

2004

# THE DISTRIBUTION OF ATTITUDINAL ATTACHMENT TO THE MALE BREADWINNER ROLE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF THE PLYMOUTH TRAVEL-TO-WORK AREA

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/2172>

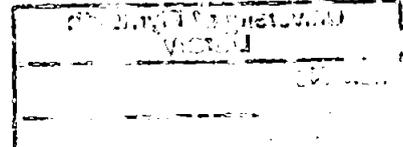
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<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/3895>

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TO THE MALE BREADWINNER ROLE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY  
OF THE PLYMOUTH TRAVEL-TO-WORK AREA**

by

**SUZANNE E. CHAMBERLAIN**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Department of Sociology  
Faculty of Human Sciences

March 2004

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Author: Suzanne E. Chamberlain

Title: The distribution of attitudinal attachment to the male breadwinner role: A quantitative study of the Plymouth travel-to-work area.

### **Abstract**

This thesis is concerned with men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role. A representative sample of 330 men, aged between 17 and 84, and drawn from the Plymouth Travel-To-Work Area, participated in the study by completing a postal questionnaire. The aim of the study was to explore attachment to the breadwinner role, and to discover if greater or lesser attachment exists among particular socio-demographic or socio-economic clusters. The quantitative approach and the application of a random sample distinguish this study from those in the literature concerned with 'men and masculinities'.

The study applies an empirical perspective to overview the trajectory of the breadwinner family in Britain from the early industrial to the contemporary period. It is argued that although there have been peaks and troughs in the extent to which British families have been financially supported by a sole male provider, the breadwinner role continues to be an important ideological tool. It is suggested that the 'male as provider' doctrine shapes the internal dynamics of various familial arrangements.

Only a handful of men are found to support a strict gender-coded division of labour in the household and labour market. The respondent's age is the strongest explanatory factor. Among those demonstrating lesser attachment, attitudes towards the breadwinner role are noted to be contextual and inconsistent. Greater support is also found for the traditional female role than the male role. It is argued that these findings represent new contributions to the debates. They are applied to challenge claims that the growth of the 'dual-earner' family has diminished the relevance of the breadwinner role in contemporary society. In

doing so, this study concludes that many men maintain a dominant position in various family types, and a gendered distribution of privilege and inequality continues to shape men's and women's respective experiences of 'the family'.

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## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the completion of this thesis:

My supervisors Dr Kevin Meethan, Dr Alison Anderson and Professor Geoff Payne, who have been at all times approachable, generous, encouraging and patient. Their knowledge and constructive criticism have been invaluable.

Dr Joan Chandler and Professor David Mason for funding for this project. I will always be thankful for this amazing opportunity.

The 356 men who participated in this research. I am very grateful for the time and effort given to completing interviews and questionnaires, and for making this study possible.

Dr Allan Jones for his advice on the collection and application of spatially-aggregated data.

Dr Alison Green, Carole Sutton and Dr Chris Ricketts for their expert advice on statistical issues.

Dr Judy Payne for kindly sharing with me deprivation data for the Plymouth area.

The 1998 cohort of PhD students in the Dept of Sociology, all of whom have been a great source of encouragement and support.

My employer the Peninsula Medical School, and in particular Dr Judy Searle, for supporting me through the final stages of this project.

My parents, grandparents and brother for being supportive and encouraging throughout this long process. Special thanks to my parents for helping me with many practical matters.

Most of all I thank my daughter, Jade. Wise beyond her years, Jade has given me some of the best advice I have ever had. Her unending love, support, encouragement, laughter, and belief in me made the completion of this project possible and worthwhile.

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award. I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly acknowledged.

This study was financed by a studentship from the Department of Sociology, University of Plymouth.

A programme of advanced research training was undertaken during the registration period. The author completed a Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Research, and a Centre for Applied Social Survey course on 'Design and administration of postal and self-completion questionnaires'.

The following conferences were attended:

British Sociological Association Annual Conference, Glasgow, 1999.

International Sociological Association Annual Conference, Athens, 1999 (Presented paper 'Technology, unemployment and female labour market participation in the UK: Displacing the male in the workforce and home?').

Gender, Work, Space and Time Conference, Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, New York, 2001 (Presented paper 'Exploring male attitudes towards the breadwinner role').

Re-thinking Gender, Work and Organisation Conference, University of Keele, 2001 (Presented paper 'Male Attitudes towards the Breadwinner Role').

Signed..... *S. Chebi* .....

Date..... *20-9-04* .....

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

This project is a quantitative study of male attitudes towards the 'breadwinner' role and the concept of a gender-coded division of labour between men and women more generally. Data drawn from a representative sample of the Plymouth Travel-to-Work Area (TTWA) are applied to investigate attitudinal similarities and differences. The main aim of the project is to identify whether there are socio-economic or demographic patterns in the distribution of attitudinal attachment to, or rejection of the breadwinner role in the male population.

The project's framework and rationale rely heavily on two bodies of literature. Firstly, much reference is made to empirical work that concerns (the relationships between) macro changes in the UK economy and labour market, and, at a micro level, trends in household composition, internal organisation, and men's position in the family, labour market and gender-discrimination debates. Secondly, the growing body of literature concerned with theorising men and masculinities is used to clarify concepts and position the breadwinner role in the broader context of a hegemonic form of masculinity.

The breadwinner role is particularly interesting and troublesome at this time. On the one hand, breadwinner ideology, within the hegemonic form of masculinity and public discourse, continues to be prevalent and influential. On the other, however, there is a diminished socio-cultural and/or economic propensity for couples to operate a traditional breadwinner/housewife division of labour. This paradox is argued to underlie a supposed crisis in masculinity, or the male role, as men attempt to reconcile an idealised male role with their own, perhaps divergent, self-narratives and realities. A secondary aim of this

project is to examine whether any such tension, between belief and practice, exists within the members of the sample.

Breadwinner ideology is argued to have emerged during the UK's period of industrialism (e.g. Connell, 1995; Creighton, 1996; Janssens, 1997). A superior earning power and the heavy manual nature of much industrial work fuelled the notion that men had *a priori* attachments to work and the public sphere (Connell, 1995; Speakman and Marchington, 1999). The invisibility of much female employment and women's status as a reserve army of labour also served to reinforce patriarchal organisation of the home and a gendered division of labour between the public and private sectors (e.g. Bernard, 1981; Connell, 1993). It is claimed that over time, paid work and the provider role became powerful sources of masculine power, identity and status for many men (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Connell, 1995).

The suggested socio-cultural dependence on paid work appears to be at the material basis of a supposed crisis in masculinity, or more accurately the male role. Today, the justification for the breadwinner role and men's *a priori* attachment to work is arguably less clear-cut. Job opportunities requiring physical strength have diminished as part of the loss of the UK's industrial base. While men still earn on average more than women, the purchasing power of the male wage has declined over time, and fewer couple families are able to, or choose to rely on a sole male income (Goode *et al*, 1998; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994).

Men, and in particular younger men, are more likely to cite the importance of their (future) roles as husbands and fathers, as opposed to the roles of workers or breadwinners (e.g. Jowell *et al*, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Stringer and Robinson, 1993). In practice however, breadwinner ideology appears to remain a powerful force in shaping men's

relationships with the labour market, women and the family, and their sense of masculine identity. Failure to achieve what men define as their rightful roles in the family, or to secure what is considered to be 'proper work' or 'men's work', has been shown to have detrimental impacts on the individual's sense of masculinity, their social and emotional well-being and, ultimately, their family relations (e.g. Connell, 1995; McGiveny, 1999; McKee and Bell, 1985; Young, 1996).

The traditional male role and the hegemonic form of heterosexual masculinity centre upon participation in paid work and earning a family income, and the status and power this brings within the family and community. This conception of the male as provider – and, reciprocally, the female as carer – also underpins much UK social policy and the workings of the welfare state. However, few couple families now operate a traditional division of labour with a sole, male provider and a female carer. Instead families are increasingly polarised between those that have a concentration of work, with two or more earners, and those with no earners at all (e.g. Crompton and Harris, 1999; Harkness *et al*, 1994; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994; Pahl, 1983). It is noted that there are relatively few breadwinner families between these two extremes (e.g. Harkness *et al*, 1994; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). This points to a considerable mismatch between the ideological importance of the breadwinner role and its empirical significance within British couple families. Arguably, public discourses surrounding masculinity and household organisation have not kept pace with socio-cultural and economic developments that have reduced the applicability of the 'male as provider' doctrine. In sociology, however, new discourses have emerged tackling the related issues of alternative, subordinated and marginalised forms of masculinities, the loss of traditional male role models, and absent fathers (e.g. Brod, 1987; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987).

## **Introduction to project aims and method**

In recent years, social attitude studies have found increasing support for more egalitarian roles between couples and within the public and domestic spheres (e.g. Jowell *et al*, 1998; Stringer and Robinson, 1993). Fewer people appear to conceptualise paid and unpaid work according to the gender binary, or to delineate forms of work as either 'male' or 'female'. There is evidently a cultural time-lag between belief and practice though; for example, most women in couple families continue to carry the greater burden for forms of unpaid caring and domestic work, whether they participate in paid work or not (e.g. Speakman and Marchington, 1999).

Parallel to this shift towards egalitarianism (in belief if not practice), the literature suggests that there is increasing disenchantment with the traditional male role among men. Since the 1970s particularly, many (male, but including some female) authors from the USA, UK and northern Europe have argued that the provider role is (emotionally and creatively) constraining and entails many negative outcomes for men (e.g. Brittan, 1989; Dench, 1994; Grønseth, 1972; Kinnunen *et al*, 1996; Messner, 1998; Palme, 1972; Thomas, 1993). There is evidence to suggest that men are increasingly dissatisfied with their lack of involvement in child care particularly during their children's early years, and family life more generally due to the hours spent outside the home in paid work (e.g. Kinnunen *et al*, 1996). However, it has been found that few men would like to increase the time spent in the home by reducing the number of hours in paid work (e.g. Stewart and Swaffield, 1997).

Disenchantment with the traditional male role is argued to be evidenced in the emergence of alternative masculinities. In Britain, the popularist masculinities of the 'New Man' and 'New Lad' have challenged traditional male relations with the family, labour market and earning a sole, family wage (e.g. Bancroft, 1999). However, it appears that it is not so much dissatisfaction with the role itself that is the issue, more that there is increasing

awareness of how precarious paid work is as a basis of masculine status and identity. There is little evidence to suggest that disenchantment is strong among men who perform the breadwinner role; indeed, being a breadwinner entails considerable economic power and privilege within the family. Rather such claims appear to be based on the evidence of men who are unable to fulfil the role. There is a comprehensive body of literature that examines the effects of unemployment and redundancy on men. All reach similar conclusions; that inability to participate in paid work alienates men from their families and other men, and leads to feelings of worthlessness, marginalisation, demoralisation, and a loss of confidence, motivation and self-respect (e.g. Brenner, 1979; Dicks *et al*, 1988; Jahoda, 1982; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Ruxton, 2002; Willott and Griffin, 1997; Young, 1996). It appears that dissatisfaction with the provider role is at its greatest among men whose traditional masculinity identities have been threatened. This suggests that the literature has over-conceptualised any negative aspects of the breadwinner role, and drawn attention further away from male privilege in the family and society.

To date, much of the research in the field of men and masculinities has been of a theoretical nature, exploring the varying conceptions of 'maleness' and heterosexual and homosexual masculinities from various socio-political perspectives (e.g. Connell, 1995; Dench, 1994; Gould, 1974; Hearn, 1996; Kimmel, 1987; Thomas, 1993). The few empirical works have been largely qualitative (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Speakman and Marchington, 1999; Willott and Griffin, 1997), based on secondary data sources (e.g. Goodwin, 1999; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994), or, particularly in USA and Canadian-based research, based upon unrepresentative student samples (e.g. Aube and Koestner, 1995; Bem, 1974; Brannon and Juni, 1984; Brooks-Harris and Heesacker, 1996; Fischer *et al*, 1998; O'Neil *et al*, 1986). Willinger (1993) notes that primary research concerned with male attitudes towards work and family roles has so far attracted little attention. The use of random samples and primary, quantitative data is unusual in this field; apart from large-

scale social attitude surveys, the author has been unable to identify any in the literature. However, this appears necessary, not least to study attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role among men who are, and who are not performing the breadwinner role.

This project represents a case study of the attitudes held by a sample of 330 male residents in the Plymouth Travel-To-Work Area (TTWA) in Devon (see Appendix 1). The principal data collection method was a self-completion postal questionnaire survey. The questionnaire comprised an index of 26 attitudinal items, and standard socio-economic and demographic classification questions (see Appendix 2). A section on parental employment histories was also included. A small number of exploratory semi-structured interviews were conducted prior to the survey to clarify research questions and inform the development of the attitudinal items.

In the light of existing literature and the ideology/practice mismatch outlined above, the survey was designed to investigate:

- 1) the extent to which couple families employ a housewife/breadwinner division of labour;
- 2) the beliefs men of varied socio-economic, demographic and familial circumstances hold about traditional and non-traditional roles in the public and private spheres;
- 3) the distribution and strength of attachment to the hegemonic form of masculinity in relation to paid work and the breadwinner role; and
- 4) the extent of consistency or dissonance between individuals' beliefs about household organisation and their actual means of household organisation.

The questionnaire responses were coded in a quantified form. Univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised in the following way:

Chapter 2 reviews the literature concerned with the rise and later (empirical) decline of the breadwinner family in Britain. Given that the breadwinner family is defined by its relations with the labour market, this chapter situates the rise and fall of this family type within labour market and macro economic trends. The chapter consists of three parts. The first reviews literature concerned with the emergence and spread of the male provider/female carer division of labour in British couple families during the early stages of industrialism. The second part brings the discussion up to date by investigating the impact of deindustrialisation and the rise of a service economy, on the distribution of work in the family and the distribution of family types. Finally, moving away from macro, empirical explanations, the chapter seeks an alternative explanation for the rise and decline of the breadwinner family in the men and masculinities literature. Various definitions of 'masculinity' are overviewed and their potential application to the distribution of work in the family is discussed. Though the 'male role' and 'masculinities' literature are individually fairly well developed, the arguments that have been made to link the two concepts are in fact weak and, at present, underdeveloped. An attempt is made to demonstrate how the two concepts may be allied. It is argued that men who demonstrate attachment to the hegemonic form of masculinity are more likely to view the breadwinner role as appropriate and desirable. The literature review suggests that the breadwinner family has always been of greater ideological than empirical importance, and that this is more marked in the present socio-cultural and economic context. This is challenged on the grounds of some definitional problems.

The third chapter is concerned with the internal dynamics of breadwinner families, and the wider implications to men and women in choosing this division of labour in their own

households. Of particular importance in this chapter is the discussion of how the breadwinner family is experientially different for males and females. The features of the male and female roles are discussed, and the benefits, constraints and inequalities associated with this family type are overviewed in gendered contexts. A secondary aim of this chapter is to define and operationalise the key concepts applied in this study. A discussion of family types is provided, drawing on a theoretical model produced by Crompton (1999) that outlines the various family types that emerge on the basis of the chosen division of labour in the family. The various dimensions and sub-dimensions of the breadwinner role, and how they informed the development of the research instrument are overviewed. The chapter finally reviews the literature concerned with measuring attitudes. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action is applied to demonstrate the relationships between beliefs and behaviours, and the ways in which attitudes can be measured. The conclusion clarifies the terms and definitions to be used throughout the thesis.

The methodology chapter is concerned with the practical and theoretical issues arising from the application of the chosen research method. The case is argued, in epistemological and empirical terms, for the use of the quantitative questionnaire survey, rather than a smaller scale qualitative approach. It is suggested that the chosen approach fits well with the author's realist epistemology, and frees the research, as much as is possible, from the female researcher's potential subjectivities and biases. The construction of the research tool is discussed, including the ways in which it was informed by the literature and the findings of qualitative interviews. This is followed by an overview of its limitations. The chapter then details the two-step sampling frame that was designed to achieve the research aim of securing a sample with a high degree of socio-economic and demographic diversity. Resource-related issues and the difficulties in negotiating access to a male sample are noted as central to the development of the sampling plan. Finally, the reader is introduced

to the geographical context of the study. The chapter concludes by highlighting how the methodology distinguishes this study from the existing literature.

The purpose of the fifth chapter is to introduce the reader to the sample males. Prior to this, the survey response rate is examined, and discussed in relation to the study aim of securing a demographically diverse sample. The larger part of the chapter uses cross-tabulation tables to demonstrate, among other characteristics, the marital, economic and class status of the respondents. Checking the sample's profile against 1991 census data (and 2001 data where available) for the TTWA shows that the sample is not significantly different to the population from which it was drawn. Where appropriate, the characteristics of the sample are discussed in relation to existing work in this field. A high degree of parity is found to exist between the characteristics of this study's sample and those of other British studies. Particularly interesting findings include the nature of the relationship between the respondents' form of household organisation and that of their parents, and the (reported) lack of income dominance among female breadwinners.

Chapter 6 consists of two sections. The first outlines the ways in which the survey data are simplified for ease of statistical analysis and subsequent discussion. The application of factor analysis and conceptual analysis to split the 26 attitudinal items into sub-scales is discussed. The respondents' attitudinal scale scores are then applied to divide the sample between 'traditional', 'non-traditional' and 'intermediate' attitudinal categories. Categorising respondents is noted as fairly common in attitudinal studies. However, the methods used by other authors in this field to make such attitudinal distinctions are criticised as statistically and conceptually unsound, and an alternative method is justified and applied to the sample. The second part of the chapter is concerned with univariate analysis of the patterns of response to each of the attitudinal items. This demonstrates that

within an overall context of rejection of the breadwinner role, the sample shows attachment to the traditional female role.

In Chapter 7, bivariate and multivariate analysis techniques are applied to test the study hypotheses (as outlined in Chapter 4). It is interesting, though somewhat disappointing, that very few statistically significant relationships are found, suggesting that few of the measured variables can be applied to explain the distribution of attitudinal attachment. The literature points to the variables that previously have been associated with strong beliefs in a gendered division of labour, but these relationships are not replicated here. The strongest bivariate relationship is found in regard to the respondent's age. The chapter concludes by outlining the main research findings.

Chapter 8 integrates the literature reviews and findings from the previous three chapters to discuss, firstly, the strength, and secondly the distribution of attachment to the breadwinner role. It is argued that some of the concepts and definitions typically applied in the literature are problematic. Some new interpretations are offered, and it is suggested that, if these are accepted as credible, they have far-reaching implications for the debates on the relevance of the breadwinner role and breadwinner family in contemporary society.

The concluding chapter has two aims. The first is to evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology in achieving the stated research aims. It is suggested that the method, sampling strategy and spatial unit of analysis represent new and seemingly effective means by which to study male attitudes towards family and gender. Indeed, it is argued that the relatively good response rate poses a strong challenge to some claims in the literature that men are disinclined to participate in quantitative research on gender and family-related matters. The second aim of the chapter is to clarify the contributions to knowledge that this study is able to make. These encompass four themes: men's attitudinal attachment to the

breadwinner role, men's alignment with the hegemonic masculinity, the division of waged labour in the family, and the types of 'family' in contemporary British society. Finally, the chapter offers some possibilities for future research.

## Chapter 2

### The rise and fall of the sole male breadwinner family?

#### A review of developments from pre-industrial to post-industrial Britain

This chapter overviews what has arguably been the nineteenth century rise and twentieth century fall of the sole, male breadwinner family type in Britain. Numerous attempts have been made to theorise the spread of this family type, but, on the basis of the evidence provided below, it is evident that a simple, linear or generic account is impossible to achieve. As with most research concerning human phenomena, any proposed trajectory of breadwinner family development is complicated by socio-economic class, age, ethnicity and a number of other sometimes indeterminable variables including, most notably, individual agency.

The chapter is divided into three parts. Part 1 is concerned with the emergence of the breadwinner family around the early nineteenth century. Industrialisation, and concurrent trends in the growth and decline of some economic activities, is identified as a key socio-historical development that impacted on the internal organisation of the 'family'. The framework for this discussion is built on women's experiences of local labour markets during the nineteenth century. Part 2 brings the discussion up to date by focusing on structural trends that have impacted on the number of breadwinner families in Britain from the mid-twentieth century onwards. The theme of industrialism is continued, albeit in the context of deindustrialisation, and is applied to demonstrate the changing composition of the workforce throughout the late twentieth century. Finally, Part 3 attempts to address individual agency in the rise and fall of this family type by introducing the concept of masculinity. It is discussed how the influence of an individual male's sense of masculinity may shape (perceptions of) the division of labour in the household. This moves the chapter from the empirical to theoretical, and from macro influences to the micro.

### **Part 1: Socio-historical explanations for the rise of the breadwinner family**

The advent of modernity and industrialism is often argued to have precipitated the emergence of the privatised nuclear family. Arguably it was a product of the shift away from an agrarian economy, in which the family was an extended, largely self-sustaining unit of production, to the industrial economy in which male participation in, and the ability to earn from the labour market was often a household priority. Instead of subsistence, families of industrial society typically became organised around the everyday reproduction of male labour power (e.g. Janssens, 1997; Seccombe, 1986). The breadwinner family became characterised by, and importantly justified, a socially constructed gendered division of labour in which the male breadwinner occupied the public sphere of paid work and the female was concerned with the tasks associated with the unpaid, private, domestic sphere (Bernard, 1981; Connell, 1995; Janssens, 1997; Land, 1980).

This is a simplified but popular account of the rise of the breadwinner family that attributes the emergence of the breadwinner family to the shift from an agrarian to industrial society. Bernard (1981) suggests for example, that what she terms 'the good provider role' seems to have arisen in the transition from a subsistence to market (especially money) economy that accelerated with the industrial revolution. However, the debates are broad and complex. According to Creighton (1996), any historical discussion of the breadwinner family is complicated by at least 18 factors, all of which are considered to have some role in its development. These factors include class, mechanisation, the interests of men, the wage system, the introduction and growth of domestic ideology, the region, trade, industry and country, and the increasing shortage of jobs throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Creighton's (1996) list of factors does not include internal family processes, male power in the household or individual agency, the list is not exhaustive (see Part 3 of this chapter and Chapter 3 for a discussion of these issues). Inevitably, attempts to chart the rise of the breadwinner family during this period have also been complicated by authors' differing

theoretical frameworks and depth of problem formulation. It is noted, for example, that the literature is heavily weighted in favour of the British experience (Creighton, 1996; Janssens, 1997).

It is evident that while some general patterns may exist, the emergence and spread of this family type in Britain was wholly inconstant; temporally, spatially, occupationally, and at the micro-level of individual families. Some authors suggest that women's exclusion, and men's economic dominance in the public sphere began as early as the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and therefore pre-dates industrialism (Creighton, 1996; Horrell and Humphries, 1997; Janssens, 1997). Horrell and Humphries (1997; 26) suggest, for example, that while many women continued to make significant contributions in some types of families and at certain stages of the family life cycle, some families were dependent upon a sole male wage as early as the latter decades of the eighteenth century. Creighton (1996) similarly claims that wage inequality - the practice of paying women less than men for similar work - was well established before industrialisation. Moreover, while on the outside some families may have been deemed to be of the breadwinner type, internal processes and formal and informal perceptions of what constitutes 'work' complicates any attempt to generalise.

Local norms, cultural ideology, structural assistance and, where applicable, high earnings, are not in themselves grounds on which families have, or have not, organised their households on the housewife/breadwinner division of labour. For example, evidence shows that the families of men who enjoyed relatively high earnings, such as factory workers, were not anymore likely than those of men with low earnings, such as agricultural workers, to adopt the breadwinner division of labour (Horrell and Humphries, 1997, 30). Indeed, Gittins (1982) and Savage (1987) both find that during industrialisation working wives were not necessarily married to the poorest men.

In order to make sense of these variant experiences, considering the development of the male breadwinner family is increasingly, and more effectively, done within a materialist perspective, with reference to 'key groups of actors' (Creighton, 1996). (See Part 3 of this chapter for more discussion of materialism). Creighton (1996) does not define the membership basis of such groups, but it may be surmised that groups are defined by affiliation to the societal strata or occupation of interest. Given that many accounts of the breadwinner family have adopted socio-economically and sometimes historically-broad discursive approaches, Creighton's (1996) proposal is sensible. This study applies Savage's (1987) framework of three broad types of local labour markets in which women participated in the early industrial period. This is preferred over other frameworks (such as Secombe's (1986) industry-based discussion) as it centralises the position of women. And it is evident from a review of the literature that it is with reference to the experiences of women that we get a direct and tangible impression of the degree to which, and reasons why, families did or did not adopt the breadwinner model.

Savage (1987) provides a useful summary of the broad employment patterns that were experienced by women in the nineteenth century. The typology is also useful for highlighting how the emergence of the breadwinner role was occupationally and regionally disparate. Savage (1987) identifies three types of local labour markets:

1. Gender segregated, women excluded;
2. Unsegregated;
3. Strongly gender segregated with high female participation rates.

Each of these labour markets is discussed in turn. The Plymouth TTWA spans the Devon/Cornwall divide, encompassing West Devon, the South Hams, Plymouth city and the Caradon district in Cornwall. In the discussion below, the historic divisions of labour in

Plymouth (and Devon more widely) and Cornwall are noted to be aligned with strongly gender segregated labour markets with high rates of female participation.

### **Local labour markets 1: Gender segregated, women excluded.**

In areas built around a core heavy industry, such as mining or ship building, there was typically little paid employment for married and unmarried women. This created a gender division between waged work and non-waged work, and largely confined women to work centred in the home. Savage (1987) suggests that in such areas women were in a position of considerable economic dependence, and it was likely that many families were of the breadwinner type. Rather than being the product of active choice however, this family type appears to have emerged on the back of women's exclusion from the local labour market.

The introduction of the Coal Mines Act of 1842 made it illegal for women to work underground and severely restricted the opportunities available to married and unmarried women to participate in paid work in the local area (see below for a discussion of women's paid work participation in Cornwall's metaliferous mining areas). In a much later discussion of a typical mining community Dennis *et al* (1969, 182) found that within the local labour market the scarcity of non-mining jobs meant that the 4,826 women of working age were eligible to apply for just 196 jobs.

During the early stages of industrialism the curtailing of self-provisioning opportunities (see below) also contributed to women's economic dependence, and men's economic dominance in the labour market and home. Humphries (1977) suggests that the exclusion of women and young children from the mines was viewed as an indirect means of regularising the men's work habits by emphasising the importance of their new

breadwinner responsibilities<sup>1</sup>. Seccombe (1986, 64) claims that once mining families adjusted to living on a sole income, they became amongst the most ardent supporters of the breadwinner family. However, this appears biased in favour of the male perspective as Dennis *et al* (1969) later found that wives of coal miners felt oppressed by their dependence on the male wage and the accompanying organisation of the household around the male job.

The curtailing of women's opportunities to make economic contributions to the household economy, and the elevation in stature of the male wage throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, were also dependent on the privatisation of rural resources and the enclosure movement. Prior to the enclosure movement and privatisation of land, women would often gather foodstuffs and firewood, grow potatoes, glean<sup>2</sup>, and/or keep a pig or cow (Horrell and Humphries, 1997, 42). These formed essential contributions to the household (Horrell and Humphries, 1997, 42). However, when privatisation occurred (and with the introduction of compulsory schooling in 1880 and the loss of paid work and self-provisioning undertaken by children) families had to adjust to relying on money income and the ability of the male to earn the sole, or chief family wage (Seccombe, 1986, 67).

Seccombe (1986, 68) suggests that giving up 'an exhausting and debilitating' dual burden of work was a relief for many women. Pinchbeck (1930) similarly claimed that women could only benefit by withdrawing from the labour market as they would have increased time to complete family and household tasks. However, many married and unmarried women were forced out of their occupations through protective legislation or intimidation and harassment by union members who sought to protect the interests of the male

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<sup>1</sup> The arduous and dangerous nature of employment in the mines meant that work attendance was often non-regular (Denis *et al*, 1969; Humphries, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Gleaning refers to the practice of collecting the useful remnants of a crop after harvesting. Horrell and Humphries (1997, 43) suggest this was mostly confined to low-wage agricultural counties, such as the arable south-east.

workers<sup>3</sup>. Even in cases where men (unionised or non-unionised) were supportive of female employees and equality of pay, women's security of tenure was far more precarious than that of men (Horrell and Humphries, 1997). Women were also mistrustful of attempts by male colleagues to secure equal pay as it was usually done to secure or improve the positions of men rather than women. In Leicester's hosiery industry in 1888, for example, male unionists attempted to fix an equal price for men and women. However, the female workers rejected the offer as they feared dismissal if they tried to charge the same rate as men (Creighton, 1996). The patriarchal structure of the labour markets in such areas determined that the opportunities open to women were shaped by male concerns that forms of male employment were not threatened.

The interventions of unions and pay disputes set up tensions between married women and single women. It is noted that women found it difficult to unite on matters of pay and work because they were often divided by their marital status (Creighton, 1996; Taylor, 1977). For example, it is suggested that single and widowed women feared competition from married women because their household was, in the main, assured a male wage and married women could therefore work for a lower wage than single or widowed women. And married women who did not work differed from married women who did work because it is claimed they were supporters of the family wage and prioritising employment opportunities for men (Creighton, 1996; Taylor, 1977).

These tensions have led to claims that the main conflict over women's positions in the labour market was largely focused between families and not within them (Hartmann, 1979, 1981; Seccombe, 1986). And indeed, given the struggles within industry to protect male positions and wages, families without a male were severely disadvantaged. Humphries (1977) estimates that in the early stages of industrialism, approximately 20% of families

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<sup>3</sup> Connell (1995, 197) suggests only a limited proportion of the working class was ever unionised.

were without a male earner, predominantly as a result of early mortality or desertion. With the inherent wage inequality of local labour markets, such families were found to be poorer across almost all occupational groups (Humphries, 1977).

### **Local labour markets 2: Unsegregated.**

In regions with unsegregated labour markets women were heavily involved in wage labour. It is an uncommon pattern but was found in the weaving areas of north-east Lancashire (Savage, 1987). As Horrell and Humphries (1997, 63) suggest, such families were likely to have multiple earners in spite of relatively high male earnings. Families enjoyed relatively high standards of living and local norms decreed inexplicable the ideology of the breadwinner family. With the exception of men in highly paid skilled trades, Seccombe (1986, 65) claims 'It was widely remarked that no working man would marry a woman who was economically dependent'. Horrell and Humphries (1997, 29) note similarly high rates of female participation among factory workers and outworkers, and suggest there was greater democratic sourcing of income in these sectors.

Seccombe (1986, 14) suggests that greater female participation in the labour market during the early stages of industrialism was a response to industry's 'rapacious consumption of labour power'. Families of this time often had multiple earners, with males and females making the most of whatever work was available. However, as industry grew Seccombe (1986) claims a new emphasis was placed on intensive modes of labour power consumption and consequently, greater investments in the intergenerational reproduction of labour were required. It is claimed that as long as industry had a plentiful supply of unmarried female labour, upon marriage women were expected to leave the labour force and devote themselves fully to the daily reproduction of labour (Janssens, 1997, 19). Indeed, Land (1980, 58) notes that one of the rationalisations of women's confinement to the home was men's weariness from work and an inability, through lack of energy or time,

to complete the personal services (such as cooking and laundering of clothes) necessary for the reproduction of their labour.

In unsegregated labour markets it certainly appears that married and unmarried women enjoyed better access to employment opportunities. However, the extent to which equality of pay was achieved is debateable. More debateable is Savage's (1987) claim that in such areas family life was relatively egalitarian with men participating in domestic work. There appears to be little evidence to suggest that the concept of egalitarianism infiltrated all aspects of family life.

### **Local labour markets 3: Strongly gender segregated with high female participation rates.**

This type of labour market characterised the jute town of Dundee, and other areas dominant in textile manufacture (Creighton, 1996). It is suggested below that it is also characteristic of the labour markets in Plymouth and Cornwall's metalliferous mining areas. In these cases there were large numbers of women in paid employment. However, work was strongly segregated from that of men, both horizontally and vertically, leaving women the most poorly paid, deskilled or low skill tasks<sup>4</sup>.

In Nottingham, a city of hosiery and lace manufacture, high rates of female participation were sustained throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1901 census revealed that of the 27,819 resident females in Nottingham, 21,566 were engaged in 'some occupation or another' (Taylor, 1977, 49). Land (1980) suggests that censuses of the nineteenth century included as an economic activity the occupation of housewife, so it is debateable whether this impressive female participation rate refers solely to paid work. However, if it cannot be inferred that the majority of families in Nottingham had multiple

earners, it is evident that the contributions of women, whether paid or unpaid, were recognised at least officially.

Secombe (1986, 64) attributes women's strong presence in the textiles industry throughout the nineteenth century to the facts that unions were unable to exclude women (instead, unions supposedly settled for job segregation) and employers preferred to hire workers' kin rather than delve into the anonymous labour market. There were high rates of female participation before marriage, but whether women continued to work after marriage varies according to region and industry (Savage, 1987). In a study of women's labour market participation between the years of 1787-1865, Humphries and Horrell (1995) suggest that industrialisation was associated with higher relative earnings for women, and in some occupations participation rates grew. Hartmann (1981) notes that female participation rates expanded in cotton textiles, wool textiles, silk, pottery, and hosiery. Until the mid nineteenth century the home was recognised as a place of economic activity, with those with an occupation of housewife counting among the economically active. Moreover, it was not assumed that women were not also engaged in other forms of economic activity. The 1871 Census General Report commented '...for it is only in a few cases that the whole of a wife's lifetime is filled up with child bearing, nursing and housekeeping.' (Quoted in Land, 1980, 59).

However, this period of increased economic independence, or conversely women's dual burden of work, was relatively short lived as participation rates and relative earnings declined in the latter decades of the nineteenth century (Humphries and Horrell, 1995). By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, married women's economic contributions were declining in almost all occupational groups (Land, 1980; Bernard, 1981). The participation in paid work of

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<sup>4</sup> Taylor (1977, 49) disputes the notion that jobs undertaken by women were deskilled as the tasks commonly undertaken by women were often detailed and intricate, demanding a great level of precision and skill.

married women continued to decline throughout the late nineteenth and into the early twentieth centuries; reducing from 25% in 1851 to 10% in 1910<sup>5</sup> (Land, 1980, 61). Simultaneously, men's economic contributions rose to account for around four-fifths of total family incomes (Land, 1980).

