Negotiation and Egalitarianism in the Sexual Division of Labour

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own, except where work which has formed part of jointly authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

The work in Chapter 5 of the thesis has appeared in publication as follows:

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Chapter 5 of this thesis documents a framework jointly developed with the co-author of this paper that was used to aid in the design and practical undertaking of qualitative interviews. This framework is set out in the paper, with equal contributions made by both authors to its conception and the writing up process, and as such there is some overlap in Chapter 5 of this thesis - but no direct copying of text without citation.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how negotiation between heterosexual couples can shape the likelihood and extent of egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour. Despite the sexual division of labour being a cornerstone of research on gender, employment and the family, current literature has surprisingly neglected the relationship between these two concepts. In particular, the actual process of negotiation is largely assumed and not subject to critical engagement, making it unclear exactly how couples transform or sustain rather traditional divisions of labour. Through qualitative, semi-structured interviews with ten couples over a six month period, accounts of the negotiation process and how this links to the likelihood and extent of egalitarianism are examined.

These processes are explored in instances of one partner's redundancy amongst previously dual full-time earning couples. Employment loss provides a fruitful context in which established and often unquestioned routines (regarding the division of unpaid labour in particular) are unsettled and subject to renegotiation. In the current labour market context, where increasing numbers of people are employed involuntarily on non-standard working arrangements and there have been reductions in familial support through welfare cuts, this research offers a timely and contemporary analysis of how households are managing (and renegotiating) the often conflicting demands of paid and unpaid labour.

Alongside a clear, comprehensive definition of negotiation is an outline of the stages in this process that facilitates higher levels of egalitarianism. Egalitarianism drives the level and form of negotiation whilst negotiation simultaneously fosters higher levels of egalitarianism, with the two concepts proving to be mutually reinforcing. The nature and extent of negotiation and egalitarianism that emerges is heavily influenced by what are distinguished as a range of individual, structural and cultural contextual factors. A typology is developed denoting the extent of negotiation and egalitarianism along a continuum of low to high.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Household decisions regarding paid and unpaid work fundamentally shape the way our lives are organised. How much unpaid work one undertakes affects their ability to engage in paid employment, which will largely influence career choices, personal earnings, and a range of factors determining one's structural position in society. We talk in terms of a *sexual* division of labour because historically paid and unpaid work was, and for many households remains, highly gendered. Typically men are positioned as 'breadwinners' and women primarily responsible for household work and caregiving (Connell, 2002). The objective of this thesis is to explicate how the negotiation of paid and unpaid labour (in the various forms 'negotiation' may take) between heterosexual partners is related to the likelihood and extent of an egalitarian sexual division of labour. Contemporary research demonstrates that despite marked changes in the demographics of the UK workforce since the 1980s women continue to undertake disproportionately greater shares of unpaid labour, and are more likely than men to compromise on paid employment as a result (e.g. Kan et al., 2011; Lindsay and Maher, 2014).

This thesis leads with the argument that the actual process of negotiation between partners is largely neglected in existing literature. Research continues to cite and to some degree 'test' a number of theories when accounting for the sexual division of labour, notably the relative resource bargaining perspective and the 'doing gender' framework of West and Zimmerman (1987). However, relatively few studies have investigated the actual process whereby paid and unpaid responsibilities are assigned between partners. That some negotiation lies at the heart of decision-making regarding employment and domestic responsibilities is assumed or implicit in the huge amount of empirical research in this area. Yet we are told little about the nature of any negotiation process and how it is practically accomplished between partners. Rather than rely on theories (including the bargaining and gender perspectives) that existing critiques already discount, as unable to *comprehensively* explain how divisions of labour come to fruition, a new approach is required. It follows that without a clear conception of negotiation in this context the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism is also under-theorised. This thesis aims to bridge this

gap by exploring the incidence of negotiation between partners and the likelihood of an egalitarian division of labour. The contention follows that only by placing negotiation at the heart of our analyses can we truly understand when and how egalitarianism is most likely – and also how more traditional divisions of labour are sustained.

An overview of the research process

The findings of this research are based upon forty qualitative, semi-structured interviews conducted individually with partners in ten couples, with each respondent interviewed twice over a period of six months. The targeted sample was couples that had been dual full-time employed prior to one partner's redundancy from public sector employment. The suggestion here is that such couples will be accustomed to managing the oft conflicting demands of paid and unpaid labour, yet redundancy and the associated changes in their circumstances will potentially act as the stimulus for a (re)negotiation. Redundancy is itself a fruitful context for studying negotiation and egalitarianism given the indications of current research (e.g. Legerski and Cornwall, 2010) that decisions regarding paid and unpaid working activities are so engrained in everyday routine that negotiation is rare without an event that unsettles everyday life.

The motivation for selecting those made redundant specifically from the public sector is multi-faceted and outlined fully in Chapter 4, but key is the significant decline in public sector employment during the current period of austerity, and its offerings of 'quality', well-paid employment – particularly for women. With many in possession of sector-specific skills such as in teaching and nursing, the transition to private sector employment may represent a backward step in moves towards or sustaining egalitarianism. The current context also sees record high numbers of men involuntarily employed on non-standard employment contracts (part-time, temporary, zero hours, etc.) with possible implications for a renegotiation in their unpaid divisions of labour too. Recent welfare regime changes introduced by the coalition government, to be further adjusted by the newly elected Conservative government, will further impact upon partner's working decisions, ensuring that this represents a timely investigation into negotiation and egalitarianism in the sexual division of labour.

A unique feature of this research is that five cases of female redundancy and five cases of male redundancy have been selected, in order to draw direct (gendered) comparisons between individual and household responses to redundancy. This provides the opportunity to see whether negotiation and egalitarianism is most likely in either situation; the nature and extent of each depending upon whether a male or female partner has been affected by job loss; and the factors that influence the likelihood of each in both circumstances. The interviews were designed to achieve the overall research objective by striking at the core of what has been neglected by existing research – querying and examining the process through which couples themselves managed their divisions of labour, and in their own words. From this data, a number of valuable insights into the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism are offered.

Research questions

The following research question has been formulated in order to address the overall objective of this thesis:

Does a high level of negotiation between couples over their paid and unpaid working contributions foster egalitarianism?

In answering the question posed, a clearer conception of negotiation than that presented in the literature is required. The forms this does take in existing research will be explicated, as will theories that have been applied to the sexual division of labour. These include relative resource bargaining, specialisation theories (focusing on Parsons and Bales, 1956; Becker, 1991), patriarchy theory (particularly Walby, 1990; 1997), and the 'doing gender' perspective (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The various forms the negotiation process may take in either increasing or reducing the likelihood of egalitarianism is of key interest, as are the conditions under which different types and extents of negotiation may take place. Therefore, four sub

research questions have been developed to comprehensively address the components of the overarching research question, the first being:

- **How can 'negotiation' in the sexual division of labour be more clearly and comprehensively conceptualised?**

As stated, one of the main concerns of this thesis is that there is a distinct lack of analysis of the actual process of negotiation. Where negotiation does emerge in analyses there is little evidence of critical engagement with it, and the result is a rather ambiguous usage of the term. Furthermore, there is little examination of how partners come to decide, agree, compromise, coerce, manipulate (the list could of course go on) who does what in terms of employment and unpaid labour. Ultimately, this thesis will conceptualise negotiation more clearly through its direct questioning as to how negotiation within households takes place, with the focus being on those actually undertaking the process of (re)negotiation. From this it will be possible to begin examining the relationship with egalitarianism more, particularly in terms of understanding any common features or key stages in a process of negotiation that increases the likelihood of egalitarianism. The second sub research question therefore concerns delineating what this process looks like as couples move towards a more unconventional division of labour:

- **How are (re)negotiations of the sexual division of labour practically accomplished?**

With a clearer conception of negotiation it is possible to examine the ways in which couples practically accomplish moves towards greater egalitarianism: including any particular stages in the negotiation process that appear, across the study, to increase the likelihood of moves towards more egalitarian divisions of labour. For example, which partner initiates the negotiation and how they do this may be significant to the extent and nature of any negotiation that unfolds. The result will be a better understanding of how couples can enact a more egalitarian division of labour in practical terms. Alongside this, the review of existing research in Chapter 3 indicates

that couples will not always (or even often) enact significant change in their divisions of labour – following job loss or otherwise. Therefore, a third sub research question is:

- **How are sexual divisions of labour characterised as low in egalitarianism maintained?**

Recognising that negotiation will vary in terms of the amount engaged in and the nature of any that takes place, it is important to uncover the type(s) of negotiation that are likely to foster a low level of egalitarianism. Furthermore, how low levels of egalitarianism are maintained, as this implies a continued effort to sustain disproportionately weighted shares of (particularly unpaid and overall labour); certainly if there is the desire for a change in the paid and unpaid division of labour by one partner. The form of such negotiations is likely to differ from those inspected when addressing the previous research question, with the potential for greater conflict, and less by way of resolution and strategies for co-operation. This is again important to see *when* and *how* negotiation is likely to result in egalitarianism, and should offer a starting point for theorising more clearly on how traditional divisions are maintained, and paradoxically how they may be changed. The final sub research question reads:

- **What factors determine the likelihood and extent of a negotiation of paid and unpaid labour occurring?**

Of course, the decisions made by individuals or couples are influenced by a range of contextual factors. We need a clearer understanding of the factors that respondents themselves cite as influencing the likelihood and extent of negotiation in their division of paid and unpaid labour, to compliment the findings of existing research where factors such as education attainment, relative earnings and paid employment hours are considered to be a predictor of egalitarianism (e.g. Berghammer, 2014; Lindsay and Maher, 2014; Lyonette and Crompton, 2014). These will likely vary by age, stage in the life course, length of marriage and many other factors that need

accounting for when assessing the likelihood and extent of both (re) negotiation and egalitarianism. Wider societal forces such as the current state of the labour market will undoubtedly play a part too, in terms of the availability of new employment opportunities for those made redundant in particular. Essentially, addressing this sub research question provides the opportunity to assess the range of factors that may stimulate moves towards greater negotiation and egalitarianism, and those that serve to maintain the status quo in circumstances where there are low levels of each.

Key findings

With a more concentrated focus on the process of negotiation, a clearer conception is formulated. When determining divisions of paid and unpaid labour, implicit and non-verbal 'types' of negotiation – hardly recognised by those involved in the process as even constituting negotiation – are as pertinent a feature as explicit dialogue about how shares can be organised and managed. Although there is no fixed format or blueprint for how negotiations unfold, analysis of the data reveals a number of stages in the process that appear conducive to greater levels of egalitarianism. Prior to the practical adjustment of labour shares or dialogue about how these can be renegotiated, is a requirement for recognition that current divisions are unfair, or not viable in light of structural change (notably job loss here). Therefore, at the very initial stages of negotiation a desire for greater egalitarianism seems necessary, or negotiation is much less likely to occur. This is the beginning of a relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism that appears to be mutually reinforcing, as the two concepts simultaneously drive each other on to higher levels. Put simply, the extent of egalitarianism desired stimulated higher levels of negotiation, with the various types of negotiation fuelling a sustained commitment to egalitarianism as part of a continuous, ongoing process.

The second stage of the negotiation process identified concerns the way in which it is instigated by one partner and is interpreted and received by the other. Again, the extent of egalitarianism desired by each partner determines how mutual their objectives are for engaging in greater levels of negotiation. This in turn influences the following stages: the practical engagement of partners (conducting disproportionately lower overall shares of paid and unpaid labour) in tasks not

previously undertaken, with a sense of responsibility and competencies developed for these tasks; to which a moral obligation for the fulfilment of these tasks to other household members emerges. Alongside this are the 'roles' adopted by each partner, with high levels of negotiation and egalitarianism unsurprisingly fostered where couples adopt complementary and mutually supportive roles, with guidance sought and offered where necessary.

A key aspect of the negotiation process in fostering high levels of egalitarianism is the renegotiation of established 'roles' within the family – which incorporates a change in gendered and familial identity. Gendered identity change that encompasses more modern, equitable views relating to parenting, paid employment, and so forth begins as the aforementioned stages of negotiation occur (for example the developing sense of responsibility and moral obligation for new tasks). This completes this 'cycle' of negotiation and egalitarianism as simultaneous, mutually reinforcing concepts as a shift in familial role requires practical change but is also both encouraged by a growing desire for egalitarianism while acting as the catalyst for further sustained change.

A typology is developed characterising couples based along axes of high negotiation and high egalitarianism ('negotiated egalitarianism') through to low negotiation and low egalitarianism ('conventional accordance'); with an in-depth examination of the different aspects of the negotiation process in each using illustrative cases from the research sample. Cases of high negotiation and low egalitarianism ('sustained dissension'), and low negotiation and high egalitarianism ('perfunctory egalitarianism'), indicate that there is more to the relationship than briefly reviewed here. Achieving high levels of egalitarianism does not require extensive levels of dialogue between partners, nor do high levels of negotiation necessarily foster an equitable division of labour. Other factors come into play, separated analytically here into individual, structural and cultural contexts; encompassing the current state of the labour market, childcare availability and affordability, and other influences on the likelihood and nature of negotiations that took place.

Amongst the more substantive findings, men appeared to be more willing than previous research suggests to renegotiate the division of paid and unpaid labour when made redundant, with three out of five cases of male redundancy resulting in

highly egalitarian arrangements by the second interviews. Meanwhile, despite espousing egalitarian attitudes female partners are generally not very assertive in overturning unequal divisions, with only two cases revealing the types of strategy that can be adopted in such scenarios. On the issue of power, men are seemingly effective at 'setting the agenda' via implicit means such as withdrawing from negotiation attempts or acting without consulting their partners. This, as opposed to more overt, explicit forms of power exertion or subordination attempts. Findings also offer support to the prevalence of 'pragmatic egalitarianism' (Gallagher and Smith, 1999), whereby male partners in particular value the greater sharing of earning responsibility and therefore female employment, without wholly relinquishing traditional gender beliefs (most notably in the sharing of unpaid labour). These and other insights into the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism are presented, alongside a critical engagement with existing research.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised in the following way. Chapter 2 offers a review of existing research and current debates on negotiation in the sexual division of labour. This begins with current conceptualisations of negotiation and how it figures in the key theories applied in this context. These include the relative resource bargaining perspective; specialisation theories - focusing particularly on the classic functionalist framework of the family proposed by Parsons and Bales (1956) and 'New Home Economics' (Becker, 1991); patriarchy theory; and the 'doing gender' framework of West and Zimmerman (1987). Through this critical engagement with existing theory and empirical literature, the lack of focus on the negotiation process and its links explicitly to egalitarianism is illustrated.

Chapter 3 extends this review to consider the incidence of egalitarianism in the dual-earner context, drawing upon a vast array of research that explores egalitarianism in purported attitudes, in practical behaviour – with a disjuncture between the two a common finding – and typologies that attempt to characterise couples based on the equity of their employment (and in some cases non-employment) endeavours. Although existing literature studying the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism in sexual divisions of labour is very limited, links between the two

concepts are drawn, in order to set up the argument presented throughout later chapters.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the current context, focusing primarily on recent changes in employment opportunities and social policy. This highlights a number of factors that potentially influence the paid and unpaid working decisions made by couples affected by redundancy. This environment affects not only the likelihood of high or low levels of negotiation taking place, but may determine sexual divisions of labour and how egalitarian an arrangement is in the absence of extended negotiations. This context is timely in the respect that both male and female partners are faced with limited full-time, well-paid employment opportunities, with increasing numbers of each involuntarily taking on part-time and other non-standard forms of employment. Examining cases where both male and female partners have been affected by redundancy, there is the opportunity to compare the responses of each with regards to subsequent employment decisions, any changes in unpaid labour undertakings, and so forth.

Chapter 5 delineates the research methodology utilised in order to generate data meaningful to the purposes of this thesis. This includes the underlying research philosophy and how this informed the more practical stages of data collection. Also presented are the demographic characteristics of the research sample; the analytical techniques used; relevant ethical considerations involved throughout the research process; and limitations of the research outlined. The data generated and analysed from the forty interviews conducted is then presented across Chapters 6 to 9, with each empirical data chapter corresponding to one of the aforementioned research questions.

Chapter 6 formulates a clearer and more comprehensive conceptualisation of 'negotiation' in the context of how partners determine respective labour shares than currently exists in the literature. Also presented here is the typology distinguishing between the different states of affairs couples had enacted by the close of the study, depending upon the level of negotiation and egalitarianism accomplished by each. Chapter 7 focuses on the three cases that had enacted high levels of egalitarianism by the end of the study, to theorise about how (re)negotiations are practically accomplished. Chapter 8 then explores the remaining cases of low egalitarianism,

identifying the array of tactics employed by those looking to initiate negotiation and equally those resisting such attempts. Incidences of high levels of negotiation and low levels of egalitarianism add a new dimension to the relationship between these two concepts, which is considered at this stage. Chapter 9 examines the factors determining the likelihood and extent of negotiation, stressing the importance of the particular interplay across the individual, structural and cultural contexts identified to the specific outcome for individual couples.

Finally, these findings are brought together in Chapter 10 where the conceptual and theoretical contributions to existing research are articulated. This includes consolidating and advancing the conceptualisation of negotiation offered, and fully accounting for how this process relates to egalitarianism. A review of the key empirical findings accompanies this, with a consideration of the implications for future research based on these new insights.

Chapter 2: 'Negotiation' and the Sexual Division of Labour

This chapter begins by exploring the way 'negotiation' is conceptualised in the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to this thesis. The underlying argument here is that its meaning is either assumed or somewhat nebulous, resulting in an ambiguous application of the term across research. This is then illustrated by a consideration of the various 'guises' the negotiation process has appeared in a theoretical capacity, most notably in the form of 'bargaining' and 'specialisation'. Following this is an examination of broader theories of gender relations to assess the extent to which these perspectives engage with negotiation as a mechanism for understanding divisions of paid and unpaid labour, with a focus on 'preference theory' (Hakim, 2000); 'patriarchy' (Walby, 1990); and 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Acknowledging that the primary aim of these perspectives is not to conceptualise negotiation per se, the argument holds that whilst this process underpins labour determinations, the actual interaction between partners regarding how paid and unpaid labour responsibilities are divided up (negotiation) is largely absent from these frameworks. That empirical research utilising and testing these frameworks has largely neglected this issue will also be highlighted throughout, to demonstrate the need for a more explicit focus on this process.

'Negotiation' as an under-developed concept

The aim of this first section is to demonstrate that negotiation, as a primary mechanism through which divisions of labour come into fruition, is often taken-for-granted in much contemporary research. The actual process and nature of negotiations in relation to the sexual division of labour are not explicated as its meaning is typically assumed, resulting in either its omission, or both a nebulous conception and ambiguous use of the term. This provides the rationale for the second research question in this thesis, namely the aim to conceptualise 'negotiation' in this context more clearly. This in turn will form a fundamental base for the over-arching question of whether negotiation is positively correlated to egalitarian divisions of labour.

Taking the first point, 'negotiation' is often treated in an unproblematic fashion by research studying how labour divisions are determined. It is widely acknowledged that couples are required to negotiate the demands of the household and develop a system for negotiating the responsibility of tasks (Bartley et al., 2005), and although some level of negotiation in the shares of paid and unpaid work undertaken is implied by research, this process is assumed and rarely warrants investigation. Subsequently, there is a distinct lack of research examining the actual process of decision-making between partners when it comes to choices around the division of labour (Sullivan, 2004). This issue has been apparent for some time, as Speakman and Marchington (1999: 102) suggest, 'We need to explore the process whereby decisions about the allocation of roles in paid and non-paid work are made, (or not 'made' if there has not been explicit discussion), where ownership lies and the conditions whereby that might change'. Thus far, research has not answered these calls and we do not appear to be any closer to outlining a clear and comprehensive conceptualisation of 'negotiation' in couple decision-making regarding the sexual division of labour.

Where the actual process or nature of negotiation is alluded to more explicitly, its use differs across studies. Couples or individuals are said to 'negotiate' their paid working commitments and unpaid responsibilities when practically organising aspects of each. For example, Shows and Gerstel (2009) find that working-class fathers often 'negotiate' work and childcare arrangements by altering their paid working hours to fulfil unpaid work duties. Alternatively, negotiation can be defined as a purposeful discussion, akin to general definitions of negotiation, whereby the aim is for parties to reach an agreement. This incorporates a specific form of interaction, most notably an explicit dialogue in which partners discuss and agree how these commitments can be managed. One of the fundamental problems here is that because negotiation is not clearly explicated in most research, it is not clear exactly what constitutes a negotiation and what the results are. The extremely limited literature on negotiations in the home (Stuhlmacher and Linnabery, 2013) is a key gap to which this thesis aims to contribute.

We begin by examining the latter conception of negotiation, as a specific dialogue between interacting partners. Firstly, it is possible that 'negotiation' using this definition is rarely examined as people typically fall into habitual routines of daily

life, from relationship or co-habitation inception that become unquestioned, and explicit discussions are not considered necessary for the organisation of everyday life. Exploring this issue, Evertsson and Nyman (2009) found little evidence that negotiation is common amongst couples at various stages in their relationships, with the relatively few examples that did occur associated with 'larger fundamental issues' that question the taken-for-granted character of daily life, rather than the day-to-day management of responsibilities (such as who cooks, cleans or undertakes child-caring activities). This resonates with the contextual rationale for this thesis, whereby redundancy may unsettle household daily routines and potentially force a reorganisation of paid and unpaid work. This situation where negotiation is often assumed rather than explicated is complicated further by the fact that where the negotiation process is considered, there is certainly no blueprint for an effective dialogue as discussions largely appear to be vague and imperfect in their application (Bond and Sales, 2001).

Due to the lack of relevant research, to ascertain how negotiations unravel practically (a central focal point of the third research question, and key to developing a clear sense of how best 'negotiation' in this context can be conceptualised), we need to examine research on the role of men and women in negotiations more broadly (not specific to the division of labour). There is a body of literature exploring issues such as who is most likely to initiate negotiations between men and women, who will lead discussions, right through to the work of conversational analysts examining patterns of interruption and so forth. Whilst there has been a move away from seeing gender as encompassing a fixed set of attributes to its emergence through the actual interaction, the characteristics of a 'competent' negotiator are still laden with stereotypically masculine traits (Kolb, 2009; Tinsley et al., 2009). These include assertiveness and a high regard for one's own interests, whilst a 'complementary' role depicts characteristics associated with femininity like good listening and being verbally expressive – suggesting that men have the advantage in negotiations (Stuhlmacher and Linnabery, 2013). These findings hold weight in organisational studies where men are consistently found to be more likely to initiate negotiations for better pay, promotions, and so forth (Crompton and Lyonette, 2011). Perhaps interestingly in the context of this thesis, men in organisational studies perceive

greater barriers to, and are much less likely to initiate, negotiations regarding flexible working arrangements than women (Smithson et al., 2004).

Extending these assertions to the household, if women are less likely to broach discussions regarding unequal divisions of (particularly) unpaid labour then this may explain, to a certain extent, the lack of explicit dialogue found to occur over issues such as cooking and cleaning. This situation is compounded by the fact that where changes in unpaid divisions of labour are not necessarily in the interest of many men they will look to avoid such discussions. In the closest alignment to the research aims of this thesis, Mannino and Deutsch (2007) found that where wives were more assertive, a change in domestic divisions of labour were more likely. However, attempts at change by no means necessarily evoked the desired outcomes. The issue of power here is an interesting one; it is possible that women feel a sense of power in that they are left to run the home on a daily basis, with control over how responsibilities are managed. Yet this often translates as having to simply perform the tasks that men would rather not, who ultimately retain the power over the 'bigger' issues (Oakley, 1974). Without a clearer conception of 'negotiation' and a closer inspection of this process it is difficult to determine the nature of this power dynamic between heterosexual couples. For example, it is not easy to distinguish whether something is negotiation, or the equally power-infused tools of persuasion, manipulation, coercion and such – which themselves may form part of negotiations (Strauss, 1978).

This matter is further complicated by the fact that negotiations could refer to situations where partners plan, organise, discuss and talk about their everyday lives, or alternatively where there is no open, active discussion (Evertsson and Nyman, 2009). These latter, more implicit negotiations may be very brief, and made without any verbal exchange or obvious gestural manifestations. Nevertheless, parties may be perfectly aware of 'what they are doing' and behave as if there is some kind of 'worked out' agreement (Strauss, 1978). Strauss uses the term 'silent bargains' to refer to negotiations that may be so implicit that the respective parties may not even be thoroughly aware that they have engaged in any type of negotiation. These types are most common with regards to daily routine behaviours as negotiations are seldom explicit 'round-the-table' discussions (Finch and Mason, 2003). It appears logical that in order to gain a clearer understanding of such 'negotiations', including

how they have become established in routine behaviour without any requirement for explicit discussion, a focus on the process – absent in current literature – will be insightful.

In the literature 'negotiation' does, however, surface under a number of guises with regards to division of labour allocations, and in order to develop a comprehensive conception of negotiations, and all that they may incorporate, these will be explored now.

Negotiation as bargaining

One of the most influential mechanisms through which the literature posits that sexual divisions of labour are determined is bargaining, a type of negotiation initially applied to issues concerning work and the family by economists. Bargaining has been defined as 'the process whereby two or more parties attempt to settle what they shall give and take, or perform and receive, in a transaction between them' (Rubin and Brown, 1975: 2). Bargaining has been considered a 'direct' influence strategy, typically used by a more resource-powerful partner (Zvonkovic et al., 1994), where relative power is typically measured in terms of earnings (both actual and prospective), hours of paid employment, or education (Crompton, 2006). It is argued that because men have historically worked longer hours and received higher levels of income than their partners, this has enabled them to 'bargain' low shares of domestic work. In the context of this thesis, individuals with the highest relative earnings are able to resist any overtures made by their partners for more equitable divisions of (particularly unpaid) labour, however some authors have also suggested that those with lower resources may be reluctant to ask their partners to increase their participation in housework because they believe in the legitimacy of the existing division based on resources, and/or fear jeopardising their access to valued resources that these partners provide (Dempsey, 2000).

In line with the previous discussion on conceptions of 'negotiation', intra-couple bargaining has been highlighted by researchers as an issue of importance for decades. However, there have rarely been attempts to analyse this process conceptually (Livingston, 2014). In the main, bargaining is almost exclusively

assumed rather than observed, with researchers theorising simply that partners had reached agreement via bargaining. We are presented with a large body of quantitative research contrasting unpaid hours and the likelihood of egalitarian attitudes being held with the aforementioned resources (relative earnings, educational level, etc.). Yet there is little, if any, concern regarding whether partners strike explicit verbal agreements or how such bargains practically unfold. As Thébaud (2010: 332) states, 'Bargaining perspectives do not say anything about a verbal social interaction in which the bargain takes place, but take income as a proxy for the best deal one can get'. For example, Bittman et al. (2003) explicitly propose that bargaining occurred between partners in their study, but there is no assessment of how bargaining unfolded, with the assumption purely that relative resources were used to justify respective shares of household labour. Livingston (2014) supports this assertion, suggesting that whilst bargaining in the division of labour is not an unreasonable explanation, we are told nothing about the process of negotiation or the strategies that partners adopt to make career and household decisions.

That bargaining occurs is not improbable, and the basic premise of these approaches resonates with common sense explanations for paid and unpaid work engagement to an extent. Clearly where an individual undertakes long hours of paid employment they will have less time available to conduct unpaid labour, and thus their overall division of labour is likely to be skewed towards paid work. Similarly, one may predict that where paid earnings are high then paid employment hours are likely to be relatively long (for example management and senior positions). Although the primary aim here is not to 'test' the bargaining perspective, by a closer exploration of the practical accomplishment of negotiations (research question three), it will be possible to ascertain the presence of any bargaining that partly or wholly informs decisions surrounding labour – whether verbalised or taken as proxy when shares are determined.

This reflects a wider need, implicit in the above calls for an in-depth examination of the negotiation ('bargaining') process, for qualitative research on this issue. This lack of focus is partly explained by the methodology adopted by the majority of research, which typically compares paid working hours and/or earnings to time and task shares of unpaid labour, often via self-reported surveys or time-use diaries (Radcliffe, 2013). There is the suggestion that bargaining is mediated by other

important factors; rather than simply relative resources, individuals consider the 'net gain' of extra paid hours of work against potential costs such as the deterioration of housework, levels of affection and so forth on family members (Parkman, 2004). Parkman also considers that perceptions of the durability of any marriage will figure heavily in any bargaining decisions. For example, if individuals believe that marriage will last their joint lives, they may be less concerned about the 'costs' of decisions (such as loss of income and reduced career investment when providing childcare) if the benefits to *all* family members outweighs these costs.

Empirical support for the bargaining of time available (to engage in paid and unpaid work) and relative resources exists but is weak. As both Ferree (1991) and Thompson and Walker (1989) conclude, contributions to unpaid labour cannot be transcribed into a simple trade-off of wage or free time and family work hours. Were this to be the case, one would expect a greater congruence between the increases in the paid working hours of cohabiting women and men, and their unpaid work contributions. The bargaining perspective gives the appearance of gender neutrality, suggesting that anyone with sufficient resources, regardless of gender, can opt out of domestic labour – a highly contested assertion. Contradictory evidence can be found in studies such as Stephens (2002), whereby there was a sharp increase in the paid labour engagement of wives following the job losses of their husbands.

Research tends to demonstrate a positive correlation between housework and paid employment for women, i.e. the greater their paid working hours the more likely women are to reduce time spent on unpaid labour (potentially utilising alternative means such as childcare facilities, cleaners, etc.); typically this does not extend to that of men (e.g. Gough and Killewald, 2011; Mannino and Deutsch, 2007). In terms of earnings, research also indicates that in families where women earn more money than their male partners they still undertake more housework (e.g. Brines, 1994; Greenstein, 2000). Such an exchange paradigm fails to recognise that a congruence in hours of paid employment would not necessarily result in equal earnings for both partners, and that gender disadvantage in wider society (for example through the gender pay gap) would leave many women with less bargaining power in the relationship (Blumberg and Coleman, 1989). When considering future earnings potential, couples may also predict – particularly where children are desired – that

male partners have the greater propensity for a sustained, higher level of potential income over the working life course.

Therefore, empirical findings suggest that whilst couples negotiate the sexual division of labour through bargaining to some extent, this does not fully account for labour determinations. Certainly, wives' earnings and paid working hours are a superior predictor of housework, irrespective of their husband's earnings (Gupta, 2006; 2007), with female educational attainment also associated with a lower gender gap in unpaid divisions (Bianchi et al., 2000). However, based on this critique, bargaining alone does not appear to constitute a comprehensive alternative to 'negotiation', and we are required to consider other concepts through which sexual divisions of labour have been determined.

Negotiation as 'specialisation'

Another economically-informed perspective on how decision-making concerning labour endeavours unfolds incorporates a number of approaches that can be loosely grouped into so-called 'specialisation' theories. Specialisation theories provide an alternative 'collective' approach to analysing household behaviour, depicting the family as a decision-making unit composed of rational actors making conscious choices in order to maximise the 'returns' on their efforts to the household. Rational choice and consensus regarding familial roles as complementary is the propagated 'mode' of negotiation. Emphasis is placed on the greater suitability of one partner, typically men (as partners and fathers) to paid work and providing financially for their families, and the greater suitability of the other partner (typically women as partners and mothers) to a more caring role within the home. Two clear illustrations of specialisation theories are the classic functionalist framework of the family proposed by Parsons and Bales (1956) and 'New Home Economics' (Becker, 1991). As with the bargaining perspectives discussed previously, negotiation here is largely an assumed rather than explicitly outlined or examined process underpinning decisions.

Taking the latter example, Becker's theory postulates that people marry when the utility expected from marriage is greater than if they remain single, and the household is treated as a unit where individuals allocate goods and time efficiently, with all household members voluntarily opting to maximise family income. This involves members specialising in the functions in which they can optimise their human capital (Becker, 1962) – skills, education, training, and so forth - notably women in unpaid labour and men in paid employment. The greater responsibility of women for childcare and housework is considered tiring and limits access to jobs that require travel, long or odd hours; 'Increasing returns from investments in specific human capital *encourage a division of labour that reinforces differences in market and household productivity of men and women* due to other forces, including any discrimination against women' (Becker, 1985: 35-36, emphasis added). Essentially, as Folbre (1994) states in a critical engagement with Becker's work, the sexual division of labour is seen as a simple outcome of rational choice and economic efficiency.

This implies that decision-making is relatively straight-forward and long, drawn-out discussions are not required. Rather than resource-powerful partners bargaining their way out of domestic responsibilities, household members are in agreement about optimal shares of paid and unpaid labour as they hold the same shared interest – to maximise their return on 'household investment'. The suggestion here is that conflict about shares will only arise if there are changes in the prospective returns of any one partner's productivity in the labour market or household, whereby rational choice dictates an appropriate shift. Linking this back to bargaining, Gough and Killewald (2011) consider that job loss may radically alter each partner's relative resources and available time, subsequently altering specialisation decisions within the household, which creates a situation whereby a renegotiation is required. Notions of specialisation, as well as the bargaining of resources, may therefore emerge in respondent accounts (being post-redundancy) in this thesis.

Similarly, Parsons and Bales (1956) theorising on the family is underpinned by the same assumption and implied lack of negotiation. Taken as a subsystem of society, the family is described as having two functions: 'first, the primary socialisation of children so that they can truly become members of the society…second, the stabilization of the adult personalities of the population' (Parsons and Bales, 1956:

16-17). These functions are achieved by the structuring of the family along axes of hierarchy or power, and that of instrumental versus expressive function. Men are conceptualised as having high power and performing an 'instrumental' role – orientating to the external world. Women meanwhile are high on power and high on expressiveness, performing an 'expressive' role - that is, looking after the internal needs of the family.

It is argued 'that probably the importance of the family and its functions for society constitutes the primary set of reasons why there is a *social as distinguished from purely reproductive*, differentiation of sex roles' (Parsons and Bales, 1956: 22, emphasis added). This theory predicts a clear sexual division of labour between men who engage in more paid work, and women who undertake a greater share of domestic responsibilities. Roles within the family are therefore 'complementary', and a clear suitability of each partner to orientate towards paid or unpaid labour suggests that households are best served by the corresponding sexual division of labour. The conception is one of the genders being different but equal, with decisions taken in an egalitarian way – in the interests of all household members (Walby, 1990). This does not sit comfortably with wider notions of egalitarianism, and empirical literature suggests that women often forgo their own interests for those of the household in ways that are not reciprocated. The indication again is that a distinct lack of negotiation occurs at the inception of such arrangements or is indeed required throughout, to continue with the fundamental, underlying issue that any process of determining these responsibilities were either simply assumed or pre-determined on the basis of perceived sexual differences or in terms of gender 'traits'.

Another major issue of these specialisation theories, stemming from the initial problem that negotiation is largely absent from any theorising, is that changes such as the rapid increase in female labour market participation has led to male and female roles in the family becoming 'decomplementary' as opposed to unitarily beneficial (Burns and Scott, 1994). As empirical research contradicts tenets of bargaining, so too the continued over-burden on women engaging in disproportionately high levels of both paid and unpaid work contradicts a notion of role complementarity. Breen and Cooke (2005) question how gender specialisation constitutes an optimal family strategy in an era of flexible labour markets, the attractiveness or indeed necessity of greater disposable income, and so forth.

This links to the problematic emphasis on rational choice in decisions regarding the division of labour, particularly the exclusion of selfishness and altruism, the role of emotion, and interpersonal preferences (Chafetz, 1997). The sustained unequal division of unpaid labour in households where women now out-earn their male partners may indicate that many men are pursuing their own interests as opposed to a rational choice benefitting the household. Amongst the reasons posited for why some think this may be the case is the continued influence of traditional ideologies about gender-appropriate roles, with the prevalence of cultural norms neglected by Becker's theory (DeVault, 1990; Ferree, 1991). By the same token, 'new home economics' ignores the power relations between women and men (Walby, 1990), which is key to determining how much paid and unpaid work each partner engages in.

This is one difference between specialisation theories and the bargaining perspective, as it is implied that individuals will forgo their own economic interests for those of the household and its other members. Bargaining theories position negotiation as a process akin to identifying and following the 'best' decisions to maximise one's own interests, not always those of the household. Extending this point, sociologists in particular have stressed the importance of romantic feelings, which are largely absent from the economic perspectives, whereby individual partners or couples will prioritise relationship-orientated interests over concerns for the self. Gelfand et al. (2006) argue that prior theories of negotiation neglect this 'relational' view of negotiations, where some individuals will view negotiation as the opportunity to enhance and strengthen relationships, for example parent-child relations, particularly in the long-term. They suggest that the desire to increase and maintain 'relational capital' (such as trust, mutual liking) may be greater than that to pursue optimal economic outcomes, and is more salient for women than for men.

Again, although some kind of negotiation is implied from this perspective, there is very little focus on its practical accomplishment. A recurring issue seen also with the bargaining perspective is the lack of focus on the gender-specific nature of the power dynamic underlying any such 'exchange' – surely a crucial component of any exchange between partners when managing paid and unpaid labour responsibilities. It is widely acknowledged in the literature that specialisation theories offer only a limited view of household working behaviour, and I would certainly extend this to

household work decision-making too (as a process). Linked to this, these conceptualisations are only fitting of nuclear breadwinning families and thus exclude the increasingly disproportionate number of 'non-standard' familial arrangements such as single-parent households (Williams, 2004). That this thesis is focusing on previously *full-time* dual-earning couples may not sit perfectly in line with notions of role specialisation. Although these perspectives have been central to academic thought on men and women adopting primary roles within and outside the family since their conception (Connell, 1987), Blackburn et al. (2002) indicate – specifically regarding Becker's formulation – that there has been a significant decline in enthusiasm for human capital theory-based approaches amongst sociologists based on many of the criticisms outlined here; although there has yet to be a satisfactory replacement offered.

Undoubtedly there is a requirement for partners to organise their working arrangements in tandem, particularly where dependent children are present (Kanji, 2013), but researchers have questioned the concept of strategy when examining household behaviour – particularly that households operate as a decision-making unit in the way implied by specialisation theories (Wallace, 2002).

Household strategy versus individualisation

In contrast to perspectives that view the household as a monolithic decision-making unit are theories of 'individualisation', a concept that endeavours to locate and emphasise the significance of personal choices made by individuals in matters such as the division of labour. There is often greater emphasis placed on romantic feelings and the search for personal growth and development that are absent from the individual rational choice perspectives of the economic theories outlined above (Lewis, 2001). These reflect changes in society, not least increases in women's wages relative to those of men, which diminish the gains of a domestic division of labour for women and the opportunity costs of marriages and childbearing rise. The (rational, economic) logic underpinning theories such as 'new home economics' dissipates as individuals see the potential gains of pursuing more individualistic goals (Irwin, 1999).

One popular theory of individualisation has been proposed by Anthony Giddens (1992) in the form of the 'pure relationship'. Here Giddens theorises that individuals are no longer constrained by familial or gender norms and conventions, and are free to shape their own biographies and identities. Any notion that men and women differ in terms of their expressiveness or instrumentality, or that society requires the successful functioning of men and women into complementary roles do not apply. Similarly, Beck (1992) refers to the 'post-familial family' to illustrate that the spread of new lifestyles and different kinds of ties (cohabitation without family, without children, single parents, and so forth) demonstrates the increasing significance of individual choice in familial life. He suggests that such moves are more suited to men whose traditional roles as centring around paid employment and less on familial ties fits well with individualisation.

Negotiations regarding the sexual division of labour will therefore be less informed by a collective strategy where the needs of the household determine labour market and domestic behaviours, and more so individual motivations and aspirations. Changes in society have created greater uncertainty about role expectations during marriage, as the gendered division of labour is certainly less rigid than before. The consensual understandings of household partners of roles and duties in the home would potentially promote efficient, relatively neutral interactions between them as suggested with the specialisation perspective. The individual choices and motivations of partners, or the inability to agree upon and enact a clear division of labour may therefore potentially result in the continual re-negotiation of duties and responsibilities, which in turn one would expect to engender frequent disputes and feelings of frustration. Alternatively, the ability to realise preferences – free from family or household based responsibilities – implies that there will be very little negotiation at all.

These perspectives resonate with the idea of a 'new scenario' theorised in the widely critiqued formulation of Catherine Hakim's (2000) 'preference theory'. For Hakim, five separate changes in society and the labour market that began in the late twentieth century have contributed to a 'new scenario' whereby 'there are no longer constraints limiting choice or forcing choice in particular directions' (2000: 18). These changes have, and are, occurring at different rates across societies, with Britain an example of one such society where the new scenario is present. The

changes that have enabled women to fully realise their preferences (resulting in this new scenario) are the greater control women have over fertility; the growth of equal opportunities legislation; the expansion of white-collar occupations and flexible working arrangements; and the increasing importance of attitudes and preferences in lifestyle choices.

The premise therefore is that if women work fewer hours in paid employment and spend more time undertaking domestic duties then this purely reflects their preference to do so. The implication here is that the need for a negotiation of the sexual division of labour may be pre-empted by selecting partners to whom preferences are complementary – i.e. a woman who wishes to spend time at home ('home centred' preference) may be more inclined to begin a romantic relationship with an individual who is more traditional, orientated to a career or financial provision ('work centred' preference). The requirement for explicit or extensive negotiation may be most likely for the third preference group identified by Hakim, 'adaptives', who are committed to a work career, but typically work as and when they need to. These individuals might, for example, be more focused on employment upon leaving education, before orientating to the family sometime after marriage and raising children. Later they may again demonstrate a preference for paid work once their children are no longer of a dependent age. The issue here, however, is that we are given little information regarding *how* these changes in orientation are managed or conflicts in preference experienced, as any process of negotiation is largely neglected in this framework. The assertion that preferences remain stable throughout the life course is contentious, and without negotiation being a central concern of this theory we are left with no insight into how changes in preferences – or changes in the wider context that constrain or enable choices – are played out in people's lives.

Undoubtedly there have been changes in society, which support the contextual points raised by individualisation theories and Hakim's conception of the 'new scenario'. Normative conceptions, legislative measures and the changing nature of education and employment mean that particularly younger women from more affluent backgrounds have considerable choice in their paid and unpaid labour endeavours (Williams, 2004). Individualisation theories also place emphasis on individual agency which is downplayed in certain feminist analyses on women's work decision-making (for example theories of patriarchy), where women are often positioned as

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relatively passive in subordination, rather than competent actors capable of shaping their arrangements within the family and paid work (Crompton, 1999). There is also support for the notion that individual preferences do feature in labour determinations; for example, evidence does exist to suggest that a considerable proportion of women would like to stay at home with children if it was a financially viable option (Dex, 2003). In particular, acknowledging that some women *do* wish to put care work first is relatively novel in much feminist theorising; despite the fact that even if affordable childcare 'were to be provided overnight, it is not clear that all women would want to work full-time' (Lewis, 2001: 158).

A broad critique of individualisation theories is that there is little evidence to suggest that households are made up of actively autonomous individuals. A lack of explicit, concerted negotiation between partners does not necessarily equate with autonomy, and that partners behave as if a negotiation has taken place can often underlie daily routine has already been mentioned. In a recent study exploring decision-making in the context of work-life conflict (Radcliffe and Cassell, 2014) any prospective decisions taken were found to be 'enabled' or 'constrained' by a number of factors, not least a partner's working arrangement. This affected their ability to meet childcare demands and significantly influenced their financial resources – which were typically pooled and jointly accessed to meet expenditures such as childcare – highlighting the importance of other household members working arrangements on decisions taken. Lewis (2001: 60) asserts that, 'The male breadwinner model has eroded but the social reality is still far from a family comprised of self-sufficient, autonomous individuals'. To say that people are completely freed of the responsibilities inherent with family ties, and normative conceptions of gender and familial roles is construed by many researchers as unrealistic (e.g. Glover, 2002).

This is illustrated particularly in the large body of literature that critically engages with 'preference theory', where the constraints on (particularly women's) choices differentially affect their desired and actual engagement in paid work (e.g. Crompton and Harris, 1998; Evetts, 2000; Tomlinson, 2006). For example, it is probable that women in professional occupations are more able to deal with structural constraints than those in low-skilled and low-paying occupations, such as receiving generous maternity packages and having partners with high incomes to better afford childcare (Walters, 2005). Women in the former position would be in a better bargaining

position should their preferences conflict with those of their partners. Fewer constraints on their choices would potentially alleviate the necessity for negotiation too if they are better able to afford childcare and such, allowing both partners to realise their desired divisions of labour.

It seems highly unlikely that higher unpaid (and in some dual-earning cases overall) labour shares are the preference of women, and findings show that women are more likely to be discontent when engaging in unequal divisions (Frisco and Williams, 2003). The feminist philosopher Nussbaum (2000: 114) calls for an examination of the term 'preference' to reveal the 'many ways in which habit, fear, low expectations and unjust background conditions deform people's choices and even their wishes for their own lives'. The reason why women may be 'accepting' of disproportionate shares is addressed in Chapter 3, but it seems likely that some level of negotiation, whether explicit or implicit, is required. 'Preferences' are therefore more likely to be compromises between what is desirable and what is feasible, which will change both over the life course and in response to unanticipated events (such as redundancy, which may force a re-evaluation of the choices people desire, or are able to make).

These points are summarised by Williams (2004: 61) who suggests, 'One should not underestimate the greater freedom that women now have, especially mothers, and especially mothers with qualifications, to take paid work without rebuke…(but) the choices they make are not simply a free 'preference' but are embedded in moral considerations and normative ideas about what is right for their children'. That decisions have to be taken which reflect both individual preference and the household's needs is central to Duncan et al.'s (2003) critique of Hakim's (2000) work and conception of 'moral rationalities'. Rather than talking in terms of preferences, this refers to the choices mothers (have to) make based on their desires *and* moral obligations, particularly concerning the family. They offer a continuum for mothers ranging from being primarily a mother; a mother/worker integrant; and primarily a worker, rather than sharply defined 'preferences'.

While we cannot dismiss the greater choice individuals have in shaping their biographies, and the greater propensity for negotiation that this implies, we are no closer to a clear conception of this process and the critique here illustrates the limitations of individualisation theories attempting to account for how sexual

divisions of labour are determined. In stark contrast to these theories are conceptions of patriarchy, which place much greater emphasis on the constraints facing women in negotiating more equitable divisions of labour.

Negotiation in conceptions of patriarchy

Conceptions of patriarchy attempt to account for unequal divisions of labour by emphasising the various ways in which men subordinate women in society more broadly. Sylvia Walby's (1990, 1997) theorisation of patriarchy in particular builds on previous conceptions to offer one of the most comprehensive accounts of the far-reaching productive and exploitative dimensions of patriarchy (Williams, 2002). Earlier formulations often sought to explain gender inequality through a single base, for example Brownmiller (1976) believed sexual violence to be the main practice through which men subordinate women; Delphy (1984) posited the domestic mode of production; while for Firestone (1974) it was sexual reproduction. This practice of theorising from one base has tended to produce a reductionist and universalistic theory of patriarchy, unable to account for cultural variations and historical change (e.g. Segal, 1987; Spelman, 1988).

Walby posits that gender is best conceptualised as a set of inter-related social relations and (gendered) institutions that constitute a system, to which there are four levels of abstraction. The most abstract of levels is the system in its totality, referred to as a 'system of patriarchy' or 'gender regime'. Walby theorises that this system of gender relations interacts with but is analytically separate from other regimes of inequality, notably class (or capitalism) and racism. The second level of abstraction is the form of gender regime, which is distributed along a continuum between a public form and a private form. She argues that in Britain there has been a general shift from a private gender regime (or 'private patriarchy') whereby the household is the main site of women's oppression to a public gender regime ('public patriarchy') in which subordination is based principally in sites such as paid employment and the state. The household does not cease to be a patriarchal structure in the public form but it is no longer the chief site. Such a change requires a change at the third level of abstraction whereby Walby contends six social structures constitute the gender regime, namely patriarchal relations in paid work; in housework; culture; sexuality;

male violence; and the state. Changes from one form of gender regime to another are brought about by changes in the gender relations both within structures and between them. The six structures have causal effects on each other but are relatively autonomous, and it is the fact that both the practices that constitute these structures and the relationship between them are dynamic that allows for different gender regimes to exist and also for regimes to change over time.

Patriarchal relations in terms of housework result in women shouldering a greater share of the domestic burden than men. This has consequences for how much time and commitment women can make to paid employment, particularly when considering childcare as part of the domestic burden. This burden, alongside patriarchal relations in paid work, further subordinates women as they take up a disproportionately high share of part-time and low-skilled, low-paid work. All of this ensures that many women remain financially dependent upon their partners who maintain a powerful position in the relationship and wider society. Central to this approach therefore is a gendered power dynamic, whereby women are typically, but not always, in a relatively weaker position than men to negotiate more equitable sexual divisions of labour, particularly regarding unpaid work. Men are able to utilise their position of power in employment, regarding housework and so forth to avoid the mundane, time-consuming endeavours of unpaid labour and concentrate on paid employment, pursuing wealth and prestige. Key here is the inter-relatedness of structures that combine to subordinate women (patriarchal relations in paid work has just been mentioned), and another example is patriarchal relations in culture (i.e. cultural representations of men and women, including perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour). These normative conceptions reinforce notions that different labour endeavours constitute 'women's work' or 'men's work', further reducing the propensity for renegotiations.

In contrast to individualisation theories, Walby's framework has been critiqued as underplaying agency. In particular, the focus on macro levels of abstraction – notably the 'gender regime' and its encompassing social structures – means that the way people maintain or resist the patriarchal relations that oppress women in everyday life is under-theorised (Pollert, 1996). This thesis contends that Walby's purported switch from private to public patriarchy is inaccurate, an argument levelled elsewhere (Bradley, 2013). Bradley suggests that gender relations in the

family continue above all to generate wider gender inequalities, and the view taken here is that until parity is gained in the home (equitable divisions of unpaid labour) then equality in the workplace is highly unlikely. Despite acknowledgement that changes in the household have provided women with more freedom than in previous eras, Walby (1990: 89) points to wider patriarchal forces (other structures) to highlight that 'liberation' from marriage and its encompassing subordination, 'is then usually a movement into poverty'. It is difficult therefore to see how women can successfully (re)negotiate equitable divisions of labour, not least because alternatives to marriage are unappealing. Women are positioned both as lacking the ability to negotiate egalitarian arrangements, and unlikely to, given that conflict may lead to marriage dissolution and potentially poverty.

Another related, important implication for the questions posed in this thesis is that the concept of negotiation is lost, particularly in the bracket of 'patriarchal relations in housework', where a relatively descriptive account of women's subordination in household production ensues. This resonates with one of the key criticisms levelled at theories of patriarchy, that the term offers use as a *description* for male dominance. However, its attempted use as an *explanation* for female subordination is fundamentally flawed (e.g. Gottfried, 1998). The attempt to theorise patriarchy as a system with an explanatory capacity slips into 'tautology' and 'a description of what is already known' – that men may gain various advantages from their relationship with women (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990; Pollert, 1996). Commenting on Walby's (1990) treatment of structures, New (1994) contends that the description of structures as 'emergent properties of social practice' and 'not necessarily visible or immediately knowable' (Walby, 1990: 19) does not add to the descriptions of practices maintaining each structure or provide evidence for their existence. New (1994: 192) indicates 'such an ontologically 'flat' usage seems to demystify structures, but actually robs them of explanatory power'. New illustrates this point with the treatment of male violence as a structure, seemingly elevating it from something that requires explanation, to a phenomenon which possesses explanatory power – 'we are now required to explain any lack of male violence' (1994: 192).

Therefore, the lack of focus on the micro context in which partners interact and manage paid and unpaid responsibilities on a daily basis does not appease the situation whereby we offered a relatively descriptive account of women's

subordination, and little on how partners can interact particularly in a way that potentially might change divisions.

'Doing gender'?

A theoretical approach that does examine the micro context, most extensively the interactional level of couple behaviour, is the 'doing gender' approach offered by West and Zimmerman (1987). 'Doing gender' sits well with the notion that explicit negotiations rarely occur, as it has been configured from an ethnomethodological perspective focusing on the mundane, routine ways in which people undertake, and make sense of, everyday life. Therefore, people 'accomplish' gender in ways often taken-for-granted in their daily interactions. Significantly for this thesis, unequal divisions of labour would potentially go unquestioned, as they become part of the fabric and character of everyday routine, particularly as shares may reflect what have traditionally been seen to embody 'men's' or 'women's' work – differences that are commonly perceived as 'natural'. Essentially, West and Zimmerman suggest that individuals are accountable to others who evaluate their behaviour in line with cultural conceptions about gender-appropriate behaviour, and because the gender dichotomy is so embedded in society, people are continuously accomplishing their role as a competent male or female in ways that are largely subconscious.

