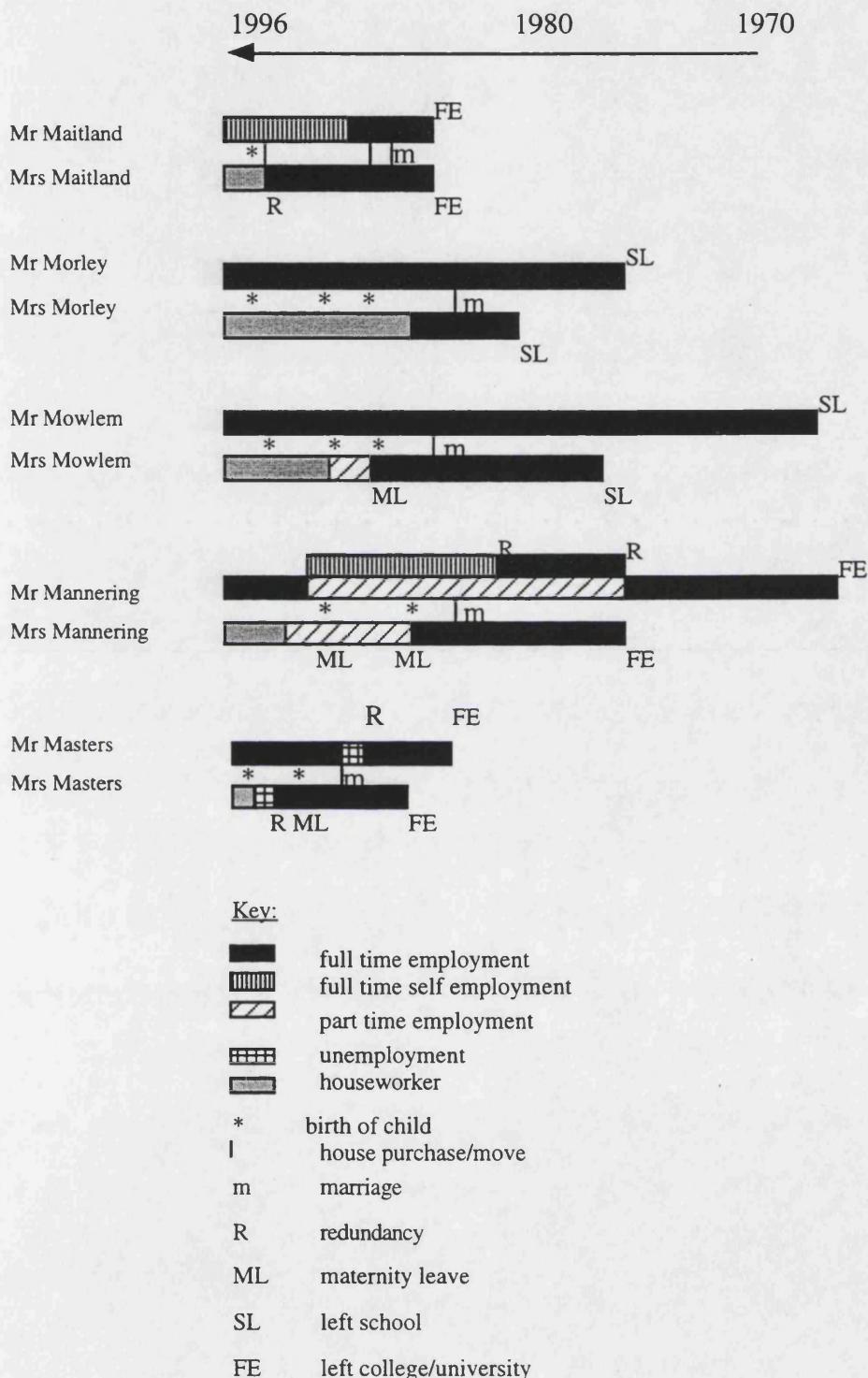
Figure 6.1: 'traditional' work-histories, Barking



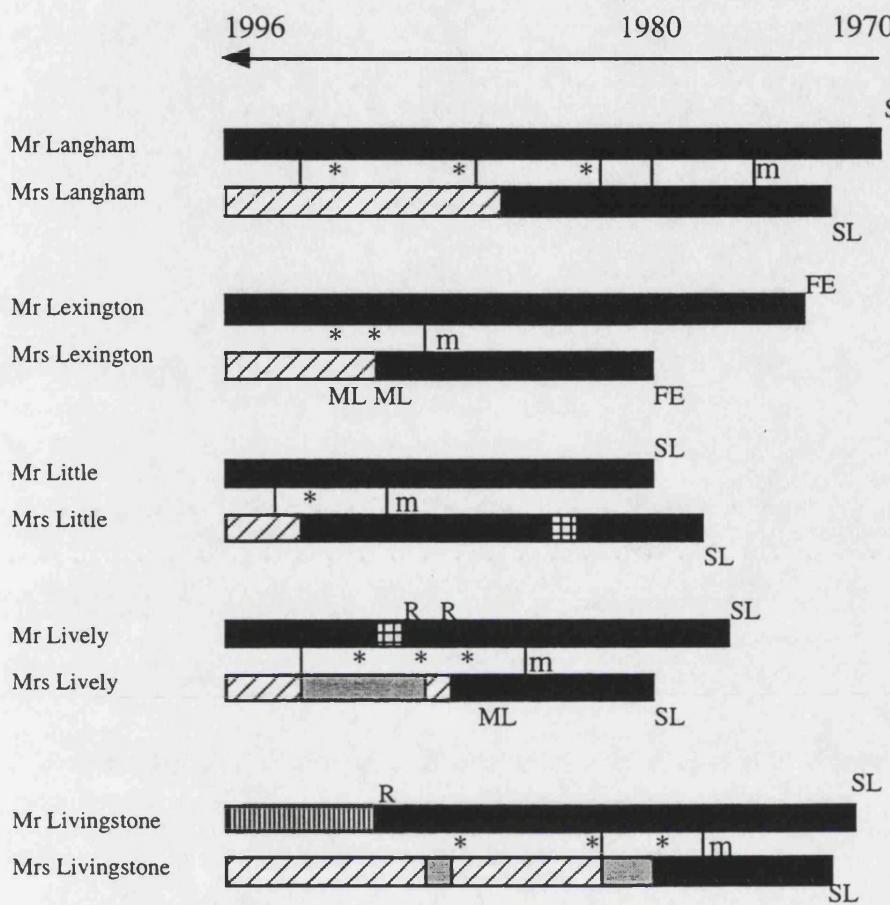
Key:

	full time employment
	full time self employment
	part time employment
	unemployment
	houseworker
*	birth of child
I	house purchase/move
m	marriage
R	redundancy
ML	maternity leave
SL	point at which adult left school
FE	point at which adult left college/university

Figure 6.2: 'traditional' work-histories, Prestwich



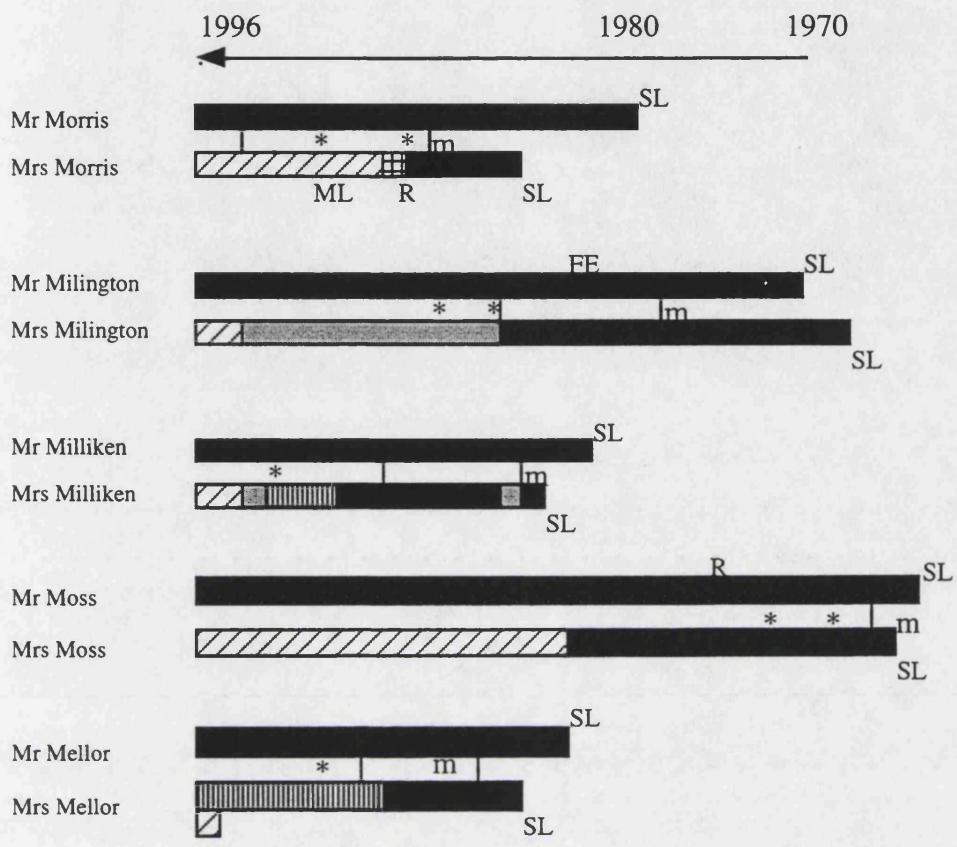
**Figure 6.3: 'flexible' work-histories. Barking**



Key:

	full time employment
	full time self employment
	part time employment
	unemployment
	houseworker
*	birth of child
I	house purchase/move
m	marriage
R	redundancy
ML	maternity leave
SL	point at which adult left school
FE	point at which adult left college/university

**Figure 6.4: ‘flexible’ work-histories, Prestwich**



Key:

	full time employment
	full time self employment
	part time employment
	unemployment
	houseworker
*	birth of child
I	house purchase/move
m	marriage
R	redundancy
ML	maternity leave
SL	point at which adult left school
FE	point at which adult left college/university

Figure 6.5: 'dual' work-histories - Barking

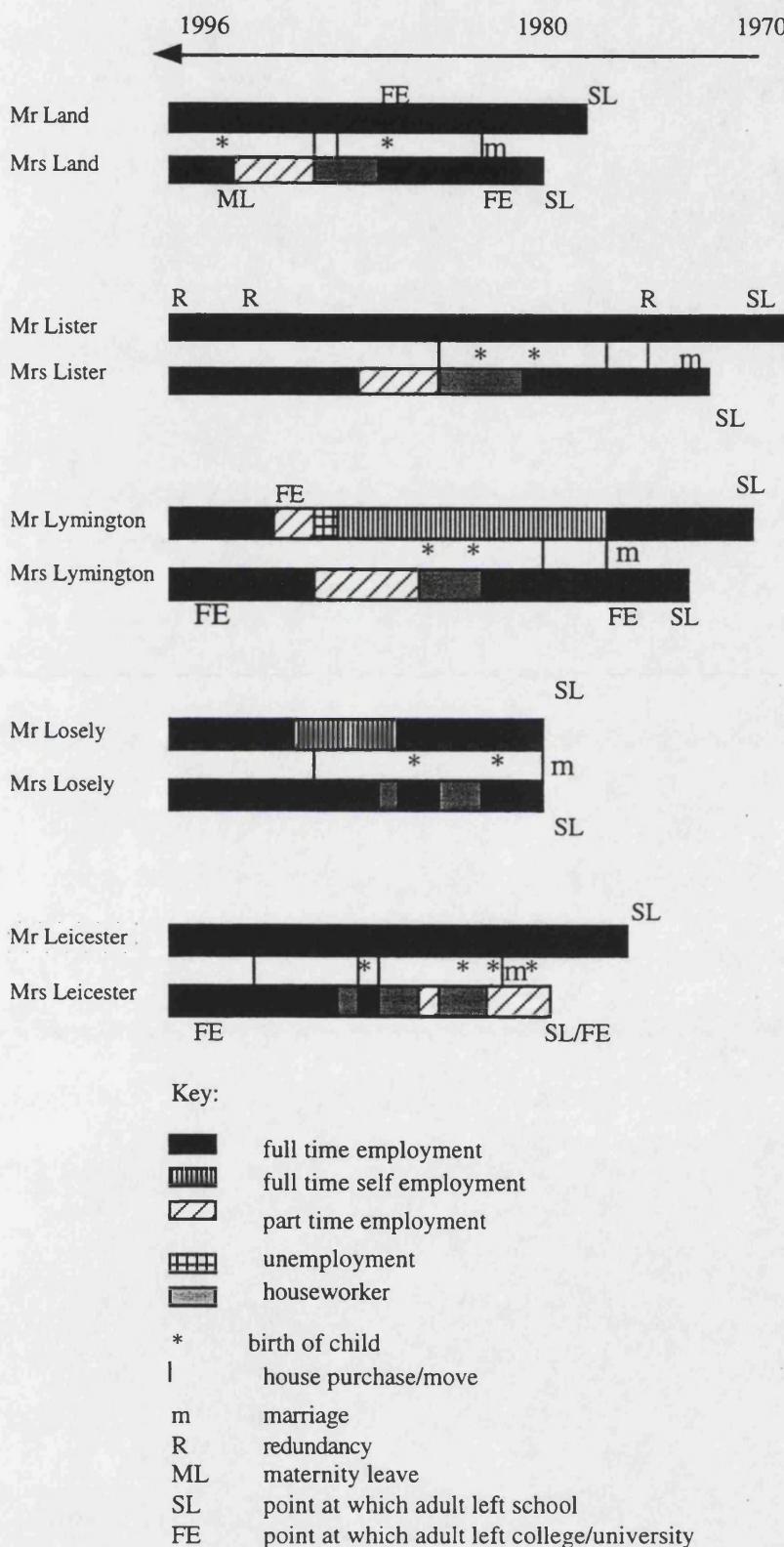
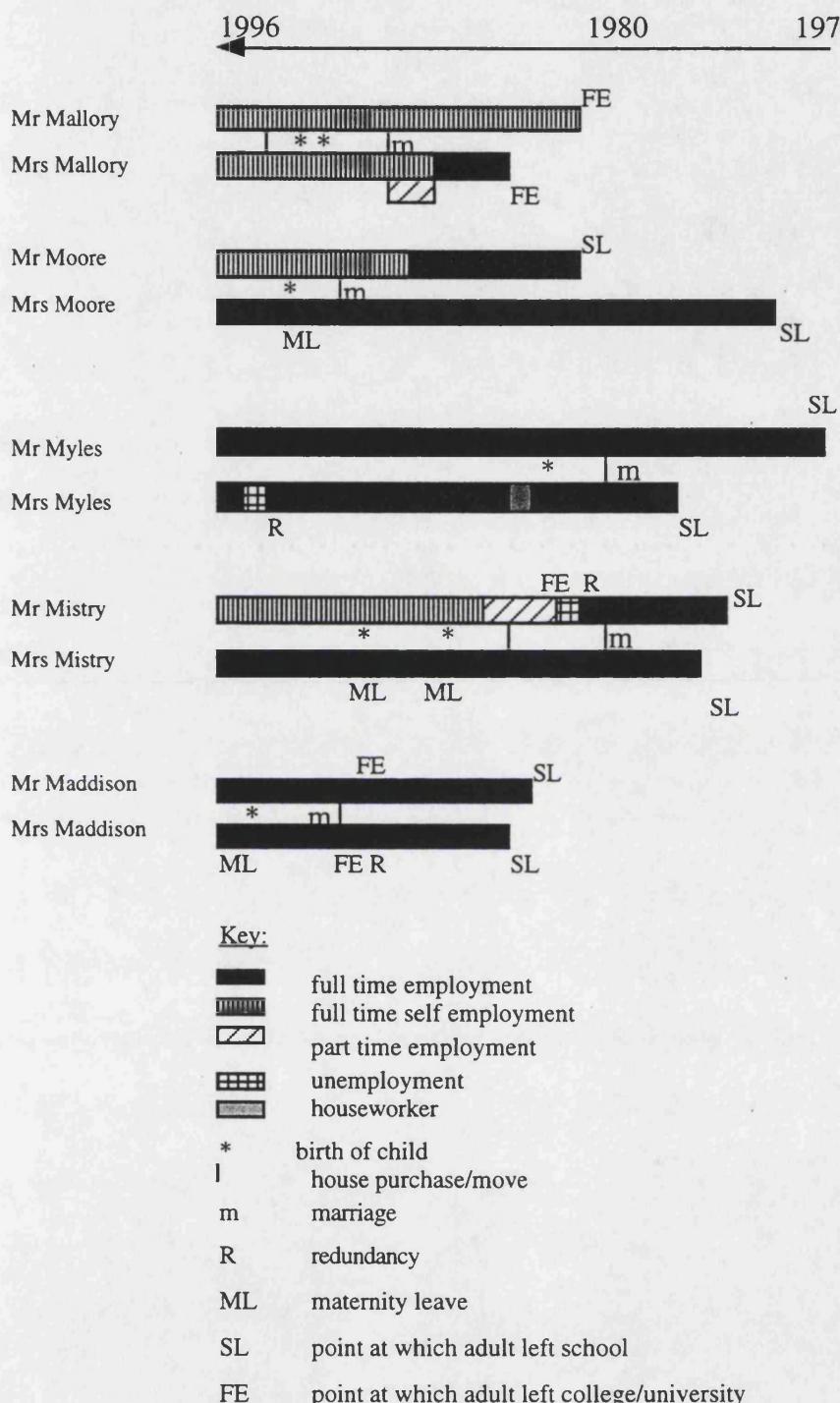


Figure 6.6: 'dual' work-histories, Prestwich

### 6.2.0 Multiple narratives: questioning orthodox theory

#### **Box 2: "I think it's because the house is done now"**

Mrs Lee: I want to move, I must admit. I'd like to get on really (...) It's just the last few months, don't ask me, it's just I really feel, I think it's because the house is done now, I'm quite happy but I'd like to just start again, really (...)

Mr Lee: yer, but it's, I just don't see the point in moving, not yet anyway. I don't want to move now (...)

Mrs Lee: Really, I can say something, put a seed in his mind, and probably, in about a years time he will then get restless himself (...)

Mr Lee: I mean, that's true what you're saying, because, when we went to look at her mates house I was really , really happy where we was living before, and we came round here and she was saying "let's go and have a look, let's have a look", and I said, no, I'm really not happy about moving, I'm quite happy here and in the end she dragged me round to see it and when we saw it I said, yes, I really do like it, and, looking back on it, it was the best move we ever made because we made a lot of money on our old house and the area, looking back at the area, it was a dump, an absolute dump

Central to an orthodox understanding of residential mobility behaviour is the premise that households seek to maximise material well-being through the determinants of economic rationality. Traditionally, households are believed to pursue higher wages (movement towards equilibrium in the labour market) or to scale the housing ladder to a greater height ('filtering' equilibrium in housing conditions). Contrary to this prediction, the household biographies provide insight into what are frequently disjointed stories about motives in housing, employment and residential mobility. Such stories would be inadequately explained by a meta-narrative of economic maximisation. Furthermore, the biographies demonstrate that it is not possible to separate out what are interdependent spheres of knowledge and experience. In effect, it is evident that residential mobility is not determined by the employment status of a single 'primary' breadwinner. Consequently, the propensity for households to move or stay in a particular locale cannot simply be explained by the hegemonic properties of reason, rationality and economic maximisation.

The biographies provide evidence, for instance, that a house move which would facilitate male spouse employment promotion (generating increased male spouse earnings) can be thwarted by non-monetary considerations such as those of family

attachment to place (children who “refuse to leave”) as well as by present or future spouse employment opportunities. This suggests that residential mobility behaviour reflects longitudinally negotiated “structures of feeling” (Williams, 1965, p.22; Hall, 1981; Taylor et al, 1996) rather than cross-sectional divisions of paid labour. As such, it is inappropriate to assume superior decision-making ‘bargaining power’ either to a single male breadwinner or (in a climate of increasing participation of wives in the labour force) the spouse who contributes the greatest income to the household coffer.

For instance, Mrs Langham (‘flexible’) has established a non-economic bargaining position from which she is able to veto an overseas move which would benefit her husband’s career:

“I already turned him down once, to go to Belgium, I didn’t want to go. We had the chance of going there for about two years, but I didn’t really want to because of the kids, settled in their school and because I had a job and I wouldn’t have a job when I got back and I’d miss my family”

Mrs Langham “speaks” both for herself and her children as the preserver of household and extended family stability. Later on in the same narrative it is apparent that her veto is subject to ongoing negotiation. The situational impact of an escalating neighbour dispute combined with the persuasive powers (application of extended knowledge boundaries) of her husband have encouraged Mrs Langham to reassess her attachment to the home locale:

“circumstances have changed now where, my family are ok, doing their own thing if they have the chance, and I’ve got problems with next door (...) So, I said if there’s a chance of us going abroad, which did come up just before Christmas, to go to Germany for two years, I would go because he convinced me that the schooling was better out there and we’d be able to save up a lot of money and, um, I could always get a job while the children were at school”.

It is evident that household mobility behaviour is not sufficiently explained by the circumstances of a single (male) breadwinner. In both ‘dual’ and ‘flexible’ households male spouse employment primacy is frequently circumscribed in household narratives by the naturalised restriction of residential location to a metropolitan area. For instance, Mr Linklater (‘dual’) describes the specific “pull” of London as a location suitable for cultivating two careers (in medicine):

“It was always on the understanding that with two of us trying to find, particularly training posts, you tend to have to wander round different hospitals, that London has enough pull that one can both get jobs, while smaller cities don’t particularly have all the jobs available”

The decision to first locate and then to assume permanence in a metropolitan employment hub is particularly characteristic of the couples employed in professional or managerial employment. Evidence of this location 'strategy' reinforces the notion of the 'escalator' region within which relative employment and occupational abundance provides potential for parallel spouse career advancement and from which out-migration entails the downward slide, or 'sacrifice', of one (typically female) spouse career (Fielding and Halford, 1991).

More generally, it is considered a "bad move" to leave a metropolitan area for the benefit of the employment of a single breadwinner. Such a move would put "all your eggs in one basket" (Mrs Mellor, 'flexible'). It is not simply the employment prospects of adult household members which have a bearing on housing mobility strategies. Mrs Lively ('flexible') describes the importance of proximity to the London labour market in terms of the range of opportunities this market offers for her children.