It appears that the nineteenth century labour markets of the Plymouth TTWA and its outskirts are best defined as strongly gender segregated, with high female participation rates. In examining the residents of a particular street in Plymouth (Lower Street, which is central to the city), for the year 1861, Bryant (1988) finds that the occupations of females included domestic servant, charwoman, seamstress, washerwoman and laundress. The occupations of the males resident in Lower Street included carpenter, labourer, stone mason, trawler fisherman, dairyman, quarryman, baker, brush seller, railway labourer, bargeman, packer in warehouse, and blacksmith. Although living conditions were extremely poor for both men and women<sup>6</sup> Emerson (1983) notes that women's employment of the type noted above, was more tenuous, prone to sudden end, and unstable throughout the life course. Women tended to have a variety of different jobs, changing from one occupation to another on a monthly, seasonal or annual basis (Emerson, 1983). Inevitably this was associated with a high risk of absolute poverty and homelessness (Bryant, 1986). In contrast, it appears that the occupations undertaken by men appeared to have a slightly greater propensity for stability, which is perhaps explained by the skilled nature of some of these occupations. Moreover, paid work opportunities for men grew significantly in Plymouth throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gill (1993) notes that the dockyard was the largest employer (employing 12,072 by 1912), but significant growth was experienced in the construction (dock, fort, housing and railway

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<sup>5</sup> Conversely, for young, unmarried women increasing mechanisation led to greater employment opportunities in some industries. In Nottingham the introduction of mechanisation boosted the participation rates of young females to 6% above the national average (Taylor, 1977, 49).

<sup>6</sup> See Bryant (1988) for a discussion of exceptional over-crowding, sickness, and unsanitary conditions in Lower Street, Plymouth. Gill (1993) suggests that conditions in Plymouth were particularly poor for Irish immigrants who tended to live in enclaves of the most poorly maintained rental housing in the city.

development), distribution, retail trade and services (which employed 10,000 by 1891), mineral extraction (limestone and granite) and manufacturing sectors<sup>7</sup>. However, by the 1930s unemployment was high, and 1.5% higher than the national average (at 16.5%) (Gill, 1993).

The fishing industry sustained relatively high rates of female participation, but again was strongly gender segregated. By the 1870s Plymouth had become the leading fishing port in Devon (having previously been second to Brixham), and was ranked tenth in terms of fleet and productivity among all the ports of England and Wales (Hoskins, 1972). The fishing industry could provide employment for all members of the family, with women knitting underwear and weaving nets; older men occupied with land-based activities such as sail making; and younger men engaged in fishing and transporting the catches (Hoskins, 1972). The fishing boom was relatively short-lived, with a large proportion of the young male population called away for the First World War (Hoskins, 1972). However, by the turn of the twentieth century the seaside tourist industry was gathering pace in Devon (and Cornwall), and much of the fishing industry turned its hand to providing day-fishing (Hoskins, 1972; Travis, 1993). With the decline of the fishing industry, women found paid work in the emerging seaside resorts, catering for, and providing lodgings for visitors during the summer holiday season (Hoskins, 1972; Travis, 1993).

Statistics regarding women's participation in Cornwall's metalliferous mining industry suggest that women constituted a significant proportion of the workforce (Schwartz, 2000). At its peak in the 1860s, throughout Cornwall in mines such as Crinnis copper mine in St Austell (Harris, 1976) and Wheal Unity in Gwennap, a approximately 6000 women were employed (Schwartz, 2000). There is some doubt over the accuracy of this figure owing to

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<sup>7</sup> Gill (1993) notes that manufacturing in Plymouth was dominated by the production of soap, matches, biscuits, starch, sugar, fertiliser and candles. In the late nineteenth century the Plymouth breweries also provided much employment.

the inclusion of children and pre-adolescents in female participation rates (thus artificially boosting the number of females employed in the mines), and the exclusion of some important mines such as Tresavean (thus potentially under-representing female participation) (Schwartz, 2000). Taking such issues into account, Schwartz (2000) suggests that the true figure of adult female employment in Cornish mines in the late nineteenth century could represent over a fifth of the total mining labour force.

Like Plymouth's labour market however, it appears that women's paid work opportunities in the mining areas were much more restricted than men's. Schwartz (2000) notes that women were engaged in three main tasks in copper mines; spalling (breaking up large lumps of rock), cobbing (chipping off copper ore from waste material), and bucking (grinding small pieces of ore into powder). These tasks were surface activities, and demanded differing degrees of strenuousness, dexterity and skill (Schwartz, 2000). In the mining context, however, they were regarded as the least demanding roles, poorly rewarded and regarded, and suitable for women and children.

The requirement for cheap, unskilled labour denoted that the mining industry was sustained on familial labour arrangements (Schwartz, 2000). Men undertook the most skilled, strenuous (and highly paid) work, while calling upon their wives and children to complete what were regarded as the less demanding, final stages of copper extraction (Schwartz, 2000). Inevitably, male labour was prioritised, with women and children serving as a reserve army of labour, employed and deployed according to demand (Schwartz, 2000).

The families of Devon and Cornwall in the early industrial period appear to share the characteristics of families in other gender segregated labour markets. Women (and children) made considerable contributions to the family economy, but their ability to do so

was mediated by the patriarchal organisation of the labour market and a distinction between 'men's work' and 'women's work'. Although such families were typically of the dual-earner type, women's precarious relationship with the labour market was built on their status as a low skilled, expendable workforce, which served to reinforce wage inequality, economic dependency in the family and women's dual burden of work.

Savage's (1987) typology of local labour markets provides a useful framework for summarising the otherwise complex historical debate about the rise of the breadwinner family. It also allows us to explore the rise of this family type, and account for some of the temporal and regional disparity from the perspective of a 'key group of actors' (in this case women) as Creighton (1996) recommends. However, there are two factors that do not sit easily within Savage's (1987) framework, but are important to the discussion; those of the 'family wage' debate, and the changing definition of 'work'.

### **The family wage**

Forsaking the potential earnings of female family members was initially feasible only among more affluent middle classes and the skilled trades of the working class. Land (1980, 56) argues that among the more affluent sections of society women who worked threatened the honour and status of men, and the unproductive wife became synonymous with economic prosperity. Seccombe (1986; 73) further suggests that a working wife and/or daughter became a source of embarrassment for men, as they emphasised the male's inability to financially support their family.

However, over time the cultural ideology surrounding the breadwinner role became entrenched in working class enclaves, particularly among agricultural and mining communities. Again, it is argued that in such communities cultural ideology emerged which gave masculine status to the man who could provide for his wife and children

(Connell, 1995). (It is interesting that these are the communities that were primarily built around local labour markets that excluded women as noted above). Seccombe (1986, 66) suggests that the increasing cultural support for the breadwinner family among the working class was based on both (union-based) support for the single male earner, and reproach of the working woman who was perceived to be failing in her domestic and maternal duties, and was 'taking a man's job'.

It was this notion of women 'taking a man's job' and the spread of breadwinner ideology in some socio-economic factions that fuelled the family wage debate in Britain at the turn of the twentieth century (Creighton, 1996; Land, 1980; Seccombe, 1986). It was argued that an increasing shortage of employment opportunities could be relieved by paying men a wage adequate to support their families; taking away the need for women in couple households to compete against men in the labour market (Creighton, 1996; Land, 1980; Seccombe, 1986). Although the concept of the 'family wage' generated much debate, it was never put into practice.

One of the chief criticisms of the concept of the 'family wage' was that one wage could never support a family, even less support a family's needs as it moved through the life course (Land, 1980). Rathbone (1940), a staunch critic of the family wage, claims that it was a concept that was unachievable in reality. As Horrell and Humphries (1997, 41) suggest, evidence of the time shows that a reliance on one income meant 'at best, static standards, and, most commonly, severe financial hardship'.

Women were often disunited over the family wage on the basis of marital status and their differing relationships with the labour market (Creighton, 1996). The family wage put into practice would prioritise men's access to (the best) labour market opportunities, would compound the attempts of unmarried and widowed women to secure adequate independent

income, and render almost irrelevant women's struggles for equal pay and opportunities (Land, 1980).

The family wage debate also showed little regard for the differing economic needs of single men, and married men with and without children. As a uniform wage intended to be payable to all working men, some men stood to benefit considerably more than others. Rathbone identified this as another obvious weakness of the argument. She further suggested that single men would become accustomed to excess and would be discouraged from marriage (at the same time many women would be economically coerced into marriage), or upon marriage would be unable to curb their spending habits. This would only serve to further compound women's economic dependence in the family. In noting the propensity of some men to withhold income from their female partners (in the context of the family wage or not), Rathbone (1940) suggested that the way forward was a 'family allowance' to be paid directly to mothers. This was not fully achieved until the 1970s (Land, 1980).

Despite its rhetorical status, the concept of the family wage and breadwinner ideology more generally underpinned the ethos of the emerging welfare state. This is exemplified in Beveridge's claim 'Reasonable security of employment for the breadwinner is the basis of all private duties and all sound social action' (Quoted in Land, 1980, 72). Indeed, Land (1980) notes that the first national insurance system in 1911 was built upon the premise that only the male's earnings needed to be replaced in sickness or unemployment.

The historical convergence of the family wage debate, breadwinner ideology and the emerging welfare state all served to marginalise women from economic activity, and structuralise women's economic dependency within the family. By the same token, men's association with the breadwinner role (and the privileges it affords) became embedded –

culturally and structurally – within British society. There was much regional variation in the extent to which families adopted the breadwinner model, and the arguments presented above show that sustaining a breadwinner family was an economic challenge, if not impossibility. This has not changed much throughout the twentieth century. However, undoubtedly due in part to the privileges it affords men, breadwinner ideology remains surprisingly resilient.

### **Defining ‘work’**

The final factor discussed here, that is central to debates about the emergence and spread of the breadwinner family, concerns how ‘work’ is defined (formally and informally), and subsequently measured. It is noted in the literature that throughout recent history some forms of work undertaken by women have been invisible (Bernard, 1981, 1). Folbre (1991) notes how nineteenth century censuses applied increasingly rigid definitions of ‘work’ that excluded economic activities commonly undertaken by women. Inevitably, fewer women were classed as economically active, but Folbre (1991) disputes the notion that women were generally unproductive. As now, women’s contributions to the household economy were vital for the solvency of many families (Horrell and Humphries, 1997, 42; Morris, 1987, 87). Folbre’s (1991) arguments suggest that behind the socially desirable façade of the breadwinner/housewife division of labour, many families may have in fact been dual-earners (or as termed in this study male primary breadwinner families). (See discussion below and following chapter).

The status of women living on small holdings or farms provides a good example of the essential, but unacknowledged, contributions of some women. Horrell and Humphries, (1997, 30) note that farming families commonly adopted the breadwinner/housewife division of labour in early modernity despite low male wages. After the introduction of stricter census definitions of ‘work’ in the 1900s, women without a form of paid work

would be classified officially as economically inactive. However, in addition to domestic and caring duties (including cooking for farm employees), farming wives were typically heavily involved in unpaid tasks related to farm production such as milking and feeding animals. In ignoring these contributions such families would have been classified in censuses as breadwinner families, but in practice perhaps few were. In a study of a farming community in Herefordshire in the second half of the twentieth century, Whitehead (1976) found that none of the wives of farming families undertook paid work outside the home and/or farm.

The invisibility of women's work in such households prioritises the economic activities of men and denies the crucial contributions that females often make to the economic sustainability of their families. As Williams (1995) suggests, regardless of its content, men's work is generally considered to be more powerful and prestigious than women's. As Higonnet and Higonnet (1987) (quoted in Williams, 1995, 56) suggest

'If men gather and women fish, gathering will be thought more important than fishing; in another society where men fish and women gather, fishing will be more prestigious. The actual nature of the social activity is not as critical as the cultural perception of its relative value in a gender-linked structure of subordination'.

It is noted in the literature that farming families are an anomaly in that they uniformly adopted the breadwinner model in the face of relatively low male wages. Yet, it is undoubtedly the case that women of farming families, including those of Whitehead's (1976) much later study, were unable to participate in other forms of economic activity as they were wholly tied up in domestic labour and the invisible tasks of farm production. It is suggested that this example of the invisibility of some forms of work undertaken by

women makes questionable any estimate of the number of breadwinner families throughout recent British history<sup>8</sup>.

## **Part 2: The breadwinner family from the mid-twentieth century: peak and decline**

This section brings the discussion of the breadwinner family up to date in examining a number of socio-economic trends that have impacted on the nature of British family and working life since the mid-twentieth century. Particular attention is paid to the process of deindustrialisation and the subsequent loss of employment opportunities in economic sectors previously dominated by men. It is concluded that in the contemporary period the suggested mismatch between the prevalence and influence of breadwinner discourse and the increasing scarcity of breadwinner families in Britain has become pronounced. The section begins by reviewing the unique socio-economic conditions of the war, inter-war and post-war years and their impact on household organisation.

### **The resilience of breadwinner ideology: the war years**

As noted earlier, breadwinner ideology gained momentum in the nineteenth, and into the twentieth century. Seccombe (1986) argues that this is partly explained by a rise in male earning power as industrialism matured throughout the twentieth century. It is frequently noted in the literature that the twentieth century saw greater numbers of nuclear households that were financially able to emulate the housewife/breadwinner division of labour which, previously, had mostly been the preserve of the skilled working classes and middle classes (e.g. Seccombe, 1986).

Then, as now, however, various familial or household compositions existed alongside the

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<sup>8</sup> Kelly and Shortall's (2002) study of farming families in Northern Ireland suggests that the contributions of female partners have become much more visible as farm incomes continue to fall year by year. The majority of farms, they suggest, are not economically viable without female (and male) contributions from 'off-farm' employment.

male breadwinner nuclear family; most notably dual-earner and female-headed single parent households. In 1925, for example, Bowley and Hogg (1925, 8-9) found that only 5% of families in the northern counties of Britain consisted of a wage earning male, dependent wife and children. This strongly suggests that breadwinner ideology out-paced the extent to which families actually adopted this model of household organisation.

The growth and spread of breadwinner ideology was also boosted by being the model of household organisation upon which much social policy and public administration was founded (Creighton, 1996; Dicks *et al*, 1998; Popay *et al*, 1998). For example, the male-breadwinner family has formed the basis of the British social security and income taxation systems since their launch (Land, 1978, 1980). This means that socio-cultural ideology that men were or should be financially responsible for their families became in time, moral and legal duties. Land (1976) suggests that for most of the time social security measures have been in place they have been underpinned by the assumption that marriage means, firstly total and secondly, permanent economic dependence for women. Social policy has defined women as either workers or married; the fact that women may be both workers and married, and indeed often are, has been neglected, arguably until the closing decades of the twentieth century.

Prior to the First World War breadwinner ideology had become pervasive and a strongly held ideal (Seccombe, 1986, 54). It was noted earlier that this was in conflict with the fact that women continued to contribute to the economies of many families, albeit through invisible forms of work. However, during the first and second World Wars women's participation in work became highly visible. Increasing numbers of married women were required for the war efforts and so were attracted to, or compelled to undertake paid employment (Land, 1980). Women commonly combined domestic roles with full-time paid work, aided by community-based childcare provisions (Land, 1980). During both

wars, working wives received less criticism and less was heard about the supposedly damaging effects on children when mothers worked outside the home. Shared sentiments of an 'age of togetherness' (Bernard, 1981, 7) meant that women's employment during the wars did not represent a persuasive challenge to the male-breadwinner family. Indeed, Bernard (1981, 7) suggests that this age of togetherness 'all but apotheosised the good provider, his house in the suburbs and his home-body wife'.

However, underpinning (male) acceptance of widespread female employment was a concern that women would become attached to work, wage earning and economic independence (Land, 1980, 62). Neglect of family and household responsibilities and an increasingly competitive labour market, in which men would have to compete to reclaim their pre-war jobs, were perceived as inevitable and undesirable outcomes of greater female employment. It was promulgated, both overtly and covertly, that the jobs 'belonged' to men and that female employment was a necessary, but temporary, means of overcoming labour shortages and catering for the requirements of the war-time economies (Bernard, 1981; Creighton, 1996; Land, 1978, 1980). Following each war large numbers of married women did indeed cease paid employment and make way for the returning men. In the inter-war years, female economic activity rates among married women fluctuated at around 10% (Bernardes, 1997). According to Land (1980, 62), however, many women left the labour force reluctantly<sup>9</sup>.

Buchbinder (1994) suggests that in the 1950s, ideology and practice of the housewife/breadwinner division of labour reached a crescendo as men's 'rightful' positions in the workforce and family were re-established following the wartime period.

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<sup>9</sup>Although a much later event, the women involved in the social, economic and political responses to the south Yorkshire miners' strike of 1984 put it like this: 'The women have changed. They have discovered a strength, a talent, a voice, an identity, that they never knew existed. The women who are involved in the Miner's Strike of 1984 will never be the same again (p.44). After the strike, we will have to find somewhere to channel our energy, most of us will never be able to sit at home again' (Barnsley Women, 1984, 29).

The media appropriated an influential role in reinforcing and perpetuating the socio-political ideology that the breadwinner and housewife roles uniquely fulfilled the needs of individuals, families and (hence) capitalist society (Fox, 1993; Segal, 1990, 6). Images of idyllic, content and mutually supportive housewives and breadwinners were commonly disseminated. (See Appendix 3 for a copy of 'The family you want' a *Woman Magazine* pull-out from 1958. The article clearly demonstrates the familial ideology, specifically the perceived appropriateness of gender-coded roles of that time). Women's return to the domestic sphere accompanied an increased interest in the home as a place of leisure and relaxation (Young and Willmott, 1973). New domestic appliances brought 'science' and skill to the everyday tasks of the housewife and, within the media at least, the housewife role was promoted as creative, skilful, valued and demanding (Fox, 1993; Segal, 1990).

Around this time there was also considerable concern over the damaging affects that working mothers had on the emotional development of children. Bowlby (1951) suggested with his theory of maternal deprivation that the separation of a child from its mother resulted in 'delinquent character development and affectionless psychopathy'. A World Health Organisation Expert Committee concluded on the basis of Bowlby's findings that '...permanent damage to the emotional health of the future generation..' could be caused by putting children in day nurseries (WHO, 1962). Such convictions provided strong moral incentives for women to return to the home following war-time employment, and for families to adopt the breadwinner/housewife model of household organisation. The criticism of working women, and particularly working mothers following the cessation of both World Wars undoubtedly served to mark a return to the patriarchal status quo. However, it sits somewhat oddly within the capitalist framework that prioritises paid work over unpaid work. It must also have been an added burden to the many men and women who required two wages to ensure the economic sustainability of their family.

Since a peak in the post-war years, increasing numbers of families have abandoned the housewife/breadwinner division of labour (Fox, 1993; Segal, 1990). The material basis of this trend is argued to include changes in the nature, location and availability of work, the loss of traditional work trajectories, increasing female labour market participation and changing attitudes towards a gender-coded division of labour. Mainstream feminism is often credited with increasing female expectations and desire for individual and economic autonomy, and hence greater participation in the labour market (Sianne and Wilkinson, 1995). By 1972 there were 5.5 million married women in the working population, 2.5 million more than in 1951 (Land, 1976). (See below for contemporary rates of female participation).

The breadwinner family has certainly come under material threat from increasing unemployment among men and rising rates of female employment. However, the ideological link between men and breadwinning, has not, as yet, been diminished in its persuasiveness by the changing patterns of employment among women or the emergence of alternative masculinities. As the evidence of the labour market presented in the following section implies, the decline in the number of sole male breadwinners appears to be more a case of economic necessity than any fundamental changes to gender role perceptions.

### **Deindustrialisation and the loss of 'men's work'**

Although subject to debate, 'deindustrialisation' is perhaps best defined for the purpose of this study as either a declining share of total employment in manufacturing, or an absolute decline in employment in manufacturing (Bazen and Thirlwall, 1992). This term came into use in academia in the 1970s, together with 'post-industrialism', as an indicator of the changing economic direction, from production to consumption, of social and economic life in many industrialised nations (Daniels, 1982; Elias and Gregory, 1994).

Bazen and Thirlwall (1992) assert that deindustrialisation in itself is not inherently detrimental. Rather it is the source and nature of deindustrialisation which determines whether prevailing economic conditions are favourable, or otherwise, to non-manufacturing sector growth and assimilation of displaced labour. As such, 'positive' deindustrialisation is possible and may occur as a *declining share* of manufacturing employment is created by rapid productivity growth (Bazen and Thirlwall, 1992). Potential unemployment problems may, therefore, be averted as redundant labour is absorbed within a buoyant, post-industrial economy based on service sector growth and technology-rich, albeit labour de-intensive, manufacturing (Bazen and Thirlwall, 1992). In contrast, an *absolute decline* in manufacturing employment may generate 'negative' deindustrialisation. Here, it is claimed that falling demand for manufacturing output and low productivity growth effect economic inertia, with few opportunities for re-employment in manufacturing and non-manufacturing sectors (Bazen and Thirlwall, 1992). The following section overviews the British experience of deindustrialisation, and suggests that the impact on individuals and families was intrinsically negative.

After two deep recessions within the last fifteen years, the UK labour market is relatively buoyant, with more people in work and a greater number of job opportunities (DED, 1999). However, throughout this period of growth the labour market and the composition of the workforce have changed markedly, and in directions that have challenged traditional assumptions about male and female roles.

In the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the industrial base that provided much male employment and sustained many breadwinner families began to dissolve. The industrial growth in output and employment which had been achieved (albeit sporadically) throughout the UK in the post-war years, was unsustainable in a deflationary economic

climate and an enduring period of decline began (Daniels, 1982; Elias and Gregory, 1994; Redwood, 1993). During the 1960s and 1970s, the demand for, and production of British products was severely curtailed on the basis of restrictive economic policies; low growth and investment rates; increased levels of unionisation and the emergence of Pacific Rim competitors (Redwood, 1993). Industry was compelled to minimise expenditure, and implement forced redundancies and fewer engagements. Inevitably, mass enterprise and job losses were accelerated in all fractions of industrial and craft activity, with the greatest job losses experienced between 1978 and 1981 (Martin and Rowthorn, 1986; Champion and Townsend, 1994).

Economic conditions deteriorated further with the onset of the world stock market crash of 1987 and the loss of Japan's capital outflows in 1990, which had previously assisted growth throughout Europe, and cumulated in the world, and later, European recessions of 1987 and 1992 respectively (Redwood, 1993). Corrective measures led again to restrictive monetary policies and high inflation which permeated the UK's economic structure and reduced the value of disposable incomes (Redwood, 1993). Subsequently, trends in employment patterns ensued as financial bodies revised their stance regarding credit and lending facilities, and industry was generally compelled to minimise expenditure, and implement forced redundancies and fewer engagements (Champion and Townsend, 1994; Massey and Meegan, 1989). Unemployment levels were further exacerbated as demographics determined a rise in the UK population of working age, employers retrenched labour forces, were unable to compete against the Tiger economies, or survive Britain's debilitating economic climate (Martin and Rowthorn, 1986; Champion and Townsend, 1994).

Of particular relevance to the geographical context of this study, given Plymouth's relationship with the Royal Navy, is the cessation of the Cold War in 1989 and 1990. The

end of the Cold War meant that the UK's immense reserve of armaments and personnel was not only financially cumbersome in a time of global recession, but also superfluous to the UK's military defence needs. Forced redundancies and fewer engagements were implemented in all military labour forces. The Royal Navy, for example, cut its personnel register of 72,200 in 1977 to 41,430 in 1997 (Moore, 1978; 1997). Simultaneously, many auxiliary industries, such as dockyards, were privatised and subsequently revised and streamlined. Newly privatised industries reduced labour forces and employed and deployed labour according to intermittent demand. Many functions, previously undertaken by local workers, were also put out to tender and sub-contracted to specialist service agencies, which often operated at a national rather than local level. In 1987 Plymouth's dockyard sustained a workforce of 11,000; in less than ten years the workforce had been cut to just 3,600 (Groves, 1996). On Tyneside, the heavy engineering plants of Vickers, in Scotswood and Elswick, employed 18,500 during the outbreak of World War II, and more at the end of the war. In the early 1960s, only a workforce of 7,000 remained, and by the 1980s the plants had closed (Brown, 1985).

Although there has been overall employment growth in the last 20 years, between the late 1960s and 1990s the UK population has, for example, encountered the following job losses:

- 465,000 in mining;
- over 200,000 across all HM services<sup>10</sup>
- 4.2 million in manufacturing
- 553,000 in construction;
- 410,000 in textiles; and
- 300,000 in railways and the production of railway stock (CSO, 1977; ONS, 1999)

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<sup>10</sup> Royal Navy, Royal marines, Army and Royal Air Force.

In a five-year period alone between 1978 and 1983 the following losses were incurred:

- 1.5 million in manufacturing;
- 220,000 in mechanical engineering;
- 110,000 in electrical engineering;
- 90,000 in metal manufacture; and
- 35,000 in ship building and marine engineering (CSO, 1977; ONS, 1999; Brown, 1985)

By 1985 unemployment had risen to 11.5%, (up from 4.6% in 1974), with long-term unemployment at 48.7%, (up from 14.8%) (Gaffikin and Morrissey, 1992). The most negative outcomes of deindustrialisation were largely concentrated in areas built around one core heavy industry (Beatty and Fothergill, 1996).

Plymouth and the south west region in general are considered to have fared relatively well given the small and diverse manufacturing sector (Gripaios, 1991). However, that is not to say that south west communities were not hard hit by, for example, the staggered closure of Cornish tin mines. By the 1980s, few Cornish mines remained in production, and the workforce had reduced considerably (Baker, 1990). From the small mining labour market that remained, an additional 500 jobs were lost in the late 1980s (Baker, 1990). Other impacts on the region include the depreciation of farm incomes, farm diversification, and introduction of the European quota management system in the fishing industry in the early 1980s (Clark, 1994). While the deindustrialisation process may have had a lesser impact in the south west than other, more heavily industrialised regions, the rural and fishing communities of Cornwall and Devon have experienced considerable difficulties over recent decades.

The following section discusses how the loss of heavy industries in which men were previously dominant has had significant knock-on effects in the labour market and family.

### **The changing composition of the workforce**

In the mid-1990s approximately 7 million people in the UK were classed as economically inactive<sup>11</sup> (JRF, 1996). Over the last 20 years this figure has remained much the same. While it is mostly women who continue to make up the economically inactive, the ratio of females to males has shifted notably in recent years.

The male inactivity rate has increased from 5%, to approximately 13% (an increase of around 2 million inactive men) (JRF, 1996). Much of this growth occurred during the late 1970s and early 1980s, and in men aged over 50. Indeed, the proportion of inactive men aged over 50 rose from 7% in the 1970s to 28% in the mid-1990s, with the growth attributed to increasing sickness and disability (JRF, 1996). Among men aged under 50, the inactivity rate has quadrupled from 2% in the 1970s to 8% in 1998 (EPI, 1998). Over the same period the inactivity rate for women fell from 35% to 27%; with most of the movement taking place between inactivity and employment, and attributed to increasing employment rates among mothers with children aged under two (JRF, 1996).

The loss of industrial activity has precipitated a decline in forms of manual and unskilled employment. The unemployment and inactivity rates for men without formal qualifications have correspondingly increased (JRF, 1996; EPI, 1998). A third of all working-age men without qualifications are now inactive (EPI, 1998). The overall increases in male unemployment and inactivity imply that men with and without qualifications have been hit by changes in the labour market. Inactivity rates for female graduates, however, have halved from 23% in the late 1970s, to 12% in 1997 (EPI, 1998).

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<sup>11</sup> Economic inactivity is determined on the basis that an individual has not looked for work in the immediate past (EPI, 1998). A movement occurs between economic inactivity and unemployment when a person begins a search for work (EPI, 1998).

The increase in male economic inactivity and unemployment denotes that across the UK, male labour force participation has fallen from 93% in 1973, to 86% in 1991 (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). Among the male working-age population, even fathers with children under 11 years, who traditionally benefit from high rates economic activity, have experienced rising unemployment (EPI, 1998). The current unemployment rate of UK fathers has reached 11% and has become one of the highest rates within Europe (EPI, 1998).

Simultaneous to the process of deindustrialisation, the UK experienced the transition to an economy dominated by service-related employment; notably that associated with the producer, consumer, market, recreational, financial and distributive services, and the trading of information and knowledge (Allen and du Gay, 1994)<sup>12</sup>. The service industry increased its workforce by absorbing 20% of the total employees in the UK, from 47.8% in 1961 to 67.8% in 1987, while the workforces of all other industries fell (Champion and Townsend, 1994). With this shift came a decline in the demand for manual and unskilled workers, and those previously employed in skilled craft trades. Instead, a study conducted on behalf of the DfEE and the TEA (1998) on employer's needs in the UK, found that employers require workers with the following attributes:

- Computer literacy/knowledge of information technology
- Customer handling skills
- Communication skills
- Technical and practical skills
- Management skills
- Literacy skills
- Numeracy skills

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<sup>12</sup> Since the late 1980s Devon and Cornwall have attracted 82 new overseas facilities with the creation of 13,322 jobs in the electronics and technology industries (Fleming, 1995). The counties also achieved significant gains in the well-established tourism sector (Fleming, 1995).

- Team working skills
- Problem solving skills

There is some evidence to suggest that many men have not been attracted to employment opportunities built on the skills characteristic of a service economy. It has been found that men previously employed in industry particularly, do not consider service employment, which often requires more mental than physical labour, to be 'proper work' or 'men's work' (e.g. BBC, 1996). Despite the evident shifts in the UK's employment patterns, research undertaken by Durham County Council in 1995 suggests that many men still look for industrial jobs and the associated status and way of life; unemployment is sometimes seen as preferable to service employment which undermines 'masculine identity' (Thomas, 1995).

McGivney (1999) finds a similarly debilitating attitude towards service employment and education and retraining. She explains that among communities with strong roots in manual forms of work, men still seek these jobs even when they are in short supply and find it difficult to engage in other forms of economic activity. McGivney (1999) surmises that this reflects the strength of the tie between masculine identity and manual work in some sectors of the male population. Encouraging men to participate in education or retraining is frustrated by negative perceptions; many men see a return to education or training as failure, a step down, abnormal, and entailing a 'loss of face'. The men of McGivney's (1999) study were fearful of failure and fearful of acknowledging deficiencies. They considered themselves to have far more to lose in terms of status and image than women. One respondent from North Yorkshire remarked "Going back to college – you'd be embarrassed – like having a Jaguar for 20 years then going on the bus" (McGivney, 1999, 66).

A male breadwinner may also be deterred from service employment due to the structuring and practices of the industry. Flexible, and hence insecure, contracts such as those based on the notion of 'zero hours' (TUC Economic and Social Affairs Department, 1995) do not offer (male and female) workers continuity in providing for their families. In some cases unemployment benefit may be viewed as a more economically secure alternative (Goode *et al.*, 1998). The poor rates of pay which are associated with the low skill sectors of the service industry, such as catering and retail (Ruxton, 2002), may not compensate for the supplementary benefits of unemployment, such as free dental care, school meals and prescriptions, and housing benefit. Unemployment also allows men the opportunity, should they so choose, to participate in the informal economy and so boost their family's income or ease the demands on it (Morris, 1985a, 1987)<sup>13</sup>.

#### **The end of the breadwinner role?**

The problems outlined above - the loss of industrial employment and its way of life, the perceived 'unmasculine' nature of service employment, the poor pay and insecurity in some service sectors, and (hence) the 'compensations' of unemployment - have had considerable impacts on the division of labour in nuclear families, and the relationship between the family and labour market. There have been two notable household trends in recent years. The first is rising female contributions to household income and falling income contributions by men. The second trend is increasing polarisation between work-rich (dual-earner) and work-poor (no earner) households. Both trends have contributed to falling numbers of families headed by a sole, male breadwinner.

In 1974 men earned on average 74% of family incomes. By the mid-1980s this had fallen

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<sup>13</sup> There is evidence to suggest, however, that income gained from informal and undeclared activities is predominantly seen as men's personal spending money. Morris (1985a, 1987) finds that income from informal work is used to fund activities that re-establish men's position in the (male) community. Income is typically spent on social activity, such as drinking in pubs, rather than being spent on household needs. Morris (1985a, 1987) concludes that in such cases men can continue to perceive themselves as breadwinners, and gain the benefits of being a breadwinner, but the family as a whole does not benefit.

to 67%, and by 1990, to 63% (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). Between 1979 and 1990, however, female contributions to family incomes had risen from 16% to 19.7% (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). The male and female proportional rates of income earning continue to fall and rise respectively (Janssens, 1997). Moreover, there are increasing numbers of men who do not contribute to family income at all, while the number of women with a zero contribution has fallen (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994).

Greater numbers of children now live in families where both parents are employed, or both parents are unemployed. In just over half of all couple families with dependent children, both parents are in work<sup>14</sup> (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). Harkness *et al* (1995) claim there are currently three times as many dual-earner families in the UK than there are breadwinner families. Concurrently, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of households in which neither parent works. In 1981, 38% of unemployed people lived in households in which no adult was in paid employment (Harkness *et al*, 1995). By 1997 this proportion had risen to 58%. Similarly, in 1981 only a quarter of the economically inactive population lived in households in which no other person worked, but by 1997 this had risen to a half (Harkness *et al*, 1995). Meadows (1996) estimates that in 20% of all couple families neither adult participates in paid work. This represents a rise of 15% since the mid 1980s (Meadows, 1996).

The rise of dual-earner and no-earner households in recent decades has had an inevitable impact on the numbers of breadwinner families in Britain. Nationally in 1983, in 61% of homes where the husband was employed the wife also had paid employment<sup>15</sup> (Morris, 1987). Between 1989 and 1991 in 67% of all married and cohabiting couples both the man and woman worked (Harkness *et al*, 1995). During this time, only 23% of families were

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<sup>14</sup> Mothers in dual-earner families are twice as likely to be working part-time as full-time (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Other estimates for the early 1980s put the figure of male breadwinner families in Britain at 15% or 5% (Bernardes, 1997).

headed by male breadwinner (Harkness *et al*, 1995). A more generous estimate suggests that one-third of families with dependent children continue to operate a housewife/breadwinner division of labour (Gregg and Wadsworth, 1995).