Gender is accomplished at three levels: at that of the individual, who is 'doing' the behaving. At the interactional level, where the individual is accountable to those co-present, and the institutional level, which dictates whether this gendered behaviour is in line with normative conceptions of what is socially acceptable behaviour. West and Zimmerman's (1987) framework is heavily influenced by the work of Erving Goffman (1977: 303) who stated that gender ideals represent the primary source for maintaining gender differences as they, 'provide…a source of accounts that can be drawn on in a million ways to excuse, justify, explain, or disapprove the behaviour of an individual or the arrangement under which he [sic] lives'.

The starting point for the analysis in this thesis is that couples do not always act as rationally as the economic perspectives (particularly of bargaining) would suggest, and many internalise gendered norms and recreate their family dynamics to meet

these normative expectations (Brines, 1994). Immediately we are offered a potential explanation for why in many cases women continue to undertake a disproportionately large share of unpaid labour even where their paid working hours are equal or even surpass their male partners' – a charge levelled at bargaining theories that largely ignore the gendered dynamic shaping such decisions. Empirical research adopting the 'doing gender' framework indicates that equal-earning and female-breadwinning households represent gender-atypical partnerships that represent a deviation from the norm, risking the social accountability of a couple (e.g. Brines, 1994; Greenstein, 2000). In the case of unemployed, previously breadwinning husbands, Legerski and Cornwall (2010) found a continued subscription to gender ideals regarding unpaid work contributions despite the fact that female partners were engaging in paid employment.

In the specific context of this research, where the adequacies of established, institutionalised and naturalised gender ideologies and behaviour may be 'unsettled', the well-worn strategies that reinforce said behaviour may become more visible and identifiable, and even become inadequate or no longer available (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010). Alternatively, efforts to maintain gendered identities may serve as a coping mechanism for some when dealing with substantial economic and familial change. The empirical literature testing the West and Zimmerman (1987) framework offers considerable support to this idea. In virtually every case, changes in the sexual division of labour and of attitudes held are explored in cases of male unemployment, typically long-term and of formerly breadwinning men. That these men are slow to adopt changes in ideology, and rarely engage in a higher or even equal share of domestic labour than their (often employed) wives is documented in Chapter 3 with some moves towards egalitarianism reported in studies with mixed findings (e.g. Chesley, 2011; Zuo, 1997).

There is a notion here that because gender is so pervasive in everyday subconscious, any attempt to change paid or unpaid working endeavours also invites a negotiation of 'roles' (Livingston, 2014). Role negotiation is 'when two consciously interact with the express purpose of altering the other's expectations about how a role should be enacted and evaluated' (Miller et al., 1996). A negotiation here therefore involves more than simply negotiating allocations of duties – but normative conceptions of

gender-appropriate behaviour. Gender is actively constructed, and therefore renegotiated, in partner interactions.

Following from this, a major limitation of this empirical research adopting the 'doing gender' framework is that despite its focus on the interactional level, and the propensity researchers can therefore gain by focusing on how partners interact to determine their division of labour, any process of negotiation is again largely absent from studies. What we find instead is that research simply takes any continued disproportionality in unpaid labour shares following changes in familial circumstance, such as male redundancy, to be evidence of couples 'doing gender'. Alternatively, any indication that couples change their division of labour is taken as evidence for 'undoing' (or more recently 're-doing') gender. It is not clear, however. that distinguishing behaviours as 'doing' or 'undoing' gender adds much value to analyses, beyond a descriptive categorising of behaviours as traditional or more unconventional. Furthermore, articles that 'test' the framework in this way are demonstrating a misuse of its application theoretically. West and Zimmerman (1987, 2009) claim that because gender is so pervasive in our society it permeates all social interactions, such that individuals are *always* accountable to those co-present for their (gendered) behaviour, and thus it is impossible to 'undo' gender. Despite this, the framework continues to be practically utilised and tested in much the same way.

This may reflect an issue with the theory itself whereby despite the focus on the interactional level allowing significant scope for agency, West and Zimmerman's theorisation has been criticised as placing emphasis on social reproduction, obscuring the potential for resistance and change. In a critique of the 'doing gender' approach, Thorne (1995) indicates that there is a seemingly 'functionalist tilt', whereby emphasis is placed on the maintenance and reproduction of normative conceptions whilst negating the disruptive oppositional character of difference; with the agency that 'does' difference conceived of as limited and collusive in its own subordination. Evidence that this is the case may be found in West and Zimmerman's (1987: 146) assertion that, 'If we fail to do gender appropriately, we as individuals – not the institutional arrangements – may be called to account (for our character, motives, and predispositions)'. This has potentially led to the above criticism of researchers affirming gender being done or looking for inclinations that it is being redone – detracting from the interactional process itself.

There are other issues with this approach that limit its ability to fully account for labour determinations. The focus on routine interactions is culpable of neglecting the wider context within which these interactions take place (Weber, 1995). For example, we learn very little about potential changes to gender norms at the societal level, nor other potentially important factors such as the state of the labour market, which could affect the employment status of partners and therefore time availability, potential earnings, and so forth that may have a bearing on interactions. This reflects a broad difficulty many social scientists have found when attempting to extend the insights of Goffman (as West and Zimmerman have) beyond the local situations to which their insights are confined (Stinchcombe, 1990). As with ethnomethodology more generally, the focus on everyday activities tends towards descriptiveness and hostility towards general theorising and structural analysis. Blaikie (2007) argues that the role of meaning is restricted to the location of activities in concrete situations.

Despite the presence of critiques – notably a symposium on West and Zimmerman's theorisation (Jurik and Siemsen, 2009) – that highlights criticisms such as the neglect of the macro-level context, literature propagating this framework rarely engages with such issues. For example, reference has been made to Legerski and Cornwall's (2010: 10) study which shares the same rationale regarding context as is adopted in this thesis: namely that 'during "unsettled times" such as unemployment during recessions, the established and often institutionalised and naturalised gender ideologies and behaviours may no longer be available'. The introduction to Legerski and Cornwall's article begins by talking about the recession, then proceeds to 'test' the doing gender framework without any further reference to the wider context (labour market opportunities and so forth). The structural context of recession is taken as a catalyst for change at the interactional level and then neglected in the subsequent analysis.

The neglect of the wider context beyond the interactional level, and failure to adequately demonstrate the transformative (as opposed to reproductive) potential of this approach, including the absence of explicit negotiation itself, limits its capacity for explaining how the sexual division of labour is determined amongst couples. Describing this approach as a 'quiet revolution', Connell (2002) testifies to the

explanatory value offered at the interactional level, yet ultimately that it fails to account for a lack of egalitarianism more comprehensively.

Bargaining in a gendered context?

There is something of a consensus in much of the literature that 'bargaining' and the 'gender' perspectives both contribute to determining sexual divisions of labour. As Chapter 3 will discuss, women's earnings and paid working hours are positively associated with contributions to unpaid work. In situations where financial provision is shared, men are more likely to increase their shares of unpaid labour, resulting in greater convergence between the two. However, the fact that male shares rarely equate with or surpass female shares – even in cases of female primary earning – suggests that the behaviour of the majority is informed by (traditional) normative conceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour, to which they are socially accountable. The general conclusion is that such bargaining needs to be considered in the (gendered) cultural and symbolic context in which negotiations take place (Ferree, 1991); where after a certain level of convergence in the paid working hours of partners, quite often, 'gender trumps money' (Bittman et al., 2003).

Therefore, because neither approach sufficiently accounts for how sexual divisions of labour are determined in isolation, research consistently posits that a combination of resource bargaining, time availability, and the continued prevalence of gendered expectations offer a more plausible account of respective divisions of labour (e.g. Kan, 2008; Mannino and Deutsch, 2007; Zuo, 2004). But what we are typically offered is a vague amalgamation of these approaches without any great clarity over the interplay of each approach. Essentially we are told that time availability and relative resources are bargained in a 'gendered context', whereby resources are the most important influence on divisions until women work the longest hours or have the highest earnings, and then couples 'do gender'. In other words, women conduct greater shares of unpaid work and this is decreased (with relatively slight male increases) the longer they are engaged in paid employment, and the above theories are referenced accordingly.

In particular, there appears to be a conflation with the West and Zimmerman (1987) approach and the fact that gender ideals often influence attitudes and behaviours at various levels of consciousness. Put simply, the fact that gender is an oft taken-for-granted influence on the behaviour of husbands and wives, subconsciously in many cases, is quite often used as evidence to support West and Zimmerman's (1987) 'doing gender' framework. Effectively, West and Zimmerman's framework has provided researchers with a relatively easy way of applying theory to what is a safe conclusion – that individual attitudes and behaviours are informed at some level by gender norms. After establishing that prior bargaining explanations did not sufficiently account for what researchers were actually finding empirically, studies appear to have appeased themselves by saying that such bargaining occurs 'within a gendered context', citing West and Zimmerman's theory.

For example, Mannino and Deutsch (2007) critique the three approaches as insufficient explanations for divisions of labour in isolation – namely time and resource bargaining, and the 'doing gender' approach – then using their own data offer support for a combination of the three without any great justification for this conclusion or the relative importance weightings of each explanation. Kan (2008) concludes by simply stating that bargaining and doing gender both 'play a key role' in determining the division of domestic labour, again implying that the issues with each explanation seemingly cease to be problematic when joined together. Likewise Kanji (2013) reviews the three as the main approaches to the sexual division of labour determination then offers little of the aforementioned need for greater analytical engagement in each, before calling for future research. Even more recently, Lyonette and Crompton (2014: 3) suggest, 'In reality, the explanatory significance of relative resource and 'doing gender' approaches may be interactive, rather than mutually exclusive'. We are not aided in an understanding of the interaction between these approaches, and how a combination of these factors determines sexual divisions of labour. The West and Zimmerman (1987) approach is then 'tested', with no mention of the issues levelled at this particular theory, and the safe conclusion drawn that men and women 'do and undo' gender in interactions concerning their divisions of labour.

Amongst the problems here is that this consensus has increasingly become the departure point for empirical research studying the determinants of sexual divisions

of labour. The issues raised thus far outline why these approaches offer only limited explanatory value when assessing how couples 'negotiate' their respective shares, and therefore when divisions are most likely to be, or move towards, egalitarianism. Further, there is often little theoretical engagement with the approaches or a consideration of relevant critiques, and the argument in this thesis follows that the above critiques of each approach are in no way appeased by their relatively vague combination. For example, certain structural factors are likely to affect decisions made regarding paid labour shares, such as (changes in) the availability of public childcare, informal private means (kinship and extended social networks), or affordable formal private arrangements. Existing critiques indicate that the 'doing gender' framework offers only a limited view of these wider influences beyond the interactional level, and it is not clear how bringing resource bargaining into the equation appeases this – particularly as we are told little about the actual bargaining process itself beyond. The typical proposition that current and prospective earnings, hours spent in paid employment, or educational and occupational status are the resources that are bargained certainly does not account for the caring options available to couples, that will itself differ along ethnic, socio-economic, and age characteristics to name but three other influences on divisions that are neglected in this consensus.

Referenced throughout this chapter is the assumed, taken-for-granted and ultimately neglected process of negotiation itself that determines these divisions – which surely warrants closer critical examination. By conceptualising negotiation in this context more clearly and comprehensively it will be possible to better account for these divisions and draw links between negotiation levels and gender egalitarianism. The next chapter will focus more exclusively on the second concept in the relationship that this thesis is examining; namely egalitarianism.

Chapter 3: Egalitarianism in the dual-earner context

Returning to the main research question addressed in this thesis, namely whether a high level of negotiation between couples over their paid and unpaid working contributions fosters egalitarianism, there are a number of elements in existing literature to consider. Of clear importance is an understanding of what precisely is meant by egalitarianism and in order to discern whether high levels of intra-couple negotiations are positively associated with egalitarianism we need to clarify how the concept is being used in this particular context. This chapter will begin by briefly defining 'egalitarianism', before exploring the empirical literature ascertaining the prevalence of such attitudes in the dual-earner context. Links will then be drawn to the incidence of egalitarianism in practice, as research suggests a potential disjuncture in views espoused and the actual incidence of equitable divisions of labour. Finally, a review of the attempts to categorise couples based on their egalitarianism is presented.

Conceptualising 'egalitarianism'

In the literature examining equity in the sexual division of labour, 'egalitarianism' is often treated in a rather unproblematic fashion and therefore defined quite loosely. Typically it refers to the relative equity with which partners share the overall burden of paid and unpaid labour, and distinctions may be made in terms of equality in the time spent or specific tasks undertaken on either paid or unpaid endeavours. Adopted in this thesis is a slight modification of a definition offered by Treas and Drobnic (2010), where an egalitarian couple is defined as one where both a wife's and husband's short and long term goals include working full-time, sharing the responsibility for earning the family income, and for responsibilities concerning childcare and other non-employment related duties with the other spouse. Egalitarianism here refers to the shared goal of broadly equal contributions towards both spheres of paid and unpaid labour in the medium to long-term, with a disregard for what is typically thought of as men's or women's work in either domain. Such motivation to sharing both income and non-employment related responsibilities

would indicate possession of liberal, non-traditional views on gender and familial roles, and a commitment to enacting these ideals in practice.

Egalitarianism in attitudes

There is a consensus amongst researchers in this area that women are more likely than men to express egalitarian attitudes towards paid employment and unpaid labour divisions (e.g. Cha and Thébaud, 2009; O'Reilly et al., 2014). There is clear evidence of a general trend towards greater non-traditional ideals being held by men too in the UK, although not quite to the same extent, with young women and men both significantly more likely to endorse an egalitarian gender ideology than previous generations (Zuo, 2004). Undoubtedly changes in the gender composition of the paid workforce, in educational attainment, and the dynamic, ostensible boundaries of normatively acceptable (gendered) behaviour have contributed to the increased adoption of what we may describe as 'modern' views (Williams, 2004). This may reflect, in part, the increasing number of women who represent their household's sole- or main-earner in contemporary society (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013; Kanji, 2013). Men in dual-earner households, or who are financially dependent upon a female spouse, are significantly more likely to endorse an egalitarian gender ideology (e.g. Gerson, 1993; Wilkie, 1993). Research findings indicate that men in these arrangements recognise the benefits of being free from primary economic responsibility (Gerson, 1993; Zuo, 1997), not least in cases of male redundancy, and see this as a way to facilitate a better balance between work and family (Hochschild, 2001). There is a suggestion that men with egalitarian views may select partners with greater earning potential, who themselves may be more likely to select men with egalitarian views (Cha and Thébaud, 2009). Meanwhile, Brewster and Padovic (2000) argue that men find 'equilibrium with reality', adjusting their attitudes as dynamic paid and unpaid working circumstances unfold.

The importance of these findings to the current thesis is that one may expect an increased likelihood that the individuals participating in this research hold relatively egalitarian views, as is found amongst dual-earners more generally. Individuals in such an arrangement, supporting dual-employment, might respond differently to becoming the secondary (or even a non-) earner and alter their unpaid work

contribution during a period of underemployment or unemployment in ways someone holding 'traditional' gender views would not. This would signify the greater propensity for a negotiation of the division of labour post-redundancy. Redundancy therefore provides an interesting context to see whether egalitarianism is upheld, or potentially emerges over the course of employment and familial role change (as suggested by the Brewster and Padovic assertion above). Alternatively, it is argued that efforts to maintain gendered identities may serve as a coping mechanism for dealing with substantial economic and familial change (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010), which may reduce the likelihood of negotiation and egalitarianism in such instances. Recent evidence shows that younger men may support female employment, but display less enthusiasm for a parallel drop in time spent on caring duties (e.g. Berghammer, 2014; O'Reilly et al., 2014).

Reflecting these varied possibilities, the literature addressing attitudinal change following (in virtually all cases male) unemployment offers conflicting evidence. Generally, both unemployed men and women increase their share of unpaid labour following job loss, although women demonstrate larger increases (Gough and Killewald, 2011). Particularly where unemployment is perceived as temporary amongst men, there does not appear to be any wholesale renegotiation of household roles (Gough and Killewald, 2011). For some time, this variance and the fact that male partner contributions to housework and caring duties rarely equal or surpass those of their partners, has been inextricably linked to the notion that male unemployment does not necessarily lead to an undermining of the male breadwinner ideology (Wheelock, 1990). So whilst it may be expected that dual-earning men with more egalitarian views accept 'secondary earner' status and potentially a greater domestic burden, findings are a little ambiguous.

Women are found to be reluctant to identify themselves as the main breadwinners, choosing instead to align with their partners as equal earners even where a male partner is unemployed (Charles and James, 2005; Warren, 2007; Wright, 2014). In the Charles and James (2005) study, in situations where women were the main financial providers many participants described their circumstance as 'unusual', rather than questioning the normative power of the male breadwinning ideology. This is reflective of a tendency amongst dual-earning couples to interpret the income of men as primary irrespective of the two earnings (Moen and Sweet, 2003;

Potuchek, 1997), which may contribute to a lack of equity in unpaid labour. Regarding their accountability as 'competent' social actors who behave in line with normative conceptions regarding 'gender-appropriate' behaviour, dual-earners often consider it to be important that others perceive the male partner to be the primary earner in their couple (Tichenor, 2005). There is even evidence that some males deliberately increase their paid work hours to maintain their breadwinning status (Deutsch and Saxon, 1998). Interestingly, in a longitudinal study, Winslow-Bowe (2006) found that women out-earning their husbands often did not maintain this income advantage over a period of five years, with the primary reason being that childcare responsibilities result in a reduction in their paid working hours. The relatively small proportion that did tended to be Afro-Caribbean women, those educated to a higher level than their partners, and those without children.

The persistence of traditional gender ideologies is in large part due to the centrality of the 'provider role', or 'breadwinning', to masculine identity (Kitterød and Rønsen, 2012; Nolan, 2009; Townsend, 2002). Documented history indicates that the predominance of the breadwinner model was a phenomenon associated with industrialisation; prior to this the organisation of households as economic units made the idea that men alone were providers difficult to sustain, and as employment for many began to take place outside the home the separation of 'spheres' and specialisation began (Dermott, 2008). Only really during periods of the twentieth century could a significant proportion of those in work sustain a family on a single income, and a welfare state developed on this basis that gave the breadwinner model predominance (despite the fact that many married women also worked). The male breadwinner role, in real income terms, has rarely met the criteria of sole male economic provider for the household. These circumstances were briefly achievable for largely white, middle-class households between 1940 and 1970 (Hood, 1986) and have been less economically viable for many since then.

Nevertheless, countless studies demonstrate that where incomes are the same between partners or where women out-earn their husbands they are still not perceived as primary or even equal providers (Charles and James, 2003; Deutsch and Saxon, 1998; Thébaud, 2010). Where female partners are not considered to be equal monetary providers we might expect that a long-term commitment to sharing financial and non-employment commitments is not wholly upheld, reducing the

likelihood of a high level of egalitarianism. Traditionally, it has been suggested that women have alternative identities on which to draw when facing job loss, and can adapt to a role within the home more easily than men (Wajcman and Martin, 2002). By this token, paid employment constitutes such a significant part of male identity that they find it more difficult than women to build an identity based on home life without a job (Kelan, 2008). There is even evidence that (particularly working-class) men are reluctant to engage in emotional labour in an employment capacity, demonstrating that masculine ideals are still pervasive in work decisions (Nixon, 2009). This may have consequences for how egalitarian labour divisions become in instances of female job loss and male job loss, with potential differences between the two cases. Indeed, breadwinning is considered not just a descriptive concept (referring to the structural location of earnings in relation to that of a partner's) but ideological too, in terms of its prevalence as an aspect of masculine identity (Warren, 2007). However, given the increase in the paid employment levels of women and other changes in labour market conditions fewer men can fully live up to traditional gender ideals, and unemployed or underemployed men tend to be stigmatised by traditional values (McDowell, 2011; Zuo, 1997).

Generally, there is an indication that working-class men are more likely to express traditional views about parenting and housework (Deutsch, 1999; Pyke, 1996; Shows and Gerstel, 2009; Williams, 2000), but are actually more likely to engage in such activities as there is often a financial imperative for their partners to work and an inability to find affordable childcare (Legerski and Cornwall, 2010; Shows and Gerstel, 2009; Sullivan, 2004; Williams, 2000). It has been suggested that young adults in lower socioeconomic groupings hold more traditional attitudes than might be expected, because their lives are not as differentiated from prior generations as has been hypothesised elsewhere (Bradley, 2008). This assertion is likely to galvanise greater support in the current economic and labour market context, as is discussed in Chapter 4. Research has found a 'one and a half breadwinner model' where typically the female partner works part-time and grandparents help out with childcare to be commonly adopted by lower-income couples (Lyonette et al., 2011). A number of qualitative studies show that middle-class fathers, including the 'highly educated' and professional occupants, espouse more egalitarian views yet perform relatively less unpaid work (Coltrane, 2004; LaRossa, 1997; Shows and Gerstel,

2009). When it comes to parenting, middle-class men are more likely to participate in organised leisure activities whilst working-class men spend more time with their families and often have richer ties with their extended family (Lareau, 2003; Stone, 2007). Affluent wives have greater opportunities to 'opt out' of paid work to concentrate on intensive mothering (Boushey, 2005; Stone, 2007) given the presence of a secure, well-paying alternative source of income.

Relative earnings potential between partners is an important source of difference with men found to express more egalitarian views about dual-earning where it is seen as a form of protection from an insecure labour market (Cha and Thébaud, 2009; Zuo, 1997); and male job insecurity is cited as one of the main factors from which women defined themselves as breadwinners (Charles and James, 2003; 2005). Men in intermediate or manual occupations are four times more likely than those in professional or managerial occupations to cite their partners income as vital to overall family resources (Crompton and Lyonette, 2010). With limited access to material symbols of power, wealth and prestige, lower-income husbands frequently look to produce masculinity in their marriages via alternative means, such as engaging in less unpaid labour where many tasks are viewed as 'feminine' (Gerson, 1993; Messerschmidt, 2000; Pyke, 1996). Particularly in geographical localities once dominated by large (typically manufacturing) masculine industries, young working-class men – to whom waged work is of crucial significance to the construction of a masculine identity – face a crisis of how to live up to the ideals of being 'a man' (McDowell, 2011). In areas of high unemployment and precarious work, McDowell (2011) actually found evidence of increasingly diverse interpretations of the changing nature of work and family, with a significant proportion of male respondents moving away from traditional gender attitudes.

Differences in the sexual division of labour across ethnic lines are often also quite marked. For example, Crompton and Sanderson (1990) show that from as early as the start of the 1980s black Caribbean women in the UK have had high employment rates relative to those of all other ethnic groups, with the percentage of economically active Caribbean women aged 25-34 oscillating around 75 per cent. Statistically, black women are disproportionately more likely to be lone parents and paid employment is often regarded as necessary for sustenance but also to be seen as a good role model for their children (Reynolds, 2001). This contrasts to a number of

Muslim groups of women who follow very traditional gendered life trajectories with the home remaining central to their lives, and participation in paid employment at comparatively low levels (Walby, 1997). Research also shows that African-Caribbean women often choose to have children earlier and then develop their careers subsequently, as opposed to patterns among many white women who tend to delay their first child until a stage where their careers are more 'established' (Bradley, 2013). The high employment rates of black Caribbean women mean that they possess considerable relative resources in a dual-earner context, and black men suffer significant labour market instability relative to white men, which results in a different structural resource context between black and white couples (Orbuch and Eyster, 1997). The frequency of this structural context amongst black couples of Caribbean descent is reflected in a different and more gender egalitarian arrangement than their white counterparts (Orbuch and Eyster, 1997), a phenomena found in comparative data for the USA (Sayer and Fine, 2011). Differences amongst ethnic groups are further exaggerated by cultural norms specific to each grouping, for example the birth order position in some Asian cultures significantly influences expectations in the family and paid employment (North, 2009).

Thus far, literature studying the incidence of egalitarianism in the espoused views of dual-earners has been examined. It is apparent that the ideology of a male partner is generally a more reliable predictor of how equitable actual divisions of labour will be (Bulanda, 2004). This is partly due to the fact that women are more likely to hold egalitarian attitudes regarding how responsibilities could or should be managed. However, concerns over male identity and social accountability appear to influence whether these views are actually operationalised. The term 'pragmatic egalitarianism' used by Gallagher and Smith (1999) is helpful in denoting that many couples recognise the necessity of women's employment, and therefore the greater sharing of (particularly) paid, and unpaid responsibilities, without completely abandoning traditional gender beliefs. This appears to accurately describe the significant yet ostensibly limited extent of change in ideologies espoused.

Macro-level research studying changes in gender ideology find that cohort replacement as opposed to attitudinal changes over the adult lifespan largely account for the societal-level trends towards greater egalitarianism (Brewster and Padovic, 2000). The current context, in which the number of female equal- and main-

breadwinning households is as high as it has ever been (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013), could create the greater proportion of economically independent women within society as a whole that is required for a more marked aggregate shift towards equitable divisions of labour (Breen and Cooke, 2005). There is some evidence to suggest that changes in familial role can evoke changes in gender ideology in the medium-term (Zuo, 1997; 2004). The research in this thesis partly answers the call made by Raley et al. (2006) for future studies exploring whether 'trigger events' (such as employment change) affect the gendered attitudes and behaviours of dual-earner couples.

It is important to note that despite discourses of equality, particularly among young adults, the shift in purported egalitarianism has not necessarily translated into actual equitable behaviour and women continue to undertake the bulk of housework and caring responsibilities (Bradley, 2013).

Egalitarianism in behaviour

Whilst there is clear evidence of a general trend towards greater non-traditional attitudes expressed and greater equity in the domestic division of labour, research consistently finds that whilst men in dual-earning couples or financially dependent on their spouses do more housework than male 'breadwinners', their contributions do not exceed those of their partner (Gough and Killewald, 2011; Kan, 2008; Mannino and Deutsch, 2007; Thébaud, 2010). A common theme in the literature is that whilst men have increased their time spent on housework, the greater congruence between the time spent by male and female partners in recent times is more a consequence of female partners reducing their time spent on domestic duties (Bianchi and Milkie, 2010; Crompton et al., 2005). It has been suggested that the vast changes in paid employment rates of women is slowly leading to changes in the unpaid work participation of men, in a process that Gershuny et al. (2005) refer to as 'lagged adaptation'.

The disjuncture between purported egalitarianism and actual lack of equity can be illustrated by considering the role of men in parenting, whereby the discourses framing the experiences of men of transitions to fatherhood are rooted in powerful,

social, cultural and historical constructions of hegemonic masculinities surrounding breadwinning, which itself is dynamic (Miller, 2011). Societal expectations have changed for fathers, with the so-called 'new father' a popular phrase in literature about parenting (Wall and Arnold, 2007; Yoshida, 2012). This 'new' father is considered to be more involved with caring both physically and emotionally (Biggart and O'Brien, 2009), with a greater expectation of equal co-parenting amongst couples (Pleck and Pleck, 1997). For example, Hatter et al. (2002) have developed a four-fold typology of fathers two for whom, namely 'useful dad' and 'fully involved dad', breadwinning is not key. Nevertheless, men continue to contribute a larger proportion of the family income in British two-parent households, although interestingly economic breadwinning often does not configure in current conceptualisations of caring (Lamb and Lewis, 2007). Despite uncertainties in the labour market and other structural factors that have led to the deterioration of male breadwinning, the actual and perceived responsibility of financial provision on husbands and fathers is still very pervasive (Morgan, 2002). Literature shows that fathers in the UK are more likely to be economically active and have higher employment rates than non-fathers. In an analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey, O'Brien et al. (2003) found an employment rate of 89 per cent for fathers of dependent children compared with 76 per cent for other men. Walling (2004) reports a similar employment rate of 90 per cent for fathers with dependent children, which has not changed dramatically in recent times (Scott et al., 2010).

Evidence suggests that men are expressing more egalitarian views and spending a greater amount of time with their children (Jacobs and Gerson, 2001; Milkie et al., 2004), but women still spend considerably more time on childcare (Baxter, 2000; Craig, 2006; Gerstel and Gallagher, 2001; Wall and Arnold, 2007; Yoshida, 2012). In terms of activities undertaken, numerous studies show that men spend more time on what are perceived to be 'enjoyable' activities such as reading and playing, as opposed to bathing and so forth (Coltrane and Adams, 2001; Craig, 2006; Silver, 2000). Research also suggests that mothers are more likely to cut back on leisure and personal care activities to maintain their time spent on childcare (e.g. Hofferth, 2001). Essentially, whilst fathers are spending more time with children, caring does not necessarily equate with sharing – employment sacrifices do not need to be made, fathers are considered to be 'good' when showing a commitment to being a caring,

involved presence (Craig, 2006). It is accepted among many partners that fathers day-to-day emotional care is fitted around employment responsibilities (Wall and Arnold, 2007).

Mothers spend more time caring in dual-earner couples where both work full-time (Silver, 2000), although fathers in dual-earner arrangements do spend more time caring for their children than fathers whose partners are not employed (Barry et al., 2011; Bianchi et al., 2000; Featherstone, 2009), with the caring gap reduced the narrower the gap between partners working hours and/or earnings (Cooke, 2007). Often men emphasise the importance of what they termed 'quality' time over the actual amount of time spent with children (Dermott, 2008). Men who are unable to fulfil the primary provider role report greater involvement as do more highly educated men (Yoshida, 2012). It has also been found that the presence of women in men's lives (moving beyond wives and partners to daughters and sisters) shapes the amount and types of care men provide, with the influence of sisters particularly evident in caring for ageing parents (Gerstel and Gallagher, 2001).

In the context of dual-earners where fathers are thus in paid employment, the under-theorised concept of 'working fathers' becomes applicable (Ranson, 2011). Unlike the term 'working mother' which is laden with a whole range of connotations, 'working father' has not received a great deal of attention despite the increase in male childcare involvement and paid working hours of female partners. The dual-earning context is an interesting one given that decisions have to be made regarding when and how paid work commitments need to fit around children and vice versa (Kanji, 2013). Ranson (2011) focused specifically on working fathers most of whom were not the main financial providers in their families, finding that they had moved well beyond any understanding of fathering characterised mainly by breadwinning. Their talk of career aspirations and involvement in childcare very much framed themselves as working fathers, accommodating these desires by taking parental leave and reducing paid work hours where necessary. Nevertheless, Ranson (2011) indicates that the cultural image of the 'new father' has not displaced the breadwinning requirement.

This extends to findings relating to the care of ageing parents, with adult males taking a primary role in caring for their parents appearing to develop a vision of

masculinity that de-emphasised or eliminated certain attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as avoiding housework and revealing emotions; but emphasising others, like 'taking charge' (Campbell and Carroll, 2007). Such findings are summarised by Gerson (2009b: 744) who herself found evidence of men working to 'soften the boundaries between earning and caring without relinquishing their claim to breadwinning prerogatives'.

A key factor determining childcare is perceived skill level, with expectant and new parents more likely to be involved with their children where they consider themselves to be competent (Fagan and Barnett, 2003; Sanderson and Thompson, 2002). There is evidence in the literature that men do, in some cases, play on a perceived lack of skill level for both housework and childcare in order to 'opt out of' an equal or significant share (Speakman and Marchington, 1999), and research shows that many women perceive their husbands to lack competence in certain tasks – a notion with which their husbands often agreed (e.g. Popay et al., 1998). This could be one factor in the incidence of 'maternal gatekeeping', namely the 'collection of beliefs and behaviours that ultimately inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work' (Allen and Hawkins, 1999: 200). As a result men can be less involved in child care which limits the development of parenting skill in itself, although gatekeeping has normally ceased by the end of the first year (Barry et al., 2011). Alternatively, Miller (2011) found that whilst soon-to-be fathers anticipated sharing and equality, there is a naivety about how this will be practically managed and sustained alongside full-time paid work given the often hard, time-consuming and relational work of caring. After paternity leave caring practices become squeezed into evenings and weekends whilst partners become experts more quickly.

The literature on egalitarianism in a dual-earner context offers a number of relatively consistent findings that are relevant to the research aims of this thesis. Cross-generationally the attitudes of both men and women have become more egalitarian, although women very often undertake disproportionately high shares of unpaid labour that can result in a higher overall burden of paid and unpaid work. Men have been slower to adopt an egalitarian ideology, and there is often a discord between the extent of egalitarianism they purport and their actual engagement in overall and unpaid shares of labour. Financial provision as central to masculine identity and

continued perceptions of the greater suitability of women to housework and caring mean that divisions of labour are rarely shared completely equally, or that men engage in disproportionately higher overall shares. It will be interesting to see if such a disjuncture in views and behaviour is uncovered from the empirical data presented in this thesis, with a recent study entitled 'Ordinary Lives in Contemporary Britain' (Atkinson and Bradley, 2013) finding evidence of continuity in the sexual division labour. In the context of employment change, redundant partners may be forced to take primary responsibility for unpaid labour and their share adjusted accordingly. As highlighted in this review of pertinent literature, where unemployment is perceived to be temporary little attempts at a more egalitarian division of labour may be enacted, and partners are less likely to find 'equilibrium with reality' (Brewster and Padovic, 2000).

Findings also suggest that changes in attitude and behaviour can occur, particularly longer-term (e.g. Chesley, 2011; Zuo, 2004) but it is not completely clear what factors determine these outcomes. There are some positive links drawn to changes based on ideology espoused, educational attainment, and so forth. However, we are left with little understanding of how exactly partners accomplish any move towards greater egalitarianism, whether this involves an incremental, complex period of renegotiation, an accompanying shift in gender ideology, or otherwise. That the process of negotiation is rarely a focus of research was addressed in the previous chapter. Examined now are a number of attempts to categorize families based upon the egalitarian (or lack thereof) nature of their labour divisions.

Discerning egalitarianism: typologies

Researchers investigating egalitarianism amongst dual-earner couples have attempted to locate them along some basis of equity in paid and unpaid working roles, distinguishing between couples that enact egalitarian, or more traditional, divisions of labour. These typically signify distinct categories or a continuum ranging from thoroughly diversified roles, where one partner is primarily responsible for caring and the other for employment, to the equal sharing of all responsibilities. For example, Risman and Johnson-Sumerford (1998) identify 'postgender' type couples to denote those who are fair and share all aspects of paid and unpaid

responsibility. Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2005) adopt this term, contrasting it to 'traditional' couples where a conventionally gendered division exists, positing a third category residing in-between the two referred to as 'gender legacy' couples. In such arrangements, couples espouse egalitarian views yet a 'gender legacy' appears to underlie the emotional and organisational structure of each family. An example would be where task allocation is based upon, and talked about, in reference to individual competencies – with the appearance of a 'postgender' couple – however competencies would be implicitly, but heavily, linked to their gender.

Typologies often describe couple working arrangements rather than categorising them based upon the extent of egalitarianism in each case. For example, Moen and Sweet (2003) offer a five-fold typology referencing the paid and unpaid working endeavours of each partner, which includes 'high commitment couples'; signifying those where both partners are heavily invested in workplace activities (both working more than 45 hours per week), typically in professional or managerial careers; 'neo-traditional couples' referring to those couples where the male partner works more hours than the female partner, the latter whom takes primary responsibility for unpaid responsibilities such as caring and housework; and 'crossover commitment couples' who invert this traditional gender schema, with the male partner working fewer paid hours than the female partner and taking the lead role on domestic duties. Similarly, Hall and MacDermid (2009) adopt a continuum that begins with 'parallel' couple types, who adopt similar domestic and employment contributions. From here a disproportionate share of female unpaid work begins to increase and their paid employment contributions decrease through 'second shift-career' couples, 'counter-balanced' couples to 'second shift-nurture' couples who represent the most gender traditional arrangements. Interestingly, Hall and MacDermid (2009) do not recognise a couple type where mothers devote more time to paid work than fathers (a la 'crossover commitment couples' in Moen and Sweet, 2003) despite its increasing frequency and potential likelihood in contemporary society (Kanji, 2013).

Paying closer attention to the role of the state, Jane Lewis (2001) uses the male breadwinner model as a tool for understanding differences between a number of European welfare regimes. She posits that historically Britain and Ireland have been strongly committed to the male breadwinning model, however this has been in decline – in large part due to the increase in female employment, with an 'adult-

worker family model' a more appropriate reflection of the situation, 'whereby it is assumed that all adults are in the labour market' (Lewis, 2001: 154). Lewis suggests that, although varying across class and ethnic lines, dual-earning models that are based loosely around a one-and-a-half earner model are most common. Here males typically work in full-time paid employment, whilst women vary between short part-time hours and long part-time hours in many European states. Scandinavian countries such as Sweden are considered to hold only weak ties to the male breadwinner model, whilst France adheres to a 'modified' version of male breadwinning.

An interesting typology developed by Gerson (2009a, 2009b) incorporates 'gender flexibility' and 'gender inflexibility' against a backdrop of social change that has seen an erosion of single-earner wages, expanding options for and pressures on working women, and so forth. Gerson argues that this new social context requires couples to invent new ways of combining caring and breadwinning, in particular when developing strategies in the face of unexpected economic contingencies and interpersonal crises (which one could extend to redundancy). This calls for flexible approaches to work and parenting, whereby 'gender flexibility' is a broad term encompassing both behavioural and mental strategies that transgress the rigid structural and cultural boundaries pertaining to men as breadwinners and women as carers (Gerson, 2009a). It involves more equal sharing and more fluid boundaries for organising and apportioning emotional, social, and economic care (Gerson, 2009b), sharing a clear resonance with the definition of egalitarianism adopted at the start of this chapter. Gerson found that where parents transgressed traditional gender boundaries and created 'new' ways of earning and caring after encountering unexpected crises, the better they fared in terms of marital quality, career trajectories, and so forth. Meanwhile, 'gender inflexibility' left other families ill-equipped to cope with unavoidable, unanticipated challenges. This implies a low level of renegotiation regarding paid and unpaid labour shares, and little movement towards greater egalitarianism.

Whilst current typologies typically categorise couples based on their working arrangements, they tell us very little about the formation of each respective arrangement. Links between a process of negotiation and these divisions of labour are neglected, therefore labels such as 'postgender' or 'high commitment couples'

may offer use as descriptive terms, but give little indication about how these come into fruition, and are maintained or adopted – particularly over the life course (including life events such as redundancy). It is certainly not clear from current typologies whether couples (whatever their label) engage in high levels of negotiation to sustain or change divisions of labour. Treas and Drobnic (2010) argue that rather than using absolute time or task allocations as the basis for categorising couples, a link to the general discourse around work sharing (for example cooperative, conflictual, avoidance, assertive, and so forth), offering greater insight into the links between desires, expectations and actual behaviours would be useful. At this stage one could hypothesise that couples engaging in high levels of negotiation *could* enact egalitarian change in their sexual division of labour, in what could be labelled 'high negotiation-high egalitarian' couple arrangements for example. By the same token, we could hypothesise that many couples would be closer to a 'low negotiation – low egalitarian' arrangement based on the literature reviewed here, with a potential continuum of possibilities in-between. A potentially fruitful framework for analysis in this thesis could be axes of high and low negotiation, coupled with high and low egalitarianism. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: A potential framework/typology for distinguishing couples based on the level of negotiation and egalitarianism enacted

51
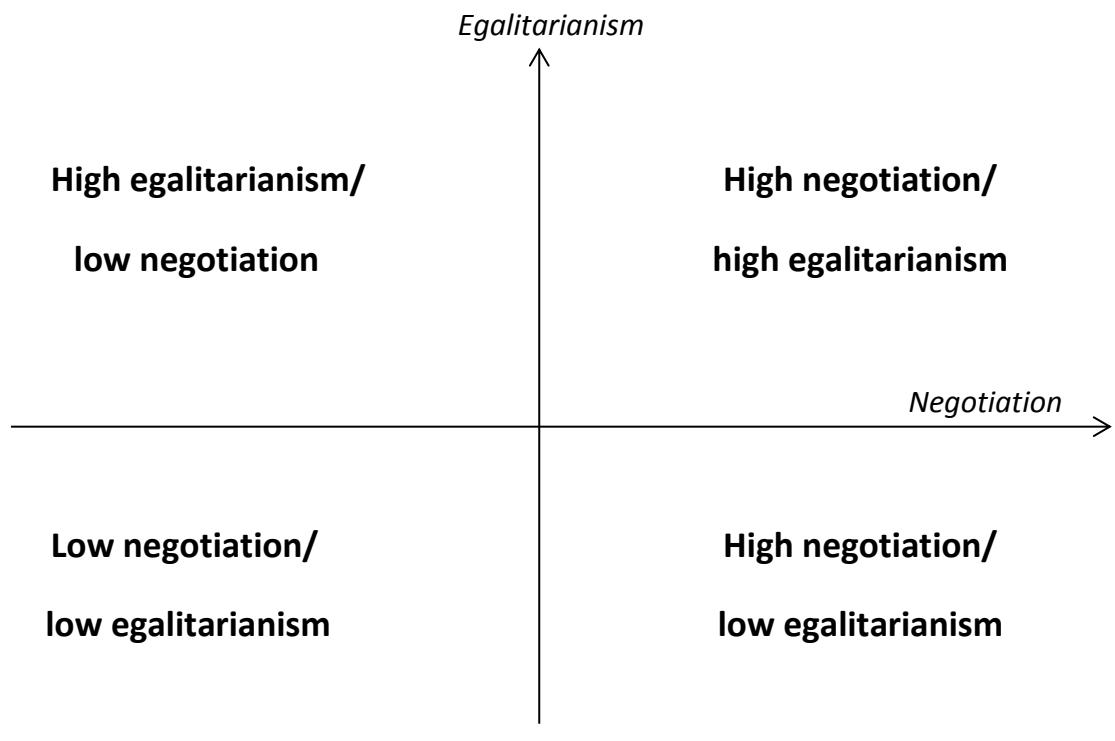
Each of the matrix quadrants could represent a typology group (based upon high/high or low/low) and the differing extents and nature of negotiation outlined for each, including the factors that influenced each state of affairs (the fourth sub research question). These ideas will be developed now as we consider current theorising on the relationship between the two concepts.

Negotiation and egalitarianism: exploring the links

Given the lack of a clear focus on negotiation in this context there is not a great deal of research that can inform our understandings of the links between negotiations of labour divisions and the likelihood of egalitarianism. Of that which does exist, perhaps unsurprisingly assertive women are closer to their ideal domestic division of labour than non-assertive women (Mannino and Deutsch, 2007). However, attempts at change did not automatically result in egalitarian shifts in behaviour, a finding reported elsewhere (e.g. Bulanda, 2004; Hochschild, 1989) and in many instances women tried to initiate a change in the division of labour but gave up after feeling they had failed. There is also an issue with longevity, as some wives asked for assistance with certain tasks and husbands would help, but that would be it – ownership of those duties would remain firmly with each wife.

Referring back to the adopted definition of egalitarianism at the beginning of this chapter, this would not constitute long-term commitment to share all of the unpaid household responsibilities. Again, we might therefore imagine egalitarianism as a continuum rather than fixed categories in which couples, whose attitudes and practical undertakings may vary greatly, are positioned as either egalitarian or not. In circumstances where change is enacted that brings about greater equity in the sexual division of labour but the change is relatively insignificant or not sustained we might distinguish this as 'low egalitarianism' as opposed to 'high egalitarianism', whereby significant, sustained equity exists.

The notion of 'assertiveness' in Mannino and Deutsch's (2007) study is an important one, as the point has been made throughout that unpaid labour in particular, forms a routine and often unquestioned part of everyday life. The findings in their study support the argument made that circumstantial change (such as a change in

employment status) was most likely to evoke change – even where requests for greater involvement had been unsuccessful before. In a similar study, Dempsey (2000) found that women were more willing than anticipated to ask their husbands to increase their participation in housework and, although men were often resistant, more than 40 per cent of women experienced some success. Again, however, they were more likely to gain help with tasks rather than for husbands to agree to accept responsibility for them. The author concludes by suggesting that men do utilise a position of superior power to resist changes in traditional divisions of labour, although ambivalence of women about handing over tasks is an equal impediment to change.

If assertiveness is required to evoke change then this is a necessary starting point for negotiations. A lack of assertiveness, or indeed ambivalence, to initiating changes suggests that pre-empting negotiation itself is a requirement for consciousness that change is indeed desired or required (Dempsey, 2002). One would be inclined to hypothesise the discontent of wives with disproportionately high shares of domestic labour is the most likely reason for negotiation initiation, and this will require a certain impetus in their feelings regarding any injustice. The clearest link between negotiation and consciousness is that made by Gerson and Peiss (1985) who identify a continuum of 'gender consciousness' over three levels. At the first level, gender stereotypes are uncritically accepted, and a renegotiation of unequal divisions is unlikely as orientations to paid work and domestic work have a 'natural' appearance. At the second level of consciousness women are said to exploit their position in society and its associated resources, for example acting on the 'power' of motherhood to control family members. The third level Gerson and Peiss refer to as feminist consciousness, whereby inequality that is an implicit or overt consequence of perceived differences in gender is contested. In this scenario, negotiations surrounding the sexual division of labour are subsequently more likely to be contested than in situations of low 'gender consciousness'.

A potentially relevant concept worthy of consideration here is that of 'unsilencing', whereby one or more parties become aware of and understands the need for a negotiation (Benjamin, 2003). Silencing refers to a situation that may be unjust but behaviour occurs as if there is no need for negotiation, or its need is dismissed by one or both partners. Unsilencing therefore is the process in which social

relationships, hitherto managed within hegemonic power or oppression, and thus characterized by ostensible harmony, are turned into an experienced social conflict that requires the renegotiation of order (Benjamin, 2003). The first level of consciousness identified by Gerson and Peiss (1985) would certainly imply a complicit state of affairs whereby unsilencing is unlikely, or indeed dismissed by a particular (potentially resource powerful – or simply self-regarding) partner.

Undoubtedly this ties in to perceptions of fairness. Previous research finds an equitable division of labour to be positively associated with marital happiness and satisfaction, and negatively with conflict (Coltrane, 2000). Therefore, where there is low egalitarianism one may expect the greater likelihood of dissatisfaction, which may offer a precursor to negotiation. The potential for unsilencing will come into play, dependent upon the strength of feelings about unequitable divisions. Unsurprisingly, the perceived fairness of equitable divisions of labour is consistently of greater importance to women, with perceived equity found to be more important than the proportion actually carried out by each (Frisco and Williams, 2003). There is often a difference between what constitutes as 'fair' between partners, with women citing unfairness as committing more time and effort to unpaid work whilst for men this was generally when doing more than what they perceived was fair – which in some cases was less than half their partner's contribution (Frisco and Williams, 2003). These findings do extend to women, for example Baxter (2000) found 59 per cent of women to report a fair division of labour even when doing significantly more than their partners.

The negotiation literature also suggests that the partner's reaction to any negotiation initiation is generally key to how the exchange unfolds. For example, Klein et al. (2007) find that where the imperatives of wives are directed at their husband's areas of 'jurisdiction', in one example gardening, they react negatively to questions surrounding the frequency of care, and so forth. Alternatively, for a father beginning to undertake cooking duties, female partners would continue in a supervisory role until the father articulates a positive explanation for how he can manage the task without threatening her prior investment in it. In these situations, imperatives usually received a more positive response. 'Models' of negotiation can vary in terms of mutuality, fairness, and whether their terms are ambiguous or clear, which all shape the frequency and nature of negotiations throughout marital life (Klein et al., 2007).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are reports that where partners clearly articulate their goals and feel listened to, there is less conflictual negotiation (Treas and Drobnic, 2010), with mutuality a potential precedent for more equitable arrangements.

All of the points covered in this section thus far form part of a central focus of the second sub research question (how negotiations of the sexual division of labour are practically accomplished). Based on the literature, the principal, initial concerns are with who raises the need for negotiation in the family, whether and how the topic of negotiation is taken up by the recipient partner, and how they each express and exchange their opinions. Research in the field of psychology has explored marital interaction, focusing on how partners engage and disengage emotionally with one another identifying potential 'roles' in negotiation (Klein et al., 2007). Relevant to this thesis may be the 'demand-withdraw' pattern, in which a partner taking on the role of demander will criticise and make demands of the other partner, who will 'withdraw'; avoiding confrontation and becoming defensive. Perhaps unsurprisingly research to this end finds instances of wife-demand and husband-withdraw interactions when wives were discontent with spousal contributions to unpaid labour (Kluwer et al., 1997). Across a number of studies Kluwer (1998) and colleagues (Kluwer et al., 1996; 1997; 2000) found that where wives expressed discontent, it was most likely to result in a withdraw interaction from husbands, with contributions to family work remaining unchanged. Husband increases were most likely where (dual-earning) men held more liberal ideas concerning gender roles. However, husbands largely had not relinquished traditional roles enough for egalitarian divisions to bear fruit.

The inability to exert power over their spouse's behaviour and the withdrawal method of getting one's own way is an interesting tactic in household dynamics, and there is (an albeit) limited literature looking at male strategies for exerting power and resisting change. In a classic study of power in intimate relationships, Falbo and Peplau (1980) found that heterosexual men are more likely to use direct, bilateral strategies to establish their power over the household. Kirchler (1993) supports this with similar findings in a study examining the tactics used by male partners when making joint purchase decisions. Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2005) offer a succinct definition of power as the ability to influence a relationship toward one's own goals, interests, and well-being, and this often begins with the ability to 'set the

agenda' (Wilkie et al., 1998). Power is not simply manifest in the ability to bargain low shares of unpaid labour, by having the final say on purchase decisions, or to successfully withdraw from situations where partners have initiated negotiation; marital power is often invisible and latent (Komter, 1989). Power is invisible when one partner learns the parameters of acceptable behaviour and functions within them, without any restating of these parameters. A study that examined the shared work and family decisions of couples, for example, found that even though both partners reported that their decisions were mutual, outcomes tended to favour the husband's needs and goals more than the wife's (Zvonkovic et al., 1994). In such instances there is no overt conflict, and power appears to be equal because the wife appears to never want anything that the husband does not want. Whilst male partners are typically positioned as those with the greatest power, there is some research to the contrary. For example, Popay et al. (1998) found that male opinions and desires were not as significant a predictor in unpaid labour endeavours as were those of employed wives in forbidding, tolerating or welcoming male involvement.

In the context of male unemployment Legerski and Cornwall's (2010) study indicates that women did report adoption of direct strategies for bringing about change at various times, such as cajoling or yelling in an effort to get the help they needed. However, they remained unwilling to press for a more permanent and equitable division of labour beyond more immediate assistance with tasks given their husbands' (actual and perceived) emotional state, lending some support to the notion that they were 'prisoners of love' (Folbre, 2001). By this token, those who engage in particularly care work may be "held hostage" - unable to bargain for a more equitable division of labour out of fear that doing so may harm their family members or relationships. Several studies document that women often focus on the feelings of other family members while ignoring their own, primarily their anger (DeVault, 1990; Hochschild, 1989). Hochschild (1989) similarly reports women actively attempting to change their divisions of household labour by explicitly asking for help, whilst many adopted more passive negotiation tactics such as feigning illness in order to get the help they desired.

Unemployment offers a significant potential influence on the likelihood of negotiation occurring and therefore moves towards or away from egalitarianism. It is plausible that shifts in relative resources and time availability (referencing here two

of the approaches addressed in Chapter 2) that accompanies redundancy could lead to negotiation initiation by one or both partners. The context within which decisions regarding paid and unpaid labour are made is of importance, which links to the fourth sub research question of this thesis. For example, where opportunities for re-employment are limited, periods of unemployment may be protracted and more likely to result in a renegotiation of the division of labour. Contextual factors can be usefully understood as enabling and constraining (e.g. Archer, 1982; Giddens, 1984). Quite simply, a labour market characterised with few opportunities would act as a constraint on one's ability to find new employment. However, the structural environment is dynamically sustained and altered by the 'active, reflexive character of human conduct' (Giddens, 1984: xvi).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) offer a clear account of agency that emphasises, through the interplay of habit, imagination and judgement, how actors capably formulate projects for the future based on the past and a consideration of the present situation. Continuing with the context of redundancy, an individual may evaluate the state of the labour market and decide to retrain, targeting employment where opportunities are more plentiful. This may depend on a number of other factors, such as stage in the work life course. An individual close to retirement age may decide that the opportunity costs of retraining do not add up, with all of these possibilities significant to the likelihood and extent of a renegotiation of labour in their households. The enabling and constraining aspects of contextual factors, and how individuals navigate the interplay of factors they encounter, may prove key to the outcomes and findings of this thesis.

Radcliffe and Cassell (2014) offer a framework for understanding how decision-making occurs between partners regarding work-life conflicts. They distinguish between two types of decisions, the first being 'anchoring decisions'. These represent the major decisions taken about the overall approach to work and life responsibilities, with examples from their study being individuals changing jobs to access more flexible working practices, in an approach centred on prioritising the family above work. These anchoring decisions then provide a framework in which 'daily decisions' are made, which refer to the more immediate familial or employment issues that will be facilitated or made problematic depending on the anchoring decisions (and approach) taken. By distinguishing the two conceptually, it

may be possible to link daily practices undertaken by couples to manage paid and unpaid work commitments with personal or household-level strategies.