"the further out you go you're taking the children and yourselves, even if you can commute, you're taking the kids away from the variety of the marketplace that's on offer. I mean, I was one of those typical, left college, on a train, in a job agency in the city and the round of interviews. I wouldn't expect a 16 year old to travel in from Colchester!"

#### 6.2.1 Housing, employment and household structure

##### Box 3: "I don't think I would have chosen to go back"

Mrs Land: once I had the twins I didn't really think about work, full stop. I don't think I had time to (...) When we moved back into London, because we needed a bigger mortgage, that's why I went back to work, basically, to pay the difference

Mr Land: we worked it out that if she went back three days a week that was enough to take care of the mortgage

Mrs Land: the difference of the mortgage, my work, it wasn't the whole mortgage, I didn't earn that much, but, um, basically, I don't think I would have chosen to go back. In fact I was quite depressed when I first went back

Mr Land: in fact, just before (youngest child) was born we was at the stage where we could just go out and get whatever we wanted, we never used to look at the bank account, did we, because we knew the money would be there (...)

Mrs Land: I only switched to full time when I did my course in '93. Before that I was doing three days a week and then the two days I had off I was looking after my sister's boy, from the age of 5 months to 15 months, and I found I got more stressed on my days off looking after him than when I was going to work. So, plus I was wanting to do this course so I felt I needed to up my hours

The biographies provide numerous examples of the interdependency of preferences in household practices concerning housing, employment and household structure. This is illustrated, for instance, in the way couples differentially perceive the 'need' to sustain one, one and a half, or two full time earners. The position taken in this regard feeds into housing choice (location and position on the 'ladder'). Equally, housing market events engage with employment behaviour and household gender divisions of labour.

These processes of evolution and interdependency are illustrated in the case of Mr and Mrs Land ('dual') (Box 3) who moved to Barking from Essex as a 'traditional' household with pre-school age twins. This move formed part of a longer term plan to locate closer to family networks in East London. In order to secure affordable accommodation in the higher priced London housing market the couple bought a house which needed extensive modernisation. The cost of undertaking this modernisation, even as an exercise in self-provisioning, required greater income than Mr Land's new employment could provide. Consequently, it was through the process of this house move that Mrs Land returned to paid employment, initially part time but subsequently increasing her career commitment through further vocational training. A gradual transformation of gender roles and divisions of labour was negotiated within the household such that when a third child arrived Mrs Land returned to full time employment after only six weeks of maternity leave.

Similarly, Mr and Mrs Livingstone ('flexible') (Box 4) situate their present division of labour within the story of Mr Livingstone's employment insecurity and the desire to maintain a "decent" standard of living. Here, the application of a biographical approach not only makes it possible to consider current household practices but also the way in which these practices are embedded in reflexive knowledge of past events, ways of coping and of 'successful' adjustments to changes in housing and labour market conditions. Indeed, the negotiation of current gender practices can be interpreted from former attitudes and intentions towards relative gender roles - the 'ideal' household composition - where the present (cross sectional) relationship of paid employment division may represent an adaptation (or naturalisation) of a former ideal (Thorogood, 1987).

**Box 4: "If we wanted to live a decent life I had to go back to work"**

Mrs Livingstone: I must admit, I didn't intend to go back to work, did I, because you was doing quite well at work and I didn't need to work. But then I fell pregnant with my second child and, um, things changed. The recession had hit and things were quite bad and (husband) had to get an ordinary, you know, fully employed type job which didn't pay very well, but it was more secure.

Mr Livingstone: I was self-employed before.

Mrs Livingstone: I had trained as a nurse, so then, after the second one, I thought this is it, if we want to live a decent life I had to go back to work. So I went back part time, nights and weekends, fitted around (husband's) job.

Mr Livingston: It was a matter of no choice really, wasn't it. Where I was earning, I don't know, x amount one month, well, one year, the next year it started to bite in the building industry and the money more or less went to half. So, she didn't really have no choice but to work, to keep the same sort of standard of living anyway

**6.2.2 Regional cultures, local labour markets and divisions of labour**

"Everyone's, everyone here is busy, they are doing something, they are not just out for a jolly, they are out going somewhere, to earn something, to have a meeting, to arrange something. There's no, well I can't see it, there's not a great deal of enjoyment here, there's a great deal of effort expended on making ends meet" Mr Lemon - Barking - ('traditional')

Further evidence of housing and labour market interdependency is provided by observing the extent to which households feel 'secure', either in terms of local labour market conditions, occupational status or the perceived ability to maintain a "decent" standard of living. In the research, 'traditional' households experienced the greatest, and 'flexible' households the least, security of male spouse employment. Couples in 'flexible' households in both survey areas expressed the need for a second income either as an essential component of household income or as an important "safety net". In 'dual' households there was also a perception of increasing employment and financial insecurity. This was especially true in Barking where there is a greater incidence of unskilled and semi-skilled male spouse manual employment.

Of course, it must be acknowledged that the level of income (and the number of household earners) actually 'needed' to maintain a particular household is highly subjective. Given that consumption and standard of living norms are not fixed in time or space it is fair to say that the relative propensity for women, as additional

earners, to enter or stay in paid employment is likely to reflect a constellation of economic motives including increased household consumer expectations (the treadmill influences of labour saving technology and conspicuous consumption), increased housing costs as a proportion of income (the costs of maintaining high rates of home ownership) as well as an erosion of male spouse earnings. In turn, this constellation of economic motives (which, through the local transmission of acquisitive norms, reflects a regional dimension) is accompanied by an overlapping multiplicity of non-economic motives (gender role identities, power relations, emotional investments in self and others).

An example of the local transmission of particular cultures of consumption is reflected in the propensity for Barking male spouses to undertake self-provisioning 'DIY' home improvements, informal economic activities and long hours working with compulsory or self-imposed overtime, to sustain locally prescribed standards of living and the norm of 'industrious leisure'. For instance, Mr Lexington ('flexible') describes a reluctance to get in paid contractors to do work on the house because "it's not something you do". Equally, Mr Lively ('flexible') (a mechanic) claims he earns as much doing "foreigners"<sup>9</sup> at home at the weekend as during the week in regular employment. Mr Lister and Mr Lymington similarly describe the way they "kept busy" during periods of unemployment by undertaking informal work (coach driving, taxi driving and courier work) because "it's amazing what actually comes up to see you through".

Clearly, the possibility of households undertaking informal and casual employment relies on their situation in dense social networks, as a conduit of information and opportunities. Such a density of local social and kin networks is typical to the Barking biographies. It is also evident that local social interactions distribute opportunities and activities in such a way as to reinforce 'traditional' gender roles. Few fathers in the Barking sample express a sense of conflict between these paid and unpaid work commitments and preserving time for their family. Female spouses appear to be equally committed (time-wise) to unpaid activities both inside and outside the home, undertaking voluntary work in local schools and the care of elderly relatives as well as generating "holiday money" from selling books, cosmetics and catalogue merchandise. Consequently, 'family time' is frequently bound up with 'industrious leisure' activities, defined in terms of the separate activities of male and female spouses.

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<sup>9</sup> The term is slang for work undertaken in the 'black' or informal economy. In this case cars are repaired for cash either out of hours in a legitimate business premises or with tools and premises not registered for business purposes.

### **“Slippers and cocoa”**

In some degree of contrast, the Prestwich biographies suggest a concerted effort to balance the demands of home and work life for both partners. To a large extent this 'couple centred' or 'family centred' story reflects the existence in this locale of loosely connected social and kin networks. Whilst the majority of Prestwich couples have at least one parent living close by, there is generally less reciprocal involvement in the lives of extended family compared with Barking. Furthermore, social interaction is typically shared by couples, as opposed to the participation of husband and wife in separate social networks. Mr Miliken ('flexible') describes this "pace of life" in terms of his belief that "time at home with my family is more important than the money in the bank, as long as the bills are paid". Mrs Mellor similarly evokes a sense of living life to savour the present and this filters through into divisions of labour:

"I like to contribute more and have him share more of the home life. He would be, what's the word, what I say is we work to live not live to work, and not, if he took the move, you know, he'd just live to work and I'm not having that, life's too short"

An apposite vignette of the transmission of a culture of 'contentment' in Prestwich is suggested by Mrs Miliken when she describes herself and her husband as being "very slippers and cocoa".

Finally, the biographies suggest that in addition to the transmission of regional cultural norms (that is, Manchester compared with London), differential divisions of labour are contingently articulated through local labour markets (occupational class cleavages and profiles of self employment) as well as generational cohort (life-course specific experiences of the 1980's recession and housing slump). Together these influences explain the existence of a regional as well as a household dimension to differential perceptions of employment security. Consequently, relative perceptions of insecurity and the impact of this on patterns of female participation in paid labour do not automatically correspond with actual experiences of redundancy or unemployment (Beck, 1992, p.93).

#### **6.3.0 Typical and idiosyncratic stories: I**

The biographical approach adopted in this project disrupts the use made in existing research of orthodox meta-narratives to explain household residential mobility behaviour. Nevertheless, it is equally evident that household behaviour is not entirely idiosyncratic nor is it conceptually chaotic. It is possible, for instance, to observe patterns of similarity and difference woven into the multiple and overlapping household narratives. Furthermore, a thematic analysis of the biographies highlights the extent to which representations of household practices

can be explained from within the template of idealised household employment structures and regional variation imposed by the design of this research.

The following section discusses the way particular household practices; male and female work-histories and domestic divisions of labour, are articulated within the household. This is first considered in terms of the longitudinal meshing together of couple employment in the context of family life-course. Second, it is considered in terms of the frequency that households, arranged by their employment structure and regional membership, share common characteristics of domestic practices, access to kin networks, modes of child-care provision and conditions of mobility or immobility with other household which are members of the same type or region.

### 6.3.1 The co-ordination of flexibility

A deeper exploration of the biographic material indicates that in Barking, the re-entry into paid employment of a female spouse after family formation occurs in the majority of cases in the context of reduced male spouse employment security. The first time Mr Lister was made redundant from a seemingly secure position (unskilled employment "on the buses") Mrs Lister returned to part time employment in retail banking to provide the household with a financial "safety net". When Mr Lister was made redundant a second time Mrs Lister increased her working hours, vocational training, and work commitment to cultivate a full time 'career'. Similarly, when Mr Lymington's business collapsed Mrs Lymington returned to work, first working nights so she could still be available for her youngest pre-school aged child, then increasing her hours to accommodate Mr Lymington's extended unemployment and need to retrain.

Regional differentiation is also evident in the nature and scope of female part time work. In Barking, part time employment takes the form of established job-share and flexi-time 'component waged' work whereas in Prestwich part time employment tends to be undertaken on a casual, piece-meal, hourly paid basis. In Barking 'flexible' households the wives work day-time shifts, either complete days for part of the week, or part days within school hours, averaging 22 hours per week. For the same group in Prestwich the majority of wives work shifts (late afternoons/evenings) to fit around spouse employment, averaging 19 hours per week. Wives in Prestwich 'flexible' households are more likely than those in Barking to make regular changes in their employment to seek improved earnings, or more suitable hours, as well as to take on additional formal and informal economic activities (home-work, piece-work, catalogue sales).

Despite working longer, conventional (office) hours, and generally earning higher wages, Barking 'flexible' households are less likely to describe these part time earnings as being an essential component of household financial survival. It is considered essential to have a second income in Prestwich 'flexible' households and part time female employment is undertaken as a necessary compromise over full time employment to accommodate the difficulty (and cost) associated with childcare provision. Only in two of the Barking 'flexible' households can part time employment be identified in the role of providing wives with an "outside interest" or "pin-money". This latter conventional and somewhat derogatory notion of the role of female part time employment is remarkably incongruous to the findings of this research.

It is also apparent that part time employment is differentially affected by the need to coordinate with male spouse employment (in terms of number and regularity of hours worked, overtime commitments and periods away from home). In 'flexible' households in Barking, the take-up of full time female employment is generally prohibited by the inflexibility of male spouse employment, with husbands working long hours, irregular hours on call-out, overtime on evenings and weekends and periods of work away from home oversees. In contrast, Mr Mellor works regular hours in a local job for which there is no pressure to work late into the evening or to work away from home. This stability of work schedule enables Mrs Mellor to undertake evening agency work for a retail bank.

Of course, flexibility to the needs of childcare does not equate to flexibility to the needs of spouse occupational mobility (Dex, 1987). Whilst the higher rate of shift-work for male spouses in Prestwich 'flexible' and 'dual' households tends to increase their availability for child-care (time spent as primary carer in a dovetailed work schedule) it can greatly reduce the employment prospects of female spouses. In Mr Miliken's "Ottawa" shift system, for instance, shifts rotate between "earlies", "lates" and "nights" on a five week cycle. This fluctuation of shifts clearly prohibits Mrs Miliken from undertaking regular (office hours) part time employment and consequently reduces her occupational mobility<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> The mixed blessings of flexible employment practices such as shift-work, to child-care options and female occupational mobility, are discussed in more detail in research by Hanson and Pratt (1995) (also see Massey, 1995).

### 6.3.2 Employment strategies

**Box 5: "yes, but the children have to come first"**

Mr Land: well, from a personal point of view, we've, not been having arguments, but I've been having pops at her about her promotion, you know, them promising her this (...)

Mrs Land: but the thing is I can find a job but it means, at the moment it takes me ten minutes to get to work, and it's convenient

Mr Land: I know, but I keep saying you gotta draw the line

Mrs Land: but it's not important, is it

Mr Land: it is important, in principle

Mrs Land: yes, but the children have to come first

It was demonstrated above that household strategies<sup>11</sup> serve to coordinate the work-histories of male and female spouses. The relative rigidity, flexibility or uncertainty of each spouse's working hours and conditions are negotiated over time and space and in the context of family life-course stage. Similarly, household strategies (such as those associated with divisions of labour) are sensitive to perceptions of long-run employment security, life-style expectations and child-rearing norms. It is evident, for instance, that the uncertainty surrounding the daily coordination of home and work (sick dependents, school closures) demands a level of flexibility which frequently exceeds that available from conventional 'breadwinner' employment. This flexibility to the needs of dependents is typically accommodated by a 'sacrifice' of female spouse career commitment.

Consequently, it can be argued that household employment strategies are, to an extent, facilitated by gendered employment practices which pre-date family formation<sup>12</sup>. These vary in terms of occupation and education but also through the wider effects of socialisation. For instance, experiences of parental employment, class background, work-history and geographic mobility (such as that associated with attending a college away from home). It is typical, for instance for female

<sup>11</sup> The concept of the individual or household 'strategy' adopted here is not that which assumes 'rational calculation' 'strategic thinking' or 'information processing', but rather that of the coordination of goals, preferences and uncertainties within the ongoing reproduction of daily practices. The way the concept of household strategies is applied here follows that popularised in recent sociological case-study research. For instance see: Yeandle, 1984; Crowe, (1989) Anderson, et. al. (1994).

<sup>12</sup> It is a feature of this research that the biographies focus on the life history of the couple dyad (and the arrival of dependents) rather than delving into the lives of individual partners prior to this union. This being said, it is evident that individual employment strategies which pre-date the formation of the present household dyad directly impinge upon the reproduction of household gender divisions of labour and household employment strategies.

spouses in the research to have reflected on potential conflicts between family and work (such as with the needs of particular occupations to be geographically mobile). Mrs Miliken ('flexible') describes her identification with the need to obtain portable skills when she met a partner whose army career would entail frequent UK and overseas postings:

"What I decided to do, I had some choices to make, so I decided to go to secretarial college then I knew that no matter where we moved to, what country, or what he was doing, I'd be able to get a job doing something, which has worked (...) within a few months of moving everywhere I've always managed to get a job doing something, you know, quite locally, quite well paid most of the time"

Mrs Mellor ('flexible') chose self employment as a means of ensuring flexible working conditions:

"I just decided to get out and try self employment where I'd have a more flexible home life and so I gave it a go (...) I said if we ever had a family I don't want to be in a salaried job, salaried employment where we'd have to drop our standard of living to look after a family because I wouldn't have a family unless I was here to look after it (...) I didn't want us to get to a stage where we'd have to drop our standard of living in order to have a family and I didn't because I didn't get to that salary level. I'll never reach it doing what I'm doing, but I'm happy with that".

Finally, Mrs Mallory ('dual') set up her own business primarily to increase her occupational mobility but now explains, post hoc, the state of self employment in terms of her ability to balance her career with motherhood:

"I started my own business up because I'd worked freelance from leaving college and I realised how precarious it was relying on other people for employment and I wanted to rely on myself for employment and not other people, so that was a conscious decision, at the time I didn't want to, I didn't think about having children (...) but if I go and work for a company as a designer (...) I'm very restricted because of the children, I can't go and work from eight in the morning 'til seven at night, which is what I'd end up doing, and six days a week, and fly off to factories in Hong Kong or whatever, I can't do that, well, it's not that I can't, I wouldn't want to"

#### **"If I moved to another company I'd have to prove myself"**

The biographic narratives suggest that sampling frame women experience a fluctuating degree of career salience or career ambivalence through the life course. This ambivalence, which is generally absent from (or silent in) male employment stories, is evident in several guises; the selection of a short-lived occupation; the selection of an occupation deemed to be flexible to the needs of spouse or dependent; or the self-imposition of a static occupational position. This latter

strategy is described by Mrs Mistry ('dual') as the decision to "tread water" in her career during a life-stage when her family is her first priority:

"I think one of the reasons I've stayed where I have as long as I have sort of employment wise is because you do have that flexibility. If I moved to another company I'd have to prove myself over a number of years there, so if I needed to go sort of at the drop of a hat to pick my child up I couldn't"

There is little evidence of sampling frame men building considerations of flexibility or portability into their individual employment practices but similar results are generated implicitly in the face of reduced male employment security. For instance, a male spouse strategy is to move into self employment. In Barking, Mr Lister ('dual') and Mr Livingstone ('flexible') are both undertaking training in "The Knowledge" to become licensed taxi-cab drivers. In Prestwich, Mr Mellor is hoping to establish his own landscape gardening business when his redundancy comes through. In general, however, male employment strategies are geared towards occupational mobility (improved earnings), greater security (securing a permanent contract) and better hours (regular hours, shorter hours, preferred shifts). Significantly, the geographic mobility of male spouse employment is rarely cited as an employment strategy.

#### 6.4.0 Typical and idiosyncratic stories: II

Not only do the household biographies reveal typical and idiosyncratic stories concerning housing and employment strategies but also domestic practices. Once again, this diversity can be related to the typological template, making comparisons between household employment structure types and regional study areas. First, divisions of domestic labour and financial management are interpreted in terms of relative gender role 'traditionalism'. Second, the mode of childcare adopted by each couple (the use of a private nursery or child minder versus unpaid help from a parent or spouse) is presented together with a description of the relative proximity (geographic and emotional) of kin networks. These observations build upon the understanding that practices concerning the division of domestic labour and the closeness of kin networks (especially when this provides a source of unpaid childcare) are commonly associated with divisions of paid labour during the year of child-rearing. Finally, the extent to which each household has undertaken home improvements, whether through 'do-it-yourself' self-provisioning or by paying outside contractors, is presented together with a schematic representation of the couples as either 'stayers' or 'movers'.

#### 6.4.1 Domestic labour and financial management

For the households interviewed in this project, the division of domestic labour largely corresponds with the findings of existing research (Berk, 1985; Goodnow and Bowes, 1994). Domestic labour is typically undertaken by wives with limited contributions (by task type and time) from husbands. This is most clearly articulated for 'traditional' and 'flexible' households in both regional survey area. Here domestic labour is clustered under a 'female spouse' descriptor. The biographies provide further evidence to note that female spouses undertake the majority of day-to-day domestic provisioning such as laundry, cleaning, cooking and shopping, with husbands performing the role of "weekend handy man" and of providing a "taxi-service" for children's after-school activities.

It is equally evident that 'dual' earning households, especially in Prestwich, demonstrate a less conventional approach to domestic labour divisions. 'Alternative' practices include the substitution of a paid cleaner and greater egalitarianism, with housework shared either by particular tasks or by a uniform division of overall work-load. Barking 'dual' households appear to retain more traditional domestic practices. This can be attributed to the fact that wives in this group took extended breaks in their employment on starting a family. Wives describe the difficulty of trying to change a "routine that sticks", from the time they were houseworkers at home with young children and commonly conclude that the unequal division of domestic labour is their "own fault" for taking on the responsibility "because I know that I'm doing it properly" (Mrs Lee, 'traditional').

Financial practices differ more distinctly by region than they do by household employment structure. In Barking, the majority of households manage a joint bank account with husbands assuming financial control. This pattern of male control is disrupted in 'dual' earning households where wives are in most cases the higher earner and where their involvement in business and financial occupations explains the "natural" (by skill specialisation) assumption of household budget control by these working wives. The Prestwich sample is characterised by a diversity of money management styles which cuts across household employment structure. Joint, separate and a combination of accounting systems are in use (Pahl, 1988; Burgoyne, 1990). Wives have financial control in over half of all households although this is less true of the 'traditional' household type. Greatest financial control by wives occurs in 'flexible' households where household budgets are

considered tight and where four out of five wives assume financial control of a joint account<sup>13</sup>.

#### 6.4.2 Kin networks and childcare provision

Typically, the parent(s) of at least one spouse live locally, in both of the study areas (Barking/Prestwich or contiguous district)<sup>14</sup>. This spatial proximity is not always translated into a close degree of interdependent support. For this reason, geographically proximate family networks are described as conforming either to 'tight' or 'loose' levels of emotional closeness. It is consistently in 'flexible' households in both survey areas that family networks are described as being tight-knit whereby regular (usually daily) contact forms an essential component of family life. Mrs Lively ('flexible') considers proximity to her parents (who live in the adjacent street) as her first priority in choice of where to live:

"I think a lot of problems can be solved with a closer knit family. My mum's my, my dad even, is, my dad goes down the school and does hobby hour with the kids. They're the backbone, aren't they, they're just there all the time (...) and it works both ways. I don't think it's all one way".