These trends highlight that the distribution of paid work in the family has changed markedly over recent years. (Although the arguments presented in Part 1 could be applied to reason that female participation in economic activity is no greater or more significant than at any other time in recent history - it just takes place in more visible arenas, and thus is formally acknowledged). Inevitably, this has impacted on the number of families that are dependent upon a sole, male breadwinner. In empirical terms, the breadwinner family is argued to be increasingly marginal to dual-earner families, and less so no-earner families (e.g. Harkness *et al*, 1995; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994).

However, suggesting that a shift appears to have taken place from breadwinner families to dual-earner families is problematic. The problem stems from how the concept of the dual-earner family is operationalised. The studies of Harkness *et al* (1995), Machin and Waldfogel (1994), Crompton (1999) and others include as dual-earner families those in which the female works part-time (defined as up to 30 hours paid work per week) to the male partner's full-time. Referring to these families as dual-earners implies a degree of egalitarianism (in terms of the distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women). As Crompton (1999, 205) notes

'...by definition (given that the gender coding of care and market work is integral to a powerful normative conception of gender), the dual-earner/dual-carer model is most likely to generate less traditional gender relations.'

However, egalitarianism in the dual-earner family is not fully supported by the literature. For example, Oakley (1974) notes that the degree of economic dependence and the burden of unpaid work remains relatively constant whether the female participates in part-time

paid work or is fully engaged in the home and family. Pahl's (1980, 1983, 1989) work on the intra-household distribution and use of resources shows that women's part-time employment does not dissolve inequality in the family. Crompton (1999, 2005) agrees and suggests that '...women's part-time working has not been associated with any substantial change in gender relations'. Classing these families as dual-earners then glosses over the potential maintenance of men's dominance in the family and intra-household inequalities between men and women. It also suggests that the potential commonality between breadwinner families and those classed in the literature as 'dual-earners' has been somewhat neglected.

Indeed, Levy *et al* (2002) seek to put on the family agenda, the propensity for egalitarian family structures to retain a core of 'traditionalism'. They note of dual-earner families in Switzerland that the nature of the intra-household exchange between men and women remains somewhat traditional, with the female partner responsible for an unequal burden of unpaid work (Levy *et al*, 2002). It is argued that egalitarianism in the distribution of paid work does not necessarily lead to egalitarianism in all other respects. They suggest that the 'modern family' is non-traditional on the outside, but traditional on the inside. This conceptualisation of the family proves useful for this study, and highlights the inadequacy of some of the family concepts that are typically applied in the literature.

To overcome this potential weakness, it is discussed below and in the following chapter that this study distinguishes families with this division of paid labour from sole breadwinner families and dual-earner families. They are referred to as male (or female) 'primary breadwinner' families. This distinction allows us to explore whether the men of dual-earner families (as typically defined) hold attitudes towards the breadwinner role that are any different to the men of other family types.

The evidence provided in Chapter 5 shows that the male primary breadwinner family is the dominant family type found in this study. On the basis of the argument above (which is developed in the following chapter) it appears that the breadwinner role has not been lost within the growing number of 'dual-earner' families. Arguably it persists, albeit in a less conspicuous form that to date has gone unchallenged.

There is much evidence to support the claim made by Janssens (1997, 2) and others that the breadwinner role has been and continues to be of greater ideological than empirical significance. However, the review of (the internal organisation of) the nuclear family in industrial and post-industrial Britain shows that this argument is dependent upon the way the concepts of the 'breadwinner' family and 'dual-earner' family have been and are operationalised. It is suggested that the dominant status of the 'dual-earner' family in contemporary Britain rests on the questionable way in which it has been defined and subsequently measured. Rather than marking the end of the breadwinner role, the privileges, powers and rewards of this role appeared to have been secured within what is defined in the literature as the 'dual-earner' family.

### **Part 3: Conceptualising masculinities**

The concept of masculinity is central to debates of how male privilege in the family and labour market was garnered and has been sustained throughout modernity. Speer (2001, 127) suggests it is imperative that masculinity is analysed in order to understand the way in which the gender order and patriarchal rhetoric is maintained, and masculinity is used for political and strategic purposes. Only when masculinity is fully understood will the established gender order be vulnerable to challenge and reorganisation (Speer, 2001). Many writers claim that undermining masculinity will benefit women, children, and groups of men who are dominated by more powerful men, including working class, ethnic minority and disabled men (e.g. Donaldson, 1993; Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1996; Speer,

2001). However, as is demonstrated below, the first and over-riding challenge is to define what is meant by the term 'masculinity', and to distinguish it from the 'male role' and 'male characteristics'.

The masculinities literature has expanded considerably since the late 1970s in both the UK and USA, but even established writers in this field seemingly struggle to operationalise the term. As McMahon (1993, 690) suggests:

'All the attributes of men discussed in the literature are spoken of as aspects of masculinity. It is remarkable how seldom writers on masculinity explicitly indicate what kind of concept they take masculinity to be. Michael Kimmel defines masculinity as 'what it means to be a man' but this still leaves the matter rather open. Connell has noted that the concept of masculinity is thoroughly bound up with modern notions of individual identity and the self, which are clearly difficult to think beyond. The usefulness of the concept is generally taken for granted, and what is offered is a description, frequently a list of traits.'

Hearn, a key author in this field, outlines how his own conceptualisations have changed over time:

'It will come as no surprise that I have used the term in a number of ways in previous work.... Within this framework, masculinity was seen as appearance, as a set of signs that someone is a man and not a woman. Elsewhere I have used the concept of masculinity or masculinities more loosely, whether within a social constructivist or post-structuralist framework.' (Hearn, 1996, 208)

The aim of this section is to review the varying conceptions of masculinity and elaborate on the centrality of masculinity to men's privileged positions in the family and the masculinisation of the breadwinner role. The following sections discuss the concepts of masculinity, masculinities and hegemonic masculinity, with reference to essentialist, and briefly materialist and post-structuralist perspectives.

It is evident that there are many competing definitions of masculinity, yet, at their core, they appear to be similar. This chapter has so far pointed to some of the ways in which

men's lives have changed over time (for example, with reference to the loss of industrial forms of work and the rise of dual-earner and no-earner families). But what the following section suggests is that relatively little has changed regarding 'male culture' or 'what it means to be a man' (Kimmel, 1996, 44).

For sociologists and other social scientists, the definition and use of the term masculinity, like that of femininity, is problematic. Masculinity is generally recognisable in some form in everyday male behaviour. As Bowl (1985, 8) simply suggests, it is often perceived as 'a way of talking and behaving', that differs fundamentally from forms of behaviour exhibited by women. Such commonsensical abstractions compete with more elaborate and complex academic accounts from various theoretical perspectives. However, tension between these two strands leads to a variety of uses and meanings. As Hearn (1996, 203) suggests, the term is often misused and applied imprecisely.

Within sociology there appear to be three broad frameworks for considering masculinity. One relies heavily on the essentialist notion of a biological, and hence shared, masculinity or 'male essence'. Another, inspired by feminist analyses and post-structuralism, considers masculinities as fluid, complex, diverse and socially scripted. Finally, materialists argue that masculinity is shaped by and constructed within the society and institutions in which the individual male is embedded.

### **What is masculinity?**

Academics have many ways of seeing masculinity. Some see it as a socially-scripted performance, others as an on-going project, and others as a (social, political and/or economic) strategy (see e.g. Carrigan *et al*, 1985; Edley and Wetherell, 1995; Lupton, 2000; Messner, 1998). Debates exist as to whether masculinity is learnt through observation, imitation and indoctrination (see e.g. Mac an Ghail, 1996), or is built upon an

innate male essence (e.g. Bly, 1991). For some masculinity is cultural and changeable (e.g. Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1996), while among others, the debate about a biological destiny or imperative is strong (e.g. Bem, 1994; Bly, 1991; Yoder, 1999). Some see men as victims of masculinity (e.g. Greentstein, 1993), while others suggest masculinity is the basis of privilege and the power to dominate women, children and other men (e.g. Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1996). In some cases masculinity is valorised (e.g. Bly, 1991), and in others is criticised as constraining and oppressive (see e.g. Dench, 1994; Lloyd and Wood, 1996). Some see it as rewarding (e.g. Bernard, 1981), others as punishing (e.g. Gould, 1974; Jourard, 1971), and others see it as simultaneously rewarding and punishing (e.g. Brenton, 1972). To some it is a contextualised but generalisable construct (see e.g. Mac an Ghail, 1996), but others suggest it may not be generalisable further than the individual (e.g. Connell, 1995). Further, added to this mix is the concern that 'masculinity' (the hegemonic form in particular) exists within the discourses that attempt to define it, or exists as ideology, but not among men themselves (see e.g. Edley and Wetherell, 1995).

These debates are also complicated by a weakness in the literature concerning the distinctions and relations between the concepts of 'masculinities' and the 'male role'. To illustrate, Donaldson (1993, 646-7) claims that

'What in early literature had been written of as 'the male sex role' *is best seen as* hegemonic masculinity, 'the culturally idealised form of masculine character' which, however, may not be 'the usual form of masculinity' at all.' (Emphasis added).

Donaldson (1993), like many others, provides no justification for linking the male sex role and masculinity. As he dubiously states, they are just best seen as synonymous. Edley and Wetherell (1995, 77), in an otherwise comprehensive text, similarly suggest

'...despite all of the different ways in which the male sex-role has been conceived, studied and subdivided, there still appears to be an overriding

consensus concerning the meaning of masculinity. According to most of these sources, masculinity is widely associated with aggressiveness, independence, self-reliance and so on'.

This passage contains the same weakness as Donaldson's (1993, 646-7) above, in making an unexplained conceptual leap from the male sex-role to masculinity. While the concepts are closely allied, there is little evidence to suggest that the male sex-role and masculinity are in fact the same thing.

It is outlined in the methodology chapter that this thesis separates 'masculinity' and the 'male sex role' by adopting a realist approach to social research and applying Bhaskar's (1975) 'hierarchy of reality'. This allows us to identify which of the constructs is tangible (the 'male role') and intangible (masculinity) and, for the purposes of this research, which of the constructs can be measured.

### **Essentialist masculinity**

In the essentialist sense, masculinity is often applied as an umbrella term that describes a number of attributes, traits and behaviours that are associated with 'men', and that are used to define men as 'men' (Messner, 1998). The basis of the distinction made between 'men' and 'women' is that of biological sex differences; in the case of men it is argued to be the presence of the Y chromosome that emerges via sex hormones and shapes a range of behaviours, preferences, attributes and capabilities that are uniquely 'male', and not 'female' (Bem, 1994; Connell, 1995). Typically, biological essentialist explanations associate men with characteristics such as physical strength, assertiveness, authority, the possession of (technical) skill, economic and emotional independence (Bem, 1994; Connell, 1995), and those noted by Bem (1974) below. Martin (1998, 474) suggests that such characteristics are normatively associated with men, and are normatively and empirically discouraged among women. 'Male' characteristics are at the polar extreme of those considered to be 'feminine' or 'female', and are thus easily identifiable (Martin,

1998). In the essentialist sense, masculinity is a tangible construct that refers to a set of observable behaviours and character traits (that can be traced back to biological differences between men and women). It is perhaps this visibility in everyday life of 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits that encourages their existence to be explained away with reference to biology and an innate male or female 'essence'.

This conceptualisation of masculinity has informed the development of numerous masculinity, femininity and androgyny psychological scales, designed to measure degrees of gender alignment. Of these, Bem's (1974) study appears to provide the most comprehensive approach to splitting human characteristics along gender lines. Tables 1 and 2 below, show a sample of the gendered characteristics that Bem claims to have found in developing the Bem psychological androgyny scale (Bem, 1974).

Table 1. The Bem (1974) psychological androgyny scale: masculine characteristics.

Masculine characteristics		
Acts as a leader	Competitive	Makes decisions easily
Aggressive	Defends own beliefs	Self-reliant
Ambitious	Dominant	Self-sufficient
Analytical	Forceful	Strong personality
Assertive	Has leadership abilities	Willing to take a stand
Athletic	Independent	Willing to take risks

Table 2. The Bem (1974) psychological androgyny scale: feminine characteristics.

Feminine characteristics		
Affectionate	Gentle	Soft spoken
Cheerful	Gullible	Sympathetic
Compassionate	Loves children	Tender
Does not use harsh language	Loyal	Understanding
Eager to soothe hurt feelings	Sensitive to needs of others	Warm
Flatterable	Shy	Yielding

Bem's (1974) research reinforces commonsensical ideas about the gender binary; that the genders are harmonious, compatible and complementary, yet diametrical. Such research also gives weight to the functionalist tenet that the genders are suited to different but contradictory types of social activity, with the instrumental male (the public worker) and expressive female (the private carer) (Parsons and Bales, 1953). This approach to masculinity/femininity typically reduces the concepts to sweeping descriptions or lists of traits that may bear little resemblance to the characters of individual males and females. As Hearn (1996, 207) suggests, they '...are really descriptions of popular ideologies about the actual or ideal characteristics of men'.

Bem's findings are typical of the essentialist conceptualisation that represented the research paradigm of the 1970s, particularly in the United States. This has not stood the test of time and has since been superseded by other paradigms. However, its evident simplicity and familiarity has secured its longevity in society, and among some (male) authors (see below).

One of the issues raised by the use of such descriptions is whether the division of behavioural norms is based on observations of social practices, or cultural ideals concerning the way the genders are expected to behave (Edley and Wetherell 1995, 90). Certainly the results of Bem's research above are questionable. In this case, Bem's (1974) sample, a panel of one hundred student 'judges', divided the list of characteristics according to gender-desirability, rather than the degree to which they applied to the individual. The resulting division of characteristics therefore only serves to reinforce gender stereotypes, and tells us little about behavioural diversity in the male and female populations.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that much quantitative, gender-based socio-psychological research in the United States and Canada has relied on unrepresentative samples. Research projects have frequently utilised college students, most often paid and sometimes rewarded with extra course credit to complete gender-based research (E.g. Aube and Koestner, 1995; Bem, 1974; Brooks-Harris and Heesacker, 1996; Fischer *et al*, 1998; O'Neil *et al*, 1986). Brannon and Juni's (1984) 'scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity', for example, which is seen by some as a seminal work in this field, was not only completed and validated by student samples; the scale items used to measure the construct of masculinity were written by a sample of 75 undergraduate students.

In comparison to true random sampling, sampling among undergraduate students is relatively quick and easy, and it is perhaps for these reasons that this tradition continues. In 1998, Fischer *et al* sought to check the effectiveness of Brannon and Juni's (1984) scale with additional student samples from two US universities. As the respondents of the Fischer *et al* (1998) study had an average age of 22, and nearly nine out of ten were white, such research can tell us only a limited amount about men and masculinity. Qualitative work in the field of masculinity has sometimes been similarly narrow in its socio-economic

focus. Pleck and Sawyer's (1974) influential book 'Men and Masculinity', for example, consists of chapters on the experiences of stockbrokers, doctors, academics and executives. In this text particularly, the notion of the male as (a highly successful) economic provider is central to conceptions of masculinity.

As Messner (1998, 264) notes, the findings of such studies have informed masculinity debates and, hence, falsely universalised the experiences of college educated men. Findings from student samples cannot possibly reflect the diversity of the male population. Indeed, it may be questioned whether knowledge about gender-coded roles and masculinity has been held back in any way by this continued reliance on student samples. As is outlined in Chapter 4, a key aim of this project is to examine alignment with the breadwinner role among a socio-economically and demographically diverse sample.

Synonymous use by essentialists of 'masculinity' and 'masculine characteristics' as 'the things that men do' or 'the way men are' neglects important systems of inequality and the hierarchical structure of the male population. The essentialist perspective is ultimately unable to account for diversity in experience on the basis of, for example, age, sexual orientation, profession, religion, race and class, as it is built upon references to biology, innateness and the fulfilment of certain forms of behaviour. It also leads to stereotypical 'categories' or 'types' of men that arguably bear little resemblance to men and their daily lives. Yet, while masculinity discourses have become more complex and the essentialist approach largely discredited, the literature frequently makes reference to such masculinity stereotypes (e.g. Williams, 1995; Young, 1996)

Hearn (1996) argues that the trait-based essentialist account of masculinity, and often the term 'masculinity' in general, is applied as an imprecise and inadequate shorthand for social phenomena that involve men. This is demonstrated in the literature that

problematizes masculinity as the cause of social effects such as violence, crime, dominance and the 'crisis in masculinity' (Lloyd and Woods, 1996; Popay *et al*, 1998). Where the problem is conceptualised as male traits and behaviours, the proffered solution is typically changes to masculinity and the male role socialisation process. This shifts the onus of responsibility on to individual men - and women, as mothers, for the role they play in early years socialisation, and as 'bearers' of masculinity, by distinguishing feminine forms of behaviour (Hearn, 1994) - and fails to acknowledge or challenge the privileges, influences and legitimacy of patriarchal social structures.

### **Essentialism updated**

In the 1990s, alternative essentialist strands of masculinity writings emerged that took a mythopoetical approach to a supposed crisis in masculinity. This was manifest in popularist texts including Bly's (1990) 'Iron John: A Book About Men', Greenstein's (1993) 'The Fragile Male', Lyndon's (1992) 'No More Sex War: The Failures of Feminism', and Thomas's (1993) 'Not Guilty: Men: The Case for the Defence'. Drawing on sex role theory and a mythology of the innateness of gender differences, these texts argue for the existence of unequivocal biological differences between the sexes, and a natural, necessary, and complementary division of labour in the family and society.

These and other texts of the same vein, formed part of a 'backlash' against feminism, and shared the tenet that, as a result of the gains of the feminist movement, men were hindered in living and working as their biology intended (Messner, 1998). The following quote from Greenstein, typical of the genre in its use of language and gender mythology, demonstrates his belief in a gendered division of labour and opportunity, and the perception that the supposed biological authority of men is in crisis as a result of female gains in the labour market:

'He knows he has nothing on the female who performs miracles back home, so he acknowledges defeat on that count and turns his sights on the office, on the building site, on a ship or in an aeroplane, or in a lecture or operating theatre. For thousands of years he marked out his territory, and firmly kept women off his patch. But now they are prowling all over his land; no matter where he looks, there they are, and they are eating his grass and killing his animals. What's worse, they are getting to the kill before he can.' (Greenstein, 1993, 110).

The texts noted above go so far as to claim that it is men, not women, who are oppressed and discriminated against. The evidence for this is argued to include falling levels of academic achievement among boys, increasing unemployment, economic inactivity, suicide, mental illness, alcohol and drug abuse among men, and gender bias in favour of women in the welfare and legal systems, (particularly in respect of divorce and child maintenance, custody and access) (e.g. Bly; 1990; Greenstein, 1993; Lyndon, 1992; Thomas, 1993).

Messner (1998) suggests that such texts are indicative of the shift that occurred in the USA in the mid-1970s from the 'men's liberation movement' to the 'men's rights movement'. Messner (1998) argues that prior to this shift, masculinist texts tended to be written from a shared feminist perspective, and commonly argued that men and women were equal victims of sex role stereotyping. (Even before the backlash male liberationists appeared to be over-stating their case). Male liberationists such as Farrell (1974), Jourard (1971), Nichols (1975), and Pleck and Sawyer (1974), for example, claimed that men are victims of sex role socialisation as much as women. The socialisation process, these texts argued, promoted psychologically unhealthy characteristics and aspirations in men such as competitiveness, violence and goal-orientation.

As Edley and Wetherell (1995) note, male liberationist authors claimed that men were not the cause of 'women's problems'. They sympathised with the emancipatory goals of the feminist movement and called for men and women to join together in overthrowing their shared enemy, that of the sex-role socialisation process and gender stereotyping. It was

argued that society was sexist and oppressive, not men. But, as Messner (1998, 265) points out:

'By ignoring the institutionalised racial and class constraints faced by Black, Latino, Asian, working class, and poor men, men's liberationists preoccupied themselves with the "lethal" aspects of the male role" and the "burden of the breadwinner role," while avoiding the issue of their own positions of privilege within race, class and gendered hierarchies. As a result, calls for changing masculinity were reduced to simplistic arguments for greater lifestyle choices, a wider range of acceptable emotional expression, and opportunities for self-actualisation for (relatively privileged) men.'

The emergence of the populist 'new Man' and 'new Lad' masculinities in the UK in the 1980s and 1990s had a similar rationale and outcome: the impetus was perceived forms of inequality, while the desired outcomes included the propensity for greater emotionality (new Man) and greater economic and personal autonomy (new Lad) (Bancroft, 1999). In similarity to Messner's (1998) claim, in a framework of male domination and privilege these masculinity 'movements' sought to secure for men other privileges in the family and society.

What male liberationists frequently gloss over is the fundamental power differential between men and women. Suggesting that men and women are equally discriminated against neglects the maintenance and daily reproduction of male structural power, and the continued dominance of men, as individuals and a social group, over women in public and private sectors.

Messner (1998) suggests that in the mid-1970s a split occurred in the US men's liberation movement. A progressive faction broke away and concerned itself with profeminist, or antisexist, works that challenged, deconstructed, and aimed to dissolve, male power bases. In contrast, writers of conservative persuasions over time aligned themselves with the 'men's right's movement' which was patently hostile towards women and feminism, and

dismissive of men's structural and institutional power (Messner, 1998, 266). Some of the highly controversial claims of the men's right's movement included that men are the true victims of pornography, false rape allegations, prostitution etc (e.g. Bly, 1990). Such claims, suggests Messner (1998, 266), had a basis not in the findings of reliable studies, but in anecdote and 'a few highly questionable studies'.

The value of an essentialist-based conceptualisation of masculinity as an analytical framework for researching men in a national, and particularly cross-national, setting is questionable. As Hearn (1996) points out, one of the significant failures of the essentialist approach to masculinity is its focus on the heterosexual, white, middle class experience in the Western world. Connell (1993, 600) similarly argues that the English-language masculinities literature only reflects the white, middle class experiences of its white, middle class authors, and fails to address the experiences of manual workers, and men of different ethnicities and classes. He estimates that masculinity discourses can only be applicable to 5% of the world's male population (Connell, 1993, 600).

Connell (1993, 605) disputes the existence of an innate masculinity with reference to the findings of studies of Confucian and Neo-Confucian cultures and studies of the Papua New Guinea population. The evidence, he suggests 'wipes out sociobiology, any scheme of genetic determination, or any ontological or poetic account of male essences, as credible accounts of masculinity' (Connell, 1993, 605). Instead, the behavioural norms used to support the existence of an innate masculinity only represent a privileged, though not necessarily empirical, ethnocentric version of masculinity which those in a position of social power wish to have accepted (Connell, 1987). It is these behavioural norms that reinforce the notion that males and females are fundamentally different and thus provides the daily justification for patriarchal social structures.

The inadequacies of the essentialist conceptualisation of masculinity as a normative referent were further challenged by the emergence of two alternative research paradigms among researchers in the United States (Brooks-Harris *et al*, 1996, 564). In the early 1980s, Pleck's (1981) concept of 'gender role strain' and O'Neil's (1981) concept of 'gender role conflict' emerged in the light of concerns that men were increasingly unable to fulfil the roles expected of them, and live up to dominant masculine images. The subsequent literature on role strain and role conflict generated new socio-psychological research instruments and paved the way for diverse poststructuralist accounts of masculinity. The emergent masculinities literature acknowledged that masculinity was instead a 'complex and problematic construct' (Brooks-Harris *et al*, 1996, 364).

### **Materialist and poststructuralist accounts of masculinity**

Writers of an essentialist persuasion neglect sources of inequality and power between men, in asserting that masculinity is innate to and shared by men, seemingly regardless of circumstance. Writers of a materialist persuasion have sought to address this inadequacy and, so the author believes, have made amongst the most pertinent contributions to the debate.

The theoretical framework of the materialist perspective is built upon the tenet that masculinity and a man's identity and sense of self are a reflection of his position within social and economic arrangements and structures. A man's relation to the production of goods and services and the exchange of these goods, the organisation of labour, the distribution of property, and the organisation of family life, for example, will shape how he perceives himself, his 'masculinity', his roles, and those of his peers (Edley and Wetherell, 1995). In this sense, masculinity is historically variable and is socially, rather than biologically or naturally produced. The literature reviewed earlier in this chapter demonstrates how masculinity is historically and economically contextualised: with

different interpretations of men in the family and society throughout the stages of industrialisation and deindustrialisation, in different locations and in different professions.

Unlike essentialists, materialists take into consideration the various social groupings to which an individual belongs. The argument is that to understand one individual we need to understand the individual's socio-economic context, which is formed on the basis of their employment status, occupation, race, class and age (Connell, 1993; Hearn, 1994, 1996; Popay *et al*, 1998). An individual's race or class positioning, for example, has materialist consequences in terms of economic well being, the exercise of power and of opportunities for self definition (Hearn, 1994). These may also combine and interact to greater or lesser effect with other important social divisions, such as those between able-bodied and disabled, and homosexual and heterosexual men (Hearn, 1996). As Mac an Ghail (1996) suggests there is also the potential for contradiction within an individual's group affiliations: the sense of masculinity of the white, heterosexual, and therefore powerful male, may be shaken by unemployment, or undermined by working class status. The evidence discussed thus far certainly suggests that unemployment or economic inactivity is a fundamental challenge to men's perceptions of their own masculinity – further discrediting the stability of masculinity that is implied by essentialists.

The focus on the individual's group memberships is not to necessarily imply a qualitative or ethnographic approach to the study of masculinity. Materialists seek to examine broad social patterns, compare the social and economic position of social groups with other social groups, investigate patterns in the division of labour, and ultimately generalise about gender and the regularities in gender inequalities across society (Edley and Wetherell, 1995, 97-98). Gender, race and class-based analyses are attempts to summarise individual experiences in terms of general categories. The results chapters of this thesis make clear the broad materialist underpinnings of this research by investigating attitudes towards the

breadwinner role on the basis of affiliation to different social groupings, and various measures of socio-economic standing.

Inevitably, materialists deny the notion of a singular form of masculinity. Popay *et al* (1998, 39) suggest that masculinities change over generations, and according to the social distinctions noted above. Mac an Ghail (1996) argues that masculinity is constructed within the family, under the guidance of the father role model, and later reproduced through role socialisation and men's social roles as fathers, sons, husbands, lovers, partners and workers. Hearn (1994) similarly suggests that masculinities are flexible 'combinations of actions' that are influenced by and exhibited within the contexts of other social identities. The argument has recently been extended to incorporate other contemporary influences on forms of masculinity including sports, consumption, music, fatherhood and crime (see Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghail, 1996).

Poststructuralist accounts of masculinity are grounded in theoretical discourses emphasising, for example, the influence of cultural values, the body and practices, sexuality, narratives, politics and the gender order. Butler (1990, 1993) for example, stresses the importance of language; how categorisation and the process of naming, in this case, of a 'man', actualises a set of assumptions about 'men'. Poststructuralist accounts reject the notion of masculinity as shaped by a 'male essence' or biological drive. Instead, gender is performed daily, and represents an on-going gender performance or 'project' (Connell, 1995, 72). Masculinity, like femininity, is defined as performed, fluid<sup>16</sup>, context-sensitive, insecure, contested, socially scripted and changeable throughout the life course (Edley and Wetherell, 1995).

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<sup>16</sup> The notion of fluidity in gender identity, a concept reintroduced in poststructuralist works, was noted by Ternan and Miles (1936) in their study *Sex and Personality*. However, they viewed masculinity as the polar opposite of femininity, with grades of intermediate states in between the two extremes (Ternan and Miles, 1936).

Work within the poststructuralist framework generated claims that rather than a singular, shared masculinity, multiple masculinities exist (e.g. Brod, 1987; Connell, 1987; Kimmel, 1987). In turn, this focus on multiple masculinities generated interest in masculinity hierarchies and in dominance between men (e.g. Connell, 1995; Lorber, 1998). Connell (1995, 37) suggested it was necessary to:

‘...recognise the *relations* between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate and exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity.’ (Original emphasis).

### **Hegemonic masculinity**

Connell (1995) suggests that there is no one form of masculinity that is consistently found in all societies and from which we can generalise. Instead, he argues that multiple masculinities exist (he acknowledges there may, in fact, be as many masculinities as there are men), with some being subordinated (such as homosexual masculinities) or marginalised (such as the masculinities of racial minorities) within a hierarchy of masculinities (Connell, 1995, 76-81). In examining this within-gender variability, Connell (1987, 1993, 1995) and many others have drawn on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to conceptualise ‘hegemonic masculinity’<sup>17</sup>. Connell suggests that at any given time there exists a hegemonic form of masculinity that reflects and safeguards the interests of the most powerful faction of the male population. Hearn (1996) suggests that among the multiple forms of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity represents the clearest, most theorised, popularised and visible form. That is not to say it is the most popular, or widespread form of masculinity among men: it is the form of masculinity *ideology* that is most dominant in any society at any particular time. As Connell (1993, 610) suggests ‘Hegemony is a question of relations of cultural domination, not of head-counts’. It is

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<sup>17</sup> Gottfried (1998, 460) notes that Gramsci’s texts never applied the concept of hegemony to gender relations, but that it has since been appropriated by feminists (and those writing on men and masculinities) to analyse male domination and female subordination.

therefore the form of masculinity that is aspired to or idealised<sup>18</sup>, but not necessarily achieved to any significant degree within the male population. As Donaldson (1993, 645) suggests, it is:

'A culturally idealised form, it is both a personal and collective project, and is the common-sense about breadwinning and manhood.... While centrally connected with the institutions of male dominance, not all men practice it, though most benefit from it'.

This is exemplified in the breadwinner role. It appears that the privileges of the role have become so embedded in the family and society that without necessarily performing the role men can reap the rewards and privileges that are associated with it. The following chapter discusses how gender inequality associated with the breadwinner role (for example, the gendered distribution of unpaid work and women's economic dependence) is often sustained through periods of male unemployment and economic inactivity. It is not always necessary for men to be the family breadwinner to secure a position of privilege and reward in the family.

Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony refers to the maintenance of power by certain social groups that is all the more secure for being garnered by persuasion and consent, rather than by force. Similarly, the hegemonic form of masculinity is so-called as it legitimates gender-based inequality in such a way as to make it appear natural, inevitable and ordinary (Donaldson, 1993). Hegemonic masculinity reinforces patriarchy as a natural state of gender order. Connell (1995, 77) claims that:

'Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of

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<sup>18</sup> Donaldson (1993, 646) suggests the 'most influential agents' in the idealisation of the hegemonic form of masculinity include 'priests, journalists, advertisers, politicians, psychiatrists, designers, playwrights, film makers, actors, novelists, musicians, activists, academics, coaches and sportsmen'. He suggests they are the 'weavers of the fabric of hegemony' in that they '...regulate and manage gender regimes; articulate experiences, fantasies, and perspectives; reflect on and interpret gender relations' (Donaldson, 1993, 646).

patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women’.

Carrigan *et al* (1985, 594) suggest that ‘...hegemony closely involves the division of labour, the social definition of tasks as either ‘men’s work’ or ‘women’s work’, and the definition of some kinds of work as more masculine than others’. Men are associated with particular jobs and are perceived, often by both sexes, that they are more valuable than those performed by women, but there is nothing inherently more worthwhile about male jobs than female jobs (Oakley, 1974). Rather, their value stems from the fact that it is men performing them (Oakley, 1974). Leask (2001) found an interesting example of how certain tasks become gender-aligned in her study of a slaughter line in a British meat factory. Leask (2001) found a strongly gender segregated mode of production, with only men working on the slaughter line, and women confined to the packaging sectors of the factory. She concludes that the slaughter line positions were not inherently masculine, but that they had become gendered by association with the qualities that were required to complete the tasks. The slaughter line was associated with masculine qualities such as physical strength, emotional strength (the ‘cold-blooded detachment’ required to kill animals), stamina, and the use of tools. It was on this basis that the jobs, and men, were defined as masculine, and the female workers were controlled and segregated within the factory.

The enforcement of hegemony also closely involves the state. For example, Carrigan *et al* (1985, 594) note that the criminalisation of male homosexuality (which was previously dominant in renaissance Europe) was a key move in the construction of the modern form of hegemonic masculinity. As Donaldson (1993, 645) suggests over time heterosexuality and homophobia have become ‘the bedrock’ of hegemonic masculinity. Conforming to hegemonic masculinity is also enforced by the state through economic incentives such as

welfare rules and tax concessions that are only of benefit within heterosexual unions (Carrigan *et al*, 1985, 594).

It is argued that throughout modernity, hegemonic masculinity has been associated with qualities such as physical strength, patriarchal organisation of the household, freedom from domestic activity, earning a family wage, and dominance over women, children and weaker men (e.g. Bowl, 1985; Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghail, 1996). Although seemingly similar to essentialist trait-based definitions of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity focuses on gendered practices and learnt or socially-scripted performances, rather than attributes (e.g. Wetherell and Edley, 1999). As a performance or practice it is then entirely feasible to be hegemonic or non-hegemonic according to the context (e.g. Connell, 1995; Wetherell and Edley, 1999). (It is also feasible that women may draw upon such practices). In a qualitative conversation analysis study Speer (2001) shows how men construct extreme definitions of hegemonic masculinity, and would seek to alternate between alignment with, and disassociation from the hegemonic masculinity. Speer (2001) found that the degree of alignment changes and so do definitions and applications, which give it different meanings across contexts.

The breadwinner role and the practice of 'bringing home a family wage' are central to the hegemonic masculinity. Yet, as noted earlier it is a role that it is not consistent or context-free; men's alignment with the breadwinner role and hegemonic masculinity may be stronger at some points during the life course. This study applies various measures in an attempt to uncover any such relationships.

As Donaldson (1993, 645) argues, even if men do not aspire to, or achieve this type of masculinity, they nevertheless benefit from its existence and are 'complicit' in sustaining it. Carrigan *et al* (1985, 592) suggest that:

'...the culturally exalted form of masculinity, the hegemonic model so to speak, may only correspond to the actual characters of a small number of men....There is a distance and a tension, between collective ideal and actual lives. Most men do not really act like the screen image of John Wayne or Humphrey Bogart....Yet very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model. There are various reasons....But the overwhelmingly important reason is that most men benefit from the subordination of women, and hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected with the institutionalisation of men's dominance over women. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that hegemonic masculinity is hegemonic so far as it embodies a successful strategy in relation to women'.