There is evidence to suggest that most couples drift into unequal gender relationships, even though they say they want, or even have, an equal arrangement (Knudson-Martin and Mahoney, 2005). Gendered behaviour in families is still so ingrained that a couple's move towards a more equal division of labour can take a substantial amount of time and effort. As discussed already, at least one partner has to consciously recognize the need for change and initiate negotiation about new ways of organizing family life. Even couples that report that equality 'came naturally' in their relationships described explicit steps to maintain it (Knudson-Martin and Mahoney, 2005). Partners and couples vary in the extent to which they pursue change. Therefore, the nature of any attempt and effort to evoke change are important, for example attempts that are limited or short-lived are not generally successful. A longer-term tone, full explanations of any help or change that is required, and a real expression of feelings are important to an effective initiation of and actual negotiation (Mannino and Deutsch, 2007).

There is a suggestion that those who seek change tend to have at least one of the following characteristics: they express awareness about gender issues, hold dual commitments to both work and family, or feel situational pressures that are not well-served by old gender patterns (Knudson-Martin and Mahoney, 2005). Following on from this, once at least one partner recognizes a need to change family dynamics, four patterns seem particularly salient to the change process itself: active negotiation about family life; challenging gender entitlements; development of new competencies; and mutual attention to relationship and family tasks. As partners move into more equitable relationships, most of them, especially the men, acquire new competencies for which they had not been socialised (Knudson-Martin and Mahoney, 2005). Literature studying the effects of father involvement from childbirth certainly support this ideas of competence development which is heavily dependent upon practical undertaking (Dermott, 2008; Doucet, 2006). These stages may represent important components in an effective, practical negotiation process.

Considering the fourth sub research question (which factors determine the likelihood and extent of a negotiation of paid and unpaid labour occurring?), this likelihood

depends on a number of factors. For example, some couples are acknowledged as having established firm and mutual understandings regarding the division of domestic labour and further negotiations are not required in the main (Klein et al., 2007). Coltrane's (1989) study of egalitarian couples demonstrates that open marital conversations are a significant condition for couples to be able to negotiate the household division of labour, and the importance of open marital conversations for the ability of couples to distance their daily practices from normative gender role imperatives. Where unequal divisions of labour are part of the routine fabric of everyday life, there appears to be a requirement for assertiveness, particularly from female partners who typically undertake disproportionately high shares. A range of potentially relevant elements of such a process have been highlighted, including the links to 'consciousness', 'unsilencing' and the steps that may be required for a successful renegotiation (the development of new competencies and so forth).

By engaging in the wider literature it is perhaps possible to formulate some ideas of how negotiations may or may not unfold, and the likely effects of varying attempts at negotiation on the chances of egalitarianism. For example, where partners do not question or take issue with unequal divisions then a renegotiation is unlikely. Various studies have alluded to negotiations being most likely where daily routine is unsettled, with employment change being a perfect scenario for this. This is where the current context in which decisions regarding paid and unpaid routines becomes important. Redundancy already ensures that the paid working behaviours of one partner is unsettled; however, Chapter 4 discusses in detail how the contemporary labour market and social policy changes introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government provide a number of interesting pressures on such negotiations.

Not only is routine disrupted, but reflecting back on the negotiation literature, any bargaining of resources or notions of role specialisation may be significantly affected by the redundancy of one partner in this current context. The empirical literature on this, which typically tests the 'doing gender' framework (West and Zimmerman, 1987) offers ambiguous findings on changes or reproductions of traditional divisions that are enacted. A focus on the actual negotiation process, which is not 'testing' this theory, will offer an invaluable insight into the nature of negotiations and how they may or may not bring about more equitable divisions of labour. The following

chapter aids in our understanding of the various personal - but also wider structural influences - that affect these negotiations, and marks the initial step in addressing the fourth sub research question.

Chapter 4: Labour market and social policy context: a catalyst for negotiation?

The recent recession has had a profound impact on the labour market, social policy, and undoubtedly the everyday lives of individuals. The changes that have taken place have significant implications for how paid employment and unpaid responsibilities are managed, particularly in the context of one partner's loss of employment. This chapter is divided into two main sections that focus on changes in, and the current state of, the labour market and social policy. Essentially, the argument follows that changes in both the labour market and social policy have created additional pressures for couples whereby some level of negotiation in paid and unpaid work endeavours is required, not least given the employment change. Regarding the labour market, current, relatively unfavourable employment conditions are likely to form a key influence on subsequent paid working decisions, and by extension divisions of unpaid labour also. The focus on social policy examines recent changes that particularly relate to paid work or familial support measures, which again influence people's paid and unpaid working decisions. Ultimately, couples negotiating labour divisions may find that more traditional conventions do not serve their current situations well, or indeed they may serve as coping mechanisms in a period of uncertainty and precarious employment (as suggested in Chapter 2). The many contextual influences on any process of negotiation and their potential outcomes will now be discussed.

The post-recession labour market

One of the first distinguishing features of the recent global economic crisis that is relevant to this thesis is the greater parity in its effects on the employment prospects of both men and women in comparison to previous recessions. There are a number of reasons for this, which include the greater presence of women in the labour market – an increase of around 4 million women in employment between 1971 and 2008 – with an additional 1.5 million since the recession of the early 1990s (Rake, 2009). Of particular importance has been the insulation of female-dominated sectors in the

past, notably the growth of the service sector and relative resistance of the public sector to the effects of those recessions (Smith, 2009), with the male-dominated manufacturing industries bearing the brunt of each financial crisis (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). In the initial stages of the recent recession the public sector again provided some source of protection with employment peaking at around 6.370 million in December 2009. However, by June 2014 this figure had fallen by 958,000 to 5.412 million (ONS, 2014b; page 24: table 1). Unless an alternative reference is provided, comparisons of figures for employment and so forth in this chapter are from this peak public sector level of December 2009 (ONS, 2010), and the most recent release of labour market statistics (at the time of writing) up to December 2014 (ONS, 2015b).

Public sector versus private sector employment

Cases of public sector redundancy are the focus in this thesis as employment levels have been adversely affected on an unprecedented scale during a period of austerity. A significant proportion of the decline in public sector employment is due to the re-classification of Further Education Corporations and Sixth Form College Corporations in England from public sector to private sector in April 2012, which encompassed around 196,000 jobs. However, public sector employment now represents just 17.6 per cent of total UK employment, which is the lowest proportion since comparable statistics began in 1999 (ONS, 2015). This sector also provides an insightful context for the research as women form a disproportionately high share of public sector employment and average rates of pay are relatively higher than they are for private sector employees (ASHE, 2014; Fawcett Society, 2013)[1]. The loss of relatively well paying public sector jobs may present something of a backward step in moves towards egalitarianism in both paid and unpaid working divisions for those women affected, given that this pay gap in the private sector for 2014 was 17.5 per cent in contrast to a gap of 11 per cent in the public sector (ASHE, 2014).

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[1] This generalisation is made mindful of the different factors that make a simple comparison between the two problematic. For example, with a higher proportion of older and more highly skilled workers in the public sector, one would expect a higher rate of relative pay. This favourable comparison also varies by region.

It is therefore plausible that, as significant contributors to household finances, there are implications for how female partners' roles within the family will be conceptualised in this thesis. For example, in existing research female earnings have been considered a reasonably reliable predictor of their unpaid labour endeavours, and such women would occupy a relatively resource-powerful position. There is also the potential issue that women made redundant from these female-dominated, relatively well paid industries and occupations may not find comparative work in the private sector given that many qualifications for work in the public sector are sector-specific, examples being teaching and nursing (Rubery, 2013a). This may affect their ability to acquire earnings at similar levels to those received before, which may have consequences for any resource bargaining and subsequent unpaid labour endeavours.

Amongst the issues here, the contribution of women to household earnings may be considered to be as important as ever in a climate of economic insecurity, and in turn male job loss will create more female 'breadwinners' (Rake, 2009). Indeed, it has been estimated that in heterosexual couple families 31 per cent of working mothers are now the main or equal financial provider, up from 18 per cent in 1996-1997 (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013). The increasing numbers of women in work since the late 1970s has helped offset the flat wages and falls in income from male employment, which will have been hugely significant to many families in the past (Fawcett Society, 2013). In dual-earner couples, the median earnings gap between partners was 45 per cent in 1996-1997, down to 25 per cent in 2010-2011 (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013). Likewise, the average gap in paid working hours between coupled men and women has fallen from 18 hours per week to 13 hours over the same period, this narrowing more greatly attributed to a female increase than a male decrease (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013). It should be noted that with the exception of the top 20 per cent of male earners, all workers in the public sector – both male and female – earn more than those at comparable levels in the private sector, and male job loss in the public sector is likely to have equally profound impacts on their respective households.

All parts of the public sector have experienced falling employment rates between December 2009 and September 2014. Amongst the hardest hit areas of public sector employment is local government, which has experienced 568,000 job losses, the majority of which were full-time equivalents (ONS, 2014b; page 28: table 3).

Education is another part of the public sector that has been adversely affected on a significant scale, with a loss of 161,000 jobs over this period (ONS, 2014b; page 26: table 2). Women represented 82 per cent of education workers in 2010 (UNISON, 2011), supporting the original point about the greater parity in the gendered employment effects of this recession than those previous.

The government's current austerity agenda in this recession sees the route to economic recovery through private sector growth and job creation, which has a number of important implications for public sector employees. As will be discussed in a moment, many of these jobs are on non-standard working arrangements with record numbers of men fulfilling such positions, whilst women are faced with the weighting of job opportunities being created by the government's 'measures for growth' agenda towards male-dominated industries; all of which mean that many individuals are not yet achieving this public-to-private transition (Fawcett Society, 2013). For example, the science, engineering and technology (SET) and construction sectors have been targeted for growth yet women represent only 12.3 per cent of the SET workforce (Women's Budget Group, 2012) and 13.5 per cent of the construction industry workforce (Business Innovation and Skills Committee, 2012). It is possible that the combination of these factors will see previously full-time employed women and men, whose qualifications and employment histories are not entirely relevant to such industries (consider local government, health and education), struggle to find new full-time work.

A lack of full-time employment opportunities

Many of the new jobs created since 2008 have been part-time, with an increase in the total number of part-time workers of 608,000 between December 2009 and December 2014 (ONS, 2010; ONS, 2015b), and there is clear evidence of 'underemployment' in the current labour market (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011; 2013). Objective indicators of underemployment typically focus on time-related underemployment, namely the difference in desired working hours and actual hours worked, and 'credentials underemployment' that refers to the gap between qualifications and job roles (Cam, 2012). The proportion of people working part-time who desire full-time employment is up from 13.8 per cent in December 2009 to

the most recent figure of 16.1 per cent (ONS, 2015), and figures do not reveal the number of people classified as full-time who would also like to work longer hours (Bell and Blanchflower, 2013).

One issue to respondents of this study is that touched upon above; given that they were originally full-time dual-earners, they may not be able to acquire full-time work easily or immediately and this will have a clear impact on the overall household income and ability to perform unpaid work activities. A significant disjuncture in paid working hours than their previous full-time positions, or a prolonged period of time where a dual full-time employment arrangement is not in effect, is more likely to require a (re)negotiation of familial role and labour responsibilities. It will be interesting to see if there are any effects of differences in relative resources following employment loss, and any evidence of conformity to normative conceptions of gender in participant responses. In cases of female redundancy, the lack of full-time opportunities available may be the stimulus for a return to more traditional sexual divisions of labour, which will be insightful as cases of female redundancy in full-time dual-earner couples is rarely examined – the focus is virtually always on previously breadwinning males. Similarly, male redundancy may lead to greater levels of egalitarianism if alternate full-time work cannot be acquired; although the empirical literature presented in Chapter 3 highlights that this is not always the case. Part-time work is relatively less well-paid in the private sector, with women earning 30 per cent less than their counterparts in the public sector (TUC, 2012b). Involuntary reductions in working time in more liberal economies such as the UK are not compensated through government schemes as in many continental European countries, and thus this can increase financial strains on affected workers (Smith, 2009). The increase in involuntary part-time work has largely been driven by the growth in male employment in part-time jobs particularly in the private sector (Cam, 2012), and redundant males considering themselves to be breadwinners may even be reluctant to take up part-time work (Threlfall, 2000).

In labour market statistic data (ONS, 2010, 2015) a much higher proportion of men stated that their reason for working part-time was that they could not find full-time work (27.2 per cent compared to 12.3 per cent of women), representing an increase of 2.3 per cent for men between December 2009 and December 2014, and 2 per cent for women over the same period. This clearly indicates that a vast and increasing

number of women *and* men have to settle for reduced hours of paid work. It is probable that a range of structural factors (such as limited job opportunities and the level of income of a partner) and cultural factors (for example gender identity and parental identity) may influence these desires and ability to sustain part-time work. Those in part-time work who desire longer paid hours of work may make continuous attempts to find full-time work; perceive their time out of full-time work as temporary; or be less willing to accept a change in familial role (to secondary earner and potentially primary responsible for unpaid duties). Someone more accepting of a transition to part-time work may initiate a non-conflictual renegotiation of the sexual division of labour given the current labour market conditions. This may foster a move from a dual-earner arrangement to a one-and-a-half breadwinner model, although long-term aspirations for sharing both may still be held, and ultimately the desire for egalitarianism in their marriage.

Increased levels of temporary employment

Whilst incidences of part-time work have increased so too has temporary employment. The level of temporary employment stood at 1.704 million in December 2014 (ONS, 2015), representing an increase of 270,000 from the number of people temporarily employed in December 2009 (ONS, 2010). Perceptions that temporary employment positions are exactly that – only a short-term state of affairs – means that a high level of negotiation in the division of paid and unpaid labour is less likely. More permanent paid working arrangements may be sought, and any renegotiation of labour undertakings delayed until longer-term arrangements are established. If temporary arrangements are on a full-time basis there may be no perceived requirement for a negotiation as prior divisions of labour are maintained. Where temporary employment is on a lower weekly level of work hours, some renegotiation may occur, however this may not be long-term in nature. The definition of egalitarianism adopted in Chapter 3 incorporates a long-term aspiration to share non-employment responsibilities, and it is possible that during temporary (for example, part-time) arrangements, extra 'help' is offered with tasks but ownership of said responsibilities unchanged.

Across the five-year period from December 2009, women represent a higher proportion of temporary workers; however the number of men temporarily employed who cited an inability to find permanent work was higher than that for women. Close to half (37.9 per cent) of men cited this reason in comparison to 30.7 per cent of women (ONS, 2015), which itself is far from a trivial proportion. Clearly, considerable numbers of people are taking on temporary employment given a lack of permanent opportunities and this has implications for their long-term job security and paid employment endeavours in the sexual division of labour.

Self-employment on the rise

Growth in private sector employment is also partly due to increases in the level of those in self-employment, with an increase of 613,000 since the final quarter of 2009 (ONS, 2010; 2015). One issue for the increasingly large numbers of people adopting this type of working arrangement is that analyses of pay trends reveal that self-employment is increasingly associated with low pay. The vast majority of self-employed people earn less than the 'average' wage, particularly in the first few years (Fawcett Society, 2013). For example, the median income of self-employed workers was £10,300 in 2010 in comparison to an average income of employees that stands at £18,900 (TUC, 2012a). In the current economic climate self-employed people – in their greater numbers – are likely to struggle with cash flow difficulties and are operating in risky and uncertain conditions particularly for new firms in their infancy (Smith, 2009). There are further implications for the relative resources one may acquire and the household's ability to meet expenditures such as those associated with housing and childcare – with a proportion of any revenues likely to be used for reinvestment into new ventures rather than as a 'take home' salary.

Similarly, time availability may be reduced as extensive attempts are made to establish new ventures. Alternatively, being one's own boss may give an extra degree of flexibility over working hours, and many self-employed individuals are granted extra flexibility by working from home. These are all potential influences on the need for and degree of negotiation, and potentially on any changes in egalitarianism. Men have historically had greater numbers in self-employment; however, the female figure has risen rapidly, most probably as a consequence of

their greater level of employment change in the recent recession and policy at both the national and European levels that has made significant efforts to promote the level of female entrepreneurship (Villa and Smith, 2013). The issues raised here are therefore of potential significance to both increasing numbers of men and women.

Unemployment durations

A final condition in the current labour market that is relevant to this thesis is average durations of unemployment, which have increased since the recession began. There is a potential link here to situations where only temporary employment may be found, in that literature suggests unemployed men are unlikely to change their contributions to unpaid labour where unemployment is perceived as temporary (Gough and Killewald, 2011). In such circumstances high levels of negotiation are less likely if redundant partners expect to be back in employment fairly quickly and therefore a renegotiation of responsibilities is perceived as unnecessary. What is perhaps interesting about the increase in unemployment durations currently being reported is that literature also suggests that men's attitudes towards egalitarianism and actual divisions of unpaid labour, become more equitable over the course of long-term unemployment (Zuo, 2004). Twenty-seven per cent of people were unemployed for over twelve months in 2009, compared with 34.3 per cent of those in December 2014 (ONS, 2010, 2015). Particularly interesting to this end, therefore, is the consistent finding across the different age groups that women tend to spend shorter periods of time unemployed; evident in both the 2009 and 2014 labour market statistics (ONS, 2010; ONS, 2015). By interviewing respondents for a second time, after a period of six months has elapsed, a clearer picture of how attitudes and behaviour evolve if unemployment becomes longer than initially anticipated will be gained.

Employment conditions for non-redundant partners

This thesis acknowledges that household-level paid and unpaid working decisions will not only be affected by the partner undergoing employment change. There may be increased pressure on partners still in employment to ensure that their jobs remain

as secure as possible whilst the threat of redundancy is very real for many, and potentially a need to work overtime where available to compensate for their partner's loss of earnings. In the public sector – regarded as a 'good' employer not just in terms of pay but also conditions (Halford et al., 1997; Webb, 2001), the TUC (2010) found 1.2 million female employees regularly work unpaid overtime – an average of 7.1 hours per week per person. Large scale redundancies have added further to these levels of unpaid overtime for those who remain in post, leading to greater work intensification and inevitable consequences for the personal and family lives of working women (Working Lives Research Institute, 2012). The private sector has generally been far less progressive than the public sector in adapting to the caring needs of employees through the provision of good quality flexible and part-time work opportunities, and this issue needs to be considered when thinking about employment opportunities in the long-term – particularly those of women.

For example, the public sector has traditionally offered greater childcare provision with 10 per cent of public sector workplaces accommodating for children in comparison to 2 per cent of private sector workplaces (Hayward et al., 2007). This extends to a greater level of flexible working provision (Hooker et al., 2007), translated into a greater sense of entitlement for such work practices by employees. More requests for flexible working arrangements were received than in the private sector; 59 per cent of workplaces as opposed to 37 per cent; with 65 per cent of these requests in the public sector accommodated by the employer (Hayward et al., 2007). Other positive measured include the Gender Equality Duty introduced in 2007 that requires all public organisations to promote gender equality, and trade unions have lodged many equal pay claims for women in the public sector that contributed to the introduction of single pay spines for the whole sector (e.g. in health and local government) based on gender-sensitive job grading. Couples may find it more difficult to balance paid working and other commitments as a partner loses public sector employment and thus access to these benefits. This particularly in a context where – given the high employment rate of women and the shrinking welfare state workplaces need to be prepared to accommodate caregiver-employees – such policies and provisions are often seen as a luxury to be disbanded with during economic downturns (Evans, 2013).

In summary, rapidly declining public sector employment is being offset by increases in private sector employment that is potentially offering employees less in terms of pay and conditions. The number of people in part-time, zero-hour, temporary and self-employed capacities has increased, and therefore many people in employment find themselves in less secure working arrangements than may have been the case before the recession. As for those unemployed, competition for job opportunities is extremely fierce as the number of people economically active has increased, and competition may also come from the many individuals currently occupying part-time roles who desire longer working hours. The need for a greater number of paid work hours and for dual-earning is likely to have increased as real wages have been in decline, compounding the desire for full-time work. Ultimately changes in the labour market are heightening the financial squeeze on many families, who will have to negotiate how paid employment and unpaid work is balanced in a context of reduced state intervention.

Contemporary changes in social policy

Evidently, changes to existing policy and the implementation of new measures relating to employment or non-employment responsibilities (such as those concerning child care) will impact upon decisions made, and therefore processes of negotiation over divisions of paid and unpaid labour. There has been a suggestion that women face a 'triple jeopardy' as primary carers, as a result of the government's austerity agenda – not only cuts to public sector jobs, but cuts to welfare benefits and access to vital public support services undermined (Fawcett Society, 2013). Given the importance of dual-earning women's income to families and their ability to take part in paid employment, these changes are problematic for households as a whole. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 signalled the government's intent to reduce the welfare benefit cost by an estimated £18 billion over the five years that follow. It represents a strong exemplar of a labour market activation approach to welfare by aiming to make paid work more attractive than receiving benefits. The measures taken have a number of effects and implications that are relevant to this thesis.

One change has been the integration of means-tested benefits and tax credits into the new Universal Tax Credit (UTC) system that offers greater returns to working

families by way of benefits (not least as part of an attempt to reduce the number of workless households), representing an increase in the incentive for individuals to work if their partner becomes unemployed (Harkness and Evans, 2011). This carries an important gendered implication, because in contrast to what has occurred in previous recessions, women are now unlikely to follow their partners out of employment. Findings from past recessions show partnered women frequently followed their partners into unemployment (e.g. Bingley and Walker, 2001) as the available jobs were typically part-time and low-paid. Undoubtedly women have a greater attachment to the labour market now than before (Rubery and Rafferty, 2013). Analysing data from the Labour Force Survey, Harkness and Evans (2011) found that among partnered men with employed spouses who lost their jobs between 2006-2009, 89 per cent remained in work, with average hours amongst these women increasing over this period from 21 to 28 hours per week. This is somewhat reflected in the greater number of female breadwinning households currently (Ben-Galim and Thompson, 2013; Kanji, 2013).

There have been changes to child benefit that include a freeze on its rate for three years – the value of which will be cut by over 10 per cent during this period, after inflation and rising living costs are accounted for (Fawcett Society, 2013). Child Tax Credit was a universal benefit paid to all families with children, per child, and this is now means-tested with eligibility more restricted than before (McCracken et al., 2013). Another issue raised with the new UTC system is the reversal of child-related benefits being paid directly to the primary carer, who in the majority of cases is women. The UTC will be paid to one member of the couple only and couples must choose who will be paid, which will potentially negate the advantages of independent welfare incomes for women. Not least is the greater likelihood that child-related benefits will be subsequently absorbed into other household expenditure and the leverage for women's greater 'say' in household finances will also be reduced (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2012; McCracken et al., 2013).

Other reductions in welfare support have been implemented, for example the abolishment of the Health in Pregnancy Grant in January 2011 and restrictions on eligibility for the Sure Start Maternity Grant from April 2011 (Fawcett Society, 2012). Studies further show that maternity leave decisions are strongly influenced by financial considerations, and the recession is likely to force many new mothers into

uncomfortable compromises about the amount of time spent with their new-borns (Rake, 2009). The economic policies of the coalition government are also extending the need for private care work – which is more often carried out by women (Evans, 2013) - in what has been termed the 're-familiarisation' of welfare (McCracken et al., 2013). Indeed, a reduction in state support for children and families demonstrates a clear intent by the coalition government to not interfere in the gendered division of labour (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2012).

The reduced funding for services such as those providing childcare and social care should be placed in the UK context where public provision is already minimal comparatively to many other countries. In terms of private childcare, costs in the UK increased by over 6 per cent in 2012 (more than double the inflation rate of 2.7 per cent) making it prohibitively expensive for many families (DayCare Trust, 2013). Indeed, a recent survey by Netmums found that 44 per cent of respondents stated a lack of affordable quality childcare was a barrier to full-time employment (Fawcett Society, 2013). There have been cuts to day nurseries and childcare offered through children's centres in many parts of the country and after-school and breakfast clubs have been hit by an increase in fees charged by schools and local authorities to use premises (NEWomen's Network, 2013).

The situation regarding childcare, the reduction in benefits and welfare to work measures mean that single parents and adults in low-income households are under increased financial pressure to work (MacLeavy, 2011, McCracken et al., 2013). For middle-income dual-earner families working or not working is more a matter of choice made on the basis of household requirements and resources, which in the context of a contracting labour market privileges a more traditional single earner model in middle-income families (MacLeavy, 2011). For example, 'secondary earning' in the household calculation of Working Tax Credit incurs a high marginal tax and this may offset the gains of supplementary incomes that may act as a disincentivisation for such workers – which disproportionately applies to women (Brewer et al., 2010; Evans and Harkness, 2010; Lyon et al., 2006). In the context of this thesis, the lack of full-time and well-paying jobs at the moment for those affected by redundancy will have implications on their incentives to take such work, which applies to both the women and men made redundant (Grimshaw and Rubery, 2012). Ultimately, the government agenda has been to encourage labour market

participation whilst simultaneously reducing supports and childcare, which makes it increasingly difficult for families to manage their paid and unpaid working commitments.

Concluding remarks

The current context provides a fruitful opportunity to explore negotiations of paid and unpaid work given the suggestion that these constitute largely unquestioned behaviours if the routine is not unsettled. The evidence shows that what began as a 'man-cession', with male-dominated industries such as the financial and manufacturing sectors initially hit hardest, became a 'she-(au)sterity' with the huge losses in public sector employment that disproportionately affected women (Rafferty, 2014; Rubery, 2013b). Having been offered relatively more well-paid and flexible working options than many compatriots in the private sector, a significant proportion of those made redundant are also in possession of rather sector-specific qualifications that may also become problematic when acquiring new employment. Increases in the number of women *and* men occupying part-time, temporary and other non-standard forms of employment suggests that couples experiencing redundancy are faced with difficult decisions regarding how their paid and unpaid commitments are to be managed. By studying cases of male as well as female employment it is possible to offer a comparison of these responses. This, in the context of a reduction in state support for those who look to balance employment with caring needs, could lead to a renegotiation in the sexual division of labour amongst some couples.

A number of potential scenarios have been identified, for example given the lack of full-time, permanent (and often relatively well-paid) opportunities in the private sector currently, female redundancy and male redundancy may act as the catalyst for a revert to more conventional gendered divisions of labour or indeed unconventional divisions respectively. Drawing links to empirical and theoretical insights from Chapters 2 and 3, where redundant partners are unable to acquire new full-time work, the balance of relative resources and time availability in their households will change accordingly. Alternatively, adherence to normative conceptions may be a key influence on any negotiation process and decisions made, which may be revealed

even implicitly in interviewee accounts as they reflect on any reproduction of, or changes to, their sexual divisions of labour. The empirical literature offers mixed findings on this, and a closer examination of the negotiation process itself, and reasons offered by respondents for courses of action taken, will provide an invaluable insight into whether gender equipoises these other contextual factors in determining the likelihood of negotiation and egalitarianism.

Chapter 5: Research methodology

Overview

The findings in this thesis are based on data collected from 40 semi-structured, qualitative interviews over a six-month period. These interviews were conducted individually with partners in ten couples who have recently been affected by public sector redundancy. Each aspect of the research design, from the philosophical underpinnings through to data analysis techniques, is detailed in the sections that follow. Creswell (2012) suggests that qualitative research is appropriate when there is a need for a detailed investigation into a topic area, notably where theories are not available to explain the behaviour of participants and need to be developed. He suggests that the nature of the research questions should be concerned with *how* the population of study make sense of and understand their experiences. To recap, the research questions in this thesis are:

- Does a high level of negotiation between couples over their paid and unpaid working contributions foster egalitarianism?
- How can 'negotiation' regarding the sexual division of labour be more clearly and comprehensively conceptualised?
- How are (re)negotiations of the sexual division of labour practically accomplished?
- How are sexual divisions of labour characterised as low in egalitarianism maintained?
- What factors determine the likelihood and extent of a negotiation of paid and unpaid labour occurring?

A key focus in this thesis is understanding how a negotiation of responsibilities may be enacted and what the experiences of respondents practically undertaking negotiation *meant to them*, including how individuals experienced familial role change, potentially adjusting their gender ideologies. Given the lack of focus on negotiation in previous research, there is cause for the in-depth examination of the aforementioned processes that qualitative interviews can provide. This method is described as particularly amenable to studying 'the family' given its suitability for

understanding the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of family members – recognising that the diverse forms and experiences of different families (and their members) require methods that are malleable, sensitive and practical (Daly, 1992).

Theoretical perspective

Key in the design stages of research development is adopting a 'theoretical perspective', what Crotty (1998: 3) defines as 'the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria'. Here we are first and foremost concerned with ontology; what we believe constitutes social reality (Blaikie, 1993). The stance adopted in this thesis is based more upon realist assumptions concerning the ontological nature of social reality, recognising that meaning is a subjective process that is shaped by particular material contexts (Crotty, 1998, Sayer, 1992).

This perspective asserts that social entities such as gender relations, class relations, markets, social customs, and so forth exist independently of social actors and our investigations of them. Of course, the social world *is* social because it requires action on behalf of human beings for its existence. However, these social phenomena exist 'without the human actors involved having knowledge of them, conceptualising them, or constructing them in discourse' (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000: 11). For example, Sayer (1992) draws on Roy Bhaskar's (1979) illustration that people do not marry with the primary purpose of reproducing the nuclear family, nor engage in paid work in order to reproduce the capitalist economy, but this is the unintended consequence of, and necessary condition for, their activity. There is a commitment to accepting that the world is concept dependent and socially constructed, whilst maintaining a pledge to materialism. As Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2000) suggest, the unemployed cannot simply become employed by believing or declaring that they are so; it depends at a minimum on the availability of the means of production.

This is not to understate that gender, both as an identity and as a normative conception that itself influences individual behaviour, is not the product of an enduring, social process. Certainly, theorists in feminist research would not accept

the extant gender arrangements as either natural or unchangeable (Marshall, 2008), and being part of a family 'is not simply a question of fitting behaviour into a preordained set of roles or role expectations but rather routinely going about activities which create, recreate, sustain or perhaps modify these roles, statuses or identities' (Morgan, 1985: 187). Nevertheless, behaviour and experience are fashioned by biological, economic and social structures (King and Horrocks, 2010), such as the encompassing labour market structure, public sector austerity and loss of earnings that occur regardless of one's identification of each process. To say that social structures such as those concerning gender relations, and *meaningful* reality more generally, are socially constructed, is not to say that they are not real (Crotty, 1998, Maxwell, 2012). In the specific context of redundancy, participants are affected by very real, tangible processes that will have a clear effect on their subsequent behaviour. Thus, the material context is adjudged to play a key role in any familial role change and potential changes in subjective consciousness, such as in orientations to an egalitarian ideology.

Epistemology of course sits beside ontology to inform one's theoretical perspective. This is concerned with what counts as knowledge, including whether and how social phenomena can be known and how such knowledge can be demonstrated (Mason, 2002). There is overlap and a requirement for consistency between epistemology and ontology, as King and Horrocks (2010: 8) indicate; 'Without a perspective on the nature of social reality – how people might exist in the world – it would be impossible to consider what might count as relevant knowledge in the research process'. Guba and Lincoln (1989) add to this the methodological question; how do we go about finding out things based on these ontological and epistemological assumptions?

The adopted theoretical perspective accepts that a mind independent world exists, but that meaning is only attributed to this world when human beings engage with, and interpret, this world (Crotty, 1998; Sayer, 1992). Thus, although this world is a key influence on interpretations, as human beings engage with it there can be, and are, strikingly diverse understandings of the same phenomenon. We are not therefore committed to objectivism; an epistemological notion asserting that meaning exists in objects, independently of any consciousness (Crotty, 1998: 10). Neither is meaning 'created out of whole cloth and simply imposed upon reality. This is to espouse an

out-and-out subjectivism [rejecting] humans as beings-in-the-world' (Crotty, 1998: 43). Meaning is constructed as we engage with the world, and thus, the basic access to any social world is the accounts that people can give of their own actions. This would need to be 'in their own language'; containing the concepts they use to structure their world, the meanings of these concepts, and the 'theories' they use to account for what goes on (Blaikie, 2000). As people understand and make meaning differently, qualitative interviews allow for an in-depth exploration of these sense-making processes. In order to establish exactly how each individual responds to their changing familial position and any reorientations in their gender ideologies, this method offers such access. It should not be forgotten that method is foremost a practical matter – and whilst informed by our underlying philosophical assumptions, methods should be appropriate to the nature of the study and its purposes (Sayer, 1992).

Conceptualising the interview

Interviews have long been the subject of theoretical debate (a topic) rather than simply an instrument for contributing to wider theoretical and empirical debates about particular subject areas (a resource). Concerns over the ontological status of the interview in particular, have created competing perspectives on how data generated by interviews should be considered. If we imagine positivists at one end of the spectrum, their goal is to create the 'pure' interview; an objective, unbiased and precise approach to provide a 'mirror reflection' of the social reality that is 'out there', external to the interview setting (Maseide, 1990). At the alternate end of this spectrum, proponents of strong social constructionism posit that the interview 'is obviously and exclusively an interaction between the interviewer and interview subject in which both participants create and construct narrative versions of the social world' (Miller and Glassner, 2011: 132). Therefore, the interview can never be a mirror reflection of reality as it is a locally produced, context-specific interaction that has been designed to fit the interviewer's demands. 'The respondent can hardly 'spoil' what he or she is, in effect, subjectively shaping' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011: 153), which differs from the former approach where the aim is to remain as objective as possible. This creates something of a quandary to researchers who

accept the anti-positivistic stance that interviewee accounts are not an authentic window into reality, yet hope that their findings are not meaningless beyond the specific interview context (Miller and Glassner, 2011). By conceptualising these positions as opposing ends of a continuum, it is possible that researchers can adopt one of a range of approaches and methodologies that exist between the two (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000).

Qualitative interviewing

Interviews represent one of the most widely used methods of data collection in qualitative research. A key reason for this, and certainly the rationale for its adoption in this thesis, is its potential as an effective means through which to understand the world in which a respondent lives and works (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). The general features of interviews are well known, consisting of varying structures where questions are asked and answered between two or more parties. 'Qualitative interviews' refer broadly to those that are flexible and open-ended in style, generating detailed accounts from respondents 'in their own words' (King and Horrocks, 2010). More specifically, the interviews undertaken here are semi-structured in nature, with the intention that rather than imposing rigid, a priori terms and concepts on respondents, they are granted the opportunity to speak about their lives to a depth that gives rich context to their meanings (Punch, 2005). The case for qualitative research is well rehearsed, typically involving a celebration of its richness, depth, and ability to constitute compelling arguments about how things work in particular contexts (Mason, 2002). Open questions helps to create a more symmetrical and collaborative relationship in which participants are able to bring their own knowledge to bear on the questions in ways that the researcher might not have anticipated (Maxwell, 2012). This links back to the point above that the requirement for new insights into this topic means that limiting participant accounts to just those concepts that were pre-conceived would not suffice in a comprehensive engagement with the research questions.

Interview accounts as co-produced

In order to remain consistent with the theoretical perspective outlined, two frameworks (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011; Miller and Glassner, 2011) have been utilised to 'operationalise' these philosophical assumptions in the practical stages of data collection and analysis (as explicated in McLachlan and Garcia, 2015). The starting point for application of these frameworks is to recognise that interview accounts are collaboratively produced. Of course, by their very nature interviews already create a degree of 'unnatural pretence' given that two (or more) people sit down to talk about their lives or a specific topic of interest. As illustrated by the notion of an 'active interview'; 'Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasuries of information awaiting excavation – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers' (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 4). Interviews are recognised as a productive site of knowledge, whereby the interviewee not only holds facts and details of experience but, in the very process of offering them up for response, constructively adds to, takes away from, and transforms the facts and details. The respondent construes and calls on what is considered relevant, assembling the information so that it makes sense as a response, such that it coalesces into a circumstantially sensible story. In effect; 'The interview is a turn-taking system that requires that the interviewer proposes topics and that the respondent seeks to produce locally acceptable answers' (Miller and Dingwall, 1997: 59). In adhering to the realist principle that there is a discoverable reality to access, the mode in which we can gain access to respondents' social worlds beyond the interview setting (and these locally produced narratives) is through what Miller and Glassner (2011) describe as 'cultural frames'.

'Cultural frames' – finding realities in the interview

Miller and Glassner (2011) present a position they believe to be outside the objectivist-constructivist continuum highlighted above, and thus 'anti-dualistic' in the sense that it subscribes to neither end of the aforementioned spectrum. They begin by recognising that those we look to research experience their identities, for example whether based on gender, ethnicity or socio-economic class, regardless of whether we interview them or not. This applies within the interview setting also, and

although there may be a manipulation of the language used to purvey meaning in the interview, it does not necessary follow that interview accounts do not yield information about these identities and social worlds outside of the interaction itself. Miller and Glassner refer to 'cultural frames', which are how individuals make sense of their external experiences and present them in their locally situated interview accounts. Respondents use concepts and 'categories' from wider repertoires available as frames of reference that help to make sense of and allow them to report back on their reality external to the interview interaction, in a way that makes sense to the researcher.

It would be useful to qualify these points with an example from the pilot interviews conducted prior to actual data collection. For a husband who, prior to redundancy, shared breadwinning responsibility with his full-time employed wife, his familial roles (as a husband and father) were not defined by primary earning status. This was certainly the case as new, full-time employment was not acquired following redundancy. When discussing her husband's emotional response to job loss, and the effects this had on his familial role, his wife drew upon the wider 'cultural frame' of masculinity to convey how she made sense of the situation:

> *'To be honest, not being the main income provider hasn't been a principal concern for us, because he's not really your machismo type'.*

Here, this individual has drawn upon 'machismo', and associated connotations of machismo behaviour whereby breadwinning has traditionally been central to the male familial role. By situating her partner within this cultural frame, yet in a sense outside of the cultural frame given that he does not fulfil its ostensibly ontological criteria, she has been able to make sense of how her husband has managed his familial role change.

This cultural frame of machismo, which feeds into the broader cultural frame of masculinity, allowed the respondent to convey aspects of her social reality outside of the interview in this localised setting. Without elaborating on what she meant by 'not your machismo type' this response indicates an assumption that I the researcher, co-producing this narrative in the interview with both the questions and my very being there, understand what the cultural frame of masculinity entails. In other words, as a member of this shared reality outside of the interview – as well as within it – I know

that masculinity is often perceived to be determined by factors such as earning power and status, and therefore understand this referential frame. Essentially, meaning has been co-produced locally within the interview, with the respondent using constructs designed specifically so that I understand what was meant, yet reflecting (and granting access to) a reality external to the interactional setting in which these cultural frames make sense. This builds on ideas elsewhere that whilst acknowledging that interviews are not literal representations of a respondent's reality we do receive insights through their selection of details, what they present to us as 'facts' about their lives and experiences, etc. (Miller and Dingwall, 1997).

The 'whats' and the 'hows' of interviews

With a means to accessing this social reality beyond the interview setting, the interviews could be designed in such a way that these subjective processes could bear fruit in interviewee accounts. The way in which this was achieved was through supplementing the 'cultural frame' approach with a framework outlined by Holstein and Gubrium (2011). They adopt a somewhat similar position to Miller and Glassner's (2011) anti-dualistic stance, propagating that meaning is not constantly formulated anew in each interaction, 'but reflects relatively enduring and recognizable forms of meaning' (156). Certainly meaning is not predetermined and is adapted to the particularities of a given situation, but it is not absolutely unique in situations where research topics are presented by interviewers in certain ways; there are locally accepted ways of orientating to those topics; and so forth.

Consistent with the notion that interviewee narratives are collaboratively produced with the interviewer, Holstein and Gubrium (2011) distinguish the 'hows' of interviews from the 'whats'. The 'hows' of interviews refer to the more practical aspects of the interaction, specifically how the narrative process unfolds and is produced. In comparison, the 'whats' refer to the more substantive content of the interview, namely what is said. In this context, the whats refer to interviewee accounts of the negotiation process and feelings towards gender or familial role change. Holstein and Gubrium (2011) suggest that researchers give both the practical *hows* and substantive *whats* equal status in the research process. This advances the idea that interviews are commonly seen as not just a resource, but also a topic in

their own right: they are often analysed both for what interviewees say about their lives and experiences and how the information is communicated (Byrne, 2004; Elliott, 2005; Harris, 2008), yet this should occur in conjunction rather than one being the primary focus.

Linking the two frameworks

Following Holstein and Gubrium's (2011) direction, we are not simply concerned with the content of what is being said in the interview but also the nature of the interaction; as it is the combination of the whats and the hows that provide the cultural frame by which people make sense of their experiences. This was illustrated in the above example regarding 'machismo', where the content was important (*he's not really your machismo type*) as this presented us with the cultural frame – and how it was conveyed (for example, not being elaborated on) allowed insight into a 'reality' beyond the context of the interview setting. Both the substantive content (the whats) *and* the contextual, situational (hows) nature of interview are key to understanding our respondents' experiences of the social world. In order to maximise the potential to draw out these whats and hows, and ultimately cultural frames from interviewee accounts, questions relating to the interview guides were asked in such a way for this to bear fruit.

For example, asking redundant male interviewees 'How do you define your familial role as an unemployed father?' sought to encourage respondents to actively make sense of the category 'father', specifically in the context of unemployment. Therefore, meaning-making was communicated verbally as respondents engaged with the particular necessities of each probe. Responses received, such as 'I understand the father's role to be…' or 'Unemployment is at odds with how society typically defines fatherhood…' granted access to how interviewees attributed meaning to these categories as well as offering the substantive data specific to the research aims, i.e. how they defined their role within the family on a more personal level. At the analysis stage, codes such as 'father' or 'breadwinner' highlighted respondents' conceptions of the reality beyond the interview setting (for example societal conceptions of fatherhood) and how they experientially located themselves in relation to this reality (what breadwinning meant to them personally – based on

their own experiences and engagement with this reality external to the interview interaction). This aided when analysing how conceptions of gendered familial roles and egalitarianism were instrumental in determining behaviour, specifically changes in or the maintenance of labour divisions post-redundancy – as often the perceived naturalness of gender difference results in an implicit, as opposed to explicit, influence on outcomes. Similarly, reorientations towards egalitarianism, are likely to involve a reflection on both societal conceptions of gender and attitudes personally held previously, with respondents 'working' out their position when distancing themselves from these.

Pilot interviews

As discussed previously, a pilot study was conducted during the early stages of the research process in which ten couples completed interviews individually to discuss their post redundancy experiences. The sample contained largely private sector employees, recruited through a community support group for people affected by involuntary redundancy. The objective was to utilise the aforementioned frameworks and judge whether they were effective in generating data that was meaningful to the research questions. These pilot interviews were a little more structured than the eventual interview design that was actually undertaken for this study. Also, there was a greater attempt to foster biographical narratives, with some questions designed to facilitate prolonged accounts of past life and experience. Based on these pilot interviews a number of key revisions were made to the interview design that will be outlined in detail following an overview of the sample recruited for the actual (non-pilot) study.

Sample

Ten couples participated in the study with interviews conducted individually, away from the other partner, with one partner being interviewed followed immediately by the other. This immediacy ensured that partners did not confer or discuss the questions asked, which may have influenced the answers provided. The same process occurred six months after the initial interviews resulting in 40 interviews

being completed in total. Given the qualitative nature of the interviews and the desire for an in-depth exploration of each couples' experience, it was felt that this number of participants was feasible in the timescale available and comprehensive enough to draw out meaningful findings from the data collected. From the 40 interviews conducted it was decided that an understanding of how, and under what circumstances, a renegotiation of labour at household-level might occur could be gained, and any links between this process and egalitarianism in arrangements drawn.

In terms of the targeted sample, respondents selected for interview had to have been previously full-time dual-earning couples, and from which one partner had recently been made redundant (under three months prior to the initial interviews) from public sector employment. Secondly, the particular sample was selected in order to satisfy the desire to have five couples within whom a male partner suffered involuntary redundancy and five within which the female partner had been directly affected by job loss. The rationale for studying former public sector employees was outlined and discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Furthermore, households that utilised the services of domestic cleaners were excluded, in order to fully capture how male and female partners manage these responsibilities between themselves. Beyond this the criteria for respondents were not particularly stringent, for example there was no ethnic group, age category or salary cap targeted specifically; and although *married* couples were not specifically targeted, the ten couples who participated in the study were.

The lack of stringency in the demographic characteristics of participants was also born out of an interest to see how factors such as accrued savings and number of children (both of which were likely to be affected by age, salary cap, and so forth) affect the responses of couples to redundancy. For the purposes of studying the dynamic inherent in male and female gender roles each couple selected was heterosexual, thus consisting of a male and female partner. There was no requirement for those partners who had not been made redundant to work in the public sector as well as their partner. The demographic characteristics of the research sample can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Table 1: Research sample demographics (male partner redundant)

	Couple 1		Couple 2		Couple 3		Couple 4		Couple 5	
Name	Mike Warriner	Dawn Warriner	Alex Murray	Danielle Murray	Carl Meehan	Lorraine Meehan	Chris Denham	Lisa Denham	Colin Singleton	Kathleen Singleton
Age Category	40-49	40-49	20-29	20-29	20-29	20-29	30-39	30-39	40-49	40-49
Years married	21	21	2	2	6	6	14	14	5	5
No. dependent children (no. non-dependent)	1(1)	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	1(0)	1(0)	3(0)	3(0)	0(1)	0(0)
Place of residence	Manchester	Manchester	Sheffield	Sheffield	Leeds	Leeds	Sheffield	Sheffield	Newcastle	Newcastle
Ethnicity	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British	White British
Period of unemployment (to new employment /familial role)	11 weeks	n/a	8 weeks	n/a	4 weeks	n/a	3 weeks	n/a	7 weeks	n/a
Occupation (start of study)	Unemployed (formerly IT Consultant for NHS)	Local government	Unemployed (formerly strategy and performance division, DfE)	Care worker (private sector)	Unemployed (formerly advisor at job centre plus)	Child-minder (private sector)	Unemployed (formerly a member of strategy and performance division, DfE)	Accountancy bookkeeper (private sector)	Fire safety consultant zero-hour contract (formerly performance officer at fire service)	Training co-ordinator at education institute
Occupation (end of study)	Self-employed (IT consultant)	Local government	Care worker (private sector)	Care worker (private sector)	Sales advisor at mechanical showroom	Child-minder (private sector)	Unemployed (primary carer in family)	Accountancy bookkeeper (private sector -working extra hours)	Fire safety consultant zero-hour contract (formerly performance officer at fire service)	Training co-ordinator at education institute
Annual household salary: end of study (/pre-redundancy)	£30,000 – £35,000 (£35,000 - £40,000)		£40,000 - £45,000 (£50,000 - £55,000)		£30,000 - £35,000 (£45,000 - £50,000)		£20,000 - £25,000 (£60,000 – £65, 000)		£40,000 - £45,000 (£60,000 - £65,000)	

Table 2: Research sample demographics (female respondent redundant)

	Couple 1		Couple 2		Couple 3		Couple 4		Couple 5	
Name	Gemma Bardsley	Jay Bardsley	Patricia Carroll	Gerard Carroll	Josephine Woodhouse	Theo Woodhouse	Amanda Solomon	Colin Solomon	Diane Legg	Charles Legg
Age Category	20-29	20-29	40-49	40-49	20-29	30-39	30-39	30-39	40-49	50-59
Years married	4	4	20	20	5	5	9	9	16	16
No. dependent children (no. non-dependent)	1(0)	1(0)	2(1)	2(1)	2(0)	2(1)	2(0)	2(0)	0(2)	0(2)
Place of residence	Manchester	Manchester	Manchester	Manchester	Sheffield	Sheffield	Sheffield	Sheffield	Sheffield	Sheffield
Ethnicity	White British	White British	White British	White Irish	White British	Mixed Black (Caribbean) / White	White British	White British	White British	White British
Period of unemployment	3 weeks	n/a	5 weeks	n/a	4 weeks	n/a	7 weeks	n/a	2 weeks	n/a
Occupation (start of study)	Unemployed (formerly primary school teaching assistant)	Shop foreman at SME engineering works	Unemployed (formerly local government employee)	Chemist (pharmacy)	Zero-hour contracted substitute teacher (formerly fixed-term)	Graphic designer (Marketing)	Unemployed : awaiting start as conference organiser (formerly a team leader at DfE)	Project manager	Unemployed (formerly advisor at DfE) awaiting start as administrator (public sector)	Training and development manager (private sector)
Occupation (end of study)	Carer (zero hour contract in public sector)	Shop foreman at SME engineering works	Administrator (private sector)	Chemist (pharmacy)	Zero-hour contracted substitute teacher (formerly fixed-term)	Graphic designer (Marketing)	Conference organiser (private sector, part-time)	Project manager	Administrator (public sector)	Training and development manager (private sector)
Annual household salary: end of study (/pre-redundancy)	£30,000 – £35,000 (£35,000 - £40,000)		£40,000 - £45,000 (£50,000 - £55,000)		£30,000 - £35,000 (£45,000 - £50,000)		£45,000 - £50,000 (£60,000 – £65, 000)		£40,000 - £45,000 (£60,000 - £65,000)	

Participants of the study were recruited in three ways: two couples were accessed via a gatekeeper in the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), who forwarded the details to recently unemployed trade union members from the local government in Manchester. Five couples were recruited via a gatekeeper in the Department for Education offices at Sheffield, who was initially contacted by a colleague at Leeds University. This individual headed a redundancy 'pool' that included anyone considered particularly vulnerable to redundancy, and contact was made with those who had recently been made redundant, with contact information provided for anyone interested in participating in the research. Finally, three couples were recruited through contact at the UNISON National Delegate Conference 2013 in Liverpool, where research information sheets were distributed (see Appendix 1).

Contact was maintained with research participants via email between interviews to ensure that each was still in agreement to participate and also to organise the second set of interviews. Although time constraints limited the elapsed time between interviews to just six months, there are obvious benefits of conducting longitudinal research including the opportunity to track changes in attitudes and behaviour over time. In the literature Walby (1997) argues that cross-section analyses cannot tell us the full extent of how a given individual or cohort experiences structural change. There is also an emphasis in the literature on the need for more longitudinal studies of dual-earning couples experiencing a change in circumstance (e.g. Rapley, 2001; Sullivan, 2004) because much of the longitudinal data that does exist on changes in unpaid working contributions or changing attitudes towards gender relations (including paid and unpaid working roles) involves analyses that have often been quantitative; utilising time-use dairies and successive surveys in particular (e.g. Berthoud and Gershuny, 2000; Gupta, 1999).

After receiving emails expressing interest in the research from potential participants, contact was made via telephone with each interested party. Consent forms and requests for background information were then completed prior to interviews. Background information included demographic features considered potentially relevant in the analysis stage such as age and ethnicity (see Appendix 3). In each case it was agreed that interviews would take place in the homes of respondents, with the perceived offering of physical and psychological comfort (for interview details see Appendix 4).

The interview process

It has been highlighted elsewhere that open-ended questions were consistent with the underlying philosophical assumptions guiding the methodology, and from a more practical sense this design provided the more generically cited benefits of qualitative interviewing, notably depth and flexibility. Flexibility was key because, acknowledging that each individual's experience of life post-redundancy is different, the intention was to allow these different perspectives to bear fruit rather than imposing strict parameters on which aspects of their experiences they 'should' talk about. Furthermore, differences in the responses of participants to redundancy required flexibility, as subsequent behaviours and levels of negotiation were unlikely to be uniform across the research sample. For example, different questions were both necessary and essential to improve the quality of data where a couple renegotiates their paid and unpaid division of labour than a couple who had not. Therefore, rather than presenting fixed questions in a predetermined order throughout, interview guides were used as a helpful means of allowing respondents to present accounts in their own terms whilst also maintaining some degree of parallel with the research questions.

Interview guides represent the main revision of the pilot interviews conducted prior to the commencement of the actual study. These were constructed following the principles of both Kvale (1996), who indicates that outlining the main topics related to the research questions and prospective questions or relevant areas for questioning under each topic upholds the requirement for flexibility, and Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) suggestion to let participants' responses determine whether particular questions are necessary or appropriate as leading frames of reference for the interview interaction. Flexibility in the order and phrasing of questions, and a commitment to keeping them open-ended in nature ensures that participants have the opportunity to lead the interaction in unanticipated directions (King and Horrocks, 2010). Adherence to these guides in terms of sticking to these topics devised as relevant to the research questions does, however, implement some degree of standardisation across the interviews, allowing for a clearer comparative analysis.

For example, one topic on the interview guide was 'perceptions of fairness' (these guides can be seen in full in Appendix 2). Here is an illustration of how they were utilised in the practical moments of interviews:

Perceptions of fairness: How do you perceive the fairness of you and your partner's paid and unpaid working contributions?
- Has this changed during your response to the redundancy?
- What criteria is used to determine fairness (time available etc.?)
- How an unequal division is justified

The first thing to note is that this list of relevant question areas is far from exhaustive. Again, the idea is that respondent accounts can lead the interaction in certain directions, which may open up other relevant areas for questioning. Depending upon participant responses to the first, general question, the order and phrasing of the interest areas that follow could change. If partners stated that their divisions of labour were fair and expressed happiness with the existing arrangement, then the third area of interest (how an unequal division is justified) would not be an apt question area to engage in, and so forth. Whilst ensuring that questions were open-ended, probes such as that relating to time-availability could be used where appropriate, in order to draw links to existing theory and factors deemed to determine sexual divisions of paid and unpaid labour. The rationale for these interview strategies will be further developed in the analysis section that follows.