The significance, for 'flexible' households, of maintaining a 'tight' family network is reflected in the fact that the majority of childcare is managed through the sequential employment (dove-tailing) of husbands and wives or by drawing on the assistance of a parent. In Barking paid childcare tends to be "ruled out" because of a belief that children should be looked after only by a family member (an extension of 'traditional' mother-at-home values). In Prestwich it is more typical for paid childcare to be "not an option" because of its cost relative to income.

#### 6.4.3 Home improvements and residential mobility

It is consistently in 'flexible' households that the majority of 'DIY' self-provisioning takes place. 'Flexible' households are also the least likely to be residentially mobile. This indicates that housing practices of consolidation which involve a high personal investment (own time, own labour, family assistance, knowledge, skills and money) are closely associated with an expectation of staying "permanently" in the present house. Couples in these households typically describe themselves as being "not ones for moving" or of having put "so much into this

<sup>13</sup> This trend corresponds with evidence in existing research on household financial management (Pahl, 1984; Pahl, 1988)

<sup>14</sup> Existing literature on East London generally, and Barking in particular, portrays this area as supporting particularly close geographical ties between extended family members (Willmott and Young, 1957, 1963; O'Brien and Jones, 1996). It is perhaps surprising to note, therefore, that there is little difference between family network distributions in the two survey areas.

house" that they view it as a permanent residence such that "they'll have to carry me out of here in a box".

Both 'traditional' and 'dual' earning households are more disposed to be mobile than 'flexible' households and they are more likely to employ outside contractors to undertake home improvements. The rootedness that ensues from DIY self-provisioning 'personification' in 'flexible' households contrasts with Barking 'traditional' households where, despite an equivalent DIY 'time' investment (especially for male spouses in 'trade' self employment), and greater financial investment, couples are less specifically attached to a particular house or locale.

In Barking this DIY activity is consistently a male preserve, typically undertaken by husbands with the assistance of local family and friends who are frequently able to contribute specialist trade skills, equipment and materials to keep costs down. This echoes previous research considering home improvements made by council tenants in the same location (Jarvis, 1994) thus suggesting a locally particular home improvement culture which transcends housing and occupational class. Prestwich 'flexible' households are less likely to draw on the assistance of local family networks but husbands and wives are more likely to work together on home improvement projects.

#### 6.4.4 Housing strategies

**Box 6: "They just couldn't believe it, it was if I'd flown down"**

Mr Maitland: the thing I've noticed, coming back from London, is that we are willing to travel to work, because people up here are very stoneage regards work attitude

Mrs Maitland: about five or ten miles is considered the limit. You know, sort of a twenty minute bus ride is, that's it and I mean I noticed it even more when I worked in Leek, the designers there, I virtually came in from nowhere and was on at least three times what the normal designer was (...) because they'd always lived in Leek (...) so when I came for my interview I drove 90 miles. Bloody hell, 90 miles after a day at work for an interview. They just couldn't believe it, it was as if I'd flown down there.

Mr Maitland: that's all down to the fact that we went away to college, and spent three years commuting each term, you know, a long distance and you become more, the country shrinks and then when we went down to London to live it shrank even more and in my first six months in London I went home to Manchester to see (wife) every weekend, a two and a half hour train journey it was.

The concept of household 'strategies'; towards housing, employment and household structure, was introduced above. Strategies provide the means (not necessarily explicit) of coordinating goals, preferences and uncertainties within daily practices and lived experience. Not only do they exist to coordinate divisions of labour in the changing context of family life-course, relative employment flexibility and proximity to kin networks, but also to coordinate the strength of attachments (relative consolidation) of household members to home and locale.

The household group typically embraces multiple identities and preferences concerning residential location, housing position and home-centredness. These identities and preferences are constructed and reproduced within changing and overlapping spatio-knowledge boundaries. For instance, in Box 6 above, Mr and Mrs Maitland ('traditional') explain their willingness to travel long distances to work in terms of their experience of having travelled away from home for a college education. Furthermore, Mrs Maitland describes the virtual detachment of house location factors from her potential labour market:

"I've always driven a hell of a long way, regardless, it's just that the places that I work for are so few and far between that if you change jobs you're bound to be driving a long way so I would never commit to say moving to say Colne to be near the first place I worked"

This perception of distance, and the relative elasticity of home and work boundaries, is in marked contrast to that of Mr and Mrs Mellor ('flexible'), who were introduced at the start of this chapter. As a reminder of this story, Mr Mellor has accepted redundancy rather than to transfer with his employer to a new location which would entail a forty mile daily commute, round trip. Neither the longer commute nor a house move can be reconciled by the couple within the boundaries they have established for the coordination of housing, employment and household structure. Jobs are to be 'local' and home a place of permanence.

**"It's easier not to move than to move sometimes"**

Household strategies concerning residential mobility not only centre on housing location but also on housing consolidation. For some couples housing consolidation is a significant outlet for self-expression (Jarvis, 1994). In many cases this suggests a source of "ontological security" whereby personal control (over networks of social interaction and boundaries of knowledge) is exercised within the 'fortifications' of home and familiarity of locale, or 'habitus' (Saunders, 1990, p.290; Boudieu, 1977, p.77-78). Nevertheless, it is equally evident from the biographies that household strategies towards both residential mobility and

housing consolidation typically embrace a multiplicity of both material (monetary) and non-material (emotional, cultural and psychic) preferences.

A popular housing strategy, for instance, is the purchase of a “run-down” property and investment of self-provisioning resources (own labour, time and skills) as a means of gaining access to an affordable family size house. This material strategy; the exchange of own labour, time and skills for increased housing amenity, is also bound up with non-material preferences of housing consolidation and attachment to locale. In the case of Mr and Mrs Lively (‘flexible’) the purchase of a spacious but dilapidated property involved the family living with Mrs Lively’s parents for a year whilst Mr Lively and his father-in-law made the house habitable.

Alternatively, the strategy of extending an existing property as a means of gaining additional space without the disruption and anxiety of a house move. Mrs Millington (‘flexible’) explains that after three thwarted attempts to make a local house move she and her husband decided to extend their present house:

“although we were going to stay in Prestwich we thought it would be a particularly good time to move then and, obviously, with having two children we needed more space (...) we extended after that, we decided, rather than move, because we’d had such a bad experience that we’d extend (...) we were always going to move. It’s easier not to move than to move, sometimes, I think”

In another ‘flexible’ Prestwich household, Mrs Moss wanted to move to a modern house but Mr Moss was reluctant to leave the present house and locale. As a compromise, Mr Moss had the house remodelled to install a new modern bathroom. The adoption of the strategy of house extension, or extensive renovation, is closely associated with the perception of mobility as something to be avoided at all costs. This relative rootedness to house or locale, as well as it’s corollary - the desire to move for the sake of it “for a change”, can be asymmetric within couple dyads. This asymmetry further complicates the attribution of one straightforward pattern of residential mobility to one geography of household gender divisions of labour.

This suggests that couples experience asymmetric attachment to locale and this feeds into the negotiation of residential mobility strategies. Mrs Moore (‘dual’), for instance, contrasts her lack of “area identity” with her husband’s strong attachment to the immediate locale by noting that when they moved into their present house:

“it was the first time he’d moved since he was three, he and his family have lived in the same house, it matters to him he’s got an area identity, his friends live not far away (...) whereas with me we’ve moved house since I was 11, I have no area identity”

Similarly, Mrs Lee ('traditional') exhibits a greater restlessness than her husband and was the one to precipitate the move the couple made to their present home. Because she proved to have been financially astute in bringing about this last move she believes she will persuade her husband to move again at her inception in the future. Mr Lemon ('traditional') claims that relocation would never be contemplated simply because "we (a)ren't moving away from her parents". He compares his wife's (and now the household's) inertia with his worldly-wise description of himself having "lived all over the place".

#### **"I tend to be the stodgy one"**

Not only are couples asymmetric in their attachment to locale and in orientation to moving house but also in terms of relative risk taking or risk aversion. Differences in general ethos can again influence the negotiation of household strategies towards residential mobility. For instance, whereas Mr Lexington ('flexible') dislikes moving and "great upheaval" and prefers "stability" worrying "about all the things that can go wrong", Mrs Lexington claims that she "probably would jump into things" like the chance to move to a new area and make new friends. Mrs Linklater ('dual') explains that her husband (who is currently unable to secure permanent full time employment in the UK) would be:

"(he'd be) quite happy to go off and work in Canada or Australia whereas I think I'm naturally more conservative (...) I'm less adventurous than you so I think in that respect I sort of, there's not exactly conflict but, I think I tend to wrinkle my nose and pooh pooh any wild mad ideas so I think I tend to the stodgy one"

#### 6.4.5 Typical and idiosyncratic stories: summary

The preceding discussion can be summarised in a thematic template as illustrated in Figure 6.7 below. Whilst this summary illustrates clearly the uniformity of certain domestic practices, especially in 'flexible' households, it also highlights the obvious limitation which hinders any attempt to 'survey' or make a quasi-quantitative study of intra-household processes. In effect, it demonstrates that the traditional search for similarity of outcomes is fruitless. As previously stated, unitary outcome preferences disguise a multitude of strategies (and ways of forming preferences). There are many ways to achieve the same preference. Indeed, what comes across most strongly in the biographies is the universality of negotiation. The biographies expose a variety of discourses and practices of negotiation within and between households. It is through an exploration of practices of negotiation that greater understanding is gained of particular household strategies to accommodate change and uncertainty.

Whilst there are apparent patterns of typicality within particular household types and within regional cultures these are frequently disrupted by cross-cutting cleavages from alternative frameworks of interpretation. It is evident, for instance, that households within a cross-sectional category of 'dual' earning divisions of labour share similar characteristics with regard to reduced mobility and more egalitarian domestic practices but when it comes to explaining processes of decision-making it is clear that typologies based on occupational status, class or generational cohort membership might provide a more consistent framework.

With the exception of 'flexible' households there is little consistency to intra-household characteristics within each employment structure type. This is quite understandable given that any typology based on household gender divisions of labour will interrupt the 'flow' of household structure. It was clearly illustrated in Figures 6.1 to 6.6 above how the meshing together of couple work-histories changes through the family life-course such that a biographic approach captures a transformation through several 'types' longitudinally. Given this fundamental dynamic, it is suggested that a single typology does not exist which would provide an explanatory framework suitable of conveying the evolution and negotiation of household strategies across time and space. Moreover, the biographies clearly demonstrate that gender roles and household practices are negotiated within a continuum of past, present and future preferences such that these can not be read off from a snap-shot of paid employment positions.

'Flexible' households offer the greatest consistency of intra-household characteristics. This is demonstrated by pattern regularity in Figure 6.7. 'Flexible' households are consistently characterised by tight local family networks, the lowest take-up of paid child-care, the highest disposition towards self-provisioning and the lowest rate of residential mobility.

In contrast, 'dual' earning and 'traditional' households demonstrate more ambiguous trends. This heterogeneity of household practices is demonstrated by irregular domestic practice distribution in Figure 6.7. The suggestion is that occupational status (careers versus jobs), generational cohort membership and the local transmission of cultural norms are powerful cleavages which serve to cross-cut those of household employment structure. Consequently, future household research needs to be sensitive to the flow of household structure. It also needs to be receptive to idiosyncratic variation in domestic practices and household strategies.

Figure 6.7: Schematic representation of domestic practices

		Domestic Labour		Financial management	Family networks	Childcare provision	Housing improvement
		Female spouse		Joint - shared	Local - tight	Mother at home	Mover
		Shared by tasks		Joint - Mr	Local - loose	Spouse - dovetailed	Stayer
		Shared overall		Joint - Mrs	Not local	Parent/in-law	Extensive 'DIY'
		Paid cleaner		Joint and separate		Unpaid friend	Paid contractors
"Traditional"		Mr & Mrs Maddison		*	*	*	*
"Traditional"		Mr & Mrs Mistry		*	*	*	*
"Traditional"		Mr & Mrs Moon		*	*	*	*
"Traditional"		Mr & Mrs Myles		*	*	*	*
"Traditional"		Mr & Mrs Mallory		*	*	*	*
"Flexible"		Mr & Mrs Lymington		*	*	*	*
"Flexible"		Mr & Mrs Land		*	*	*	*
"Flexible"		Mr & Mrs Leicester		*	*	*	*
"Flexible"		Mr & Mrs Losely		*	*	*	*
"Flexible"		Mr & Mrs Lister		*	*	*	*
"Dual"		Mr & Mrs Miliken		*	*	*	*
"Dual"		Mr & Mrs Morris		*	*	*	*
"Dual"		Mr & Mrs Millington		*	*	*	*
"Dual"		Mr & Mrs Mellor		*	*	*	*
"Dual"		Mr & Mrs Moss		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Little		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Langham		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Lexington		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Livingston		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Lively		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Maitland		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Morley		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Mowlem		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Masters		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Mannering		*	*	*	*
"Barking"		Mr & Mrs Lampton		*	*	*	*
"Barking"		Mr & Mrs Lemon		*	*	*	*
"Barking"		Mr & Mrs Loader		*	*	*	*
"Barking"		Mr & Mrs Lever		*	*	*	*
"Barking"		Mr & Mrs Lee		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Mr & Mrs Stayer		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Extensive 'DIY'		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Paid contractors		*	*	*	*
"Prestwich"		Few improvements		*	*	*	*

### 6.5.0 Negotiating gender divisions of labour

**Box 7: "It's very hard just to change your role all of a sudden"**

Mr Lymington: It was very difficult, for me. The roles had changed, you know, I mean, I didn't earn from the April through to the October. I didn't actually earn any money because the business had gone under and the stamps weren't paid so I wasn't entitled to unemployment benefit

Mrs Lymington: It was just hard, very hard work, physically hard, and then coping with what (husband) was going through and plus there were a lot of financial pressures (...). It's very hard just to change your role all of a sudden, from me doing everything indoors, which I was, you know, two and a half days a week, of course I was doing it all, um, and it was getting back to, kind of, leaving lists, can you do this, can you do that. It was very difficult, when he was feeling so vulnerable anyway

It has been argued throughout this project that issues of housing, employment and household structure need to be researched in a way that is sensitive to transformations through the life-course. Couples who begin life together as 'dual' earning households without children (typical of all the interviewees) will 'park' temporarily or more permanently in any number or any order of 'traditional' 'flexible' or 'dual' earner compositions in the context of changing family form (the birth of a first or subsequent child, spacing of children above and below school age, the ill-health of a dependent) as well as housing or employment circumstances (overcrowding, redundancy).

The argument has been made that it is inappropriate to interpret residential mobility behaviour and relative decision-making 'bargaining power' from cross-sectional household employment structure. It would be equally misleading to assign a shifting female spouse involvement in household decision-making to correspond with the obvious longitudinal fluctuations in household employment structure through the life-course. Whilst gender practices (the project of negotiating masculinities and femininities) both reproduce and are reproduced by these structural changes this reproduction is not sufficiently explained by divisions of paid labour.

The household narratives suggest that alternative masculinities and femininities<sup>15</sup> are deeply embedded within a multiplicity of individual identities and institutional structures (Watts, 1991; Taylor et al, 1996; Eade, 1997). At the same time that most individuals enter the dyadic relationship with some perception of their own and others gender role<sup>16</sup> preferences, these are generally made implicit rather than explicit. Goodnow and Bowes (1994) note that a lot is taken for granted in household communication where "couples are often sustained by leaving unchallenged the assumption that they share the same views about what a marriage should be like, how children should be looked after, or how household tasks should be done" (p.91).

Both individual identities (masculinities and femininities; as husband and wife, as father and mother, as son and daughter) and institutional identities (the household group) are contested within a changing spatial and temporal milieu. Overlapping preferences and identities are negotiated in situations of co-operation and conflict (Sen, 1990). For instance, normative parenting values (mother at home) may conflict with preferences for children's education (demand for a second income). Similarly, gender role preferences potentially conflict with co-existing, interdependent preferences of ethnicity, class, occupational status, and ideology. In effect, there are many and varied ways in which gender role identities (and power relations) are lived out within households in paid and unpaid divisions of labour over time and these are highlighted in the substance and discourse of the household biographies (Rawlins, 1992).

One image of fatherhood, for instance, is depicted by Mr Morris ('flexible') who, since his haulage job was transferred from Manchester to Liverpool, resents the fact that his lengthy commute and late shift pattern reduces the time he can spend with his children:

"at work there's like, there must be about 20 of us travel up from Manchester and (...) that's the main topic of conversation, like, that there's too many lates and you don't see your family like you should. It does disrupt your family life".

<sup>15</sup> Sexual identities are assumed to be heterosexual in this research.

<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to note from the interview material the ease with which interviewees talk about 'roles', about each other having or not having roles, about being 'role-oriented' or of changing their roles. To an extent this must be attributed to the adoption in everyday language and understanding of the concept of people 'having' roles. It also indicates the implicit awareness interviewees had of the issues of gender divisions of labour which lay at the heart of the research. This is in the context of strict interview conditions in which the researcher at no point used the terms 'role' or 'gender'. In this way, couples do not only suggest particular role relations indirectly in the substance of the biographies but they also talk explicitly about their self-image and their image of others' roles (their spouse, parents, peers) (see Potter and Wetherall, 1987).

Similarly, Mr Loader ('traditional') describes his experience of conflict between a desire to spend time with his family and the high level of commitment required in a "demand led" legal career. His working life entails a lengthy commute and quite regular periods of work overseas:

"working these kind of hours in London and not seeing the kids one end of the week to the other is just not really acceptable and at some point, maybe sooner rather than later, I'll just decide I can't be bothered with this anymore and go somewhere where I can have a reasonably quiet life and see the kids more"

**"It's inbred in the way I've always got to be on the move"**

Not only are gender practices reproduced within the milieu in terms of the hours worked (timing, regularity and number of hours worked) by each spouse but also in terms of the nature of that employment. Particular work practices and environments engender particular networks of learning which percolate through to the construction and reproduction of masculinities and femininities and household gender divisions of labour. For instance, Mr Myles ('dual') explains his relaxed attitude to doing housework in terms of work practices relating to his semi-skilled manual occupation:

"it's more or less done as it needs. Like that washing tommorow when I come home I'd take it in and do the ironing there and then, so it's out the way, because I'm home here before (wife) gets home so instead of just sitting down getting bored of an evening I'd sooner do that for an hour and the same with tea (...) it just happens because, you know, I'm one of these, er, me job is actually piece work, so it must be like it's inbred in the way I've always got to be on the move, you know, you do things and you're planning things and this that and the other so I just like to keep active"

Equally, feminine identities differ idiosyncratically within household types to dampen typological trends by divisions of paid labour alone. This is exemplified by comparing the attitudes of two Barking 'traditional' wives. Mrs Lemon describes her primary carer role as the 'natural' consequence of motherhood:

"I didn't think there was any reason for me to go back to work after I had children. My thoughts were that, if you have children you stay at home and you bring them up. Afterall, that's what my parents did"

In contrast, Mrs Lee admits to a degree of ambivalence to the assumption of a 'traditional' role.

"My life has certainly changed since I've given up (work). It's for good and for bad really. It's good for the children, but it's bad for me. I certainly miss going out to work, certainly, for the money, even though we share, it's still nice to have your own independence"

In Box 8, Mrs Masters (traditional) experiences a conflict between her desire to maintain financial independence, to have interests outside the home, and her sense of guilt at not wanting to be a full time mother. In the course of the narrative this conflict is resolved when Mrs Masters explains her full time mother role to self and others by situating her departure from paid employment within the anticipated event of redundancy.

**Box 8: "I thought, I'm not a real mother"**

Mrs Masters: if you'd asked me starting out when I first started my job, I said I'm going to have a childminder because I want to work full time so that was a definite change of job. It was, it was very difficult with (eldest child) because he was six weeks early so he was in an incubator and then he went to intensive care and was critical and sort of both our lives just stopped really, didn't they, and I think you learn what's important and certainly my job didn't seem important at that time and we hadn't done anything for him so giving up work seemed, as well, I'd realised how, not upsetting, but the childminder used to do just silly little things like kissing his finger nails so I didn't get to kiss his finger nails for a month and I thought, I'm not a real mother (...) Um, so it was a change more in me than, I think, (husband) would have always been happy for me not to have gone back to work

Mr Masters: Mmm. I mean I think if I had thought about it I would have definitely not wanted you to go back to work but then that's not for me to decide is it. I tell you, I tell (wife) what I think but it's still up to her what she wants to do

### 6.6.0 Summary and conclusions

Central to this thesis, which explores the relationship of household divisions of labour to patterns and processes of residential mobility, is the expectation that households which divide paid labour contributions between two earners will experience greater immobility (inertia) than male breadwinner households. This orthodox reading of monetary bargaining power is disrupted in the biographies, however, by evidence to suggest that whether a household moves or stays in a particular locale, in a particular housing and labour market context, is as much influenced by non-material as by economic motives.

The biographies emphasise the ways in which households construct and reproduce the boundaries of their lived experience within multiple and diverse forms of

'habitus'. This might be described in terms of the situatedness of households within a shared system of dispositions, practices and learning; a spatially situated and evolving 'modus operandi' (Krais, 1993). It is through reflection on past events and engagement with overlapping institutions that the household appears to evolve through time and space. Changes in household employment composition, domestic labour divisions and parenting roles appear to be negotiated indirectly over time so that couples frequently express "surprise" at how "naturally" or "neatly" things fell into place or how "lucky" they were that decisions were seemingly made for them by circumstances.

In effect, the biographies provide a window through which the principles of structuration are illuminated in action. The narratives revealed here are all about the interdependent relationship of human action (individual and collective) and institutional systems. For this reason, it is the case that the guidelines of structuration illuminate the empirical questions underlying this thesis (Gregson, 1986, p.194) at the same time that in-depth ethnographic research brings to life a clearer understanding of structuration in action. In this chapter, this has been demonstrated in terms of the 'flow' of the duality of household structure. The biographical narratives describe the 'flow' or 'becoming' (Pred, 1985, p.338) of household structure through the interdependent evolution of spheres of employment, domestic provisioning, gender roles and mobility dispositions. The biographies convey stories told by couples to 're-present' events which 'tidy up' the unintended consequences of previous actions and ways of acting. Couples shape the stories they tell of household strategies to accommodate the 'messiness' of reality, describing how 'plans' "came about naturally".