Donaldson (1993, 646) argues that even powerful men rarely achieve hegemonic masculinity, and that it often excludes working class men and black men. Nonetheless most men gain by supporting its existence. Where men may not fit model but gain from it is notably the case with homosexual men, who, as Connell (1995) argues are men, not some third gender. Homosexual men may experience the forms of privilege available to their gender without participating in hegemonic practices.

Some inherent contradictions in the concept of hegemonic masculinity have been pointed out. Donaldson (1993, 647), for example, points out that participation in competitive sport is a central feature of hegemonic masculinity, and that 'a football star is a model of hegemonic masculinity'. It was noted above that Connell (1995) and Mac an Ghail (1996) also perceive participation in sports as a defining influence on contemporary forms of masculinities. Yet Donaldson (1993, 647) argues that sports are often the impetus for male bonding, connectedness and male closeness. This desire for connectedness and closeness are the very things that hegemonic masculinity contests.

The following chapter discusses how adopting the breadwinner role, a practice that is central to the hegemonic masculinity, can be of considerable benefit to men, (and is often a source of inequality for women). But in discussing what men are able *to do* with hegemonic masculinity, Donaldson (1993, 646) points out that:

'...hegemonic masculinity can be analyzed, distanced from, appropriated, negated, challenged, reproduced, separate from, renounced, given up, chosen, constructed with difficulty, confirmed, imposed, departed from, and modernized. (But not, apparently, enjoyed.) What can it do to men? It can fascinate, undermine, appropriate some men's bodies, organize, impose, pass itself off as natural, deform, harm, and deny. (But not, seemingly, enrich and satisfy.)'

The concept is therefore somewhat paradoxical in that at a material level many men benefit from the existence of this cultural ideology that reinforces their dominance in the gender order. On a personal level, however, the ideal may be unrealistic, unattainable, and undesirable, as the ideal of femininity is undoubtedly to many women. Further, hegemonic masculinity is argued to reflect the interests of the most powerful men in society, as noted above mostly to the exclusion of working class men. However, as discussed earlier in the chapter, the breadwinner role which is central to the concept, has been a strongly-held ideal among men in some working class professions. Agricultural workers and miners were noted as particularly attached to the breadwinner role as a central source of masculine identity, despite the economic hardship it would often entail. There is therefore some degree of tension between how the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been defined by academics, and how it has been played out in actuality in some working class arenas.

### **Concluding comments**

The first two parts of this chapter overviewed how patterns in the internal organisation of the 'family' and the distribution of waged labour between men and women have been shaped by socio-economic processes at the macro scale. It was noted how breadwinner ideology developed around the time of industrialism in some regions and among (men of) some professions, typically on the basis of women's exclusion from economic and self-provisioning activities. By the early to mid-twentieth century breadwinner ideology gathered pace, aided by the process of re-establishing the masculinist status quo in the family and labour market following the war years, and the structural priority given to the

breadwinner role in the emerging welfare state. Towards the close of the twentieth century, the process of deindustrialisation had a significant impact on the economic sectors that previously sustained much male employment. Concurrently shifts occurred in the composition of the workforce, with a rise in the number of economically active females and 'dual-earner' families.

Janssens's (1997) claim that the actual number of breadwinner families throughout recent British history has never matched the prominence of breadwinner ideology seems entirely credible. Using the central tenet of the 'family wage' debate, for many families one wage was/is inadequate. The discussion based on Savage's (1987) typology of labour markets during early industrialism shows that, where opportunities existed, some regions sustained high female participation rates. Given the rise of the 'dual-earner' family in contemporary Britain it also appears credible to suggest that the mismatch between breadwinner ideology and practice has become even more pronounced.

However, the argument changes when we merge the socio-historical literature on the breadwinner family with the literature on women's experiences within the nuclear family. It is evident that neither the term 'breadwinner' family nor 'dual-earner' family caters for the position of women in part-time employment. Indeed, it is argued that these labels have distorted the debates about women's experiences, and the distribution of labour in the family.

On the one hand, Horrell and Humphries (1997) and Harkness *et al* (1995) have shown that in the industrial and post-industrial periods respectively, women engaged in part-time employment make important contributions to the economic sustainability of their families. In this respect, (where the male partner is also engaged in paid work), there is symmetry with the dual-earner family as defined in the literature. On the other hand however, Oakley

(1974) and others have shown that as secondary or supplementary earners, women engaged in part-time employment typically experience a range of inequality that is similar in depth and breadth to economically inactive women in breadwinner families. As such, there is also overlap with the 'breadwinner' family.

This should lead us to question the appropriateness of the 'dual-earner' label given to families in which the female is in part-time employment (given that, as Crompton (1999) notes, the label implies balance in the distribution of paid and unpaid work between the genders). As part of this, it appears that the way the 'dual-earner' family has been operationalised in the literature also requires some attention. These issues have not been addressed in the literature or informed debates about the rise and 'decline' of the breadwinner role – on which they evidently have an impact.

To account for the experiences of women in part-time employment the concept of the 'primary breadwinner' family is introduced. Applying the concept of the 'primary breadwinner' family (in which both partners participate in paid work, but there is an unequal distribution of such work, and consequently of inequalities and privileges) has two consequences.

Firstly, it challenges claims that dual-earners represent the dominant couple family type in contemporary Britain. In applying this distinction between dual-earners and primary breadwinners, this study finds more of the latter (see Chapter 5). With a representative sample, it may be the case that this type of family is dominant over dual-earners as they arguably should be defined (those with equality of paid work – undoubtedly the question of the distribution of unpaid work will remain gendered for the foreseeable future).

Secondly, it brings the breadwinner role to the surface again. With the rise in the number of dual-earner families (as defined in the literature), the concept of the breadwinner role appears somewhat out-dated. Yet if we acknowledge that there is some parity of experience between women of 'dual-earner' and breadwinner families then we must also acknowledge the continued relevance of men's dominance in the family. To date, it appears that the label of 'dual-earner' family has concealed the maintenance of gendered practices and female inequalities in many families.

In addition to socio-economic processes, this chapter has also overviewed the influence of masculinity. It is hypothesised that men's alignment, or otherwise, with the hegemonic masculinity will to greater or lesser degrees explain their attachment to the breadwinner role. It may also help to explain the distribution of the breadwinner/home-maker division of labour found in the sample. However, the relationship is not anticipated to be linear, given that the hegemonic masculinity is an idealised type that few men achieve (or desire) in reality (Donaldson, 1993).

Many of the claims made by authors concerned with the 'men's rights movement', including those of Bly (1990) and Greenstein (1993), for example, are highly questionable. As Messner (1998) notes, many claims are based on anecdote rather than research. This includes the argument made by Greenstein (1993) and others that (the relative) female gains in the economic sector have been to the detriment of men. The conceptual frameworks of such texts wholly neglect the power differential and structural inequalities between men and women. They also neglect important power differentials between men. McGiveny's (1999) study shows that for working class men alignment with the hegemonic masculinity is constraining. A strong attachment to the breadwinner role and traditional forms of work is a barrier to adjusting to new patterns of employment, and participation in retraining and education.

Although 'masculinity' is noted to be a complex, and sometimes poorly conceptualised construct, there are some common themes in all the divergent accounts. Firstly, for all the attempts to move the discussion away from essentialist trait-based conceptualisations, the concept of masculinity relies heavily on attributes, traits and forms of behaviour that distinguish masculinity from femininity. Secondly, a man's sense of masculinity is not constant; it is changeable over time, and in particular places and social situations. By exploring the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents this study aims to investigate how men's alignment with the breadwinner role changes according to circumstance.

To date the masculinities literature has not fully explored whether men adopt patterns of behaviour that are consistent or divergent from their beliefs. Just how persuasive is alignment with the hegemonic masculinity in shaping choices, attitudes and behaviour? Studies by McGiverny (1999) and Dennis *et al* (1969) have addressed this question in the context of working class men and working class occupations. Similarly, the masculinities literature is at present narrowly focused on student samples and theoretical approaches. This study aims to bridge these gaps by exploring the relevance of the hegemonic masculinity (in respect of the breadwinner role) to men's lives.

The following chapter now turns to examining the internal dynamics of the breadwinner family. Here we explore further how this family type is structured to men's advantage and women's disadvantage. The evidence is compelling, and it is suggested that the roots of the breadwinner role's longevity lies in the powers and privileges it affords men.

## Chapter 3

### Defining and measuring the breadwinner family

This chapter has two aims. The first is to build on the themes of the previous chapter in exploring the internal dynamics of the breadwinner family. The second is to apply this discussion to clarify the terms and concepts used in this study.

The chapter begins by discussing the nature of the labour exchange and the relationships between men and women in the breadwinner family. This family form is noted to be a source of various inequalities for women, and particularly advantageous for men. However, with reference to the men and masculinities literature discussed in the previous chapter, a discussion of male inequality is provided that examines the (negative outcomes of the) centrality of paid employment to male well-being in, and outside of the family.

The second part of the chapter is concerned with clarifying the concepts to be applied and measured in this study. It was discussed in the previous chapter that the terms 'breadwinner' and 'dual-earner' family have at different times and for different reasons been applied with some inaccuracy. To overcome some of the weaknesses in these terms, an alternative family typology is offered. Although arguably more complex, the resulting typology is considered a more precise and equitable means of classifying men's and women's experiences of and in the 'family'.

The final part of the chapter overviews the literature on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. This is framed by Fishbein and Azjen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. In contrast to the tenets of the theory though, there is little evidence of a strong relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Indeed, this is found to be more marked in regards to family-related attitudes, where studies have found little consistency either over time or

within families. It is suggested that the gendered distribution of inequalities and powers in the family makes it difficult for some individuals (notably women) to act in accordance with their beliefs.

### **Part 1: Inequality in breadwinner families**

In Young and Willmott's (1973) study of the symmetrical family, they note that women's experiences of poverty in the nuclear family are often more acute than the experiences of their children and male partners. They observed that among men in the manual, routine and semi-skilled socio-economic groups the larger proportion of family income was spent by and for the social activities of the men. Women's access to the family's economic resources was often severely restricted and confined to a 'household' or 'house-keeping allowance'. Young and Willmott (1973) noted that the allowances remained relatively stable over time with female partners and children not always informed of, or benefiting from wage increases. On this evidence they intimated that some working class nuclear families sustained a gendered distribution of poverty and material inequality. Their evidence contrasts sharply with the breadwinner family rhetoric noted in the previous chapter. It also demonstrates further the inadequacy of the 'one wage per family' debate.

Household surveys of almost any kind, including the Low Income Family Statistics and the Family Expenditure Survey, collate data pertaining to the family unit, often measuring social indicators against the income of the chief earner (generally assumed to be male in two-parent households). However, research since the 1980s has built on the theme identified by Young and Willmott (1973) and exposed the maintenance of unequal patterns of income- and resource-use *within*, as opposed to the traditional focus of *between*, families. Such findings challenge the notions that the breadwinner family represents an economically secure familial arrangement for women and children, and that deprivation is experienced in equal measures throughout the family structure.

Studies in the field of internal household resource distribution, such as those undertaken by Pahl, (1980, 1983, 1989) and Goode *et al* (1998) disclose that women's access to, and use and consumption of family resources often differs, sometimes greatly, to those of male partners or other family members. In order to maintain a particular standard of living or to ease the effects of debt or poverty on family members, women often forfeit biological and/or social needs (e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Glendinning and Millar, 1989, 1992). In both the long- and short-term women have been found to miss meals, eat less than other family members, take part in fewer social activities, and have restricted access to private or public transport (e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Glendinning and Millar, 1989, 1992).

Differential use of household income and resources by female partners (most notably in economically struggling families) is associated with inherently negative impacts on women's economic, socio-psychological and physical well-being (Glendinning and Millar, 1989, 1992). It appears that some of this is attributable to men's dominance in the family (in terms of their control over access to resources). Female-headed single parent families usually have fewer economic resources than couple families. However, Brannen and Wilson (1987) found that among women who experienced the transition to a single parent family, some experienced fewer economic and socio-psychological privations than in their previous life as part of a couple family. The women noted that this was due to the greater control they had over their (limited) resources (Brannen and Wilson, 1987). Pahl's (1980, 1983, 1989) work on the different methods of internal resource allocation within the family (which is discussed below), demonstrates that some women fair better in couple families than others. The key point however, is that women's economic well-being in the family (notably in no-earner and breadwinner families) is dependent upon the degree to which household resources are controlled by the male partner (Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Pahl, 1980, 1983, 1989).

The following section explores how women's economic dependency in the family is exacerbated by inequalities in the labour market and other social agencies. This followed by a review of male inequality in the breadwinner family.

### **Women's economic relationship with the breadwinner family**

Glendinning and Millar (1992) note that women's earning capacity and risk of poverty is compounded throughout their lifetimes. This is based on inequalities associated with domestic labour, child care, and caring for sick, disabled or elderly relatives, women's paid work, social security provisions and the distribution of household finances (Glendinning and Millar, 1989, 1992). Women's (access to) independent income is sometimes severely constrained, and is often offset or supplemented by a male partner's earnings (Pahl, 1983). This is, of course, the tautological assumption that perpetuates the gender pay gap as women are often deemed to be supported by a (higher earning) male (Harkness *et al*, 1995).

Women's access to secure employment and individual solvency is largely more precarious than that of males. Glendinning and Millar (1992) conclude that women, as a social group, sustain a notable risk of economic insecurity and poverty throughout their lives. According to the Government Households Below Average Income data for 1999/2000 the risk of poverty for men was 20% compared with 24% for women (Ruxton, 2002). Risk of poverty has been found to increase significantly for women when combined with a 'vulnerable' life-stage (such as mother with pre-school children or pensioner), disability, a lower class affiliation, and/or race other than Caucasian (Goode *et al*, 1998; Glendinning and Millar, 1992; Oppenheim, 1993).

We can summarise some of the main factors that exacerbate women's economic well-being in the labour market and family as including:

- ◆ Social policy and abated social welfare services, which have restored the primary responsibilities of caring for young, elderly, sick or disabled relatives to the 'community', namely women (Dicks *et al*, 1998). This represents a dual-burden for women, as opportunities for paid employment are severely restricted, and the inadequacy of the state-provided carer's 'wage' reinforces female economic dependency (Finch and Mason, 1993);
- ◆ Inadequate public, and unaffordable private, provisions of child care. Other aspects of child care that may exacerbate female economic dependency include the inflexibility of school nursery hours, the tendency of children to suddenly fall ill, the disruption to child care arrangements brought about by school and public holidays, and the prohibitive costs of 'out-of-hours' child care cover (Bristow, 2003);
- ◆ Horizontal segregation, whereby women are concentrated in a small number of employment sectors, often associated with catering, retail or caring, personal or consumer service occupations (Ruxton, 2002). These employment sectors are mostly low-skill and low-pay (Perfect and Hurrell, 2003; Ruxton, 2002);
- ◆ The widespread use of casual, temporary, short-term and/or flexible contracts (largely according to employer, rather than employee needs) in such sectors (McRae, 1997). Consequently employment is highly insecure, mostly without fringe benefits and prone to sudden termination without gratuity (TUC Economic and Social Affairs Department, 1995);
- ◆ Rates of female part-time employment. Mothers in dual-earner families are twice as likely to be working part-time as full-time (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). Hakim (1995) argues that this reflects the fact that part-time employment is often more compatible with household and family commitments. However, this reinforces the 'naturalness' of women's engagement with the home and family, and women's economic dependency;

- ◆ Women's relationship with child birth, child rearing and other caring responsibilities denotes that employment histories may be punctuated and consist of alternating periods of full-time and part-time participation in paid work (Ruxton, 2002). This is noted to compound regularity in National Insurance and private pension contributions (Glendinning and Millar, 1992);
- ◆ The gender pay gap. This is an obvious source of inequality in itself. However, it also often shapes household decisions that female, rather than male employment in a two-person household, should be conceded in times of increased domestic responsibility (Levy *et al*, 2002). As Young and Willmott (1973, 274) note 'When what have been two-income families are reduced to one, it is rarely the husband's that is sacrificed'. The gender pay gap between men and women in full-time employment currently stands at 18% (Ruxton, 2002). This is more marked in the south west where in 2001 women's hourly earnings were 19% below men's, and their weekly earnings were 26% less than men's (New Earnings Survey, 2001).

The adverse relationship that women commonly experience in relation to the labour market and time-consuming responsibilities centred in the home and/or family, reinforce female economic dependency on a male partner or the welfare state. Dependency on a male partner is systematically and structurally advocated by institutions of power, as an arrangement which protects and perpetuates the socio-culturally valued nuclear family form, and gendered divisions of labour (e.g. Bernard, 1981; Land, 1976, 1980). Alternatively, female dependency on state support is customarily rebuked as a threat to capitalist and familial ideology, and society at large (Dicks *et al*, 1998). This has been particularly visible since the 1980s with sporadic 'moral panics' created, in part, by the 'underclass' theories of Murray (1990), media prejudices concerning welfare recipients, and the growing number of female-headed single parent families (e.g. Ermisch and Francesconi, 2000).

### **The paradox of power: male inequality in the breadwinner family?**

Being a breadwinner undoubtedly entails many privileges for men and is a position of considerable power in the family. Participation in full-time employment often absolves men of housework and caring responsibilities, and puts the burden of domestic and caring work on women – who may complete such tasks in tandem with participation in paid employment (e.g. Bernard, 1981; Hood, 1986; Land, 1976, 1980). In addition, men (whether breadwinners or not) often claim a larger share of food, receive nutritional priority, organise their families around their occupational demands, and take responsibility for major decisions, such as geographical mobility and large purchases (e.g. Land, 1980). The breadwinner role is also argued to be a source of prestige and status within families and communities, and among other men (e.g. Bernard, 1981).

It was noted in the previous chapter however, that during the 1990s a strand of masculinities literature emerged that argued men are as, if not more, discriminated against than women by the structures of society (e.g. Bly, 1990; Greenstein, 1993; Lyndon, 1992; Thomas, 1993). This includes the claim that legal processes prioritise women's rights to abortion, child access and custody (e.g. Greenstein, 1993; Lyndon, 1992). The author agrees with Messner (1998, 266) that the claims of such texts are largely anecdotal and lack sound, if any, methodological or sociological bases. They contribute little to sociological debate and to our understanding of how the gender order operates in contemporary society.

However, these texts build on a theme that has a longer history in the (mostly USA-based) literature on men and masculinities. Since the mid-twentieth century, many writers have claimed that the breadwinner role is constraining and burdensome for men, and is a source of gender inequality (e.g. Bakke, 1933; Komarovsky, 1971; Liebow, 1972). It is argued that the unequal distribution of paid work and economic responsibility in the family forces

men to work (perhaps long) hours throughout their life course in jobs that may be creatively constraining, arduous, dangerous and/or humiliating (e.g. Grønseth, 1972). As part of this, it is also suggested that as a result of socialisation into the breadwinner role, unemployment is more socio-psychologically difficult for men than it is for women (e.g. Bly, 1990; Greenstein, 1993; Lyndon, 1992).

Jourard (1971) claims that the male role creates a paradox in men's lives. On the one hand, if men fulfil the traditional male role into which they have been socialised, they deny themselves of basic human requirements such as giving and receiving love and affection. Yet, if men fail to fulfil the expected role they are judged, publicly and privately, as unmanly. This paradox underlies many of the claims made by writers of the recently evolved 'men's rights movement', as discussed in the previous chapter.

However, in this paradox Jourard (1971) makes the assumption that fulfilling the male role, (chiefly the breadwinner role), necessarily precludes men from the intimacy of family life and emotional attachment. As a recent study of fatherhood by Hatter *et al* (2002) (discussed below) shows, this is not necessarily the case. Many men maintain an active role in domestic work and child care. Indeed, far from being excluded from the intimacy of the family, it appears that participation in full-time employment allows men the opportunity to choose for themselves their extent of involvement in the family and household. For many men, full-time employment is not a barrier to participation in family and/or household tasks. As Segal (1990) claims, greater participation in selected forms of child care or domestic work represents another area of male privilege. An increasing emphasis on fatherhood is not lessening men's power over women and children, but is allowing men to 'have it all – power in the public sphere and greater access to the satisfactions (without the frustrations) of family life.' (Segal, 1990, xi).

It was discussed earlier that the breadwinner role is central to the concept of masculinity, and more specifically the hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is arguably not a type of masculinity, but reflects the dominant masculine ideology of its time (Connell, 1987, 1993, 1995; Donaldson, 1993). It was noted that the breadwinner role emerged during early industrialism, and indeed, has been sustained even through periods of high male unemployment. Although the breadwinner role appears to have significant longevity and robustness in socio-economic and cultural terms, at a micro scale the relationship between masculinity and breadwinning appears fragile. Men's sense of masculinity has been shown to be vulnerable during times of economic inactivity or unemployment. Studies have found that following the loss of their economic roles and breadwinning status men ordinarily experience feelings of marginalisation, worthlessness, disillusionment, demoralisation, alienation, and a loss of confidence, motivation and self-respect (e.g. Dicks *et al*, 1988; Brenner, 1979; Jahoda, 1982; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Ruxton, 2002; Tolson, 1977; Young, 1996). It is likely that these socio-psychological difficulties are also related to concerns about the loss of income, and the likelihood of debt and poverty (Goode *et al*, 1998).

Dicks *et al* (1988) agree that male unemployment has negative consequences for self-esteem and masculine identity, but importantly point out that it is mostly women who remain responsible for emotional care within the family, and so carry the burden of such 'masculine loss'. As noted, female partners also employ various strategies to ease the effects of debt or poverty on other family members by, for example, eating less or less often (e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Goode *et al*, 1998; Kempson *et al*, 1994). Further, there is little evidence to suggest that women do not also experience concerns about loss of income and status, or socio-psychological difficulty in adjusting to the loss of paid work (Waters, 2001). The distinction however, is that women have been found to utilise effective coping strategies, and as a result may adjust to unemployment better than men.

Waters (2001) finds that women engage in more proactive coping approaches, such as seeking substitute or alternative roles in the family or community. Women are also more likely than men to seek emotional support from others, and to engage in social activities that foster a positive self-esteem (Waters, 2001).

There is a wealth of literature on men and unemployment, but very little that looks explicitly at women and unemployment. This perpetuates the ideology that participation in paid work is largely the preserve of men, and that, as such, men must suffer more from this loss than women. However, there is little evidence to suggest that the negative outcomes of unemployment are gendered in any way. The socio-psychological difficulties that many men experience following unemployment are interpreted in the men and masculinities literature as inequality, as a negative outcome of the relationship between paid work and masculine identity (e.g. Dicks *et al*, 1988; Brenner, 1979; Jahoda, 1982; Mac an Ghail, 1996; Tolson, 1977). However, rather than being a form of gendered inequality, it simply appears that, in comparison to women, some men may not cope very well with the experience of unemployment. The essentialist and mythopoetical strands of the men and masculinities literature fail to explore this and instead seek explanations that mostly absolve men of any responsibility.

Hearn (1996) suggests that it is important not to take any negative aspects of the breadwinner role, (or any of the other inequalities that writers such as Greenstein (1993) and Lyndon (1992) make claim to), to position men as victims of social processes, or as victims of the relative gains made by the feminist movements. It is also important not to detract from the inequalities that women commonly experience. (Although as a heterogeneous population, some women experience greater inequality than other women). Social structures, including the welfare state and taxation system, nurture the 'male as provider' doctrine, as do many men themselves, given the privileges it affords in the

family, household and community. As Brenton (1966) suggests, this has been to the exclusion of other, arguably more fulfilling roles such as father, husband and citizen.

The question remains as to whether men's appropriation of the public world of paid work, and a self-imposed reliance on employment as a source of masculine identity, status and power can be credibly seen as sources of gender inequality in the family and society at large. The longevity and durability of the association between men and breadwinning implies that whatever negative outcomes accompany the role, they are not outweighed by the powers and privileges. If the breadwinner role is burdensome, it is at least a role of public and private status and reward. This is in sharp contrast to the 'housewife' role that, as Oakley (1974) notes, is unstructured and undefined, unacknowledged, unappreciated (publicly and perhaps privately), unrewarded and often unrewarding. Moreover, if men's dependence on paid work is precarious, as the arguments presented above suggest it is less, or at least no more, precarious than many women's economic dependence on men.

### **Part 2: Defining the research concepts**

This part of the chapter builds on some of the issues discussed thus far in the thesis. Firstly, it was noted in the previous chapter how the terms 'breadwinner' family and 'dual-earner' family, (as typically defined in the literature), are considered to be problematic. To overcome the suggested weaknesses in these terms a discussion of the family types to be applied in this study is provided. Secondly, one of the aims of this study is to examine the relationship between family structure and attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. This is based on the hypothesis that the more traditional the structure of the respondent's family, the more attachment the respondent will demonstrate to the traditional male role. For the purposes of analysis then, it is discussed how the family types introduced previously may be situated along a traditional/non-traditional continuum. Finally, this section demonstrates how the breadwinner role is operationalised.

### **The breadwinner family**

The terms 'nuclear family' and 'breadwinner family' are sometimes used interchangeably and synonymously. When Bernardes (1997, 10) suggests, for example, that 'the nuclear family is so rare as to render the whole idea of the nuclear family entirely redundant', the claim is more applicable conceptually and statistically to breadwinner families. The nuclear family, consisting of a male and female in an intimate, heterosexual relationship, with children, remains a dominant family structure; even if its dominance has been challenged in recent years. The proportion of children living in nuclear households has fallen from 88% in 1981 to 78% in 2002; with most of this fall attributed to the rise of female-headed single parent families (Social Trends, 2003). The number of nuclear households has also been overtaken in recent years by the number of married couple households without children, and single person households (Family Policy Studies Centre, 2000). However, nuclear families still account for 23% of all British households (20% married, 3% cohabiting) (Family Policy Studies Centre, 2000).

'Nuclear family' and 'breadwinner family' are two different, albeit intertwined concepts. The former term is one of many that refer to the physical structure of the family or household as noted above. Counterparts to the nuclear family include single person households, multiple person households (in which members are not necessarily related or within intimate heterosexual or homosexual relationships), married or cohabiting couple households without children, single parent families, extended families and extended step-families (Copeland and White, 1991).

The term 'breadwinner family' is a sub-classification of nuclear family; a breadwinner family is by definition nuclear. However, in applying the term we are also summarising two economic features of the family; the adult family members' relations with the labour market, and the intra-household division of paid and unpaid labour. Closely related to this

are issues of (men's) income and occupational dominance within the family. (A fuller discussion of these features is provided below). Counterparts to the breadwinner family include dual-earner, female breadwinner and no-earner families. All of these terms summarise the nuclear structure of the family and their different distributions of economic activity (see below).

In addition to the conceptual overlap with the 'dual-earner' family as noted earlier, there is another complication with the term 'breadwinner family'. This problem is evident within the literature. It appears though that addressing the problem directly and discussing how it may change our interpretation and operationalisation of the term has been neglected.

Studies have found that men and women sometimes employ strategies to safeguard the 'breadwinner' status of the male in times of unemployment or economic inactivity (e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Kempson *et al*, 1994). Goode *et al* (1998) found that during unemployment men and women continue to perceive the male as provider on the basis, for example, that benefit giro's may be sent to and cashed by the male, and handed over to the female as the family's 'wage' (see e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Kempson *et al*, 1994, for discussion of other strategies). Both males and females are found to be complicit in sustaining the illusion that during male unemployment the male continues to be 'head of household', the chief decision-maker and the family 'wage-earner' (Goode *et al*, 1998). This is usually confined to couples that have strong beliefs in a gendered division of labour in the family (Goode *et al*, 1998). Morris (1985b) notes that wages gained from informal economic activity during unemployment serve a similar purpose. The literature reviewed thus far demonstrates that economic provision for the family through participation in formal employment is the central measure of 'breadwinner' status. Yet there appears to be some discrepancy in how 'breadwinners' are identified within the academic sphere, and how the 'breadwinner' is defined at the level of the household. This appears to lend weight

to Williams's (2003) claim that at the level of the social survey participants should be given the opportunity to define for themselves the measures of the research object.

It is noted in Chapter 5 that this study has identified a further element to this discrepancy. The evidence strongly suggests that men of *female-headed* breadwinner families are reluctant to acknowledge economic dependency within the family, and may over-report their own (non-earned) income in order to be perceived as a breadwinner, or at least the chief breadwinner. Some men appear reluctant to re-define themselves as no-earners or co-earners following adjustments in their relations with their female partners and the labour market. In part, this may be evidence of the strong attachment some men have with hegemonic masculinity, and the socio-psychological difficulties some men experience in adjusting to exclusion or withdrawal from the labour market. There is evidently some need for further research that examines the way a breadwinner identity is constructed by men and women inside and outside of the family.

This study uses Janssens's (1997) definition of the breadwinner family, as a starting point for operationalising the term 'breadwinner family' and discussing the gendered distribution of benefits and inequalities associated with this family type. Janssens (1997) provides a useful account of the internal workings of breadwinner families in a body of literature that often takes the breadwinner family as a taken-for-granted concept. She suggests that the breadwinner family represents the:

'...model of household organization in which the husband is the sole agent operating within the market sector, deploying his labour in order to secure the funds necessary to support his dependent wife and children. In exchange, the wife assumes responsibility for the unpaid labour required for the everyday reproduction of her husband's market work, such as cooking, cleaning and laundering. In addition, she provides for the intergenerational reproduction of labour: the bearing and raising of children.' (Janssens, 1997, 3).

In essence, Janssens's (1997) conceptualisation of the exchange between males and females in breadwinner families is not disputed. However, it is suggested that the definition lacks some robustness. Oakley's (1974) work on the 'housewife' role, for example, allows us to add greater detail, and be more specific in the operationalisation of the term 'breadwinner family' and other family types.

In her study of the housewife role Oakley (1974) identifies that some features of the role, such as economic dependence and the burden of unpaid work, transcend certain distinctions between women. Oakley (1974) finds that economic dependence and the weight of unpaid work remain constant whether the female is married to or cohabiting with the male partner, and whether the couple have children or are childless.

We can add Oakley's (1974) observations to address the following concerns in Janssens's framework:

- ◆ **The ratio of male paid employment to female home- and family-centred unpaid work.**

Rightly, Janssens (1997) definition only includes as breadwinner families those in which the female partner does not participate in paid work. However, excluding families with a female in part-time paid work neglects the resulting internal family dynamics, distribution of resources, and the potential continuance of female dependency.

In a study of a small Herefordshire community, for example, Whitehead (1976, 185) found that part-time working wives continued to be economically dependent as earnings were used for personal purchases such as clothes, rather than household commitments. A decade later, Morris (1987, 96) found that female earnings were used to boost household income but overall were invisible and unrecognised. More recent research recognises that female

part-time earnings are crucial for household solvency, and can no longer be considered as 'pin-money' (Harkness *et al*, 1995).

However, greater participation in part-time paid work appears to have had little impact on the established gender order and female economic dependency in families. Oakley (1974) notes that a part-time employed female experiences a degree of economic dependence commensurate with a female fully engaged in the home. Pahl's (1980; 1983; 1989) work also shows that some means of internal resource distribution are associated with greater economic dependence. Based on these arguments, this study also defines as breadwinner families those in which there is a full-time employed male and a part-time employed female. These are referred to as primary breadwinner families. Distinctions are made between sole breadwinner and primary breadwinner families as appropriate.

◆ **Breadwinner families and breadwinner couples.**

As part of the labour exchange between couples in breadwinner families, Janssens suggests the female role includes the bearing and raising of children. While this is not disputed, it is suggested that an additional category, that of breadwinner couples, is required to acknowledge the position of females not engaged in paid work or in the daily upbringing of children. As it stands, Janssens's definition excludes females without children at home, who are full-time home-makers or are engaged in caring for sick, disabled or elderly relatives or friends. In terms of dependency on a male wage and the daily reproduction of male labour, such cases appear to differ little to women in breadwinner families (Oakley, 1974).

◆ **Marital status.**

In using the terms 'husband' and 'wife', Janssens (1997) prioritises formal marriage and excludes couples and families built on cohabitation. Oakley (1974) notes no difference in

the experiences of unpaid work in the home, child care and economic dependence between cohabiting and married women. This study weights equally marriage and cohabitation, and only distinguishes between the two arrangements where further clarification is required.

◆ **Heterogeneity**

While Janssens points out the organisational similarities between breadwinner families, it is important to note that breadwinner families do not constitute a homogeneous social group. Breadwinner families and couples differ in, for example, socio-economic circumstances and resources, caring responsibilities, and involvement with public agencies (Dicks *et al*, 1998). As individuals and family groups, males and females also experience the privileges or inequalities associated with various group affiliations and hierarchies, most notably ethnicity, class and age.

In terms of internal differences, Pahl's (1980, 1983, 1989) work has shown that the method of internal resource distribution influences internal dynamics, and an individual's power and status in the family. The balance of power and dependency shifts for women depending on the method of resource distribution within the household. For example, women are likely to have greater power in households run under a 'whole wage system', (in which the female partner controls all family income, bar the male partner's personal spending money), rather than that of an 'allowance system', (in which the female partner is dependent upon an 'allowance', largely based on the amount the male partner deems appropriate to meet household needs) (Pahl, 1989).

Similarly, a recent study of paternal involvement in child care by Hatter *et al* (2002) shows that the within-household distribution of unpaid work can differ significantly between families. O'Brien and Shemilt (2003) suggest that the amount of time spent by fathers with their children has increased significantly in recent years, with fathers currently undertaking

approximately a third of all child care responsibilities. Yet, within this context of overall greater participation in the home, some 'types' of fathers have been shown to be more involved than others in the daily care of children. This can be a significant influence on the division of paid and unpaid labour within families.