This topic feeds into what the literature propagates as a key determinant of division of labour negotiations – namely that where divisions are perceived to be unjust, the partner undertaking a disproportionately larger share is more likely to become assertive and instigate a negotiation. This reflects the development of each topic and potential question areas on the interview guides, where they were designed specifically to contribute to the research questions in some way. Patton's (1990) categorisation of question types was useful here. Amongst those recognised, 'background/demographic' questions, which are relatively simple and descriptive, were completed before the interviews took place. During the interviews questions were largely 'experience/behaviour' (reflecting on or indeed constructing experience) and 'opinion/values' questions. As Kvale (1996) notes there is an

overlap between what participants offer up as their opinion and what they consider to be knowledge – i.e. what they believe to be 'fact'.

It would also be appropriate to relate this extract of the interview guide back to the frameworks outlined earlier in this chapter. By asking *how* each individual perceives the fairness of their divisions of labour, the criteria used to determine fairness, and how any unequal divisions are justified and maintained it is possible to see how respondents make sense of their arrangements. For some time literature (e.g. Gager, 1998; Wilkie et al., 1998) suggests that perceptions of fairness are commonly determined via social comparison (particularly to previous, more traditional generations), and thus individuals often refer to other couples as well as social norms regarding gender-appropriate behaviour in order to make sense of (particularly unequal) divisions of paid and unpaid working shares. The style of questioning can thus be conducted in a way consistent to that outlined previously, where the sense-making processes (the *hows*) are clearly explicated alongside *what* is said.

Recognising that interview accounts are collaboratively produced involves acknowledging and managing one's role as researcher (Willig, 2001), and the decisions about how to present myself were not underestimated. It is widely noted (e.g. Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) that such decisions can affect the behaviour of respondents, beyond demographic characteristics such as age and gender. Mindful of, particularly, feminist critiques of the interview process (Oakley, 1998; Punch, 2005) I presented myself simply as a 'learner' who wished to hear about their experiences, but also as a professional academic researcher who was concerned that the research was carried out to ethical standards. Trust and rapport was built up by a clear presentation of the nature and aims of the study, with respondents made completely aware that the data would contribute towards a PhD thesis studying the determinants of the sexual division of labour, and that my objective was to publish some of the findings in an academic journal too.

Each interview was audio recorded in full, in order to capture the whole interaction with playback opportunities when transcribing. This offered a more permanent, accurate and unbiased record of the interview for analysis. Recording equipment is a potential influence on people's responses (Warren, 2001), the limit of which was sought by re-emphasising confidentiality. To avoid receiving what respondents felt

would be the 'right' answer given that responses were recorded, it was explained that the best responses would simply be given by providing a full and honest account of their own views and experiences.

The same principles were upheld for the second interviews in terms of presentation of the self, location, utilisation of interview guides, and so forth. These interviews provided an exploration into whether and how each respective situation and division of labour had changed over the six month period, ensuring a relatively significant period of time had elapsed since the redundancy. Essentially, second interview data was used to compare the initial data set: from a practical perspective to see if a negotiation of labour divisions had occurred, and thus how themes in the initial interviews were reproduced or assigned new meaning following changes experienced in their daily lives. For example, identity (both gendered and in terms of their familial and/or employment role) was an area of interest on the interview guides. There was a desire to explicate how individuals continue to make sense of their changing roles, and again whether this may have changed in light of any alterations in circumstance. As can be seen in Table 1 and Table 2, some of the interviews were conducted before a month had elapsed since the redundancies and it may have been the case that couples who had not initially made adjustments to their division of labour did so if, for example, unemployment became more longer-term than initially anticipated. Questions were consistent with the style of the first interviews, with a particular focus on 'how' questions, such as 'How have unpaid work contributions changed since we last spoke?', and 'How has the renegotiation process been managed as time has elapsed?'

Data analysis techniques

This research strategy followed the phronetic iterative approach highlighted by Tracy (2013), an approach designed for qualitative data from relatively unstructured interviews, where the emphasis is on codes and themes emerging from the data rather than being wholly predetermined. In this process, data analysis is developed through an alternation between a consideration of existing theories and research interests (on the one hand) and emergent qualitative data on the other. This approach comprises an inductive process whereby first level coding of the emergent

qualitative data is followed through to third level coding forming a more deductive stage of existing theory consideration (see Figure 2). This iterative process of theory building is cyclical between the two stages with second level coding providing more comprehensive analysis of first level (descriptive) codes before links to existing theory are drawn.

Figure 2. Iterative approach (Tracy, 2013, 8)

Existing Theory   **Emergent Qualitative Data**

Iterative Approach
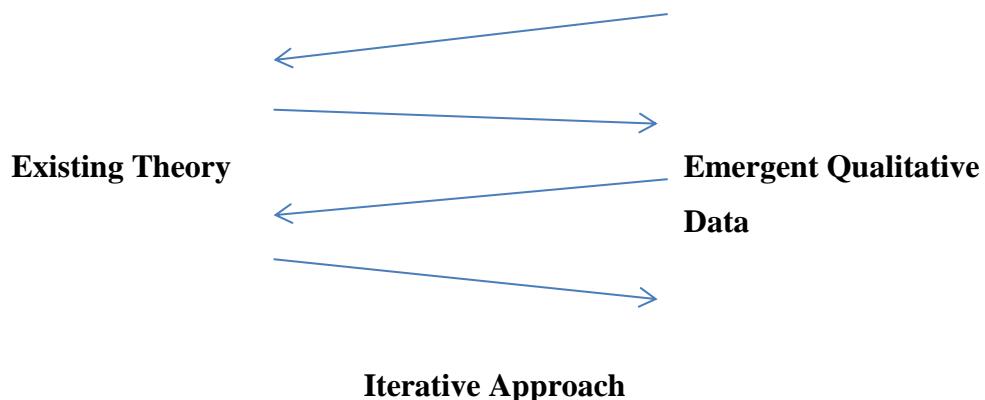
As Tracy (2013: 184) proposes, 'Iteration is a reflexive process in which the researcher visits and revisits the data, connects them to emerging insights, and progressively refines his or her focus and understandings'. The rationale for using this approach stems from the fact that there is a dearth of research focusing on individuals' actual accounts of the negotiation process, meaning that there was a requirement to allow new insights to emerge from respondent accounts rather than purely relying on predisposed researcher-led factors. Nevertheless, existing literature did form part of the research design. As highlighted above, as one example, propagations in the literature that assertiveness for a renegotiation of labour divisions is likely to be born out of perceptions of fairness played a key role in selecting relevant question areas of that interview guide topic. Similarly, probes such as that relating to 'time availability' in the same example illustrate that factors deemed important in labour determinations were forming part of a deductive process in data collection and subsequent analysis.

Identifying themes

In terms of analysing the data, themes were identified in the transcripts and elaborated upon through the three stage process highlighted as part of the phronetic iterative approach in the introduction to this chapter, practically aided through a similar conceptualisation of these stages propagated by King and Horrocks (2010). They define themes as 'recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question' (King and Horrocks, 2010, 118). The first stage of this thematic analysis is 'descriptive coding' which – following a read through an entire interview transcript without any attempt to code in order to become familiarised with the context of the interview (and therefore accounts) as a whole – involved identifying parts of the transcript likely to be helpful in answering the research questions. This represents a key part of the inductive stage of the iterative approach. Single word or short phrases were attached to label each descriptive code as were brief comments indicating what was of interest in the highlighted text. Descriptive codes particularly included anything it was deemed might aid in understanding the views, experiences and perceptions of participants. This was completed each couple at a time, in order to identify similar themes emerging across the accounts of both partners, with some redefining of codes where appropriate to aid in a more coherent analysis. This stage was carried out by hand, where line numbering and wider margins with double spaced lining enabled comments to be made on each transcript.

The second phase is 'interpretative coding', whereby descriptive codes that appeared to share some common meaning were grouped together and interpretative codes developed which went beyond describing relevant features of participants' accounts to an interpretation of their meaning. This was organised in a hierarchical system of themes and subthemes (interpretative codes and descriptive codes) presented as a list with a numbering system. Punch (2005) refers to this as 'memoing'; 'A memo is the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding…it exhausts the analyst's momentary ideation based on data with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration' (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 72: cited in Punch, 2005).

Finally, and following on from this, was stage three which involved the identification of overarching themes. This involved a higher level of abstraction, drawing upon relevant theoretical ideas and applied concerns underlying the study. Here the more deductive stage of this adopted approach bears fruit, whilst simultaneously the cycle continues as a return is made to the emergent data with these existing concepts and theories in mind. For example, concern about 'contributing' to household needs was identified as a key motivation for a renegotiation of unpaid duties amongst the recently redundant. Common expressions of this included 'earning my keep', 'pulling my weight', and so forth, which abstracted to concerns over their input in terms of a lack of relative resources and greater time availability to take part in such responsibilities. The emergent and recurring theme of 'contribution' clearly related to a number of the explanations put forward for the instance of particular paid and unpaid working arrangements (discussed in Chapter 2) such as resource bargaining theory. Interesting findings emerged as such theories were brought into the analysis. For example, contrary to the notion widespread in such theorising, rather than instances of individuals bargaining their way out of domestic duties through higher earning resources, it was commonly those with lower resources who dictated the bargaining process by assigning themselves higher shares of unpaid workloads in a bid to indeed 'earn their keep' or 'pull their weight'. This extended to both men and women recently unemployed, where in many cases both actively looked to take on more responsibility even where unemployment was perceived as likely to be short-term.

Reflected in both the philosophical underpinnings and sample size is a greater desire for exploration and explanation which is acutely sensitive to context, than generalizability of findings as a primary concern. As suggested by (Williams, 2004: 23), 'Generalising theories, or even aggregate statistics, cannot fully capture the variability, processes and meanings in people's responses to changes. That part of the picture requires a closer investigation of people's own experiences'. The research strategy adopted in this thesis was designed to offer insights which may inform generalising theories and their development through a more in-depth explication of the interactions of partners. As was highlighted in Chapter 2, there has been a distinct lack of focus on what individuals themselves believe to determine and encompass in negotiations of the sexual division of labour, and the objective is to

gain in-depth insight into this process from which a platform for hypotheses and more large-scale deductive analysis may be undertaken in future research.

Ethical considerations

In terms of ethical considerations the interviews cover issues of a sensitive nature and were a potential source of distress for research participants. This was communicated very clearly when initial contact was made with potential participants, ensuring that anyone expressing an interest in being interviewed was in the position to make an informed decision. Information sheets (Appendix 1) included an overview of the study and its objectives, and an invitation to participate. This included a section on what was expected of participants; acknowledging that issues relating to job loss would be discussed, and that this may have been an uncomfortable topic of inquiry for some individuals. During the initial contact, prospective respondents were invited to ask any questions or air any reservations they had about the research or indeed their participation in the process. Opportunities for discussions between couples themselves were given before individual and collective agreement for participation was obtained. The accompanying consent forms ensured that respondents had read the relevant information and agreed to take part, and acknowledgement that their data could be used in future research. As included on the signed consent form, respondents were given the opportunity to opt out of the research at any time over the duration of the process if they so wished.

Alongside sensitivity, the other major ethical consideration was anonymity for research participants. In terms of anonymity, complete confidentiality was ensured for all individuals, with names in the main body of the research changed. Regarding data protection, all information was stored either temporarily on the audio recording equipment used during interviews and on a personal laptop computer, to which access was exclusive and a password required for use. The data kept was that considered adequate, relevant and not excessive, such that only information needed was actually stored and kept only for the appropriate amount of time.

Limitations of the research methodology

The major limitation of this research has been the lack of diversity in the respondent sample. Some of this was deliberate, for example it was not the intention here to study the determination of divisions of labour in same-sex marriage, or families that do not contain at least one full-time earner. However, the lack of representation of ethnic minorities, for example, was a consequence of difficulties in gaining access to such groups. Contact made with potential participants was not exclusionary, but those who expressed an interest in taking part in the research were predominantly White British. The focus here on ethnic minorities reflects the differences outlined in Chapter 4 regarding employment rates, caring behaviours, and so forth that would clearly impact upon the data collected. There is also an indication that black minority and ethnic (BME) women may be particularly adversely affected by public sector job cuts, and the recession is likely to inhibit the rise of women (especially those from BME and working-class families) into good careers (Bradley, 2013). For example, a survey of seventeen local authorities in London found that BME women were disproportionately affected, including one council where BME women accounted for five per cent of the workforce, but twenty three per cent of redundancies (UNISON, 2012). A call for more, larger-scale research targeting a greater mix of respondents is therefore an important contemporary issue and should help increase our understandings of these differences.

This research has also paid little attention to the contributions of other household members, and in many families children may contribute to household chores and potentially finances. To conceptualise the role of children within the family as purely a drain on resources (effort exertion, time, monetary expenditure) rather than a potential source of assistance, is a disservice to the households whereby a contribution is made. The respondents in this study did report only minimal contributions of rent and domestic work from children; however there were cases in particular where older siblings would 'mind' younger siblings for short periods of time. The role of children in household determinations of sexual divisions of labour should perhaps form a more central focus in future research.

Another limitation has been the inability to record changes in behaviour and emotions in-between the interviews. Clearly there is a requirement for retrospective

reflection on the part of respondents, and the data may have benefitted from diary-keeping to log job applications, times spent on unpaid work, and feelings about changing roles and identities as they happened. This was an initial objective and requirement listed in the first information sheets distributed to potential participants. However, difficulties in recruiting the desired number of couples meant that this requirement was dropped in order to encourage more participants to engage in the study. Diaries offer the advantage of immediacy, which is particularly useful in the context of this research as the work and family domains are dynamic and change daily, and particularly emotional experiences can be lost or diluted using purely retrospective methods (Symon, 2004). This would have complimented the interview data, potentially allowing for an examination of the more meticulous, relational work that is embedded in the routine, daily management of work and family responsibilities (Radcliffe, 2013).

Linked to this may be questions about other potentially fruitful methods. In particular, it was initially considered that some kind of participant observation may be beneficial, whereby the negotiation process between partners could be monitored in order to see how the process actually unfolded, as opposed to relying on respondent reflections on it. As useful as it would have been to observe the (re)negotiation process itself, there are a number of issues. As is found in the literature, it became evident during the interviews that an explicit and concerted effort at negotiation is actually quite rare, and certainly not conducted as a one-off prolonged discussion between partners. It would therefore be difficult and time-consuming to observe disparate discussions over an extended period of time. Alternatively, orchestrating a sit-down discussion between partners is unlikely to foster any negotiation that offers a true reflection of how discussions would unfold without my involvement or presence. The situation would be no less 'fabricated' than interviewing, where it was felt that actually interacting with respondents and properly opening up issues pertinent to the research would be most useful. As stated throughout, the design of these interviews did allow respondents to breach into areas that were not pre-conceived.

Concluding remarks

This section has outlined the chosen methodology of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with partners in ten couples affected by redundancy. Respondents were interviewed individually, and twice over a period of six months. It is worth reiterating that the rationale behind this research strategy is a lack of in-depth focus on those people making the decisions about their sexual divisions of labour. If we are dissatisfied with current explanations for these divisions would we not be well served to ask individuals how their paid and unpaid working endeavours were determined? This reflects the call of researchers such as Speakman and Marchington (1999) highlighted in Chapter 2. Many studies on this issue have been quantitative, comparing aggregate figures of paid and unpaid working hours, earnings, and so forth in order to hypothesise about current theorisations (Casper et al., 2007). As stated by Radcliffe (2013: 164), 'The everyday reality of people trying to manage work and family involves complex processes and dynamics, where reconciling different interpretations of events is a daily occurrence'. Of the research that has interviewed household members about shares of paid and unpaid work this has often been to 'test' the interactional-level theory of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) rather than explicitly determining the key causes of specific labour divisions.

This research has adopted the phronetic iterative approach of Tracy (2013) in order to allow respondent accounts to lead data generation, whilst being mindful of current theories and how they inform, and are informed by, the data simultaneously. Utilising the frameworks of Holstein and Gubrium (2011) and Miller and Glassner (2011) the philosophical underpinnings have been operationalised in the more practical moments of data collection, including interview guide design. Mindful of the limitations outlined above, the findings chapters that follow illustrate the key stages of the negotiation process, its links to the incidence of egalitarianism, and the factors that were key to influencing the likelihood and extent of each for those studied in this research. This provides valuable insights into the negotiation process household individuals engage in when organising and managing paid and unpaid work, which can stimulate large-scale research to represent the wider population more optimally.

Chapter 6: 'Negotiation' as a mechanism for understanding the sexual division of paid and unpaid labour

Each of the four sub-research questions represent important elements of formulating a clear basis for understanding the principle research question, concerned with the relationship between negotiation levels and the extent of egalitarianism in a couple's sexual division of labour. Each of the four chapters that follow focuses specifically on a sub-research question, with links drawn to the main research question throughout. This first chapter formulates a clearer conception of 'negotiation' in the context of determining household sexual divisions of labour (the first sub-research question). Respondent orientations to negotiation are examined based on the definition developed (instances of high or low levels of negotiation), and we can then begin drawing links to its relationship with egalitarianism. A typology is configured based upon the instances of each, with an overview of where couples in this study are situated and how negotiation was conceptualised for couples across these groups. This chapter also presents some of the more general findings that give context to those that follow, such as an insight into how responses differed depending upon whether the female or male partner was made redundant across couples.

Formulating a clear and comprehensive conceptualisation of negotiation

Explicit negotiations

It is possible to begin formulating a definition of 'negotiation' based upon references made to this process by respondents, particularly those in instances where relative shares *were* actively renegotiated. It was outlined in Chapter 2 that existing research has positioned negotiation as both the practical management of paid and unpaid working commitments and also an interactional, discussion-based process. In line with these definitions, respondents conceptualised the process as both; namely in terms of a purposeful, on-going dialogue regarding the potential ways in which paid

and unpaid labour was organised between partners; and also practical undertakings that enabled the dual-management of both responsibilities. For example:

> *'It takes a lot of talking things over. In order to balance both of our work commitments and everything else outside of work, it needs both of us to compromise where possible. We're both given some degree of flexibility at work, so we plan what days we can bring some work home or make the time up during lunch breaks, and go from there. We couldn't manage if both of us didn't negotiate at work as well as with each other, so I think it's important that you're both willing to sit down, work out what's required and what you can do, and then go through with those plans as best as possible'* (Dawn Warriner, second interview).

Here there is a clear reference to talking, 'working out' and planning, which appears to constitute the verbal negotiation with each other. This also incorporates negotiating verbally *at work* but also 'going through' with plans that encompasses the more practical fulfilment of managing these often conflicting demands. Meanwhile, in the majority of cases studied in this thesis only low levels of negotiation materialised. Nevertheless, when describing a situation whereby little negotiation took place, respondents often alluded to this process in much the same way:

> *'We've never really sat down and discussed how things could be worked out. It probably sounds a little impractical given that we both work full-time and of course there are always other things that need doing, and when work is quite intense it's not always easy to even get away on time. Realistically there will come a time where we do need to figure out how care can be better managed if we both want to continue working. That may involve changing jobs for more flexibility or reducing our hours if the places we work now allow it. But so far no, we go about things in a manner you might describe as just "getting on with it" in my mind'* (Jay Bardsley, first interview).

It is perhaps interesting that this notion of 'sitting down' to negotiate was evoked in both instances, as was the case across a number of cases. Respondents clearly felt that negotiation involves a purposeful interaction, with the objective of reaching a worked-out arrangement regarding how paid and unpaid responsibilities could be

managed. 'Sitting down' conjures images of 'round-the-table discussions' highlighted in the literature as a potential way in which partners may negotiate these responsibilities (e.g. Finch and Mason, 1993). Again this latter account acknowledges the more practical requirement to alter working arrangements and so forth as a means to practically accomplish any worked out agreement. Here this is represented as the need to alter paid working arrangements, whether by negotiating with their employer or actively seeking a new working role to manage the demands of unpaid labour.

Significantly, Lisa Denham gave an account not too dissimilar to that of Jay above when acknowledging that there had not been any extensive level of negotiation prior to redundancy. However, after the initial interviews Lisa and her partner Chris went on to engage in high levels of negotiation, and her perception of what constitutes a negotiation retained the same features when reflecting on their on-going process of negotiation:

> *'Given the changes in Chris's work schedule we did start to do things a bit differently. With extra time around the house he did show that he wanted to do more, but was a little unsure about where to start with certain things because for as long as we can remember I've done most of it! So I don't think you can just bring about change without talking it through. Whether that's about what things need doing, what things he's comfortable with, how best to do them, every aspect of it. And for us the discussions continue alongside these activities 'til we get things right'* (Lisa Denham, second interview).

It is possible at this point to begin outlining a conceptualisation of negotiation, as interviewees saw it, as purposeful discussions (plural, as particularly those partners who felt that they had engaged in negotiation noted that dialogue on how to plan and execute management of responsibilities was on-going) and the practical undertaking of bringing these discussions (and associated plans of action) into fruition.

Implicit negotiations

What became strikingly apparent however is that while respondents were clear on explicit incidences of negotiation, there was much more to this process in terms of

what we may refer to as 'implicit' negotiations. These were much more difficult to conceptualise as respondents often spoke in terms of 'routine' and lost sight of the negotiation that had actually occurred within this, perceiving a lack of explicit discussion regarding each partner's share to mean hardly any negotiation took place. As configured in existing research (e.g. Evertsson and Nyman 2009; Finch and Mason, 1993), implicit negotiations may involve little or potentially no verbal dialogue at all, yet form a significant contribution to determining the labour undertakings of each partner:

> *'Personally I think things become established early on in a relationship and you kind of stick to those routines. I wouldn't suddenly wake up one morning and think right, I'll check the oil on the car, I'd leave that alone for him to tackle. I don't recall much "negotiation" at all, there are just some things you are better at and vice versa, and you simply do the jobs you're good at. The question of who does what became established and unfortunately for me I must have taken the initiative on more things…and that kind of set the tone really'* (Gemma Bardsley, first interview).

> *'It's difficult to pin-point exactly when and how we…I'd say reached an agreement but that implies that we did sort of talk about and agree on who does what. We certainly didn't draw up a plan of what each of us could or should do, it just…became so. That's probably not a very helpful description! But I really can't confidently say how these things came into being. Yet we both have our own jurisdictions if you like. There's jobs I do and there's jobs she does, and of course some we both do depending on how we're fixed or possibly do together'* (Colin Singleton, first interview).

At the very least labour shares have been determined by practical engagement in specific tasks and a division of domestic labour 'negotiated' through partners undertaking certain duties and not others. Illustrated particularly in the latter quote were difficulties in describing how labour shares were negotiated in the absence of explicit conversations, where partners may have been able to recount the more explicit planning and spoken aspects of managing their household responsibilities had such discussions taken place. Yet clearly these more implicit negotiations have played a huge role in establishing long-standing divisions of labour that in this study

had been disproportionately weighted towards female partners, and had become taken-for-granted. Subsequently, the absence of explicit negotiations continued as these divisions became routine, supporting assertions in the literature that daily tasks such as who cooks and cleans are rarely subject to clear or prolonged discussion (e.g. Legerski and Cornwall, 2010).

That interviewees struggled to account for how labour divisions were negotiated in the absence – in their eyes – of explicit negotiation itself, means that we are left to formulate our own interpretations of these processes to a degree. Respondents often alluded to the notion that when they began co-habiting, rather traditional divisions of unpaid labour were commonly adopted. This was not presented as the result of any overt attempts at female-subordination, but rather a situation that quite simply 'unfolded' without much verbal interaction. Consider:

> *'We had what you might call a pretty traditional setup with regards to who does what around the house. It's difficult to explain why to be honest because it kind of just happened. I'd spent more time doing those things before we moved in together so maybe in some unspoken way it seemed logical that I would continue to do those things. Moving in with your partner is obviously a big deal and you want it to go smoothly. Moving house is stressful enough as it is; if it's plagued by arguments and disagreements then things probably don't bode well for you both long-term. And when you get a new place you want it to be presentable, you want to invite people round and receive nice comments. So possibly for those reasons…but it certainly wasn't the result of any kind of deliberation. I don't think we talked about it much at all'* (Diane Legg, first interview).

In Chapter 2 the idea of 'silent bargains' was introduced, whereby partners act without a great deal of engagement with their partners about what they plan to do. It is possible that partners may act in their own self-interest, pursuing individual goals above those of the household and therefore opt to pursue courses of action without consultation. Alternatively, partners may undertake courses of action (following non-verbal decisions made) that they believe *are* in the interests of their household as a whole above their own personal needs or desires, which again may not require discussion if they believe that they know what is right for other household members.

Indeed, the economic exchange models of household divisions of labour (those relating to bargaining) have been shown largely to fail to recognise that some individuals acquire much of their life satisfaction and happiness by their relationships, which are strengthened by these more selfless acts. One could argue from the account above that Diane acted in the interests of her household by engaging in a disproportionately higher share of household chores, or alternatively that her partner Charles acted in self-interest by undertaking a lower than equal share of the domestic burden from the beginning.

What is apparent is that divisions of paid and unpaid labour are not always determined by overt discussions. Women in this study demonstrated a greater sense of moral obligation to undertake higher shares of unpaid labour, yet attempted to distance these rather traditional divisions of labour from normative conceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour. In other words, they expressed the view that they did not simply follow perceptions and expectations about male and female roles within paid employment and the family, merely that their divisions resulted purely due to personal circumstances. It would also appear from this sample that men are satisfied to maintain situations where no overt discussions take place surrounding labour divisions when they undertake disproportionately lower shares, and this has become 'routine' and essentially accepted without challenge. Many male respondents had difficulty in explaining the disjuncture between their own individual shares and their partner's disproportionately higher shares of labour when all bar one espoused non-traditional views pertaining to gender and familial roles:

> *'We're talking about something that, by and large, underpins our everyday life. These things are so…normal I guess, so taken-for-granted because they've been done for so long and nothing really changes in your daily life that causes you to stop and say oh, well this needs to change, and we quite simply didn't. When you do stop and actually look at it, it's clear that the amount of housework and caring we do between us is not equal. For me personally, I have a high-pressured job so I guess subconsciously it suited me to not come home and continue doing jobs, and whilst it was not causing any real problems between us I've not looked to change things. But I'm a fair person, which is obviously a little contradicted by my actions. But if Gemma had said something about it being unfair that I don't do more around the*

house and stuff then I certainly would have worked on it' (Jay Bardsley, first interview).

Women and men do not appear to be on a level playing field when it comes to dividing up (particularly unpaid) labour, and gendered expectations may form an instrumental role in determining this - potentially negating some negotiation where normative conceptions implicitly or explicitly influence behaviours. These issues will of course be explored in greater detail as the analysis develops over the following chapters. The key point for the moment is to acknowledge how these more implicit elements of negotiation contribute to determining divisions that are largely unquestioned until the daily routine is itself disrupted. Certainly in this thesis, all couples displayed and indeed indicated that there had not been high levels of negotiation prior to redundancy, with job loss acting as the catalyst for a renegotiation in those cases where levels increased.

Using the data generated in these interviews it is possible to formulate a definition of negotiation in this context as:

The division of paid and unpaid household labour based upon explicit, purposeful discussion between household members, and/or the often implicit decisions or actions that are taken by members with little or no verbal communication, and the subsequent practical undertaking of these labour endeavours.

Respondents revealed various orientations to this conceptualisation of negotiation, ranging from high to low levels. In particular, high levels of negotiation involved the engagement of *both* partners in purposeful dialogue over an *extended* period of time. This requires a sustained commitment to continued discourse around how the demands of paid and unpaid work can be planned, organised and managed, and likewise a long-term commitment to any agreed practical undertakings. In the context of examining whether negotiation is positively associated with moves towards more equitable divisions of labour, these aspects that are constitutive of high levels of negotiation appear invaluable. Low levels of negotiation therefore imply that there was not an on-going effort from both partners to discuss and practically execute plans regarding the division of labour. The reasons for this, tactics employed by partners looking to avoid negotiation, and all other relevant emergent themes from the data are examined in the chapters that follow.

Orientations towards negotiation: high and low levels

With a clearer conception of negotiation in this context it is possible to examine its relationship with egalitarianism more effectively. Based on the points made above that high levels of negotiation imply a dual commitment to discussing and practically managing paid and unpaid labour responsibilities, one may hypothesise that the two are positively linked. In other words, high levels of negotiation will increase the likelihood of a move towards greater egalitarianism. There is considerable support for this assertion in the analysis that follows yet such a claim does require qualification as a number of cases do contradict this notion, at least at a more superficial level. In particular, instances of high levels of negotiation yet low egalitarianism achieved, and low levels of negotiation that resulted in high egalitarianism, indicate that the relationship is more complex.

Adopting the idea introduced in Chapter 3 (Figure 1) in developing a useful framework for analysing couples based upon the level of negotiation and egalitarianism enacted, it has been possible to discern instances of high and low negotiation, and also high and low levels of egalitarianism. Based on the cases studied in this thesis, a typology has been developed (Figure 3) displaying four different 'states of affairs' based upon these instances; namely 'negotiated egalitarianism' (high levels of negotiation and egalitarianism), 'sustained dissension' (high levels of negotiation and low levels of egalitarianism), 'perfunctory egalitarianism' (low levels of negotiation and high levels of egalitarianism) and 'conventional accordance' (low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism). The matrix below charts where the couples studied in this thesis are situated in terms of each *by the end of the study*. As will be explored in the chapters that follow, an interesting finding was that each couple was distinguished as being in a state of conventional accordance (low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism) *prior* to redundancy. In this section what each typology group refers to, encompasses, and the different ways in which negotiation was conceptualised amongst the couples in each of these groups, is explicated below.

Figure 3: A typology illustrating incidences of high/low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism

Egalitarianism

<u>**Perfunctory egalitarianism**</u>   <u>**Negotiated egalitarianism**</u>

✖ Denhams

✖ Warriners

✖ Meehans

Negotiation →

✖ Singletons

✖ Woodhouses

✖ Murrays

✖ Bardsleys

✖ Leggs
✖ Carrolls

✖ Solomons

<u>**Conventional accordance**</u>   <u>**Sustained dissension**</u>
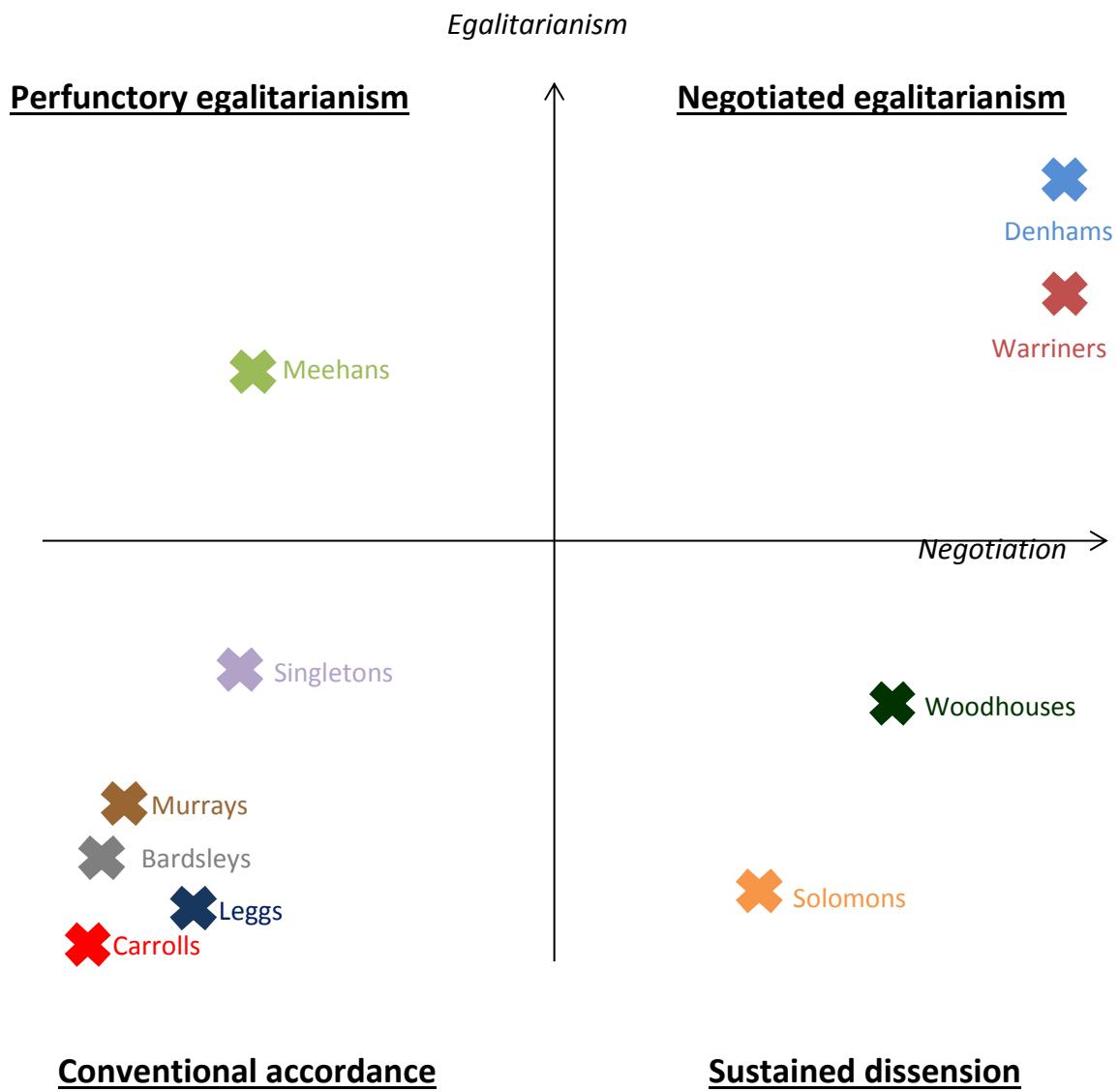
Negotiated egalitarianism

Figure 3 illustrates that there were two cases, the Warriners and the Denhams, deemed to have displayed high levels of each in order to achieve a state of what has been termed here as 'negotiated egalitarianism'. That is to say, following redundancy these couples engaged in high levels of negotiation – as defined here sustained purposeful discussions around how to manage paid and unpaid working commitments, and a long-term practical attempt to enact these discussions. These cases are also considered to have achieved high levels of egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour, in that partners demonstrated a desire for and

commitment to the *medium and long-term sharing* of both employment and other (non-financial) household responsibilities. For Chris in particular, whilst his case represents something of a familial 'role reversal', his future aspirations for new employment and to continue sharing housework and caring duties satisfies the definition of egalitarianism adopted in this thesis. This typology group offers preliminary support to the notion that a positive link exists between negotiation and egalitarianism.

Negotiation in both of these cases began in a more practical sense. One may hypothesise that discussions, planning and so forth would come before actual practical endeavour, once plans of action had been established and agreements reached, but this was not so in the two instances of negotiated egalitarianism. Immediately following male redundancy, it was actually the employed female partners who attempted (successfully at first) to take on more of the unpaid duties. Without any consultation they began undertaking tasks that their partners had done around the home, despite the fact that they already conducted disproportionately higher shares of unpaid labour and were fulfilling full-time paid working hours. The rationale for this centred on concerns for their partners' emotional well-being, in what was considered the difficult transition period of adjusting to life after job loss, as indicated by Dawn Warriner:

> *'Being made redundant isn't easy for anyone to cope with. The last thing I wanted to do whilst he came to terms with it was say oh by the way, the oven needs a good going over. Or the front garden needs de-weeding. It was important that he had time to look for other jobs, take stock of his CV and things…So when I got in from work I would do my best to take the onus off him and get on with the dinner, seeing to the kids and tidying up. It's a stressful time and you don't want to add to that'* (Dawn Warriner, first interview).

Here we see a clear display of acting in the best interest of one's partner, where both Dawn and Lisa were clear on what would be beneficial for their husbands and consultation was not required. Indeed, there was a concern that broaching discussion would actually have negative effects on their partners psychologically:

'I think it would have made things all that more real to be honest, saying now you're out of work you can be in charge of this, this and this. And at the start when he's applying for jobs if you begin saying things like that I guess it could imply that you don't have much faith that he'll find a new job quickly. It almost gives off a greater permanency, because you'd be less likely to start reorganising how everything's done if you expect to be back in work quickly. So no, I tried to keep things as normal as possible at home' (Lisa Denham, first interview).

However, the men 'reclaimed' these tasks relatively quickly in each case as they came to terms with the loss of employment and began adjusting to the time available they now had that was predominantly spent in the house, and from this point there was a continuous move towards greater levels of negotiation and egalitarianism throughout the duration of the study. Both men reported that as their failure to acquire new employment became longer in duration, they began to increase their shares of unpaid labour:

'I'm sure I speak for everyone when I say that I don't particularly enjoy housework, but it was the right thing to do. I wasn't contributing to the household financially so I had to find other ways to compensate for that' (Chris Denham, first interview).

'Dawn would come home from work and it would be like right, you've done enough parenting for today now go and relax, run a bath and watch TV or something. Dinner will be ready in an hour. And I'm thinking, you've literally just walked through the door, I'm not the one working here' (Mike Warriner, first interview).

At this stage there was very little evidence of bargaining as it is presented in the literature exploring how divisions of labour are determined. In fact, these findings contradict the dynamic underpinning the bargaining literature as it commonly appears, where it is propagated that resource-powerful partners are able to use their greater earning potential or hours of work to bargain their way out of unpaid duties such as housework. In this instance, Dawn and Lisa actually chose to increase their unpaid labour undertaking despite being the resource-powerful partners by a significant distance throughout the duration of the study. Bargaining is actually

posited as a more accurate predictor of male behaviour with substantial evidence that resources are not always bargained in the manner outlined once a female partner has equal or higher relative resources (Bittman et al., 2003; Kan, 2008).

However, in each case the men (with fewer relative resources) had instigated a change that encouraged greater levels of negotiation *and* egalitarianism. Illustrated in the three accounts thus far, emotions play a key role in the decisions taken by individuals, something that is largely neglected in those economic exchange models (Parkman, 1998). Dawn and Lisa expressed concerns about their husbands' emotional well-beings and attempted to increase their own shares despite being the 'resource-powerful' partner. Chris displayed concern for the household and what he perceived to be a lack of contribution to its needs on his own part, resulting in a desire to conduct more housework and caring duties. Meanwhile, Mike alluded to the strain his wife was under attempting to combine full-time employment with a large unpaid division of labour, which encouraged him to increase his own contribution around the house. Although expressed in different ways, and arguably to differing extents, concerns for other household members do discount the ability of bargaining, as it is applied in the relevant empirical literature to fully account for how divisions are negotiated, so too notions of any pure form of individualisation.

At the point of initial interview there had only really been a slight renegotiation of domestic labour and this had been almost purely by way of practical endeavour, with no real discussion having taken place. Dialogue only really occurred as the men decided to extend the duties they undertook whilst out of work to those that they had not previously fulfilled, which centred upon a number of housework and caring activities where there had been little prior engagement. The more specific aspects of this process will be explicated in the following chapter; the point to be made is that these supportive negotiation 'roles', driven by the mutuality of their goals with partners effectively seeking the same outcome, were not replicated by couples in other matrix quadrants and were thus key in the development of 'negotiated egalitarianism'.

These four interviewee accounts, particularly in the second interviews, testified to the notion that practical endeavour was not feasible without the accompanying discussions. This meant that the level of dialogue and practical 'negotiation'

increased in a relatively parallel fashion, with both dependent on the other to an extent. It is therefore important to stress that the negotiation was a gradual, on-going process, incorporating both aspects. The discussions were themselves shown to progress over the duration of the study. Contrasting the accounts of verbal interactions given by Chris between the first and second interviews there was a clear shift in how these discussions were conceptualised:

> *'We spend a lot of time planning. I've always done my bit, but to be completely honest now that I'm more involved I didn't realise how much…management, goes into things. Everything needs organising, planning, there's constant checking minor details haven't changed. It's an endless stream of things to remember, and the worrying! Particularly taking over these things, you don't want to get it wrong…So we spent a lot of time on what I call the "admin"; basically the organising. Lisa gives me her input when I'm about to do certain things too so that they don't fall below the standards we're used to'* (Chris Denham, second interview).

It is quite interesting that Chris places emphasis on joint discussion, and the two of them working together to successfully manage their commitments. This contrasts somewhat to Chris's account in the first interview where, to begin with, he only really engaged with Lisa in a way that involved her in the negotiation when seeking a response (her opinion) to what he proposed to do. In other words, he effectively stated his intentions regarding future employment decisions (and initially limited unpaid labour changes) to see if she had any thoughts on his planned course of action. However, this had clearly shifted to her inclusion about what to do, meaning that she was more centrally involved in the negotiation process:

> *'We did talk about it. I would show her a list of jobs I'd applied for, and she would say if they were suitable for me or not. And likewise, I'd do little jobs around the house whilst she was at work and then when she came in see what she thinks. If it was done well I'd continue with those jobs, if not I'd look for other things to try my hand at'* (Chris Denham, first interview).

In these initial stages of the study Chris's conception of negotiation is one in which he is largely dictating the terms, with a lack of *real* input sought or provided by Lisa. This situation changed to one in which both partners were fully involved in the planning stages and decision-making, as conceptualised by Dawn and Mike Warriner more clearly from an earlier stage.

Conventional accordance

The most densely populated state of affairs is that of 'conventional accordance', constituting low levels of negotiation and low levels of egalitarianism. 'Conventional accordance' denotes that in each case this meant a rather traditional arrangement where female partners undertook disproportionately much higher shares of unpaid labour, and typically overall divisions too, with their husbands primarily responsible for financial provision. This quadrant contained five of the ten couples studied; the most notable characteristic of couples in this group being that three out of five cases of female redundancy are situated here. This means that in only two cases of female redundancy a significant level of negotiation in their sexual divisions of labour occurred.

One potential reason for this is that in the Warriner and Denham cases, Mike and Chris undertook disproportionately lower shares of unpaid labour prior to redundancy; therefore in order to achieve high levels of equity, substantial renegotiation was required. In these cases of female redundancy, where low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism have been found, the divisions of unpaid labour prior to redundancy were all disproportionately weighted towards the female partner too (as was the case in all couples studied). Already conducting higher shares of unpaid labour, it would be surprising if their job loss and the subsequent reduction in paid working hours acted as the catalyst for any change towards greater egalitarianism in unpaid labour, given their greater time availability and so forth. It appears that where a female partner loses her job, she increases her share to take on the vast majority of their household's unpaid labour – lowering further their degree (and likelihood) of egalitarianism.

In the cases of female redundancy that have been distinguished as conventional accordance, accounts revealed that by and large the women simply increased their shares of unpaid labour following job loss without any real consultation with their partners. One of the key differences between these cases and those classed as negotiated egalitarianism is that their male partners accepted this course of action without much attempt to engage in discussion about any renegotiation of shares at all. How can we explain this reaction in contrast to those of Dawn and Lisa who, despite being in full-time paid employment, attempted to increase their own already disproportionately high shares of unpaid (and therefore overall) labour? Across these cases there was support for the assertions of researchers (e.g. Gupta, 2007) that female paid working hours and earnings are extremely sensitive to their unpaid labour endeavours. For example:

> *'I'm now in a situation where I spend a lot of time at home. My paid work hours can be pretty unpredictable, sometimes it can be as little as around twelve hours per week. When you put these things together it makes sense than I now do more because, quite simply, I can. It would be pretty unfair on Jay to come home to no dinner and an unclean house when he's putting in a lot of hours. And how would I even justify that to him? The situation isn't ideal for either of us to be fair, we are losing income and our mortgage still needs paying, we still have bills, and whatnot. He's supportive of the choices I make, and the career that I eventually want to have. It seems only right that I take care of the house and other things when, and whilst, I can'* (Gemma Bardsley, first interview).

Furthermore, this notion of time availability as a key factor in these responses – one of the major sources of relative resources in the bargaining literature – was confirmed in male accounts as a reason why they allowed a more conventional division of labour to emerge without attempting to engage in much dialogue. Consider:

> *'Gemma is doing a lot more around the house now that she's working less. Including some of the jobs I used to do, because she's got more time basically. If she's spending a pretty significant part of the week at home then*

I guess it's a way to use the time productively, whilst I'm out at work' (Jay Bardsley, first interview).

Male accounts across the couples in this conventional accordance grouping revealed satisfaction to quite simply let their wives 'get on with it' as far as increasing their shares of unpaid labour were concerned – which in each case resulted in a decrease in their own time spent on such duties.

Again, there were no overt instances of the bargaining dynamic as it is typically conveyed in the literature whereby any partner stated that given their higher relatives resources they should be relieved of certain unpaid tasks, akin to 'I earn this, therefore s/he should do that'. In each case – as with those of the Warriners and Denhams – the partner with the least resources initiated the subsequent increases in their own shares of housework and caring, due to a concern and desire over their contributions to the household following job and therefore monetary loss. This attests to the point made in Chapter 2 that the bargaining process is largely assumed, with paid working hours or earnings taken as a proxy for bargaining lower shares of unpaid labour without much examination of the process itself (Livingston, 2014). There is evidence that some bargaining has taken place given the references made, particularly to time in the Bardsley accounts above. It appears that these practical renegotiations were more the result of 'silent bargains' (Strauss, 1978); without much dialogue, or overt bargaining in the sense implied by much research, male partners with the greatest relative resources effectively simply 'allowed' these conventional divisions of labour to emerge. This centred on choosing *not* to discuss the changes that were taking place (whether insisting that they maintain their shares, or offering to do more as their wives came to terms with redundancy, updated their CVs, sought new employment, and so forth – a key difference in the responses to those of negotiated egalitarianism).

It may be that gender plays a key role in these responses, informing the behaviours of both partners in each of the cases thus far. There were actually relatively few explicit references to normative conceptions of 'gender-appropriate' behaviour made by individuals adjudged to be in a state of conventional accordance, one being:

'I think, generally speaking, it means more to men to be in a higher paid job than it does to women…unless you're extremely career orientated' (Patricia Carroll, first interview).

Largely however, gender appeared as a more implicit influence on behaviour in interviewee accounts, particularly as all but one respondent, Gerard Carroll, espoused modern views on gendered familial roles. If we take Alex and Danielle Murray as one example, subtle subscriptions to gender norms were made despite their assertions of relatively egalitarian views. Whilst undertaking much the greater share of unpaid work, Danielle – even when in full-time paid employment, including during Alex's period of temporary unemployment – claims not to be 'as house proud as many wives are'. This indicates a subscription to traditional notions of gender roles as we gain an insight into her perceptions of who typically takes primary responsibility for the presentation of the domestic sphere – wives and not 'people' generally – reflected in and perhaps justificatory for her own situation whereby she has ownership of most household duties.

In this case and also that of the Singletons, it was actually the male partner who was made redundant – yet shares of housework and caring remained much lower than their wives' despite the loss of employment. For Colin Singleton in particular, there was an unemployment period of seven weeks and then re-employment on a zero-hour contract, which averaged around 15 paid working hours per week. Therefore, he had considerable scope to renegotiate his disproportionately lower share of unpaid labour during this period and alleviate some of the burden being place on his wife Kathleen. However, there was little by way of a negotiation or shift towards egalitarianism. In actual fact, he reported an increase of just four hours per week on unpaid labour despite an average weekly reduction of twenty-seven paid working hours. These figures and those for all couples are displayed in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3. Self-reported labour hours across the study (male partner redundant)

	Couple 1		Couple 2		Couple 3		Couple 4		Couple 5	
Name	Mike	Dawn	Alex	Danielle	Carl	Lorraine	Chris	Lisa	Colin	Kathleen
Paid weekly working hours (pre-redundancy)	40	38.5	38	33	38	34	37	35	42	34
Paid weekly working hours (start of study)	0	38.5	0	33	0	34	0	35	Zero hour contract (circa 15)	34
Paid weekly working hours (end of study)	Self-employed (circa 20)	38.5	33	33	33	34	0	35	Zero hour contract (circa 15)	34
Unpaid weekly labour hours (pre-redundancy)	15	20	9	16	16	27	16	27	12	20
Unpaid weekly labour hours (start of study)	20	22	11	16	26	28	22	27	20	18
Unpaid weekly labour hours (end of study)	27	17	10	16	23	24	34	18	16	18
Increase/ decrease in paid weekly working hours	↓20	0	↓5	0	↓5	0	↓37	0	↓27	0
Increase/ decrease in unpaid weekly labour hours	↑12	↓5	↑1	0	↑7	↓4	↑18	↓9	↑4	↓2
Proportion of household income pre/post redundancy	50% / 15%	50% / 85%	65% / 50%	35% / 50%	70% / 50%	30% / 50%	65% / 0%	35% / 100%	60% / 30%	40% / 70%

Table 4. Self-reported hours across the study (female partner redundant)

	Couple 1		Couple 2		Couple 3		Couple 4		Couple 5	
Name	Gemma	Jay	Patricia	Gerard	Josephine	Theo	Amanda	Joseph	Diane	Charles
Paid weekly working hours (pre-redundancy)	32.5	38.5	36	39	34	35	36	40	38	40
Paid weekly working hours (start of study)	0	38.5	0	39	Zero hour contract (circa 18.5)	35	0	40	0	40
Paid weekly working hours (end of study)	Zero hour contract (circa 15)	41.5	34	39	Zero hour contract (circa 18.5	31	17.5	40	34	40
Unpaid weekly labour hours (pre-redundancy)	18	10	30	7	26	12	26	14	18	10
Unpaid weekly labour hours (start of study)	22	8	36	6	30	10	35	8	22	7
Unpaid weekly labour hours (end of study)	26	8	30	6	32	15.5	31	10	21	8.5
Increase/ decrease in paid weekly working hours	↓14.5	↑3	↓2	0	↓15.5	↓4	↓18.5	0	↓4	0
Increase/ decrease in unpaid weekly labour hours	↑8	↓2	0	↓1	↑6	↑3.5	↑5	↓4	↑3	↓1.5
Proportion of household income pre/post redundancy	40% / 20%	60% / 80%	55% / 40%	45% / 60%	50% / 30%	50% / 70%	50% / 30%	50% / 70%	50% / 40%	50% / 60%

Couples distinguished as conventional accordance are shaded on the table, and we can see that Colin's relatively small increase in unpaid labour hours actually represents the largest increase in all male partners in this grouping. In fact, Alex was the only other male respondent in this group to increase his share, which represented just two hours whilst unemployed and actually reduced by one hour once new employment was acquired.

It is important to note therefore that egalitarianism is not necessarily the goal of every couple, or at least individual partners, even where attitudes of this nature are expressed. It would certainly be unwise to assume, particularly based on the interview accounts of couples in this state of affairs, that even partners conducting considerably higher shares of unpaid labour would like a renegotiation of their divisions, not least actually push for and initiate discussions or practical change. This contrasts with the cases that will be explored in the next section, where this was clearly the objective of one partner yet goals were not mutual, and this brought about a number of issues. The cases of conventional accordance here do however offer more preliminary support to the notion of negotiation and egalitarianism being positively linked given the absence of each. In other words where higher levels of egalitarianism are not desired, the likelihood of high levels of negotiation are lower to overturn what are relatively conventional gendered divisions of labour, whether in cases of female redundancy where this may be exacerbated, or otherwise.

Sustained dissension

Two couples in the study were identified as constituting high levels of negotiation yet engaging in low levels of egalitarianism, distinguished here as occupying a state of 'sustained dissension'. This refers to the continued engagement in negotiation with the goal of one partner (at least) to evoke change in the sexual division of labour (towards greater egalitarianism). However, the nature of these negotiations, characterised by disagreements over what was considered to be fair and appropriate, meant that low levels of egalitarianism were maintained. The term 'dissension' offers value in the sense that negotiation (and by extension these disagreements) were ongoing, and the movement between the four states of affairs is always possible given the dynamic nature of couple interactions and the context within which such

negotiations take place. This testifies to the point above that both partners may not actively seek a negotiation of their paid and unpaid working contributions, and there may be resistance to both extended negotiations and any move towards more unconventional divisions of labour. Unlike the previous cases of conventional accordance, there was a much greater attempt made to engage in dialogue about labour shares and enact practical changes in the responsibilities fulfilled. These cases represented instances of female redundancy where there was an initial shift towards a very traditional division of labour, and accounts given in the first interviews appeared to show content when undertaking greater shares too. However, there was evidence that by the second interviews, where in each case new work had been acquired, there was strong desire for a renegotiation of these increasingly inequitable divisions of overall (paid and unpaid) labour:

> *'Everything had been fine at first, Joe was working full-time, I was at home, it was only right that I took care of the chores and any bits and pieces that needed doing at home. But when I started working at [the new organisation] things didn't seem to be changing. Now I understand that I'm only on a part-time contract at the moment, so many of the things from before still hold. I still have more time and energy to take care of things, but I did expect a shift of some kind to happen accordingly. Let me give you some little examples, Joe always took care of the washing up after dinner, especially if I had cooked it, and would also give the downstairs a quick hoover at night whilst I made sure the kids got into bed without any fuss. It's as though, in that short space of time, he forgot that they needed doing!'* (Amanda Solomon, second interview).