Similarly, the duality of structure of the household is expressed, not only through the manifest interdependency of structure spheres (public, private, collective and individual) but also in the 'flow' of this interdependency, sustained through a relationship of recursive reflexivity, between male and female spouse and the household group. The operation of this reflexive relationship comes across in the way couples separately and jointly contribute to the narration of household biographies. Consequently, the material presented in this chapter brings structuration to life by exposing the interactive mode of preference formation within discourses and practices of day-to-day household relations.

Stories of the way housing, employment and household structure shape household lived experience are convoluted and fragmented, suggesting that behaviour in these spheres is embedded in a constellation of overlapping and contested interests.

Moreover, social and cultural factors influence a household's relative disposition towards mobility, or inertia, in a way which cuts across positions of economic structure. This is not to say that approaches to mobility are entirely heterogenous. It has been demonstrated that certain household practices are common to particular household types and to regional context.

Patterns of similarity and difference have been sketched across household composition types and between contrasting north-south regions. Differences exist between household employment composition types which are not wholly undermined by observations of diversity. For instance, a pattern of association exists between the relative security and nature of male spouse employment, the proximity and reciprocity of local family networks, the extent of household self-provisioning and the relative educational and occupational investments of male and female partners. This evidence supports Morris (1995) in her suggestion of a causal relationship between insecurity of employment (typically male) and the composition and significance of local family networks (p.74).

Greatest male spouse insecurity exists in 'flexible' households and these households cultivate the strongest local social and kin networks. In turn, these networks provide a valuable source of childcare provision, local knowledge and self-provisioning assistance. Indeed, it might be argued that the formation of the 'flexible' household type is not so much representative of a specific gender role culture but rather of a coping strategy to a measure of housing and labour market constraint.

A sense has also been gained of the local transmission of acquisitive norms and gender roles in the negotiation of household strategies. Regional difference is evident in terms of cultures of consumption, housing consolidation and expectations for the future. The 'industrious leisure' of Barking family life is contrasted with the 'slippers and cocoa contentment' of Prestwich family life. Whilst there is little evidence to support the notion of regional 'cultures of patriarchy', relative gender role preferences and household structures are clearly embedded in the history and practices of the locale. Dispositions and practices are reproduced reflexively and recursively through the duality of structure of the household, through the interdependency of individual household members and the household system. This is not to say that a 'regional' dimension is dominant but, rather, to coin a popular phrase, to say that 'space matters' (Massey, 1995, p.326) in the formation and reproduction of household structures and household strategies.

Strategies and practices are not ubiquitous to household structures across space but rather are specific to situations of time and space.

Nevertheless, it must be recognised that diverse practices exist which disrupt these categoric patterns. Multiple identities are associated with gender, occupational status, housing position, attachment to locale and the interdependent effects of these on residential mobility. Idiosyncratic expressions of “lived experience” (the project of the self-making and of sustaining intimate relations) are emphasised in the biographic narratives. Differences within and between household types are articulated both symmetrically and asymmetrically within couples in households, subject to ongoing negotiation and mediated in the context of changing housing and labour markets. In this way, a web of interacting variables are expressed in the propensity for households, from the three household employment composition types, in the two regions, to adopt particular housing and employment strategies.

Chapter seven: Synthesis and conclusions

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### 7.1.0 Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to shed light on the changing geography of household divisions of labour. It was suggested in the first chapter that changing divisions of labour (the proliferation of dual earning households) would be identified alongside changing power relations in decision-making such that a once straightforward male spouse primacy in household decision-making is increasingly disrupted by relations of negotiation and potential conflict.

Residential mobility provides a particularly thorny subject for inter-personal decision-making, especially for dual earning couples. It requires the negotiation of individual employment preferences (and practices), attachment to place and the co-ordination of daily family life. Co-ordination comprises a myriad of place and time specific events, often conducted in a specific sequence, within limited options of transportation. One residential location does not offer the equivalent means of co-ordination of another. This is particularly apparent where co-ordination is sustained through kin networks and locally embedded networks of resources and knowledge.

At the start of this thesis, it was asked what the implications were for a changing geography of household divisions of labour on patterns and processes of residential mobility. If power in family-household decision-making is determined by the relative monetary contributions of partners then this will be reflected in a relative equalisation of power relations in dual earning households. If the decision at stake is whether or not a whole household should move for the advancement of male spouse employment then the logic would be that women in dual earning households will be better able to veto a personally disadvantageous move than their counterparts in 'traditional' male-breadwinner households.

Furthermore, if flexible labour market practices both nourish as well as incapacitate dual earning households then the paradox introduced at the start of this thesis remains. Rising numbers of dual earning households will contribute to declining rates of flexibility, in terms of mobility, for the individuals within these households.

This thesis has made evident that power relations in household decision-making are not adequately explained in relation to economic measures alone. Consequently, it is not possible to predict patterns of residential mobility from household divisions of paid labour. At the same time that household employment structure contributes significantly to explanations of residential mobility, households occupy many different employment structures through the life-course and corresponding

variations in mobility propensity do not necessarily follow suit. Households employ mobility strategies which transcend fluctuations in employment structure. Decision-making power relations are not simply determined by the relative economic contributions of household members. Instead, strategies are negotiated beyond the ambit of economic determination (a conclusion which contrasts with that reached, from a game theoretic approach, by Jordon et al, 1994).

Overall, households with more than one earner demonstrate reduced levels of spatial mobility. This indicates that the negotiation of the goals and aspirations of more than one career can result in strategies of inertia or the long-run consolidation of a permanent place of residence. What is equally evident, however, is that many and varied stories of residential mobility are told by households sharing similar characteristics of a dual earning structure. These typically relate to a differential sense of 'rootedness' and 'risk-sensitivity'.

This chapter brings together the findings (in terms of scope and depth) which have been generated from extensive and intensive research. This synthesis demonstrates the role of household strategies in explaining residential mobility in Britain. The argument is made that residential mobility strategies are best described in terms of the reproduction of relative rootedness and risk-sensitivity within the habitus. This set of dispositions and practices is "enduring rather than eternal" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; p.133). Dispositions are "practical in character" and express "the capability to 'go on' within the routines of social life" (Giddens, 1984, p.4). Whilst positions relating to risk-sensitivity and rootedness may be associated with particular household employment structures the former is not sufficiently realised by the latter. It is suggested, therefore, that future research start from an understanding of situated household behaviour.

#### 7.2.0 Summary of findings

##### 7.2.1 Part one: situated households

In part one, the exploration of a changing geography of household divisions of labour, and the relationship of this to residential mobility, was cast in the context of existing research and debate. The attempt to consider both patterns and processes of mobility through multiple method research was contrasted with existing housing and employment research which perpetuates the assumptions of orthodox economic theory through the reification of large-scale quantitative surveys.

A sampling frame population of 'nuclear family' households was introduced as a particularly appropriate subject for mobility research. This approach focuses

attention on decision-making which encompasses the frequently complicated coordination of employment and child-care. It also represents the greatest potential source of gender relation conflict, which lies at the heart of this thesis. This household type is also the subject of significant reification in British policy making. If policy regarding household economic activity is founded on a misconceived notion of the 'ideal' family-household and this ideal represents a minority (one in four) of households in the first instance, then a stronger argument is made for the redirection of household policy initiatives.

It was demonstrated how a typically closed view of the household, as a consensual unit, retains a strangle-hold on existing explanations of residential mobility. The decision to move or stay is simply read off from a-priori behavioural assumptions of rational utility maximisation. Even within the scope of household research, the 'black box' of internal household relations is opened but the motives and preferences which underpin mobility decisions are attributed, without further differentiation, to positions of paid employment. The 'black box' is opened but the workings inside remain hidden.

A hypothesised relationship was introduced between household divisions of labour and relative rates of residential mobility. This was done in such a way as to expose the insufficiency of existing explanatory paradigms. The aim was to question the claims made by resource contribution theory, that increasing female participation in paid employment is accompanied by growing egalitarianism in household power relations - the 'symmetrical family' forecast by Willmott and Young back in 1973. At the other extreme, it also sought to question the claims made, by theories of patriarchy, that structural inequalities prevent increasing female participation in paid employment from having any significant bearing on intra-household power relations.

A review of existing literature led to the rejection in this thesis of orthodox economic assumptions, the reduction of household actions to economic measures alone and an attempt to predict future rates of residential mobility from large-scale quantitative studies of events. The theory of explanation pursued in this project recognises that there is not a single 'reality' which can be read off empirically from observed events. Residential mobility is neither facilitated nor thwarted by housing market structure or employment market structures in isolation. Consequently, in disengaging with the orthodox regime it was necessary to advance a theoretical and methodological framework capable of embracing the multiplicity of household experience.

### 7.2.2 Household structure

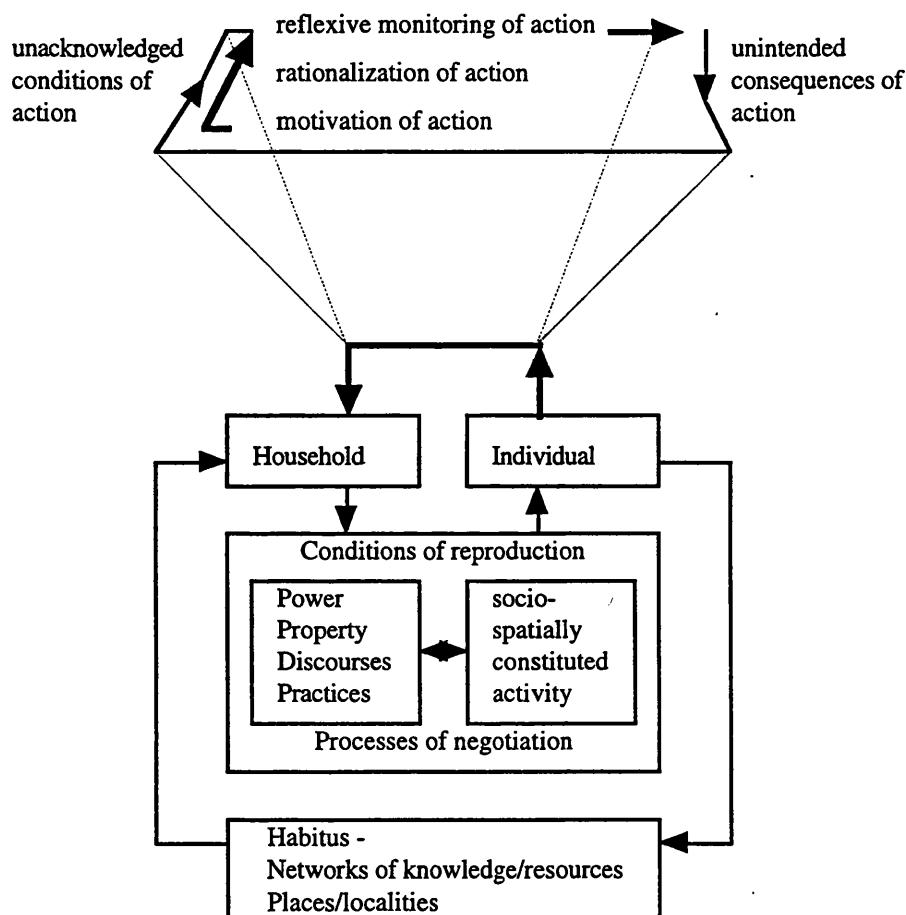
At the start of this thesis it was suggested that the household is best conceived, following the principles of structuration, in terms of a duality of structure. The household is an institution of both objective form (money, property, skills, state legitimised authority over dependents) and subjective relations of thought and perception (shared customs, conventions, morals, beliefs and norms).

In Chapters One and Two, it was made apparent that one of the most significant obstacles confronting the researcher in this field is an adequate conception of the household. The aim of this section is to offer a reconceptualisation of the household in the context of the research undertaken in this thesis. Following the principles of structuration it is understood that individual agents occupy positions within the household institution interdependently with the group structure itself. Thus, we can conceive of each household member separately participating in spheres of activity inside and outside the nominal boundaries of the household (the 'home sphere'). These activities and social interactions, constituted through the discourses and practices of daily life, are the emergent 'reality' of the institution. The separate participation of individuals in external activities and social relations is not appropriately conceived as functioning within a 'separate' 'public sphere' because of the interdependency of the practices, discourses and power relations of individual agent and household group. The practices and discourses, revealed and interpreted in this thesis, are both reflexive and recursive within and between spheres of activity and networks of social interaction and knowledge. These relations of interdependency might be summarised schematically as in Figure 7.1 below.

Figure 7.1 represents the interdependence of the individual household member, as a reflexive agent, and the social reproduction of institutionalised household practices. The illustration integrates a well established conceptualisation of agent reflexivity (Giddens, 1984, p.5) together with a new conceptualisation of the duality of household structure developed in this thesis. Agent reflexivity is represented as the magnification, in a planometric projection, of the relational link between individual household members and the system of the household. Whilst the household, as a structure, is unreflexive in this relationship agents reflect upon the household system in a way which is differentiable from individual self-monitoring. Moreover, interdependence is not brought about through reflexivity alone. As previously stressed, the household is more than the sum of its (reflexive) individual members. The emergent 'reality' of the household is constituted through the mediation of a multiplicity of overlapping institutions (including class and gender).

These institutions, overlapping within and between the membership of the household, mediate the distribution and interplay of power (material, moral, emotional) and resources (money, property, knowledge) through daily household practices. It is this inherent conjuncture of the institutions and practices of social reproduction that makes the household such a significant site of research.

Figure 7.1: The duality of household structure



Source: Author. This schema incorporates concepts devised by Giddens, 1984, p.5.

The household structure orders individual reproduction (consumption, production and reproduction) at the same time that practices and resources, drawn upon in reproducing social action, provide the means of reproduction for the system of the household (Giddens, 1984, p.19). Furthermore, households are spatially and temporally constituted in a relationship of interdependency whereby the spatial and temporal situatedness of households serves to reconstitute that space (place and locality) and time (period and movement). Household action (interdependent

reproduction of structure and agents) entails the continuous flow of reflexive monitoring, by individual agents, of self, other and the system of the household across time and space. As with individual action, much occurs which is unintended or unacknowledged. Consequently, the rationalization of household action may be represented ad hoc or post hoc by individual household members in contradictory ways.

In the course of household reproduction, practices of negotiation draw on different degrees of knowledgeability and different degrees of power, according to the situation and the effects of reflexive monitoring of self, other and the system of the household. Indeed, a thoroughly magnified linear diagram would highlight circuits within lines of circuitry, reflexive feedback within lines of feedback. In this way, an understanding of the practical impact of structuration on household action explains the operation of sub-rational or non-rational behaviour as well as the behavioural diversity of seemingly similar household types. By way of example, there may be times when a household (as a collective) sets out to achieve a preference or goal and does indeed reach the intended goal but by unintended means (Giddens, 1984, p.9). This is because the household is not a closed unit but rather a duality whereby individual or social action may incur unintended or unacknowledged processes as well as outcomes.

In the course of the research it has become increasingly evident that households function as a duality and that this understanding provides a constructive analytical framework for household research. It is possible to identify from the biographies, for instance, the influence of a process of 'evolutionary learning' between individual partners, through their communication with kin and social networks, on household decision-making<sup>1</sup>. A transparent example is provided in the case of Mr and Mrs Lampton ('traditional'). The couple describe their approach to parenting as having been influenced by Mrs Lampton's attendance at evening classes:

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<sup>1</sup> To some extent this notion of 'evolutionary learning' corresponds with an understanding of institutional reproduction. The emphasis here on 'evolution' conveys the paradoxical tension which operates between stability of habit and change through interaction. There is in this discussion a strong parallel with Bhaskar's (1989) 'Transformational Model of Social Activity' (TMSA) in which society is viewed as "an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions that individuals reproduce and transform" (p.76). (See also, discussions in Pratt, 1995). Reproduction (though not a process of replication) represents continuity whilst transformation offers disruption and mutation of either a moment in, or trajectory of, continuity. These ideas work harmoniously with the principles of structuration and offers scope for further development within household research: theory and practice.

Mrs Lampton	The first year I attended the college I did child psychology and, I think that actually had a huge influence
Mr Lampton	on both of us
Mrs Lampton	initially on me, but, ultimately, as parents really (...) plus there were friends who were in a similar sort of field, got me interested, so I did this child psychology course and just got involved in it more and more and it just made me think so much and I'd come home and we'd discuss it

This excerpt describes the transmission of 'new knowledge' (ideas relating to child psychology) between Mrs Lampton's social networks (friends interested in this subject), Mrs Lampton's discussions at home with her husband, the couple's combined experiences of parenting and Mrs Lampton's contributions to the evening class and social networks. Whilst this is quite an explicit example of the transmission of practices and knowledge concerning parenting, these relations of interdependency between the situated individual and the situated household are implicitly revealed in practices described by couples throughout the biographies.

### 7.2.3 Places, practices, networks and the habitus

Interactions between individuals, the group and overlapping social networks and spheres of activity (in space, place and time) are interdependent. Households are situated within a shared (though changeable) system of dispositions, practices and learning. This describes the concept of 'habitus' elucidated by Bourdieu (1971; 1990). This spatial and temporal 'situatedness' percolates through individual and group lived experience alike. Rather than having a unifying effect, however, individual agents remain 'free' to introduce innovation to the group at the same time that the group is able to influence the receptiveness of that individual to innovation.

Practices are active (though not always pre-conscious) ways of going about daily life. Whilst these 'ways of operating' embrace trivial as well as sophisticated 'background social activity', together, the practices of daily life form the rich fabric of lived experience (de Certeau, 1988). Ways of operating are typically acquired, learned, ritualised, experimented or taken-for-granted. Consequently, an emphasis on practices (and strategies) is not a study of the actions of individuals but rather of interdependent interactions. It is the transmission of individual practices which is of

interest, a capability which is fundamentally social and both historically and spatially constituted (Habermas, 1979, p.140).

It is by focusing on the transmission of practices that a link is made between the concept of practice employed here and that of habitus expounded by Bourdieu. In effect, the habitus:

"enables an intelligible and necessary relation to be established between practices and a situation, the meaning of which is produced by the habitus through categories of perception and appreciation that are themselves produced by an observable social condition" (Bourdieu, 1984, p.101).

The habitus is both the historicity of systems of learning and the spatial situatedness of these systems (Calhoun, 1993).

It is suggested that households typically sustain particular mobility strategies (willingness to contemplate relocation) through practices and discourses common to their situation within overlapping networks in the habitus. Transformations of daily practices (children starting at school, new social contacts, changes of employment) operate interdependently with transformations in the habitus (disposition sets). Consequently, particular household strategies - embracing gender roles, spheres of knowledge, perceptions of distance, sensitivity to risk - both reproduce and are reproduced by the habitus; the familiar, the routine and the taken for granted.

In order to clarify what might appear to form an all-inclusive concept (the habitus as both the process and the medium of co-ordinating social practices) it is useful to draw on 'networks of knowledge' as a third in this complement of concepts. Networks are here conceived as the mechanisms by which social practices are conveyed within the medium of the habitus which forms the dispositional setting, or receptiveness, to particular forms of knowledge.

The concept of social networks (ties between groups of kin, neighbours and friends) is not new to human geography. It typically describes the 'ties' which operate between groups of kin, friends and neighbours. These 'ties'; of communication, reciprocal exchange, shared activities and values, are further described in terms of their spatial arrangement (concentrated or fragmented) as well as their density and intensity ('tight' or 'loose' levels of interaction) (Granovetter, 1973). Hence, as mechanisms of conveying knowledge of norms and practices, networks vary in accordance with the physical arrangement of

activities and interactions across space and time. As Hanson and Pratt (1991) observe:

"information is not only not ubiquitous or homogenous; it tends to be sticky over space and, in its context, therefore, to be quite place specific" (Hanson and Pratt, 1991, p.193)

Networks are not always consciously occupied. The relationships between individuals in networks may best be described in terms of a haphazardly 'tangled web' rather than as chain links. What also emerges clearly from the research is that it is not sufficient to think of networks simply in terms of social contacts (communications with work-mates, meetings with the PTA) because they also contribute significantly to the reproduction of local 'knowledge'. Elements of knowledge (from those of gender roles and parenting to those of job search and self-provisioning skills) are not parcels to be passed between agents in networks but rather the changing product of 'interactive learning' (Lundvall, 1992).

To a large extent household survival is a function of local networks of knowledge. It is not simply access to suitable jobs and housing, but access to the knowledge of suitable jobs and housing, which delimits household practices and strategies (Granovetter, 1985). Again, Hanson and Pratt encounter this same finding in similar research in the US. They note that:

"what is judged to be possible and what is actually available as employment depends on the local place" (p.185). It is for this reason that: "varying class and gender practices are created and re-created simultaneously in different urban neighbourhoods" (p.186). "The political process of acquiring a gendered identity (and of negotiating household strategies and structures) is conditioned by, and in turn conditions, local institutions and resources, some of which are tied to localised class practices" (Hanson and Pratt, 1991, p.187).

At the same time that household preferences and decisions are deeply embedded within the habitus (as the containment of evolving practices) and overlapping networks of knowledge (as the mechanism of sustaining these practices) households are, through the reproduction of practices, contributing to the habitus and its sustenance. It is in this regard that the inherent stability of the habitus is noted (Krais, 1993) and that the likelihood of inertia (strategies of non-movement) increases with duration of residence. It is suggested that those households in particularly stable and 'tight' networks adopt strategies which minimise change and risk. These households receive limited 'new knowledge'. Those households in expanding or fragmented networks experience a less stable habitus and have

greater contact with innovation in practices<sup>2</sup>. Once again, it needs to be stressed that it is not simply access to new forms of knowledge that directs the evolution of household practices but receptiveness to this knowledge and the processes of learning.

To recapitulate, it is perhaps helpful to expand upon these three concepts; practice, habitus and networks of knowledge, by way of a simple biological analogy. The habitus can be viewed as the site of capability, the 'brain', within which networks function as 'synapses', conveying new and existing forms of knowledge, perception and experience. Social practices then form the voluntary and involuntary actions, interactions and discourses which stimulate synaptic response. This is a crude schema of a diffuse interdependency of systems and structures. It does illustrate, however, a key argument of this thesis, that household behaviour can only be comprehensively explained from an interpretation of both actions and the situation or place of those actions - the contextualised household.