On the basis of interviews and focus groups Hatter *et al* (2002) summarise four types of fathers that highlight the differing degrees of male involvement in unpaid work in the home:

1. Enforcer Dad: not involved in day-to-day care of children or in domestic tasks; sees himself as a role model and disciplinarian; tends to emphasise traditional gender roles.
2. Entertainer Dad: entertains children, leaving female partner 'free' to complete domestic tasks; little involvement in domestic work.
3. Useful Dad: participates in child care and domestic work, but requires the prompting/follows the lead of the female partner.
4. Fully involved Dad: equally involved in domestic work and child care, although this may be tempered by an unequal distribution of paid work commitments (Hatter *et al*, 2002).

Evidently, the female's burden of work, and constraints on participation in paid employment outside the home may be felt more acutely in homes with 'Enforcer Dads', than with 'Useful' or 'Fully Involved Dads'. While parental involvement in child care, and methods of internal resource distribution were not covered by the questionnaire, this study recognises the heterogeneity of the 'breadwinner family' (see below).

◆ **Life cycle stage**

Finally, it must be noted that the family type Janssens refers to is fluid, and often more compatible with particular life cycle stages. Couples move in and out of the breadwinner formation with, for example, age, divorce, the arrival of children (and their participation in formal education and later departure from the family home), movements in and out of employment, and from full-time to part-time work (e.g. Hood, 1986). This study is concerned with the similarities and differences between breadwinner families and the how the male sample perceives the male role in such families. It is recognised, however, that the gathered data represent a specific time and place in the men's self-narratives and life histories.

To address some of these issues, this study applies two types of breadwinner family. On the basis of Oakley's (1974) claims above, these, and the family types below, make no reference to marital status. Distinctions are only made between married and cohabiting couples where further clarification is appropriate. Further, as this study is concerned with attitudes towards male (and female) participation in the labour market, the family types make no reference to the distribution of unpaid labour in the home.

Table 3. Types of breadwinner family.

<b>Family Type</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Sole breadwinner family/couple	Male in paid employment, whether full-time or part-time, with a full-time female home-maker/carer, with/without dependent children living at home
Primary breadwinner family/couple	Male in paid, full-time employment, with a part-time employed female, with/without dependent children living at home

In addition to the male breadwinner families noted above, this study also encounters the following family forms.

Table 4. Additional family types encountered in the study.

Family Type	Characteristics
Female sole breadwinner family/couple	Female in paid employment, whether full-time or part-time, with an unemployed/economically inactive male, with/without dependent children living at home
Female primary breadwinner family	Female in paid, full-time employment, with a part-time employed male, and dependent children living at home
No earner family/couple	Unemployed/economically inactive male and female, with/without dependent children living at home
Dual earner family/couple	Male and female with balanced division of paid work, whether part-time or full-time, with/without dependent children living at home

The discussion provided in this section sub-divides further the family classifications that are most usually applied in the literature. A review of the internal dynamics and divisions of labour in some family types demonstrates that the classification 'dual-earner' family in particular, can be problematic. The argument has been made for the inclusion of a 'primary breadwinner' classification to account for the experiences of women engaged in part-time paid work. With an increased number of family classifications, the family typology of this study is slightly more complex than others applied in the literature. However, on the basis of the literature reviewed thus far, it is arguably more precise in acknowledging the differential experiences of men and women in different types of family. The distribution of the sample between these family types is discussed in Chapter 5.

The family typology applied in this study is largely centred upon participation or non-participation in paid work. However, for many women, participation, and the exchange of paid and unpaid labour in the family, may be shaped by unpaid servicing responsibilities. Parker (1985) suggests that the responsibility for the care of dependent relatives – such as grandchildren, or elderly or disabled siblings or parents – falls upon the family, with women having a disproportionate burden for such care. Studies exploring women's views on care-giving disclose that care relationships may be shaped by love and companionship, but can also incite hatred and resentment (Aronson, 1990; Marsden and Abrams, 1987). These are undoubtedly demanding relationships: as Berthoud (2000b) identifies, those being cared for by another household member are likely to score highly on measures of ill-health.

Contemporary developments in the labour and housing markets are also impacting on the formation of households and the relationships within them. The proportion of children remaining in the parental home until adulthood has remained much the same over recent years (Buck, 2000). However, children tend to move out later than earlier generations did, and they are more likely to return to their parental home at some stages (Berthoud and Gershuny, 2000). Returning home is typically a response to unemployment, and is likely to be accompanied with increased economic burdens on the parents (Buck, 2000). Remaining in the parental home until a later age is associated with the decrease in marriage rates, the delaying of marriage, and an inability to enter the rented or owner-occupied housing market (Berthoud and Gershuny, 2000; Buck, 2000). Buck (2000) suggests that those staying relatively late may do so in order to save a deposit for their first home. By increasing the domestic workload and perhaps economic pressures, the presence of such dependent or non-dependent kin in the household may cement men and women's traditional roles within the family; perpetuating men's relationship with paid work, and women's with unpaid work centred upon the home and family. Unfortunately, while these

trends are of relevance to men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role, and the exchange of labour in the family, it was beyond the scope of this thesis to build such issues into the family typology.

### **Traditional and non-traditional family types**

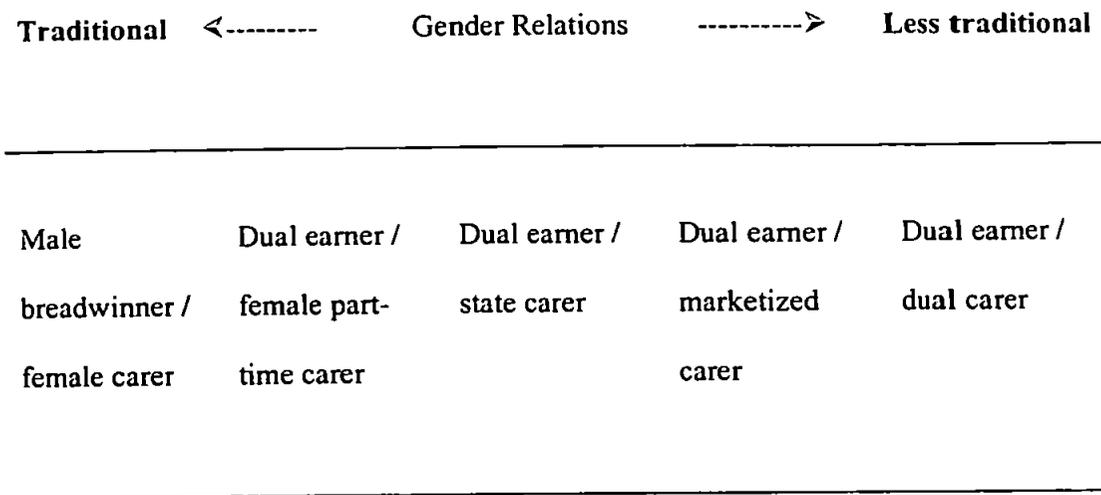
The first aim of this study is to determine among the sample the distribution of traditional and non-traditional attitudes in relation to the breadwinner role. The second aim, which is more complex, is to explain the strength and distribution of the sample's attitudes. As part of this the 'theory of reasoned action' (Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) (see discussion below) is applied to determine whether relationships exist between attitudes towards the breadwinner role and actual behaviour within the household. Put simply, the theory of reasoned action proposes that people tend to demonstrate linearity between their actions and beliefs (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), (although, as noted below, there are some problems with this). According to the theory we would expect men of breadwinner families to show greater attachment to the breadwinner role than, say, men of dual-earner families. To enable analysis of this hypothesised relationship, it is necessary to place the family types introduced above on a traditional/non-traditional continuum. In terms of analysis, this allows the respondent's family type to operate in a similar way to their attitudinal score.

Crompton's (1999) work provides the best theoretical framework within which to explore the traditionality of different family types. Crompton (1999) devised a model (see Figure 1 below) that distinguishes between traditional and untraditional<sup>19</sup> family forms. The model demonstrates the possible gender inequalities in the distribution of paid and unpaid work between couple families (Crompton, 1999, 204-05).

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<sup>19</sup> While Crompton (1999) and others use the term 'untraditional', the term non-traditional is preferred and is applied in this study. The term 'untraditional' may be viewed as synonymous with egalitarian. The questionnaire measured 'traditionality' and it can only be said that the respondents are traditional or not traditional.

Figure 1. 'Beyond the breadwinner model' (Crompton, 1999, 205)



Gender division of labour

Crompton's (1999) model is applied in this study in two ways. Firstly, based on the demographic information collected from respondents, the various family forms encountered in this study can be positioned on the continuum and defined as more or less traditional. Secondly, attitudinal scores can be applied to explore whether respondents show a preference for a traditional or non-traditional division of labour in the family. These findings could then be cross-tabulated to check the extent to which respondents' attitudes are consistent with their means of household organisation.

Crompton's (1999) model was devised as a measure of gender equality. The model has been applied to explore the relative positions, between the extremes of traditional and untraditional, of families in various nation states (Crompton's use of 'state carer' and 'marketized carer' reflects the differences in substitute care (usually child care) in ex-state-socialist and capitalist nations). Perhaps because of its comparative use, no reference is made to female breadwinner and no-earner families. It was therefore necessary to adapt

Crompton's model (see Figure 2) to accommodate these additional family forms. The adapted model includes the family types introduced above.

Figure 2. Classifying couple families. (Adapted from Crompton, 1999, 205).

Traditional ←— Household labour Arrangements —→ Non-traditional

Sole male breadwinner, full-time female carer	Primary breadwinner – full-time working male, female part-time employed/part-time carer	Dual earners – equal distribution of paid work
No earner	Female primary breadwinner, part-time employed male	Female sole breadwinner, non-working male

The adapted model places no earner families at the traditional extreme. This perhaps appears counterintuitive, given that there is no male (or female) breadwinner in these families. However, the positioning reflects the findings of this study (see Chapter 7) and studies by, for example, McKee and Bell (1985) and Willott and Griffin (1996). These studies have found that economically inactive men (whether of working or retirement age) show strong preferences for the traditional male role and gendered division of labour<sup>20</sup>. McKee and Bell (1985) suggest that the state of economic inactivity, and particularly unemployment, actually reinforces the 'correctness' of the gendered division of labour. It was noted above that men and women of no-earner families may employ various strategies to 'safeguard' the male's breadwinner status in the family, and that men may be reluctant to re-define their role and position in the family during economic inactivity. Although

<sup>20</sup> See Arber and Ginn (1995, 26) for a review of studies that have found that females assume the traditional housewife role when the male partner is not in full-time employment or the female is occupationally and/or income dominant.

writing on the relationship between masculinity and violence, Toby (1966) similarly suggests that it is men who lack an obvious source of power that are most likely to demonstrate a 'compulsive' or exaggerated form of masculinity.

Situating female breadwinner families on the traditional-non-traditional continuum is difficult. On the one hand, female breadwinner families represent the antithesis to the male breadwinner family, with the female taking on the dominant, or sole market role. As such, they would be most appropriately positioned at the non-traditional extreme. On the other however, as suggested above, economically inactive men may be strongly attached to the ideology, if not the performance of the breadwinner role. Studies have also found that economic inactivity among men does not necessarily lead to increased participation in household tasks (e.g. Arber and Ginn, 1995; Morris, 1985a, 1985b; Wheelock, 1990). This means that referring to female breadwinner families as 'non-traditional' may also be applicable. The model above includes female breadwinner families at the non-traditional extreme, but only on the basis that the argument for a traditional classification seems marginally less strong.

In both Crompton's and the adapted model, breadwinner families and dual-earner families are situated at the polar extremes. This reflects the distribution of male dominance and female dependency in the breadwinner family, and the supposedly egalitarian nature of the exchange between men and women in dual-earner families. As discussed in Chapter 6, the respondents' attitudinal scores are set along a comparable traditional/non-traditional continuum. This allows us to explore the efficacy of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action in relation to attitudes towards and practice in the household.

### **Operationalising the breadwinner role**

The process of operationalisation involves 'descending the ladder of abstraction', or moving from the abstract to the concrete (de Vaus, 1996, 50). This is a sequential process in which the research concept is subjected to greater definition and clarification, with the aim of identifying the items by which the concept can be measured (de Vaus, 1996). For the purposes of this study it is necessary to operationalise the breadwinner role so that attachment to and rejection of this role can be measured among a sample of men.

Williams (2003) suggests that there are some inherent complications in the process of operationalisation. The first is that in applying the literature to 'descend the ladder of abstraction' (de Vaus, 1996, 50), we shape our research by existing knowledge, and dissolve the possibility of discovering new knowledge (Williams, 2003). Secondly, there may be tension between how a concept is interpreted by the researcher and interpreted by the people whose social world is under study (Williams, 2003). As noted previously, this is particularly relevant to this study, given that men may continue to perceive themselves as breadwinners during unemployment or economic inactivity. Following on from this is the question of whose interpretation is more valid. The decision to apply a measure that has either greater 'sociological' meaning or meaning among those under study, inevitably impacts on findings and the conclusions to be drawn (Williams, 2003). As discussed in the previous chapter, this study merges the literature on women's experiences in the family with the typical definitions of family types, to introduce the 'primary breadwinner' family. This leads to the conclusion that 'primary' breadwinner families are very different to, and are dominant over 'dual-earner' families as typically defined. Finally, Williams (2003, para 7.6) notes that the process of operationalisation is 'not a once and for all task'. Rather, underlying processes and mechanisms are subject to change over time and place, meaning that the process of operationalisation should be dynamic (Williams, 2003). This last issue is exemplified below.

The emergence of alternative strands of masculinity has, as Williams (2003) notes, rendered inappropriate some well-established measures of masculinity. In the field of social psychology particularly, many indices have been devised to investigate attitudes towards sex roles, either *per se* or in the specific contexts of the family or marriage. Among those potentially relevant to this study were, for example, the Bem Sex Roles Inventory (Bem, 1974), Gender-Role Conflict Scale (O'Neil *et al*, 1986), and the Masculinity-Femininity Scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (Butcher *et al*, 1989). Some of the weaknesses of such scales were discussed in the previous chapter.

Brannon and Juni's (1984) 'Scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity' proved to be more accessible and applicable for this study. Rather than measuring masculinity-femininity traits such as those of the Bem Sex Roles Inventory, the scale was constructed to measure attitudes regarding the 'male role'. In an earlier publication David and Brannon (1976) conceptualised the male sex role as comprising four dimensions. These dimensions were labelled:

1. No 'Sissy Stuff': The avoidance of all feminine behaviours and traits.
2. The Big Wheel: The acquisition of success, status and breadwinning competence.
3. The Sturdy Oak: A manly air of toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.
4. Give 'em hell: The aura of aggression, violence, and daring.

This conceptualisation of the male role fits within the framework of the hegemonic masculinity, as noted in the previous chapter, and as such it fails to account for differences between men: for example between black men and white men, and homosexual and heterosexual men. It is also indicative of essentialist sex role analyses in that it fails to acknowledge the distribution of (structural) power between men. Further, it is unclear whether David and Brannon base this conceptualisation of the male sex role on observations of the social practices of particular factions or groups within the male

population, or normative or cultural ideals based on the way society expects men to behave.

As noted in Chapter 2, discourses surrounding masculinity/masculinities have moved on quite considerably, and David and Brannon's typology has failed to stand the test of time. Arguably, the construct of 'masculinity', and perhaps 'breadwinning', requires re-operationalising in the light of contemporary processes on the construct/s. However, while these dimensions may no longer be appropriate or exhaustive, David and Brannon's (1976) framework has proved useful in locating and positioning the breadwinner role in terms of other aspects of the dominant masculinity. Brannon and Juni's (1984) later 'scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity' was constructed around these four dimensions.

While the over-arching construct of masculinity is central to this study, it is only concerned with one aspect of masculinity, the breadwinner role. As a whole, the Brannon and Juni (1984) scale was too large and conceptually diverse for complete replication via a postal survey. The whole scale, and in particular the 'Breadwinner' section, was examined in order to identify appropriate measures of attachment to the breadwinner role. Only eight items were found to fit well the aims of this study. Four of the eight items used required minor wording changes for purposes of clarity (changed items are italicised in the table below). The clear positive or negative style of wording in Brannon and Juni's (1984) scale was adopted in developing the other scale items of this study to eliminate the reliability problems that are associated with neutral items (Mueller, 1986).

The following table demonstrates the items that were taken from the Brannon and Juni (1984) scale, and, where applicable, the changes that were made to the items during the pre-testing stage in the development of the questionnaire. The eight items are part of a sub-scale Brannon and Juni (1984) designed to 'measure the belief system that a man should be

dedicated to work and to supporting his family' (Brannon and Juni, 1984, 3). The sub-scale is one of seven<sup>21</sup> that make up the full 110-item 'scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity' (Brannon and Juni, 1984). Brannon and Juni (1984) tested the reliability of the scale on two occasions with samples of male and female New York City college students. The performance of all items used in this study is discussed in Chapter 6.

Table 5. Items taken from Brannon and Juni's (1984) 'Scale for Measuring Attitudes about Masculinity'.

<b>Brannon and Juni's (1984) item</b>	<b>Item as it appeared in this study</b>
46. I think a man should choose an interesting job, even if the pay is very bad	<i>1. Men should choose interesting jobs even if the pay is very bad</i>
39. A man should generally work overtime to make more money whenever he has the chance	<i>4. A man should generally work overtime to make more money for his family whenever he has the chance</i>
34. The best way for a young man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it very seriously, and do well at it	<i>13. The best way for a man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it seriously and do well at it</i>
44. It's hard to respect a man who loses or quits his job too often	<i>15. I have little respect for men who quit, or are sacked from, their jobs too often</i>
40. It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work	<i>17. It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work</i>
38. I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will suffer financially	<i>20. I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will suffer financially</i>
36. A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either	<i>23. A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either</i>
37. A man owes it to his family to work at the best-paying job he can get	<i>25. A man owes it to his family to work at the best paying job he can get</i>

<sup>21</sup> The seven sub-scales are: 1. Avoiding femininity 2. Concealing emotions 3. The breadwinner 4. Admired and respected 5. Toughness 6. The male machine and 7. Violence and adventure (Brannon and Juni, 1984).

Prior to the construction of the questionnaire the author conducted exploratory interviews with eight local men. Data from these interviews proved invaluable in devising the remaining 19 attitudinal items. As Mueller (1986) and Oppenheim (2000) encourage, key phrases or sentiments that emerged during the analysis of interview transcripts were identified and re-worded as questionnaire items. It is believed that this process allowed the breadwinner role '...measurements (to) be derived from the meanings of the agents whose social world is the object of research.' (Williams, 2003, para 7.3). It is suggested in Chapter 6 that the application of interview data in this way lends the study a sound degree of construct validity, in that men themselves have defined the relevant aspects of the role. The breadwinner role, as traditionally defined, is an object of the male social world (although it need not necessarily be so, or be confined to men's social worlds), and it seemed appropriate that the object be defined by men. As discussed in the following chapter, the use of interview data was also a positive means of distancing the researcher from the researched, and reducing the influence of the female researcher's subjectivities and biases.

Each of the eight interviews lasted approximately 50 minutes, and was conducted between December 1999 and January 2000. The following table demonstrates the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees, the method by which they were recruited and the place of interview.

Table 6. Socio-demographic characteristics of interviewees.

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>
Full-time male Printer, single, early 20s, living in parental home	Postal request	Respondent's home
Full-time male Home-maker/carer, 40s, second marriage with one three year old son	Postal request	Respondent's home
Retired male, 50s, former Deputy-head Teacher, married, three children all left home	Postal request	Respondent's home
Full-time male, Royal Air Force, 30s, recently married, no children	Postal request	Respondent's home
Full-time male university student, 40s, ex-army and ex-navy employee, miner's son, single	Snowballing	University of Plymouth
Full-time male university student, 30s, married, expecting first child	Snowballing	University of Plymouth
Full-time male Refrigeration Engineer, late 30s, married with one pre-school aged child, and one child in primary education	Presentation to allotment tenants	Respondent's home
Retired male, 60s, former Group Foreman in shoe factory, married, one child left home	Presentation to allotment tenants	Respondent's home

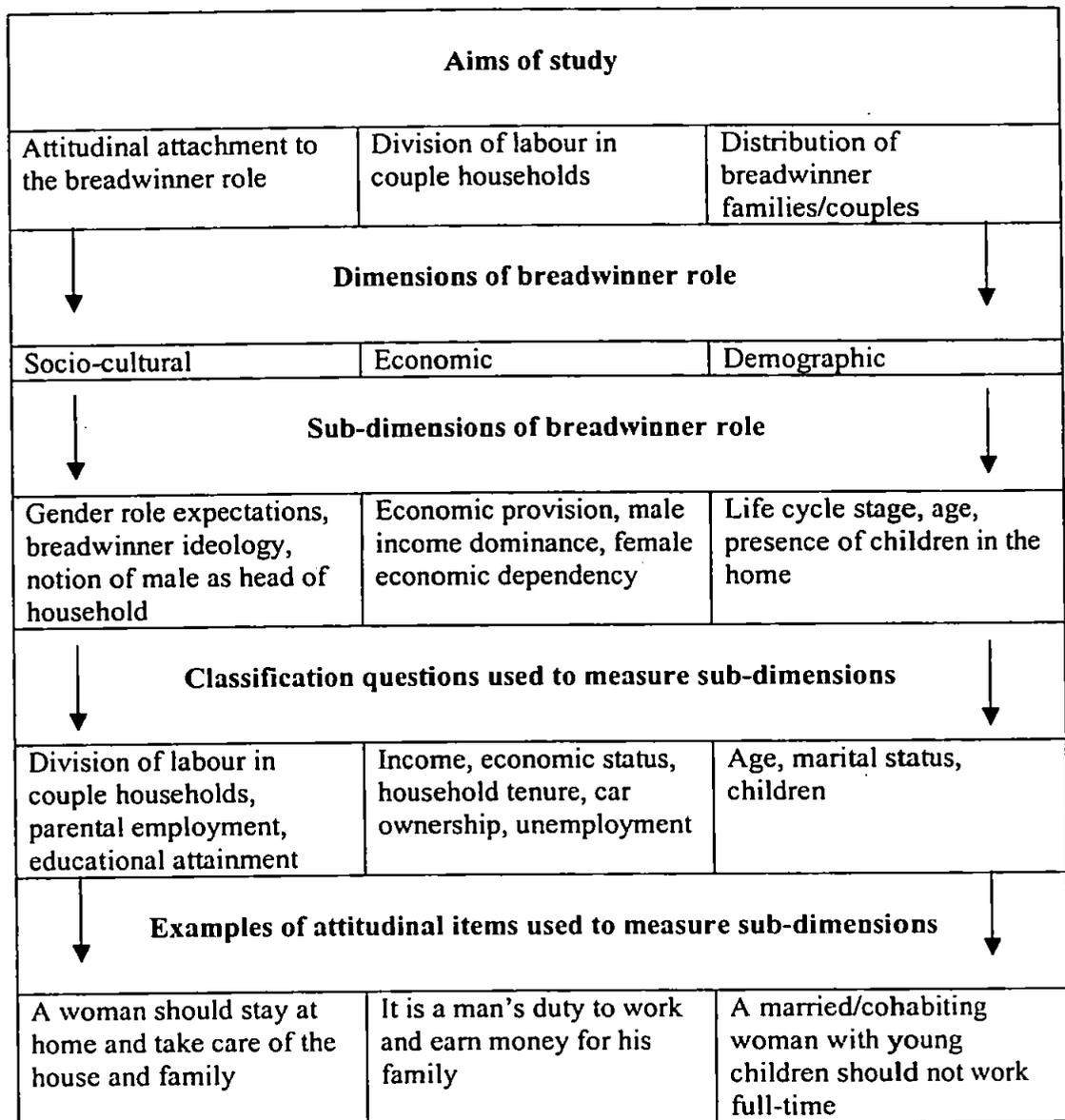
Table 7, below, shows some of the respondents' comments and, following pre-testing and pilot testing, the items that were included in the questionnaire.

Table 7. Constructing questionnaire items from interview data.

Respondent	Interview response	Questionnaire item
Full-time male printer, single, early 20s, living in parental home	"My mum perhaps earned more than my dad, in some respects, but I kind of got this idea that the man should take care of his family."	It is right and natural that a man should be the main family provider
Full-time male home-maker/carer, 40s, second marriage with one three year old son	"At the time I never really thought about the idea of breadwinning, looking back on it. It really pissed me off though that I... um...that I couldn't provide as well as I thought I should."	If a man earns a low salary he cannot be a good provider
Full-time male university student, 40s, ex-army and ex-navy employee, miner's son, single	"I was beginning to see....because I was moving around a bit, that I was...that I'd got out of it, sort of thing. Other blokes spending all their wages on the wife and kids. I suppose I began to consider myself quite lucky to have escaped it."	Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden
Retired male, 50s, former deputy-head teacher, married, three children all left home	"My wife didn't work when the children were young....she couldn't. Juggling two careers with children just wouldn't have worked."	A married/cohabiting woman with young children should not work full-time

On the basis of the literature reviews in previous chapters and the findings of the exploratory interviews, the breadwinner role was operationalised in the following way. The figure below demonstrates how 'descending the ladder of abstraction' (de Vaus, 1996, 50) shaped what was required of the research tool.

Figure 3. Operationalising the breadwinner role



The figure above points to the way the dimensions and sub-dimensions identified as pertinent to the breadwinner role informed the development of the classification and attitudinal sections of the questionnaire. Identifying the most relevant sub-dimensions to some extent determined which classification variables were required to measure actual behaviour regarding the breadwinner role. Identifying lifecycle stage as a sub-dimension of the breadwinner role, for example, necessitated the inclusion of variables that could assist in making the relevant distinctions between respondents; in this case age, marital status, parental status and, if appropriate, the age of children.

On the basis of the operationalisation process, attitudinal items were devised to cover:

1. Beliefs and attitudes regarding the appropriateness of the traditional male breadwinner role and female carer role;
2. The importance of work to male respondents' sense of socio-psychological and economic well-being; and
3. Gendered economic and family responsibilities.

Each of these research areas was addressed with a number of attitudinal items. (The results of factor analysis on the attitudinal scale are discussed in Chapter 6 to determine whether, in practice, the scale measured these themes). The following section looks at how the literature on the measurement of attitudes further informed the development of the attitudinal index.

### **Part 3: Defining and measuring attitudes**

The findings of longitudinal studies have been important in establishing the changeable nature of attitudes in the field of family-related attitudes. Goodwin (1999), for example, who examined the 1981 and 1991 cohorts of the National Child Development Study, found greater attitudinal support for a traditional gendered division of labour as respondents aged. Scott *et al* (1996) similarly found both inter- and intra-cohort changes in gender-related attitudes in Britain between 1984 and 1994. Again a propensity for attitudes to change over the life course was found (Scott *et al*, 1996).

In a Canadian study, Aube and Koestner (1995) found however that in the short-term attitudes may be relatively stable. The study surveyed a sample of married and cohabiting couples twice over a period of fifteen months and found more attitudinal stability than change. On the basis of these existing studies, the reliability of the findings of this project

may therefore be relatively short-lived in the lives of the respondents. Attitudes appear to represent relative truths in the lives of respondents.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) propose the theory of reasoned action which determines that behaviour is shaped by underlying beliefs and attitudes. This sits comfortably with the author's realist perspective discussed in the following chapter, in that the goal of the research is to uncover the underlying structures that predispose individuals to adopt certain forms of behaviour within the household. From an analysis of beliefs we can then seek to explain and predict behaviour. However, as noted below the relationship between beliefs and action is not always linear. In the context of the family particularly, this relationship may be governed by an imbalance of power between men and women.

An attitude is argued to comprise three features; firstly, on the basis of information, an attitude is learned, secondly, it predisposes action, and thirdly, such actions will be consistently favourable or unfavourable in relation to the object (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, 6). Ajzen (1988, 25) suggests attitudes are '...typically conceived of as relatively enduring dispositions that exert pervasive influence on a broad range of behaviors'. The notion that attitudes have a 'pervasive influence' on behaviour has been taken, particularly in social psychology, to denote that with a reliable and valid means of measurement, behavioural patterns can be deduced from attitudes (Ajzen, 1988; Mueller, 1986). It is this predictive validity, or the ability to infer behaviour from attitudes, that is typically the purpose of attitudinal studies (Ajzen, 1988).

Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) claim that an attitude consists of three components; cognitive, affective and conative responses. In their hierarchical, tripartite model of attitudes, each component stands alone and can be measured independently. Cognitive responses can be measured with items that concern beliefs, perceptions and information,

while affective responses concern evaluations and feelings about the attitudinal object. It is the affective, or evaluative, response that determines the consistency of favourable or unfavourable attitudes (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975, 7). Conative responses represent behavioural intent, tendency and commitment. Behavioural-tendency responses are generally measured with 'would' or 'should' items, and have been found to correlate quite satisfactorily with affective and cognitive responses (Ajzen, 1988). When combined, the three responses comprise an attitude that places the individual on a continuum between extreme favourableness and extreme unfavourableness in relation to the attitudinal object.

However, inferring behaviour from attitudes is not straightforward. The inductive reasoning of the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) implies that behaviour is a logical and empirical expression of an individual's attitudes, or, conversely, that an individual's attitudes in some way explain their actions. This implies that those respondents who hold traditional attitudes will choose a traditional model of household organisation, while those with egalitarian views will adopt an egalitarian model.

Little empirical evidence has emerged to support a strong relationship between attitudes and actual behaviour. In a review of social psychology attitude studies, Ajzen (1988, 41) summarises 'People were found neither to behave consistently across situations, nor to act in accordance with their measured attitudes'. Attitude studies have most often found low, or zero, correlations between actual behaviour and attitudes (Ajzen, 1982). In a study of gender-related attitudes, Aube and Koestner (1995) found poor relationships with actual behaviour, suggesting that what individuals reveal about their gender beliefs does not necessarily inform their behaviour.

Wicker (1969, 65) claims that, in examining the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, correlation coefficients 'are rarely above 0.30, and often are near zero'. As

such, Salancik (1982, 56) argues that consistency between attitudes and behaviour 'is a social concept more than a formally logical concept'. Salancik's (1982) example of a devout Christian who does not attend church services demonstrates the potential difficulty in defining consistency and inconsistency between attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

However, while acknowledging the weak correlations, Ajzen (1982, 3) disputes the argument that no direct relationship exists between attitudes and behaviour. Ajzen (1982, 7) claims that the relationship is in the form of general patterns rather than in the prediction of specific actions. Perhaps owing to the number of influences on actual behaviour, respondents have been found more likely to show consistency between attitudes and behavioural intentions, or conative responses, than attitudes and actual behaviour (Mueller, 1986).

Inconsistency between attitudes and behaviour is evident in the field of families and household organisation. In a study of 3100 husbands and wives, Scanzoni (1975) found that despite increasing ideological support for egalitarianism, male providers maintained considerable power in decision-making, and assumed, or were granted, the right to organise the lives of family members around their occupation. Similarly, Hood (1986) found disparity between couples' beliefs concerning the *ideal* distribution of labour in the family, and their *actual* means of household organisation.

A discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour is also evident when comparing the behavioural findings of Sianne and Wilkinson (1995) with those of UK Social Attitude Surveys. Over recent years, attitude surveys have charted declining support for traditional gender roles across all aspects of life (Stringer and Robinson, 1993; Jowell *et al*, 1998). In the same socio-economic context, however, Sianne and Wilkinson (1995) have found that while both genders appear prepared to confront traditional gender stereotypes in the

workplace and education, in intimate heterosexual relationships more traditional patterns of behaviour tend to prevail. In contrast to the attitude studies, Sianne and Wilkinson's (1994) findings perhaps reflect the influence of structural or resource constraints that commonly determine behaviour in terms of household organisation. Indeed, an imbalance of power in the family may prevent individuals, particularly women, from acting in accordance with their preferences.

In studies that test for association between attitudes and actual behaviour, low correlations have been found in spite of respondents' attempts to demonstrate affective-cognitive consistency, or linearity between attitudes, beliefs and actions (Rosenberg, 1956; Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960). According to Festinger (1957), when beliefs or attitudes and actions are inconsistent, a psychologically undesirable state of cognitive dissonance occurs. To reduce dissonance, respondents may consciously or unconsciously modify their attitudes or behaviour to achieve a greater degree of balance between the two (Ajzen, 1988). If respondents' attempts at consistency are taken into account, correlation coefficients, and the relationship, between attitudes and actual behaviour may in fact be less significant than Wicker (1969) proposes.

Biological and neuro-physiological frameworks have been applied to explain the need in humans to demonstrate affective-cognitive consistency (see e.g. Ajzen, 1988, for discussion). In addition to a potential biological need, however, individuals may also have a social need to pursue consistency. This may be in order to project and preserve agreeable images of the self. As Ajzen (1988, 26) notes '...we express attitudes and values consistent with our actions in an effort to make a favourable impression on others'. This process undoubtedly has implications for the reliability, validity, and predictive validity of attitude and behavioural studies.

In addition to a respondent's inconsistency, findings of cognitive dissonance could stem from a poor measurement tool. Ajzen (1988, 36) notes that measuring attitudes with single items can result in findings of cognitive dissonance. Instead, it is necessary to use a number of items, in both positive and negative expressions, to measure a particular attitude or behavioural trait. Chapter 6 demonstrates how attitudes towards the breadwinner role were measured with a number of items to overcome findings of cognitive dissonance caused by a poor measurement tool.

An alternative means of reducing cognitive dissonance is to exclude actual-behaviour items from questionnaires (Mueller, 1986). As opposed to attitudes and potential-behaviour, actual-behaviour is shaped and constrained by a number of indeterminable variables (Mueller, 1986). Owing to the low correlations found between attitudes and actual behaviour and the inconsistent findings of the above studies, this project took the responses to a number of classification questions, such as the economic statuses of the male and female, as evidence of actual behaviour, rather than relying on responses to any actual behaviour-based items.

A key research question of this study was whether dissonance or consistency existed between attitudes and actual means of household organisation. To investigate this, the attitudinal items and demographic data were tested for statistically valid associations. The findings are outlined in Chapter 7.

### **Concluding comments**

On the basis of the literature reviewed in this and the previous chapter, some amendments are suggested to the way family types, traditional and non-traditional family types and the breadwinner role are operationalised. It is believed that the inclusion of the 'primary breadwinner' family allows us to acknowledge and explore the socio-economic and

demographic circumstances, and attitudes within this family type. It was suggested that including as 'dual-earner' families those in which the female partner is in part-time paid work (to her male partner's full-time) conceals, and fails to challenge, the persistence of male dominance and female dependency in these families.