This was also alluded to by Gemma Bardsley who currently partakes in low levels of negotiation and has a conventional division of labour. We can see the dynamic nature of both these concepts with couples always in possession of the potential to transcend these typology boundaries:

> *'It's fine now, it's only right that I do more at the moment. But I absolutely don't want this to be a permanent arrangement. I miss working a lot, not just the wage but I get a lot of satisfaction from the job. I seriously want to increase my hours of work in the not too distant future, if it becomes a*

possibility. And, with that, gain a better balance with the domestic stuff than I've currently got. That means sharing it more with Jay' (Gemma Bardsley, second interview).

The implication here is of a desire for a long-time commitment to sharing both paid and unpaid labour representative of the definition of egalitarianism adopted in this thesis, and thus signalling a desire for a high level of egalitarianism that is not present in their existing arrangements. With an increase in her paid working hours, Gemma may look to instigate higher levels of negotiation and potentially egalitarianism, although it remains to be seen whether her partner Jay would be accommodating enough that they move towards a state of negotiated egalitarianism as opposed to one of sustained dissension.

Again there is support for the argument that women's hours of employment are a reliable indicator of their *desired* unpaid labour hours at least. Changes in hours or earnings suggest a shift in the terms of bargaining that may take place it would appear − silently at first, as the partner with the fewest resources increases their shares of unpaid labour without encouragement − a move accepted by their male partners. In these two cases, however, the partners conducting higher shares of unpaid labour did become more assertive and this led to more overt conflict as partners with the lowest shares were not able to maintain the status quo through their silence. The primary reason for conflict therefore was that goals when entering negotiation were not shared, as each partner desired a different outcome from any negotiation that took place. On the contrary, particularly in the case of Joseph Solomon, it became apparent that he looked to completely avoid negotiation where possible, both in terms of distancing himself from Amanda's attempts at initiating conversations about change and practically engaging in more unpaid labour duties:

'I would say to him you're not doing enough around the house. I'm doing all I can as well as going out to work. Shall I cook the dinner, make the packed lunches, do the washing up, make sure the kids' homework is done, tidy up after everyone, and if I get a chance breathe as well? He would often laugh; I don't think he took it seriously at all. It's as though this is just all part of an easy, everyday routine where no help is required whatsoever' (Amanda Solomon, second interview).

Whilst Joseph looked to avoid discussions where possible, many verbal exchanges did occur regarding how unpaid labour duties could be renegotiated between them. Dialogue was not of the amicable, mutually supportive and guidance-orientated nature described by the Denhams and Warriners as shares were renegotiated (discussed in greater detail throughout Chapter 7). Instead, there were much greater efforts at coercion and manipulation, and clear shifts from polite requests to, on occasion, what were described as relatively serious arguments:

> *'When I say I have tried everything, I really have. It's gone past the stage of saying "do you mind" or "it would be great if". I've shouted at him before today, because he just doesn't see the problem. As far as he's concerned, he works full-time and I don't, so I'm available and it's my responsibility to do everything else. But in fact, if you add all what I do it dwarves what he does, you know, in total. So yes I've shouted, I've deliberately washed everyone's clothes except his so that he had to do it himself, all sorts. And it might sound a bit ridiculous, but I feel extreme measures are the only way to get a reaction sometimes'* (Amanda Solomon, second interviews).

Josephine Woodhouse reported a similar transition from requesting help to a more direct approach in her attempts at negotiation. It is important to stress the term 'help' here as this appeared in the majority of accounts across the study. Both male and female respondents would talk in terms of one partner 'doing their bit', or 'assisting' with tasks, that highlighted how one partner (typically the female) was perceived as the owner of most household tasks, and the other partner performed something of a helping role. This point was captured as Josephine accounted for why their continued negotiations had not led to the changes she desired in her sexual division of labour:

> *'There is a fundamental issue that acts as a barrier to us moving forward in how we negotiate our responsibilities. Ultimately Theo thinks he does his bit by actually sitting down and talking about the situation with me, and doing what he feels is all he can regarding the kids. But he doesn't understand that it's me who instigates these discussions, it's me who drives them, it's me who has the problem. It then comes across as my problem, and I need him to help me. Therefore, when he does re-jig his work around it's as though he's done me a favour; he's done his bit. But it should be seen as our problem, not*

mine. We've both had children and we both work. Do you not think he's supportive of me working and bringing money into the house? Of course he is. But if I'm to do that then he needs to start seeing the school run and watching the kids as our responsibility, not primarily mine. He should clearly communicate his situation to the people he works for, that he will get the work done, but he has a commitment to looking after his children for a couple of hours, on a couple of days per week. And he won't do that because he thinks it will reflect badly on him. I've lost count of the conversations we've had about it and when someone is so set in their mind about something and will not be moved, how do you change it? We have had arguments, he will say oh, if you don't think I do organise work around it then watch me actually not, see how much you have to spend on after school club then each week. And again, it just feels like it's my problem, or my responsibility' (Josephine Woodhouse, second interview).

These cases are adjudged to have engaged in high levels of negotiation because protracted conversations about their respective shares of particularly unpaid (and by extension overall) labour did occur, with both partners partaking in these discussions over the duration of the study. There were also *some* changes in practical undertakings – as displayed in Tables 3 and 4 – with Theo increasing his weekly time spent on unpaid labour by three and a half hours on that prior to Josephine's redundancy, whilst Joseph had actually decreased his time contribution to these tasks from when both he and Amanda had been employed full-time.

Yet negotiation was very much conceptualised in a different manner to the other cases of high negotiation, both of which resulted in high levels of egalitarianism. Characteristic of the Woodhouse and Solomon accounts of negotiation were terms such as 'argue' and 'defensive' that were not see in those of the Warriners and Denham accounts:

'There is an element, when we come to plan how things are going to work for the coming week, of here we go…It's been discussed so many times and I actually find myself very much on the defensive. It's as though having a full-time job is not enough, I have to find other ways of justifying why I'm busy on a weekday. We both know what the outcome will be but it's a regular

occurrence anyway. She'll say can you do this, this and this day. Chances are I can do two, we'll argue about the third day and then she'll tell me I don't do enough. I think I negotiate as much as one could expect, and that's it really' (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

What is particularly interesting about this is that Theo alludes to the fact that both partners know the outcome before negotiation even begins, and 'that's it really' suggests that in his view the outcome is fixed, because he will not be moved in his outlook or adopted stance. The fact that these conflictual discussions are a regular occurrence, initiated by Josephine, indicates that although she may be aware that the change she desires is unlikely to occur, she perceives that there is still enough chance or the cause is worthy enough to continue her attempts and endure these repetitive discussions. Are we to deduce from this that Theo holds control of the situation because, without his say so, Josephine's desired change will not occur? A relatively consistent finding throughout all of the cases is that male willingness to engage in negotiations and increase their shares of unpaid labour was a key determinant of the extent of negotiation and moves towards egalitarianism enacted.

Perfunctory egalitarianism

This typology group refers to cases where egalitarianism was enacted without recourse to high levels of negotiation, indicating that the transition from conventional accordance was achieved with less difficulty than in other cases looking to overturn long-standing, rather traditional divisions of labour. Only one couple were distinguished as undergoing low levels of negotiation yet 'achieving' a high level of egalitarianism by the second interviews. Carl and Lorraine Meehan described negotiation in much the same way as respondents in the conventional accordance grouping, reporting that little had taken place:

'I don't think we've ever had that, actually. That absolute sorting out of what needs to be done, when, and who needs to do it. We pitch in and have never had too many problems. It has to be like that when you both work long hours and especially with a child, you have to both play your role. Things must have worked out without too many complications because I don't recall any drawn out negotiations, or discussions or anything. It obviously helps that I

have flexibility in my location. But yeah we've just managed. Things have been a certain way for a long time, before Carl was made redundant. I suppose you don't really question how things work when they are working, and we'd get by OK. I know I do more around the house, again related to my work as much as anything, but I wouldn't be in a situation where I thought it was too much and Carl wasn't pulling his weight. Then there might have been discussions and such' (Lorraine Meehan, first interview).

'You think about these things, how you go about caring for your child and everything else when both working relatively long hours, and it probably sounds unrealistic to say that there wasn't much by way of managing things. Maybe Lorraine does a lot of the planning and stuff which I take for granted and she has a different perspective on things. But we've always made things work quite well really. If you both want to work, and you both enjoy the spoils of two incomes, then it goes without saying that you'll have to share the other stuff that needs doing too. I know that a lot of couples don't, I can personally think of people who are quite traditional in how they see things. But I want to spend time with [child] and I can't do that down the pub. So I'd be at home a lot, outside of work, doing my bit where that's concerned. She might ask me to do something, I might ask if she needs help with something, those kinds of things. But by and large I have things to be getting on with anyway' (Carl Meehan, first interview).

This is a familiar feature of the interviews where negotiation is taken to mean explicit, sit down discussions, the lack of which is used as evidence to suggest that very little negotiation took place. There is an underlying emphasis on implicit negotiation which, again, is not seemingly easy to describe or account for; appearing under the guise of 'routine', or how things have 'just worked out' in the past. This routine involved Carl having the joint highest pre-redundancy time spent on unpaid labour of all males in this thesis (alongside Chris Denham), yet a considerable division did exist and there was certainly not the high level of egalitarianism witnessed by the end of the study. In actual fact, a key reason for the lack of negotiation in comparison to those identified as high negotiators was that Carl already engaged in longer hours of unpaid labour than was the case for other couples – where there was a greater need for more extensive negotiation to overturn long-

standing unequal divisions. The rationale for distinguishing this state of affairs as being 'perfunctory egalitarianism' is precisely for the reason that comparatively little negotiation was required, as a desire and commitment to egalitarianism, or certainly greater equity to begin with, was enough to drive the process. There was certainly much less by way of purposeful and protracted discussion around managing paid and unpaid working contributions, with the negotiation that was talked about centred around changes in practical undertakings.

When accounting for the lack of previous 'negotiations' regarding unpaid labour, Carl felt that he would either say he'd do something, or simply just do it – high levels of negotiation did not seem necessary. In other words, he would engage in a task, or inform Lorraine that he was going to undertake a task that she usually performs, without seeing any requirement for lengthy discussions about it. Obviously there were mixed results of adopting this approach when attempting new duties; and where he felt it went poorly, and was not something he would be particularly good at then he wouldn't make a prolonged attempt and leave it under Lorraine's jurisdiction. Lorraine acknowledged this lack of involvement in negotiation, when reflecting on his decision-making:

> *'I've not had much input at all to be honest whilst Carl has been looking for new work. You hear from people you know, and see it on the news that people are struggling to find work at the moment, so it wasn't a huge surprise when Carl would say he wasn't having much joy. He's clearly looking, and spends hours on the internet filling out applications, adjusting his CV to each job's requirements, writing covering letters. It's a part-time job in itself really, when you think about it. It's not for me to tell him what jobs to go for, and I did actually start looking one night. But the first couple of results I thought might suit him he'd already seen or applied for, so I didn't bother after that…I've very much left him to get on with the job hunt, and was fully prepared to do more around the house until he gets sorted. But again, I haven't needed to say much because he started using his time to get involved with things. Some stuff he'd already done before, but a couple of new things as well. A few of them he's tried and said "no, I'm no good at this. I've tried love, but it's best you carry on with this". And I do, you know, he's looking*

for work and doing more at home, what else am I going to ask for him to do?' (Lorraine Meehan, first interview).

Both partners testify to the importance of implicit negotiations, and portrayed quite clearly that each will go ahead and act in the best interests of their household without engaging in extended discussions, which is key to how things were worked out:

'Unless something major happens that brings into question how you manage your daily routines then it's not something that you spend a lot of time thinking about. Or maybe, you're so accustomed to it that it's taken-for-granted and it doesn't feel like you are actually negotiating much at all. Obviously, losing my job meant that things did change. And I'd do things that I didn't really do before, which would result in Lorraine making a comment and inevitably we'd talk about it at least a little bit. But it would be interesting to go back and see how things were worked out originally, because I don't feel like they were to any great degree. I know that I'm quite bad for going ahead and doing things without consulting anyone. Like, I was looking for jobs and doing bits and pieces around the house without really consulting Lorraine. I wouldn't say to her should I apply for this job, or this job has these hours, how will that fit in with your schedule and [child's]. So I am bad for that I guess. But I feel like she goes ahead with things as well, that's just how we operate. I'd like to think we largely act in the interests of the family and it's not a lack of discussion because we don't value the other's opinion' (Carl Meehan, second interview).

Contrary to the assertions of individualisation theories, decisions taken here without much communication between partners were often made mindful of what individuals perceived to be others', or their households', collective interests. This was seen in all three cases of high egalitarianism. In cases of conventional accordance, however, decisions taken without much verbal interaction were usually employed by the female partners who increased or maintained disproportionately higher shares (without much by way of discussion), and their husbands who were satisfied to passively maintain and reproduce an unequal division where their share of labour is lower. In some instances female partners did play something of a collusive role in

sustaining low levels of both egalitarianism and negotiation, displaying a distinct lack of assertiveness to overturn unequitable divisions of unpaid labour – certainly pre-redundancy as well as post.

The above points regarding decisions being taken in the interest of the household are associated with the moral dimension often neglected in the bargaining literature, whereby there is a failure to truly account for emotion in decision-making regarding particularly unpaid labour. This was illustrated clearly in Chris's second interview, when he was undertaking a move towards high levels of egalitarianism:

> *'You have to remember as well that I'm not earning as much as I was. It does play on your mind a little, because I was contributing more in that way. I don't exactly feel guilty that I'm earning less but enjoying the job and want to continue there, when potentially I could move into something else in future and earn more. But it does drive me to do more for my family in other ways. Things that we may have bought in, which would be considered more expensive on our current wages, I would look to provide in a different way. For example, I'm interested to start building things, and decorating [child's] room myself, things like that. Ultimately that will save money that would previously have been spent, whilst also it shows my time and effort commitment to her. I think men often get too fixated on providing for the family in that way, I'm learning all the time that greater involvement is probably more rewarding'* (Carl Meehan, second interview).

This state of affairs adds a new facet to the question of whether negotiation and egalitarianism are positively associated; high levels of egalitarianism did not require significant amounts of negotiation, certainly by way of explicit discussions around planning and other aspects of managing the demands of paid and unpaid commitments. That said, this represents only one case in the study, and the indication from the other nine couples is that dialogue, from planning through to guidance on tasks, is required to a degree in order to overturn considerably unequal divisions of labour. Of course, as testified in the previous section the nature of negotiations is important, as a *sustained* commitment from *both* partners certainly increases the likelihood of high levels of each being enacted.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter a definition of negotiation has been constructed based on the accounts respondents offered as to how they 'negotiated' their divisions of paid and unpaid labour. Largely, respondents felt that where clear dialogue about how to manage these demands, and/or significant changes in respective shares of these competing demands had *not* occurred, then high levels of negotiation had not occurred. These two elements – verbal discussions and the practical undertaking of paid and unpaid responsibilities - have been identified as characteristic of 'explicit' negotiations, which were undoubtedly important in the enactment of high levels of egalitarianism in the Warriner and Denham cases, and potentially the absence of which were key to the lack of negotiation and egalitarianism observed in cases of conventional accordance. These accounts also revealed the integral part implicit negotiations play in enacting or reducing the likelihood of high levels of negotiation and egalitarianism. These were often not framed within the parameters of what respondents felt was their actual negotiation process, but the Meehans effectively achieved a high level of egalitarianism in their division of labour without recourse to protracted, purposeful discussion. Nor were such (explicit) interactions key to the maintenance of rather conventional divisions in five of the cases here.

Negotiations have to include these unspoken means through which labour shares are determined. In particular, couples generally could not recall a great deal of 'negotiation' (as they saw it – essentially referring to discussions) that had informed their respective shares. Therefore, via implicit negotiations routines emerged that have become so long-standing and unquestioned that in two cases of male redundancy there was barely any change in their time spent on unpaid labour at all. The continual engagement in disproportionate shares highlights that these divisions are continually 'renegotiated' such that the routine prevails. Without a great deal of description as to how these (implicit) negotiations could be practically accounted for, respondents felt that a combination of female partners taking the initiative on more tasks, and male satisfaction to allow unequal divisions to materialise, set the agenda in the majority of cases.

The chapters that follow engage more closely with notions that normative conceptions of gender were a key determinant in the evolution of these rather

traditional divisions of unpaid labour, and by extension the idea that bargaining of resources occurs in a 'gendered context'. Utilising the typology developed here, the more specific aspects of the negotiation process, tactics utilised by partners, and so forth will be considered across instances of high egalitarianism firstly (Chapter 7), and those with low levels (Chapter 8). The different ways the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism manifests itself as couples practically undertake changes in, or reproduce, their sexual divisions of labour will be as recurring theme throughout.

Chapter 7: Negotiating high levels of egalitarianism

The aim of this chapter is to address the second sub research question: How are (re)negotiations of the sexual division of labour practically accomplished? The sections that follow explore the three incidences where couples moved from a state of conventional accordance to those of high egalitarianism, in order to formulate a clearer understanding of how renegotiations of the sexual division of labour, characterised by egalitarianism, are practically accomplished. This involves identifying any key stages in the negotiation process that were witnessed across each case, allowing us to begin theorising about the relationship between this and egalitarianism. The matrix below (Figure 4) displays the progression of each case from a state of low to high egalitarianism, and this analysis charts the negotiation process of each, drawing out similarities between the cases and differences between those of negotiated egalitarianism and the Meehan case of perfunctory egalitarianism.

Figure 4: The movement from conventional accordance to high levels of egalitarianism
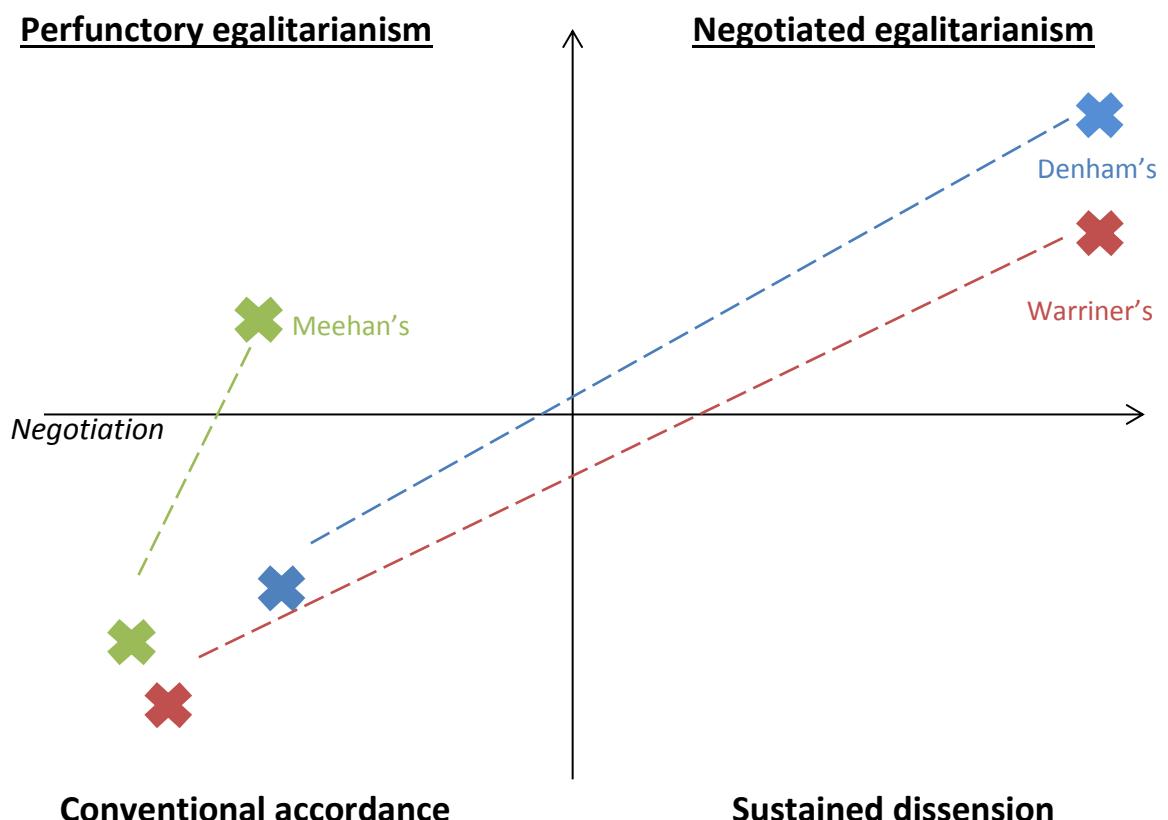
The point of departure for the second sub-research question is to critically engage with assertions in the literature (e.g. Bond and Sales, 2001; Finch and Mason, 1993) that there is no blueprint or formula for the negotiation process whereby couples determine responsibility for their various labour demands. There was certainly support for this in the interviewee accounts as no respondent could clearly chart their renegotiation and its progression over the duration of the study. However, this is a rather unhelpful conclusion when attempting to ascertain whether negotiation is positively linked to incidences of egalitarianism. A closer examination of how respondents described their experiences and the changes that did occur following redundancy revealed a number of key stages that proved essential to the development of high levels of negotiation, *facilitating* high levels of egalitarianism.

These important features that were clearly evident in the Warriner and Denham accounts formed a more implicit theme across the Meehan accounts of how they achieved high levels of egalitarianism. It is possible to identify these stages yet there was much less requirement for the 'sitting down', planning and extensive dialogue that characterised the former two cases. What became apparent in this sample was that the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism is in many respects mutually reinforcing. In short, the desire for greater equity was a driving force in enacting high levels of negotiation, with the extent of negotiation itself producing higher levels of egalitarianism. These key stages of the negotiation process are displayed in Figure 5 below, and the final section of this chapter evaluates the simultaneity in this process and the incidence of high levels of egalitarianism.

Figure 5: stages in the negotiation process that facilitate moves towards greater egalitarianism


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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Consciousness/unsilenci     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    Negotiation inception     │
│    and how it is received    │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Adoption of negotiation    │
│          'roles'             │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│    Development of new        │
│       competencies           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Developing sense of        │
│  responsibility and moral    │
│         obligation           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Progressive gendered       │
│   and familial identity      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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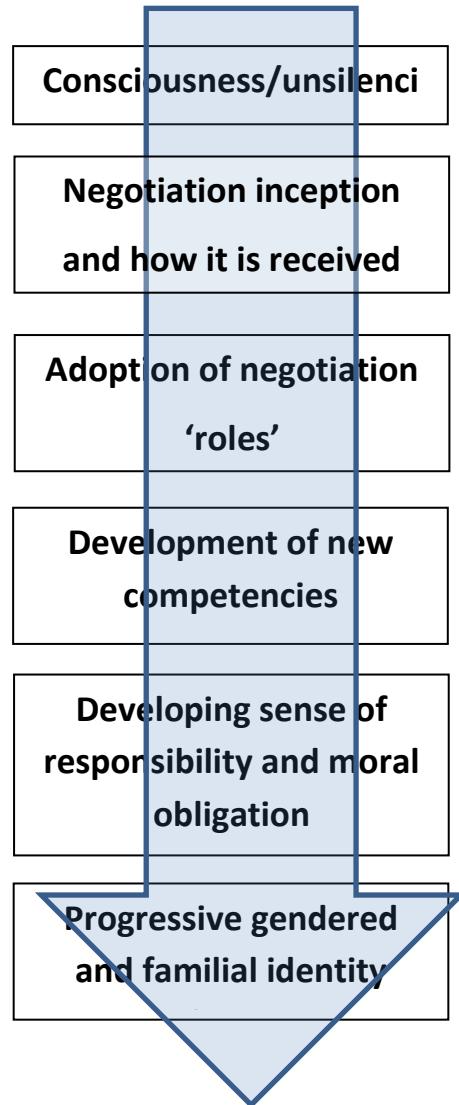
These different stages are now examined, with their presence and importance to the continual development of higher levels of negotiation (that simultaneously increases the likelihood of higher levels of egalitarianism), illustrated through the three cases of perfunctory egalitarianism and negotiated egalitarianism.

Consciousness/unsilencing

The first stage highlighted here in a process of negotiation is the development of 'consciousness', that the current division of labour is no longer viable or perceived as fair. This is required, at least to some extent, in order to bring about practical

change or more explicit discussion between partners, otherwise the established labour routine – disproportionately weighted towards the women in this study – is unlikely to be overturned. This idea is developed from Benjamin's (2003) conception of 'unsilencing' where assertiveness for a renegotiation requires some kind of consciousness that change, or indeed discussion about any potential change, would be beneficial to one or both parties, and the desire to enact change is strong enough to push forward with efforts to initiate a renegotiation. This final point is certainly testified through the lack of assertiveness in cases of conventional accordance, where each partner was aware that overall divisions of labour were not equal, yet there was little negotiation and change in labour shares at all. It is perhaps telling that the only cases constituting high levels of negotiation and high egalitarianism in this study were those of male redundancy, which began with a change in male 'consciousness' – particularly in terms of what they perceived to be fair – and their subsequent initiation of negotiations about how to manage the households responsibilities. For example, Chris Denham entered this process after suffering job loss and seeing his wife's efforts with regards to unpaid labour during his period of unemployment:

> *'In truth, I have looked to avoid housework in the past. If I'm asked to do something then I will, but in the sense that I know she did more than me and I never really made any attempt to change that. It's only really since being out of a job, seeing her come home from work and straight into jobs back here, sticking the dinner on, sorting the kids, you name it, that I've really come to appreciate how much she does. That's not what I want, it's not fair. I know I should do my bit, and now I genuinely look to share the load'* (Chris Denham, first interview).

For Mike Warriner, this period of consciousness had not been fully realised by the first interview, but many of the same sentiments appeared:

> *'I've talked about self-employment not being the first thing on my career bucket list, but neither was being a stay-at-home dad. My views have definitely changed [since the first interview]. I still want to and enjoy working. But I appreciate now how tasking and how mundane a lot of the house jobs are. To think Dawn was working like me and doing all this stuff as well, is something I can't explain. I genuinely did not think about all the extra work she was doing, completely ignorant to the whole thing. If you*

asked me then, as I'm sure you did, I would have said things were pretty fair!' (Mike Warriner, second interview).

Respondents did not simply wake up one morning and decide to 'become' more egalitarian, it became so over a period of time. If we recall, during the early stages of male redundancy their wives actually began attempting to take on more unpaid responsibility, and it took a period of observing their efforts, initial difficulties in finding new employment and growing concerns about their lack of (financial or otherwise) contributions to the household. This process involves a reflection and acknowledgement that previous divisions were not 'fair', which itself testifies that unequal divisions were now being questioned and unpaid labour perceived as a *joint* responsibility much more than previously. As stated in Chapter 6, prior to redundancy when these three couples were in a state of conventional accordance, these unequal divisions had been long taken-for-granted as primarily the jurisdiction of female partners. When conceptualising fairness, accounts focused on the fact that housework was not enjoyable *and* arduous, particularly when combined with paid employment. For Carl the nature of Lorraine's work, a child-minder working larger from home, was key to seeing and appreciating the repetitive and mundane nature of her typical working day:

> *'Whilst I was unemployed I did do a lot more around the house, I thought. It was a strange situation really, because I was trying to stay out of the way of Lorraine and the kids, but it's not so easy! And of course they're loud, especially one or two of them when put together. So I'd be looking for jobs on the laptop, out of the way of everybody. But there'd be plenty of time in the day where I'd be around them. You find yourself mucking in really, if you think a child is going to spill something, knock something over, hurt themselves. So I was almost like an assistant at times! I realised how mentally fatiguing it is to be watching kids all day. And of course, after a day of it you don't really feel like cleaning up after yourself! But then you know it's same again tomorrow so it all needs doing, spick and span. Seeing and being part of this, properly, made me realise that it's an unfair burden on Larry [sic] to be doing all that. I've always done my bit, but not being in*

work and having the time to do more, on top of everything else, it felt like the right thing to do' (Carl Meehan, second interview).

The high levels of egalitarianism achieved by these couples were something that had to be worked on over a period of time, but key to its accomplishment was the initial realisation and change in attitude demonstrated by the husbands here. After all, change is most likely when *both* partners are actively involved in its emergence – testified here as the three cases of high egalitarianism occurred following a change in male attitude ('consciousness') towards their disproportionately lower divisions of labour. Even if the female partner sparks the process, undoubtedly the 'consciousness' and views of men will also be key to determining the outcomes of negotiation initiation. As existing research posits that men are less likely to initiate negotiation in this context, this has been subsequently neglected in theorisations.

Taking one example from the literature presented in Chapter 2, it is interesting that the Gerson and Peiss (1985) framework of gender consciousness is based solely from a female perspective of consciousness. Taking the third level of consciousness, what they refer to as 'feminist consciousness' – the level at which change is most likely to occur with regards to unequal divisions of labour – this refers to women contesting perceived gender differences. In the instances here, however, only when the men acknowledged the disproportionality in their labour shares and set the ball rolling for a change did egalitarianism become more likely. Hugely significant to this process of negotiation was the increase in 'consciousness' that *they* experienced regarding what constitutes fairness and the socially constructed nature of traditional (gendered) familial roles, which in Mike's case was actually only fully realised by the time of second interview. The literature, including Gerson and Peiss's (1985) framework, suggests that initiation is typically from a wife discontent with an unequal division of labour, who then becomes assertive in her attempts to enact changes. These cases highlight that we need to factor in male consciousness rather than simply focus on a discontent female being assertive and how a male partner may respond to this.

For example, a new dimension should be added whereby the process of 'unsilencing' occurs, but rather than how it is typically portrayed in the literature, male partners

have become aware of a discrepancy in the division of labour. In the context of redundancy studied here this involved acknowledging that they have more time available to rectify this unequal arrangement and begin to conduct more unpaid tasks for the household. The longitudinal nature of male consciousness could then be outlined, based on the three cases of high egalitarianism, that the male partners actually enjoyed aspects of greater involvement, particularly in terms of caring, and this stimulated further engagement in unpaid tasks and the other stages of negotiation that follow. That consciousness, if sustained, is a key and enduring element of the negotiation process facilitating high levels of egalitarianism is a recurring theme throughout the rest of this chapter.

Negotiation inception and how it is received

Of course, how the negotiation is instigated may be crucial to how it unfolds, and the likelihood of a positive, and fruitful process that results in higher levels of egalitarianism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in cases of male consciousness female partners were very receptive to their initiations of negotiation, happy to develop more equitable divisions of labour:

> *'At first I did have a couple of reservations about this new-found desire to get more involved with the housework and whatnot. Would this be a short-term thing? He might get bored straight away and go back to doing less. Would he even be able to get things done to the standard we're used to now? None of us would be happy if the house wasn't cleaned properly, if we didn't have the right food in, all aspects really. But I was assured that this was a long-term commitment to helping out more and that he was determined to do these things well so of course, who wouldn't be happy to lessen their own burden?! With paid work too it can be a long day with not much time to yourself otherwise'* (Dawn Warriner, second interview).

As touched upon when conceptualising negotiation, in all three cases there were practical adjustments made first – beginning with female attempted increases following male redundancy, before these tasks were reclaimed by the male partners. More extensive and explicit dialogue only truly came later as new tasks were taken

up by these men. Negotiation inception occurred largely through these increased practical undertakings, where wives were satisfied to quite simply let them 'get on with it' (Dawn Warriner, second interview), and 'feel their way into new jobs' (Lisa Denham, second interview). Much of this is typified by the Meehan case where this negotiation style actually set the tone for the whole negotiation process.

Lorraine's response to Carl's engagement in more frequent and new unpaid tasks was to allow him to take on the extra responsibility, without pushing him or making demands if he decided that certain duties were not 'for' him, whilst pursuing with others – even when his initial standards were lower than what the household was used to. They reflected on this as amicable, with the opportunity for guidance to be requested or given at all times:

> *'Although we weren't holding family meetings or anything, there was nothing overly complicated going on here. I'd started taking care of a few things, pot washing, tidying up, food shops, those types of things, and of course this saved Lorraine time so she was happy enough to let it continue. If there were any problems then obviously she's there to ask, and likewise if there were any problems her end she wouldn't hesitate to let me know! But as I say, we just got on with things really and it was working fine for everyone'* (Carl Meehan, second interview).

This can be clearly contrasted to certain cases of low egalitarianism in this thesis where female partners', discontent with a disproportionately high share of unpaid labour (desiring change), were a little apprehensive about initiating discussions on this issue. For example:

> *'It bothers me a lot that I'm left to do the majority of things around the house. Even when it comes to planning and making arrangements for the kids, he just assumes that I've done it. If I forgot something they could be left stranded anywhere really! But it's not easy approaching him about it because he'll think I'm just moaning for the sake of moaning, or suggesting that he doesn't work hard enough in his job. I do ask for help, I'll say can you do this, and even ask frequently where really he should take the hint and see that I want him to take control of that task but he'll literally just do it as*

and when. So ultimately it's left with me to carry on as primarily responsible for jobs around the house' (Amanda Solomon, first interview).

This instance also reveals how the negotiation initiation was received, in a non-conflictual manner by her husband, Joseph, but in such a way that reduced the likelihood for higher levels of negotiation and egalitarianism. Indeed, concerns over a negative reaction played a significant part in this respondent's *initial* unwillingness to press for a more explicit renegotiation. As will be explored in Chapter 8, respondents employed a number of tactics to both avoid negotiations and resist attempts at initiation from their partners.

Adoption and maintenance of mutually supportive negotiation 'roles' and goals

How the initiation of any negotiation is received, and indeed the nature of the negotiation as it unfolds will depend on the mutuality of goals and whether partners share the same commitment to these goals. As noted, the cases of high egalitarianism in this study were initiated by male respondents who, after a period of 'consciousness', began to embark on a process of negotiation with greater equity in their divisions of labour the objective – a goal welcomed by their female partners. To achieve this and overturn unequal divisions of unpaid and overall labour in these three cases, particular roles were adopted that facilitated higher levels of negotiation and egalitarianism. As the process developed, particularly Mike Warriner and Chris Denham talked in terms of both seeking and receiving guidance with tasks they had not previously engaged in to any considerable extent. Mike actually likened this part of the process to on-the-job training:

> *'The thing about it is you take a lot of this stuff for granted, coming home to a house that is always clean and tidy, knowing that [child] will be there and asking "how was swimming", not checking to see if they actually got to swimming and back okay, you just automatically presume that. So when it became my responsibility, all of a sudden you realise the full extent of what goes into these daily parts of your family's life. Of course I needed direction. Dawn would show me the best way to scrub, stand over whilst I mastered it, and so on. I was like her apprentice!'* (Mike Warriner, second interview).

Dawn gave a fuller insight into her approach, stating that it was not just in practical terms that she found the best way to navigate the negotiation process but also in terms of spoken interaction:

> *'There were times where he'd get very frustrated at things; for instance I found him shouting at the washing machine on one occasion! My approach was to say "what I find helps is this…" or "yes this can be annoying, try…" and so on. Rather than straight up telling him what to do, or patronising him, that seemed to do it. We're quite supportive, and it helps if you know how each other works'* (Dawn Warriner, second interview).

Equally Chris acknowledged the on-going, simultaneous importance of dialogue and practical endeavour in facilitating higher levels of negotiation and egalitarianism, testifying that both elements form an integral part of the process:

> *'Although I've always tided up after myself, mucked in with the housework, loaded the dishwasher, and such things, I was actually gaining responsibility for things here, so ultimately the standard of a lot of the housework came down to me. I had no intention of doing it badly, and all that would mean is I'd waste my own time and Dawn's because she'd end up going over it anyway. So yes we had discussions. Particularly as Dawn has her way of doing things and wants to know that just because I'm doing them things won't change and there won't be any problems. So we'd talk about things, go and carry out what we said we'd do, then talk about how it went. We couldn't have managed things, not effectively anyway, without her help. Asking questions in particular, how best to do things. What needs to be done, and how. She couldn't have done my job if I sat her in front of a computer, and equally I couldn't just start fulfilling the role. In many ways this stuff is…I know the basic premise of each task, but not how to do them well'* (Chris Denham, second interview).

Certainly during the initial stages of these negotiation processes, both Dawn and Lisa maintained an element of control over the organisation of duties, even where it was Mike and Chris who undertook the activities in question. Using the example from Mike's quote above, Dawn would check that swimming had not been cancelled, would pack their child's bag the night before, and so forth. Chris conceptualised

Lisa's role as almost 'supervisory', drawing on the way she 'formalised' their renegotiation process through means such as drawing up a rota of certain domestic tasks:

> *'She even has on there what colour bin needs taking out on which day. Not like I've been managed in work for nearly twenty years or anything, I need to be managed in my own home now too!'* (Chris Denham, first interview).

This is most probably because Dawn and Lisa displayed greater emotional management of the situation, particularly in terms of worrying that things were running smoothly – even if only cognitively – and the organisation of responsibilities being fulfilled, including those being undertaken by Mike and Chris. This is characteristic of how many women feel responsible for the organisation and management of unpaid labour regardless of who conducts each activity (Hochschild, 1989).

For the Meehan's there was much less by way of verbal communication, with much less guidance sought and offered as Carl's engagement in new tasks began. However, the increase in practical contributions he made and Lorraine's positive response to these initial efforts at renegotiating their division of labour provided the second key stage in this negotiation process:

> *'I see our relationship as pretty equal. We both take decisions that affect each other, on behalf of each other, even for each other. Not in a way that says look, I wear the trousers in this relationship, I'm the powerful one who decides what everyone does. We act in everyone's best interests, and clearly there is a level of trust there, such that we go and make these decisions without always discussing things at length first. I guess we're both quite impulsive too, and not the type to spend ages deliberating things or anything else that slows things down. He did that when unemployed, just did things around the house without asking if they needed doing, how I normally do them, is there a best way, anything at times. So yeah, things are done for the family really, it's not a case of anyone being in charge'* (Lorraine Meehan, second interview).

The lack of explicit negotiation that was engaged in was put down to the style in which they interact, which is not always based upon the amount and frequency in which they interact, rather decisions are often taken without consultation that each believes is in the household's interests rather than those of the individual. In particular, Carl felt that increasing his time spent on housework and childcare was beneficial to Lorraine, with the extra time spent on caring a positive for himself and their child too. However, where he felt that he could not perform certain duties to the standard they were used to, he would focus on other activities believing that his continued undertaking of these duties would have negative effects on household members. This was agreeable to Lorraine who concurred with these assertions and was appreciative of the extra contribution he was now making.

Development of new competencies

Following the initial period of 'consciousness', negotiation inception and the beginning of a trial-and-error process of dialogue (to varying extents) and undertaking new tasks, these men began to develop new competencies as a direct result of their engagement and perseverance with these new tasks. Highlighted by Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2005) as an important element in transforming a sexual division of labour, this proved to be a key stage in the processes of negotiation described in this thesis. Not only does this require practical endeavour on the part of individuals looking to engage in new labour tasks, but in the two cases of negotiated egalitarianism discussions with their partners also, who were able to offer support and guidance on the best ways to undertake each task – further aided the development of new competencies. Linking back to consciousness as a growing, ever-present component of higher levels of egalitarianism, it was only really through this engagement that respondents fully appreciated the mundane and often arduous nature of many of these tasks, which proved crucial to generating a desire for greater egalitarianism as the negotiation process unfolded:

> *'Two things in particular put me off doing more of the household jobs. One was that obviously they are hardly exciting and something you don't look forward to, which I now see is a bit of an immature attitude to have when*

clearly you're then leaving it up to your partner to do them who isn't particularly enthralled by the idea either. But most importantly, I didn't perceive myself to be very good at them, so it seemed pointless when she would have to go over what I've done anyway to a better standard. Again that seems like a really poor excuse, and it is, because cleaning and whatnot is just like everything else. Apply yourself to it, do it a couple of times, and of course you become better at it. And I have' (Carl Meehan, second interview).

Equally, the development of new competencies revealed the socially constructed nature underpinning many of their initial perceptions that their wives were often better suited to specific unpaid tasks, as indicated in existing research (e.g. Rehel, 2014). Each male respondent testified to the fact that expertise is developed with experience, and notions of specialisation in unpaid labour tasks often simply reflect the greater engagement female partners have previously had in many of these tasks (that become 'routine'):

'When you actually take the lead on many of the caring duties and tasks around the house, you quickly realise that the only thing that really stopped you getting involved in them more were your own feelings that you were not well suited to them. Or more accurately, that your partner is better suited to them. And there's not much logic for that other than we as society see women as naturally better at caring and so on. Personally, I think I can offer the kids just as much in my parenting role, including things and doing things differently to their mother that really benefits them' (Chris Denham, second interview).

During the second interviews their wives concurred with many of these assertions. Crucially, their partners' competency developments (and therefore the standards of housework and caring engaged in) ensured that they did not feel obliged to reclaim these tasks, which may have affected the progressive moves towards higher levels of egalitarianism:

'I don't really have any concerns about any of the jobs Chris does. I know if he has to do anything with the kids it'll be fine, whereas before I would worry quite a bit because he hadn't done certain things that regularly. And the same goes for a lot of things around the house too. I'd actually say he spends

more time cleaning the kitchen than I did. He's become really aware about hygiene in particular, and really has things down to a tee now. I joke that standards are slowly improving but not to the level they were, but genuinely he runs quite a tight ship!' (Lisa Denham, second interview).

This confidence had certainly grown since the first interviews where these female partners were happy with the initial changes, but displayed very much a 'wait and see' attitude to the changes taking place – indicating that their long-term nature was not ensured at that point.

Reference to competency development was actually made in the first interviews, where Mike conceded that he had been much more involved physically with their second child, believing that his physical caring ability had 'improved' over the course of childrearing and this was a factor in actually wanting to play a greater role now than had been the case with their first (and now non-dependent child):

> *'I felt I could have done a lot more caring first time round. It wasn't very fair that I let Dawn take on so much when – apart from leave – she was working pretty long hours also. I think her doing so much when [child] was born created a situation where she was better at all the different things a child needs. Something as important as how hot a bottle or a bath needs to be…obviously it makes sense for someone who knows how to do these things to actually do them! I probably didn't trust myself, and if you imagine a snowball effect from there, where I gradually didn't do anywhere near as much as she did. Maybe it's not a good excuse I don't know'* (Mike Warriner, first interview).

Through processes that were largely described as trial-and-error like, and the perseverance with tasks in order to become increasingly competent at them, this proved a key stage in the negotiation process in contributing to high levels of egalitarianism.

Developing a sense of responsibility and moral obligation

This stage sits hand in hand with the development of new competencies, as the two appeared to occur often simultaneously. Certainly once competency in a task was

developed and it could be performed to the standard established previously, then partners demonstrated a greater sense of ownership over that specific duty. For example:

> *'I was stepping into her area here. Where things have always been done the way she likes them, and to a certain standard. It's safe to say those standards dropped at first but I definitely got the hang of things pretty quickly. It goes to show that habit dictates everything really. I've learnt to programme computers but felt I couldn't clean the kitchen properly. Not very logical when you actually think about it'* (Mike Warriner, first interview).

This ownership was key to the sustained commitment to undertaking tasks, which in these cases shifted the onus of a disproportionately high share of unpaid labour away from the women. It is perhaps interesting to note in the quote above that Mike described the broad domain of domestic responsibility as 'her area' in his first interview. No such references were made in the second interview where, despite each partner consistently fulfilling specific tasks, and thus having ownership of specific tasks, both financial provision and unpaid labour in its entirety was viewed as a joint responsibility. The array of tasks undertaken had evidently moved away from just those typically regarded as 'masculine' in current research such as electrical, DIY or vehicle maintenance (e.g. Atkinson and Bradley, 2013; Lindsay and Maher, 2014; Young et al., 2013) that characterised the cases of conventional accordance in particular.

This was equally apparent in Chris's account of the initial change in his division of labour. To begin with, before there was a significant increase in his unpaid labour share, Chris took to conducting the school run and caring for the children until Lisa returned home from work. It became apparent in the first interview that Chris did not perceive himself to be in control of the tasks he had taken on when outlining his evening routine:

> *'It allowed me to sort myself out while she took over, sorta thing. Have a wash, eat dinner and then we'd watch TV before both making sure the kids got tucked into bed'* (Chris Denham, first interview).

What he referred to as 'took over' actually encompassed many activities that he was not performing. It was clear in both partner's accounts that Chris would pick the children up from school and undertake what would largely be described as play activities with them until Lisa came home. Her 'taking over' meant ensuring that everyone was fed, bathed and that any schoolwork was done. This occurred whilst Chris 'sorted himself out', which centred on some time to himself – personal time of which Lisa appeared to have much less. Again, this situation changed, and Chris highlights how an obligation to other household members drives this desire to become competent at each task such that the standard was achieved, and ownership to continue fulfilling each task, to this level, in the long-term:

> *'I used to view housework and so on as a thankless task, in other words a little unrewarding. But that's because you take it for granted rather than actually thanking the person who's been doing it! You then realise that it's for your family. It's for your wife so that she doesn't have to spend more time than she already does on things for everyone else, for your children who get a clean environment and plenty of attention, and for yourself. The task you're doing becomes more than what it actually entails, I truly believe it signals your love and commitment to those around you'* (Chris Denham, second interview).

A similar comment was made by Amanda Solomon, whose husband Joseph was much less willing to take ownership of tasks and certainly had not developed the sense of moral obligation displayed by the men in these three cases of high egalitarianism:

> *'It's the gesture that comes with doing things for other people. To him it might be hoovering, and it's boring. But to me it's just a little way of saying he cares'* (Amanda Solomon, second interview).

Where partners did not feel a sense of obligation to take ownership of a task, particularly respondents who would use terms such as 'assist' or 'help out' when referring to their involvement in tasks – as individual occurrences rather than actually feeling a sense of responsibility for them – then the negotiation process stalls and high levels of egalitarianism are less likely. Actually taking control of

unpaid tasks is key to sharing a long-term commitment to sharing unpaid as well as paid employment duties, itself criteria for high levels of egalitarianism.

This leads us to the final negotiation stage highlighted in this process, namely identity change, and a sense of responsibility and obligation can have a significant impact on how they perceive certain roles within the family:

> *'He seems a lot more confident in his abilities to not just take sole responsibility if I'm doing something else or have gone somewhere, but to use that time productively. Before he wouldn't necessarily start educational tasks, but would be happier getting some toys out and playing with them, or putting a DVD on. He definitely sees his parenting role differently now, I would say. Of course he's always been an active father, but now I think he sees himself as a fifty per cent parent, for want of a better word. He'd be less inclined to say that I was a primary carer, because when he's not at work he's fully involved. And obviously the work is to provide for us all too, it's a bonus that he enjoys what he does'* (Lorraine Meehan, second interview).

Identity change

In the cases of high egalitarianism it was clearly evident that the male partners each underwent changes in their familial identities. It was common for initial identities to be largely grounded in an individual's occupation, or primarily constituted by paid employment – certainly before familial role – with expressions such as 'working dad'. By the second interviews, however, some did offer accounts of fatherhood and their involvement in unpaid labour that very much emphasised their greater sense of responsibility for tasks and adjusted familial role. This was particularly evident in Carl's case, where he spent a great deal of time talking about his job in the first interview when asked about how he defined his identity:

> *'I strongly identified with that role. Many of the jobs people tell me are somewhat equivalent to what I did before, available at the moment, are more like recruitment consultant type things, which are not my thing at all. So I do feel like I've lost part of my identity, sure. Not that my work is what solely*

defines me, I'm a father and a husband, a brother and a son too. However, how long can I say I was a job advisor in the public sector? I've been unemployed for a little while now. I don't want to identify myself as unemployed. A house husband? That doesn't feel right, at all, either. As a dad, and as a husband, you want all the old fables of putting food on the table, clothes on backs, and everything else' (Carl Meehan, first interview).

When asked about his identity in the second interview, Carl did not say much about his previous role, and spoke a lot more freely about his familial role. This formed a much more substantial amount of what he felt gave him a sense of identity, despite the fact he now worked in an industry and position that represented his key interest: vehicle maintenance. He spoke at length about the job satisfaction he had in his new role, but took the greatest pleasure to being a part of his (and the other children's) development:

'It's great to be around them at a young age, because you can really influence their development. Children are so inquisitive. You don't want them to reach an age where you think you could have done more to inspire them. I'm definitely spending more time with [child] and it's really great. That's a huge positive to come out of being made redundant, and not having a job for a while. To see that having as much time with your child as possible is such a great thing, it created that desire to maintain it when I got the new job. Obviously I can't be around quite as much as I was then, but the quality of that time is just as important as how much there is of it. I feel I'm a better dad' (Carl Meehan, second interview).

Carl is further revealing in this account the points being made here that with greater engagement in childcare he feels that his competency level has increased, a greater sense of responsibility and satisfaction has been gained from this; and his identity undergoing change accordingly. For Chris, he embraced his role as primary carer after many weeks of avoiding any such label – evident in his accounts across the first and second interviews:

'The people who matter know I've been made redundant but silly things, like standing with the other parents at the school gates, or when the post man

comes and I'm there to sign for things in the mail. I did and still do feel a little sense of people wondering why I'm not in the office. It might sound ridiculous' (Chris Denham, first interview).

After the six-month time lapse between interviews he expressed a different attitude towards the situation and had clearly been considering both his role and the notion of male primary carers more generally, to quite an extent:

> *'There's labels you are given as a male taking the lead on caring and so on, such as stay-at-home dad. I can't say that has any appeal to me or accurately describes my situation at all, and there certainly feels like society expects you, as a man, to make a significant contribution to your household financially, hold down a stable job, and what have you. It was difficult at first, but I've grown comfortable with my situation and what people think'* (Chris Denham, second interview).

He demonstrated that his identity had, and is, undergoing change, and something that he continually reflects upon. Reference is made to societal expectations and how he has negotiated his own personal situation and familial role in line with these (more conventional) norms. Undoubtedly when speaking of familial role we are also talking about gender as the two are inextricably bound up. As with Chris, Mike's reflection on his changing role, particularly as a father, involved acknowledging and distancing himself from traditional gender norms:

> *'Typically fathering centres on earning, and earning at least a significant part of the family income. It's almost expected I guess. It does bother me that I don't earn more at the moment, but that's more about maintaining and improving our standard of living rather than adherence to male culture'* (Mike Warriner, second interview).

Identity change begins with 'consciousness' at the very beginning of this process, as awareness of inequality in their household labour often calls into question their familial role as they came to terms with a relatively lower contribution. The development of moral obligations that come with spending time with children and other loved ones, and positive feelings of doing more for these individuals significantly influence the development of changes in identity. Evidence here

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suggests that without changes in one's identity, negotiated somewhat pragmatically based upon changes in employment and familial role, but also in relation to and with an awareness of societal expectations, high levels of negotiation and egalitarianism are much less likely to emerge. Take for example Theo Woodhouse (discussed more fully in the following chapter), who engaged in high levels of negotiation yet does not appear to relinquish traditional roles (his as primarily concerned with a full-time, stable income, and lower share of unpaid labour) enough to achieve high levels of egalitarianism – despite the attempts of his wife that proved inefficacious in bringing about change:

> *'We positively rely on two incomes, as most families do. There's no doubt at all that he's supportive of my employment, but for whatever reason this doesn't translate across to the housework. He's happy to share existing responsibilities but not the other things that we need doing as a family, because whereby he sees that as women's work and he's a man – mainly concerned with keeping the money coming in…despite the fact I do too'* (Josephine Woodhouse, second interview).

Identity is not easily changed, as will be demonstrated in the cases of low egalitarianism – like the Woodhouses – even where individuals espoused equal views and were forced to reflect on unequal divisions of labour in the interviews. There was little indication at the end of the study that sudden drives towards egalitarianism were in the offing, particularly as new routines were becoming established given the time lapse since redundancy in each case. For the Carrolls in particular, such was Gerard's advocacy of traditional ideals surrounding what constitutes 'men's' or 'women's work' that Patricia had never made any real attempt to instigate a negotiation – with collusion itself testament to the perceived difficulties of stimulating (gendered) identity change.

It is of course important to recognise that these changes affected both partners, and in the cases of high egalitarianism the female partners also underwent identity change as they adapted to a lower share of unpaid and overall labour as more egalitarian divisions were achieved. This meant a reduction in the responsibility they had for housework and also, particularly in the case of Lisa Denham, not being the primary carer for her children:

'It's quite strange that I'm no longer responsible for certain things that were really just part of my week, things that I knew I had to do and would just get on with. I don't take the lead on a lot of that stuff anymore. You know that someone else is in charge when you're constantly reminded to do things you yourself used to say. For example, I get told off if I don't arrange the settee cushions nicely when leaving the lounge. Not something I imagined a year ago! In the same way it has taken a little adjustment to accept that I'm not the one who is the most hands-on with the kids, particularly as a lot of my friends are. It's great that Chris is more involved but of course you do think about the fact that you are spending less time with them, but particularly [the youngest child] does not see my face at the end of every school day, things like that' (Lisa Denham, second interview).