#### 7.2.4 Part two: differentiated mobility

Part two of the thesis was dedicated to the exploration of causal relations between household gender divisions of labour and relative rates of residential mobility at a comprehensive geographical scale of detail. This was undertaken through the analysis of several complementary sets of secondary data from the UK Census of Population.

The purpose of this scale and method of analysis was two-fold. First, it formed the preliminary stage of multiple method research. This data provides a national framework from which to analyse the extent of apparent causality between the incidence of particular household employment structures and relative rates of mobility. From this position it is possible to focus on the intensity with which this causal association is observed and how it might be explained.

Second, by relying on quantitative economic measures of household structure and mobility (economic activity by hours worked; wholly moving households by distance moved) this approach replicates that which is typically assumed by resource contribution theory. By employing a similar approach, it is possible to

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<sup>2</sup> This re-emphasis on the resources of knowledge and processes of learning draws on a specific literature on systems of innovation most generally attributed to management and business applications (see Lundvall, B ed., 1992, for a general review of this literature). The application of ideas relating to systems of learning offers great potential for further research at the household scale.

examine critically this orthodox theoretical framework from both within the same paradigm (extensive research) and from outside, from a critical realist perspective, in intensive biographical research (Sayer, 1992).

It was stated at the outset that the aim of this thesis was to seek the power to explain household behaviour in residential mobility rather than to predict mobility events. This position can be restated on the basis of the research findings. The expectation was that household mobility decisions would be found to be context dependent and, as such, potentially as varied as lived experience itself. In practice, however, infinite regress is inhibited because of the degree to which households are socially constituted in shared contexts.

If the findings of both qualitative and quantitative research had pointed towards divisions of paid labour as providing a strong determination for mobility then little justification would have been given to the application of multiple method research. Household research could be conducted simply from making observations from material indicators alone. What comes across clearly from both sets of findings, however, is that households operate from particular positions (of place and cultural identity as well as socio-economic status) which are differentiated and stratified rather than ranged along a single continuum of relativism.

The pursuit of a critical realist perspective is bolstered by the findings of this thesis. Mobility strategies evolve across space and time through recursive and reflexive practices learned interactively within the habitus. In practice, people may change their mind (and the mind of those intimately connected with them), partly in response to the views of friends, family and neighbours and partly as a result of their own reflections. It is arguable, therefore, that to extract single snap-shot events from this 'tangled web' would be to inadequately interpret the deeper picture. A sense of processual depth is better captured from the combined study of observable events, causal associations and the interpretation of social discourses and practices. Furthermore, a fundamentally historical (biographical) and spatial interpretation is required to avoid the compression of a multi-tiered reality into a single ahistorical and aspatial snap-shot 'reality'.

#### 7.2.5 Response to existing debates

The evidence from part two indicates that, from a homogenous population of 'nuclear family' households, particular household employment structures (divisions of paid labour) predominate in particular counties and regions. Dual earning households predominate in the north and north-west. Male breadwinner

households predominate in the south and north-east. Superficially, this regional articulation of 'idealised' household structures follows a familiar picture, with regard to historical patterns of female employment participation, mapped out in existing research (Duncan, 1991; 1991a).

It would be tempting to conclude that regional differentiation in household gender divisions of labour supports the notion of regional 'cultures of patriarchy' (Walby, 1986; 1989; Duncan, 1994). Indeed, the concept of habitus in some ways provides the scope for interpreting spatial differentiation in cultures of patriarchy. This is because gender roles, norms and identities are "a deeply rooted, bodily anchored dimension of an agent's habitus" (Krais, 1993, p.170). Consequently, a 'modus operandi' is provided for enduring patriarchal gender relations in association with spatial (regional) concentrations of gender relation practices (Krais, 1993). Whilst it is not disputed that gender role identities are spatially as well as socially constituted, it is suggested that notions of 'embodied history' are over prescribed in theories of patriarchy.

Where there is a regional articulation of particular household employment structures, there also exists a corresponding arrangement of relative rates of mobility. Not only do these patterns emerge from aggregate data, where the inference of causality is susceptible to ecological fallacy, but it also comes through clearly for actual households taken from SARs microdata. It is evident that single earner households experience greater mobility when compared with dual earning households. A frictional 'drag' effect is imposed on relative household mobility in the presence of a second earner, particularly with regard to 'distant' moves. Furthermore, longitudinal data confirms this trend.

Superficially, the evidence also supports the hypothesis of resource contribution theory that paid employment positions are synonymous with positions of power in household decision-making. This would suggest that an increasing number of female earners, especially those in full time employment in situations of comparable or significant income, have the ability to veto personally disadvantageous relocation. This verification of the principles of resource contribution theory comes unravelled, however, as it transpires that 'dual career' households are more distantly mobile than 'flexible' households. The anomaly emerges that women in full time professional or managerial employment are more likely to sacrifice personal employment prospects through relocation than are women in part time employment. Of course, this anomaly might be differently expressed in alternative research if this were to emphasise the role of occupational specific mobility. It is

likely that the ubiquitousness of particular male or female occupations (and, more specifically, particular combinations of occupations) will operate in national and international labour markets in such a way as to preclude universal statements of female career sacrifice.

'Flexible' households consistently demonstrate the lowest rates of mobility of all the household types. At the same time, 'dual career' households tend to transform into 'flexible' households in the process of making a distant (inter-regional) move. Whether or not a household relocates over distance is more closely associated with occupational status than with hours worked, an association which works to the continued disadvantage of female careers. Women in 'dual career' households are more likely to be 'tied movers' who are pushed into relocation than women in 'dual earner' households. Reference to national occupational earnings data suggests that women in professional and managerial employment are likely to be on a closer par to a male spouse in a similar occupational status than women in dual-earner households (ONS, General Household Survey, 1991). Thus, the power to veto a disadvantageous move is inappropriately attributed to material resource contributions alone.

Finally, a spatially uneven distribution of household divisions of labour might also be explained by noting the unevenness of housing and labour markets. Certainly, the role of housing varies by region, by location and market position. Income and prices also vary regionally and a different design of research project might focus on the regional distribution of household divisions of labour by their association with relative individual income and household earnings levels. Indeed, interest has been expressed in this field (Hills, 1995; Hamnett and Cross, 1997).

Housing typically performs the role of a cultural good, a source of self-expression and conspicuous consumption. It is inherently positional, a good which relates directly to socio-economic resources. In the language of welfare and citizenship housing is a means of determining the quality of children's education and access to wider social, cultural and environmental services which reinforce the relative life-chances of households according to residential location. Evidence of the diverse role of housing is illustrated in the biographies. The 'industrious leisure', gender differentiated, home improvement activities typical of Barking households can be contrasted with the shared activities, home-centred emphasis on 'living for now', enjoying home as a place of retreat from work, in Prestwich households.

In this project, complementary evidence from primary and secondary research suggests that housing alone does not explain the changing geography of household divisions of labour. Whilst households cite housing costs (the need to accommodate fluctuations in interest rates in owner occupied housing markets) as a reason why they 'need' a second income, this 'need' is not determined simply by differential regional house prices or costs of living. It is not the case that the higher house prices experienced in Barking, relative to Prestwich, push more 'mothers' into paid employment (return to Table 3.2 for a comparison of house prices and costs of living in the survey areas).

Equally, Barking and Prestwich demonstrate quite different patterns of household employment structure despite sharing similar structural conditions of low unemployment. Prestwich 'mothers' tend to work full time or part time whilst Barking 'mothers' tend to work part time or not at all. The availability or shortage of female employment is rarely cited as a motivating factor in decisions concerning household structure. What is certainly a factor, however, is the perception of the security and adequacy of male employment as a source of household survival. These perceptions vary socially and culturally whereby households sharing equivalent material resources (capital and income) may differentially conclude the 'need' to have a second income. Once again, it is possible that local perceptions of uncertainty might be better explained in alternative future research which might focus on detailed class and occupational type stratification as well as cleavages of gender divisions of labour.

It is concluded that the uneven geography of household structure is not straightforwardly defined by material differences between households on the basis of earnings, occupational status, property and capital resources. In effect, transmission within the habitus of 'risk-sensitivity' and relative place 'rootedness' influences the reproduction of particular household structures. Undoubtedly, housing costs and labour demand constitute material elements in the experience of both 'risk-sensitivity' and 'rootedness' but they are not the determining factors of life-chance differentiation as is conventionally portrayed in much existing literature.

#### 7.2.6 Part three: household strategies

The evidence which emerges from the household biographies disrupts the conventional wisdom that power in decision-making is determined simply by employment or occupational status. Rates of mobility are not a reflection of the maximisation by households of either housing or employment utility. What can be observed in current trends is not so much that women in dual earning households

are 'tied movers' (although the sacrifice of female occupational status is persistent) but rather that increasing numbers of dual earning households do not contemplate relocation. In effect, explanations about residential mobility in Britain are better made from evidence of immobility ('stayers') than of mobility.

It is important to reiterate what is meant by the use made in this thesis of the concept of household 'strategies'. Afterall, the argument which is being made is that it is differences in strategies, rather than employment structures *per se*, that explain the existence of uneven patterns of mobility. The concept of household strategies is in many ways a short-hand for interdependent systems of practices, preferences, goals and aspirations. Strategies are at the same time enabling and constraining, voluntary and structural. The term is used in disassociation with a sense of strategic planning, information processing, maximisation or rational calculation. This is not to say that these elements play no part in the formation and reproduction of household strategies but that strategies are not consciously thought of by individuals and households in this way. Strategies are typically formed and reproduced from norms and values which are taken for granted. Evidence of the operation of 'strategies' in the biographies suggests support for Hodgson's (1993) understanding that human behaviour can be both rational and sub-rational at the same time.

It is argued that mobility strategies hinge on the two axes of 'risk-sensitivity' and attachment or 'rootedness' to place. Perceptions concerning these two (interdependent) variables are formed and reproduced within the *habitus* and, therefore, whilst subject to change over time, are likely to transcend external housing or labour markets events, in the short-term, where these might conventionally have been understood to stimulate mobility.

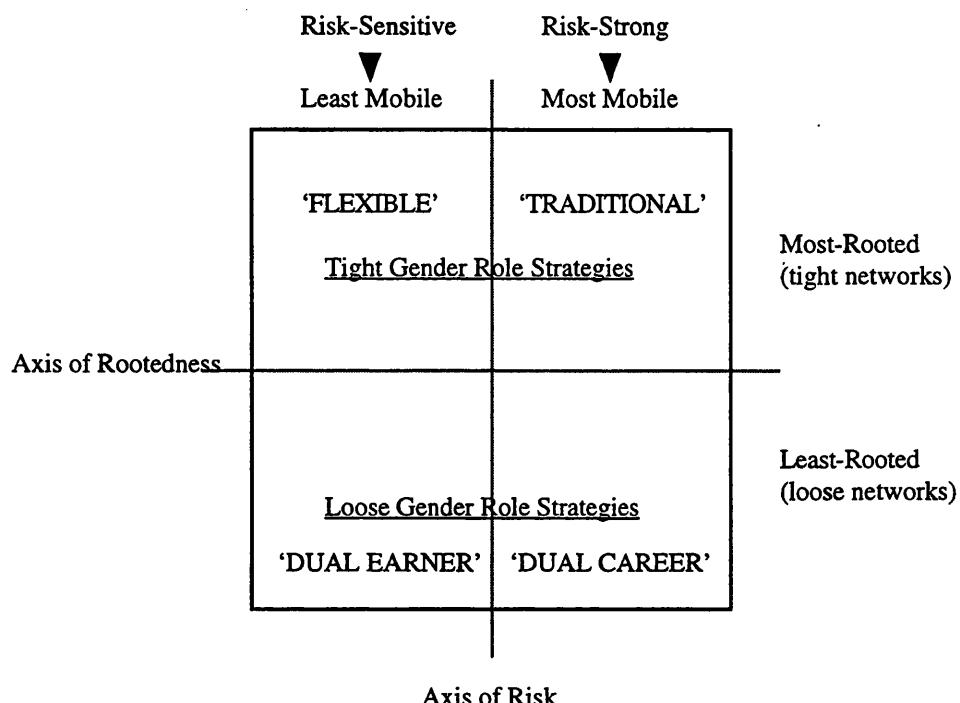
In overview, particular household employment structures are characterised by particular practices relating to risk-sensitivity and relative rootedness. This association is illustrated schematically in Figure 7.2 for the four idealised household structure types. For instance, 'flexible' and 'dual earner' households tend to display least mobility and greatest risk-sensitivity (vulnerable to threats posed by an uncertain world). In contrast, 'traditional' and 'dual career' households demonstrate greater resilience to uncertainty and, as a result, are more likely to contemplate mobility. On the other hand, it is 'traditional' and 'flexible' households which demonstrate a strong attachment to the locale. 'Dual earner' and 'dual career' households are less likely to draw upon local networks of family and friends for assistance in the co-ordination of family life and for this reason are less

likely to describe themselves as feeling 'tied' by this proximity. Mobility strategies comprise the ongoing negotiation of risk-sensitivity and rootedness, as interdependent functions of the habitus.

Figure 7.2 also describes how other elements of the habitus, such as dispositions towards gender roles, frequently cut across categories based on employment structure. For this reason, a schema of mobility strategies based on movers/non-movers or risk-sensitivity and risk-strength remains a simplification of the diversity in practices. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that strategies tend to be enduring (within a stable habitus) whereas household structure is subject to periodic change through the life-course. It is in 'flexible' households where the correspondence between household structure and strategy characteristics is most successfully made. For most other structures it is possible for households to demonstrate strategies more akin to an alternative structure type because this represents a preferred long-run structure.

It is evident that most households do not choose their residential location to accommodate a particular job. Where relocation is an option for the advancement of male breadwinner employment this is as effectively vetoed by women in 'flexible' households as women in 'dual career' households. Indeed, it remains in 'dual career' households that relocation for employment prospects (either male or female) is most likely. In 'traditional' households it is also the case that issues surrounding family life weigh as heavily in the decision process as do male employment opportunities.

In similar findings, Hanson and Pratt (1991) note that for most couples residential location is typically unresponsive to employment change (p.126). Location is often associated with existing family ties and an environment which is familiar. Given the relative 'stickiness' of residential location, it is interesting to note the way in which professional and managerial couple households appear to differ in this respect. To militate against the potential conflict of competing career mobility these couples frequently assume a permanent location in a 'hub' metropolitan area where, because of the scale of the potential employment market, future occupational mobility need not require physical relocation. The choice of this location is often quite independent of prior attachment to family and friends in the area. Such a strategy was illustrated in the cases of Mr and Mrs Linklater ('dual career') (both medical professionals) and Mr and Mrs Lexington ('flexible') (both local government officers).

**Figure 7.2:**Conceptualising mobility strategies: four 'idealised' household structures

'Dual career' households are the least likely to hold personal attachments to a particular place and, consequently, the most likely to contemplate relocation whether for male spouse employment, children's education, or a change of housing environment. Cases do emerge where the superior career prospects of a female spouse are considered likely to stimulate relocation but, once again, non-employment issues are as likely to predominate in the decision-process as male or female career salience. As McRae notes in her study of cross-class<sup>3</sup> couples where wives hold positions of superior employment:

"..several other factors intervene and reduce mobility. For both husband and wife, attachment to specific homes and cities, either for reasons of sentiment or of proximity to other family members, overrides the desire to advance occupationally through relocation. Perhaps more important..is the recognition by both husbands and wives of the difficulties presented by a very uncertain economy" (p.74/75)

<sup>3</sup> It has not been possible in this research to extend the typology of household structures under observation to include differentiations of social class and occupational type as well as gender divisions of paid labour. It is evident from the simple differentiation of 'dual earner' and 'dual career' households, however, that there is scope for further research, to consider the interface of these and other social cleavages and their impact on household strategies.

### 7.3.0 This tangled web we weave:

#### 7.3.1 'Risk-sensitivity'

The issues of 'risk' and 'uncertainty'<sup>4</sup> come across strongly as a source of differentiation in household strategies towards housing, employment and mobility. 'Flexible' households are a particularly enduring structure type, strongly associated with inertia. For these households, the continued maintenance of a second income, albeit part-time, is described in terms of the need for a financial "safety net" and as a hedge against uncertainty. It appears that it is not the presence of a second earner which impinges on mobility, *per se*, rather that the presence of a second earner forms part of a strategy of non-mobility. This strategy reflects the consolidation of a permanent place of residence (strong rootedness), in close proximity to local kin and social networks, as a means of combating uncertainty.

In many cases these households could be made materially better off if a move was to be considered. The fact that 'flexible' households appear unwilling to be mobile is further evidence that strategies do not operate on the basis of income maximisation. The risk associated with moving away from immediate sources of security (family support, unpaid child-care, local self-provisioning skills and knowledge) outweigh recognised material benefits of mobility. Consequently, male and female spouses typically extend their working hours, take up additional employment and undertake a greater degree of self-provisioning, in preference to mobility, as a strategy aimed at consolidating their position within the locale.

By way of example, it was described in chapter six how Mr Mellor ('flexible') accepted redundancy in preference to advancing his employment prospects through employment relocation. He and his wife feared being "left in the lurch" in an unfamiliar setting. As a result of this 'risk-sensitivity' Mrs Mellor took on a second part-time job and Mr Mellor resorted to low paid semi-skilled employment in the local labour market.

'Dual earner' households appear to be similarly risk-sensitive. This is because the income from 'primary' male employment (husbands in this type tend to earn less than wives) is considered inadequate or insecure as the sole source of household survival. In these circumstances great store is set by having more than one source

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<sup>4</sup> Risk and uncertainty are different terms. The former indicates an outcome which may or may not occur on a particular scale of probability. In an uncertain situation, probabilities cannot be established (Johnson et al., 1994). In this thesis, the term risk is used in the context of 'risk-sensitivity' to denote the degree to which agents are 'cushioned' or protected from uncertain events and, therefore, the degree to which they are likely to 'take a chance' and incur risk.

of income, of keeping overheads low (substituting self-provisioning for paid services), of maintaining reciprocal links with social and kin networks and avoiding innovation and change. The price of this strategy appears to be a loss of 'family time' and limited opportunity to expand sources of knowledge and information. Couples in 'dual earner' households spend the longest combined hours in paid employment for relatively low pay (Breugal and Lyons, 1997). Hours of work are frequently dovetailed in order to minimise recourse to paid child-care. As a result, spouses spend little time in each others company and it is easy to see how this might lead to marital strain and, potentially, family breakdown.

The 'traditional' employment structure can be described in terms of risk-strength. Couple's in this household type feel confident about the maintenance and adequacy of a single male-breadwinner income. This perception of material security is typically reinforced by identification with 'traditional' gender roles and the 'need' to support 'mother at home' as a way of family life. 'Dual career' households are similarly risk-strong by virtue of the level of remuneration associated with professional and managerial occupations. This is not to say that they face less uncertainty than 'flexible' and 'dual earner' households. It is simply that they are better resourced (in terms of both material and knowledge capital) to cope with uncertainty and to accommodate risk and change.

In effect, the potential mobility of 'traditional' and 'dual career' households is derived from risk-strength as much as it is from the presence or absence of multiple earners. Mobility strategies are further complicated in 'dual career' households, however, through the negotiation of the goals and aspirations of two careers. It is also evident that positions of risk-strength are to a large extent bound up with household structure and vice versa. For this reason risk-strength mobility may be negotiated as a strategy of non-mobility, such as that associated with the consolidation of permanent residence in a 'hub' metropolitan labour market, as a means of co-ordinating two careers.

In summary, both the preference and ability for a household to sustain a particular employment structure is intimately bound up with place and the situatedness of households within networks of reciprocal support and knowledge. Not only do these networks typically provide paid and unpaid labour (family childcare provision, access to skills and materials of self-provisioning) but they also provide the normative discourses and practices from which knowledge is constituted. The boundaries of these overlapping networks reproduce and are reproduced by the co-ordination of home, work and family reproduction. Consequently, strategies of co-

ordination differ for particular households in accordance with the spatial scope and density of their social and kin networks. For this reason a second, interdependent, 'axis' of influence on mobility is that of relative rootedness.

### 7.3.2 Rootedness

The findings of this research hold a degree of resemblance to existing behavioural explanations of residential mobility. Concepts of 'place utility' and 'context dependency' come readily to mind (Wolpert, 1964; Lin-Yuan and Kosinski, 1994). Also, the notion that individuals and households can be 'tied movers' or 'tied stayers' in relation to their attachment to the locale. This language has particular purchase for dual earning couples (Bonney and Love, 1991; Breugel, 1996; Green, 1995a). The findings of this research suggest, however, that relative rootedness is better described in terms of a socially and spatially constituted 'network utility', and degree of situatedness in the locale, rather than a strict attachment to 'a place'.

This is not to deny that an element of 'rootedness' results from symbolic attachments which are appropriately associated with place rather than locally embedded networks. Symbolic attachments frequently abound in the identification of individual tastes with familiar landscapes, regional cultural identity (accents, language) as well as personal nostalgia and family history. Nevertheless, the findings of this research indicate that it is rootedness within socially and spatially constituted systems of support which directly influence household mobility strategies.

'Flexible' households consistently demonstrate the greatest proximity to kin and social networks and draw on these in the co-ordination of production, reproduction and daily family life. 'Dual earner' households may live in close proximity to family members but are less likely to be in a position to draw on these networks as a source of informal child-care. Furthermore, with two partners in full time employment, spending extended periods of time away from the home, spheres of activity and social interactions are typically described as being separate and scattered. 'Dual career' households demonstrate the least reliance on local networks and the greatest recourse to provisioning via commercial markets. In effect, a lack of 'rootedness' in 'tight' local networks of support in dual earning households both conditions and is conditioned by extended participation in activities associated with paid work away from the immediate locale.

Finally, 'traditional' households pose the greatest difficulty for schematic categorisation. As stated previously, membership of this structure type, from a cross-sectional snap-shot, may constitute the temporary interruption of a long-run trajectory as a dual earning household. In general, however, 'traditional' households demonstrate a close attachment to the locale where this attachment is nourished by the community involvement of a full time houseworker. From the Barking biographies in particular, it was noted that 'traditional' female spouses choose to undertake voluntary work in local schools and the reciprocal care of extended family members which 'ties' them to the locale. A degree of unpaid community work is often cited by women in these households as their expectation of the parenting role.