Williams's (2003) discussion of the problems with the process of operationalisation highlights that some of the complications with the breadwinner role are not addressed in this study. This is particularly noticeable in respect of unemployed and economically inactive men. It was discussed in the previous chapter that men who are not engaged in paid work sometimes hold on to the identity of breadwinner. It was noted that female partners may be complicit in sustaining this identity. This negotiation within the family challenges the centrality of participation in paid work to the breadwinner role. Paid work is typically conceived as the central measure of the hegemonic masculinity and the breadwinner role. If some men sustain a breadwinner identity (and the privileges and powers it affords in the family) without necessarily participating in paid work, then it appears further exploratory work is necessary to establish where else the roots of breadwinner identity may lie. (Interestingly, the evidence of Goode *et al* (1998) suggests it may, in part, rest on the 'handing over' of the family 'wage' to the female partner).

The review of the attitudes literature demonstrates that, at best, there is a weak link between an individual's beliefs and their actions. This is despite the fact that people may be biologically and/or socially predisposed to demonstrating consistency between their beliefs and actions. The situation appears more complicated in the case of research into family-related attitudes and behaviour. The literature reviewed in this and the previous chapter demonstrates that some family types have a greater imbalance of power than others. With the depth and breadth of inequality experienced by women in the family and labour market, it appears credible to suggest that it may be more difficult for women to act

in accordance with their beliefs. However, as noted, some writers of the 'men's rights movement' maintain that men are equally, if not more, constrained by gender inequality. The application of the qualitative interview data to construct the attitudinal items has produced some strong measures to assess directly the extent to which men feel constrained by the breadwinner role. The results are outlined in Chapter 6.

## Chapter 4

### Methodology

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section provides a theoretical and empirical rationale for the use of the postal questionnaire survey method. The second section is concerned with the limitations of the research instrument, examining whether the project is predisposed to some of the traditional criticisms of quantitative methodologies, such as data superficiality. The final section looks at the steps that were taken to secure a probability sample. It is concluded that the project's methodology and sampling framework represents a new approach to the topic, and that the project subsequently makes a significant contribution to existing knowledge. The chapter begins by restating the empirical and theoretical bases on which the project was born, and the aims and hypotheses of the research.

#### **Research rationale, aims and hypotheses**

The rationale for this quantitative study of men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role was built on three key themes identified in the literature. Firstly, Chapter 2 demonstrated that throughout the (limited) history of the breadwinner role there has been a noteworthy disparity between its empirical and ideological importance. It was discussed that the notion of the breadwinner role emerged during early industrialism, and since the early twentieth century has maintained a central position in the discourse of family organisation, provided a conceptual framework for social policy, and been a principal source of many men's identity, status and power in the family. In practice however, it is noted that few nuclear families choose to, or are financially able to adopt this family type. It was also suggested that the breadwinner family is a mostly transitional type of internal family organisation that is more compatible with particular stages in the family life course. Traditionally this was the child-bearing and rearing years. However, as noted in Chapter 2, even this sporadic

relationship with the life course has been challenged recently by increased female labour market participation among mothers with children aged under two (JRF, 1996). Breadwinner ideology appears to persist, and maintain its relationship with the hegemonic form of masculinity in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary. This disparity in the ideological and empirical importance of the breadwinner role formed the main underpinning of the project and gave rise to research questions concerning the existence of a practice-belief paradox among men, of questions concerning men's attachment to breadwinner ideology, and the influence of lifecycle stage, family economics, and childhood experiences of family organisation.

Secondly, the research rationale was informed by a methodological gap in the men and masculinities literature which arguably creates a gap in our knowledge. It was noted that the UK and European literature is very limited in its use of primary sources and, more so, quantitative research methods. The breadwinner role and men and masculinities literature is characterised by work that is qualitative, theoretical and/or historical (see discussion below). There is a scarcity of, and evidently a need for, work that offers statistical trends, predictions and (evidence-based) generalisations concerning men's lives and attitudes. Of course, at the other extreme there are large-scale social attitude surveys, such as the British Social Attitudes Survey, and the International Social Attitudes Survey. These provide valuable information on the attitudinal trends in the population, and can be applied to determine attitudinal change over time, and across nations. However, such surveys are typically broad in focus. In addition to family-related attitudes, they typically investigate attitudes concerning employment, education, politics and religion. Perhaps as a result of the sheer size and complexity of these surveys, family-related data are mostly presented as sample percentages, and respondents are rarely categorised or sub-divided further than by gender and sometimes economic activity. This informs us of the attitudes held by males and females as social groups, but tells us little about the diversity within the male and

female populations. There is a gap in the literature then for a detailed quantitative analysis that not only explores in-depth male attitudes towards the breadwinner role, but also examines such attitudes in the light of men's social, economic and demographic attributes.

The issue of heterogeneity within the male population formed the third rationale for this project. It is well documented that sociology has traditionally been written by and for men, giving rise to the term 'malestream sociology'. However, Connell (1993), Hearn (1989) and others argue that 'men' have often been regarded in sociology as a homogeneous social group, with knowledge of 'men' and 'men's' experiences typically referring to (the experiences of) white, middle class men. The existence of within-gender hierarchies and power differentials between men has only recently been explored (e.g. Connell, 1993). (Other trends in the literature are discussed later in the chapter). Research that investigates and seeks to explain the diversity of male attitudes is necessary. Chapter 2 discussed how much of the USA and Canada-based research on men and masculinities has relied on unrepresentative student samples. These studies were criticised on the basis that they can add only a limited amount to the debates given the socio-economic and cultural homogeneity of their samples. Much of this work was also shaped by an essentialist, trait-based approach, which in assigning certain human characteristics and behaviours to either males or females, only serves to reinforce commonsensical notions of the gender binary and the differences between males and females. This tells us very little about what it means to be male or female, how we create identities of 'male' and 'female' and perform 'maleness' and 'femaleness' in our daily lives. Such studies tell us even less about behavioural diversity in the male and female populations, and how attached different factions within the male population are to certain forms of behaviour.

As shaped by these three rationales, the aim of this study is therefore to employ a quantitative method - the postal questionnaire survey - and random sample to investigate:

1. The extent to which couple families employ a housewife/breadwinner division of labour. In a random sample of households in the Plymouth TTWA what is the proportion of breadwinner families relative to female breadwinner, dual-earner and no-earner families?
2. The attitudes that men of varied socio-economic and demographic circumstances hold about traditional and non-traditional roles in the public and private spheres.
3. The distribution and strength of attachment to the hegemonic form of masculinity in relation to paid work and the breadwinner role.
4. The extent of consistency or dissonance between individuals' attitudes towards household organisation, and their actual means of household organisation.
5. Whether there are factions of the male population that are more or less likely to support the ideology of the male breadwinner; and to investigate which, if any, variables can be applied to explain and predict such a distribution.

These aims were applied to generate two null hypotheses as a focus for data collection and analysis:

- Attitudes will not differ between men of different socio-economic and demographic statuses.
- Men living in households with a traditional division of labour will not demonstrate greater attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role than men living in other family types.

In order to meet the aims and objectives of this project, a self-completion, postal questionnaire survey was conducted between April and May, 2000. The last return was received on 13 June, 2000. Initially, a sample of 714 men living in the Plymouth TTWA was contacted. Following adjustments for long-term ill, disabled, or relocated respondents,

and known refusals, the sample size was reduced to 664. A total of 330 completed questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 50%.

All survey responses were coded in a quantified form, and subsequently analysed using the programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Prior to the survey eight exploratory interviews were completed. The findings of the interviews were applied solely for the purpose of informing the development of the main research instrument, in that comments made by interviewees were used to construct the majority of the survey attitudinal items. As discussed later in the chapter, this lessened the potential tension of a female researcher constructing a research instrument to be used by a male sample.

### **Part 1: Research method rationale**

The following sections outline why the survey method was favoured over other methods. This begins with a statement of the author's epistemological position and then covers past research, the problem of securing male participation, the relationship between the researcher and researched, ethics, and resources.

#### **A question of epistemology**

It is apparent in the philosophy of science literature, particularly that of the critical rationalist school, that research will not lead to the 'truth'. A knowledge claim can only be an approximation of the truth or a relative truth; a truth that is relative in time and space and is arrived at in certain ways, according to certain rules and conditions (Hubner, 1983; Tudor, 1982). Hubner (1983) suggests that this leads to frustration as researchers concede that they will never establish the truth, or perhaps even a relative truth.

However, without a belief in the ability of researchers to employ a research method which can capture the 'truth', even if relative or provisional, no research would take place. The

philosophy of science literature points to many competing epistemologies and ontologies – each of which represents a school of thought concerning what truths may exist and the most appropriate means by which to observe or gather such truths (although each school of thought, such as realism, may itself consist of competing and/or contradictory orientations) (Mantysaari, 2002; Williams, 2003). This project is framed by the author's preference for a realist epistemology; the specific assumptions of which include that that a) the world is partly made by humans in that it is influenced by human concepts, b) there can exist several competing but true descriptions of the social world, c) the truth is a theory-dependent concept, d) agents may be unaware of, or have incomplete knowledge of the social structures that impact on and shape behaviour, and e) scientific knowledge of the social world is fallible, and our thinking is based on changeable principles, methodologies and theories (Mantysaari, 2002; May, 1997; Williams, 2003).

The realist approach prioritises the goal of explanation, but only explanation that considers and theorises about the multi-layered nature of the social world (Bhaskar, 1975; Pawson and Tilley, 2002). Research that uses, for example, correlation to describe an individual, in isolation from social processes and context, is only one-layered (Pawson and Tilley, 2002). In this study, for example, suggesting that the status of being married produces strong traditional attitudes towards the breadwinner role would be one-layered, and inconsistent with the goals of realist research (this being more consistent with the cause and effect approach associated with successionist causation) (Pawson and Tilley, 2002). If a statistically significant relationship exists between marriage and attitudes then the explanation lies within the wider network of social processes that are at work in the contemporary context. For example, marriage has been found to increase men's wage earning potential (Gorman, 1999). This profitable relationship with the public sector of paid work could increase the propensity among married couples to adopt a breadwinner/home-maker division of labour, which in turn may foster an attitudinal

attachment to this model of household organisation. It is not marriage itself that can explain the regularity in attitudes – this would be considered a descriptive observation - but the wider processes (responsibilities, behaviours, associations, loyalties etc) that are associated with marriage in the present context. Realist research is concerned with the goal of generative causation, tracing what is observable in the social world to the hidden, underlying processes and mechanisms, and exploring why regularities may occur in one set of circumstances and not others (Pawson and Tilley, 2002).

Pawson and Tilley (2002) build on the realist notion of a stratified reality, and offer researchers a framework (referred to as Realistic Evaluation) for social research in the critical realist tradition. Their blueprint for realist research is built on a simple equation: regularity = mechanisms + context (Pawson and Tilley, 2002). Briefly, Pawson and Tilley (2002) suggest that any regularity in the social world (an association between, say, marriage and strong traditional attitudes) is a product of mechanisms (unobservable social processes at a micro or macro level), combined with context (the physical conditions which allow the mechanisms to come into operation). The goal of realist research is explanation that considers the layers of social reality, focusing on how associations between social phenomena come into being in the particular social context (Pawson and Tilley, 2002). In the example above regarding marriage and strong traditional attitudes, this hypothesised relationship may not hold for earlier social contexts in which marital status is unrelated with earning power. Indeed, it was noted in Chapter 2 that the early industrial period represented a different social context, with the most significant wage-earning differential being between men and women, and less significantly so between men of different marital statuses. In this example marriage is a mechanism; not a variable, but a theory about what influences marriage may have on the observed regularity (Pawson, 1989).

Using Pawson and Tilley's (2002) framework for realist research requires that the researcher:

1. Identifies the regularity of interest (traditional attitudes towards the breadwinner role)
2. Builds up a picture about which contextual factors are likely to be important (macro socio-economic processes, labour market opportunities etc as discussed in Chapter 2)
3. Establishes explanatory priorities (mechanisms such as internal household organisation, socio-economic and demographic influences as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3)
4. Develops a theory from the findings of the sample concerning how the mechanisms and context impact on the observed regularity. The researcher may further theorise about the stability or generalisability of the regularity across different sets of circumstances.

The introductory chapter presented the regularity of interest, while Chapter 2 was concerned with elucidating items 2 and 3 above. The chapter contrasted the social contexts of the early industrial and contemporary, deindustrialised periods, suggesting that the relevance of, and support for the breadwinner role is reduced in the present-day context. This discussion also highlighted a number of potential mechanisms including the balance of power between men and women in the household, men and women's relationship with paid and unpaid work, and socio-economic change. These were offered as seemingly influential factors in explaining the number of male breadwinner families, and the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role - the regularities with which this study is concerned, and the questionnaire was designed to measure. The figure 'Operationalising the breadwinner role' presented in Chapter 3 serves two purposes. Firstly it demonstrates how the concept of the breadwinner role was subjected to greater clarification until a list of observable measures was obtained. Secondly, and more pertinent to this discussion, it illustrates the theories or hypotheses on which this study is based. On the basis of the literature reviews this study assumes, or in Pawson and Tilley's (2002) language, theorises, that factors such as socio-economic and demographic status (and their various measures),

the individual's means of household organisation and parental work history, for example, represent the explanatory priorities. It is hypothesised that these constitute the mechanisms that impact on and shape breadwinner-related behaviours and attitudes.

Pawson and Tilley (2002) are methodological pluralists, expressing no preference for any particular research method. Instead, they suggest that realist research should use a method or methods that are appropriate to the goals and context of the research. The methods used in this study were informed by two concerns:

1. As a study concerned with men's attitudes towards the male breadwinner role, the potential explanatory mechanisms should be identified by men. As noted earlier, Williams (2003, para 7.3) suggests that 'measurements (should) be derived from the meanings of the agents whose social world is the object of research'. Moreover, realists consider that knowledge of the social structures that impact on behaviour and beliefs may be, at best, incomplete (Pawson and Tilley, 2002; Williams, 2003). As a female researcher the author was likely to have a much more partial understanding than men. The decision was made to use qualitative face-to-face semi-structured interviews to explore with a small sample of men the mechanisms that are of relevance to the breadwinner role, and that might hold explanatory power for any observed regularities.
2. The main research method should lend itself to identifying regularities, and measuring the relevance of a range of potential mechanisms among a probability sample. The self-completion postal questionnaire survey, with an attitudinal scale and range of classification items pertaining to the mechanisms, was considered most suited to this aim.

Pawson and Tilley's (2002) blueprint for realist research offers the author a framework within which the breadwinner role can be allied to the mechanisms identified by the

interviewee respondents as relevant to breadwinner role-related behaviour and attitudes. It can help us understand, and theorise about, the relations between these mechanisms and the lives and beliefs of individual men. By exploring the potential influences of such factors, and offering some interpretations about how they may or may not be important, the research moves from the discussion of discrete, standalone variables, to hypothesising about the influences of wider mechanisms in operation in the present socio-economic context.

Pawson and Tilley (2002) denounce a focus on one-layered, discrete explanatory variables. However, the theorising which is central to the realist approach must start at the level of the individual variable. Arguably, theorising requires a thorough analysis of the relations between the attributes, behaviours and beliefs of the sample, which can only be built on an analysis of discrete variables. With this in mind the thesis uses Chapter 5 to examine the socio-economic and demographic attributes of the sample. Chapter 6 reviews the sample's responses to the attitudinal items in the questionnaire as the foundation for a discussion of the distribution of traditional and non-traditional attitudes within the sample. Chapter 7 amalgamates the results from the previous two chapters, and uses statistical techniques to clarify what, if any, relations exist between the measured attributes and attitudes. These chapters then serve as the foundation for Chapters 8 (discussion of results) and 9 (conclusions); and it is only in these later chapters, with reference to the earlier literature reviews and knowledge of the significant relationships, that the author is able to offer some explanations about what mechanisms may shape the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role.

### **Past research**

To date, much of the research in the field of men and masculinities has been of a theoretical nature, exploring the varying conceptions of 'maleness' and heterosexual and

homosexual masculinities from various socio-political perspectives. The few empirical works have been largely qualitative (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Speakman and Marchington, 1999; Speer, 2001; Willott and Griffin, 1997) or based on secondary data sources (e.g. Goodwin, 1999; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). For example, Goodwin's (1999) 'Men's Work and Male Lives; Men and work in Britain' is based on data collected as part of the 1991 National Child Development Study, while Machin and Waldfogel's (1994) 'The Decline of the Male Breadwinner: Changing Shares of Husbands' and Wives' Earnings in Family Income' re-examined data of the 1979-80 and 1989-90 General Household Surveys. Qualitative studies exist on how masculinities are constructed and performed in different workplaces (e.g. Cockburn, 1991; Dennis *et al*, 1969; Leask, 2001; Nordberg, 2001), communities (e.g. Dicks *et al*, 1988; Morris, 1987; Whitehead, 1976), and among socio-economic groups (e.g. Cunningham, 2001; McDowell, 2001; Pleck and Sawyer, 1974), and age groups (e.g. Bowlby, 1946; Jenkins, 1983; McDowell, 2000; Willis, 1984). The impacts of unemployment and redundancy on men, their public and private roles and subsequent (re-)constructions of masculinities has also been documented (e.g. McKee and Bell, 1985; Morris, 1985a, 1985b; Willott and Griffin, 1996).

It was discussed in Chapter 2 that the literature lacks statistical analyses (based on primary, random samples) that investigate potential relationships and draw causal inferences between the social, economic and demographic characteristics of cases and attachment to masculinity discourses. This study aims to contribute to bridging the sampling, attitudinal and quantitative gap in the men and masculinities literature. The application of the survey method on a primary, random sample appeared to be a means of distinguishing this research from previous research. It could then contribute new knowledge to the men and masculinities debates in the form of primary and statistically valid findings from a random, representative sample of men. This study was designed to test for measures of association between men's lives and the way they perceive the hegemonic form of masculinity, in

relation to the breadwinner role. This required a relatively diverse sample and multitudinous dataset. The means of data collection had to allow for the conversion of essentially qualitative beliefs into frequencies, trends and, ideally, statistically significant and generalisable findings and predictions. The survey questionnaire approach, and use of a Likert Scale, was individually suited for the pursuit of these aims.

### **The problem of securing male participation**

Dench (1996, 22) claims that it is widely noted to be difficult to secure research participation from men, and particularly younger men, in studies of gender and family relations. He does not elaborate on this point or provide further references, and similar claims have not been found in the literature to validate his assertion. However, this claim added to an overall concern that due to the subject-sensitive nature of the project, male participation would be low.

Indeed, an attempt to complete exploratory interviews prior to the main research did not give cause for confidence. A small number of exploratory interviews were deemed necessary to enable a greater understanding of potentially suitable topics and questions for the main research, and to inform the development of the questionnaire items. Four methods of interviewee recruitment were attempted: local posters and leaflets, presentations at local meetings of allotment tenants, snowballing among friends, and finally a random postal request. The local posters and leaflets failed to generate any interest at all. The presentations were made to two audiences of approximately 60 men, but resulted in only two completed interviews. The postal request gained a 13.3% response rate, with four men out of a potential sample of 30 agreeing to take part in face-to-face interviews. An additional two respondents were contacted using the snowballing method of sampling.

The data gathered during these interviews proved invaluable. They were of great assistance in the construction of the attitudinal items, and subsequently freed the research, as much as is possible, of the female researcher's values, beliefs and interpretations of men's lives and attitudes. The practical application of interview data also lends the study a sound degree of convergent validity (see Chapter 6). However, it was evident that, without exception, the respondents had specific personal reasons for consenting to participate. For example, one male recruited via the postal request was a full-time, economically dependent 'house-husband' and carer, who felt very strongly about the perceived inappropriateness of traditional notions of masculinity and the male role. While representativeness is not generally a requisite of qualitative research, the partiality of this small sample was a concern.

These concerns gave weight to the belief that a confidential, self-completion postal survey was the most appropriate research method. Securing participation for a questionnaire survey was not without its own problems however. Goodwin (1999) sought to conduct a postal questionnaire survey and gained an unfortunate 4% response rate. This was a concern, but it was believed that such a low response rate must have had more to do with the nature, and perhaps quality, of the research instrument than the gender of the sample. Indeed, as the pilot survey of this project gained a 60% response rate, confidence grew in the chosen research method. (See below for a discussion of the disparity between the response rates of the pilot and main survey).

### **The relationship between the researcher and the researched**

Debates about the relationship between the researcher and the researched came to the fore in the emergence of work on 'feminist methodologies' (e.g. Morgan, 1981; Oakley, 1998). Since the 1960s particularly feminist social scientists have aligned themselves with qualitative methodologies, and to a large part rejected quantitative methodologies as

'implicitly or explicitly defensive of the (masculinist) status quo' (Oakley, 1998, 707). Quantitative methodologies, it was argued, are inherently masculinist; enumerate, objective, scientific, and exploitative (Layland, 1993). The exploitative nature of quantitative research was/is characterised as 'hit and run', in that the research takes from, but rarely gives anything back to the respondents (Oakley, 1998). It is also argued that 'masculinist' methodologies are concerned with furthering knowledge about men and keeping 'silent' the voices of women, by excluding and marginalising women from the research process (Oakley, 1998, 708).

The author has used a 'masculinist' methodology in a study of men. However, the author shares Morgan's (1981, 86) view that 'there is nothing inherently sexist in the use of social surveys....or, indeed, positivism'. The author does not see the terms 'masculinist' and 'quantitative' or 'positivist' as necessarily synonymous. Morgan (1981, 86-87) explains that

'...while there may well be something sexist in the use of the actual terms 'hard' and 'soft' data we cannot assume that the use of 'softer' methodologies is in some way less sexist than the use of techniques which might be labelled 'hard'. Qualitative methodology and ethnography after all has its own brand of *machismo* with its image of the male sociologist bringing back news from the fringes of society, the lower depths, the mean streets, areas traditionally 'off limits' to women investigators' (original emphasis).

Morgan's comments suggest that the debate can be shifted away from questions of research methods and gendered paradigms or methodologies towards the research context. Indeed, Oakley (1998, 708-709) notes that basing methodological decisions on the gendered, sometimes antagonistic, quantitative/qualitative divide may be ultimately unhelpful to the goals of social science.

The main concern regarding the relationship between the researcher and researched was that the relationship would not be exploitative by being built upon detrimental power and

gender relations. Winchester (1996) suggests that 'competitive masculinity', denoting a relationship compounded by gender-based rivalry is often experienced between male interviewers and male interviewees. In this case, competitive masculinity was not a direct issue. However, it is indicative of the gender and power dynamics between researcher and researched that can have a bearing on the nature and quality of the data that are gathered during any kind of research interaction.

The author believed that as a female researcher looking to contact and gain information from a male sample, the influence of gender and power relations would be palpable. A qualitative approach to the study would have required questioning men about their marriages/partnerships, family life and gender beliefs. This could have depressed the participation rate, and, for those participating, may have been an uncomfortable, intrusive experience. On this occasion, the author favoured the more impersonal survey approach as a way of protecting the respondents from any negative outcomes of the research interaction.

It was not investigated whether the male sample did experience any negative outcomes or found the research exploitative. However, a small number of men (14) made notes on their questionnaire to the effect that they appreciated the opportunity to be asked and have their views heard on the topics of work and family life. These comments are interesting for the contrast they provide with the claim noted above that it is traditionally women who are silenced in social research.

Similarly, although it is not deemed necessary (or desirable) to always match the researcher to the researched in that certain characteristics are shared, be it of gender, age, religion or particular experiences, the likely experiential disparity between the researcher and participants was a concern. A female researcher is undoubtedly an 'outsider' to the

male perspective on men's lives and beliefs. As a female researcher with no knowledge of what it means to be male, and without any experience of being a male breadwinner, it was anticipated that the interpretation of qualitative responses would be problematic and may have impacted on the validity of the project. A quantitative approach to the research took away the need for the researcher to rely on subjective interpretations of the interview data. Further, as discussed earlier, comments made by the eight interviewees contacted prior to the survey formed the basis of many items used to measure the men's beliefs. It is believed that this allowed men themselves to determine the themes of the research, and kept to a minimum the content input, and hence subjectivity, of the female researcher.

### **Ethics**

Sieber (1996) claims that ethical research is required to gain the necessary cooperation of participants and the societal support needed to sustain scientific inquiry. To this end, ethical codes of practice are designed to aid the researcher in an attempt to protect themselves, the research participants and society at large from any harmful physical or psychological actions and/or consequences which the research project may otherwise generate (Sieber, 1996). Practices which are deemed to be ethical include gaining informed consent, securing anonymity and respecting the particular needs of any vulnerable populations that have agreed to participate. In recent years ethical debates have also been applied to the use of language during the course of the research, with the British Sociological Association (BSA) (1997) now encouraging that ethical research is built upon language that is anti-racist and non-disablist.

Prior to making the research method decision, it was noted that the chief ethical issues would concern the confidentiality of responses and, where appropriate, ensuring that the sole participation of the male did not create within-household tension. The issue of confidentiality was relatively easy to overcome, in that all responses, whether from

interviews or a survey, could be anonymised before analysis and stored securely. Participants would be informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time, and all ethical issues would be addressed in the context of the University's and BSA's ethical code.

Safeguarding against the potential of the research to generate tension between couples was more problematic however. This was considered an issue solely due to the sensitive and intimate nature of the research. In face-to-face interviews, respondents could have potentially disclosed attitudes and beliefs that conflicted with their means of household organisation, and with those of their female partners. The veracity of responses, given in their own home, may have been questionable.

With both face-to-face interviews and a postal questionnaire, respondents could choose for themselves whether to include female partners in the research process. However, it was felt that the presence of a researcher during interviews may have had a bearing on this decision. Instead, the use of a postal questionnaire allowed respondents to determine, in freedom from external influences, whether their participation was confidential to other family members.

### **Research resources**

All of the above concerns are, of course, set within a cost, time and resource context. In terms of the initial outlay, a questionnaire survey is not inexpensive. However, when judged against the time and travel costs of, say, face-to-face interviews, the questionnaire survey method has many benefits. A large sample of people can be contacted, and a large data-set generated relatively quickly and easily. Within a period of three months, the survey was completed, data were input, checked and cleaned, and initial analysis had begun.

In the event, the survey was also relatively cost effective, with each completed questionnaire costing £2.58. This compares favourably with Sykes and Hoinville's (1985) estimates of £3.18 per face-to-face interview, and £2.72 per telephone interview, per 1000 completed interviews. Such estimates are undoubtedly subject to favourable economies of scale, and should ideally be adjusted in the light of inflation over the past nearly 20 years. Indeed, a dearth of up-to-date literature on the costs of primary research encouraged the author to produce a departmental statement on the costs of conducting postal surveys of various sizes as a guide for other researchers and dissertation students (Chamberlain, 2001).

Prior to making the research method decision the suitability of the telephone questionnaire survey method was explored in detail. This method is growing in popularity due the development of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) programmes, which enable data to be entered directly at the time of interview, and allow complex question paths to be followed on screen (Lavrakas, 1993). Without such programmes, conducting reasonably large scale telephone surveys is usually too labour intensive to contemplate (Lavrakas, 1993).

At present, this method is used more frequently for commercial than academic purposes. However, a benefit of this is that some very detailed literature exists that outlines the most cost and time effective use of the method. Data have been gathered, for example, on the best days of the week, times of the day, and number of rings of the telephone for maximum response (e.g. Frey, 1988; Lavrakas, 1993; Sykes and Hoinville, 1985).

Of course, there are inherent problems with this method, including that not everyone has access to a telephone at home or allows their telephone number to be listed. Random digit dialling (RDD) is increasingly used as a means of sampling among telephone owners,

including those with ex-directory numbers (see Thomas and Purdon (1994) for discussion of this technique). RDD is not without its own problems however, including that it requires a detailed knowledge of telephone number structuring at a local and national level, and can be time-consuming and costly (given that some randomly dialled numbers will be for commercial use, will go unanswered or will not be in use) (Thomas and Purdon, 1994). Moreover, RDD cannot provide a solution to the inclusion of people who do not own a telephone.

These sample access issues undoubtedly have implications for the reliability and representativeness of the findings of telephone surveys. However, by using this method and following the advice in the literature this project could have combined the efficiency of a survey with the research interaction of interviews. Unlike a postal survey, during a telephone survey the researcher is able to clarify any misunderstandings, take note of any additional comments that are made, and explore issues in more depth if appropriate.

In this case the telephone survey method appeared to be a strong alternative to the postal survey. It was not chosen solely as CATI programmes were unavailable locally. For future research on male attitudes this method may prove very useful. It would also be of considerable methodological interest to the field of men and masculinities to investigate whether men may be more likely to participate in telephone, rather than postal surveys (see Chapter 9 for further discussion on researching 'men and masculinities').

### **Measuring attitudes**

An attitude scale consists of a number of positively or negatively worded statements concerned with one or more attitudinal constructs or topics, to which responses are requested. The desired responses may be in the form of circles or some other mark on a numbered continuum, ticks in the appropriate boxes, a written response, or as in this case a

score within a given range of scores on a Likert Scale. As discussed earlier, attitudinal scales were used fairly widely in the emergent masculinities literature from the 1960s onwards in the USA, but have rarely been employed in the UK for similar purposes.

The beliefs of the sample were measured using a scale consisting of 26 attitudinal items. These items formed the first part of the questionnaire, and were presented with a standard five-point Likert Scale which advanced through 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', to 'agree' and 'strongly agree'. For analysis, scores are examined for individual items, as a sum of the whole scale or as a sub-total of three sub-scales that were identified using factor and conceptual analysis (see Chapter 6). High scores denote support for a traditional division of labour in the household, while low scores are commensurate with more egalitarian perceptions of male and female roles. In scoring and analysis, the Likert Scale was adjusted for negatively worded items.

Using Rosenberg and Hovland's (1960) typology of attitudes, the index applied in this study consisted of:

- five conative items that examined behavioural intentions, for example, item 19, which is a proxy measure of the importance of work, 'If I became unemployed I would worry that my family and friends would lose respect for me'
- 15 cognitive items that concerned the beliefs of the respondents, for example, item 12 'An unemployed father can usually be a good role model for his children'
- six affective items concerned with feelings and evaluations such as item 9 'It is very important to me that I always have a full-time job'.

The attitude scale, and accompanying Likert Scale, was considered as the ideal means of accessing the beliefs of a male sample for a number of reasons. Responses to attitudinal indices are easy to quantify and, with a representative sample, are able to say something

statistical and generalisable about male attitudes. Securing an adequate internal consistency reliability coefficient, by undertaking item-item and item-total correlations, is one means of establishing that the scale findings are reliable. The research instrument can then be administered with other populations for comparative research purposes. Further, by employing a Likert scale and asking relatively little of the respondents in time and effort it was hoped that this project could avoid the poor response rate prediction of Dench (1996) and experience of Goodwin (1999).

## **Part 2: Limitations of the research instrument**

In choosing a singular research method there are inevitably trade-offs of benefits and drawbacks. It is acknowledged that the chosen method has the following limitations.

### **Reliance on the written word**

The success of a postal questionnaire survey relies on the respondents' ability to interpret and understand the language, questions and instructions as intended by the researcher. The researcher is not present to clarify any queries or misunderstandings as they are during interviews<sup>22</sup>. The onus is therefore on the researcher to carefully design, pre-test and pilot test the research instrument. While these steps were taken in this study, it could not guarantee that misunderstandings would not occur. Indeed, the Likert Scale instructions were not understood by two respondents, who commented to this effect, and it was evident that a few others had made false starts.

Ability to understand the questions and format of the questionnaire may be compounded if the language used is not native to the respondent or the respondent experiences literacy difficulties. In the case of the former concern, the use of GB Profiler data (see sampling section below) would indicate enumeration districts of high ethnic minority concentration

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<sup>22</sup> A telephone number was given on all correspondence, but no question-related queries were taken.

where, it can be surmised, research may encounter speakers of English as a second language. In such cases, alternative language versions of a questionnaire may be appropriate. It is important therefore that researchers have a good knowledge of the area and population under study. For this project, a review of GB Profiler and census data indicated that alternative language versions of the questionnaire were most likely unnecessary (see below for further discussion of ethnicity).

During the development of the questionnaire and the pre-testing and piloting testing stages, amendments were made to the language used in all correspondence with participants. To encourage participation and fulfil the ethical code of the BSA (1997) relating to the use of language, it was very important that the language used was accessible, non-technical and, as noted above, was non-disablist and non-racist.

As the questionnaire was designed to test gender-related attitudes, the items of the attitudinal index were worded strongly, either positively or negatively. Many of these items were necessarily worded in sexist terms. Item 26 on the scale contended, for example that 'It is unmanly for men to stay at home and look after their children full-time'. In all other respects, however, the language was also non-sexist, with the research tool given approval by the Faculty Ethics sub-committee.

### **Superficial data?**

It is recognised that in employing the survey technique, this study lacks the data richness and depth of understanding that may have been gained with the use of a qualitative method. It may also be suggested that the questionnaire constrained the ability of respondents to truly express their attitudes and beliefs about the attitudinal object.

A small number of respondents commented that the 26 attitudinal items were rigid and did not allow for contextual attitudes and behaviour. The respondents noted that their responses to the items would change in different circumstances. Of these respondents, two felt the lack of context made it impossible to respond, and their questionnaires were returned with these comments and uncompleted. While this is undoubtedly a limitation to the research, it was felt that providing contextual boundaries would result in wordy, complicated items. To gain an adequate response rate it was important that the questionnaire was as user-friendly and accessible as possible. It was even more important, however, to avoid results that were limited to specific contexts. Instead, the aim was to gauge normative beliefs and investigate their distribution among the sample.

It could also be argued that the scale scores which form the basis of the analysis are a superficial summary of respondents' attitudes that lack detail. And indeed, it is important to note that the scale scores conceal responses to individual items, and that respondents with similar scores did not necessarily respond in similar ways. As the scores are interval rather than ratio, it cannot be said, for example, that a respondent with a score of 50 is twice as traditional as a respondent with a score of 25. It can only be surmised that men with higher scores are more likely to have traditional beliefs than men with lower scores. To overcome some of these concerns, Chapter 6 details the standardising of upper and lower limits of the scale; how low, moderate and high traditionality is defined; and how scalograms were constructed and applied to check the respondents' scoring patterns (see Appendix 4). The responses to individual items are also overviewed in Chapter 6.