Some sections of the literature do identify so-called 'maternal gatekeeping', namely the unwillingness of women to give up much caring responsibility as a potential barrier to the greater sharing of such duties (e.g. Allen and Hawkins, 1999). There was little evidence of this throughout the sample, regardless of their positioning in the negotiation/egalitarianism matrix. In the specific cases here, following on from the positive receipt of renegotiation, the relevant identity changes experienced by the female partners were also very important to this end, and significantly to maintaining a supportive role as their husbands engaged in new tasks (with the offer of support throughout indicated by all six partners in these three cases.

The link between negotiation and egalitarianism

It became apparent when examining the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism that the two were inextricably linked in many ways. Certainly, if we take 'consciousness' as the first stage in a process of negotiation, the awareness displayed in these three cases that current divisions of labour were no longer fair is surely a key component of 'egalitarianism' itself. The desire for change in their respective divisions of labour was not born *automatically* out of job loss – as seen in the cases of male redundancy that remained in a state of conventional accordance – rather, this desire itself represents the first stage in the development of egalitarianism

and negotiation. We may therefore position egalitarianism as a *prerequisite* for negotiation; in other words a negotiation of the sexual division of labour is most likely in instances where a desire for greater egalitarianism exists.

This is perhaps unsurprising, however the particular conditions under which this desire bears fruit is important in understanding why some cases of male redundancy led to high negotiation and/or egalitarianism, and others displayed little, if any, of each. Pre-redundancy all male respondents engaged in relatively conventional divisions of unpaid labour, and egalitarianism was not an initial, overwhelming desire of any – even after job loss, where goals had been described purely in a paid working sense – namely to acquire new full-time employment. This job loss, and the interplay of a number of contextual factors (that are the focus of Chapter 9) created pressures on these redundant males to renegotiate their disproportionately lower shares.

Nevertheless, where this desire was created its strength appeared to drive the level of negotiation engaged in. It would be reasonable to hypothesise that the greater this desire, the more likely higher levels of negotiation will be undertaken. Referring back to the definition of negotiation formulated in Chapter 6, couples will be more willing to engage in discussions about the planning and execution of managing their paid and unpaid working commitments, not to mention those more practical undertakings, where both wish to overturn more conventional, unequal divisions of labour. Such a strong desire could be referred to as 'sustained unsilencing' or 'sustained consciousness', signifying a commitment to egalitarianism that would act as a catalyst to higher levels of negotiation coming intro fruition.

For example, in the cases of sustained dissension in particular, female partners would actively state their discontent with their current divisions of labour, demonstrating some degree of unsilencing and an encouragement for negotiation initiation with their partners to bring about change. However, where there was not a commitment to sustained unsilencing and assertiveness from *both* partners, negotiations did not reach levels considered 'high' relative to other couples in this study, and likewise the extent of egalitarianism achieved remained low.

It is important to look at the direction of causality in this relationship. Whilst the desire for greater moves towards egalitarianism began as they witnessed the efforts

made by their wives whilst out of employment and spending more time at home, this desire really developed with their actual engagement in tasks. The initial practical element of negotiation is hugely important for the realisation process that existing divisions of labour were not fair, and the desire to make arrangements more equitable. If these men had not begun undertaking more caring duties and housework they would not have experienced its often mundane, time consuming and frequently arduous nature. This was critical to understanding the huge amount of overall work their wives had been taking on pre-redundancy, and their motivation for a sustained commitment to egalitarianism.

What we actually see as couples begin negotiating, is that the greater their engagement with this process, the greater their desire for egalitarianism becomes also, at least to an extent. For example the continued practical application to tasks was in some part due to the commitment they had for pursuing a more egalitarian division of (particularly unpaid) labour. Simultaneously this stage of the negotiation process was essential to the development of a sense of responsibility for those tasks and feelings of moral obligation to other household members. This was significant in the maintenance of sustained consciousness, arguably a component of egalitarianism itself, which reinforced the desire for continued practical application and sustenance of feelings of moral obligation. Therefore the two appear to act in a manner that is mutually reinforcing.

The desire for a more highly equitable division of labour did drive the extent of negotiation; largely talked about in terms of a non-monetary contribution to the household. High levels of egalitarianism were seemingly not possible in the Warriner and Denham cases without the high level of explicit negotiation, as there was a requirement for planning, organising, managing, guidance and support, and ultimately extended dialogue between partners to enact the required practical change to foster egalitarianism. At the start of each case there was only a slight, practical change in each division of labour. The move towards a more egalitarian division can be seen to accelerate as the level of negotiation increased also. Therefore, the two concepts were crucial in the evolution of each other to the high levels witnessed in both scenarios.

For the Meehans, many of these points hold true in the sense that Carl's desire for egalitarianism also grew as they went through the outlined staged of negotiation, just

without recourse to the same level of overt planning and discussion. Lorraine still received his practical changes in a positive fashion and adopted a supportive role as he increased the time he spent on unpaid labour, and as he developed new competencies and a sense of responsibility, the desire for higher levels of negotiation and egalitarianism increased also. Figure 6 (below) illustrates this relationship more clearly:

Figure 6: the simultaneity of egalitarianism and the process of negotiation

NEGOTIATION

- **Commitment to egalitarianism (sustained unsilencing)**

- **Implies shared mutuality of goals and supportive roles adopted/maintained**

- **Motivation for continued practical application to tasks under ownership**

- **Perceptions of fairness**

- **Consciousness/unsilencing**

- **Negotiation inception and how it is received**

- **Adoption of negotiation 'roles'**

- **Development of new competencies**

- **Developing sense of responsibility and moral obligation**

- **Gendered and familial identity change**

EGALITARIANISM

At a more superficial level, the level of negotiation is influenced by, and itself continually influences, the extent of egalitarianism. For consciousness to reach a level where a partner (or partners) initiate a discussion around respective labour

shares, or undertake practical changes in their paid and unpaid contributions to a level conducive to high levels of negotiation (and the subsequent elements of the negotiation process), there needs to be a sustained commitment to egalitarianism. For the adoption of negotiation roles that are conducive to further levels of negotiation the evidence here – including the support and guidance offered by female partners – implies a shared commitment to certain goals, and maintenance of a supportive role so that new competencies and the other stages are most feasibly achievable.

These new competencies and a sense of ownership and moral obligation for tasks not previously undertaken require motivation for the combined practical application of oneself to these new responsibilities. The sustenance of motivation and commitment to the negotiation process are key aspects of egalitarianism, namely the desire to enact greater egalitarianism in their household's division of labour, which as stated is itself stimulated by each progressive stage in the negotiation process. The changes in gendered and familial identity seen here redefined what each partner considered as fair, as they made sense of their new roles and greater awareness surrounding the socially constructed nature of 'men's' and 'women's' work. These modified perceptions of fairness of course have implications for the maintenance of an individual's commitment to moves towards egalitarianism, and thus the level of egalitarianism and negotiation 'achieved'. Viewing both concepts as exactly that, accomplishments, it is clear from these three cases that a positive link does exist between the two, which mutually and simultaneously reinforce one another.

Of course, the nature of any negotiation that take place is hugely important in fostering further, higher levels of negotiation, and this may largely depend on the extent to which *both* partners desire change in their respective divisions of labour. Egalitarianism may be the goal for one partner but not necessarily both, and we would expect that where this is the case, the two concepts do not form the mutually reinforcing process described thus far. The next chapter is going to qualify many of the claims made here regarding the relationship between these two concepts, particularly when considering cases of sustained dissension where high levels of negotiation did not foster egalitarianism as it did for those in a state of negotiated egalitarianism.

Chapter 8: Maintaining low egalitarianism: tactics and resistance

This chapter explores the seven remaining cases of low egalitarianism, in order to address the third sub-research question: How are sexual divisions of labour characterised as low in egalitarianism maintained? Looking at Figure 7 (below), cases of low egalitarianism have been distinguished as constituting two different states of affair. Of the seven couples who engaged in low levels of egalitarianism, five remained in a state of conventional accordance across the duration of the study. This chapter will explore the various means through which traditional divisions of labour were maintained, despite redundancy affecting a partner in each case (identified as a catalyst for change in the previous chapter).

With relatively low levels of negotiation for these couples we may anticipate that the experiences of those in a state of sustained dissension are different, given that high levels of negotiation were enacted for both the Woodhouse and Solomon families. Here the greater extent of negotiation lays testament to the way that the present conventional division of labour was overtly contested, and the ways in which partners initiated and sustained negotiation is of key interest. Given that these cases do not represent states of high egalitarianism, another central focus of this chapter concerns the way these divisions are maintained, the various tactics employed by partners seeking to sustain the status quo, and the key reasons for high levels of negotiation not leading to high levels of negotiation – a different proposition to that examined in the previous chapter.

Figure 7: The movement and relative staticity of cases of low egalitarianism

Egalitarianism

Perfunctory egalitarianism   **Negotiated egalitarianism**

Negotiation

Singleton's

Woodhouse's

Murray's

Bardsley's

Legg's

Solomon's

Carroll's

Conventional accordance   **Sustained dissension**
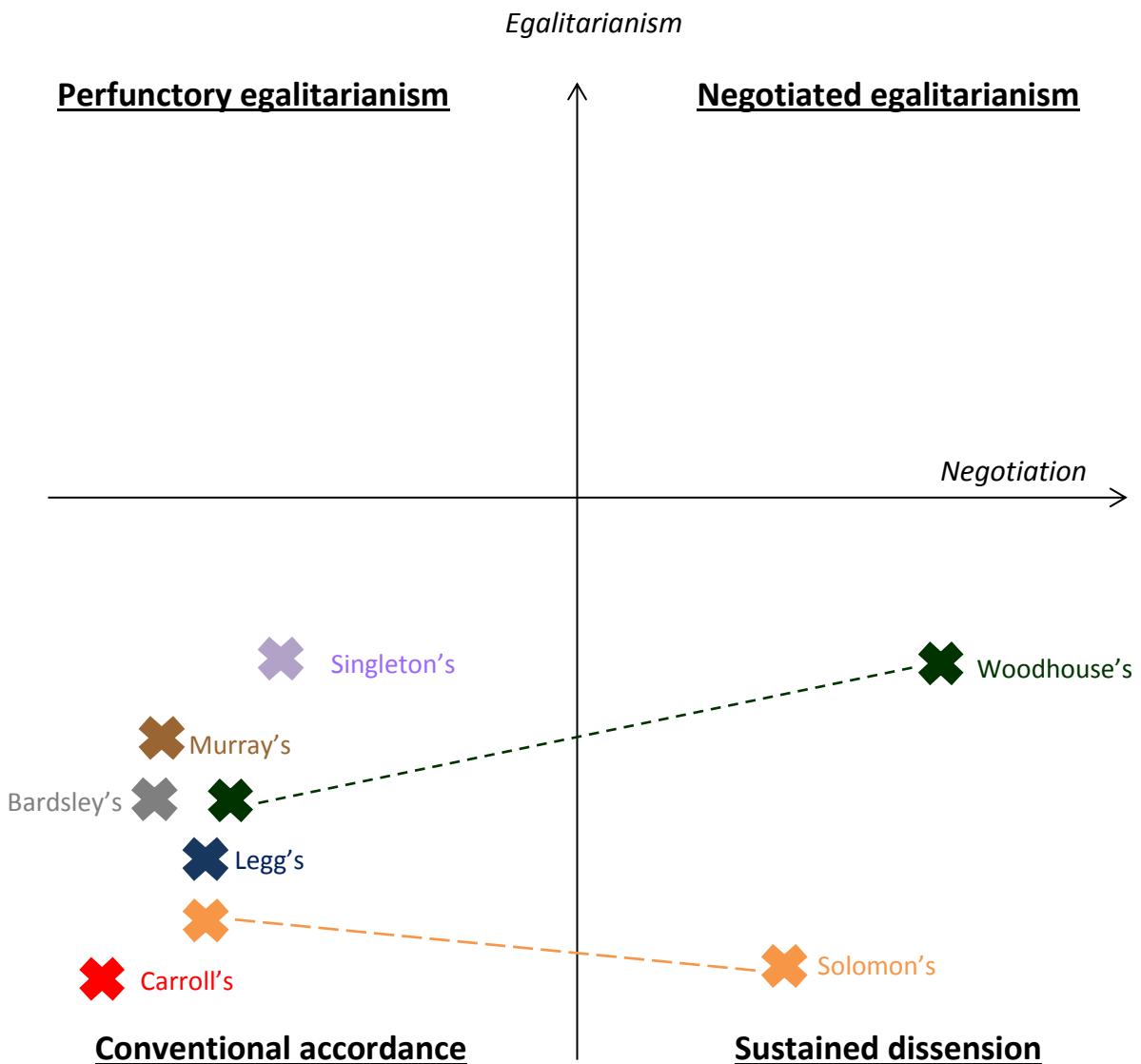
These cases are now explored, beginning with those of sustained dissension.

Sustained dissension: conflict and resistance

Two couples have been distinguished as engaging in high levels of negotiation yet enacting low levels of egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour, the Woodhouses and the Solomons. There are a number of similarities between the two cases, not least that both represent responses to female redundancy. As was true across all cases of female redundancy, these women initially increased their already disproportionately high shares of unpaid labour to take on the vast majority of their household's caring and other housework duties. As new employment was acquired,

both felt that the higher shares of unpaid labour they had engineered for themselves following redundancy were no longer reasonable given that they were now engaging in paid employment once again.

Beginning with Josephine Woodhouse, she began pushing for a more explicit renegotiation, both practically and in terms of dialogue with her husband Theo. In addition to the increase in her paid weekly working hours following re-employment, Josephine was concerned about their current arrangement for managing particularly child caring activities given that her new zero-hour employment contract was relatively unpredictable. Although she was working fewer hours than when previously full-time employed, and thus had greater time availability to undertake unpaid labour, she had few guarantees over her availability for time-specific tasks. For example, if she was required to teach until the end of a normal school day it was not possible for her to collect their children from school on time.

The result would be that they would have to attend an after-school club for a period of time, which was an expense that Josephine felt they could not really afford given the loss of earnings since her redundancy. Furthermore, she expressed the opinion that it would be more beneficial for the children and Theo himself if they spent this time together, rather than remaining at school for an extended period. Josephine expected Theo to work around these caring demands more with regard to his own employment, given the flexibility he was often granted over specific, daily work hours and the location in which to complete it. Certainly at this stage following Josephine's redundancy, this case is categorically low in egalitarianism, something that remained constant across the study indicating that her attempts to generate greater egalitarianism in their sexual division of labour were unsuccessful – despite high levels of negotiation engaged in.

Specifically, Josephine began initiating explicit, discussion-based negotiations with Theo by asking him his availability for school runs and home caring typically a week prior to when it would be needed, as this was usually when she would find out her own employment hours. Theo's role as a freelance graphic designer was one he was able to fulfil from home unless specifically required at organisations he worked with, which typically amounted to three days per working week. Theo felt that he could not completely commit to undertaking the school run on specific days because the

actual days he could work from home were often not firmly established until relatively close to each working week, giving both partners a degree of unpredictability in how these conflicting demands could be satisfied. Josephine felt that Theo was comfortably in a position to negotiate with the companies he worked with about organising the work he could not do at home around their child caring needs, completing the rest at home where she would 'take over' once in from teaching – on the days where she was not already available to pick them up.

Josephine orchestrated dialogue akin to what Theo had described as 'round the table' in his first interview, clearly stating her intentions and how their responsibilities could be more fairly divided, with greater predictability than the current arrangement. However, the objective was not perceived to be mutual and Theo did not respond to her advances in the positive manner described (particularly) in the Warriner and Denham cases:

> *'I sometimes think she looks at my work as a bit of a laugh. Because I enjoy doing what I do, and can work from home as opposed to under direct supervision, it's as though this is leisure time for me. It doesn't mean that I can start telling the people I work for what my hours will be this week, or what time I'll show up at their office. We've worked together for a while and they like what I do, I'm easy to work with. So I can negotiate with them a little bit yes, but if I openly start prioritising aspects of my personal life over work commitments I'm not sure how long they'd tolerate it for. I do what I can, and what I think is an acceptable amount of balancing the two, which doesn't seem to be enough in Jo's eyes at the moment'* (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

Theo negotiated these competing perspectives by practically managing the two conflicting demands on his time so that both could be fulfilled where possible. He feels that this is done to an 'acceptable' amount, and that Josephine overstates his ability to further organise employment duties around time-specific caring duties. For Josephine, she is happy to take ownership of caring once home from work, meaning that her engagement in unpaid labour remains substantially higher than Theo's:

'I'm not asking for much really. That he makes himself available on the days that I can't be, so that the kids get to and from school alright, and is simply there in case anything goes wrong until I get back home. They can play in their rooms while he sits on his computer if he likes, so the work will still get done. And I'll do the majority of the jobs that need doing with the kids and the house when I'm there' (Josephine Woodhouse, second interview).

Without a shared goal or perception of what is acceptable in a given situation, it is clear how negotiations may not unfold in a mutually supportive and progressive manner – certainly without compromise from the parties concerned. In Theo's mind he was compromising, certainly to a level he felt would be acceptable to those he worked with and did not wish to jeopardise the working relationships by requesting greater flexibility. The literature (reviewed in Chapter 2) depicts a situation where men are less likely to negotiate for flexible work arrangements than they are for other things such as promotional opportunities or higher pay. This is perhaps reflecting of an organisation culture where there is greater expectancy on men to be fully committed to their work, where presenteeism is valued and women more often expected to work flexibly. There were no explicit references to gendered expectations in Theo's accounts; purely that he did not want to be seen as uncommitted to the work or looking to take advantage of the working relationship.

Both partners engaged in discussions about how responsibilities were to be managed, and there were practical adjustments made by both – for example Theo did organise some work around the unpaid duties he had been tasked with; again to the extent he felt acceptable. Discussions were relatively frequent, and Josephine made a continued attempt to foster a more equitable division of labour across the six-month period of study, but typically they ended in disagreement. Despite her best efforts, and a willingness from Theo to engage with Josephine and demonstrate his position both that no more could be done to increase his employment flexibility, and that with the disjuncture in paid working hours he *was* 'pulling his weight' for the household, there was not what could be described as an egalitarian division by the end of the study, or indications that both were fully committed to the long-term sharing of employment *and* other household responsibilities.

Theo certainly did not fully 'withdraw' from negotiations as the 'demand-withdraw' literature (Chapter 2) portrays as a possibility. Although, Josephine did feel that this was the case when suggesting that he could do a couple of extra hours of work at the weekend when deadlines were flexible enough to permit it. She felt that he was unwilling to compromise on his social or personal leisure time in the way that he was on parental duties during the week. It would be fruitful to return to the incidence of implicit negotiations here and the concept of 'power'. As described, Josephine has attempted to initiate changes in their sexual division of labour with only limited success – overall divisions are significantly short of being equal. Yet, Theo was engaging in negotiation and not exerting power in any overt, crass manner of ordering, instructing and so forth. Taking the point that power can be invisible and latent (Komter, 1989), Theo effectively managed to set the agenda by simply choosing *not* to increase his engagement in unpaid tasks – despite his wife's attempts to the contrary. We have to remember that although Josephine focused on child caring activities, both partners acknowledged the disjuncture in *all* unpaid labour activities – despite Josephine stating her belief that Theo is competent at tasks such as cooking. Therefore, even though both were aware that he engages in disproportionately lower shares of other activities too, Theo had not increased those shares either.

What was particularly interesting about Theo's accounts of the explicit negotiations that took place was that he framed the unpaid duties that he agreed to undertake almost as a concession as the negotiation with Josephine progressed. This included time with the children and other domestic tasks that *he* needed doing, which one may have expected him to be a little more forthcoming in fulfilling rather than positioned as something he was doing *for Josephine*, given that she had initiated the negotiation:

> *'She asks me to pick the kids up from school and look after them whilst she's at work, or to pick bits of food up during the day, I do them. She can't say that I refuse to get involved, I physically cut back on work to do the things she's asked. She exaggerates, or rather underestimates how much I compromise with her'* (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

There are similarities in the accounts provided of discussions that took place to the case with Joseph Solomon's evasion of a more equitable division of labour, as will be discussed in a moment. In both instances, Amanda and Josephine effectively 'led' the discussions; doing most of the talking, controlling conversation topics, adopting a more aggressive tone, and greater incidence of interrupting and talking over their partners:

> *'I'm a right stickler for people butting in, being spoken over and stuff. It effectively says "I'm more important than you so I'll talk now, thanks". But I find it impossible not to when we're discussing these things because I'm raising a clear issue, I do a lot more round here than he does and really, what can he say? What could anyone say when a situation is unfair and they obviously should do something about it? And the result at times is he gets annoyed with me too, which in one sense is fair enough because I do talk over him quite a lot. Not always vindictively, but it happens. But that then gives him an excuse to walk away from the conversation, when really the issue I brought to him right at the start is still there'* (Josephine Woodhouse, second interview).

Research utilising conversation analysis to explore such power 'tools' during mixed-sex interactions, although varied, suggests men are more likely to be the perpetrators of measures like interruption to control the conversation (Stokoe and Smithson, 2001). One might expect this to have been the case here where both males were essentially looking to resist their partners' attempts to initiate negotiation and get their own 'way'. Alternatively, it is perhaps unsurprising that Amanda and Josephine have adopted these roles during discussions, given the lack of progress made in overturning what they perceive to be unfair divisions of labour. As touched upon, the males effectively set the agenda by disengaging with their partners and were 'passively' able to maintain the status quo.

The concept of power presented itself in an interesting and somewhat ambiguous fashion throughout all ten cases. Some women spoke about unpaid labour as 'their' domain, sometimes in ways that appeared to provide justification for their greater (unequal) shares. Arguably, female respondents *were* setting the agenda in the sense that they wanted control over the majority of unpaid labour, particularly during

periods of unemployment and non-standard paid working arrangements. Therefore, by increasing or maintaining their higher shares of unpaid labour and not encouraging a much greater contribution from their partners, they essentially retained control of the family's 'well-being'. This rationale was often bound up in terms of the fulfilment received from knowing their family members were cared for to the best of their ability and the emotional growth they personally experienced by the way these relationships were strengthened. Alternatively, it could be construed that this sense of control over unpaid labour offered what is potentially a false sense of empowerment in some instances, as they all professed to want greater egalitarianism. This was often spoken about in discourses of wanting greater 'help', and it is not clear if they wanted greater assistance with tasks but to retain control, or that it was simply unrealistic to frame unpaid duties as anything other than under their own jurisdiction.

As will be shown, male partners proved to be successful across the sample when looking to avoid high levels of negotiation – remembering that in the three cases of high egalitarianism it was the men who initiated change. The suggestion here is that male willingness to enact change in the division of labour is key to the level of negotiation and egalitarianism that occurs; not least because they need to be willing to adapt to changes in their circumstances and their 'lagged' behaviour given that an imbalance in their respective division already existed.

Turning to the Solomons, Amanda had been redundant for a period of five weeks at the time of first interview, and was awaiting the start date for a new position in the private sector. She had been employed in the DfE for eight years, working as part of a team that assesses how best to implement policy for disabled individuals who were not able to access education through many of the standard means. She has two children with Joseph, a project manager at the headquarters of a large private sector corporation, to whom she has been married for nearly ten years. During the initial interview, Amanda echoed many of the rationales listed by respondents above for increasing her share of unpaid labour to virtually all tasks, without feeling the need to engage too extensively with her husband. The time she had available to partake in housework and caring responsibilities, and what she described as 'the sense of

purpose' it brought to an otherwise relatively unstructured day were amongst the primary reasons cited.

Upon taking the new job position Amanda expected that the division of unpaid labour would change accordingly, but she went on to describe a situation whereby initiating a negotiation proved problematic:

> *'I would say to him can you not stack the dishwasher while I get myself sorted, or take care of a few bits, and he would do it without any fuss. But he would see this as a one-off, as though he was doing me a favour. So eventually I said we could make this your thing, you know, it would help me out a bit. And he would say yeah, do it for a night or two then act as though nothing had been said'* (Amanda Solomon, second interview).

Essentially, despite the fact that she was working part-time, Amanda felt that Joseph was happy to let the division of labour that had become established during her period of unemployment continue, resulting in what she described as an arduous and long working week. The issue is one of perceived fairness, as Amanda knew that she *could* manage the responsibilities, but questioned *why* she should have to. Fairness in her mind did not necessarily have to equate to a wholly equal affair – so that all tasks were split completely down the middle – but what could be *reasonably expected* of each given their competing responsibilities and commitments.

Findings in existing research (e.g. Dempsey, 2000) describe wives as 'more willing than anticipated' to ask for help from their husbands regarding greater engagement with housework. This was not entirely the case for this sample, with only Josephine and Amanda making a clear and concerted effort to evoke change. Even in this instance, Amanda was reluctant to begin with; her initial attempts were not overly forceful, and through adoption of a short-term tone whereby she was effectively asking for assistance on tasks, Joseph was able to somewhat manipulate the situation into one of 'helping out' rather than of taking ownership for the tasks (taking ownership *back* in many respects, as these had been tasks he regularly completed prior to her redundancy). Her approach provided scope for Joseph to view her

requests as short-term, and believing his paid working hours justified a low share of unpaid tasks, he accepted her requests as such.

So what of Joseph's perspective on these matters? He too pointed to the nature of his employment and time availability as key to the arrangement that had evolved in their household:

> '*My contracted hours are 8:30 'til 5pm. I never leave the office before half six or even seven o' clock on occasion, because my workload is unbelievable at the moment. There's been some downsizing, and I've been given work that previous employees used to do but have since been let go, on top of everything that comes with my old role. So it's a long day, I'm out of the house for nigh on twelve hours and it's tiring. That doesn't leave me with a lot left in the tank to start tidying up the house when I get in, you know. I see the kids, me and Amanda have dinner, and ultimately I relax for a couple of hours. I am doing less around the house than before, but Amanda is there a lot now so it makes sense that our routines have changed somewhat*' (Joseph Solomon, first interview).

Joseph indicates what he believes to be the common sense arrangement given their respective paid employment endeavours. This was the case with Theo who felt the discrepancy in unpaid duties was justifiable given the differences in their paid employment hours post-redundancy. As the extent of negotiation and the nature of these negotiations became more conflictual, silent bargains that had effectively taken place during each female partners' unemployment became more explicit.

As has been highlighted already and is illustrated in the next section, in the other cases of female redundancy male partners had not been looking to increase their own shares of unpaid labour as their redundant wives came to terms with their loss of employment and sought new positions – as was the case with the couples engaging in high egalitarianism. This endured after re-employment, which contradicts their bargaining rationale somewhat. Using paid working hours as justification for a low share of unpaid labour would suggest that corresponding increases in their partners' paid working hours would have had a more clear and definite effect on their own

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paid labour shares. Combined with the unequal divisions when both partners in each couple previously worked full-time the suggestion is that there is a lot more at play here than just resource bargaining. Could this be relative resource bargaining in a gendered context? This question is a little more difficult to answer when all respondents espouse modern views regarding gender and familial 'roles', claiming that they each desired greater egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour. This issue is explored shortly after relevant points from cases of conventional accordance are addressed and incorporated into the analysis.

Taking a comparative view, it is clear that the reactions of Dawn Warriner, Lisa Denham and Lorraine Meehan were important to the successful unfolding of negotiation in the cases of high negotiation and high egalitarianism. Their positive response to negotiation initiation, centring on the mutuality of goals and playing a supportive role in the development of new competencies and a sense of responsibility for tasks, was crucial. Joseph did not respond positively to Amanda's initial attempts at negotiation, in no small part due to the fact there was no real mutuality in their goals – he did not feel that it was particularly fair for him to hold any significant share of unpaid labour. There was a clear failure in these two cases to move beyond the initial stage of negotiation, namely consciousness/unsilencing, and progress to the latter stages that are indicative of high levels of negotiation (facilitating high levels of egalitarianism).

This is not to say that in the aforementioned cases of high egalitarianism things ran completely smoothly across the entire period of study, with each partner describing moments where tasks were not going well, and there was a temptation to give up attempts at enacting greater egalitarianism. In such instances, the female partners would step in to undertake tasks or assist – demonstrating ways they felt were easiest or best for fulfilling the specific duties in question. Through such measures any potential sign of conflict was resolved relatively quickly, and efforts at negotiation resumed. Amanda was unable to push forward her attempts at assertiveness, and after a period of time had elapsed where Joseph failed to take ownership of the tasks she desired help with, she resorted to more 'direct strategies':

> *'There'd be times where I'd shout at him. Can you not just start doing this or this regularly? You used to do it! I work too you know! Things like that. I*

understand that I'm part-time, but starting work at a new company can be a little daunting no matter how qualified for the job you feel you are. You're meeting new people, who you hope you have things in common with and will be able to work well with. I'd been in education for quite a while, this was a little bit out of my comfort zone. And I know his job is stressful, and he works a lot longer than he should. But it's the gesture that comes with doing things for other people. To him it might be hoovering, and it's boring. But to me it's just a little way of saying he cares' (Amanda Solomon, second interview).

So there is evidence that Amanda would raise her voice in order to get the assistance she required with housework. Other tactics adopted in attempts to change their relative contributions included feigning tiredness and even illness on occasion, when the more direct strategies were not achieving the desired effect. Her demands certainly became more explicit, including openly criticising his contribution around the house. It appears that the nature of initial negotiations set the tone for the frequency and nature of those that follow – in this instance the lack of progress made with the more 'soft' approach resulted in more direct approaches utilised in order to instigate desired changes. There is support here for the assertions of Treas and Drobnic (2010) who suggest that where goals are clearly articulated, and partners feel listened to, negotiations are less conflictual.

Amanda certainly did not feel listened to, resulting in other tactics being employed to orchestrate an increase in Joseph's unpaid contributions. Perhaps interestingly, these 'hard' strategies, where there was greater conflict experienced, acted as a disincentive for Joseph to continue discussions – a similar situation to that where Theo would walk away from Josephine's attempts at negotiation when she began interrupting him and talking in a more aggressive tone. This did create something of a situation where Amanda felt she could not 'win' – softer approaches had not resulted in Joseph taking ownership of unpaid responsibilities, and the more assertive methods resulted in him 'withdrawing' from their negotiation. This had negative consequences for future negotiations as Joseph would often refuse to be drawn into an argument or protracted dialogue about his unpaid labour contributions:

'The minute she starts yelling and criticising you know that the conversation is basically done, precisely because it's not a conversation anymore. It's

target practice and it's a guilt trip, more than anything. As soon as that starts happening nothing productive is said, and actually, it's counter-productive because I, and she to an extent, will look to avoid confrontation for a while afterwards' (Joseph Solomon, second interview).

After such confrontations there would be an interesting dynamic, as often a period of 'silence' would follow, whereby Amanda and Joseph would talk to each other less. During this period, Joseph felt there was added pressure to undertake tasks, as it would signal that he was prepared to contribute more without being explicitly told to – essentially giving the impression that he was doing more of his own accord after what had been said previously. However, as with the more amicable discussions that took place, Joseph conducted what could be construed only as the minimum practical labour required to demonstrate that he had listened and reacted to Amanda's requests (yet as indicated above, largely as a 'one-off').

When accounting for the nature of their more conflictual discussions Joseph felt that these occurrences evolved rather quickly because Amanda was 'too emotional'. This description is heavily laden with gendered connotations, and reflects the wider perceptions of women as inferior negotiators precisely because they are more emotional than men (e.g. Eriksson and Sandberg, 2012; Tinsley et al., 2009). This should of course be understood in the household setting where familial relationships are characterised by such feelings; itself compounded in this instance by Josephine's feelings of injustice, which would of course provoke a more emotional reaction. He resorted to what he felt was a more 'rational' argument in that his paid working hours justified a lower share of unpaid labour, again characteristic of more masculine negotiation behaviours.

Conventional accordance: maintaining the status quo

The remaining four couples engaged in relatively low levels of negotiation, and there were no real move towards egalitarianism at all in these cases. These represent two cases of female redundancy where the women (again a common feature) took on the vast majority of the household's unpaid labour, with slight decreases once new employment was found. Over the course of these variations in time spent on

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housework and caring their husbands contributions barely changed at all (as seen in Tables 3 and 4). As was a continuing theme across interviewee accounts, these changes were seen by both partners in each couple as an unproblematic occurrence – each perceiving that whilst the redundant female partner was not in paid employment, they were comfortably in a position to take on more of the domestic burden. There was little evidence of any attempt to alleviate these women from any of their already disproportionately high shares of unpaid labour whilst they came to terms with job loss and so forth, as was seen in the cases of male redundancy that resulted in high levels of egalitarianism.

In the two cases where male redundancy did not act as the catalyst for any significant increase in negotiations or moves towards greater egalitarianism, there were a number of interesting findings. A principal area of interest concerned how unequal divisions of labour were maintained, given that in the other three cases of male redundancy there was a clear shift towards an egalitarian arrangement, and why there was a distinct lack of assertiveness from the female partners as seen in the Woodhouse and Solomon cases. Particularly in the case of Colin Singleton, following a period of unemployment he acquired paid work on a zero-hour contract, which meant that he had a sustained period whereby he had a degree of flexibility and time available to increase his share of unpaid labour. In these interviews he clearly expressed the view that there was no evident problem at all between his wife and himself about their respective divisions:

> *'As has been the case for as long as I can remember, there was no issue between us in terms of who does what. My hours of work changed yes, I do have more time to get on with things outside of work. I've used that time to do a few things around the house, things that have taken quite a lot of time too, such as retiling the bathroom floor. Things we basically said we'd do for a while and never got round to it. Or rather I'd never got round to it. I'm not aware that Kathleen feels there needs to be huge changes in what we do. I hoover more, we do the food shopping jointly now and I load the dishwasher. So there are things I've started doing off my own back really. Like I say if she is unhappy with my contribution, then she certainly hasn't said anything. So to my mind, there's no problem'* (Colin Singleton, second interview).

This account reveals something that was found across all couples distinguished as being in a state of conventional accordance, whereby partners would often focus on any (typically slight) increases in contributions by the male partners rather than considerable disjuncture that still existed. For the men in this grouping, the fact that their partners had not raised the issue was taken simply to indicate that there was not one – although this may have been something of a convenient response for those looking to justify the maintenance of unequal divisions. The suggestion therefore, is that if partners conducting disproportionately greater shares were unhappy with their respective efforts or felt that the existing arrangement was not fair (displaying consciousness and a move towards assertiveness), then something would have been said – negotiation may have been initiated.

Alex Murray was more forthcoming in acknowledging his awareness that he performed a much lower share of his household's unpaid labour, and conceded that he had in fact done practically nothing to overturn this:

> *'It would be pretty dishonest of me to say that I was completely unaware that we do not exactly split things equally. I know that Danielle does more than I do, in the sense that she works and comes home to do more there too. There's no good reason why I haven't stepped in and done things, from my end, to change that. I guess given that she's doing more and hasn't called for change then it's been easy for me to just allow that to continue. If I was unhappy with something, where I felt I did more than someone else, for example someone on my team at work, then I would probably say something, yeah'* (Alex Murray, first interview).

The key point therefore is that the men in these cases were satisfied to let things continue until an approach was made to begin renegotiating their different responsibilities, despite awareness that they were engaging in unequal, rather traditional divisions of unpaid labour. We may ask the question then, why were their partners not looking to initiate such a negotiation, as had been the case with Josephine Woodhouse and Amanda Solomon? The most frequently cited rationale was that undertaking duties themselves was the best guarantee that things would be done to the standard they felt was required:

> *'I don't kick up much of a fuss because honestly, doing it myself gives me the peace of mind that things are actually done properly. When you're talking about the well-being of your family, what they eat, how clean their living space is, these are important things and if I stopped then it would have a negative impact on them'* (Kathleen Singleton, first interview).

Of course, in a situation where females display clear ownership over unpaid tasks and male partners are satisfied to sustain the status quo, there is very little scope for the development of new competencies that could potentially alter this state of affairs. This supports the assertion that only really in cases where there is the desire or requirement for the (at least relatively) equal sharing of paid and unpaid labour can we expect respondents to progress through all of the stages highlighted in the negotiation process. Particularly relevant to these points is the clear development in competency level Alex Murray reported with regards to caring duties over the course of the study, despite constituting a state of conventional accordance in his sexual division of labour. Before he became employed at a care home, the workplace of his wife Danielle, he described caring as something he was not 'naturally' good at. However, after several months of employment in this role, Alex's greater participation in caring tasks, and associated cleaning, resulted in a wholesale shift in his self-appraised abilities regarding such tasks:

> *'Growing up I never had to do much around the house. My father is quite traditional in that respect and my mother was very thorough in what she did and I guess didn't trust us to do it to her standard. So I've always felt I'm no good at those things, and therefore it'd be pretty pointless me trying to do them for Dan to end up doing it herself anyway…Things have definitely changed since starting this job. There's a bit more pressure I think when you're doing stuff for someone else and not yourself, so I listened, watched, and learned the best ways for everything – how to make a bed, iron, you name it. It's like anything, do it enough times and you become good at it. I'm much more comfortable and ready for when we start a family in the future'* (Alex Murray, second interview).

Alex (together with those men engaging in high levels of egalitarianism) recognised, with practice, that the perceived suitability of their partners to many household tasks

were not any kind of natural pre-disposition. In Alex's case however, this did not translate into a move towards greater egalitarianism, the reasons for which will be examined in Chapter 9. For the other men in this state of conventional accordance there was little perceived imperative to engage in new tasks in order for this stage of the negotiation process to occur, the remaining case being that of the Carroll's, where Gerard's traditional views regarding gender and familial roles were such that no real attempts at negotiation had taken place at any point during their marriage.

From the evidence here, the extent to which men advocate an unequal sexual division of labour, and the importance of implicit negotiations (including the avoidance of discussions, etc.) is key. Rather than the adoption of clear and overt power 'tools', including where discussion did occur (referencing Theo and Joseph in particular), men were essentially passive about their unequal labour shares, 'allowing' their partners to undertake greater overall workloads. Thus, despite the unequal nature of their arrangements becoming apparent in the first interviews, by the second interviews these divisions largely were maintained. Men would certainly look to avoid negotiation to sustain their disproportionately low shares, or engage in negotiation (discussions and slight changes in practical undertakings) but remained limited in their accommodation of their partner's requests for greater attempts at compromise.

Men were seemingly able to adopt this rather passive role, taking advantage of the greater sense of obligation their female partners had for undertaking greater unpaid labour shares, as noted above. It is important to caveat this statement too by acknowledging that maintaining the status quo is potentially easier than evoking change in long-standing roles, competencies, senses of responsibility, and associated changes in gender and familial role identity. Rather than positioning men as more effective negotiators than women, it is quite clear that there is a considerable challenge facing those, like Amanda and Josephine, who wish to overturn established divisions of labour. Certainly, without the pressures to evoke change from different contextual factors (the focus of Chapter 9) it is plausible that moves away from conventional accordance are quite difficult.

The disjuncture between attitudes and behaviour

A major issue that has presented itself in these interviewee accounts was the recurring disjuncture between espoused attitudes and actual behaviours, with all but one of the respondents (Gerard Carroll) expressing a desire for egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour. Whilst many of these disproportionately weighted divisions of labour had for a long time been unquestioned, the first interviews brought to the fore this issue, creating awareness that each partner sustained a division at odds with the attitudes they professed. Of course, we cannot discount the possibility that individuals were giving what they felt were the 'correct' responses, and not actually a true reflection of their views when espousing egalitarianism. However, the question remains, how then did individuals explain this disjuncture when reporting that they engaged in a relatively conventional household division of labour?

Perhaps interestingly, the reasons cited by Mike Warriner, Chris Denham and Carl Meehan for their *prior* unequal divisions of labour, something they too had difficulty explaining in the first interviews, emerged in the accounts of male respondents when justifying the low level of renegotiation in their personal arrangements. Comments such as 'She's much better at those things' (Colin Singleton) or 'I can't meet her standards' (Jay Bardsley) were commonplace. These comments could link to the perception that women were more suited to particular domestic roles, when perhaps this was rooted purely in the different socialisation experiences of men and women from an early age, where women have had greater engagement in certain tasks and developed a higher level of expertise. It was demonstrated in Chapter 7 that as the men in cases of high egalitarianism developed new competencies through practical engagement they realised this to be the case.

Notions of 'She'd rather do it' that were used as justification for low involvement implies that undertaking a higher share of housework and caring duties was some kind of choice or preference on the part of their wives. What we find in female accounts is that whilst it was a choice to undertake many unpaid tasks, indeed *because* they conduct these tasks to a higher standard than their partner – it is a constrained choice. Precisely because they are more adept, and their partners were able to use this (indeed play on this incompetence to avoid further engagement in

mundane tasks) they feel that there is no alternative; if they do not undertake the tasks themselves then either they will not be done at all, or not done to the established standards. Therefore women find themselves with the obligation to conduct them; essentially putting the well-being of their family above personal gain, or indeed taking a great deal of their personal gain from the good that they do for their family members.

Alex Murray attempted to justify his lower proportion of unpaid labour by stating that many of the tasks he undertook at work in the care home were similar to those required in his own household, and therefore found it difficult to gain the motivation needed to undertake what he felt were repetitive duties. Interestingly, this had been Danielle's primary reason for undertaking a relatively low share of unpaid labour herself. However, Alex was forced to reflect on the fact that this current justification was not applicable to their prior arrangement – having only been employed in this role for a short period of time yet engaging in a disproportionate share of unpaid labour since the beginning of their marriage. What he stated and became apparent was that despite the changing circumstances and subconscious awareness that their division of labour was not equal (fairness appears to be a more ambiguous concept, going beyond more measurable components of equality in terms of time, tasks, etc.) it was not until being questioned that he was forced to fully reflect on his acceptance of an unequal division. His 'consciousness' therefore came at the end of the study; although there was no indication that this would translate into greater egalitarianism given the perceived repetitiveness of employment and housework tasks, and the fact that their overall unpaid endeavour was low to begin with.

What is meant by fairness as a relatively ambiguous term here is the fact that fairness did not necessarily translate into what could be expected of partners when simply accounting for their paid working hours, earnings, or any other 'resource bargaining' aspects. An 'equitable' arrangement could be one in which a rather traditional sexual division of labour is enacted, in the sense that where a partner earns seventy per cent of the household finances it could be perceived as 'fair' if they undertake thirty per cent of housework and caring duties. However, even where a partner conducted an equal or higher number of paid working hours they may still be expected to, and undertake, a larger share of unpaid labour. For example, wives conducting larger

overall shares did not always perceive their arrangements to be unfair, despite the fact that they were not wholly equal. This indicates that fairness is bound up in other factors, including gender.

It is perhaps interesting when we reflect on the three cases of high egalitarianism, where the male respondents displayed this sense of moral obligation, and clearly demonstrated behaviours that were in the interests of the household above what could be considered solely for themselves. Assertions of 'She's better' when justifying disproportionately lower shares of unpaid labour imply that men in conventional accordance are choosing not to engage in more tasks is for the good of the household – they are acting in everyone's best interests by avoiding activities that would not be performed to the standards members were used to. The aforementioned three cases lay testament to the fact that whilst standards do 'slip' temporarily, wives are generally receptive to an increase in contribution and accept this as part of the process of developing new competencies; cementing the argument that these are rather convenient justifications for not overturning traditional labour divisions. The points raised thus far do offer some support to the notion that women are often 'prisoners of love' (Folbre, 1994; 2001); almost bound to unequal shares of unpaid because there is the expectancy from other household members that the female partners would ensure things are done, with responsibility – or perhaps blame – likely to be levelled their way if they don't (even though no-one else has completed the tasks in question).

For example, it is worth recounting Josephine's view that Theo was choosing not to negotiate more with his employers for greater flexibility in his paid working arrangements and thus not leaving much work for the weekend, where he likes to go out with friends. This indicates that he does compromise on family responsibilities for his own purposes and interests, with a disproportionately low share of unpaid labour engagement as a result. We see that Josephine is much more bound to the household's unpaid needs and does compromise on her own personal leisure and social time a lot more. Therefore, degrees of 'freedom' and 'choice' in decisions around work and caring are inextricably linked to gender and normative expectations. Women feel a sense of obligation that many male partners do not, testified in their satisfaction (in the main) to avoid negotiation and 'go along' with a

state of affairs that burdens their partners with a disproportionately heavy, unpaid load.

Women in these (certainly the first) interviews demonstrated clearer 'ownership' of unpaid labour generally, which undoubtedly added to (whilst also causing) this sense that the onus was largely on them for tasks to be completed to the established standards. In instances of conventional accordance, particularly where the female partner was made redundant, the home did become their chief site of doing something purposeful, an area in which they still had authority. For Gemma Bardsley, this was a key reason as to why little negotiation occurred following her redundancy:

> *'I was out of work, not bringing any wage into the home. You feel a loss of independence when that happens, not having the freedom to just go and buy something, or there are certain activities that you have to weigh up your ability to afford them, you can't just decide on the day oh I'll go do this today. Looking after the home, improving the cleanliness, its presentation, you know, those kinds of things gave me sense of purpose and, I guess, independence. Pretty important to that end was the control to go about doing those things without consulting anyone. This is my role, this is how things are being done here, I've got this'* (Gemma Bardsley, first interview).

It is important when attempting to consider all of the relevant factors regarding the disjuncture between male and female divisions of labour where both profess a desire for a modern, egalitarian arrangement, about how paid employment is conceptualised by respondents. The point was made in Chapter 3 that as the emphasis on physical and emotional caring has grown, financial provision has gradually moved to the periphery of what is considered 'caring' (Morgan, 2002). It is easy when examining male cases of lower unpaid labour shares and longer paid working hours to suggest that such individuals are pursuing their own interests of career, status and so forth, and not prioritising their families. However, the men in this study spoke about paid employment as *for* their families, not just themselves.

Particularly in the context of redundancy, the lack of financial contribution being made and the desire for a stable, well-paid full-time position in order to 'provide' for their families was widely cited as their primary grievance about becoming unemployed – more so than the social stigma or detriment to careers. Unquestionably, increases in caring shares reduced the importance these men placed on financial provision and greater emphasis was made on the physical and emotional aspects than in the first interviews. This to the point where Mike actually professed greater 'work-life balance' satisfaction in his new self-employed role where his average weekly paid working hours were an estimated five hours lower than pre-redundancy:

> '*I have to say, the balance I have between work and time with the family is now better than it's ever been. Yes I'd like a little more work, but you appreciate time with the family more and realise that your job isn't everything. You're not just a postman, a lawyer, whatever. You're defined more by who you are as a person, which I think has a lot to do with your position in the family. If you work long hours and don't have that involvement with the family then of course you will identify with your job. I feel that I've grown as a person due to my better work and family balance*' (Mike Warriner, second interview).

Since the inception of many of the theories outlined and critiqued in Chapter 2, where culture (particularly normative conceptions surrounding gender) are integral elements of each framework, not least West and Zimmerman's (1987) theory, it is important to highlight that there have been many cultural changes in the time that has elapsed. It is clear that structural changes – for example the increase in the number of female sole- or main-breadwinning households (Kanji, 2013) – have stimulated *some* cultural change. Certainly, there has been something of a shift away from male-breadwinning, where there is reduced pressure on men to be the sole or even the household's highest earner. It would appear that these shifts in attitudes towards women and paid employment have been more radical that those pertaining to expectations around (particularly) housework, and parenthood. This is partly because the financial imperative for two incomes has created a situation where female employment has become necessary – and so too dual-earning – which undermines

the male breadwinning ideal. Such has been the scale of structural changes, not least in education and sectoral employment shifts, that the increase in female employment has been formidable. Women's career aspirations are greater, and inevitably the culture surrounding a family wage to be provided primarily by a male has changed (though financial provision remains an expectation for men). The same cannot be said for the division of unpaid labour, and a number of insights as to why this is the case emerged in the interviews.

Some respondents felt that the mass marketing of household goods that allow for the more time and effort efficient undertaking of domestic duties, more readily affordable by two incomes, has to some extent reduced the required expenditure of time and effort. Two incomes – recognising here that we are generalising about dual-earning households only – can also better afford formal childcare measures, from private providers to activities outside school that require financial expenditure. For those who cannot, although variable along characteristics such as ethnicity and socio-economic group, social networks based upon mutual obligations are developed and sustained, where help is reciprocated. It is possible that the same level of imperative is thus not required for dual-ownership of these responsibilities as it is with financial provision, or the desires of women to be in work (where motivations extend beyond the purely financial – to social networks, self-esteem, and so forth). In the interviews both partners in each couple would often focus upon any male increases in unpaid labour (even where slight) rather than the fact that shares were still typically unequal:

> *'After being made redundant it wasn't as though Alex sat there and waited for me to come home, to put the dinner on, you know. Or he'd sit in a messy room all day watching TV, happy for me to come in from work and start tidying things up. He definitely started doing more, even just little things, which made a bit of a difference'* (Danielle Murray, first interview).

Here Danielle attempts to present what both she and Alex described as a relatively low increase in his unpaid working share whilst unemployed in a positive light, choosing to refrain from labouring the point that despite no hours of employment his share had remained much lower than hers.

This extends to cases where male respondents were considered to be 'co-parents', where this did not entail a wholly equal share of the parenting – just an active role (to varying extents) in their children's lives. It appears that where couples are dual-earner and both partners actively engage in childcare (both elements not to any particularly well defined parameters of time or effort) then couples satisfy themselves that they adopt modern gender ideals and behave in a non-traditional way. Effectively, the data here supports various assertions in the literature that the change in culture around fatherhood and increased involvement still effectively positions men as secondary parents (Wall and Arnold, 2007); and although the breadwinning requirement has been displaced to a certain extent, it is culturally assured that men will work and pay attention to their families in that order (Daly and Palkovitz, 2004):

> *'No-one in their right mind could say that families don't rely on two incomes these days, whether it's through both being employed, benefits, whatever. And I think roles in the family have changed when it comes to parenting, most men are much more hands on than they were in previous generations. So we look at that and say our roles have expanded, we are still expected to earn, but also to take a more active role in child caring in order to enable mothers to work too. So clearly their role has changed as well, because as I said families rely on two incomes. But it definitely feels that society would be more accepting of a mother who doesn't work than a father, that's my opinion. A father who doesn't have a job would probably be considered a bad one, someone unable to provide for his family. When really, who knows what is going on behind the scenes – he could bathe, clothe, feed them, everything. Whilst things have changed, I personally can't imagine it ever changing to the point where men are staying at home to be the main carer and doer of housework on the scale that women have. That's the reality of the situation'* (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

It has already been mentioned that throughout the interviews respondents often used 'helping' or 'assisting' terminology to describe male partner contributions to housework and caring. Even in the cases of sustained dissension, Amanda and Josephine only desired extra help with tasks that needed doing, and were not actually

asking for a wholly equal affair where all tasks and times spent on overall labour were split down the middle. The cultural boundary regarding unpaid labour needs to shift more, otherwise the eventual outcome of the 'lagged adaption' hypothesis (Gershuny et al., 2005) – where the cultural context will slowly catch up with these structural changes – is highly unlikely to come into full fruition.

What other potential reasons can we offer for this difference? It has been suggested in the literature (e.g. Wajcman and Martin, 2002) that women have alternative identities to draw upon outside of paid employment that men do not, in the sense that they adopt familial roles not defined primarily by financial provision more easily than men. If this is true, we may expect that husbands would not be as concerned about their redundant partners taking on greater unpaid shares (as observed here) as wives would be about their redundant male partners (as observed before). It would seem that this line of argument feeds into wider conceptions surrounding gendered behaviour, and what is expected of both women and men. Evidence from these interviews is that particularly without the incidence of redundancy that can affect whether a renegotiation of how divisions of labour are managed occurs, many couples in contemporary society are situated closer to 'pragmatic egalitarianism' as described by Gallagher and Smith (1999). Essentially, this means that whilst individuals are supportive of female employment and dual-earning, male partners in particular have not wholly relinquished traditional gender norms, certainly where housework and caring responsibilities are concerned.

The link between negotiation and egalitarianism

When looking at the cases of conventional accordance there is support for the notion, as was the case when examining those couples in a state of negotiated egalitarianism, that a positive relationship does indeed exist between negotiation and egalitarianism in the sexual division of labour, precisely because there is an absence of any substantial negotiation and no cases of high egalitarianism. It was suggested earlier that the two are inextricably linked: overturning unequal divisions of labour requires some degree of discussion, planning, guidance in the development of new competencies, and other elements of the negotiation process outlined previously.

Simultaneously, high levels of negotiation are seemingly driven by the quest for greater egalitarianism – both of which are accomplished and developed over time. Where this desire for egalitarianism was found in short-supply, as was the case across all couples in a state of conventional accordance (despite expressions on the contrary), there appears to be very little negotiation initiated or developed.