### 7.3.3 Regional context

Practices relating to risk-sensitivity and rootedness are constituted within the habitus. This transmission and reproduction of ways of operating is fundamentally historical and spatial. Consequently, household mobility strategies can be defined by positions relating to regional cultural landscape, to place and locality, as well as to positions of social stratification. An element of the situatedness of household practices and strategies reflects, therefore, the regional context.

In this project, dimensions of differentiation have been identified within and between household structure types, within and between two regional study areas. It is evident, for instance, that there is a regional as well as a household dimension to differential perceptions of risk-sensitivity and rootedness. At the same time that 'flexible' households in both regions experience a type-characteristic level of risk-sensitivity it is evident that the strategies of 'dual' earning households in Barking reflect greater fear of uncertainty than do those for the same household type in Prestwich. In part, this is a result of occupation and SEG type differences, introduced in Chapter Three (see Table 3.1 and Appendix 25). In Barking a greater number of male spouses are employed in unskilled or semi-skilled manual work for whom there is an increasing risk of long-term unemployment. Prestwich dual earning couples are not generally materially better off than Barking dual earning couples but the occupations undertaken by the former appear to be associated with relative security. In effect, there is a greater tendency for dual earning couples in Prestwich to constitute 'dual career' households and for dual earning couples in Barking to constitute 'dual earner' couples. This occupational profile contributes to regional difference in perceptions of risk.

This regional difference is also influenced, however, by non-material factors of culture; the 'industrious leisure' talked about with regard to high rates of informal work activities in Barking and the treadmill of consumer expectations associated with this; the struggle to cope with high housing costs and fulfil dreams of the 'Dallas-style' interior. In Barking, it is the treadmill of consumer expectations, the perception of male spouse employment insecurity, together with actual experiences of income and employment loss which have frequently directed the re-entry of female spouses into paid employment after family formation. As a regional effect, this appears to be stronger than a parallel understanding that there exists differential 'tastes' for women to maintain their connections with paid employment.

It is suggested that evidence of regional cultural variation in practices and strategies is not sufficiently explained by an understanding of 'cultures of patriarchy', although gender role practices form a part of regional differentiation. Rather, that the transmission of practices and strategies builds upon spatially and historically constituted cultural identities<sup>5</sup>. Identities such as those towards ways of working, ways of socialising - the relative child-centredness or couple-centredness of social interactions. In other words, identities surrounding modes of production, reproduction and daily family life.

#### 7.4.0 Implications for future research

This thesis set out to explore the role of household strategies in explaining residential mobility in Britain. With this as its remit, a detailed discussion of policy proscriptions would be inappropriate to the project. Nevertheless, the research findings discussed in this chapter suggest certain implications for policy debate. Furthermore, they also suggest a degree of interface with current welfare concerns; of the perceived increase in the 'polarisation'<sup>6</sup> of households into 'work rich' and 'work poor' populations; the 'social exclusion'<sup>7</sup> of particular households from receiving material, educational and environmental opportunities on the basis of their residential location; in corollary, the concentration of advantage in areas of

<sup>5</sup> A discussion along these lines is introduced in the first chapter of "A tale of two cities", by Taylor, Evans and Fraser (1996).

<sup>6</sup> For an outline of the current debate regarding a perceived division of the population into extremes of multi-earner and no-earner households see: Hamnett, 1994; Woodward, 1995; Williams and Windebank, 1995; Jarvis, 1997.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Green and Owen (1996) for a discussion of issues of 'exclusion', 'disadvantage' and 'deprivation' as these are popularly used in policy debate.

'gentrification'<sup>8</sup>, in terms of schools of high achievement, environmental amenity and consumption and transport convenience.

Whilst there is not space here to discuss these debates in any detail, it is evident that the theoretical and methodological contributions of this project could be applied to these fields in future research. Within the 'polarisation' debate, for instance, recent attempts to redirect attention away from the individual-in-the-work-place to the household from a 'whole economy' perspective (Williams and Windebank, 1995) might be reinforced by the application of a biographical approach. It is suggested that in-depth interviews are the most appropriate means of de-mystifying (if not measuring) the extent of the 'hidden economy' of informal economic activity. Qualitative research is also the means by which unpaid domestic practices and non-material aspects of self-provisioning can be included within the 'whole economy' of the household.

This project has also established the importance of identifying relative division of labour structures from a level playing field of household demography (Jarvis, 1997). Furthermore, of exposing rather than obscuring the role of part time employment. An emphasis on the nature as well as the extent of employment undertaken by households feeds into the 'social exclusion' debate. The concept of 'exclusion' is generally determined along material lines; unemployment versus employment. What is apparent from the findings of this research is that the form of employment participation undertaken by many 'risk-sensitive' households is potentially 'exclusionary', in terms of quality of life, but that these experiences of disadvantage are disregarded in conventional analysis. For instance, 'family time' needs to be considered as a resource from which households might experience exclusion. An example is the social cost in many dual earning households of combined long hours working, the need to extend hours of working to compensate for low pay and the 'dove-tailing' of spouse employment to accommodate the care of dependants.

In effect, dual earning households may be excluded from the benefits of family life by the combined constraints of (lost) leisure time and (increased) personal risk (Harrop and Moss, 1995; Sibley, 1995). Furthermore, it is argued that 'work-rich'

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<sup>8</sup> An introduction to this subject is found in the text "Gentrification and the city" by Smith and Williams (1986). Butler (1996) provides a useful overview of the issues of Gentrification in London in the 1980's. Further discussion of gentrification as an expression of the co-ordination of time and space in dual earning couples is provided by; Munt 1987; Warde, 1991; Bondi, 1991; Butler and Hamnett, 1994.

dual earning households are not necessarily increasing their material advantage (though there's no denying that multiple employment is preferable to no employment). To preserve current housing positions, it is frequently perceived as necessary for households to extend the hours worked or the number of earners or both. There appears to exist a treadmill effect of strain exacerbated by the interdependent effects of perceived risks associated with housing shortage and vicissitudes and continued labour market de-regulation.

Finally, whilst it has been stressed that the households and neighbourhoods in this research are not subjects for gentrification research, it can be recognised that the residential location strategies of 'ordinary' dual earning family-households suggests a certain resonance with a 'break with the suburbs' (Zukin, 1987). It is frequently noted that gentrification is a consumption preference specifically associated with high earning single professional households or couples without children (Munt, 1987; Bondi, 1991). The findings of this research suggest that a variety of parallel strategies of time-space co-ordination, such as the strategy of consolidating a place of residence within a hub metropolitan labour market, operate alongside gentrification for a variety of household structures. These strategies of co-ordination equally demonstrate the interdependence of housing and employment, albeit less visibly, without capturing the popular imagination in the manner of the 'yuppification' of Georgian terraces in Inner London.

#### 7.4.1 Housing, employment and the co-ordination of family life

An attempt to 'make the connections' between housing, employment and household structure defined the starting point of this research (Allen and Hamnett, 1991). It has been demonstrated that the application of theories of structuration makes it possible to consider the negotiation of housing and employment preferences within the duality of structure of the household. At the same time, however, it is evident that urban policy programmes continue to treat as separate those social and economic systems which operate interdependently within processes of household decision-making (Pratt, 1996).

As a result of the compartmentalisation of policy initiatives concerning housing and employment, attempts made to redress social or economic 'imbalances' in these areas frequently have a countervailing impact. At the same time that further deregulation of the labour market anticipates enhanced labour mobility, the operation of a precarious housing market for owner occupation and marginalised public sector provision serves to inhibit the mobility of the households which reproduce labour (Jarvis, 1998). Future housing and employment policy needs to

be conceived through consideration of issues of household structure and to focus on the means by which households co-ordinate home, work and daily family life.

Part-time employment constitutes a much vaunted feature of the flexible British labour market (Atkinson, 1985). The role of part-time work has changed over the last decade and looks set to continue to change into the future (Hewitt, 1996). For the generation reaching retirement, part-time female employment might be deemed supplementary to a full-time male breadwinner income. For the vast majority of family-households of working age, however, it is not considered possible to raise a family or maintain a home on a single income. Even if it is possible to do so in the short term it is regarded 'unsafe' to 'put all your eggs in one basket' in an uncertain world. Pinch and Storey (1991) observe in their study of Southampton households that "whatever the complex arguments for and against part-time employment, it is playing an important part in maintaining the living standards of families with children" (p.459). Certainly, the derogatory notion of the role of female part-time employment as providing 'surplus' 'pin-money' is remarkably incongruous to the findings of this research.

Given that part-time female employment has moved in from the margins and second or even third incomes are increasingly propping up fragile household economies it is important that alternative forms of work be given greater recognition. The specific role of part-time employment needs to be afforded equal attention to full time employment; both in terms of research and in policy initiatives; in attaining equivalent rights and protections in the monitoring of pay and conditions (Meadows, 1996)<sup>9</sup>.

It has been demonstrated that 'flexible' households proliferate in situations where a second income is 'needed' but where full time female employment is precluded either by the absence of full-time unpaid child-care (largely fathers and grandmothers), the prohibitive cost of paid child-care relative to earnings or an unwillingness to allow children to be cared for 'outside the home'. Child-care options limit the extension of household employment.

Problems associated with the care of dependants do not get easier for families when their children reach school age (Bailyn, 1978). Household employment has to fit

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to say that a further expansion of part-time female employment is a panacea for fragile household economies. Furthermore, beyond the scope of this research, part-time female employment is clearly not the answer for households currently without a single income from paid employment.

around school hours, half-terms and holidays and the 'taxi-service' required for after-school activities. It is also the case that informal child-care is still necessary even where full use can be made of day-care services. Paid child-care is little help to working parents when their child is ill or if changes in hours of working clash with day-care opening hours. At present the uncertainty surrounding the daily co-ordination of home and work (sick dependants, school closures, mandatory overtime at work) demands a level of adaptability which frequently exceeds that available from conventional 'breadwinner' employment. For this reason it is typically female spouse employment which must be squeezed into day-care opening hours or sacrificed to the needs of a sick child.

The issues of flexible labour market practice becomes one of flexibility for whom? (McRae, 1989). If all forms of employment (full-time, part-time, 'career' and casual) are to fall within the ambit of flexible labour market practices then these should be to the benefit of employer and employee alike. De-regulation, temporary contracts, multi-skilling and short-time working need to be reciprocated by the ability for fathers and mothers in employment to take leave for sick-dependants and vary their start and finishing times to co-ordinate with children and spouse.

Increasingly in Britain, long-hours working is associated with fathers with young children. Observing this trend, Burgess and Ruxton (1996) note that "increased working is often presented as the 'natural' male response to becoming a parent. In fact, it is more likely to be a response to crises in family finances occasioned by mothers' withdrawal from the labour market" (p.37/38). Family-households increasingly require two incomes to survive and few would accept the desirability of fathers spending long-hours working from home, denied contact with their children (Hood, 1993). It is suggested, therefore, that greater consideration be given in policy initiatives to the co-ordination of different forms of childcare and different ways of working. Policy initiatives should be sensitive to the needs of working parents; to facilitate occupational opportunities for mothers in paid employment and an involved role for fathers in the care of their children. 'Family friendly' employment policies, which are all too often interpreted in terms of 'mother friendly' or 'mummy track' policies, need to be re-conceptualised as the co-ordination by men and women of home and work.

#### 7.5.0 Postscript

This chapter has presented the findings of multiple method household research. The scope of this project, considering the impact of a changing geography of household gender divisions of labour on patterns and processes of residential

mobility, does not pretend to provide for an exhaustive account of the opportunities and constraints which confront particular households. It does claim to contribute, however, to finding ways of opening the 'black box' of the workings of the household. Greater knowledge of what lies within the 'black box' may be revealed by further research which will not have to clear so much ground, theoretically or methodologically, to reach this fundamental point of departure.

By applying the theoretical and methodological framework elaborated in this thesis, future research will be able to find more meaningful ways of identifying household behaviour, beyond those determined by positions and structures relating to paid employment. Future research may take as its starting point the strategies which have been found to be enduring in this project. A deeper understanding of the role of strategies might also be gained from extending the scope of observation to that of class, occupational status, ethnicity and cultural identity. Biographical research has been demonstrated to offer a variety of ways of interpreting the negotiation of both material and emotional practices across time and space. Consequently, there is potential for the further application of the theory and method of this thesis to a variety of substantive themes. Further research, directed along these lines, would promote a greater awareness of the significant role of spatial-temporal situatedness. It would also greatly increase the transmission of ideas between economic and sociological fields of research.

Appendix 1**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY: - RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY**

Please tick the appropriate box, using one box of questions for each adult in the household:

Adult A:

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Employment Status</u>	
Male [ ]	18 - 24 [ ]	Houseworker (tick with part time work if applicable)	[ ]
Female [ ]	25 - 29 [ ]	In Part Time Employment (under 30 hours per. wk.)	[ ]
	30 - 39 [ ]	In Full Time Employment (over 30 hours per. wk.)	[ ]
	40 - 59 [ ]	Full Time Student	[ ]
	60 - 65 [ ]	Unemployed	[ ]
	65+ [ ]	Retired	[ ]

Adult B:

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Employment Status</u>	
Male [ ]	18 - 24 [ ]	Houseworker (tick with part time work if applicable)	[ ]
Female [ ]	25 - 29 [ ]	In Part Time Employment (under 30 hours per. wk.)	[ ]
	30 - 39 [ ]	In Full Time Employment (over 30 hours per. wk.)	[ ]
	40 - 59 [ ]	Full Time Student	[ ]
	60 - 65 [ ]	Unemployed	[ ]
	65+ [ ]	Retired	[ ]

Relationship to Adult A (e.g. spouse, cohabiting partner, unrelated friend etc).....

Other Adults (over 18) Permanently Resident in the Household:

Number of other adults [ ]

Relationship to Adult A (e.g. parent, child, lodger etc) .....

Relationship to Adult B (e.g. parent, child, lodger etc) .....

Dependent Children (under 18) Permanently Resident in the Household:

Number of children [ ]

Ages of children [ ], [ ], [ ], [ ] etc.....

Housing Tenure:Resident at This Address:

Owned (outright or with a mortgage) [ ] Less than two years [ ]

Rented [ ] Less than ten years [ ]

More than ten years [ ]

In the time you have lived at this address have you undertaken any major home improvements?

Yes [ ] Type of improvements:.....

No [ ]

Your agreement to take part in this research will be very much appreciated

We are willing to take part in a home-based interview [ ] (please tick).

phone number/contact.....

Please return this page in the envelope provided to:

Helen Jarvis, Geography Dept - S504, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE

Appendix 2

Helen Jarvis  
Geography Department - S504  
London School of Economics  
Houghton Street  
London  
WC2A 2AE

0171 405-7686 X2613 (10am - 5pm)  
0181 519-5912 (after 5pm)

Date as postmark

Dear

**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY:- HOUSING MOBILITY**

A household survey is being carried out in this area and in a similar area in Bury, Greater Manchester. This survey forms part of a larger PhD research project looking at the experience of people who have moved house in Britain. In particular I am interested in the differences between people in different types of jobs and for men and women. This research will provide a valuable insight into the problems faced by households in balancing the housing and employment challenges of the 1990's.

Attached to this letter is a short list of questions which I would be very grateful if you could complete. It should only take five minutes. The answers to these questions will be used to identify a small group of households to take part in a more detailed survey of past house location and employment. A very limited number of households have been invited to take part in the survey and for this reason your co-operation is especially important.

**YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE TREATED AS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

The names, addresses and any identifying characteristics of participants in this survey will be removed or made anonymous before any results are published.

If you are selected for the follow up, detailed, survey this will take the form of a tape-recorded interview which will last about one hour, to be conducted in your own home, at the time and date of your choice. If you are willing to take part in this exciting project and your household fits the profile required then I will contact you to make an interview appointment. Please remember to include your telephone number on the attached list of questions.

Thank you for completing and returning the attached list of questions using the stamped addresses envelope provided.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Jarvis

Appendix 3Employment and demographic profile of the returned household questionnaires

	Barking	Prestwich
Postal survey size	160 households	250 households
% returns	42.5% (68 from two drops + 3 'snowballs')	32%
<u>Breakdown of returns: %</u>		
'traditional'	13	14
'flexible'	22	16
'dual'	10	14
trad - female unemployed		4
flex - no dependents	3	4
dual - no dependents	9	14
unemp male + ft/pt female	1	4
retired male + ft/pt female	6	1
both unemployed	4	3
both retired	19	16
(note: majority 'early'retired)		
incomplete questionnaires	13	10
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Demographic profile:</u>		
<u>% sampling frame population</u>	45%	44%
<u>Age range: %</u> <u>(individuals in households)</u>		
25 - 29	5	15
30 - 39	37	34
40 - 59	33	35
60 - 65	16	8
65+	9	8
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Housing</u> <u>Owner occupation: %</u>		
	100	98
<u>Households which have undertaken a house extension: %</u>		
	21%	16%
<u>Occupancy (years): %</u>		
0 - 5	6%	6%
2 - 10	32%	46%
10+	62%	46%

Appendix 4

(LSE Geog dept. logo)

Helen Jarvis - S504

0171 405-7686 X2613 (Work)  
0181 519-5912 (Home)

Date as postmark

Dear

Ref.....

Interview appointment.....

**HOUSEHOLD SURVEY: HOUSING MOBILITY**

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the above survey. This letter is to confirm the date and time of the household interview (above) which we made on the telephone today.

I would like to take this opportunity to describe how this sort of interview works. This will ensure that I can make efficient use of your time and get the best results for this project. First, it is essential that I am able to interview both you and your spouse (or cohabiting partner) together at a time when neither of you have other commitments (such as favourite tv programmes, visitors or domestic chores). I understand that this is difficult when it comes to the needs of your children. If this appointment is not already set for a time when your children are most likely to be settled (if young) or suitably entertained (if older) then please do not hesitate to contact me to rearrange to a more suitable time.

The interview will last approximately one hour. In it I will ask you both questions about your employment histories, housing histories, reasons for moving house in the past, what physical changes (if any) you have made to this house etc.. To save time in the interview it would be very helpful if you both could complete the enclosed 'time table' of employment (like a curriculum vitae but with out the pressure to get the job!). It is often hard to recall jobs from the past so you might appreciate the thinking time this exercise provides.

Thank you once again for participating in this survey.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Jarvis

### Work/Life History (Self-Completion Chart)

Sex (M/F)..... Age..... ID Ref.....

#### Employment Status Codes:

FT = Full Time Employment (30 + hours per week)

PT = Part Time Employment (Less than 30 hours per week)

HW = House Worker

UP = Registered Unemployed (or with a registered disability)

ML = Maternity Leave

Year/Month (work back from present)	Employment status (use codes)	Job Title/Description	Hours Worked Per. Week.	Significant 'Milestone' Events - e.g: Birth, House-Move, Redundancy etc....
(1996)	(e.g. HW/PT)	(e.g. Machine Operator - making auto parts)	(24 + overtime)	(youngest child started full time at school)

## Appendix 6

### Residential mobility survey: Household Interview Topic Guide

#### 1.0 HOUSING

##### **1.1 Coming to live at this address**

*(Typical question)*

“Can you tell me something about how you came to live here?”

*(Typical probing)*

what options, selection criteria, obstacles, search process, information sources, thoughts about moving in, thoughts about moving away.

##### **1.2 Location**

“What do you think about where you live from the point of view of its location?”

Neighbourhood, friends, identity of place, transport and amenities, differences with past locations.

##### **1.3 Satisfaction with house**

“How does your house suit your needs?”

comfort, taste, space, security, potential.

##### **1.4 Home improvements**

“In the time you’ve lived here (or at previous residences) what sort of changes have you made?”

Why these changes, who decides, who does what tasks, future plans.

##### **1.5 Household consumption**

“Thinking back over the most significant purchases you’ve made in recent years tell me how you went about deciding when and what to buy”

how long to plan, who decides, who chose, taste/ priority difference, sources of advice, budgeting constraint.

##### **1.6 Daily housekeeping**

“Briefly describe a typical day in terms of who does what to look after your home and family”

#### 2.0 EMPLOYMENT

##### **2.1 Nature of employment**

“Describe to me the job you do”

type, hours, environment and conditions.

“What do you like about this job (or any other you’ve had in recent years)?”

satisfaction, security, prospects/ambitions.

##### **2.2 Relations with workmates**

“Do you spend much time with workmates/ colleagues outside work hours?”

social activities, union membership.

##### **2.3 Additional sources of employment**

“Do you have any other sources of employment?”

temporary, casual, informal, reciprocal.

### 3.0 CHILDREN

#### **3.1 Starting a family**

“When did you decide to start a family?”  
postponement, who decided, discussion/ taken for granted.

#### **3.2 Changes**

“How has having children changed your lives?”

#### **3.3 EITHER: Childcare provision**

“How did you go about making childcare arrangements?”  
options, practicalities, problems, who decided, views on parenting, attitudes of family and friends.

#### **OR: Childcare at home**

“In looking after your children, who generally does what?”  
Infant care, school, after school activities, entertainment, sick children, discipline.

#### **3.4 Traditions and values**

“Are there any traditions or values you would like to see your children grow up with?”  
Religion, morals, family-mindedness, ambitions.  
“What are your hopes and fears for your children's future?”

### 4.0 MARRIAGE/COHABITATION

#### **4.1 Shared interests**

“What interests do you have in common outside the home?”  
have these changed, time spent together, enough time, enough independence

#### **4.2 Relations with wider family**

“How much do you see of each of your parents and other extended family members?”  
who visits who, enough time/contact, commitments to other family members.

#### **4.3 Disputes/Resolution**

“Finally, is there anything you both tend to feel differently about which might lead to disagreement?”  
childcare, return to work, housing location, eldercare, household budget.  
“If you disagree about something which will affect your family, how do you go about deciding what to do?”