This project would have undoubtedly suited a dual-method approach. The survey could have generated statistically reliable and generalisable findings, while a qualitative method such as focus groups or interviews could have added depth and greater understanding of some of the more complex associations made in this research. There was a time and cost

element in the decision not to employ such a research strategy. To do justice to such an approach would have required more time (for completion and analysis) and economic resources than the author had available. There are also the issues noted above concerning the relationship between the researcher and the researched, specifically the female author's interpretation of male narratives. However, of greater relevance in this decision was the author's desire to contribute new knowledge to the field of men and masculinities, and to do so by taking the opportunity to employ a relatively large-scale random survey. Like many research projects, this research is based on a trade-off between the ability of the project to generalise and predict, and offer in-depth explanation and understanding.

### **Sampling error**

The degree of sampling error determines the accuracy with which estimates about the characteristics of the target population can be drawn from the characteristics of the sample (de Vaus, 1996). Sampling error can be defined as the variation within a sample around the true value of the population under study, that stems from the fact that, by chance, randomly-drawn samples may differ from the population as a whole (Fowler, 1993). Applying probability theory to the process of drawing a sample suggests that the sampling errors of a number of samples will be normally distributed (Fowler, 1993). In this case, most samples will tend towards the mean sampling error, with large sampling errors occurring less frequently.

Part 3, below, discusses that within the sampling frame, each respondent had an equal probability of being selected, and that random selection methods were applied. As a probability sample, simple random sampling errors can be calculated. de Vaus (1996) notes that with a total sample size of 330, this study has a sampling error of  $\pm 5.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. Inevitably, if we wish to determine the attitudes towards the breadwinner role of a sample sub-group, consisting of only single men for example, the sample size

falls to just 49, and any population estimates are therefore subject to greater error. (See Chapter 6 for a discussion of the confidence intervals on the attitudinal scale for the target population). Moreover, as a social study, in which securing sample diversity was a purposeful part of the design, some proportional statements that can be made about the sample are subject to greater error than others. Where variables are dichotomous, an approximately equal split of the sample results in relatively large sampling errors. In contrast, where splits are more uneven, the greater the bias in favour of one attribute, the smaller the error (Fowler, 1993).

The following two examples illustrate this point. Only 35 (11%) of the 330 respondents do not have personal access to a car. This finding is subject to a sampling error of  $\pm 4\%$  at the 95% confidence level among the target population (see Fowler, 1993, 29, for the formula). The sampling error regarding the proportion of the sample with children living in the home, which has a more equal split, (48% with children in the home, 52% without), results in a sampling error of  $\pm 6\%$  at the 95% confidence level. If a smaller sample size of, say, 100 had been secured, at the 95% confidence level these sampling errors increase to approximately 6% and 10% respectively. Such random error is an inevitable aspect of sampling. Researchers must therefore be aware of the accuracy with which they can extrapolate findings from the sample to the target population.

#### **Male only participation**

The questionnaire was designed to be completed by men, and it was requested on all correspondence that only the target respondent participated in the research. In a few cases it appeared that female partners had helped to complete the questionnaire. In these cases it can only be surmised that the given responses mainly reflect the beliefs of the male and not the female.

While the focus of this study is male attitudes, the attitudes of female partners undoubtedly would have been beneficial and insightful. Comparing male and female responses would have allowed examination of intra-household attitudinal parity and conflict, and could have been applied to address a diverse range of research questions. The neglect of female attitudes represents a gap in the findings of this project and can only be justified in relation to the time and resource constraints noted above.

### **Missing variables**

As noted, the development of the research instrument was framed by a concern that participation would be low, owing to the gender of the sample and the sensitivity of the research topic. A review of the survey method literature was completed in order to apply to this research the successes encountered by other users of questionnaire surveys, and to avoid their failures. In 1992 Goodwin (1999) piloted a questionnaire survey to a sample of 50 men in Britain and received only two replies; neither of which was fully completed. As a result, the primary element of his research was abandoned in favour of secondary data (Goodwin, 1999, 78). Goodwin's (1999) experience, coupled with Dench's (1996) assertion that research participation is commonly low among men, provided a timely reminder of the importance of thorough development and testing of the research instrument. To this end, the questionnaire was designed to be user-friendly, being brief, easily understood, quickly completed, and most importantly, non-offensive or alienating to a diverse sample of men. That the questionnaire was user-friendly was confirmed with extensive pre-testing and then pilot testing.

However, there are two variables missing from this research that are noted in the discussion in Chapter 2 as central to men's lives and their degree of alignment with dominant masculinity discourses. The variables are those of sexuality and ethnicity. As Connell (1993) notes there has been a general neglect of these issues in UK masculinities

research, being subordinate in research terms to class-based issues. It is unfortunate that this study adds to such neglect. However, in this case, the omission of these variables was not an oversight, but a conscious decision made with the interests of the potential respondents, and the success of the research project in mind.

As noted earlier, ethnicity must be considered as a central thread of masculinity, as an individual's ethnicity may influence the extent to which they are, at least materially, able to fulfil masculine ideals and behavioural norms (Connell, 1995). The ethnicity of respondents could therefore have added an important and interesting element to this project, and made a contribution to an area of study, that of ethnic masculinities, that is currently underdeveloped in British sociology. Despite this, the ethnicity of respondents was not addressed in the questionnaire.

As a whole, Plymouth's ethnic minority population stood at 0.9% at the time of the 1991 census, while towards the outskirts of the TTWA the population was as small as 0.2%. At a regional scale a more recent assessment suggests there is an ethnic population of 1.4% in the south west, and 0.7% and 0.5% in the counties of Devon and Cornwall respectively; compared with 6% nationally (McGinty and Williams, 2001). However, such statistics can be misleading, given that the largest UK ethnic category, that of 'white', subsumes under its heading various 'white' ethnic identities (such as Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Cornish etc) (Ahmad, 1999; Williams, 2003). Indeed, Williams (2003, para 4.3) notes, for example, that the 'white' population in Plymouth currently stands at 97%, but that 'the principal ethnic minorities include Greek, Maltese, Cornish and Irish'.

With an initial sample of 714, the census statistics implied that the likelihood of contacting respondents from ethnic minority groups (other than 'white') would be especially poor. In addition, the claims of Ahmad (1999) and Williams (2003) suggested that the ethnic

classifications typically applied in the literature would be inappropriate to the local context. The decision was therefore made to fore-go an analysis of ethnicity, rather than attempt an analysis that had limited validity and reliability.

The question of respondent sexuality was omitted from the questionnaire as it was considered intrusive, insensitive and inappropriate given the format of the research. As noted in Chapter 2, a key aspect of the hegemonic masculinity is the denial of, and distancing from all things homosexual. Indeed, as Carrigan *et al* (1985, 593) identify, the literature on masculinity and the family takes it for granted that the hegemonic masculinity is heterosexual, although this should not necessarily be the case. However, to include a question which queried the individual's sexuality may have been highly offensive to men with a strong sense of hegemonic masculinity. At the extreme, this question could have caused distress to individuals and couples, and, as such, raised doubt over the author's commitment to undertake ethical research. While the masculinities literature must examine further the influences of sexuality, it was deemed inappropriate to do so in a postal questionnaire survey.

#### **Social desirability and other research effects**

A high score in any of the three sub-scales and full scale denoted an attitudinal preference for a traditional division of labour in the household and traditional sex roles, specifically a breadwinner and full-time housewife/carer. This method of scoring was chosen in order to reduce the influence of social desirability response set (Ayidiya and McClendon, 1990; Phillips *et al*, 1999). Mueller (1986; 74) suggests that if respondents answer in socially desirable ways then a large proportion of the scale variance will be due to this factor, and not attitudinal differences. As it was deemed more socially undesirable to disclose traditional attitudes, it was made difficult to gain a high score on the scale. All traditional

responses<sup>23</sup> were weighted, so that responding in a consistently 'traditional' way would create a much higher score than those of non-traditional and intermediate respondents (see discussion in Chapter 6). As noted in Chapter 6, this study also applies a more strict statistical definition of traditionality than is commonly used in the literature. It is believed that this adds to the study's reliability in identifying and measuring the prevalence of traditional attitudes.

Similarly, to negate the influence of acquiescence response set (a desire to please the researcher) (Ayidiya and McClendon, 1990; Phillips *et al*, 1999), covering letters and the questionnaire were deliberately neutral. In all written contact with respondents it was not expressed, either explicitly or implicitly, that one set of attitudes was any more desirable or pleasing than the other. Comments made by the pre-testers of the questionnaire suggested that the wording of the attitudinal items made it equally easy to disclose traditional and untraditional attitudes. Acquiescence response set was also addressed by phrasing items in both positive and negative forms. As single items are an unreliable means of measuring attitudes (Ajzen, 1988), each attitudinal construct was measured with a number of items. Mixing positively and negatively worded items cannot eliminate acquiescence response set (Mueller, 1986). However, as points gained through positive responses are usually balanced by low or minus scoring for negative items, the effects of acquiescence are potentially cancelled out (Mueller, 1986). Phillips *et al* (1999) suggest that mixing positive and negative items also reduces the potential effects of primacy or recency (sequential effects in which the questions posed first or last in a list influence the nature of the other responses) and order effect (responding in a patterned way) that can occur with questionnaires. Care was taken during the construction of the attitudinal index to ensure there were no obvious order biases. This was checked post-survey with reference to the scalograms.

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<sup>23</sup> For non-reversed items, the options of 'agree' and 'strongly agree'; for items that were reversed for

### Part 3: Sample size and sampling

The final part of the chapter is concerned with the sampling plan and response rate to the questionnaire survey. The section begins by introducing the geographical context of the research.

#### **The Plymouth Travel-To-Work Area (TTWA)**

TTWAs represent a relatively new geographical territory within Britain. The boundaries were initially drawn up in 1984 by the Department for Employment for the purpose of presenting employment and unemployment data (Green and Owen, 1990, 9). On the basis of commuting patterns identified in the 1981 census 322 British TTWAs were created. Since then TTWAs have been re-drawn or occasionally newly created to accommodate the local changes in work and commuting geographies identified in the 1991 census. Cumbria, for example, saw the creation of one new TTWA, and changes to five existing TTWAs in 1997 (Cumbria Local Authority, 1997). Increased car ownership, changes in the road and rail network, and telecommunication developments have all impacted on the spatial relationship between home and work, and contributed to the reorganisation of TTWA boundaries (Green and Owen, 1990).

A recent local government briefing defines TTWAs as 'approximations to self-contained labour markets – that is, areas where all commuting to and from work occurs within the (TTWA) boundary' (Cumbria Local Authority, 1997). The use of the word 'all' in this definition is slightly misleading as boundaries are applied on a basis of at least 75% self-containment (Green *et al*, 1991). Some leeway is acknowledged as total self-containment, in that all residents living within a TTWA also work within that area, is highly unlikely. In addition to at least 75% self-containment, the other criteria that a TTWA must meet are that:

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analysis purposes, the options of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.

1. Wards in the TTWA are contiguous;
2. The TTWA has a working population of at least 3,500; and
3. The TTWA does not cut through ward boundaries (Green *et al*, 1991).

The TTWA territories are most notably used by local governments and the Department of Trade and Industry for planning and economic development and mapping purposes (Cumbria Local Authority, 1997). The boundaries are also particularly useful for monitoring changes in local labour markets and economies, comparing unemployment rates, and investigating the nature of the links between the workplace and home. Green and Owen (1990, 9) suggest that initially the boundaries proved relatively unpopular for academic analyses owing to a dearth of information concerning the characteristics of individual TTWAs and relationships between TTWAs. Classification work has since been completed (e.g. Green and Owen, 1990; Green *et al*, 1991) that has made them more suitable for academic purposes. It is evident however, that in comparison to other spatially aggregated data, TTWA level data do not attract as much academic interest as, say, ward or county level data. There remains much scope for the use of these boundaries in academic research.

Plymouth's TTWA consists of 53 wards which extend to the north, east and west of the city boundaries by approximately 15 miles. In 1993 the population was estimated at 354,000; in the south west second in size only to the Bristol TTWA. The wards span the city of Plymouth, and encroach into west Devon, the South Hams, and the Caradon district in south east Cornwall.

The Plymouth TTWA was chosen as the focus of this study on the grounds of its geographic and socio-economic diversity. The area encompasses urban and rural areas of varying degrees of deprivation and prosperity. It includes St Peter ward in the heart of

Plymouth city which, on the basis of selected variables, was noted by Payne (1995) to be the most deprived ward in England. At the other extreme, the suburban and peripheral wards of the TTWA include some comparatively affluent commuter areas. Wards to the east of Plymouth in the South Hams, for example, score highly on the Wealth Z Scores index (Devon County Council, 1998). Using measures including dual car ownership, dual incomes, and large houses, wards such as Sparkwell and Newton and Noss gain high scores of between 2.51-7.00 on the index, in comparison to scores of -7.00 - -2.51 in the centre of Plymouth<sup>24</sup> (Devon County Council, 1998).

The following table shows selected characteristics of the Plymouth TTWA, compared against three other dominant TTWAs in the south west.

Table 8. Characteristics of the Plymouth TTWA and other dominant south west TTWAs.

TTWA	Rank by urban size (Britain)	Urban population	Urban-rural character	Classification
Plymouth	21	200,000-500,000	Urban	Declining centre
Bristol	9	500,000-1million	Urban	Established service centre
Exeter	36	100,000-200,000	Intermediate	Established service centre
Taunton	48	50,000-100,000	Intermediate	Established service centre

(Derived from Green and Owen, 1990)

Plymouth is the only TTWA in the south west to be defined as a declining centre on the basis of the 1984 analysis. Green and Owen (1990, 34) identify that the majority of

<sup>24</sup> Rather than a simple deprived urban-affluent rural dichotomy, it is acknowledged that such indices, and other ward-level data, conceal affluence and deprivation at a household, street and Enumeration District

declining centres are clustered in northern Britain, particularly the northern region of England. The characteristics that declining centres share include, in comparison to other TTWAs:

- lower out-flow from unemployment;
- higher unemployment rate;
- larger job shortfall;
- higher share of young people among the long-term unemployed;
- greater proportion of employment in intermediate service occupations; and
- higher married female economic activity rate (Green and Owen's rationale for the inclusion of this variable is undefined, and seemingly questionable) (Green and Owen, 1990, 34-36).

While Green and Owen (1990) and Green *et al* (1991) provide the most comprehensive analyses of TTWAs, their publications are now considerably dated, based as they are on 1981 data. Indeed, growth in Plymouth and the surrounding areas in the tourism, electronics and technology sectors, and a falling unemployment rate<sup>25</sup>, may now challenge Green and Owen's (1990) classification of the Plymouth TTWA as a declining centre.

As noted above, academics have been relatively slow to make use of TTWA boundaries and data. And from a researcher's point of view, using them at the current time is not without problems. The main difficulty concerns the availability of and access to suitably spatially aggregated information. As noted, the Plymouth TTWA spans the Devon-Cornwall border, and includes wards under the governance of three councils: Caradon District Council, Plymouth City Council and Devon County Council. The author found that the unitary authorities hold little TTWA data and, moreover, are reluctant to combine data

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level. While wards in the centre of Plymouth generally score highly on deprivation indices, like those of most

and contribute to knowledge of the TTWA as a whole. In part this may be complicated by the timing of the research as there appears to be a disinclination among the relevant parties to complete further analysis of the 1991 census, when the results of the 2001 census are forthcoming. TTWA-level data are also less frequently consulted than, say, ward, enumeration district, county and regional-level data which may add to such reluctance. In addition to such difficulties at a local level, the TTWA data available from the otherwise comprehensive electronic sources NOMIS, MIMAS and Casweb are also sketchy and incomplete.

In spite of this drawback, the Plymouth TTWA was chosen for sampling purposes largely because the boundary *did* span the various peripheries of Plymouth. Ward-level analysis was considered too specific and unsuitable for statistical generalisation, while the county or regional level was deemed too broad, and likely to conceal patterns and trends at a local level. At a larger level of spatial analysis the limitations of the sample size would have also reduced the statistical reliability of the findings. It is also suggested that TTWAs have a clear economic coherence, being based on a city core and the population that depends on it. This is in contrast to administrative boundaries that may be drawn arbitrarily.

The TTWA offered the researcher a pre-defined boundary in which the geography and socio-economic and demographic profile is diverse, yet knowable in some detail. With an effective sampling plan the research could survey men from divergent circumstances and ultimately make steps towards contributing to some of the socio-economic and demographic discontinuities in the existing men and masculinities literature. As the project is concerned with work-related attitudes it also made conceptual and statistical sense to apply the TTWA boundary, based as it is on one dominant labour market in which at least 75% of the local working population are employed.

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sizeable cities, enclaves of some affluence exist.

### **The sampling plan**

As noted in earlier chapters and above, a key aim of this project was to sample a representative cross-section of the male population. This aim grew out of the literature review which shows a neglect of primary, random samples and diversity within the male population. By investigating a population dissimilar to that of existing studies it was hoped that this study would discover new knowledge to contribute to the men and masculinities debates.

The sampling plan was informed by the belief that sampling randomly throughout the Plymouth TTWA was too ill-defined for the purposes of this research. Given the criticisms made of the literature regarding the use of homogeneous samples, it was important that this project took steps to secure sample diversity. Demonstrating sample diversity would require a high degree of respondent definition and it was believed that the sampling process itself could be used to provide additional data on the characteristics of the sample. This would add value to the research, without asking anything extra of the respondents. A two step sampling plan was devised to target a range of socio-economically disparate wards, and within those wards a similar range of households. The sampling plan consisted of a two-step process.

#### **Step 1: Ward selection**

Townsend Material Deprivation Scores<sup>26</sup> (TMDS) were gathered (Payne, 1995) and applied as a means of organising the 53 wards of the TTWA. Score quartiles were calculated, representing wards of high, medium high, medium low and low socio-economic deprivation. By establishing the quartile categories and selecting three wards from each, the sampling plan could ensure balanced representation from relatively affluent and

<sup>25</sup> The Plymouth TTWA unemployment rate has fallen from 5.8% in 1998 to 2.8% in mid 2001 (ONS, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> The Townsend Score includes four variables: unemployment (lack of material resources and insecurity), overcrowding (material living conditions), lack of owner occupied accommodation (a proxy indicator of

relatively deprived areas. This deprivation classification also added another variable to the research.

A random selection of three wards was then taken from each quartile, giving a total of 12 wards from which to sample. The selected wards are:

in Plymouth; Estover, Ham, Southway, Plymstock Dunstone, Plympton Erle,

in the Caradon district of Cornwall; Landrake and Pill

in the South Hams; Ivybridge and Ugborough

and in West Devon; Lydford, Tavistock and Walkham.

#### Step 2: Postcode unit selection

By themselves the TMDS were not considered detailed enough summaries of the wards as the scores are likely to conceal pockets of affluence or deprivation that contrast with the overall character of the ward. Instead, to select a range of socio-economically diverse households within the 12 selected wards, the geo-demographic, census-derived programme 'GB Profiler'<sup>27</sup> (Blake and Openshaw, 1994) was used. GB Profiler provides a socio-economic summary of the households in any postcode unit and enumeration district in Great Britain. The summaries are based on the combining of over 80 Small Area Statistics of the 1991 census with data from the 1991 central postcode directory. The table below shows one example of the postcode unit summaries from each deprivation quartile.

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wealth) and lack of car ownership (a proxy indicator of income) (e.g. Devon County Council, 1998). The score is a summation of the standardised scores (z scores) for each variable.

<sup>27</sup> Developed by Marcus Blake and Stan Openshaw (1994) of the School of Geography, University of Leeds.

Table 9. Examples of GB Profiler summaries.

Deprivation quartile*	Postcode unit	GB Profiler socio-economic summary
Low deprivation	Plympton PL7 1QG	Established; well off middle agers, mature white collar families owning and buying detached and semi-detached houses
Medium low deprivation	Landrake PL12 5DF	Climbing; affluent, executive home owning area, white collar families and couples buying detached houses
Medium high deprivation	Tavistock PL19 0ER	Prospering; affluent rural commuter area, mature professional or farming residents owning and privately renting detached houses
High deprivation	Ham PL5 1AS	Aspiring; new home owners and mature communities, blue and white collar couples and families owning and buying terraces and semi-detached houses

\* Derivative of Townsend Material Deprivation Scores

The above summaries provide a brief description of some of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of these small residential areas and their populations. It is notable that the summaries are not always commensurate with the TMDS quartiles. Tavistock North, for example, a ward in a relatively small town situated some 15 miles to the north of Plymouth, was coded as medium high deprivation. The three randomly selected postcode units, however, are either 'prospering' or 'established', and suggest quite a high degree of affluence and prosperity. There therefore appears to be some disparity between ward positioning based on TMDS, and the postcode units selected to represent those wards. In contrast to the TMDS data, the number of households in each postcode area ranges from just a few to a maximum of approximately 130. While there are limitations to the GB Profiler database (noted below), the summaries are likely to be more accurate than those based on TMDS, given the smaller spatial unit of analysis.

GB Profiler data were gathered for all the postcode units in each ward. The systematic random sampling method was then applied to ensure there was a proportionate relationship between the number of postcodes in an area and the likelihood of a postcode being selected. Approximately three postcode units were selected in each ward.

The final stage in the sampling process was the purchase of electoral roll data for the selected postcode units, and the systematic selection of male participants. As well as securing sample diversity, the GB Profiler data were particularly useful for cutting the costs regarding the purchase of electoral roll data, in that specific postcode data could be requested. However, negotiating access to the electoral roll data proved difficult due to a combination of copyright laws and the costs of electoral roll data (given that the sample spanned the boundaries of three unitary authorities). In an attempt to reduce the costs of the research, the author found during a review of alternative data sources that electoral roll data could be bought from a missing person's investigator. The missing person's investigator held the relevant GB Accelerator programme and supplied the required data at half the estimated cost, and in a fraction of the time quoted by the local authorities. This allowed all correspondence with respondents to be named correctly which was important for households with more than one male, and was considered essential in terms of the response rate.

While the GB Profiler descriptions proved useful for sampling purposes there are some inherent limitations in the database. Most notably, like any attempt to categorise an area there are likely to be anomalies. The different methods of compiling TMDS and GB Profiler data, and their differing spatial units of analysis, result in some disparity. Further, this study falls on the cusp of the 2001 census, meaning that while the 1991 data are outdated, the 2001 data are not yet widely available. The implication of this is that GB Profiler data must be viewed as an indication of an area's profile, rather than a definitive

summary. Since 1991 some of the postcode units of the 12 sampled wards have grown considerably while others have become disused. Indeed, of the 40 selected postcode units spread throughout the 12 wards that GB Profiler classed as in use, four had become disused or had been modified.

GB Profiler data were also applied, in part, to identify, and subsequently exclude from the selection process, enclaves of retired residents. Owing to the nature of the study a sample of working age men was preferred. Of the final 330 respondents, 17% (55) were retired. This, of course, may represent a relatively good response rate among retired men. Conversely, it may be the case that, in this study, the application of GB Profiler data for the purpose of limiting the number of retired respondents was not particularly effective.

### **Conducting the survey**

Following pre-testing of the research instrument a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 30 men living in Plymouth. The sample was drawn randomly from the Plymouth electoral roll. Analysis of the pilot study responses suggested a strong, statistically significant relationship between attachment to the breadwinner role and economic status. As a result additional measures of economic status - household tenure, type of accommodation and car ownership - were added to the questionnaire, with a view to exploring this relationship in more detail. Minor wording adjustments were also made to three attitudinal items that some of the respondents had noted difficulties with. It is discussed in the following chapters that the relationship with economic status fails to be significant among the main sample. Conversely, other themes emerged during the main survey that were not identified in the pilot study data.

The pilot study gained a response rate of 60% (18 cases), which was very promising given the participation concerns noted above. On conducting the main survey, however, the

response rate fell to 50% (330 cases). This was disappointing given the results of the pilot study, but was deemed adequate, particularly in the light of Kent's (2001, 201) claim that postal surveys with random samples typically receive response rates of between 20-30%.

The disparity in the response rates of the pilot and main survey appears to be a product of the use of pre-letters. The survey literature concerned with primarily the telephone survey method advocates the use of pre-letters, sent in advance of the main survey to inform respondents of their selection, and to request participation. Frey (1989) found that pre-letters depress refusal rates and improve data quality. A pre-letter was seen as potentially beneficial for this research due to the difficulties encountered in securing participation in the exploratory interviews; the sensitive nature of this research project; and Dench's (1996) claim that men are disinclined to participate in family and gender-related questionnaire surveys. The pre-letter was also a means of eliminating from any further correspondence the respondents who had recently changed address, thus helping to reduce costs. The pre-letter was composed for the purposes of informing potential respondents of their selection, and ultimately increasing participation by validating the research project, eliminating any surprise and ideally generating interest or anticipation.

Following the recommendations in the survey literature (Frey, 1989) pre-letters were sent prior to the pilot study with the intention that they would also be sent with the main survey. The pre-letters were planned and had been budgeted for. However, as the pilot study received a far greater response than had been anticipated, the decision was made to target a larger sample for the main study. The decision was made to forego the pre-letters and use the savings to target a sample of 720 men, instead of 400 as planned previously. As the main survey gained a 10% response rate deficit, in hindsight it may have been beneficial to contact a small sample of the pilot respondents to check whether the pre-letter had been at all persuasive.

During late April-May, 2000, the self-completion postal questionnaire was sent to 714 men in the selected postcode units. Of these 714 potential respondents, 35 had relocated, 13 declined to participate on the basis of disability or long-term sickness, and two refused outright. After two weeks a postcard reminder was sent to the outstanding respondents. Following another two-week period a second copy of the questionnaire was sent. The postcard reminder and second mailing increased participation by approximately 22%. (See Appendix 5 for examples of all correspondence).

The 330 respondents are distributed relatively evenly between the twelve selected wards in the Plymouth TTWA. Table 10 below, shows that the lowest number of responses (72) came from the three wards that have a relative absence of deprivation, and in comparison are affluent. The six mid-range wards contributed the greatest number of respondents. Responses to the second mailing of the questionnaire were consistent throughout the different ward classifications.

Table 10. Survey responses by ward, deprivation classification and mailing (%).

Ward	Deprivation classification*	% of total response	1 <sup>st</sup> mailing (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> mailing (%)	Total count
Estover	High	6.1	75	25	20
Lydford	High	7.3	75	25	24
Southway	High	11.5	76.3	23.7	38
Ham	Medium high	7.9	80.8	19.2	26
Tavistock	Medium high	10.9	83.3	16.7	36
Walkham	Medium high	7.3	79.2	20.8	24
Landrake	Medium low	9.4	64.5	35.5	31
Pill	Medium low	9.1	86.7	13.3	30
Ugborough	Medium low	8.8	86.2	13.8	29
Ivybridge	Low	6.1	75	25	20
Plympton Erle	Low	9.1	70	30	30
Plymstock Dunstone	Low	6.7	77.3	22.7	22
Total		100	77.6	22.4	330

\*Classifications based on quartiles of Townsend Material Deprivation Scores (Payne, 1995).

Table 11 below demonstrates that the overall response for each age quartile was reasonably consistent. However, it appears that men aged 36 or below were more likely to respond late, or be persuaded by second mailings (33%, as opposed to 17% among the 37-47 age cohort). In comparison, respondents in the 60-85 age quartile appeared to be the least influenced by the second mailing. The number of responses from men of or near, retirement age is surprisingly high given that the sampling plan was designed, in part, to target men of working age.

Table 11. Survey responses by age of respondent and mailing (%).

Age quartile	Number of respondents		
	1 <sup>st</sup> mailing (%)	2 <sup>nd</sup> mailing (%)	Total count
17-36	67	33	82
37-47	83	17	82
48-59	74	26	93
60-83	83	17	73
Total count	256	74	330

### Concluding comments

This chapter has explored how the research process was framed by a number of conceptual and practical considerations. These considerations underpinned four sets of decisions on, in turn, the quantitative approach, the method employed, the development of the research tool and the sampling plan.

Among all the considerations however, two stood out as being of primary importance. The first was that this project had to take an original approach to the study of 'men' and the breadwinner role. Although sociological research has traditionally been 'malestream', the men and masculinities literature is a field of study that has many empirical discontinuities. As noted, the literature is characterised by theoretical and/or historical works, community or issue-based research, and studies that utilise secondary data sources or, particularly in the USA, student samples. This project was designed in part to fill an empirical knowledge gap concerning the lives, experiences and attitudes of a random sample of men.

The second issue that framed many of the research decisions was a concern that the study would experience a poor response rate. This concern grew out of Dench's (1996, 22) assertion that poor response is typical among male samples, and Goodwin's (1999) actual experience of a 4% response rate among a random male sample. This study could not

afford to share Goodwin's experience. The research approach and research tool were therefore developed on the premise that everything must be done to encourage participation. This framed the decisions to use:

- A quantitative approach, which would require less time commitment from respondents than a qualitative project. This decision was also influenced by the author's realist epistemological position, and desire to contribute to the existing gaps in the men and masculinities literature.
- The postal questionnaire survey, which respondents could complete independently in their own time. This also dissolved any potentially detrimental relationships between the researcher and the researched.
- GB Profiler data. As well as for sampling purposes, the use of GB Profiler enabled electoral data to be purchased so that all correspondence would be correctly titled.
- The attitude scale, in which the items were designed to be relatively short and easily read and understood.
- And the Likert Scale, which required little from respondents in terms of comprehension, time or written output, but was an essential tool for quantifying the beliefs of the sample.

The only response rate to which this study's can be compared is Goodwin's (1999) 4% in 1992. To date, no other studies in this field have used a random sample. Indeed, the repeated use of unrepresentative student samples in the masculinities literature implies that other researchers may have preferred to avoid the potential risks of sampling randomly among men. As a step into the unknown, it may be suggested that the cautious approach taken in the planning stages of this research, and the development of a user-friendly research tool, were justified. The following chapter demonstrates how this project has been moderately successful in gaining access to a diverse, random sample of men.

## Chapter 5

### Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sample

This chapter has two aims. The first is to introduce the reader to the sample males, exploring their socio-economic, demographic and family characteristics, and some of the characteristics of their immediate families. This analysis forms the basis of identifying any regularities among the sample by introducing more formally the mechanisms which are considered to be the explanatory priorities in this study. The opportunity is taken here to explore the distribution of respondents between the various levels of each measure, and to explore relationships between the respondents' socio-economic and demographic statuses. The second is to establish if the sample can be considered as representative of the sampled population. The previous chapter discussed the steps that were taken to secure a diverse sample, and noted how this would distinguish this study from others in this field. Sample data are checked against 2001 census data for the four sampled districts (Plymouth city, the South Hams, West Devon and Caradon in Cornwall)<sup>28</sup> or the 12 sampled wards, depending on where data are available. Some reference is also made to data from the 1996 British Household Panel Survey and recent sociological studies to explore or explain trends in the sample. As noted earlier however, some disparity can be anticipated between the findings of this study and those based on national samples, due to differences in sample size and the degree of sampling error. Finally, the chapter also builds on the themes of Chapter 3, providing further evidence of men's (economic) dominance in the family, and economic dependence and a dual-burden of work among women.

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<sup>28</sup> The spatial unit of the four sampled districts is chosen over the 53 wards of the TTWA as at the ward-level for the TTWA, 2001 census data are missing for several wards.

The following table demonstrates the attributes of the 330 male respondents which are examined in this thesis, and shows the level of response to each of the items in the questionnaire.

Table 12. Measured attributes and item response rates (%)\*.

Attribute	Percentage of total sample that responded to item (n=330)
Age of respondent	100
Marital status	100
Parental status	100
Number and ages of children	73
Economic activity	100
Female partner economic activity	81
Unemployment	9
Job title (basis of socio-economic classification)	99.7
Female partner job title	80
Respondent's Father job title	94
Respondent's Mother job title	95
Educational attainment	100
Household tenure status	100
Type of accommodation	100
Respondent income	74
Female partner income	52
Respondent's Father paid work participation history	99.7
Respondent's Mother paid work participation history	98.8

The characteristics of the sample regarding each of these variables are discussed below.

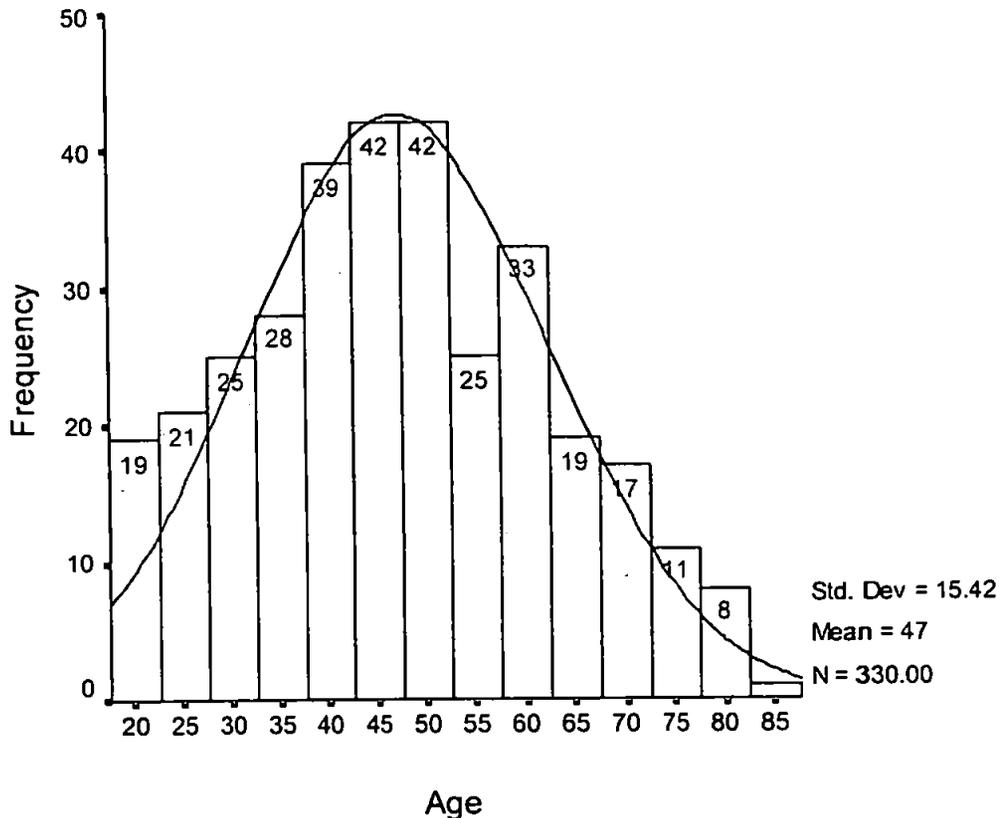
### **Age of respondent**

It was noted in the sampling discussion in the preceding chapter that one of the aims of this project was to secure a sample with a high degree of socio-economic and demographic diversity. Such diversity among a primary sample would distinguish this study from

existing work in this field. However, due to the employment-related nature of the questions asked of the respondents, the sampling strategy was devised, in part, to target a representative sample of men of working age. As the histogram shows below, the approach taken was only moderately successful. The age of respondents ranges between 18 and 84, with 15% (50 respondents) aged over the retirement age of 65.