Looking at the negotiation process, the consciousness/unsilencing and ultimately desire for egalitarianism to the extent required for negotiation initiation was not evident. Consequently, without engagement in new tasks, this desire was not accelerated as a new sense of moral obligation, identity change and so forth did not occur – key to the continued evolution of each in the previous chapter. As stated, the Meehans' perfunctory egalitarianism state of affairs illustrates that high levels of egalitarianism can be achieved without recourse to extensive discussion, yet as it represents only one case it cannot solely discount the importance of protracted, explicit negotiations – the nature of which were absent in these cases of conventional accordance.

The two cases of sustained dissension reveal that high levels of negotiation do not automatically result in an egalitarian arrangement either. Superficially the incidence of high levels of negotiation and low levels of egalitarianism contradict the prior notions that there is a positive relationship between the two. Based on these cases we may conclude that high levels of negotiation do not necessarily lead to an equitable division of labour amongst partners. It is important to qualify the original claim therefore and state that egalitarianism is *most likely* where there is a clear and extensive process of negotiation. The nature of negotiations is of obvious importance: discussions can be protracted and purposeful, and practical adjustments to conflicting work responsibilities can be made, but there are a whole host of factors and elements that have been highlighted in the previous sections as integral to an *effective* negotiation that is more likely to result in high levels of egalitarianism in working arrangements.

It is not enough to have the first stage of the process outlined, namely some kind of 'consciousness' or process of 'unsilencing', as witnessed in the Woodhouse and Solomon cases. Moving beyond this stage, although Josephine and Theo engaged in

discussion and there were practical adjustments made in their labour divisions, a number of the key stages of negotiation that may help to foster egalitarianism did not occur. For example, as Theo did not really alter any of the unpaid tasks he undertook (other than in childcare - and this involved little beyond ensuring that they came home from school and were content until Josephine returned home from work) he did not really develop a sense of responsibility for anything. It was clear throughout Theo's accounts that the added school runs and subsequent caring at home was something he viewed as necessary whilst Josephine's paid working hours conflicted, and not something he wanted to take control of with any great permanency:

> *'It's something I do on the days that she can't, until she gets home from work, on the days that I can. So I'll organise my work around it when she is teaching, because she doesn't want to turn down hours as we need the money and she thinks that if she is reliable and does a good job it could hopefully become permanent there in future. It's us working as a team to manage all responsibilities. Jobs we both do, when we can, until there are changes in either of our paid working arrangements'* (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

A lack of consciousness of, and desire for, egalitarianism, can determine the nature of negotiations. Clearly Theo did not feel that their division of labour was unfair to an extent worthy of greater practical negotiation on his part, or a more mutually supportive role in discussions with Josephine. Likewise, the stages highlighted above (new competency development and so forth) where a continual, effective negotiation is required to truly foster high levels of egalitarianism did not take place. This and the Solomon case in particular offer evidence to the fact that discussions about a practical renegotiation are not enough – there needs to be a corresponding change in (typically unpaid) endeavours for a renegotiation of the division of labour to be achieved; reflecting the importance of each aspect to the definition of negotiation being developed here.

Essentially, negotiation and egalitarianism still appear to act as mutually reinforcing concepts with both certainly increasing the likelihood of the other occurring. Cases of sustained dissension do not discount this positive relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism, demonstrating the complexity of negotiation in terms of its

different elements (explicit and implicit, dialogue and practical undertaking), and the requirement for a progression through the stages outlined in Chapter 7. Of course, the nature of the negotiation is highly important, with those in cases of 'negotiated egalitarianism' described as much more constructive than those of sustained dissension, which were certainly less constructive and sometimes disruptive, indeed counter-productive in many senses too as they negatively affected each partners disposition towards future negotiations.

What emerged throughout all interviewee accounts is that the likelihood, extent and nature of negotiations were hugely influenced by the context in which decisions were made. Of course redundancy brings with it issues regarding the duration of unemployment, the types of employment opportunities available, and all manner of other key influences on paid working endeavours. It became apparent that decisions regarding subsequent paid and unpaid labour shares were influenced by the interplay of a range of factors, to which the following chapter now turns.

Chapter 9: Factors influencing the likelihood and extent of a negotiation of the division of labour

Thus far we have considered the nature and extent of negotiations that took place, and how this related to the incidence of egalitarianism in each case. Whilst redundancy was the catalyst for change in cases constituting states of negotiated egalitarianism, sustained dissension and perfunctory egalitarianism, we need to account for why responses differed amongst these couples - including those that remained in a state of conventional accordance. Interviewee accounts revealed a range of factors that they felt determined the level of renegotiation that occurred. Added to this, individuals navigated the interplay of factors they encountered differently, and the conception of agency outlined by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) in Chapter 3 is utilised here to consider the different outcomes across the sample.

This chapter will begin by setting out these factors, characterised as containing 'enabling' and 'constraining' elements depending upon the specific case in question. For analytical purposes these factors are presented as constituting individual, structural and cultural contexts, and the interplay between them is examined in order to assess how they influenced individual and household behaviour. There were a number of similarities in the interplay of factors for those couples in a state of sustained dissension, yet responses typically varied based on the *specific* intersection of these factors, which differed for each couple. The objective here is to delineate the factors that determine the likelihood and extent of a renegotiation so that we have a clearer understanding of when and how higher levels of egalitarianism may be enacted.

Influencing factors: individual, structural and cultural

A number of factors emerged in interviewee accounts as being key to their individual and household-level responses to redundancy, and consequently the level of paid and unpaid labour renegotiation that took place. Influenced by Gardiner et al.'s (2009) study of different responses to redundancy, the factors deemed significant to each outcome have been distinguished as constituting individual, structural and cultural

contexts, forming a useful framework for analysis (illustrated in Table 5). It should be remembered of course, that these factors are deemed relevant in the context of heterosexual, married couples; and this studied in the context of redundancy to one partner where they were previously full-time dual-earning.

Table 5: Factors determining the likelihood and extent of a negotiation of labour divisions

Individual factors	Structural factors	Cultural factors
Age	Financial resources and	Gendered and familial
Socio-economic group	expenditure	identity
Ethnicity	Time availability	Ethnic identity and cultural
Work experience and	Labour market opportunities	heritage
qualification level	Caring responsibilities and	'Socio-economic' identity
Marital stage	availability	Occupational identity
Household composition	Social policy	

Beginning with the individual context, this refers to those factors personal to each specific case. Each factor is defined and its influence on the paid and unpaid working decisions and likelihood of negotiation demonstrated throughout this chapter. Individual factors include the demographic characteristics of each partner; the composition of the household, broadly referring to the number and respective ages of any dependents present; and marital stage that encompasses the length of marriage duration and stage in each partner's life course at which the marriage commenced. Meanwhile, structural factors incorporate those not wholly personal to an individual, but shaped more by wider forces in society such as the government and employers. There is a crossover here between these and those contextual factors highlighted in Chapter 4, with respondent references to these points testifying their importance in influencing decisions taken.

Finally, cultural factors refer primarily to the many identities, attitudes, experiences and societal expectations that are associated with the relevant individual factors highlighted previously. For example, whilst ethnicity and socio-economic group constitute individual factors, these also translate into cultural factors by virtue of the fact that such demographic characteristics come with a set of particular experiences; forming a unique identity based on the intersection of each (which will of course depend also upon age, marital status, and so forth). The key point to make here is that these factors have been separated for analytical purposes, but in reality the particular intersection of them all determined the likelihood and extent of a renegotiation in each case. This reflects wider debates on 'intersectionality' where groups such as 'women' and 'men' should not be treated homogenously, as individual experiences differ along ethnic and class lines as two examples, and thus it is problematic to treat each in isolation (e.g. Bradley, 2013).

Factors as enabling and constraining

These factors can be characterised as both enabling and constraining (e.g. Archer, 1982; Giddens, 1984) in the sense that they created opportunities for each individual or household to consider a number of viable paid and unpaid working options, or alternatively they acted as a constraint on these choices and subsequent action. Each individual and household was therefore engaged with different situational contexts based upon their specific interplay of (enabling and constraining) factors, eliciting a range of responses across the sample. A clear example of this was financial resources, where accrued savings and access to alternative sources of money created significant differences in the paid and unpaid working decisions of couples even intra-quadrant.

Taking those couples in a state of negotiated egalitarianism, both Mike Warriner and Chris Denham desired new full-time employment, however, when they were unable to attain such work Mike was afforded the time and resources to set up his own business venture. Due to a multitude of interrelated factors including the presence of three dependent children that brought about considerable responsibility (in terms of time) and financial *cost*, Chris did not have the level of savings required to consider such an option given the initial financial outlay required and loss of welfare benefits

that would have been incurred. Of course, individuals did not merely respond to the specific contexts they encountered but proactively navigated these situational pressures to create their own opportunities for managing paid and unpaid work, as will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Intersectionality across each 'context'

Remaining with finances for the moment, couples' expenditures (particularly those relating to childcare and housing costs - varying by each particular arrangement, i.e. whether a mortgage, privately rented, etc.), were key to determining subsequent employment decisions and therefore the extent of a negotiation between partners. There could be a case for 'relative' resources as the literature typically purports, in the sense that individual partners generally have different incomes. However, in all instances here, regardless of marriage duration, age, and so forth, all couples pooled their wages more or less entirely. There are obvious financial implications of redundancy, with Tables 1 and 2 illustrating that the annual household incomes of all but one had been reduced by the end of the study. Following redundancy, household incomes for the respondents in this research all remained above the average annual household income of £25,636 (ONS, 2015a) bar one, the Denhams. Losses of income immediately brought into play the level of accrued savings couples had, determining the options they had available in terms of how long they could afford to be out of employment, the types of employment that were financially viable for them, and so forth.

In the three cases of male redundancy that resulted in high egalitarianism, and the moves made by *all* redundant wives, the indication is that generally a loss of personal income does increase an individual's incentive to undertake more unpaid tasks; and as illustrated in the Warriner and Denham cases this can lead to discussions too – and high levels of negotiation. Support has been offered for assertions in the literature that female unpaid labour hours are very sensitive to their paid work hours and earnings. This is less so for men but still evident in three of the five cases, suggesting that with the intersection of various other factors, loss of incomes (and the described feelings of needing to make a more significant contribution to the household in other, non-monetary ways) can result in negotiation.

The perceived duration of a lower income level was also deemed to be important too, particularly when considering that as unemployment durations went on, or new employment on a lower salary was acquired, the level of negotiation and egalitarianism increased in these cases. Of course there are cases to contradict both of these findings, with little movement in either negotiation or egalitarianism in the Murray and Singleton cases of male redundancy, irrespective of their paid working arrangements.

There are a number of factors that could potentially influence the level of accrued savings a couple has. These were of course often bound up with financial expenditures, for example Patricia Carroll referred not just to the cost of three dependent children but how the breaks in employment affected her income over the life course in comparison to those whose careers are relatively uninterrupted. This reflects current literature, which highlights the negative effects that gaps in paid employment has on opportunities for greater pay, promotions, and so forth (Connell, 2009). Another clear example of how other factors affect financial resources is age, as testified by Jay Bardsley who was aged twenty-eight at the time of second interview:

> *'I've been in work ever since leaving school, but we haven't managed to save enough money yet to maintain our current standard of living for too long without both incomes. With care costs and the mortgage in particular we've stopped eating out and even changed supermarkets to save money. And we live a modest lifestyle anyway, to be quite honest. We don't run a car at the moment for example'* (Jay Bardsley, second interview).

In this instance, Jay took on extra hours at work following Gemma's redundancy in a bid to increase his own earnings for the household and this inevitably affected his time availability for unpaid labour further. Financial imperatives do appear to be forcing people into types of work they initially did not desire, with record high numbers of people involuntarily taking part-time and temporary employment (ONS, 2014a: Table 3). In ten cases of redundancy studied here, five respondents were in non-standard working arrangements after six months due to the fact that full-time work was not available, and unemployment was not a financially viable option for

any prolonged period of time. As has been demonstrated in the preceding chapters, these different arrangements led to significantly different levels (and nature) of negotiation, and also moves towards egalitarianism.

It is worth turning this analysis to the two cases of female redundancy that moved from a state of conventional accordance to sustained dissension; the Solomons and the Woodhouses. The rationale for this is that there are marked similarities between the two cases across a number of factors. This suggests that the intersection of these particular factors, compared to those for couples in other states of affairs, gives some insight into what interplay of factors may lead to high levels of negotiation - yet low levels of egalitarianism. Returning to financial resources as an influencing factor, both couples incurred an income loss of between £10,000 and £15,000; reporting a number of the same issues with regards to their level of accrued savings and financial expenditures. There were sentiments of Jay Bardsley's assertion above that at their respective ages (the four individuals were aged between twenty-seven and thirty-four) and marital stage (with only four years difference between the couples) mortgage payments for them were high and a significant drain on their accrued savings. This meant that they had more limited financial resources to draw upon than some of the older couples in the sample (the Warriners are again an example of this). They each had two dependent children and cited the high costs of childcare as a huge disincentive to accept many of the relatively low-paid or non-standard job opportunities available in the current labour market, itself bringing into play access to social benefits (considered here under the umbrella term of social policy). Both women actually became re-employed on non-standard contracts; Amanda on a part-time contract and Josephine a zero-hour contract (incidentally both indicating that their average weekly working hours were eighteen hours), but the nature of these positions were of key importance to their acceptance, as will be discussed in a moment.

Both couples also live in Sheffield, with a number of (particularly structural) factors shown to display some level of geographical sensitivity in that labour market opportunities and childcare facilities as two examples were contextualised by interviewees in specific locales. Amanda and Josephine had been employed in the education sector, and they, like other respondents who had worked in the Department

for Education (DfE), expressed the opinion that there is a distinct lack of corresponding job roles in the private sector. There is an obvious link here to one's individual work experience and qualification level, so much so that only Diane Legg explicitly acknowledged that she possessed transferable skills. In particular, Alex Murray described the great difficulty he had in translating the duties fulfilled as part of his previous position in the DfE, and skills developed during this time, into something attractive for private sector employers.

Alex took employment in an elderly care home after eight weeks of unemployment, a job he was only able to acquire as it was his wife's place of work and she was able to orchestrate an initial trial period. This was certainly not his first career preference, however, a lack of labour market opportunities in industries relevant to his skill set and the financial imperative to work given high mortgage repayments constrained his choice. Likewise Amanda's application to, and acquisition of, a part-time conference planner position was that this had been one aspect of the role in her previous DfE capacity. This job was on a considerably lower salary than the previous one, and she was left feeling under-utilised as many of the skills she has developed were not required in this position.

Outside education, Sheffield was generally considered to offer limited job opportunities for those being made redundant from the public sector, not least due to historical employment trends. The respondents made redundant in Sheffield acknowledged it as a city largely built on steel manufacturing, which relied heavily on the public sector for employment opportunities after the decline of the heavy industries. The subsequent reduction in public sector employment during austerity has fostered an unfavourable labour market context for those with certain skill sets and employment histories:

> *'In Sheffield it's not uncommon for previous generations of family to have all worked in steel, whilst opportunities in health, government and education really expanded the range of work options open to the people here. An issue now for those made redundant is that unlike before, no sector is really offsetting the job losses. You're left with a huge shortfall in the number of, shall we say, good jobs where pay or responsibility is similar to that people*

had in the public sector, and the number of people going for these rather limited opportunities' (Chris Denham, first interview).

Of the five individuals made redundant from the DfE in Sheffield, just two had full-time employment (Alex and Diane) by the end of the six-month period. Chris had become his family's primary carer, and there were two acquisitions of zero-hour contracts (Gemma and Josephine) and a part-time position (Amanda). The effects of these different outcomes on the level of negotiation and actual changes in labour divisions have been shown to vary considerably throughout these analysis chapters.

Thus far the focus has largely centred on structural factors, however the intersection with cultural factors was clear as each theme emerged out of the data. In particular, when respondents talked about the lack of what were deemed to be appropriate job opportunities in Sheffield outside of the public sector, and their perceived lack of relevant skills and experience, many references were made to occupational identity. This was evident when voicing concerns that many recruiters in the private sector do not look favourably upon those with a public sector background, with an impression built up by some private sector employers that public sector workers have been 'living on easy street' (Josephine) and 'because it's not like a regular business per se, we turn up at 10 a.m. and leave at 3 pm, after a very long lunch' (Amanda).

Identity can be grounded in a specific occupation as testified by Josephine. With her qualifications and experience Josephine strongly identified with her occupation as a teacher, and was unwilling to forgo the career steps she has already taken, including voluntary work as a teaching assistant and PCGE accreditation, to move into a completely new area. She talked about the intrinsic value working with children gave her, and a desire to continue with this line of work - sentiments echoed by Gemma Bardsley - with both accepting non-standard working arrangements in order to remain within what they described as 'caring' roles:

> *'For me, the job is as much about having the opportunity to help other people as it is about anything else. And of course I want to be helping people as much as possible, so longer hours would be much more ideal. The pay is important too, but I really want to stick this out and hopefully there will be full-time opportunities in the not-too-distant future. I don't want to work*

> *longer hours doing something that doesn't interest me at all, I want to make*
> *a difference'* (Gemma Bardsley, first interview).

The impact of strong affinities with their previous (and in some cases current) sector and occupations on the likelihood of negotiation was a desire to remain in these capacities, or experience difficulties in transitioning to a different area of employment, affecting these choices and frequently their unpaid divisions of labour too.

Another important cultural factor that came through when respondents described the labour market opportunities specific to a certain location and their identities was their socio-economic background. The debate continues to go on regarding whether class remains a relevant concept as individuals have much more freedom of choice than to be 'following the rules' established for certain collectives (Crompton, 2006). The aim here is not to engage with broader debates concerning what 'class' constitutes, but a number of references concerning the socio-economic positions of individuals are worth mentioning. Different cues were utilised when respondents looked to describe their socio-economic status, taken here as the household's economic and social position in relation to the wider population (based primarily upon income and occupation). There were many claims of a relatively modest upbringing and some sentiments that although their families had not been 'well off' they had never really been left without any basic material needs.

Largely each interviewee identified with a 'working-class' background when reflecting on their upbringing, with certainly the older cohorts feeling that they had achieved a more 'comfortable' standard of living over the course of their working lives. Regarding the implications for the domestic work of those in lower socio-economic groups, there is an interesting dynamic found in the empirical literature. Working-class men are more likely to espouse traditional views on gender, yet often spend more time on domestic work than middle-class men (e.g. Shows and Gerstel, 2009; Sullivan, 2004; Williams, 2004). This was somewhat affirmed by Mike Warriner:

> *'I'm from a very working class family and my dad fulfilled a lot of the*
> *criteria, shall we say, for a working-class man. Work was very important to*

*him as well as time in the pub, and he's your ideal for working-class macho*ism *in many respects. But our family needed two incomes so he had to get involved with a lot of the so-called women's jobs around the house. That's kind of been passed on to me, even though we've had things more comfortable than was the case for my parents since we began courting, that whole ethos of everyone mucking in together is important and I do my share of the paid and the household stuff. More so than I imagine others, with the money to hire nannies, cleaners, etcetera'* (Mike Warriner, second interview).

At this point in the study Mike was indeed engaging in high levels of both negotiation and egalitarianism, and this 'working-class ethos' he refers to appears to have configured in his thinking and therefore the nature and extent of negotiation that took place. Mike also makes an interesting comparison to those he considers more affluent, and the idea that they would use the extra disposable income they have available to manage their unpaid responsibilities more effectively. This seems unfitting with his own personal attitude of household members doing 'their bit', even though he has access to greater financial resources than was the case for his parents.

For Lisa Denham in particular, she attributed her mother's life choices to have been much more influenced by her socio-economic standing and the expectations of those around her relating to their material and social position. Although her mother had worked, she had started a family at a relatively young age, something Lisa felt to have been one of the key demographic changes in recent times, and much more characteristic of the 'working-class way' she felt dictated familial choices:

'It was the norm to have children at a younger age then, and there wasn't the same level of expectancy on the men to get involved in the caring activities as there is now. My mother tells me all the time us girls today don't know how lucky we are! I think her lifestyle had a big impact on the way in which she raised me. She really wanted me to knuckle down at school and get a good job before worrying about a family. And I think that's reflected in the way a lot of people have children at an older age nowadays, particularly those who have been to school, college and so on' (Lisa Denham, first interview).

Dawn Warriner echoed a number of these sentiments suggesting that her parents had worked very hard over their lives but without much education behind them their financial situation had never been secure. Dawn suggested that her mother starting a family and really taking the lead on the housework and caring duties (which had resulted in a very traditional sexual division of unpaid labour) was her way of not being solely defined by a working life that was 'defined largely by mediocrity…the family gave her a different route to have something she could call her own, something positive to show the world' (first interview). It was clear throughout the interviews that early choices made regarding work and the family were largely informed by their own familial backgrounds. First and foremost, seeing their own parents work hard acted as a motivation for both female and male respondents to pursue careers in paid employment. This for the more financially comfortable lifestyles they could provide for their families, but also to reproduce the impression hard work would have on their own children – as had been the case for them growing up.

All interviewees indicated that they would struggle without two incomes and therefore appreciated the dual-earning nature of their relationships. This applied even to Gerard Carroll who purported rather traditional views on gender, work and the family, which further brings into play the cultural factor of ethnicity as is highlighted shortly. It is possible that this sustained practical undertaking of dual-employment led to a cultural shift (in contrast to existing research that suggests more traditional views are found within this socio-economic group) amongst those who consider themselves working-class, as all of the other couples espoused egalitarian views. Or perhaps this is because they do now live more comfortably than when they were children themselves, *because* of the two incomes, that they harbour these more modern attitudes. We do have to exercise caution when suggesting that couples adopt 'modern' or 'egalitarian' views, certainly when these attitudes are self-reported, given the discussion that took place in the previous chapter where this often translates into something closer to 'pragmatic egalitarianism' than what has been considered as constitutive of high levels of egalitarianism in this thesis.

The reported upward social mobility presented many respondents with the opportunity to afford child-minding and household products that helped manage

their paid and unpaid working commitments. This was actually a little at odds with what Mike in particular had described as the 'working-class ethos' of everyone mucking in; saving on time and effort with other household members to concentrate more of that time and effort on employment was a contradiction to the attitudes he attempted to convey as part of his upbringing. However, the drive to pursue a career and generate greater financial security was also born out of this upbringing. One resolution to this was the availability of their own parents (a key enabling component on couples 'care availability') with those living in close proximity and in an appropriate state of health still maintaining the high level of 'familialism' characteristic of the working-classes (Crompton, 2006). This reflects the prevalence of wider informal networks amongst the working-class with a greater degree of shared responsibility and reciprocity amongst family and friends (Finch and Mason, 1993). Finch and Mason (1993) do highlight the danger in perceiving this to simply mean that such households have greater caring options available to them. There is typically a two-way relationship here with favours expected in return, which adds to each household's own unpaid labour commitments (for example, minding their friends' children in return for their own children being minded at a later date); something alluded to by Theo Woodhouse when talking about the caring arrangements amongst the Caribbean side of his family.

This, an element of Theo's ethnic identity as mixed British and Caribbean descent, was a rather crucial factor that led to the adversarial negotiations that took place and resulting low levels of egalitarianism. Theo felt disillusioned with the lack of an informal care network they had to rely on when both had work and required assistance with the children, with such means a key enabling feature of care availability in his view. Originally from Derby, Theo did not have family in close proximity to help out, with his parents and siblings approximately a one hour car journey away from their home in Sheffield. He commented on the cultural differences in caring for his own family and that of Josephine's, making reference to their respective ethnic backgrounds:

> *'Things are done differently with Jo's family. In my family, I'm from a big family, everything works as a series of favours. My parents, my brother and his girlfriend, her mum and brother, all co-ordinate the school runs and other child minding arrangements together so that all responsibilities are*

sorted around each person's work or other commitments. If one picks another's child up and minds them, they will return the favour another night, and so on. And it works; people rarely have to compromise on their jobs. That's how it's done for a lot of people of Caribbean descent, it's not unique to my family. It's notably less common – it does happen – but much less so on the white, English side of my family. And Josephine's is much the same, there isn't that same level of extended network to help out and manage responsibilities with' (Theo Woodhouse, second interview).

He attributed this lack of informal care network as the primary reason for their issues, and subsequently the high level of negotiation they engaged in, not least its conflictual nature. His assertions have been supported in the literature for some time (e.g. Crompton and Sanderson, 1990), which acknowledges that since the 1980s black female employment rates have been relatively high and informal means of care a widely used method of balancing childcare with paid employment. A potentially significant point following on from the notion that black female employment rates are relatively high is that this often means they are in possession of considerable relative resources in a dual-earner context. Combined with the fact that black men suffer significant labour market instability relative to white men, this has traditionally resulted in a different structural resource context between black and white couples (Orbuch and Eyster, 1997). In contrast, employment rates of particular Muslim Asian groups of women are comparatively low (Walby, 1997) and amongst the reasons for this are concerns regarding the cultural sensitivity of formal care facilities (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014). These points testify to the need for future research on a more ethnically diverse sample to fully comprehend how ethnicity influences the paid working and particularly care practices of different groups.

Another clear example of the effect ethnicity and the particular identities and views that may vary cross-culturally is that of Gerard Carroll, the only partner interviewed that subscribed to traditional normative conceptions of gender and attributed his attitudes and low unpaid share of labour to a 'conservative' Irish upbringing he described as typical in his home country. Despite lower earnings than his wife Patricia before she was made redundant, Gerard stated his belief that the husband

and father role was centred on financial provision, with women more aptly suited to caring and other domestic duties. Patricia had been made redundant from a local government position, and since found new full-time employment as an administrator for a private sector organisation. Gerard was fully supportive of her working full-time, but was less forthcoming in the joint sharing of domestic labour:

> *'It's great that Patricia works, the two incomes go a long way to giving us the lifestyle we have, which is reasonably comfortable. And I know that she thinks working is a positive thing for the children, she wants them to know that they can do whatever they wish when they get older. And that's what I focus on mainly, I see her as a mother first. I do my bit of course, but she is the main one that ensures everything is ticking over with the kids and the house. That's how it was when I was growing up. The mother's role is so important, and a father should do all he can to earn a stable living'* (Gerard Carroll, first interview).

As indicated, Gerard explained the attachment to these ideals stemmed largely from his ethnic background whereby traditional gender roles were a fundamental way in which men and women's lives are organised. He considers his involvement, particularly in childcare, to be more hands-on than that of his own father, but conceded that despite also working full-time Patricia undertakes a much more substantial 'second shift'. Throughout the entire research period she undertook a hugely disproportionate share of the unpaid workload, with childcare balanced during working hours between informal (familial) care and private (paid) caring arrangements. Gerard could not estimate an approximate number of hours difference in their weekly unpaid work, whilst Patricia suggested her weekday contribution could eclipse Gerard's by over two hours each day.

It has already been suggested that (two) dependent children created financial and time-related pressures in both the Solomon and Woodhouse cases that influenced the nature and extent of negotiation. In terms of the importance of a renegotiation of paid and unpaid labour attributed by interviewees, household composition and care responsibilities and availability proved undoubtedly to be the key determinants of the nature and extent of negotiations across the whole sample. When talking about

household composition it is clear that there will be a huge variance across households composed of single-parent, same-sex, and all other manner of arrangements characterising contemporary society. In the context of this research on married heterosexual couples, it referred largely to the number of dependent children present in each household, which created different pressures in terms of the time and effort required to meet caring responsibilities. These pressures of course varied depending upon the number of children present in each household, and also the respective ages of those children.

In a number of the cases of conventional accordance, it was suggested that the absence of dependent children (the greater the number, and younger in age of children seen as a constraining factor) was the main rationale for a lack of negotiation. In the two cases of male redundancy where there was little negotiation particularly, the Murrays and the Singletons, this was clearly indicated as the case. For example:

> *'We don't have children together. I have a daughter from a previous marriage, but she is an adult herself now and does not really depend on me for much at all. There wasn't any great imperative for us to overhaul our responsibilities outside of work, because it's really just up to us how it is managed. What I mean is, there is nothing particularly pressing. How much we do around the house is completely up to our own discretion, and we've not discussed any real need to switch things about other than the extra few jobs I've been doing' (Colin Singleton, second interview).*

It is notable that in couples where there were no dependent children, children were seen as the most likely cause of a need for a significant renegotiation of how responsibilities are managed. It is almost assumed that this is likely to be the case, even where individuals are yet to have children. It is true that in the Warriner and Denham cases of high negotiation there were dependent children present, however there are three cases (of female redundancy here) where dependent children are present and yet there has not been any substantial negotiation between partners. Perhaps the absence of 'pressing' child-related demands offers some justification to those sustaining divisions that are lacking in egalitarianism.

The importance of dependent children on the likelihood of a negotiation taking place cannot be understated however, and one is inclined to suggest that because women typically undertake a larger share of unpaid labour (including caring responsibilities), it is in cases of male redundancy where dependent children are present that high levels of negotiation are most likely. This is precisely because the presence of children creates time-specific pressures (the timing of school runs and so forth) and is relatively labour-intensive in terms of how many duties are encompassed in a caring role, meaning that someone taking on these responsibilities is required to navigate role change with both discussion and practical endeavour. This is absolutely not to suggest that in cases of male redundancy where dependents are present then a high level of negotiation is inevitable, but its likelihood is certainly increased. The intersection of other factors is, of course, key to determining whether roles regarding paid and unpaid work will indeed change.

Referring back to Theo's comments on his own family's reliance on informal means of care, Josephine was evidently less aware of the reliance one may have on such arrangements, focusing instead on the cost of available formal means of childcare:

> *'We've made use of after-school clubs in the past, as they were simple to arrange, other friends' children used them so they all got to be there together, and it was only needed for a relatively short while. The cost wasn't an issue when we both worked full-time, but it's noticeable in terms of our current incomings. We're not particularly well off at all with all of the bills we have and things; it's one of many things we could do with avoiding as much as possible at the moment. That said, it is much less expensive than what a lot of private paid child-minder's charge. And to be completely honest with you, I'm not entirely convinced about the quality of their service and even the facilities in some cases, despite how expensive it can be' (Josephine Woodhouse, second interview).*

The lack of public and affordable private childcare was one of the main catalysts in the renegotiation of the Denham's sexual division of labour too, where the loss of income negated paid child-minding arrangements as financially viable, resulting in Chris's primary caring role within the family.

The cost and availability of childcare is an unquestionable influence on the nature and extent of negotiation, which is inextricably linked to a couple's finances. The intersection of factors is again clear; taking age as one example, those aged 40-59 typically had the most caring responsibilities with parents, children and grandchildren to support. Elderly relatives were talked about almost exclusively as a primary source of childcare, with many respondents indicating that without them, their paid working arrangement (where both worked long hours) would be unsustainable given the high costs of private, formal childcare. These costs increased on average by over 6 per cent in 2012 alone (more than double the inflation rate of 2.7 per cent), making it prohibitively expensive for many families (DayCare Trust, 2013).

Elderly relatives, particularly grandparents, were spoken about as *requiring* care (as opposed to a source of care for children) by some of the older members of the research sample. Kathleen Singleton made reference to the fact that she and Colin were thinking about taking an elderly relative into their home given this individual's care requirements and a lack of suitable caring arrangements available to them. With the extra demands that would place on the household, she felt that this would signal a greater likelihood of negotiation:

> *'It's a bit of a dilemma we have at the moment; there's reluctance you know, to have someone else caring for her. But it's also a huge responsibility to be taking on, and we would seriously need to rethink how we manage things because she does need a lot of care. There's [sic] different things to consider, how much and what specifically we'd both be willing to do, what she wants herself, and whether it's possible to compromise on all of that. But it would certainly represent a big change' (Kathleen Singleton, second interview).*

It would be worth further investigation to see if these extra demands evoked a change in their division of labour that had remained in a state of conventional accordance over the course of one critical life event already; redundancy. The Leggs also spoke about visiting and caring for their parents as part of their weekly unpaid labour routine. These were not, however, spoken about as creating the same pressures on time, or as being as labour-intensive, as the presence of dependent children, and therefore was not seen as creating the same imperative for a re-

consideration and potentially a negotiation of how such responsibilities could be managed.

The intersection between factors is also clear when considering that care responsibilities are a significant element of 'time available', identified here as a structural factor influencing the likelihood and extent of negotiations and moves towards egalitarianism. The time available that individuals have to take part in both paid and unpaid work, central in current theoretical explanations for labour determinations (most notably as a bargaining resource), was cited by all respondents in this study. This was most evident when studying couples engaging in low levels of egalitarianism, particularly in cases of female redundancy, where both partners justified a disproportionate share of unpaid labour as a result of disparities in paid employment hours. Likewise in the two cases of sustained dissension, Josephine Woodhouse and Amanda Solomon initiated negotiation and sustained these processes (and the resulting conflictual nature) given the changes in their paid employment hours. In the former case, the flexibility in Theo's working arrangement has also been instrumental, although he feels that this has been somewhat exaggerated by Josephine. What he perceived to be unspoken rules surrounding availability and flexibility for the people he worked with largely dictated his availability for family duties.

A recurring theme throughout the interviews is that time 'available' to undertake unpaid tasks can be more problematic to conceptualise than is frequently posited in the bargaining literature. Time available is typically conceptualised in the literature as time not spent in paid employment. Respondents raised a number of both routine and unpredictable occurrences that further limited the time they had available to take part in unpaid labour. There were variations in the likelihood that respondents would have to work beyond their scheduled (paid employment) finish, often without much prior warning, depending on their occupation and job role. This could affect one's ability to meet time-specific commitments like the school run, cooking dinner, and so forth – and in some instances resulted in alternative arrangements having to be made at short notice. Another often more routine factor affecting one's ability to undertake unpaid labour was varying commute times, some of which could take up to one hour per day. Certainly these more routine drains on time resources should be

accounted for in any consideration of time availability relative to their partners in a consideration of respective divisions of labour.

There are also obvious difficult conceptual issues in determining how much time each day individuals spend on certain unpaid tasks, particularly the 'third shift' of emotional and more cognitive labour highlighted by Hochschild (1997). One example of boundary blurring from the interviews conducted here was where individuals had to re-organise child-minding, picking children up from school, and other such matters whilst at work; for example phoning someone privately employed or a family member – or even 'ducking out of work' to pick children up before returning and making the time up at the end of the day. It is not always an easy distinction to clarify exactly what constitutes time spent on unpaid work. Simply comparing the paid employment hours of partners in order to hypothesise their unpaid working shares, or seeking correlations between partners paid and unpaid hours is thus problematic.

Time demanded by a job role or organisation may be contractual, however the 'ideal worker' culture present in many occupations, particularly where presenteeism is considered an indication of commitment to the firm, places enormous pressure on those concerned with job security or seeking career advancement to put their paid position over any unpaid responsibilities they have. This provides one overlap with the cultural context (a point picked up when examining occupational identity as a factor) where organisations create expectations and demands upon employees that can influence individual paid labour undertakings, and by extension, their engagement in housework and caring activities. Even in Theo's course where he was not directly employed by an organisation, he felt that 'unwritten terms of acceptability' about how much one should negotiate paid working hours meant that such approaches to an employer are best kept to a minimum.

Flexibility is often dictated by the employer too; a reflection of the limited nature of legislation in the UK granting the right to request flexible working. Reference was made by some redundant interviewees that the public sector had offered a fair degree of flexibility to help balance non-work commitments, and this would become an issue for them when seeking employment in the private sector. However, those still

employed in the public sector raised concerns about the growing work intensification, as mass layoffs across the many departments increased the burdens on those who remain. For example:

> *'You have a situation where whole divisions have gone. Someone will say in a meeting oh will you send that over to the third sector team, and someone else will say oh that doesn't exist anymore, it was subsumed a couple of months ago…We have senior people leaving with tacit knowledge that others simply don't have. All these people leave but demands on public services are still high. And what do you do, go home without finishing your work when the public are relying on you? I've dragged myself away as late as 9pm, and only because any later and I wouldn't be in time to say goodnight to my child'* (Dawn Warriner, first interview).

These factors are all potential influences on the time available individuals have to engage in paid and unpaid work, and particularly how to balance the two where tasks are time-specific. Therefore, the findings indicate a need for more clarity on conceptions of time available – both where paid working hours are quantitatively analysed and where respondent self-reporting is used. There is also evidence of a need to distinguish between 'more favourable' and 'less favourable' dimensions of unpaid work. A consistent finding in the first interviews concerning time availability is that housework was viewed less favourably than childcare activities, particularly 'play time'. A comprehensive analysis of contributions particularly to unpaid labour would have to consider how different tasks require varying degrees of time, with some more effort consuming than others.

As a final point relating to time available, as well as *actual* weekly hours individuals had to undertake both paid and unpaid work were *perceptions* of time available; immediately following redundancy in particular, which proved to be a significant factor in the incidence of negotiation. For example, in the case of Diane Legg and her partner Charles, her period of unemployment was less than one month, and they did not feel much requirement to change their situation to any great extent:

> *'I was actually interviewed for the new job whilst still employed, and the starting date for the post was disclosed in the advertisement. So I knew once I*

had been accepted that I wasn't to be out of work for very long at all. So I have been getting a few jobs done around the house that I've wanted doing for a while, and spent more time than usual gardening and cooking. But there isn't any great need to completely re-evaluate how things work around here. Charles has his jobs and I do mine, not a great deal has changed really. I'm doing a little more, yes, because I have time. But our routine will fall completely back into place I imagine when I get started in the new job' (Diane Legg, first interview).

There is again potential support for the notion that the perceived duration of unemployment influences the likelihood of a negotiation of existing divisions (Gough and Killewald, 2011). This new position was full-time, with the hours similar to those worked previously. A similar point was made by Colin Singleton immediately following his redundancy:

'Taking on all of the household tasks would have been admitting defeat that I wasn't going to be back in work, and that's what I wanted. So there you go' (Colin Singleton, first interview).

This perception or at least desire for unemployment to be short-term reduced the levels of negotiation and egalitarianism that occurred.

Respondents as agentic when navigating these contexts

The factors outlined thus far as key influences on the likelihood and extent of renegotiations of labour have been identified as containing both enabling and constraining elements depending upon each individual case and the intersection of each factor with others. Even where factors were much more constraining, for example the limited labour market opportunities reported by all respondents, individuals displayed the capacity to create a more positive outlook for themselves. Patricia Carroll undertook a number of training courses that were offered by her local government department when she became aware that her job was at risk, in an effort to improve her prospects of gaining new employment. This involved a reflection on her own work experience and skill set, a consideration of the present situation where opportunities were limited, and a focus on what she desired for the

future in terms of career progression, income level, and so forth. The interplay of work experience and other factors including age (as will be disseminated in a moment) is again clear.

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conception of agency has been useful in understanding the ways in which respondents navigated the different situational (individual, structural and cultural) contexts they faced – based on the specific intersection of these factors that they experienced. They describe agency as 'a temporally embedded process of social engagement informed by the past (in its "iterational" or habitual aspect) but also orientated toward the future (as a "projective" capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and towards the present (as a "practical-evaluative" capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)' (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998: 962). Taking the previous example, Patricia was looking to create new opportunities for herself in the labour market via evidence of skill development that was distinct from those she held in current possession.

We may contrast this with Josephine's choice of action following redundancy, where she decided to remain within her chosen career path despite the current limited opportunities, taking a zero-hour contracted position in teaching with the hope that a permanent position would follow:

> *'It's all I've ever wanted to do really. And I've worked hard for my qualifications, so leaving the profession was not something I was willing to consider. We have a family, and we have bills to pay, so my working arrangement at the moment isn't ideal. But this is the career I've been building, and this is where I want to stay'* (Josephine Woodhouse, first interview).

Given the qualifications, skills and experience she had spent a substantial number of years working towards, and the intrinsic value gained from the nature of this work, she was not prepared to consider alternative job roles where labour market opportunities were less constrained. She desired a future career in this profession and revealed that there had been a full-time job offer in a non-teaching capacity that she had declined, but which would have potentially signalled a continuation of their prior divisions of labour without much negotiation. She acknowledged that the desire to

build a future career in teaching would require a considerable commitment to paid employment (and therefore the requirement for a greater sharing of unpaid labour), and had no wish to spend the rest of her married life engaging in an unequal division of labour – key to the level of negotiation she initiated.

Meanwhile, Diane Legg (aged 50-59) was faced with redundancy at time when she felt that it would not be worth any significant retraining. Yet she was keen to work full-time because she believed that her husband Charles (also aged 50-59) would look to retire in about five years' time and wished to do the same:

> *'Financially, our retirement would be a lot more comfortable if we have two full-time incomes up until that point. And work is important to me, I still feel I've a lot to offer a company. Anything much less than thirty or so hours wouldn't have interested me really'* (Diane Legg, first interview).

Drawing on her vast work experience and greater range of job roles than had been held by Josephine, Diane was the only respondent made redundant from the DfE to really account for the transferable skills she had developed (as noted previously). Reflecting upon her past employment history and evaluating her present situation in the context of limited job prospects in education and aspirations for the future, Diane secured her desired full-time employment in a job role that she described as 'suitable for her purposes'. The position offered limited promotional opportunities and was not demanding in terms of overtime or the requirement to learn new competencies, which she was happy to accept given that she only planned to hold the position relatively short-term. Habit certainly dictated their unpaid division of labour (see Table 4) with virtually no change in either respective division. Both Diane and Charles felt that this was largely due to the fact that there had been little negotiation, given the clarity of Diane's working aims and thus continuation of full-time work following redundancy that served to maintain the status quo. The result was that Charles made fewer attempts to negotiate with Diane and actually made less 'positive' adjustments in his unpaid labour contribution than Theo, yet experienced no (and therefore much less) real negotiation or conflict at all with his partner.

Likewise, the situation regarding Theo's capacity to negotiate more flexible working hours demonstrates the ability with which individuals may or may not exercise their own autonomy in order to manipulate their present circumstances. Theo was

undoubtedly granted some flexibility given his status as self-employed, however there is a question mark regarding whether he chose to exercise this ability to the fullest extent. This reflects assertions in the literature that men are often less likely to negotiate flexible working in any way that could be construed as prioritising their families over their employer (Crompton and Lyonette, 2011), and it is worth recounting that Jay increased his own paid work hours following Gemma's redundancy.

Numerous respondents indicated that they had negotiated with their employers over working hours in the past, notably Patricia who had for some years started work at 9:15am every morning instead of her contracted 9am start, allowing her to undertake the morning school run. Similarly, Dawn who left work at 3pm on Friday afternoons each week to pick her child up from school and avoid paid caring means. In both instances, these changes were not formalised contractually but enacted with mutual trust that the time would be made up during the rest of their working week (for example through designated lunch breaks). The ability to orchestrate more flexible paid working arrangements by those made redundant from the public sector were considered to be detrimentally affected for any person wishing to create a good impression when starting out at a new organisation. This particularly with the widely held perception that private sector employers were less willing to engage in such negotiations and practices.

The present situation regarding job loss, pay freezes, changes in social benefit and the state of the labour market undoubtedly fostered a context in which respondents were reflecting on their past and present situations whilst considering the future. Redundancy is obviously a catalyst for such reflection and many individuals alluded to the fact that they had entered into a routine prior to job loss whereby, at least comparatively to the current situation, they had not been as reflecting about the past or present, or as proactive as they had been forced to be in the changing circumstances. Even where constraints mean that future plans are delayed or couples are satisfied to maintain the status quo – including situations of conventional accordance where minimal negotiation and therefore moves towards egalitarianism occur, the agency that individuals possess and exercise should not be understated in our analyses. Consider the accounts of the youngest couple, the Murrays, where

references were made to specific life events that they wished to experience before starting a family:

> *'We have plans, particularly in terms of countries we want to visit, and travelling is something we'd like to do whilst we have no real responsibilities and other things to be spending the money on. I think our attitude is to ride out the recession, neither of us are in the jobs we'd like to be in in say ten years time, so we're not really worried about "career jobs" because we do want a few weeks break to do the travelling at various points. Only then would we come back and get the stable career job, where you don't want to be disappearing for weeks at a time. And with those stable jobs we'll begin thinking about starting a family'* (Alex Murray, first interview).

The Murrays testified in their accounts to the notion that young people perceive the labour market to be particularly unfavourable for them (supported in Chapter 3 e.g. ONS, 2014a; table 2.1) , with huge uncertainty over their working futures. When talking about their jobs as not what they hoped to be doing in ten years' time, both Alex and Danielle referred to their current positions with the phrase 'a job is a job at the moment', sentiments echoed in the accounts of the second youngest couple, the Bardsleys. These couples felt heavily constrained by the interplay of their contextual factors, however Alex still began training and working in a care home – a role completely 'alien' to him - which itself only came about through Danielle herself organising a trial period. Both partners also consciously decided to more or less maintain their time spent on unpaid labour and the specific duties undertaken, as was the case when small changes took place during Alex's period of unemployment.

Perhaps the other clear example of the way that people reflected on past experience and the huge role this had in their present behaviours and future plans was that pertaining to their upbringing and the working roles adopted by their own parents mentioned before. Mike Warriner stated that his father had very much held the view that 'if you haven't earnt it then you don't deserve it', and this was a position he himself adopted with regards to social benefits. The 'stigma' that is sometimes attached to unemployment had been an issue for Chris Denham immediately following redundancy, however, as his familial identity changed he became more accepting of his role and their use of support from the government.

Chris is an exemplar of the reduced incentive for coupled parents to work as high childcare costs cancel out the gains of paid work in a labour market where many opportunities are on non-standard working arrangements. As was the case for Chris, changes in the tax and benefit system have created a scenario where for middle-income dual-earner families working or not working is more a matter of choice made on the basis of household requirements and resources; which in the context of a contracting labour market privileges a more traditional single earner model in middle-income families (MacLeavy, 2011):

> *'We've sat here and worked out what particular jobs I've applied for would mean to our finances once things like tax credits and child care is considered, and the types of jobs available at the moment do not really inspire you to work. It seems difficult to find full-time work with any great permanency, maybe because of the sheer number of people applying for those that are out there. Realistically these types of work don't actually pay if your partner is in work, at a certain level of income and you have children who need looking after'* (Chris Denham, second interview).

Various analyses (e.g. Centre for Economic And Social Inclusion, 2012; Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2012) corroborate these points, drawing attention to changes in Universal Tax Credit that acts as a disincentive for 'second earners' to work longer hours. Gemma Bardsley testified to many of these points, suggesting that both she and Jay had 'done the sums', and were it not for the intrinsic benefits she gained from working in a caring capacity, then she would be much less willing to reduce the time she spends with her own children for what was described as negligible additional income.

In all instances here; Mike Warriner, Chris Denham and Gemma Bardsley, whilst responding to their situational contexts, displayed clear evidence of how options were weighed up and decisions made that are informed by the past, and a consideration of the present circumstances and their future goals (which may be adjusted). In all cases, outside of conventional accordance in particular, we can see that people adjusted their caring shares or attitudes towards respective divisions in a way that questioned divisions of labour that had become habitual and routine over significantly long periods of time.

The specifics of their present situation combined with a reflection on the past, undoubtedly brings into play not just their own upbringing but also their marital stage, again influenced by the other intersecting factors. It is important to set out clearly what is meant here by marital stage, as it refers to two phenomena. These are the stage in each couple's life course that they became married and the duration of each marriage. Beginning with the former point, there was a clear contrast in the accounts of some couples that had been married from a relatively earlier age and those who had met their partners or decided to get married at a later stage. For the Woodhouses as one example, Theo has a child from a previous relationship, plus Josephine and he have two children together. Josephine had always been open to the idea of having another child in the future, a desire Theo did not share, claiming that three children was enough for him. This impacted upon his future life plans whereby he was happy to focus on work, save as much money as they both could, and live comfortably without the costs relating to another child. It was clear that this was yet another factor influencing his wishes to avoid negotiation and maintain the status quo – a key source of the contention that arose between the two partners.

Taking both aspects of marital stage together, where respondents are more elderly, married for a long duration and have no dependents in their household, long-standing divisions of labour may be less likely to become questioned and the source of significant levels of negotiation (as seen in the case of Diane and Charles Legg). The Leggs became married at a later age than the other respondents, and with both having long employment histories, relative responsibility and power at work, both wished to continue with their careers. In fact, both identified that the dual commitment to their careers was a key reason for why they progressed in the early stages of their relationship – both were clear in their objectives about work and family and this was a contributing factor for the low levels of negotiation that have occurred over their marital lives. As indicated earlier on in this chapter, both were looking to retire in the not-too-distant future at which point they would both focus on aspects of their lives outside of employment. The consequence of this was again a low level of negotiation following Diane's redundancy as both have been clear for some time exactly what each partner desired, and there was synergy in these wishes.

There is also some support for Parkman's (1998) assertions from Chapter 2 that the perceived permanency of marriage – here consolidated by a longer marriage duration

– affected the desires for negotiation and subsequent employment and non-employment decisions. The Warriners (married for 21 years) and Denhams (14 years of marriage) were comfortably the longest married couples in cases of male redundancy, with the third case of high egalitarianism, the Meehans (6 years), the third longest. This is perhaps telling, and illustrated by the Warriners who spoke about Mike's self-employment as a risky endeavour, and something he/she was only confident/supportive of precisely because of their long time together. This decision had a huge impact on their subsequent renegotiation of labour, and her support was amongst the key reasons for Mike's committed desire for greater egalitarianism and sustained period of consciousness. However, a long marriage duration can also spell the entrenchment of longstanding divisions of labour that are difficult to overturn, seen particularly in the cases of the Carrolls (20 years of marriage) where Patricia made no real attempt to change Gerard's traditional views or behaviour, and that of the Leggs (14 years of marriage) where, alongside the other reasons highlighted, again a state of conventional accordance endured.

Finishing this analysis with a factor pertinent to the underlying research interests of this thesis we turn to gender and familial identity. The change demonstrated over time as part of the negotiation process for those in cases of high egalitarianism shows that what is habitual, taken for granted and actually perceived as natural *is* subject to change through practical application to new tasks, development of new competencies, and so forth. As has been shown throughout, normative conceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour do, to varying extents, inform people's behaviours with regards to paid and unpaid work. The clearest example of this was Gerard Carroll who openly propagated traditional values. In this instance we saw his partner Patricia largely accept this state of affairs without a great deal of negotiation initiated for change, despite largely espousing egalitarian views herself in the interviews.

As gender is a social construct and attitudes and identities are fluid, it is clear how in some cases there were changes in gender and familial identity. However, this took considerable action and adjustment on their parts; as was highlighted in Chapter 7 the desire for sustained negotiation and egalitarianism was itself fuelled by continued practical endeavour in new tasks and such. The importance of outlining this stems from the fact that all respondents excluding Gerard espoused modern, non-traditional views towards gender, employment and the family, yet implicit subscription to

normative conceptions acted as a constraint on the likelihood of negotiation and moves towards egalitarianism in the majority of cases. This was apparent in Charles Legg's interview despite the fact that he was actually attempting to downplay the influence of gender on labour decisions:

> *'I don't think gender is a key factor dictating anyone's career, whereas in the past it obviously did. Women were expected to be mainly responsible for the family and home, limiting how much time they could spend in work. But now there's so many options for childminding or working flexibly that mothers can balance the two much more'* (Charles Legg, first interview).

So despite attempting to downplay the significance of gender on career progression, Charles unwittingly positions the management of paid work and child care as primarily a mother's prerogative, and moreover a female issue. There were also explicit references to traditional gender norms in interviewee accounts, including in situations where respondents attempted to distance themselves from these expectations. This was the case in Kathleen Singleton's account, despite the fact that her division of labour was characterised as low in egalitarianism:

> *'If you conducted a study targeting a different type of person, then I imagine that you might find a male breadwinner and adoring family who appreciate that support and expect nothing from the woman financially still exists and is in fact expected and desired by many'* (Kathleen Singleton, first interview).

Here Kathleen indicated that this would be the case for other cultural and demographic groups but not her personally, *despite* the conventional nature of her own arrangement. Even in the case of Lorraine Meehan who represents the 'perfunctory egalitarianism' case, the influence of societal expectations surrounding gender is apparent:

> *'There's [sic] relatively clear paths for boys and girls in activities they do and expected behaviour. For example, [daughter] has started going to football club after school and she enjoys it. But I don't see it as anything more than a fad she'll lose interest in in a couple of weeks. As a parent you can't help but carry it on really, you want your children to fit in and make friends'* (Lorraine Meehan, second interview).