Appendix 7  
Sampling frame population as a proportion of all families

COUNTY - GB	% SAMPLING FRAME POPULATION married or cohabiting with one or more dependent child(ren) as a percentage of all resident families (in ascending order of presence)
Isle of Wight	29.13
Inner London	29.21
East Sussex	30.21
Dorset	31.01
Devon	32.00
Tayside	32.03
Norfolk	32.26
Merseyside	32.30
West Sussex	32.61
Lothian	33.14
Lincolnshire	33.16
Tyne And Wear	33.31
Avon	33.38
South Yorkshire	33.44
Gloucestershire	33.59
Somerset	33.71
Strathclyde	33.77
Cumbria	33.82
Borders	33.83
North Yorkshire	33.83
Humberside	33.84
Nottinghamshire	33.86
West Midlands	34.01
Dumfries & Galway	34.04
Cornwall	34.09
Gwynedd	34.13
South Glamorgan	34.21
Dyfed	34.28
Clwyd	34.36
Lancashire	34.37
Suffolk	34.39
Powys	34.51
West Glamorgan	34.53
Surrey	34.56
Derbyshire	34.59
Hereford & Worcs	34.63
Northumberland	34.63
West Yorkshire	34.76
Gwent	34.83
Greater Manchester	34.84
Outer London	34.93
Essex	35.04
Durham	35.09
Hampshire	35.16
Kent	35.20
Fife	35.34
Cleveland	35.35
Cambridgeshire	35.66
Oxfordshire	35.80

Cheshire	35.91
Mid Glamorgan	35.93
Staffordshire	35.94
Central	35.98
Warwickshire	36.08
Shropshire	36.15
Hertfordshire	36.18
Wiltshire	36.27
Leicestershire	36.88
Highland	37.07
Northamptonshire	37.21
Berkshire	37.22
Grampian	37.65
Orkney Islands	38.02
Bedfordshire	38.33
Buckinghamshire	39.19
Western Isles	42.46
Shetland Islands	44.18
MEAN	34.80
Std. dev.	2.43

Source: ONS, Small Area Statistics of the 1991 UK Census of Population, data derived from MIDAS

Appendix 8

Economic status of economically active sampling frame women (women in 'couples' with dependent children): arranged in descending order of women in full time employment

COUNTY (Britain)	ECONOMIC STATUS (a)			
	% full time	% part time	%self employed/ student/ other	%economically inactive
Tayside	18.56	33.91	7.66	40.06
Lancashire	18.22	33.28	8.41	40.21
Greater Manchester	17.80	31.35	8.14	42.81
Durham	17.30	31.64	7.32	43.84
Strathclyde	17.18	30.01	7.30	45.61
Inner London	17.18	16.92	10.16	55.85
Fife	17.12	32.18	7.21	43.61
Mid Glamorgan	16.92	27.44	7.04	48.66
Outer London	16.62	26.93	7.39	49.13
Central	16.62	32.38	7.63	43.44
Powys	16.58	29.85	10.94	42.74
Lothian	16.48	35.50	6.84	41.29
Staffordshire	16.33	34.44	7.51	41.86
Northumberland	16.24	35.04	7.89	40.91
Leicestershire	16.23	35.28	8.10	40.47
West Glamorgan	16.10	31.58	6.04	46.34
Northamptonshire	16.05	36.18	7.72	40.15
Gwent	15.88	30.87	6.65	46.66
Dyfed	15.83	26.38	10.97	46.89
Cheshire	15.45	34.41	7.50	42.75
Warwickshire	15.27	36.26	8.47	40.10
South Glamorgan	14.99	33.17	7.17	44.76
Merseyside	14.97	31.25	7.83	46.07
Clwyd	14.83	32.85	7.74	44.68
Borders	14.83	37.53	8.22	39.51
West Yorkshire	14.69	34.70	7.44	43.27
Tyne and Wear	14.68	33.01	7.39	45.00
Bedfodshire	14.65	31.05	6.67	47.75
West Midlands	14.61	29.59	7.25	48.67
Buckinghamshire	14.39	33.42	7.56	44.69
Berkshire	14.26	33.66	6.87	45.30
Hereford & Worcs	14.11	36.53	7.75	41.72
Western Isles	13.89	31.61	7.60	46.95
Shropshire	13.81	33.69	7.70	44.88
Cambridgeshire	13.76	34.77	7.32	44.23
Gwynedd	13.60	28.78	9.24	48.41
Dumfries & Galway	13.50	36.73	7.93	41.88
Highland	13.14	32.10	8.16	46.69
Hertfordshire	13.12	34.78	6.78	45.38
Wiltshire	13.04	38.16	7.40	41.49
Oxfordshire	12.99	36.20	7.57	43.35
Cleveland	12.97	33.06	6.67	47.38
Derbyshire	12.96	36.18	7.27	43.68
Nottinghamshire	12.89	33.99	7.52	45.74
Lincolnshire	12.63	33.99	7.68	45.76
Gloucestershire	12.56	37.77	7.68	42.10
Hampshire	12.46	36.00	6.86	44.77
South Yorkshire	12.40	32.92	6.99	47.77
Grampian	12.37	33.77	6.29	47.75

North Yorkshire	12.17	38.61	8.89	40.45
Surrey	12.16	33.72	7.71	46.47
Cumbria	12.15	39.16	8.77	39.95
West Sussex	12.14	37.69	7.42	42.86
Suffolk	12.09	36.64	6.80	44.54
Shetland Islands	12.09	34.66	6.56	46.74
Kent	11.56	31.87	6.83	49.80
Avon	11.55	38.56	7.29	42.68
Isle of Wight	11.54	34.63	8.67	45.26
Orkney Islands	11.51	31.30	9.51	47.71
East Sussex	11.51	34.27	8.08	46.23
Essex	11.48	32.73	6.44	49.43
Humberside	11.16	34.83	6.92	47.20
Devon	11.05	34.55	8.87	45.60
Norfolk	10.92	35.78	7.45	45.88
Somerset	10.92	36.72	8.69	43.78
Dorset	10.73	34.74	8.12	46.45
Cornwall	10.70	30.78	9.56	49.03
MEAN	14.04	33.5	7.73	44.82
Std. dev.	2.14	3.45	0.98	3.05

Note:

(a) Economic status of economically active female population (full time, part time, self-employed, student and other economically active)

Source: ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 10% County files via MIDAS

Appendix 9

Employment composition of sampling frame households: arranged in descending order of households with both spouses employed (undifferentiated by hours worked)

COUNTY (Britain)	HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE(d)		
	% both <sup>(a)</sup> employed	% one spouse <sup>(b)</sup> employed	% neither spouse <sup>(c)</sup> employed
Lancashire	60.21	33.45	6.34
Borders	58.53	37.22	4.25
Cumbria	58.29	36.74	4.96
Tayside	57.82	36.12	6.06
Warwickshire	57.82	37.64	4.54
North Yorkshire	57.69	38.71	3.60
Leicestershire	57.25	36.89	5.86
Staffordshire	57.10	36.98	5.92
Northamptonshire	57.04	38.13	4.83
Northumberland	57.02	36.24	6.73
Hereford & Worcs	56.80	38.10	5.10
Lothian	56.59	37.09	6.32
Greater Manchester	56.48	34.36	9.06
West Yorkshire	56.48	35.21	8.31
Gloucestershire	56.26	38.61	5.13
Cheshire	56.09	38.13	5.78
Wiltshire	55.99	39.49	4.53
Powys	55.76	39.20	5.04
Dumfries & Galway	55.55	38.70	5.75
Durham	55.32	36.20	8.48
West Sussex	55.01	40.52	4.47
Oxfordshire	54.96	40.69	4.35
Central	54.75	37.93	7.32
Derbyshire	54.50	39.13	6.37
Avon	54.46	39.22	6.32
West Glamorgan	54.37	35.75	9.88
Clywd	54.05	39.69	6.26
Fife	53.91	39.04	7.05
South Glamorgan	53.83	36.38	9.79
Shropshire	53.58	41.09	5.33
Cambridgeshire	53.55	40.84	5.61
Berkshire	53.55	42.07	4.38
Buckinghamshire	53.39	42.07	4.54
Hampshire	53.25	41.09	5.66
Suffolk	53.18	42.36	4.46
Gwent	53.08	37.82	9.10
Tyne and Wear	53.01	35.21	11.78
Strathclyde	52.89	37.23	9.88
Isle Of Wight	52.61	38.71	8.67
Lincolnshire	52.54	40.70	6.75
Hertfordshire	52.46	43.05	4.49
Nottinghamshire	52.41	38.88	8.72
Merseyside	52.33	35.08	12.60
Surrey	52.13	44.52	3.35
Dyfed	51.88	39.23	8.89
Devon	51.81	41.01	7.19
East Sussex	51.72	40.76	7.52
Norfolk	51.67	42.02	6.30

Orkney Islands	51.58	45.55	2.88
Dorset	51.53	41.87	6.59
Mid Glamorgan	51.46	36.71	11.84
Bedfordshire	51.41	42.33	6.26
Grampian	51.15	45.41	3.44
Shetland Islands	51.04	46.60	2.36
Cleveland	51.00	37.38	11.61
West Midlands	50.73	38.10	11.17
Highland	50.63	43.29	6.08
South Yorkshire	50.55	38.21	11.23
Humberside	50.39	39.99	9.63
Gwynedd	49.49	40.99	9.52
Western Isles	48.56	45.37	6.06
Outer London	48.49	44.32	7.20
Essex	48.35	45.52	6.13
Cornwall	48.27	43.27	8.46
Kent	47.97	45.16	6.88
Inner London	39.62	44.12	16.25
MEAN	53.39	39.70	6.91
Std. dev.	3.28	3.11	2.63

Note:

- (a) Both male and female spouse in paid employment, undifferentiated by hours worked
- (b) One spouse (assumed to be male) in paid employment, undifferentiated by gender or hours worked
- (c) Neither male or female spouse in paid employment (includes unemployment, economic inactivity and retirement)
- (d) Sampling frame household population: married or cohabiting couples living with one or more dependent child(ren).

Source: ONS 1991 Census of Population: data derived from the 10% files via MIDAS

Appendix 10  
Household Typology: counties

Highest and lowest ranked counties demonstrating a close association between the two variables used to plot Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 which describe the distribution of 'idealised' household structures at county level for Britain<sup>(a)</sup>

**'Traditional' Counties**

<b>Highest ranked County</b>	<u>Rank: X</u> <u>economically inactive</u> <u>'mothers'</u>	<u>Rank: Y</u> <u>one-earner</u> <u>households</u>	D <sup>2</sup>
Kent	2	4	16
Essex	3	3	0
Outer London	4	8	16
Bedfordshire	11	14	9
Dorset	21	18	9
East Sussex	23	24	1
Lincolnshire	26	25	1

**Lowest ranked**

Central	45	47	4
Staffordshire	55	54	1
Lothian	58	53	25
Northumberland	59	59	0
Lancashire	62	67	25
Tayside	65	61	16

**'Flexible' Counties**

<b>Highest ranked County</b>	<u>Rank:</u> <u>'mothers' employed</u> <u>part-time</u>	<u>Rank:</u> <u>two-earner</u> <u>households</u>	D <sup>2</sup>
Cumbria	1	3	4
North Yorkshire	3	6	9
Borders	7	2	25
Hereford & Worcester	11	11	0

**Lowest ranked**

Tyne & Wear	43	38	25
Orkney Islands	55	50	25
West Midlands	62	57	25
Gwynedd	63	61	4
Outer London	65	63	4
Inner London	67	67	0

## 'Dual' earning Counties

**Highest ranked**

<u>County</u>	<u>Rank: X</u> 'mothers' employed full time	<u>Rank: Y</u> two-earner households	<u>D<sup>2</sup></u>
Tayside	1	4	9
Lancashire	2	1	1
Lothian	12	12	0
Staffordshire	13	8	25
Northumberland	14	19	25
Cheshire	20	16	16
Clwyd	25	27	4
Buckinghamshire	30	34	16
Berkshire	31	33	4
Shropshire	34	30	16
Cambridgeshire	35	32	9

**Lowest ranked**

Hertfordshire	39	42	9
Nottinghamshire	44	43	1
Lincolnshire	45	41	16
Grampian	49	54	25
Shetland Islands	54	55	1
Essex	61	64	9
Humberside	62	60	4
Cornwall	67	65	4

Note:

(a) Using the Spearman's rho measure of association, counties are ranked in descending order of variable X: economic position of sampling frame women ('mothers' employed part-time, full time or economically inactive). Counties are then ranked in descending order of variable Y: household employment structure (one earner or two earner household). The rank position Y was subtracted from rank position X and the difference squared to give D<sup>2</sup>. In the three computations, D<sup>2</sup> typically ranges from 0 to 1849 for the 67 counties. 0 to 25 signifies a close association between the two variables and all counties within this range are recorded here as those suggesting the highest/lowest concentration of the 'idealised' household structures employed in this thesis.

Formula for Spearman's rho:

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

$$\begin{array}{lll} \text{'Traditional'} & \text{'Flexible'} & \text{'Dual'} \\ 1 - \frac{135060}{300696} & 1 - \frac{132720}{300696} & 1 - \frac{178182}{300696} \end{array}$$

$$r_s = 0.55 \quad r_s = 0.56 \quad r_s = 0.41$$

Source: ONS 1991 Census of Population, data derived from the 10% County files via MIDAS

Appendix 11Housing: Tenure profile of all sampling frame households in England and Wales  
(Arranged in descending order of mortgagee owner occupation)

<u>Counties: England &amp; Wales</u>	<u>% buying</u>	<u>%own outright</u>	<u>%private rent</u>	<u>%social rent</u>
BEDFORDSHIRE	78.92	4.22	3.58	10.67
SURREY	78.79	4.78	3.74	9.39
ESSEX	78.18	4.84	2.44	12.49
BERKSHIRE	78.06	3.49	3.64	11.18
SOUTH GLAMORGAN	78.02	12.71	6.97	12.83
LANCASHIRE	77.89	8.74	2.72	9.05
WEST SUSSEX	77.77	4.58	3.29	11.67
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	77.76	4.23	3.22	11.98
AVON	77.38	5.60	2.63	12.94
CHESHIRE	77.37	5.19	1.90	13.79
WARWICKSHIRE	77.37	5.37	2.61	12.03
LEICESTERSHIRE	76.74	6.80	2.76	11.70
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	76.33	4.57	2.98	14.16
EAST SUSSEX	75.85	5.48	4.28	12.00
KENT	75.62	5.48	3.94	12.10
HAMPSHIRE	75.13	4.17	3.43	12.56
OUTER LONDON	74.92	4.95	4.17	14.19
HERTFORDSHIRE	74.84	3.66	2.66	16.70
STAFFORDSHIRE	74.49	6.75	2.36	14.72
MERSEYSIDE	74.24	5.26	2.35	17.19
DORSET	74.24	6.10	4.53	10.55
GLoucestershire	74.07	5.89	3.64	12.85
DERBYSHIRE	73.95	7.80	2.88	13.95
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	73.91	6.37	2.47	15.45
CLWYD	73.88	15.42	6.24	13.64
HUMBERSIDE	73.82	6.10	2.84	15.13
GREATER MANCHESTER	73.55	6.59	1.95	16.75
WEST YORKSHIRE	73.42	6.58	2.60	16.09
CLEVELAND	72.96	5.45	1.43	19.20
MID GLAMORGAN	72.92	17.95	4.57	14.09
WEST GLAMORGAN	72.60	14.96	4.50	15.65
HEREFORD & WORCS	72.58	6.77	2.93	14.76
ISLE OF WIGHT	72.41	9.10	5.58	10.67
SOMERSET	71.79	6.99	4.07	13.80
GWENT	71.02	15.88	5.37	18.33
CUMBRIA	70.74	9.05	3.29	13.68
DEVON	70.70	7.23	5.31	12.45
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	70.60	5.66	5.01	13.81
NORTH YORKSHIRE	70.56	8.33	3.97	9.88
NORTHUMBERLAND	70.16	4.98	3.30	17.34
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	69.76	5.90	2.19	20.76
LINCOLNSHIRE	69.52	7.65	4.79	12.93
WILTSHIRE	69.07	4.58	4.39	13.49
OXFORDSHIRE	68.36	5.35	5.42	13.74
SHROPSHIRE	68.27	7.77	4.41	14.72

WEST MIDLANDS	68.23	7.06	2.48	21.09
DURHAM	67.94	7.32	1.71	21.52
CORNWALL	67.59	11.65	5.75	10.88
SUFFOLK	67.41	6.84	5.69	12.88
NORFOLK	66.44	8.20	4.99	15.87
GWYNEDD	65.75	20.06	7.69	14.88
TYNE AND WEAR	64.65	4.18	2.28	27.70
DYFED	63.43	21.54	6.76	14.13
POWYS	56.78	24.07	7.71	16.54
INNER LONDON	45.95	4.86	7.18	39.47
Mean	72.09	7.84	3.92	14.76
Std. dev.	5.72	4.64	1.58	4.75

Appendix 12

Inner London: household employment profile of sampling frame 'couple' households living with one or more dependent child  
(Arranged in descending order of two-earner households)

Household employment structure

<u>Inner London: districts</u>	% Both employed	% One spouse employed	%Neither spouse employed
CITY OF LONDON	56.25	39.58	4.17
LEWISHAM	46.05	45.29	12.90
HARINGEY	43.94	40.46	24.76
WANDSWORTH	43.93	47.71	12.60
CAMDEN	41.80	41.12	14.95
ISLINGTON	41.62	40.78	17.59
LAMBETH	41.00	54.82	11.50
SOUTHWARK	39.74	43.25	15.75
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM	39.68	41.12	12.82
CITY OF WESTMINSTER	37.25	44.97	19.43
NEWHAM	35.60	42.25	18.01
HACKNEY	34.78	42.88	28.99
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA	33.68	46.24	9.83
TOWER HAMLETS	28.14	50.38	12.37
Mean	40.25	44.35	15.40
Std. dev.	6.64	4.31	6.22

Appendix 13

Greater Manchester: household employment profile of sampling frame 'couple' households living with one or more dependent child  
(Arranged in descending order of two-earner households)

<u>Greater Manchester: districts</u>	<u>Household employment</u>		
	% Both employed	% One spouse employed	%Neither spouse employed
BURY	62.03	33.08	8.91
OLDHAM	59.64	32.96	5.01
STOCKPORT	59.36	36.45	18.92
TAMESIDE	59.00	31.42	8.94
TRAFFORD	58.46	33.14	9.67
BOLTON	58.01	34.30	11.79
ROCHDALE	57.19	35.96	4.68
WIGAN	57.03	33.78	7.22
SALFORD	53.91	35.53	6.01
MANCHESTER	44.62	35.25	7.72
Mean	56.93	34.19	8.89
Std. dev.	4.80	1.59	4.15

Appendix 14

Outer London: household employment profile of sampling frame 'couple' households living with one or more dependent child  
(Arranged in descending order of two-earner households)

<u>Outer London: districts</u>	<u>Household employment</u>		
	% Both employed	% One spouse employed	%Neither spouse employed
HARROW	52.94	47.63	6.42
HILLINGDON	52.52	46.22	5.48
CROYDON	51.47	43.70	10.03
HOUNSLOW	51.45	46.19	5.32
SUTTON	51.26	41.98	6.56
KINGSTON UPON THAMES	50.83	41.53	9.53
RICHMOND UPON THAMES	49.07	43.23	8.64
EALING	48.94	42.47	13.04
BROMLEY	48.49	42.21	4.85
BEXLEY	48.30	47.42	5.57
ENFIELD	48.13	42.10	5.37
REDBRIDGE	47.69	41.60	6.95
HAVERING	47.01	44.89	4.28
MERTON	46.71	46.34	6.95
BRENT	46.27	45.37	6.94
BARNET	45.95	47.23	3.69
WALTHAM FOREST	44.63	43.51	5.22
GREENWICH	44.49	46.13	11.04
BARKING & DAGENHAM	42.83	43.20	12.17
Mean	48.37	44.37	7.27
Std. dev.	2.86	2.13	2.72

Appendix 15Relative rates of 'traditionalism': gender divisions of paid employment

Relative rates of traditionalism derived from the statistical difference between 'dual' and 'traditional' household distributions

REGION	Statistical (a) Difference	
North West	2.32	LEAST TRADITIONAL
Wales	1.29	
West Midlands	0.70	
East Midlands	0.58	
North	0.52	
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.24	
Scotland	-0.17	
Inner London	-0.40	
Outer London	-0.65	
ROSE	-1.34	
East Anglia	-1.45	
South West	-1.64	MOST TRADITIONAL

Population: economically active 'nuclear families' with household employment compositions comprising: full time, part time and economically inactive employment combinations

Note:

(a) Calculated as the difference between the Z scores for rates of 'dual' households and rates of 'traditional' households.

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS 1991 Census of Population, Data derived by author from the 1% Household SAR's accessed from MIDAS

Appendix 16Counties in which the sampling frame population is significantly less mobile (by 'distant' moves) than the general population

REGION	'DISTANT' WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS					
	Sample population	General population	Difference	TYPE <sup>(a)</sup>		
Powys	19.39	-0.40	36.57	0.48	-0.88	Dual
Wiltshire	20.42	-0.20	33.50	0.03	-0.88	Flex
Northamptonshire	19.71	-0.34	35.48	0.32	-0.66	Flex/Dual
Gloucestershire	24.17	0.50	40.78	1.09	-0.66	Flex
Clwyd	19.65	-0.36	34.74	0.21	-0.57	Dual
West Sussex	30.59	1.71	41.46	1.19	-0.57	Flex
Warwickshire	23.37	0.35	38.36	0.74	-0.39	Flex/Dual
North Yorkshire	24.01	0.47	38.56	0.76	-0.39	Flex
Cheshire	21.07	-0.09	34.98	0.25	-0.34	Dual
Grampian	24.35	0.53	33.33	0.01	-0.34	Trad
South Glamorgan	13.97	-1.43	24.71	-1.25	-0.18	Dual/Flex
Surrey	35.48	2.64	46.81	1.97	-0.18	Trad
<b>MEAN</b> (all Counties)	<b>21.53</b>		<b>33.29</b>			
std.deviation	5.29		6.88			

Counties in which the sampling frame population is significantly more mobile (by 'distant' moves) than a general population:

REGION	'DISTANT" WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS					
	Sample population	General population	Difference	TYPE <sup>(a)</sup>		
Tayside	17.61	-0.74	23.36	-1.44	0.70	Dual
Buckinghamshire	28.94	1.40	40.67	1.07	0.70	Trad
Essex	26.71	0.98	37.99	0.54	0.70	Trad
Strathclyde	16.80	-0.89	23.33	-1.45	0.56	Dual
Shropshire	22.24	0.13	36.37	0.45	0.56	Flex
Somerset	22.35	0.16	34.41	0.16	0.56	Flex/Trad
Outer London	28.59	1.33	38.99	0.83	0.50	Trad
Highland	25.41	0.73	35.25	0.28	0.50	Trad
<b>MEAN</b> std. deviation	<b>21.53</b>		<b>33.29</b>			
	5.29		6.88			

Notes:

(a) The 'idealised' household employment structure type recorded for each County based on the 'clusters' discussed in the previous chapter and listed in Appendix 10

Source: ONS 1991 UK Census: derived from the Small Area Statistics from MIDAS

Appendix 17

Wholly moving households arranged in descending order of rates of 'distant' inter-urban moves.

## WHOLLY MOVING HOUSEHOLDS

COUNTIES IN BRITAIN	% INTER-URBAN	% INTRA-URBAN
WESTERN ISLES	38.89	57.94
SURREY	38.41	55.33
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	35.72	59.41
WARWICKSHIRE	35.15	60.46
BERKSHIRE	33.53	59.72
POWYS	33.07	63.77
HERTFORDSHIRE	33.07	61.84
BEDFORDSHIRE	31.65	64.42
ORKNEY ISLANDS	30.95	65.48
OUTER LONDON	30.92	60.46
OXFORDSHIRE	30.30	60.50
WILTSHIRE	29.86	65.04
CHESHIRE	29.12	67.65
WEST SUSSEX	28.90	66.73
GLoucestershire	28.83	67.55
HEREFORD & WORCS	28.65	68.53
EAST SUSSEX	28.42	66.28
NORTHUMBERLAND	27.86	70.31
CAMBRIDGESHIRE	27.86	64.76
NORTH YORKSHIRE	27.83	67.82
SOUTH GLAMORGAN	26.65	68.33
SHROPSHIRE	26.26	70.09
GWYNEDD	26.13	70.70
BORDERS	26.09	70.39
INNER LONDON	26.00	58.16
HIGHLAND	25.98	69.65
LINCOLNSHIRE	25.95	70.69
DERBYSHIRE	25.41	72.33
SOMERSET	25.38	71.75
STAFFORDSHIRE	25.38	72.53
DORSET	24.96	70.63
DUMFRIES & GALWAY	24.89	72.46
AVON	24.78	71.20
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	24.63	71.58
CENTRAL	23.91	73.82
CLWYD	23.62	73.97
HAMPSHIRE	23.62	72.50
SUFFOLK	23.61	70.37
ESSEX	23.46	73.14
DYFED	23.06	73.30
DURHAM	22.64	75.01
SHETLAND ISLANDS	22.44	75.64
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE	22.22	74.92
GRAMPIAN	22.09	72.08
LEICESTERSHIRE	21.98	74.21
FIFE	21.77	75.43
CORNWALL	21.63	74.92
KENT	21.41	74.55

NORFOLK	21.29	74.80
LOTHIAN	20.43	73.96
DEVON	20.29	76.51
CUMBRIA	19.73	77.78
LANCASHIRE	19.47	77.57
TAYSIDE	19.37	77.08
ISLE OF WIGHT	19.08	76.81
MID GLAMORGAN	18.96	78.84
HUMBERSIDE	18.79	78.87
WEST GLAMORGAN	17.97	77.37
GWENT	17.95	80.08
WEST MIDLANDS	17.82	79.37
TYNE AND WEAR	17.78	79.52
SOUTH YORKSHIRE	17.37	80.11
WEST YORKSHIRE	16.33	80.42
GREATER MANCHESTER	16.21	80.29
MERSEYSIDE	15.24	81.69
CLEVELAND	12.99	84.72
STRATHCLYDE	11.08	85.77
MEAN	24.52	71.49
Std.dev.	6.81	6.81

Source: ONS, Small Area Statistics of the 1991 UK Census of Population, data derived from MIDAS

Appendix 18

Relative rates of distant mobility 1981 and 1991, by region for four 'idealised' household structures

Dual career	% 1981		% 1991		Proportional change %
Region	local	distant	local	distant	distant moves
North	81.45	18.55	85.52	14.48	-21.94
Yorks and Humberside	80.00	20.00	81.00	19.00	5.00
East Midlands	78.26	21.74	75.11	24.89	14.48
East Anglia	74.65	25.35	59.36	40.64	60.31
Inner London	77.78	22.22	80.65	19.35	-12.92
Outer London	68.29	31.71	87.31	12.69	-59.98
ROSE	73.44	26.56	66.40	33.60	26.51
South West	70.39	29.61	62.85	37.15	25.46
West Midlands	79.41	20.59	73.10	26.90	30.65
North West	79.87	20.13	81.08	18.92	-6.01
Wales	80.34	19.66	75.84	24.16	22.89
Mean	<b>76.72</b>	<b>23.28</b>	<b>75.29</b>	<b>24.71</b>	<b>6.14</b>

Dual earner	%1981		% 1991		Proportional change %
Region	local	distant	local	distant	distant moves
North	88.76	11.24	91.46	8.54	-24.02
Yorks and Humberside	9.41	10.59	88.03	11.97	13.03
East Midlands	87.20	12.80	87.58	12.42	-2.97
East Anglia	78.26	21.74	79.66	20.34	-6.44
Inner London	81.25	18.75	92.59	7.41	-60.48
Outer London	82.14	17.86	88.72	11.28	-36.84
ROSE	80.42	19.58	77.73	22.27	13.74
South West	80.61	19.39	77.89	22.11	14.03
West Midlands	88.04	11.96	89.56	10.44	-12.71
North West	88.60	11.40	89.39	10.61	-6.93
Wales	85.39	14.61	88.69	11.31	-22.59
Mean	<b>84.55</b>	<b>15.45</b>	<b>86.48</b>	<b>13.52</b>	<b>-12.49</b>

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS; data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University.

Appendix 18 (continued)

Relative rates of distant mobility 1981 and 1991, by region, for four 'idealised' household structures

Flexible	% 1981		% 1991		Proportional change %
Region	local	distant	local	distant	distant moves
North	86.78	13.22	86.91	13.09	- 0.98
Yorks and Humberside	82.54	17.46	82.15	17.85	2.23
East Midlands	84.12	15.88	77.86	22.14	39.42
East Anglia	80.98	19.02	69.79	30.21	58.83
Inner London	76.36	23.64	82.56	17.44	-26.23
Outer London	73.57	26.43	82.89	17.11	-35.26
ROSE	75.16	24.84	71.99	28.01	12.76
South West	77.60	22.40	69.10	30.90	37.95
West Midlands	85.71	14.29	85.49	14.51	1.54
North West	85.01	14.99	85.54	14.46	-3.53
Wales	82.30	17.70	78.29	21.71	22.65
Mean	80.92	19.08	79.33	20.67	8.33

Traditional	% 1981		% 1991		Proportional change %
Region	local	distant	local	distant	distant moves
North	80.59	19.41	82.41	17.59	-9.38
Yorks and Humberside	77.19	22.81	78.75	21.25	-6.84
East Midlands	75.58	24.42	74.16	25.84	5.81
East Anglia	73.23	26.77	61.26	38.74	44.71
Inner London	68.26	31.74	83.84	16.16	-49.09
Outer London	73.20	26.80	84.10	15.90	-40.67
ROSE	69.64	30.36	69.98	30.02	-1.12
South West	71.01	28.99	63.91	36.09	24.49
West Midlands	79.73	20.27	80.81	19.19	-5.33
North West	75.90	24.10	75.04	24.96	3.57
Wales	78.23	21.77	73.79	26.21	20.39
Mean	74.78	25.22	75.28	24.72	-1.98

Source: Crown Copyright, ONS; data derived from the Longitudinal Study of the UK Census of Population, SSRU, City University.

Appendix 19Relative rates of household structure transformation: regional profile 1981 and 1991

<u>1981</u>	Dual career		Dual earner		Flexible		Traditional	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
North	220	6.54	278	8.27	1149	34.18	1715	51.01
Yorks & Humberside	362	6.58	378	6.87	2056	37.35	2708	49.20
East Midlands	302	6.22	430	8.85	1651	33.99	2474	50.94
East Anglia	128	5.71	100	4.46	762	34.00	1251	55.82
Inner London	116	8.02	190	13.13	443	30.62	698	48.24
Outer London	355	7.97	397	8.92	1422	31.94	2278	51.17
ROSE	857	6.91	672	5.42	4234	34.15	6635	53.52
South West	268	5.64	228	4.80	1667	35.11	2585	54.44
West Midlands	426	6.92	528	8.58	2144	34.84	3056	49.66
North West	610	9.19	572	8.62	2476	37.32	2977	44.87
Wales	272	9.86	219	7.93	814	29.49	1455	52.72
total	3916	7.18	3992	7.32	18818	34.49	27832	51.01
<u>1991</u>	Dual career		Dual earner		Flexible		Traditional	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
North	559	16.89	478	14.45	1490	45.03	782	23.63
Yorks & Humberside	796	14.59	745	13.66	2662	48.80	1252	22.95
East Midlands	846	17.11	750	15.17	2199	44.47	1150	23.26
East Anglia	402	16.90	320	13.46	1078	45.33	578	24.31
Inner London	182	16.81	227	20.96	366	33.80	308	28.44
Outer London	735	17.42	678	16.07	1614	38.26	1192	28.25
ROSE	2505	19.69	533	12.05	5534	43.50	3150	24.76
South West	811	16.26	605	12.13	2372	47.54	1201	24.07
West Midlands	957	15.66	984	16.10	2756	45.11	1413	23.13
North West	1265	19.27	997	15.19	2902	44.22	1399	21.32
Wales	541	19.43	420	15.08	1137	40.83	687	24.67
total	9599	17.59	7737	14.18	24110	44.19	13112	24.03
<u>Proportional change</u>								
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
North	1.58	0.75	0.32	-0.54				
Yorks & Humberside	1.22	0.99	0.31	-0.53				
East Midlands	1.75	0.71	0.31	-0.54				
East Anglia	1.96	2.02	0.33	-0.56				
Inner London	1.10	0.60	0.10	-0.41				
Outer London	1.18	0.80	0.20	-0.45				
ROSE	1.85	1.22	0.27	-0.54				
South West	1.88	1.53	0.35	-0.56				
West Midlands	1.26	0.88	0.29	-0.53				
North West	1.10	0.76	0.18	-0.52				
Wales	0.97	0.90	0.38	-0.53				
MEAN	1.46	0.94	0.28	-0.53				

## Appendix 20

### Setting up primary research in London and Manchester

Household interviews were undertaken in London and Manchester to generate observations of gender divisions of labour from two comparative regions. This selection was based on secondary data which indicated that these regional study areas provided contrasting trends of female employment participation but within similar metropolitan city contexts. A neighbourhood was selected from the outer urban fringe of each of these cities using district census data to ensure sufficient contrast in gender divisions of paid labour whilst at the same time maintaining broad socio-economic comparability in features such as; the rate of home ownership, the proportion of households with modern housing amenities, rates of unemployment, ethnic profile and population representation of 'nuclear' family households. This is as described in Chapter Three.

A drop-off/mail-back questionnaire generated an average return of 38% (Appendix 3 provides a breakdown of returned questionnaires). There was some clustering to the returned questionnaires such that addresses were not evenly represented throughout the selected housing sample. Given that the postal questionnaire was intended as a means to an end, to reach households willing to be interviewed, rather than as a survey in its own right, there is little scope (or need) to determine the nature of this clustering of returns. It is notable, however, simply from physical observation, that returns were disproportionately represented amongst streets of the relatively better maintained and improved housing. This suggests a difference in the income level or socio-economic profile of questionnaire respondents to that of non-respondents. It is quite possible that the methodological approach employed here best suits access to relatively advantaged (educated and employed) households and that an investigation of more disadvantaged population groups would require alternative means of access.

Not only did the returned questionnaires yield the desired number of willing interview participants (five) from each of the three 'idealised' household employment structures in Barking and Prestwich (thirty in total) but they also served to confirm that the two local survey areas met the selection criteria. Both the Barking and Prestwich survey areas produced an equivalent rate of sampling frame households from the returned questionnaires but in Barking these were disproportionately distributed between 'traditional' and 'flexible' household types whilst in Prestwich 'dual' households were more heavily represented. Indeed, a shortfall of 'dual' sampling frame households willing to be interviewed in Barking had to be made up through the 'snowballing' of interview contacts (Laurie, 1992).

It is perhaps surprising to find such a high rate of 'traditional' household employment compositions amongst the Prestwich questionnaire returns, given the indications of non-traditionalism in the SARs data for the North-West (encompassing the Manchester area), district employment census data for Prestwich, as well as existing literature on the geography of gender (Duncan, 1991). This being said, it is notable that it is in the Prestwich sample that sampling frame wives register as unemployed, an action which can be interpreted in terms of a non-traditional normative gender role (Harris and Morris, 1986).

It is also important to recognise the cross-sectional nature of this survey element of the primary research. Sampling frame women in the 'traditional' households in Prestwich, have younger aged dependent children relative to Barking and are more likely than the more established Barking 'traditional' households to be captured in this type in a maternity-break transition, on their way to becoming 'flexible' or 'dual' households. A longitudinal regional distinction between the temporary 'parking' (Prestwich) and more permanent establishment (Barking) of 'traditional' household employment compositions is highlighted in the biographical research. The average age range for heads of households in both survey areas is 30-59 but beyond this the Barking sample demonstrates a higher rate of retired couple households (60-65) and Prestwich a greater number of young childless couple households (25-29) (The age profile of interviewees (couples) and their children is described in Appendix 21). Similarly, those describing their economic status as 'retired' in Prestwich are frequently below the official age of retirement. The questionnaire returns also confirmed the assumption made from physical observation that all the housing in the two survey areas is in owner occupation.

It has already been explained that the key purpose of the questionnaire was to identify sampling frame households from which to furnish the research with an equal number of households willing to participate in detailed in-depth interviews from each of the three household employment types. Selection of the households to be interviewed from those registering their willingness to be interviewed was done by date order such that those selected for interview were straightforwardly the first five 'willing households', for each type, to return their questionnaires. Interview appointments were subsequently made with these households for a date and time to suit the availability of both husband and wife together. A letter was sent in each case to confirm the interview appointment and to establish the conditions under which the interview needed to be conducted (see Appendix 4).

## Appendix 21

### Age profile of interviewees (couples) and their children in the two study areas.

#### London - Barking

Household type	<u>couples</u> <u>mean age (years)</u>	<u>dependent children</u> <u>mean age (years)</u>
Dual	39	10
Flexible	37	8
Traditional	36	4

#### Manchester - Prestwich

Household type	<u>couples</u> <u>mean age (years)</u>	<u>dependent children</u> <u>mean age (years)</u>
Dual	36	6
Flexible	35	6
Traditional	36	4

#### Note:

The ages listed are the average (mean) for each category. Within each category variation is such that the households interviewed span both 'thirty something' and 'forty something' generational cohorts.

## Appendix 22

### The application of qualitative research analysis

The qualitative research component of this project draws on formal procedures of analysis together with a high degree of intuitive personal interpretation. The application of multiple methods recognises that language and meaning are socially constructed and subject to a plurality of interpretations (Kvale, 1996). This is not to say that qualitative research analysis is a free for all. Formal methods of analysis are available which provide a useful framework of continuity through each stage of the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

No single method of qualitative research analysis can overcome the essential role of an essentially personal 'take' of events. Interpretation is not a discrete event. Rather, various modes of interpretation occur throughout the design, conduct, analysis and presentation of the research (Kvale, 1996). In this project, for instance, the design of the interview topic guide was grounded in a theoretical interpretation of the household as the site of competing preferences and the resolution of tensions associated with housing and employment. This theoretical grounding influenced the actual interviews, reactions to the taped interviews, transcription emphasis, thematic selection and presentation of interview quotations. Once it is recognised that the researcher position is necessarily subjective and that language offers up several layers of interpretation it is possible to consciously build skills of empathic and intuitive awareness into qualitative research and analysis.

This project employed formal methods of analysis as a route into the vast amount of material generated from the household interviews (350 pages of transcription). The formal 'route map' chosen was once again determined by the theoretical design of the research project. Thus, the thematic interpretation of interview material followed the themes of the topic guide (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The formal methods adopted comprised a thematic content analysis of the interview transcripts, a summary of key narratives with ad hoc interpretation of recurring patterns of thematic interaction and a review of the telling of the narratives (Wolcott, 1994).

The thematic content analysis was based around two templates, one based on questions from the topic guide (Appendix 23) and the other on recurring themes from the household narratives (Appendix 24). The templates served to consider the relative 'fit' between a range of themes and categories of household structure, gender position and

regional study area. In some ways this approach of fitting interview themes into a template follows the precedent of a repertory grid technique (Hudson, 1980). Whereas a repertory grid technique is essentially a mathematical formula (Ryle, 1975), the construction of a simple and systematic means of comparing a broad range of elements with a range of categories is easily adapted to a purely qualitative approach. Indeed, this technique of thematic analysis is evident in market research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Not only was it considered important to try to fit interview themes within a template but also to identify particular narratives which confounded attempts at thematisation. In the interviews, 'stories' were frequently told in tandem by the overlapping contributions of husband and wife and by the disjointed nature of story-telling (Shotter, 1993). Each narrative was separately identified at the same time that it was viewed as part of an interconnected web of narratives. Similarly, themes relating to the topic guide were separately identified but noted in a way which avoided losing site of the wider picture from which these thematic observations were lifted.

In this project, narrative analysis constituted a simple review of the way elements of the household interview narratives were organised, the 'plot structure' of the overlapping narratives of husbands and wives. What was considered was the priority given by particular households to particular narrative elements. This revealed those households for whom, for instance, issues of childcare provided a key thread through daily life. In this way a series of narratives were identified which, when considered in terms of emphasis rather than thematic content, highlighted an important dimension of idiosyncrasy. This mode of interpretation did not directly employ the sociolinguistic techniques of conversational or discourse analysis (the analysis of subject positionings and sub-text) (Potter and Wetherall, 1987; Shotter, 1993). It is important to note, however, that while the research did not mobilise a formal deconstruction of voices 'behind' the narrative, in the manner currently popular in social psychology, an appreciation of this body of literature permeates the conduct and analysis of the interviews. An almost theatrical personal role-play of the interview psychodynamic can be recognised as an important stage of doing qualitative research (Potter and Wetherall, 1988).

Finally, a limited number of interview excerpts were selected for quotation. Selections were made to exemplify a recurring theme. Many similar interview excerpts could have

been provided to demonstrate the universality of particular statements. However, the purpose of presenting actual excerpts from the transcripts was not to provide robust evidence in support of the interpretation being made but rather to illuminate the argument. It would be repetitive and self-defeating to present quotes in the way of empirical evidence when a mass of similar statements may still be open to alternative interpretations. This said, the use made of interview excerpts is once again far from random. The quotations are specifically rooted in the themes of the interview topic guide and of the theoretical framework of the entire project. Each quote is used to exemplify a trend from this analysis which, whilst open to a potentially different angle of interpretation, represents a significant pattern in the behaviour of a particular category of the households interviewed.

Appendix 23: Qualitative interview analysis: thematic template (I)

Household code .....	Mr and Mrs.....(pseudonym) Barking Prestwich TRAD FLEX DUAL (circle)		
Story - summary			
Strategies			
money management		housework division	
family networks		social networks	
childcare provision		conflict resolution	
motives to move			
housing consolidation			
<u>Female spouse employment:</u>	<u>Male spouse employment:</u>		
Higher education	Higher education		
Occupational status	Occupational status		
Job security	Job security		
Redundancies	Redundancies		

Appendix 24: Qualitative interview analysis: thematic template (II)

Theme:	London		Manchester	
Household Structure	Female	Male	Female	Male
<u>Traditional:</u> 1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
<u>Flexible:</u> 1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
<u>Dual earning:</u> 1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Appendix 25Occupational profile of interviewees (couples) in the two study areas.**London Interviewees****Manchester Interviewees**'Traditional' households

Mr Lemon Bank manager

Mrs Lemon Bank clerk

Mr Maitland

Mrs Maitland

Graphic designer

Textile designer

Mr Lampton Carpenter

Mrs Lampton Receptionist

Mr Morley

Mrs Morley

Engineer

Childminder

Mr Loader Lawyer  
Mrs Loader General Practitioner

Mr Mowlem

Mrs Mowlem

Engineer

Civil service officer

Mr Lee Builder  
Mrs Lee Bank clerk

Mr Manning

Mrs Manning

College lecturer

Computer analyst

Mr Lever Manager  
Mrs Lever Nurse

Mr Masters

Mrs Masters

Graphic designer

Personnel officer

'Flexible' households

Mr Langham Engineer

Mrs Langham Secretary

Mr Morris

Mrs Morris

Lorry driver

Administrative assistant

Mr Lexington Local authority manager  
Mrs Lexington Local authority officer

Mr Millington

Mrs Millington

Laboratory supervisor

Accounts clerk

Mr Little Engineer  
Mrs Little Care worker

Mr Miliken

Mrs Miliken

Traffic warden

VDU operator

Mr Lively Mechanic  
Mrs Lively Accounts manager

Mr Moss

Mrs Moss

Textile manufacturing worker

Home help

Mr Livingston Taxi-Cab driver  
Mrs Livingston Clerical assistant

Mr Mellor

Mrs Mellor

Warehouse manager

Payroll clerk

'Dual' earning households

Mr Land Engineer

Mrs Land Nurse

Mr Mallory

Mrs Mallory

Fashion industry promoter

Textile designer

Mr Lister Security guard  
Mrs Lister Bank clerk

Mr Moore

Mrs Moore

Engineer

Civil service officer

Mr Lymington Financial administrator  
Mrs Lymington Nursing manager

Mr Myles

Mrs Myles

Showroom manager

Process worker

Mr Losely Mechanic  
Mrs Losely Financial advisor

Mr Mistry

Mrs Mistry

Photographer

Insurance underwriter

Mr Leicester Taxi-Cab controller  
Mrs Leicester Finance officer

Mr Maddison

Mrs Maddison

Insurance sales

Administrative manager

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