These (particularly implicit) subscriptions to normative conceptions of gender, held by those who espoused non-traditional views and propagated a desire for egalitarian sexual divisions of labour, demonstrate the significant readjustment in gender and familial role and identity that occurred for those who overturned divisions that were constituted as conventional accordance prior to redundancy, to those of high levels of egalitarianism. This incorporated a reflection on prior divisions and indeed the disjuncture in their declarations of a desire for egalitarianism and these rather traditional divisions of unpaid labour, which extended into long-held, largely unquestioned views on the suitability of women and men for different responsibilities. References were made in Chapter 7 to the desires of all six partners in couples enacting high levels of egalitarianism to sustain these role changes as their future goals for employment and the family had changed somewhat during the negotiation process.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has accounted for the many different influences on decisions surrounding paid and unpaid labour interviewees reported, which affected the level and nature of negotiation in each case. The specific intersection of these factors, particular to each case, have been characterised as potentially enabling and constraining for individuals who have responded differently to the interplay of the individual, structural and cultural contexts that they confront. Therefore it is not straightforward to attribute importance weightings to the many varied factors as they are only really separated here for analytical purposes. Just to illustrate this point a final time, household composition (particularly the number of dependent children) and care availability were cited by all interviewees as potentially the most important influence on the level of negotiation and egalitarianism enacted across the interviews. Immediately age became relevant and a significant influence on both the requirements and resources of care each couple possessed. Those aged 50-59 reported that grandparents required care to varying extents (consider the Singletons who were contemplating whether to bring parent into home) and were not really utilised as a source of caring for children whilst at work. For younger couples

grandparents were seen as an invaluable source of care and a huge enabling element in meeting both their care requirements and employment responsibilities.

Again, this interplay develops further as Theo highlighted the different care practices that are utilised by different ethnic groups. He characterised stronger ties to extended friends and family as a crucial means of childcare amongst the Caribbean side of his family, which is positioned in existing research as characteristic also of those considered to be 'working-class'; the socio-economic group largely orientated to across the sample. However, formal caring means were also widely used and this of course depended upon the level of financial resources each couple had – not least given the expensive nature of such arrangements, as attested by all who used them. Where couples had insufficient resources, alternative strategies for managing childcare and paid employment were required. Consider the case of Mike Warriner, who became the primary carer in his family whilst working on a self-employed basis to meet both caring and earning demands.

Whilst household composition and care were cited as the key influencing factors, the current state of the labour market was not far behind; and this was largely positioned in terms of one's skills and experience and occupational identity. Again the point here is that outcomes were variable because each case – each individual and their partner – experienced different situational contexts, and drew upon their past experiences, the present interplay of factors and their future aspirations and expectations when making decisions (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), highlighted in the last section. As demonstrated in the three cases of high egalitarianism, the change in situational pressures can indeed overturn long-standing, taken-for-granted routines that have become habitual, as couples evaluate and adapt to the changing circumstance, and adjust their desires and expectations for the future accordingly. Where there are changes in familial role and identity, the likelihood is greater that high levels of egalitarianism will be enacted – at least until changes in the dynamic (individual, structural and cultural) contexts unsettle new routines or aspirations.

Whilst couples share certain factors across these contexts (for example the specific labour market opportunities and caring facilities of Sheffield experienced by five couples), the unique intersection of these factors with the others highlighted meant that different responses were enacted following redundancy, incorporating varying

degrees of negotiation and egalitarianism. Illustrating this point, the five couples from Sheffield occupy three of the four states of affairs in the typology presented in Chapter 6. Given that this interplay is so variable across couples occupying the same quadrant of this typology, it is possible to draw out clearer similarities when considering cases of male and female redundancy collectively. In cases of male redundancy, a renegotiation of the sexual division of labour and moves towards egalitarianism are most likely where individuals are faced with a labour market characterised by limited labour market opportunities, have dependent children, and significant financial outgoings. Key here is the importance of time, both in terms of quantity and the time-specific pressures that dependent children require for care (bringing into play 'time availability'). Only through the intersection of these (and the other referenced) factors did the process of 'consciousness' and therefore negotiation begin, ultimately shifting these three couples from a state of conventional accordance.

In the case of Colin Singleton, despite a considerable loss of earnings (his household earnings were currently down £20,000) and new employment on a zero hour contract, they had sufficient accrued savings and no time related pressures to enact much negotiation or change in their division of labour at all. For the Murrays, a younger couple with fewer savings and high mortgage payments, Alex was happy to take on a lower paid full-time position in a career he had no intention of remaining in long-term. Again, with no dependent children neither partner felt any great requirement to renegotiate their established (unequal) divisions of labour.

In cases of female redundancy the findings from this sample indicate that high levels of egalitarianism are unlikely irrespective of the contextual factors at play. What we can see however, are similarities in the two cases of sustained dissension where high levels of negotiation did take place. Notably, the movement out of unemployment back into work (even where this is not full-time) and the presence again of dependent children were cited as key in both cases – however these factors held for two other couples that remained in a state of conventional accordance. Examining these couples, the Carrolls demonstrate the importance traditional attitudes towards gender and familial identity had on a lack of renegotiation and move towards egalitarianism; whilst Gemma Bardsley did not push for negotiation but indicated that this would change once full-time employment was acquired. In cases of female redundancy the

implication again is that men are satisfied to maintain unequal divisions of labour, using their partners fewer paid working hours as justification, even where they did not hold true prior to redundancy yet conventional divisions were enacted.

It seems unlikely that we could fully account for how sexual divisions of labour are determined, and thus make informed predictions on the likelihood of moves towards egalitarianism without considering this array of factors. This is problematic when considering that a large body of literature considers resource bargaining (predominantly in terms of financial resources and time availability – configured here as structural factors) in a context of gender norms (a cultural factor in this framework) to provide a comprehensive explanation of how labour divisions come into fruition. A whole host of important factors as indicated by interviewee accounts here are neglected, not least other wider factors (again considered here under the structural context) that are grossly under-theorised in empirical research utilising West and Zimmerman's (1987) framework as key in their analyses. It is worth adding that the important individual (and associated cultural) factors of ethnicity and socio-economic group were subject to attempts at being incorporated into the West and Zimmerman approach – 'doing difference' (West and Fenstermaker, 1995). However, the many shortcomings of this approach have been outlined extensively in a symposium elsewhere (Hill Collins, 1995; Maldonado, 1995; Thorne, 1995; Weber, 1995; Winant, 1995). Only through a consideration of the intersection of these factors can we truly understand why moves towards or away from high levels of egalitarianism are most likely.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how negotiation between heterosexual couples can shape the likelihood and extent of egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour. It became apparent that in this two-way relationship egalitarianism shapes negotiation to much the same extent, with both concepts proving to be simultaneously and mutually reinforcing. Despite a huge body of research exploring gender, employment and the family, current literature has surprisingly neglected the relationship between these two concepts. When analysing egalitarianism in the sexual division of labour, the negotiation process through which respective divisions are decided upon and sustained (or not) offers a fruitful area for research. However, the meaning of negotiation as a mechanism for organising and managing conflicting household demands (of paid and unpaid work) is largely assumed and rarely subject to critical engagement. A huge body of research quantitatively analyses variables such as relative earnings and educational attainment in order to predict which partner is most likely to engage in a higher or lower share of employment or housework and caring, and there are of course many qualitative studies focusing their analyses on the interactional level. Yet, it is very rare that individuals have actually been interviewed and asked about the negotiation process *specifically*, when clearly this method can offer valuable insights into what the negotiation process entails, and when egalitarianism is most likely.

The aim in this thesis was to take a closer examination of the negotiation process in this context, beginning with a clearer conception of what that is, and thus be in a position to theorise about when and what types of negotiation are likely to foster egalitarianism. This was achieved through semi-structured, qualitative interviews whereby individuals were asked to describe and reflect on the negotiation process they experienced, in their own words. By directly querying what negotiation they had engaged in and the extent to which this led to greater egalitarianism in their sexual divisions of labour, or the maintenance of status quo, new valuable insights into the relationship between both concepts have been garnered. Given the suggestion in prior research (affirmed in this data) that decisions regarding paid and unpaid work form part of a couples long-standing everyday routine and are therefore

subject to rather minimal reflection and discussion in many cases, the negotiation process was explored in the context of redundancy, a point at which settled routines regarding the division of paid and unpaid labour were disrupted.

A key argument of this thesis is that egalitarianism in the sexual division of labour should be understood through a consideration of the negotiation process that determines respective shares of labour amongst partners. Egalitarianism and negotiation are related, but there are different patterns of change based upon the nature and extent of each (illustrated in the typology). These patterns of change can be prompted and shaped by the interplay of individual, structural, and cultural factors, to which individuals and couples navigate these situational opportunities and pressures and subsequently enact varying degrees of negotiation and egalitarianism. This argument will now be unpacked and its contributions to the theoretical and empirical literature outlined.

Conceptualising negotiation

The first important contribution made to existing research is bringing 'negotiation' into sharper focus. Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrated that negotiation as an underlying mechanism for decision-making with regards to respective divisions of labour is implied in much research, but rarely explicated. By making negotiation the actual focus of this thesis a conceptualisation has been developed that researchers can utilise, and begin critically engaging with the concept and their treatment of it with this as a reference point. This definition reads:

The division of paid and unpaid household labour based upon explicit, purposeful discussion between household members, and/or the often implicit decisions or actions that are taken by members with little or no verbal communication, and the subsequent practical undertaking of these labour endeavours.

In particular, this thesis has recognised the importance of implicit negotiations to the establishment and (often unwitting) reproduction of unequal and traditional divisions of labour. These are often difficult to draw out from the data because respondents were not always clear that a) they had taken place, and b) that they even constituted 'negotiation'. These more implicit aspects of the negotiation process were largely

incorporated into notions of 'routine', and not immediately viewed as the product of any exchange between partners, merely 'the way things were'.

The four couples constituting high levels of negotiation engaged primarily in high levels of explicit negotiation. For the couples in 'negotiated egalitarianism' this incorporated prolonged and frequent discussions about what changes could be made in each partner's respective divisions of labour and how these could be practically undertaken. Both women in these couples were likened to performing a supervisory role as their husbands developed competencies in new household tasks, offering guidance and practical demonstrations during this 'learning' process. In the cases of sustained dissension the nature of these negotiations were of course different, yet frequent and prolonged explicit negotiations took place as the women attempted to enact changes in their partners' unpaid labour contributions.

Implicit negotiations refer largely to the unspoken courses of action taken that have been key to the sexual division of labour. There were a number of ways that implicit as opposed to explicit means of negotiation set the tone for a high or low level of egalitarianism. For example, partners could act without consultation as they felt that they knew what was best for the household and discussions were not necessary. Alternatively, some partners would actively look to avoid explicit negotiation in an effort to maintain the status quo in their divisions – resulting in unspoken practical engagement in tasks as the means through which respective divisions emerged. Prior to redundancy, it was felt that implicit negotiations had established long-standing divisions with relatively little explicit negotiation referenced by any couple. For five couples this remained the case at the close of the study, with little evidence of explicit negotiation occurring or even likely – certainly without significant change in the interplay of their individual, structural or cultural contexts.

Conceptualising negotiation as purposeful dialogue (akin to more general definitions of 'negotiation') *and* the practical, often unspoken means through which divisions were renegotiated – distinguishing between explicit and implicit elements – the definition offered comprehensively accounts for the process as it was described by the respondents in this thesis.

Through the descriptions of negotiation offered by respondents, the relevance of theories referenced in Chapter 2 became clear and the data enables further critical

commentary on their value. Superficially there was a degree of specialisation a la Parsons and Bales (1956) and Becker (1991), although this only really applied to unpaid labour as both partners previously worked similar full-time hours and there was not a huge difference in monetary contributions (see Tables 3 and 4). Therefore, it was not the case that one partner specialised in paid employment and the other in unpaid, as both engaged in high levels of paid work with the public sector offering women in this thesis a 'good' wage. Specialisation in unpaid labour was evident both in terms of the overall time spent on such responsibilities, and the specific activities undertaken, with men and women generally gravitating towards different tasks – particularly outside the cases of high egalitarianism.

As noted in particularly Chapter 8, quite often male respondents justified disproportionately lower shares by asserting that their wives were better at unpaid tasks than they were, and thus preferred to do it themselves. This was offered some support amongst female interviewees who felt that standards would slip if they personally did not take ownership, which would have led to unfavourable consequences for all household members. So certainly the notion that specialisation dictated their respective engagement in unpaid labour was evoked in interviewee accounts. However, the speed at which those men in cases of high egalitarianism developed competences in new tasks and the subsequent rate of change in ownership of these unpaid duties illustrates that specialisation is far from fixed. The perseverance demonstrated by these men, and willingness to assist and accept lower standards of tasks completion temporarily by their wives, shows that female 'specialisation' in unpaid labour offers something of an 'excuse' in couples where both partners work full time.

The disproportionately higher shares of unpaid labour undertaken by women pre-redundancy and continued following male job loss testifies to the oft cited critique of specialisation theories that the sexual division of labour cannot be seen as gender-neutral. The data here reveals that competences can be developed and 'specialisation' is demonstrably fluid, yet wider conceptions of normative gender behaviour and the moral obligations this often incorporates are at play. As is shown across the findings chapters, where there is the desire for egalitarianism from both partners, unequal divisions of unpaid labour (based along notions of who is most

capable of performing it) can be overturned and a new – more egalitarian - division forged.

Many of the issues raised here are equally applicable to the widely adopted bargaining perspective. Referring back to Tables 3 and 4 it is clear that, pre-redundancy, female partners were relatively equal in terms of the earnings they contributed to the household and the number of paid work hours undertaken in many cases. Yet, the time spent on unpaid labour demonstrates that they conducted a much larger overall and unpaid share even where these bargaining resources were similar. For example, it was not the case that where a male partner earned 70 per cent of the household income he therefore performed 30 per cent of the household's unpaid labour. From this, it is particularly clear that any notion of bargaining ties in more closely to issues of perceived fairness rather than what would constitute equal. Bargaining only really surfaced in cases of female redundancy where the disjuncture in paid working hours was used as justification for significantly higher female shares of unpaid labour, despite the fact that this had not been applicable pre-redundancy. Again we see recourse to a relatively convenient 'excuse' for a traditional sexual division of labour with paid employment hours used in a similar fashion to notions of competency highlighted above.

By actually focusing on the negotiation process itself this thesis has identified the extent to which specialisation and bargaining figured in the division of paid and unpaid labour for couples studied here. What we can learn about the bargaining process from this data is that couples with the fewest 'resources' may instigate a higher share of unpaid labour for themselves as a result of their willingness to contribute to the household in other ways than those they are not afforded through paid employment (hours of paid work, earnings, etc.). The notion of bargaining purported in the literature whereby those with the highest relative earnings initiate and lead bargains in order to undertake a lower share of unpaid labour was generally not evident. As the actual process of bargaining is largely neglected in existing research it is plausible that these purported notions of bargaining are based on hypotheses and assumptions rather than empirical findings. As quantitative comparisons of paid work hours, earnings and other resources are compared with time spent on unpaid labour this assumption is certainly made, rather than

questioning why and how divisions actually materialise - where the findings here would perhaps be replicated more widely.

These points, alongside the existing critiques presented in Chapter 2, testify to the need for a sharper focus on the process of negotiation itself. By making this process central to analyses and actually engaging with those undertaking a (re)negotiation we can learn a lot about exactly how and why conventional or egalitarian divisions of labour come into fruition. Elements of specialisation and bargaining in this process will emerge and can be accounted for in a more comprehensive conceptualisation of the negotiation process itself. The argument in this thesis is that negotiation involves the explicit, often protracted verbal interaction (planning, organising, guiding, monitoring and evaluation of ongoing changes) and implicit, often unspoken, practical undertaking of changes in task ownership and so forth. Justifications offered for unequal divisions of unpaid labour may centre on relative resources or one individual's specialisation regarding certain tasks (as identified in this research and noted above) and these can be factored in to a more complete and inclusive analysis of the sexual division of labour. In particular, the findings here testify to the value of 'silent bargains' (as theorised by Strauss, 1978), often not considered in empirical research on bargaining. Those instances of bargaining – cited only by male and female respondents in some cases of *female redundancy* – were indicated as unspoken between partners, and only verbalised in the interviews as justification for unequal shares.

The findings here again offer further critical engagement with the gender perspective, reinforcing the need to consider negotiation and egalitarianism outside of the widely adopted 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) approach. As has been suggested throughout, a great many examinations of the sexual division of labour account for egalitarianism (and the lack thereof) through the bargaining and gender perspectives (e.g. Chesley, 2011; Kan, 2008; Kanji, 2013; Kelan, 2010; Legerski and Cornwall, 2010; Lyonette and Crompton, 2014; Mannino and Deutsch, 2007). The bargaining approach has been critiqued on several counts throughout Chapters 2 and 6 to 9, not least the fact that the bargaining process is itself absent, much like negotiation is in research more generally. Similarly, the argument has followed that West and Zimmerman's (1987) framework has provided researchers with a relatively convenient way to apply theory to the safe conclusion that

normative conceptions of gender affect behaviour, particularly by way of women being burdened with a higher division of unpaid labour. By adopting this approach researchers typically position conventional behaviours as 'doing gender', and non-traditional behaviours as 'undoing gender'. Based on the data here there are significant question marks over the actual usefulness this approach provides for analysing moves towards or away from egalitarianism.

Potentially the clearest way to illustrate this is in the cases of high egalitarianism where men demonstrated awareness that notions of specialisation and normative behaviour are socially constructed. They experienced changes in their identity and ideas about work, employment and the family, and their practical engagement in housework and caring changed accordingly. This would be considered evidence of 'undoing gender' in the vast array of research adopting the West and Zimmerman (1987) framework for their analyses, as these men began to behave in a gendered manner that would be considered unconventional. It is difficult to see how such a conclusion offers value to the discussion however. For one, traditional conceptions of gendered behaviour (and the gender binary itself) are being preserved when suggesting that they are 'undoing gender' by taking a lead caring role. Secondly, they spoke about their parenting roles in a much different way to how their wives did. The men talked about the different ways in which they performed certain activities and the benefits they felt that this involvement provided the children, particularly those that were not gained when their wives conducted these same responsibilities. By talking in terms of these individuals 'doing' or 'undoing' gender, many of these subtle nuances in their behaviours are ignored.

Significantly, the two perspectives are often combined quite vaguely and it is not clear how the two interact (when combined) in a way that appeases their individual issues in attempting to account for divisions of labour. The joining of these two perspectives also fails to account for many other influences on decisions made regarding paid and unpaid labour shares that emerged in interviewee accounts here, which have been incorporated into the individual, structural and cultural conceptual framework for analysis.

The relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism

Taking the second point in the above argument, that egalitarianism and negotiation are positively linked in a relationship that is in many ways simultaneously and mutually developing, it is important to outline the key stages in the negotiation process that are conducive to higher levels of egalitarianism. Awareness that established unpaid divisions of labour are no longer viable or fair (in this context following one partner's redundancy) was the catalyst for a negotiation of responsibilities; itself the initial stage in any process of egalitarianism. This also represents the first stage in the negotiation process when considering that partners were aware that divisions of unpaid and overall labour were, or had been, unfair despite espousing egalitarianism attitudes, yet they had not attempted to renegotiate to any significant level. Therefore, 'consciousness' or 'unsilencing' constitutes the very first stage in the process of negotiation but also of egalitarianism – where this consciousness may generate the motivation to enact more equitable (and egalitarian) change.

This mutually reinforcing relationship between the two then progresses between the stages identified (from respondent accounts) in Chapter 7. Negotiation by way of discussions and practical changes in tasks undertaken is the next step, and for each stage in the process the desire for egalitarianism grew – itself simultaneously acting as the catalyst for higher levels of negotiation. This is best demonstrated when considering that the negotiation process entailed a developing sense of responsibility and moral obligation to fulfil tasks for other household members (caring duties and so forth). This represents an intangible, cognitive commitment to egalitarian ideals, which are manifest in the more practical undertaking of tasks. After engagement in tasks for a variable period of time, discussions about what to do, how best to do them (typically in terms of guidance sought and given) were less frequent, and the sustained undertaking of tasks not previously engaged in by one partner signalled the practical element of negotiation. It is plausible that these undertakings become routine and subject to implicit negotiation as time goes on, much like the long-standing divisions and implicit negotiations that sustained them prior to redundancy.

As stated, there are different patterns of change based upon the nature and extent of negotiation and egalitarianism in each case. Cases of sustained dissension

demonstrate that where there is not the desire from both partners for egalitarianism then high levels of this are unlikely. The initial stages of consciousness and negotiation initiation occurred, yet this was not received in a positive fashion and subsequently the *nature* of the negotiation was not conducive to egalitarianism. It was deemed that high levels of negotiation were engaged in as many protracted discussions and practical behaviour (feigning tiredness, deliberately avoiding certain tasks, and so forth) all occurred. These cases highlight that the stages of negotiation considered to facilitate egalitarianism (a developing sense of responsibility, etc.) are an important part of the process, as without them the sustained desire for egalitarianism and simultaneous wish to continue making practical changes in respective divisions is absent, reaffirming the findings from cases of high egalitarianism. Similarly, cases of conventional accordance indicate that where the desire for egalitarianism is low, negotiation is unlikely and low levels of each the subsequent result. To reiterate, the nature of negotiations, which itself will determine and is determined by the extent of egalitarianism based on the findings here, is crucial to the pattern of change witnessed.

A negotiation-egalitarianism typology

This thesis has developed a typology based on these instances of negotiation and egalitarianism to offer a useful conceptual tool for analysing this (currently underdeveloped) relationship. To recap:

Negotiated egalitarianism quite simply denotes those couples engaging in high levels of each.

Perfunctory egalitarianism categorises couples who achieve a state of high egalitarianism without recourse to high levels of negotiation. In this research, long drawn-out verbal dialogue was neither sought nor given, with substantial change achieved largely through implicit means.

Sustained dissension refers to states of affair where attempts to evoke change (with the incidence of high levels of negotiation) towards egalitarianism are unsuccessful for a sustained period of time, resulting in the incidence of low egalitarianism.

Conventional accordance represents cases of low negotiation that are characterised by a rather traditional arrangement, where female partners undertake disproportionately much higher shares of unpaid labour and typically overall divisions to, with their husbands primarily responsible for financial provision.

Value is immediately offered in that this represents the first explicit examination of the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism, and a typology based on incidences of each is unique. By viewing the two concepts as a continuum from low to high levels the typology is fluid, enabling us to assess differences within and across each group. Importantly, the typology aided in the tracking of changes over time, as half of the couples moved from a state of conventional accordance into other groups. The point was made that all couples possess the agency to transcend boundaries in the future, and this will no doubt be affected by the particular situational contexts encountered by each. Redundancy and the interplay of individual, structural and cultural factors led to the five moves away from conventional accordance examined in this thesis, and future changes in each factor will no doubt create new opportunities and pressures on household behaviours.

At a more personal level, as the new division of labour becomes established as routine and subject to more implicit means of negotiation, the couples in a state of negotiated egalitarianism will most likely transcend to one of perfunctory egalitarianism. Similarly, it is possible that cases of sustained dissension change, whether through a change in attitude, conflict resolution, or the interplay of dynamic individual, structural and cultural factors, and could progress to higher levels of egalitarian (although not necessarily enough to constitute a state of negotiated egalitarianism). Alternatively, the initiators of negotiation may eventually give up their attempt to evoke change and these couples move back into a state of conventional accordance from whence they came. This fluidity is important, as the various matrices across the findings chapters here illustrate that couples in the same typology group still enact different levels of negotiation and egalitarianism (demonstrated further in the time spent on paid and unpaid labour, in Tables 3 and 4). In Chapter 3 current typologies of familial working arrangements were considered too static, and the framework here has deliberately addressed this issue.

The typology is also useful in that, by distinguishing between different states of affairs based upon the incidence of high or low negotiation and egalitarianism, it became easier to clarify the types of process (nature of negotiation, stages in the negotiation process fulfilled, etc.), and the different tactics adopted by partners in each group. For example, Joseph Solomon engaged in many of the explicit negotiations that were often conflictual and devoid of a great deal of compromise that characterised the other case of sustained dissension (the Woodhouses). However, he also looked to avoid negotiation where possible, situating this case closer to conventional accordance than the Woodhouses as there were similarities in his tactics employed to those in the low negotiation/low egalitarianism grouping. By distinguishing between states of affairs but maintaining fluidity in each group, we can better compare and contrast these strategies for maintaining the status quo (low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism).

Similarly, when comparing these cases of sustained dissension to those of high egalitarianism insights into the stages of negotiation and what is required for its evolution (and that of egalitarianism) into high levels becomes clearer. The stages of 'unsilencing' and negotiation inception occurred, however, we can see that in Joseph Solomons case this was not received positively and the following stages were left unfulfilled. Although not received in a fashion that could be construed as positive, Theo Woodhouse did engage in negotiation to a higher level than Joseph, and enact some changes in his unpaid division (including negotiating a little more flexibility at work). Such differences, tactics and fundamentally the catalysts or obstacles to higher levels of egalitarianism, can be usefully examined and compared when distinguished along these axes of negotiation and egalitarianism.

Identifying the individual, structural and cultural contexts

Distinguishing typology groups also aids in addressing the different contextual influences on the likelihood, level and nature of negotiation and egalitarianism achieved. Essentially, negotiation and egalitarianism coexist under the particular interplay of contextual factors where the enabling features of each, or the ability of individuals to navigate this interplay may induce a renegotiation. The relationship between these two concepts is mutually reinforcing, with the desire for

egalitarianism born out of perceptions of fairness (identified here as the first stage in a process of egalitarianism under the terms 'consciousness' and 'unsilencing') that only emerged in this thesis following male redundancy. Prior to this change in employment status, there is little indication that any moves towards egalitarianism would have occurred, testifying to the importance of these contextual factors. There were many similarities between the two cases of sustained dissension that were highlighted in Chapter 9, and there is the indication that in cases of male redundancy where dependent children are present and only limited labour market opportunities available, then a renegotiation is most likely. In actual fact, there are a host of factors that influence the outcomes of each couple and it would be problematic to exclude any as the particular interplay of these factors led to each pattern of change. Again, a framework has been developed that distinguishes these factors between individual, structural and cultural contexts, recognising that each may be both enabling and constraining; and it is up to individuals and couples as to how they navigate their particular situational context.

Considering that renegotiation is unlikely where established routines regarding paid and unpaid labour are in effect, we cannot treat the household as operating in a vacuum and the importance of considering this context cannot be understated. The framework consists of factors the respondents themselves cited as being of significant influence to the level and nature of negotiations they engaged in. Given that these respondents have been going through the process, and this does not simply represent a list of pre-conceived, *potential* influences on the sexual division of labour (as within a significant amount of particularly quantitative existing research), this framework for analysis should prove useful for future research studying this phenomenon. It also testifies, along with critiques cited throughout this thesis, that the current consensus in much literature that relative resources are bargained in a cultural context of normative conceptions of gender does not consider a range of relevant influences on shares of paid and unpaid labour. That this consensus is often the departure point for many analyses of the sexual division of labour is hugely problematic, and its limitations need to be more explicitly stated in mainstream research.

Empirical contributions

A number of empirical insights emerged from the data set that are worth revisiting. Looking at the effects of job loss more generally, redundant women and men fared relatively similarly in terms of subsequent employment. The initial desire from *all* was for new full-time employment and each respondent applied for numerous full-time positions whilst serving redundancy notice periods and during phases of unemployment. Testament to the current economic and labour market climate, every respondent reported that they applied for positions they felt were a 'backward step' in terms of pay, skill utilisation and career prospects from prior public sector positions. Indeed, four of the ten interviewees made redundant applied for part-time and various other non-standard positions in the public sector, laying testament to the strength of occupational identity cited throughout the study, and the issues with sector-specific skills (particularly regarding teaching) and a lack of relevant private sector opportunities.

Of the redundant five women and five men, two of each were in new full-time (lower-paid and what was generally described as lower 'quality') roles by the end of the study. Two women (Gemma and Josephine) and one man (Colin) were employed on zero hour contracts; the remaining female respondent (Amanda) was employed part-time whilst Mike was self-employed and Chris became the primary carer in his family. It would have been plausible at the start, had we been aware that three cases of male redundancy resulted in high egalitarianism, to hypothesise that the three cases of male non-standard employment resulted in these cases of egalitarianism. However, it was actually only two of these cases and Carl who found new full-time employment – not Colin employed on a zero-hour contract - due to the interplay of contextual factors as highlighted throughout Chapter 9. For the women, redundancy did not signal much change towards egalitarianism in behaviour (or attitude – given that almost all purported egalitarian views and this remained constant) across the five cases, with increases in time spent on unpaid labour by all following job loss, and male decreases (despite already significantly lower contributions) in all cases except Theo, who averaged three and a half hours more per week by the end of the study (see Table 4).

Meanwhile, men were more willing than anticipated to enact significant change in the sexual division of labour following their own redundancy (three in five cases). The current literature offers mixed findings regarding attitudinal or behavioural changes of men suffering job loss, which was the case here, however research tends to demonstrate that such significant familial role change and moves towards high levels of egalitarianism are rare. With the focus on *why* the responses of couples differed in cases of male redundancy – something that is not always explicated in existing research – it has been possible to account for the factors determining the nature and extent of renegotiations. Where there is the greater imperative for men to increase their shares of unpaid labour, typically created by the pressures of dependent children (both in terms of time and financial expenditure) and a labour market characterised by reduced full-time employment opportunities, the desire to contribute more by way of housework and caring is increasingly likely to develop.

There was no evidence from the data that female assertiveness is a primary factor for such changes. Female partners were not as assertive as anticipated given that only two women initiated negotiation - although the male initiation in three cases of redundancy will have negated this outcome to an extent. Where male consciousness provided the foundation for negotiation inception high levels of egalitarianism were achieved, which was not so in the two cases of female assertiveness. The obvious recurring theme here was that male willingness to advocate change is key in the likelihood of moves towards greater egalitarianism, as in each case pre-redundancy they performed disproportionately lower shares of unpaid (and overall) labour. That each case represented a state of conventional accordance pre-redundancy is a significant finding in itself, particularly given that all bar one respondent espoused egalitarian attitudes. It is plausible that maintaining the status quo – by avoiding discussions and undertaking fewer duties around the house – is much easier than evoking change, a proposition suggested by both Amanda and Josephine in particular.

Chapter 8 examined this, specifically the disjuncture between these behaviours and purported attitudes of equity, which is not fully explicated in empirical literature. The suggestions from these findings are that women feel a greater sense of moral obligation to perform unpaid labour, which has been witnessed elsewhere (e.g. Folbre, 1994). Concerns over the standard of housework and caring if not conducted

themselves, and the intrinsic value gained from the way unpaid labour strengthened their relationships with other household members, proved to be a key reason for the general female lack of assertiveness. This circumstance creates support for assertions in the literature (e.g. Babcock and Laschever, 2009; Small et al., 2007) that women are often less positively disposed towards negotiation (some respondents feeling apprehensive about initiating negotiation) and the setting of lower goals (adoption of 'helping' terminology as opposed to more equal ownership and practical undertaking of unpaid duties). This enabled men in cases of conventional accordance to maintain lower shares of housework and caring without actually having to engage in explicit negotiation, notably the arguments and evasive actions characterising those in a state of sustained dissension. Until men undergo a period of consciousness and are committed enough to the negotiation process and egalitarianism as the end goal, it is unlikely that the continued practical undertaking of new tasks will occur so that new competencies and ultimately identity change will surface.

It is possible that the current economic climate is creating more households that contain a redundant male and a full-time employed female partner, which like here, may act as the catalyst for the (re)negotiation process outlined. However, the fact remains that women are far from immune to the structural changes that have taken place and continue to influence the working options available to each individual. In the cases of female redundancy here it is clear that many families revert back to more conventional divisions of labour; enact little change where female unemployment is temporary; and even face a more unequal division of labour once back in employment – when that acquired is not on a full-time basis, despite all but one respondent stating a desire for egalitarianism in paid and unpaid labour. The suggestion here is that there is considerable use in the concept of 'pragmatic egalitarianism', a term that is actually sparsely used in the literature. Referring back to points made in Chapter 8, couples seemed to satisfy themselves that they are 'modern' unconventional couples purely by both partners taking an active role in paid and unpaid labour (to often very different extents). The fact that 'fair' contributions did not necessarily translate as 'equal' contributions across the sample testifies that (often implicitly) individuals have not fully abandoned traditional conceptions of gender – with obvious implications for the extent of egalitarianism and any moves away from conventional accordance.

Implications for future research

There are a number of implications for future research based on the findings of this thesis. The current context provides researchers with the opportunity to explore households at a time when many of the established routines regarding paid and unpaid labour will have been unsettled by changes in employment status and access to familial supports from the state. This thesis explored cases of public sector redundancy specifically, because the disproportionately high female workforce typically have access to family-friendly work policies, the gender pay gap is lower than in the private sector, and sector-specific skills such as in teaching and nursing. Researchers can build on the empirical findings here to see, on a larger scale, if austerity is having an unfavourable impact on women who have suffered job loss. The opportunities for investigating egalitarianism in the sexual division of labour extend far beyond public sector redundancy to consider changes in all manner of households given the ever increasing number of men involuntarily employed on part-time, temporary, zero-hour contracts and so forth where there may have been a renegotiation of labour with their partners.

Significantly, as one of the key arguments to emerge from this thesis, with many households affected by job loss and cuts to public spending researchers have the opportunity to explore the *negotiation process itself* at a time when this may be more illuminated. Respondents will be better positioned to reflect on and account for a process they have actively engaged in rather than attempting to discern how long established routines come into being. This begins by critically engaging with 'negotiation' in this context at a conceptual level, in order to discern exactly *how* couples decide (or do not decide) how paid and unpaid labour will be divided amongst themselves. The argument here is that the negotiation process should be central in analyses, with the methodological implication that individuals and couples are asked directly what this process entailed, or indeed observe the process unfold if possible.

The objective is for future research to take this approach rather than purely rely on, or test, an amalgamation of the bargaining and gender perspectives – certainly when these approaches are often adopted uncritically. In terms of explicit negotiations, future research could actually observe interactions between partners about how their

paid and unpaid labour is to be divided, rather than using respondent reflections on the process to purely inform our understanding of it. Conversation analyses could also offer more in-depth findings on these found here. For example, those in a state of sustained dissension were found to argue, interrupt and shout, and there is considerable scope to develop a more nuanced understanding of when this is likely to occur; how it can potentially be avoided; and thus how conflictual negotiations can become more constructive – which may increase the likelihood of egalitarianism in such cases. Regarding implicit negotiations, given the importance attributed to them across the study in determining the pattern of change for each couples and the difficulty respondents had in articulating exactly what these entailed, this offers a fruitful avenue for future research in developing a clearer understanding of this aspect of negotiation.

The second implication is that, with a clearer and more comprehensive conception of negotiation, the somewhat neglected relationship between this process and egalitarianism can be explored. The typology here potentially offers a starting point, as a useful conceptual tool, for theorising about this relationship and the types of negotiation (explicit, implicit, etc.) and tactics individuals employ when low to high levels of both negotiation and egalitarianism are in effect. There is of course considerable scope for future research to engage with this typology, including the appropriateness of the classifications advanced.

Similarly, the stages in the negotiation process identified here would benefit from clarification and critical interest from further, more large-scale research. Indeed, a number of these stages lend support and have added to assertions elsewhere in the literature, for example the importance of unsilencing as a pre-cursor to negotiation (Benjamin, 2003); the development of new competencies (Knudson and Mahoney, 2005); or alternatively the key role played by 'silent' bargains (Strauss, 1978) where overt discussions do not take place between partners. New insights from future research could include the addition of new, relevant stages to the negotiation process outlined here.

The point has been raised already that cases of sustained dissension may become less conflictual: as time goes on and the respective circumstances of each change (such as Amanda or Josephine's acquisition of full-time employment). Based on the data here

it was not possible to formulate 'conflict resolution' as a stage in the negotiation process because such a stage had not emerged, yet other studies exploring negotiation and egalitarianism may witness and be in a position to theorise about such a process. Hypothesising for the moment, such a stage may fit into the currently propagated process like so:

Figure 8. Potential additional stages in the negotiation process
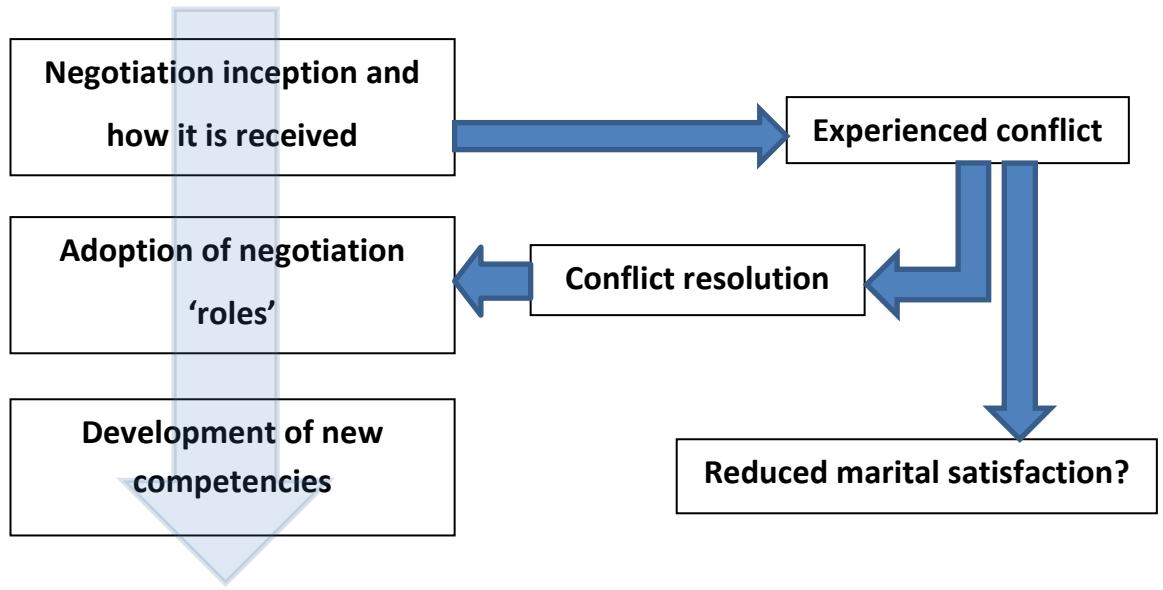
Reduced marital satisfaction has been added to this process where conflict between partners has not been resolved just to demonstrate the possible additional aspects of this negotiation process that future research may uncover, depending upon the scale and breadth of focus. Amanda and Josephine certainly expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation each found themselves in, yet it was beyond the time-frame and scope of the interview questions to gauge data on marital satisfaction.

A longer timeframe for the research stage may have revealed this for the two couples in sustained dissension, or even the movement of the Bardsleys from conventional accordance into sustained dissension and potentially beyond, given Gemma's assertions that she would look to evoke change in the not-too-distant future. More longitudinal studies would obviously improve our knowledge of how couples can transcend boundaries over time, including those in a state of negotiated

egalitarianism to perfunctory egalitarianism as the high level of explicit negotiations gradually become routine and subject to more implicit means of negotiation.

Many of these points extend to the typology itself, as research exploring the links between negotiation and egalitarianism may reveal new insights and nuances in this relationship to contribute with those found here. Future studies may find different processes, tactics employed by individuals and couples in each group, and the factors determining the likelihood and extent of negotiation and egalitarianism to those found here, or indeed affirm them but offer new or modified aspects to the characteristics of each group purported in this thesis. A significant proportion of the empirical findings relate to these processes, such as male redundancy and negotiation initiation being the catalyst for moves towards high levels of egalitarianism. Other studies may find the greater incidence of female assertiveness sparking moves from conventional accordance to sustained dissension on to negotiated egalitarianism, or even straight to the latter typology group. Having not been the case for these ten couples it has not been possible to comprehensively theorise on this issue, yet research suggests that this is the most probable cause of a renegotiation and therefore offers opportunities for future studies to explore such incidences.

Finally, regarding the prevalence and importance of individual, structural and cultural factors that influence the likelihood and extent of both egalitarianism and negotiation emerging, future research can offer numerous insights. Through the purposive sampling of various groups, such as specific ethnic groups, age categories, and so forth it will become clearer which groups are most likely to engage in high and low levels of negotiation and egalitarianism, and exactly when each is most likely for the different groupings. This extends to those groups outside of the individual characteristics researched in this thesis such as same-sex couples. Similarly, large-scale research that does not target specific samples but all demographic groups would contribute to the conceptual framework developed here in creating a better understanding of the *intersection* of the factors outlined in Chapter 9 that influence the likelihood of negotiation and egalitarianism.

Final concluding remarks

As a final means of conclusion, it is worth reiterating that this thesis represents a unique and original exploration into what negotiation means in the context of sexual divisions of labour conceptually, and its relationship with egalitarianism. It challenges researchers to critically engage with negotiation, in terms of what this process entails and when and how egalitarianism is most likely to emerge as couples divide their paid and unpaid labour responsibilities. The importance of making negotiation at the interactional level central to our analytical focus is testified as a key argument to emerge from this thesis, as this is ultimately the mechanism whereby conventional divisions can be changed or are indeed sustained. Through examination of the negotiation process it has been possible to identify the different patterns of change in egalitarianism that occur (low to high levels).

These different patterns of change have been distinguished in a typology that denotes the level of negotiation and egalitarianism that couples are engaging in at a particular time. Within each typology group couples were found to display varying degrees of assertiveness to evoke change in their divisions of labour, a range of tactics when looking to engage in high or low levels of negotiation, and ultimately fulfilment of different stages in the negotiation process outlined in this thesis. Negotiations may be largely explicit or implicit in nature, and couples may require high levels of explicit negotiation to reach a state of egalitarianism (negotiated egalitarianism). In contrast they may only require low levels of negotiation to achieve high levels of egalitarianism (perfunctory egalitarianism), or alternatively high levels of explicit and implicit negotiation that do not result in significant levels of egalitarianism (sustained dissension). By distinguishing between these different groups it has been possible to outline many of these similarities and differences both within and between the four matrix quadrants.

An important element in this analysis and of the relationship between negotiation and egalitarianism is the context promoting and shaping the prospects of each. The complex interplay of a vast array of factors – separated for analytical usefulness here into individual, structural and cultural contexts cannot be neglected when analysing the incidence of negotiation or egalitarianism, and these proved to be key in influencing the outcomes in each case. Indeed, negotiation and egalitarianism were

found only to coexist where the particular interplay of contextual factors fostered consciousness – an aspect of egalitarianism that also forms the first stage in a process of negotiation. Of course, individuals respond to the intersection of these contexts and adjust their aspirations regarding paid and unpaid labour (and negotiate) accordingly.

By addressing the research questions designed specifically to address each aspect considered important in this relationship, a much clearer conception of the negotiation process and how couples enact egalitarianism has emerged. That future research can follow this lead and move beyond the existing theories that attempt (it has been argued unconvincingly) to account for sexual divisions of labour, this harbours important theoretical and practical implications. Returning to a point made in the very first introductory paragraph to this thesis, decisions regarding paid and unpaid labour constitute one of the fundamental ways in which our lives are organised. This thesis has focused on the nature and types of this decision-making process in a clear and more explicit fashion than is offered in existing research. Current labour market trends and reductions in welfare provision pose an increasingly interesting dynamic for how couples divide paid and unpaid labour, presenting the perfect opportunity to push these debates forward.

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Appendix 1: Research information sheets

Research Information

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
Leeds University Business School

Research Focus

The effects of involuntary redundancy from the public sector on paid and unpaid work contributions amongst dual-earning couples.

Invitation

I would like to invite you to participate in a study, but before deciding it is important that you understand what the aims of this research are and exactly what would be expected of you as a participant. Please take time to consider the following information, discuss it with your partner and feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding any aspect of the research.

The Study

In the current post-recession period the public sector continues to undergo restructuring with enduring implications for the working arrangements of its employees. The aim of this study is to capture the experiences of dual-earning couples where one partner has experienced involuntary redundancy from the public sector. Areas of interest include subsequent employment decisions, changes in the amount of unpaid work undertaken (housework, childcare, and so forth), and feelings towards job opportunities in the contemporary labour market. Of particular interest to the research is how the responses of couples where the male partner has been affected by employment change compare to those where the female partner has been affected. This will involve semi-structured interviews with individuals and their partners as the study commences in the coming weeks and again six months after this discussion takes place to see the outcome of these responses. Participants will be encouraged to keep a diary during this time to record any actions (applications for jobs for example) and feelings between the interviews which may be relevant or useful to the research, however this is completely optional.

What is Expected of Participants

The process will begin with the initial interview where the format consists largely of open-ended questions and participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences in

the early stages of this employment change. Spouses will be asked similar questions in order to gain both perspectives on the evolving situation. The second interview at the end of the six month period will offer an interesting insight into whether and how these attitudes have changed in light of the changing circumstances. Of course how behaviours have changed (the number of paid hours worked, etc.) and how the everyday routine interactions with partners have been affected is equally as pertinent to the research. The location of interviews can be decided once participants have formally agreed to take part. For more information and to express an interest in partaking in the study please refer to the contact details below.

Commitment to Confidentiality and Anonymity

All of the information collected about participants during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that individuals will not be identifiable in the report. Data will also be stored securely, remaining inaccessible to anyone other than myself.

Potential Benefits of Participation

One benefit of participation is the opportunity to contribute to research which will provide useful insights into people's experiences during what may be a difficult time, with significant contemporary value. The research is further attempting to advance our knowledge of how gendered behaviours and attitudes potentially change in response to a change in employment status. Gender continues to be a source of inequality in our lives and particularly in the labour market, so participants may be motivated to partake in this effort to improve our knowledge in this research area. Participants may also find personal value in keeping a diary, for example as a medium to record any steps taken to find new employment or as an outlet for their feelings during this significant life event.

Contact Details for Further Information/Acceptance into Study:

Mr Reece Garcia, PhD researcher at Leeds University Business School

Telephone: 07821675944

Email Address: bn09rjg@leeds.ac.uk

About the Researcher

I am a postgraduate researcher who is interested in gender inequality and the contemporary restructuring of the public sector during this period of austerity. I have recently been involved in research commissioned by the Trades Union Congress relating to union learning initiatives and will soon be participating in an exploration of current welfare-to-work schemes for the long-term unemployed.

Thank you

Researcher: Mr Reece Garcia

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet which explains the research cited above, and that I have had the opportunity to both ask questions about the study and consider at length whether I wish to participate or not.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.

3. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential and I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the resulting report from the research.

4. I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

Participant's name: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

Researcher's name:_____ Date:_____ Signature:_____

Appendix 2: Interview Guides

(First interview)

Can you tell me about the paid working arrangement in your household prior to redundancy?

- ☐ Past employment history (beginning with level at which educated to)
- ☐ Typical working week: total number of hours, propensity for overtime/flexibility
- ☐ Encourage a relative perspective (to partner's employment situation)

What have been the initial effects of redundancy on your respective employment participations?

- ☐ Subsequent employment decisions
- ☐ Touch upon motivations to work if not already discussed
- ☐ Perceptions of current labour market opportunities
- ☐ Effects on non-redundant partner (increased hours? Etc.)
- ☐ Any insight on emotional impact of redundancy (potential link to material effects, e.g. loss of earnings; may vary depending on motivations to work cited above)

Can you tell me about how unpaid working responsibilities are managed in your household; so how you fulfil the requirements of childcare, housework, and so forth?

- ☐ Who takes the lead/any explicit ownership of duties?
- ☐ Typical (approximate) times spent, specific tasks engaged in

Can you elaborate on how these shares have changed, if at all, in light of the redundancy?

- ☐ Changes in individual contributions
- ☐ Changes in 'ownership'?

How was the original arrangement regarding paid and unpaid work shares established? And similarly any changes that have since occurred.

- ☐ Any explicit negotiation
- ☐ What does negotiation mean to you? Can you describe it? Any steps taken? Something that was talked about? Planning?
- ☐ Product of trade-offs (any specifically?) and difficult decision-making?
- ☐ Who led discussions

  ☐ Efforts (and views!) of partners complementary?

  ☐ Happy with outcome?

Reflecting on this process, what were the key factors determining shares of paid and unpaid work?

  ☐ Elaborate on factors cited

  ☐ Probe for how key factors cited in literature are: financial necessity

                  Childcare

                  Individual motivations

                  Relative resources

                  Social policy?

How do you perceive the fairness of you and your partner's paid and unpaid working contributions?

  ▪ Has this changed during your response to the redundancy?

  ▪ Criteria used to determine fairness (time available etc.?)

  ▪ How an unequal division is justified

I want to talk a little bit about your views on gender and family roles. How would you describe your views on men and women's functions in the family, regarding paid employment and caring responsibilities?

  ☐ More 'naturally' suited to different roles?

  ☐ Male breadwinner ideology acknowledged/propagated? *(link to partners loss of earner status etc. depending upon situation)*

  ☐ Feel behaviours are informed by traditional conventions?

  ☐ Perceptions of partner's attitudes

Have you found these views conflicted or indeed modified in light of the recent change in circumstance?

(Tailor to situation, e.g. if now relying on partner's sole income, taking primary responsibility for unpaid labour, and so on).

(Second Interview)

Since the last interview have there been any changes in the paid employment status of either yourself or your partner?

  ☐ Type of contract

- Hours worked
- Earnings relative to previous level

Since the last interview have there been any changes in the unpaid working arrangements in your household?

- Times
- Specific tasks
- Change in ownership?

What factors have been salient in determining these paid and unpaid working endeavours?

- Similar probes to last interview after they offer own factors (finances, childcare, etc.)

How do you feel, and perceive your partner to feel, about these changes?

- Emotionally
- Change in identity?
- Positives/negatives of modified familial role

How was the process been managed then: in terms of continuing to meet these demands whilst changes, in employment status or otherwise, have occurred?

- Explicit negotiation? (describe this process – what does negotiation mean to you?)
- Spoken about? Planning? Complementary roles?
- Adapting as needed? (in what ways? What did this involve?)
- Partners equally shared burden?
- Any particular difficulties in adapting to new role(s)? (learning parenting techniques etc.)

How would you describe your feelings towards gender roles with regards to paid employment and unpaid labour after your recent experiences, and do you feel it has changed since we last spoke?

(Tailor to situation depending upon specific changes in familial role and work responsibilities).

Appendix 3: Pre-interview completion sheet (sample demographics)

Name _____

Age category (<20 years; 20-29 years;
30-39 years; 40-49 years; 50-59 years; 60<) _____

Years married _____

Number of children (dependent and
non-dependent) _____

Place of residence _____

Ethnicity (please specify e.g. white; Black;
Asian and country of descent) _____

Occupation pre-redundancy (if applicable)
_____

Occupation at present (including employment
arrangement e.g. full-time, term-time, etc.) _____

**Annual (£) household salary band
(pre-redundancy and at present)**
(e.g. <15,000; 15,000-20,000;
20,000-25,000; 25,000-30,000…) _____

Appendix 4: Interview details

First interviews

Ref	Date	Time	Place	Length (minutes)
Mike Warriner	15-Aug-13	3pm	Home	52
Dawn Warriner	15-Aug-13	4pm	Home	57
Gemma Bardsley	17-Aug-13	11am	Home	50
Jay Bardsley	17-Aug-13	12am	Home	46
Alex Murray	18-Aug-13	1pm	Home	49
Danielle Murray	18-Aug-13	2pm	Home	51
Amanda Solomon	21-Aug-13	6pm	Home	64
Joseph Solomon	21-Aug-13	7pm	Home	48
Patricia Carroll	27-Aug-13	5:30pm	Home	58
Gerard Carroll	27-Aug-13	6:30pm	Home	45
Carl Meehan	10-Sep-13	7pm	Home	57
Lorraine Meehan	10-Sep-13	8pm	Home	51
Chris Denham	14-Sep-13	10:30am	Home	54
Lisa Denham	14-Sep-13	11:30am	Home	55
Josephine Woodhouse	21-Sep-13	4pm	Home	49
Theo Woodhouse	21-Sep-13	5pm	Home	41
Colin Singleton	24-Sep-13	8pm	Home	48
Kathleen Singleton	24-Sep-13	9pm	Home	50
Diane Legg	26-Sep-13	12pm	Home	55
Charles Legg	26-Sep-13	1pm	Home	49

Second interviews

Ref	Date	Time	Place	Length (minutes)
Dawn Warriner	18-Feb-14	7:30pm	Home	67
Mike Warriner	18-Feb-14	8:45pm	Home	61
Patricia Carroll	22-Feb-14	11am	Home	46
Gerard Carroll	22-Feb-14	12am	Home	42
Gemma Bardsley	22-Feb-14	4pm	Home	53
Jay Bardsley	22-Feb-14	5pm	Home	40
Josephine Woodhouse	23-Feb-14	6pm	Home	59
Theo Woodhouse	23-Feb-14	7:05pm	Home	52
Charles Legg	01-Mar-14	10:30am	Home	41
Diane Legg	01-Mar-14	11:30am	Home	44
Lorraine Meehan	01-Mar-14	3:30pm	Home	57
Carl Meehan	01-Mar-14	4:35pm	Home	62
Chris Denham	08-Mar-14	2pm	Home	60
Lisa Denham	08-Mar-14	3:05pm	Home	63
Alex Murray	09-Mar-14	12:30pm	Home	55
Danielle Murray	09-Mar-14	1:30pm	Home	50
Amanda Solomon	09-Mar-14	3pm	Home	66
Joseph Solomon	09-Mar-14	4pm	Home	58
Kathleen Singleton	13-Mar-14	7:30pm	Home	45
Colin Singleton	13-Mar-14	8:30pm	Home	42