Although not quite fitting the sampling aims of the project, the sound dispersion of respondents throughout the age range ensures that this variable makes a strong showing in the statistical analyses of Chapter 7. The chart below demonstrates that the age distribution of respondents is a very good fit to the normal frequency curve. The mean, mode and median age all fall between the ages of 47 and 49; the symmetry of these values is another strong indicator of normal distribution.

Chart 1. The sample age distribution (count).



## Marital Status

Marriage is overwhelmingly the most frequent arrangement among the sample males (72% of the total males, and 88% of all couple households). Of the 237 married men, 60% have children living in the home, or have a regular financial commitment to children living elsewhere. Unfortunately, due to the question asked, this study is unable to distinguish between the two arrangements.

A total of 10% of sample respondents are currently cohabiting. Of the respondents living in couple households (a total of 269 men), 12% are cohabiting. The rate of cohabitation among the sample is marginally less than the average of the sampled districts. Out of a combined total of 86,170 couple households<sup>29</sup> in Plymouth, West Devon, the South Hams and Caradon in south east Cornwall, just over 17% (14,941) were cohabiting couples with or without children in the home at the time of the 2001 census (National Statistics Online, 2003). The cohabiting sample males are much less likely to have children than their married peers; just one in four cohabiting sample males have children, compared with three out of five married respondents (see Table 13 below). Among the target population there is greater parity: four out of ten cohabiting couples have children, while nearly half of all married couples in the four sampled districts have children (National Statistics Online, 2003).

The sample males are most likely to cohabit in their 20s (41%), and less likely to cohabit in their 30s (31%) and 40s (19%). Of the sample males aged 50 and above, 81% are married and just 5% are cohabiting. In the early 1990s in seven out of ten cases cohabitation was a prelude to marriage (Haskey, 1995). However, as the questionnaire did not cover marital status history, or marital intentions, there is no information on the sample's movements in and out of, or durations of, marriage and cohabitation.

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<sup>29</sup> Refers to married couples with and without children, and cohabiting couples with and without children.

Using data from the British household panel survey Berthoud and Gershuny (2000, 220) note that the median duration of a cohabitation coupling is two years; with less than 10% cohabiting with the same partner ten years later. On the basis of this, and Haskey's (1995) claim above, it can only be assumed that many younger cohabiting respondents will go on to marry their current partners, while others will form new partnerships and marriages. Surprisingly, evidence suggests that cohabiting couples with children (in this study, 8 couples) are less likely to marry than couples without children (24 couples) (Berthoud and Gershuny, 2000, 201). The Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) (2001) suggests that the higher the couple's earnings the more likely they are to marry, while the presence of children decreases the odds that couples will marry.

While the majority of single men (94%) are without children, the sample includes three fathers who are currently single. Owing to the questions used the degree to which these men are involved in the daily upbringing of their children is unknown; it is only known that they live without a female partner and maintain a regular financial responsibility for their children. It is well documented that single parent families are overwhelmingly headed by women (e.g. Bernardes, 1997; Fox, 1993). In 2002, 98% of all single parent families were headed by women and only 2% by men (Social Trends, 2003). The proportion of male-headed single parent families has not changed since 1981, while female-headed single parent families have increased by 9%, to 19% of all families with children (Social Trends, 2003). Among all households within the four sampled districts, 6.3% are single parent households (National Statistics Online, 2003). The much lower rate of single parenthood found in this study undoubtedly reflects that fact that the sample is male.

The number of single person households has climbed significantly over recent years, becoming a dominant household structure in contemporary Britain. Currently 29% of all households consist of one person; second only to married couples without children (31%)

(Family Policy Studies Centre, 2000). The growth of this household type has most been most evident among younger and older people (Berthoud, 2000a, 6). This survey finds that 64% of the respondents aged under 25 are single. Of these, however, very few live alone in single person households. Among the under-25s, 15% live in rented accommodation, while the majority (85%) reside in their parental homes. None of the single males aged under 25 live in mortgaged homes.

Among the respondents aged over 65, only 11% live alone without children or partners in the home. Two out of three of the respondents aged over 65 living in single person households are widowers. As all of the sampled addresses were private homes, rather than business premises, none of the elderly respondents live in local authority or private nursing homes.

Table 13. Marital status and the presence of children in the home (%).

Marital status	Children in the home		% of total
	With children	Without children	
Married	60	40	72
Cohabiting	25	75	10
Single	6	94	15
Widowed	25	75	3
Total	47	53	100

### Economic Status

Table 14, below, outlines the economic status of the 269 male respondents who were living with female partners at the time of the survey, and answered questions on their behalf. The economic status of the 61 single respondents is discussed below.

The most interesting finding concerning the respondents' economic statuses is that while 84 (25%) respondents are not in work or are retired, only one male chose to define his economic status as 'looking after the family/home'<sup>30</sup>. The other 83 respondents all opted to define their economic status as retired, unemployed or economically inactive (referred to in the questionnaire as 'unemployed but not looking for work'). This contrasts sharply with the reported situations of female partners. Of the non-working female partners, 68% (65) were classed as looking after the home and family, with the remaining 32% (30) defined as unemployed, economically inactive or retired<sup>31</sup>.

The responses to these questions appear indicative of an underlying belief in a gender-coded division of paid and unpaid labour, and the labels that are subsequently considered appropriate for male and female patterns of participation, or in this case non-participation in work. The respondents were encouraged to define their economic status as fully as possible, and thus had the option of defining themselves as both unemployed or full-time employed and looking after the family/home. Only the one respondent noted above chose to do so. This strongly suggests that the men define themselves on the basis of their relationship with paid work, and that for many men this differs from the way they define the status of their female partner. It appears that the men are either not engaged in looking after the home and family while economically inactive, or that it is deemed to be an inappropriate label for men. As noted in Chapter 3, economic inactivity tends to be associated with an exaggerated sense of masculinity and a strong attachment to gender-coded roles. Choosing to disregard the 'looking after the home/family' option may be indicative of this trend.

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<sup>30</sup> In McRae's (1997) review of the 1992-1993 Labour Force Survey, she finds that 4% of men define their reason for economic inactivity as being 'caring for the household/family'. The question was posed slightly differently in this study, which may explain the disparity.

<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, in their study of the 'symmetrical family' Young and Willmott (1973) only allowed single women to be classed as unemployed or retired; all economically inactive married women had the choice only of 'housewife' or 'full-time student' (p.319). While the men of this study were encouraged to choose as many options as they liked, the majority focused on the female partner's domestic and/or caring roles, as did Young and Willmott thirty years earlier.

Self-employment was reported more frequently among the male respondents (11%) than for their female partners (4%). The male respondents show a marked preference for full-time self-employment (86%), while female self-employment is more evenly split between full-time (45%) and part-time (54%). The significantly higher rate of part-time self-employment among female partners may be symptomatic of women's dual burden of work, and Hakim's (1995) claim that part-time work is easier to combine with home and family responsibilities. As noted above, their male partners do not appear to define the unpaid work associated with the home and family as part of their workload. A gendered distribution of part-time and full-time work between couples is also evident among employees, with 35% (94) of female partners being employed part-time, as opposed to only 4% (11) of the men<sup>32</sup>.

The distribution of paid work among the sampled men's couple households verifies the claims outlined earlier that few families are of the traditional breadwinner type, but instead are increasingly of the work-rich or work-poor forms. Nearly one in three (30%) of the sampled men's households are primary breadwinner families or couples, with a full-time working male and part-time working female. An additional one in four (25%) couples are dual earners with an equal distribution of paid work (male and female both either full-time (90%) or part-time (10%)). Interestingly, the presence of children in the home appears to make little difference as to whether both partners are in full-time employment (49.2% with children, 50.8% without). Of the couples working full-time, those with children are more likely to be married (97%), than the couples without children (48%). The respondents married with children and working full-time are also on average older than the couples working full-time but without children (mode age quartiles of 48-59 and 17-36 respectively).

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<sup>32</sup> Hakim (1998) provides a useful typology of the forms of part-time work that are commonly undertaken. These include 'marginal jobs', 'half-time jobs' and 'reduced hours'. The questionnaire requested that respondents themselves define whether their paid work is part-time or full-time. Further classification of part-time work is therefore not possible in this study.

A total of 56% (149) of the sampled men live in couple households with two earners. Of the working female partners of the sampled men, 57% work part-time, and 43% work full-time. In comparison, almost one in five of the cohabiting/married males' households (19%) may be classed as work-poor, in having no earner at the time of the survey. One in four of these couples have children living at home. In contrast to popular rhetoric, evidence suggests that it is the children of work-poor couples, both married (in this sample 92%) and cohabiting (8%) couples, who are most at risk of poverty, and not as is often claimed the children of single parents, although such families also maintain a notable risk (Jenkins, 2000, 112). In no-earner couple households evidence suggests that male partners' claims on household resources such as money (in the form of personal spending money) and food often exacerbates the family's financial situation (Brannen, and Wilson, 1987; Kempson *et al*, 1994). Indeed, women who make the transition from a no-earner couple to a single parent family often report an improvement in their economic circumstances; although the family finances are typically reduced during single parenthood, women have greater control over the use of their resources (Brannen, and Wilson, 1987; Kempson *et al*, 1994).

Just over one in seven (14%) couples are of the traditional type, as outlined in Crompton's (1999) model earlier, with a full-time employed male and an economically inactive female. Including cases where the male is in part-time employment increases the proportion of traditional breadwinner families to just 17% (46). This proportion corresponds with the claim of Harkness *et al* (1994) that the ratio of breadwinner families to dual-earner families is 1:3. This study finds a slightly higher ratio of one breadwinner family to 3.7 dual earner families. This finding is consistent with one of main themes of this thesis; that among nuclear households the breadwinner/home-maker form of internal organisation is marginal relative to other forms of organisation, notably a dual-earner arrangement.

Only 9% (24) of the sampled men's households are headed by a sole (23) or primary (1) female breadwinner. In these couples, 48% (11) of the male partners are retired, 30% (7) are economically inactive, 17% (4) are unemployed and job seeking, one male is working part-time, and only one male described his main economic activity as looking after the family and home.

Table 14. Respondents' and female partners' economic activities (count).

Male Economic activity	Female partner economic activity								Male total
	Home & family	Emp ft	Emp pt	Self Ft	Self pt	Unemp looking	Unemp not looking	Re-tired	
Home & family		1							1
Emp ft	30	49	68	3	1			3	154
Emp pt	4	1	5				1		11
Self ft	4	8	8	1	3	1			25
Self pt	2		1		1				4
Unemp, looking	3	2	2			1			8
Unemp, Not looking	6	3	4			1	4	1	19
Retired	16	3	6	1	1			18	45
Female total	65	67	94	5	6	3	5	22	267

Single respondents (excluding widowers) were noted in all age quartiles, with 55% aged under 37, and 77% aged under 48. However, only single men report being in full-time education (8) or completing full-time training schemes (1). While there appears to be a slight distinction between younger and older men in participation in education and training, it does not appear as marked as that between the single and married/cohabiting men of this study.

McGivney (1999), in a review of male and female participation rates in education and training, suggests that lower participation among men across most academic and vocational training opportunities stem, in part, from masculinist ideology. White, male manual

workers, identified as the most difficult group to attract to organised learning programmes, commonly perceive a return to education or training as failure (McGiveny, 1999). Men are found to be more fearful of failure, fearful of acknowledging deficiencies, and consider themselves to have more to lose in terms of status and image than women (McGiveny, 1999; Ruxton, 2002).

The majority of single men in this study live in their parental homes, and hence appear to have fewer financial commitments than the married/cohabiting men of this study. In terms of lifestyle and ability to honour financial commitments it may be suggested that married/cohabiting men have 'more to lose' than their single peers in undertaking a programme of education or training. Interestingly though, none of the 267 female partners of this study are currently in education or training. McGiveny's (1999) work suggests that men are often hindered in taking advantage of learning opportunities by socio-psychological barriers. However, in this case, women's 'dual burden', the burden of domestic and caring responsibilities, potentially combined with employment commitments, appears even more constraining.

Indeed, many of the sampled men's female partners combine domestic and caring responsibilities with paid work. The following table shows that of the 268 female partners, 64% (172) undertake some form of employment, and 63% of these working females (108) combine their paid work responsibilities with motherhood.

Table 15. The female partners of the sampled men: economic activity and number of children in the home (%).

Number of Children	Economic activity (%)			Count
	No paid work	Full-time*	Part-time*	
None	46	32	22	118
1	13	29	58	31
2	25	24	51	88
3	55	10	35	20
4 or more	46	18	36	11
Count	96	72	100	268

\* Refers to employees and self-employed.

Of the 150 female partners of the sampled men who are mothers<sup>33</sup> 28% do not participate in paid employment, 23% are in full-time employment, and 49% are in part-time work. In one- and two-child families, women are more likely to be employed part-time, than be in full-time work or have no form of paid work. In larger families, with three or more children, the female partners of the sampled men are more likely to be engaged in full-time unpaid work in the home.

As the table below demonstrates, the mothers have a considerable work load. There is a trend towards greater participation in paid work as children age. However, mothers of children of all age groups are more likely to work than not work. Among those with pre-school aged children, the age group generally considered to be the most time and labour-consuming, 61% of the partners of the sampled men who are mothers have some form of paid work. As noted earlier, it is among this group that most of the rise in female labour market participation has been attributed (JRF, 1996). By the time children have reached schooling age and beyond the majority of mothers are engaged in paid work outside the

home, with increasing parity in the split between full-time and part-time work. This, combined with the income data below, suggests that the partners of the sampled men make considerable contributions to their household economies. Although in each age group the females are more likely to work part-time, and hence to some degree are also reliant on the male wage, it is further evidence of the marginality of the breadwinner family to the dual-earner type.

Table 16. Women's dual-burden of work: economic activity and age of youngest child (%).

Age of youngest child	Female economic activity summary (%)				
	No paid employment	Full-time	Part-time	Total with paid work (%)	Total count
Pre-school	39	12	49	61	49
Primary age	21	18	62	79	34
Teenagers	14	41	45	86	44
Total count	32	30	65	95	127

Given the high rate of female participation in the labour market found in this study it is unfortunate that the questionnaire did not cover the topic of child care. It would be interesting to know what strategies are employed by these women in the combining of motherhood and paid work. Whether more female partners would take on paid work with greater local and affordable child care, was also not addressed in the survey.

### Family type

If variables concerned with marital status, economic status and children are combined it is possible to see how the sample is distributed according to the family typology introduced in Chapter 3.

<sup>33</sup> No data are available on whether the mothers are biological mothers, step-mothers, adoptive or foster mothers. It is assumed that in households with children the female partner is at least partly responsible for the daily care of the children.

Table 17. The distribution of sample family types.

Family type	Count	% married	% of sample couple households
Sole breadwinner family	29	90	11
Primary breadwinner family	64	100	24
Sole breadwinner couple	17	88	6
Primary breadwinner couple	16	87.5	6
Female sole breadwinner family	9	89	3
Female primary breadwinner family	1	100	0.4
Female sole breadwinner couple	14	100	5
No earner family	12	92	4.5
No earner couple	38	92	14
Dual earner family	34	97	13
Dual earner couple	34	50	13

The most common family type encountered in this study is the primary breadwinner family (full-time employed male, part-time employed female with children). All 64 of these couples are married. Gregg and Wadsworth (1995) claim that there has been a significant increase in the number of such work rich households between the 1970s and 1990s. Taylor (2000, 93) suggests that this household type benefits from high home ownership and appreciating economic capital and assets (in contrast to the depreciation of housing and assets commonly experienced in no-earner households); the benefits of which permit and encourage (the continuation of) dual participation in paid work.

While such families may enjoy appreciating capital and assets, it is evident that many of the women are combining work with parental responsibilities and are therefore experiencing a 'dual burden' of work. Harkness *et al* (1995) have falsified the 'pin money hypothesis', the notion that females' part-time earnings are for 'non-essential' purchases, such as luxuries or leisure. Instead, the evidence strongly suggests that female contributions are crucial in keeping families out of debt and poverty (Harkness *et al* 1995).

This is not a new phenomenon however. In the early 1970s it was found that the number of poor two parent families in which the father was in full-time work would have almost trebled without the contributions made by female partners (Land, 1976).

Unpaid work by women in the home and/or community represents a 'hidden' economic contribution to the family that can also be considerable. Gordon and Forrest (1995) estimate that participation in the 'free' or 'hidden' economy (which is based upon unpaid servicing work, such as caring for relatives, the home and/or family) is particularly high among the coastal populations of Devon and Cornwall. This work is estimated to account for over half of all working hours and approximately a third of Gross Domestic Product in the national economy (Gordon and Forrest, 1995, 27).

In addition to a dual burden of paid and unpaid work, in many families women may also be economically dependent on (the earnings of) their male partners<sup>34</sup>. Of the female partners of the sampled men, 25% have no earned income, while 37% have part-time earnings, suggesting that almost half of all the sample's female partners are fully or partially economically dependent. As noted in Chapter 3, such dependency has been found to be potentially detrimental to women's status and well-being in the family (e.g. Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Pahl, 1983). (Also see discussion of male and female incomes below).

### **Unemployment**

Of the 330 respondents, 9% (29) reported being unemployed or economically inactive at the time of the survey. This compares with an average of 7.2% unemployed and economically inactive across the 12 sampled wards<sup>35</sup>. As noted earlier, the sampling frame

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<sup>34</sup> The questionnaire did not request information on alternative sources of income or independent wealth. It is therefore assumed that in couples where one partner is employed and the other is not, the unemployed partner is to some extent economically dependent.

<sup>35</sup> This is boosted by an exceptional rate of economic inactivity within the Lydford ward of 26.3%. Excluding the Lydford ward, 5% of the population within the 11 remaining wards are classed as unemployed or economically inactive.

spans an area that is socio-economically diverse, with unemployment (not including economic inactivity) ranging from 1.8% in Landrake in the Caradon district, to 4.3% in Ham in Plymouth city.

Of the respondents unemployed at the time of the survey, nine are looking for work and 20 are not looking. Among the long-term unemployed respondents, 64% are not looking for work. A number of these respondents reported (although the question was not asked) that this is due to poor health, injury or disability.

The number of respondents unemployed and looking for work represents a small proportion of the total sample (3%). However, five of these respondents (56%) have been job seeking unsuccessfully for over two years. Taylor's (2000, 90) analysis of the BHPS data finds that 56% of unemployed men of working age remain unemployed one year later. As Taylor (2000, 91) suggests, the longer the term of unemployment, the more likely the individual will lose valuable work experience and forms of cultural or human capital. The probability of making a transition between unemployment and secure (permanent) employment often decreases over time (Taylor, 2000). The ISER (2001) suggests, on the basis of longitudinal analysis, that one in five unemployed men who find work are likely to be unemployed again a year later.

Table 18. Period of unemployment (%).

Economic status	Term of unemployment				
	3-6 months	6 months – 1 year	1-2 years	Over 2 years	Total count
Unemployed, and looking	11	33		55	9
Unemployed, not looking			15	85	20
Total count	1	3	3	22	29

Of the five males unemployed for over two years and looking for work, two have no qualifications, two have GCSEs and one holds a BTEC qualification. Using the 1996 BHPS data, Taylor (2000, 92) calculates that in one years' time there is a probability of approximately 55% that the two males with no qualifications will remain unemployed. For the three men with GCSE and BTEC qualifications the probability of being unemployed a year later is reduced to approximately 36% (Taylor, 2000, 92).

#### Socio-economic classification

The socio-economic classifications (SECs) applied in this study are taken from the Rose and O'Reilly (1998) scheme, that is due to replace the two official government social classifications, Social Class based on Occupation, and Socio-Economic Groups. Rose and O'Reilly's (1998) full scale details 14 SECs, (an additional three SECs refer to full-time students, occupations not stated or inadequately described, and occupations not classifiable for other reasons), and is collapsible into scales of nine, eight, five and three class SECs (see table below). The full, eight and three class SEC scales are used to analyse the socio-economic positions of the male sample<sup>36</sup>. Rose and O'Reilly are due to amend the

<sup>36</sup> To allow comparison between groups, the within-group codes in Rose and O'Reilly's schema are not applied. Using within group codes for the full version, for example, results in 30 SEC categories, and even the three class version results in 27 SECs.

positioning and definition of the 'managers large' class. Until such a time, the full, eight and three class SEC scales are applied in this study in the forms noted below.

Table 19. New socio-economic classification scheme (Rose and O'Reilly, 1998).

Full version	9 class	8 class	5 class	3 class
1. Employers large	1. Higher managerial	1. Higher managerial and professional	1. Managerial and professional	1. Managerial and professional
2. Managers large				
3. Professionals	2. Professionals	2. Lower managerial and professional		
4. Associate professionals	3. Lower managerial and professional			
5. Managers small				
6. Higher supervisors				
7. Intermediate occupations	4. Intermediate	3. Intermediate	2. Intermediate	2. Intermediate
8. Employers small	5. Small employers and own account workers	4. Small employers and own account workers	3. Small employers and own account workers	
9. Own account				
10. Lower supervisors	6. Supervisors/ Craft related	5. Supervisors/ Craft related	4. Supervisors/ Craft related	3. Working
11. Craft and related occupations				
12. Semi-routine occupations	7. Semi-routine occupations	6. Semi-routine occupations	5. Working	
13. Routine occupations	8. Routine occupations	7. Routine occupations		
14. Never worked/ long-term unemployed	9. Never worked/ long-term unemployed	8. Never worked/ long-term unemployed		

Rose and O'Reilly (1998, 22)

It appears that the chosen sampling method was reasonably effective in targeting respondents from the range of socio-economic groups. Only the category 'large employers' is unrepresented among the sample.

Table 20. Socio-economic status of sample males and their female partners (8 class).\*

Socio-economic classification (8 class scheme)	Males		Females	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Large employers	0	0	0	0
Higher managerial and professional	86	26	41	15
Lower managerial and professional	86	26	29	11
Intermediate	31	9	70	26
Small employers and own account	22	7	8	3
Supervisors/craft	27	8	5	2
Semi-routine	60	18	64	24
Routine	11	3	12	4
Never worked/long-term unemployed	6	2	34	13
Total	329	99	263	98

\* Based on current or most recent job.

The most frequently cited occupations among the male sample fall within the higher and lower managerial and professional classes. This is followed by semi-routine occupations. Female partners are clustered within intermediate and semi-routine occupations. Although the proportions in each classification are not directly comparable, this clustering is consistent with data from the 2001 General Household Survey (GHS). The GHS (2002) finds that men are much more likely than women to hold managerial or professional occupations, while women are more likely than men to be classified in the intermediate occupation group.

However, in comparison to 2001 census data for the four districts sampled in this study, there is greater representation among the higher socio-economic classifications, and under-

representation among the lower groups. This study finds 26% of sampled men in the higher managerial and professional group, and 26% in the lower managerial and professional group. This compares with 7% (-19%) and 21% (-5%) of men across the four sampled districts respectively<sup>37</sup> (National Statistics Online, 2003). Among women in the four sampled districts, an average of 12% have occupations classed as intermediate (National Statistics Online, 2003), while this study finds that 26% of the sampled men's female partners hold intermediate occupations. The proportion of males in the intermediate group is also marginally higher in this study; 9% compared with an average of 6% of men across the four sampled districts (National Statistics Online, 2003).

This study finds fewer men in the small employers and own account classification than among the male target population; 7% compared with an average of 14% across the four sampled districts (National Statistics Online, 2003). There is also a larger split in this group than in others between males and females, with males in this study nearly three times as likely as women to be small employers. The GHS (2002) data suggest men are twice as likely as women to be in this group. This study also finds under-representation among routine workers with 3% and 4% of men and women classified as such in this study. This compares with 13% of men and 17% of women in routine occupations across the four sampled districts.

The author completed the socio-economic classification process based on the respondents' job titles, and industry details where clarification was required. As such, it cannot be suggested that the discontinuities regarding the sample's socio-economic profile stems from respondents' over- or under-reporting their occupations. Instead, there appears to be some imbalance in the socio-economic status of the males who responded to the survey. As discussed in the previous chapter, the study is deemed to have good proportional

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<sup>37</sup> Analysis does not include the proportion of non-classified residents in the four sampled districts (an

representation from areas of relative high and low deprivation; there is no imbalance apparent within the sampling data.

It therefore appears to be another instance (in addition to the unexpected response rate from retired respondents) of the geographical data (Townsend Material Deprivation Scores and GB Profiler data) providing socio-economic summaries of areas that are not wholly commensurate with the lives and statuses of residents at a household level. This finding is supportive of the notion of 'ecological fallacy'; the argument that it cannot be assumed that peoples' lives reflect the impoverished or affluent characteristics of their area of residence (Cater and Jones, 1996). In this study the economic character of the sampled areas is a poor indicator of the respondents' socio-economic statuses.

It appears that the noted discontinuities in the socio-economic profile of the sample may be explained with reference to the chosen sampling frame (the TTWA). The TTWA boundary was chosen on the grounds that the population spanned urban and rural areas of differing levels of affluence and deprivation, (but had a good degree of economic coherence, being based on one core labour market with at least 75% containment). As the table below shows, the three peripheral districts (Caradon, the South Hams and West Devon) have quite different socio-economic profiles to Plymouth city. Among the Plymouth population, males aged between 16 and 74 show greater representation among the lower socio-economic classifications, with smaller proportions being classed among the higher classifications. There are also notable differences between Plymouth and the peripheral areas in terms of small employers and own account workers; over one in five males in the South Hams and West Devon are classed as small employers or own account workers, compared to less than one in ten among Plymouth males. The socio-economic diversity within the sampling frame indicates that we should perhaps not expect great parity between

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average of 16% of the population in the four districts).

the target population and the sample, given that the sample consists of 330 men distributed widely throughout 12 wards of the TTWA.

Table 21. Male socio-economic classifications across the four sampled districts (%).

SEC	Plymouth	Caradon	South Hams	West Devon	Average
Large employers	3.7	4.4	4.9	4.7	4.1
Higher managerial and professional	5.6	6.7	8.7	8.5	6.6
Lower managerial and professional	19.5	21.8	23.5	19.7	20.6
Intermediate	7	5.7	5.7	4.6	6.3
Small employers and own account	9	18.6	21.3	22.1	14.3
Supervisors/craft	14.7	13.8	10.6	11.6	13.5
Semi-routine	11.1	8.9	8	9.2	10
Routine	14.8	12.2	9.2	11.5	13
Never worked /long-term unemployed	3.2	1.8	1.8	2.7	2.7
Total count males aged 16-74*	73,520	23,657	23,934	14,880	33,998

\* Not including residents in full-time education or unclassifiable for other reasons.

Among the men currently living with female partners, this study finds that over half (53%) are occupationally dominant over their female partners (data not shown). Only 17% of the sampled men's female partners are occupationally dominant in their coupling. A total of 30% of the sampled males are of equal occupational status to their female partners. Much of the occupational dominance within the sample males' relationships can be explained by the gender split within the intermediate socio-economic group. Females are much more

likely to be clustered in this group than males (26% compared with 9% of males). The number of females in the SEC scheme reaches a peak at the intermediate class and then falls within the higher classes; in comparison the number of males increases towards the higher classes. The fact that, among this sample at least, the majority of women appear clustered within the intermediate SEC appears entirely consistent with the range of inequalities experienced by women in the world of paid work as discussed in Chapter 3.

Few relationships are found between the respondents' SEC and their educational backgrounds<sup>38</sup> (data not shown). The vocational City and Guilds award is the highest educational qualification achieved by 67 (20%) of the respondents, followed by 46 respondents (14%) with GCSE qualifications. A similar proportion have a degree or higher qualification. Interestingly, the 143 respondents in the top three SECs (excluding the non-represented large employers) cited more frequently that they have GCSEs, City and Guilds or no qualifications, than the higher qualifications of A' Levels, HNDs, degrees or higher degrees. Only a small proportion of these respondents (6%) also hold professional or job-related qualifications.

Having no educational qualifications is evidently a barrier to relatively high earnings in the Plymouth TTWA; none of the 29 respondents without formal qualifications earn over £2000 per month. Among those with no qualifications 62% earn between £500-999 per month. Conversely, having some of the higher qualifications is evidently no guarantee of high earnings in this region; the incomes of respondents with A' Levels or higher are equally split above (44%) and below (44%) £1500 per month. (See below for further discussion of income).

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<sup>38</sup> Educational data were not requested for female partners.

## Household tenure

The most frequent household tenure type is owner occupation with a mortgage (55%). This is especially the case among the respondents in full-time employment. Of the retired cohort, 82% (45) own their homes outright. All of the respondents living their parents' homes (19) are clustered within the youngest age group (17-36).

Table 22. Household tenure and economic status (%).

Economic status	Household tenure (%)				
	Home owner	Mortgage	Rent	Parental home	Total count
Home & family		100			1
Emp full-time	10	73	12	5	188
Emp part-time	36	43	21		14
Self full-time	40	53	7		30
Self part-time	25	75			4
Unemployed, and looking	44	33	11	11	9
Unemployed, not looking	40	40	15	5	20
Education			13	87	8
Gov. training			100		1
Retired	82	13	5		55
Total count	93	182	36	19	330

The table above shows a concentration of mortgage tenure among full-time employed males (73%). Of these, 37% are aged between 37-47 and 30% are aged between 48-59. The relationship between full-time employment and mortgage tenure is unsurprising given mortgage eligibility criteria and the work commitments that are required to honour monthly mortgage repayments. Kemeny (1980, 2) suggests that mortgage payments are concentrated in the early years of the family life cycle, when paradoxically the family is most likely to experience a fall in disposable income owing to the arrival of children. As

discussed above, while there may be a fall in *disposable* income, it is evident that the majority of female partners make important contributions to the household economy throughout the child-rearing stages of the life course. Of the respondents with mortgages, 66% have children at home, and three out of four mothers participate in paid work. This finding is consistent with Hakim's (1998) claim that home ownership 'tends to encourage' more democratic sourcing of income in the family.

### **Income**

Table 23 demonstrates the monthly incomes, after tax and National Insurance deductions, of the male respondents and, where applicable, their female partners. As was anticipated, the income question had a fairly high level of item non-response; 40% of male, and 42% of female responses were coded as missing, or coded according to economic activity (for example, retired, unemployed). Income data are available for 199 (60%) of the sampled men, and 157 (59%) of their female partners.

It is notable that 78% (122) of the sampled males' partners earn monthly incomes of less than £999, as opposed to only 38% (76) of the males. Of the female partners working part-time, 60% earn less than £499 per month, with 92% earning less than £999 per month. Interestingly, the proportion of males in part-time work earning less than £499 per month is slightly greater at 61%. However, 22% of males in part-time work earn more than £1000 per month, as opposed to just 7% of females.

For the female partners in full-time employment, 56% earn less than £999, and 83% earn less than £1499 per month. For the full-time employed males, the figures are 32% and 71% respectively. Among males in full-time employment 29% are earning above £1500 per month, in contrast to just 17% of the men's female partners.

With a view to lessening item non-response, this study requested details of net monthly income, and provided income bands rather than requesting exact incomes. This makes direct comparison with regional and national income analyses difficult. However, while the males of this sample evidently earn more than women, it appears that both groups experience some degree of inequality of income.

In Payne's (1995) analysis of the south west, the average gross male weekly income for Devon and Cornwall is £300, while for females it is £209. At least 13% of females working full-time earn less than this average of £209 per week (given the different analyses of income it could be as much as 56%), while at least 21% full-time employed males earn less than the average £300 per week. The most recent estimate from the New Earnings Survey (2002) is £380 average gross per week for Devon and Cornwall, including Plymouth Unitary Authority. Approximately 46% of males and 22% of females working full-time earn less than this.

The extent of income inequality within the sample is even more marked when compared with national average wages. The New Earnings Survey (2002) estimates the national weekly gross wage for full-time males at £514, and £465 for females. Among the Plymouth TTWA sample only 9% of males (23 married/cohabiting, and six single men) earn a weekly wage that is comparable to the national average. As the New Earnings Survey (2002) estimate for women falls within the income band used in this study, at the most 5% (13) of the sampled men's female partners earn a wage that is comparable with the national average.

Table 23. Income distribution within couples (count).

Male income	Female income					Male total
	Up to 499	500-999	1000-1499	1500-1999	>2000	
Up to 499	7	3	1		1*	18
500-999	16	16	5			58
1000-1499	28	19	10	4		70
1500-999	6	12	3	4		30
>2000	9	6	3	2	2	23
Female total	66	56	22	10	3	199 (Female 157)

\* This couple appear interesting in that the female reportedly earns over £2000 per month, while the male earns less than £499. However, this female is also reported to be unemployed.

This study finds males to be earnings dominant in 66% of the couples, while 9% of females are earnings dominant, and one in four have equality of earnings. Based on an analysis of General Household Survey data, Harkness *et al* (1995, 16) found that between 1979-1981 only one in 15 women contributed more to family income than male partner. By 1989-1991 one in five females were found to be income dominant (Harkness *et al*, 1995). As noted above, of the 268 couples in this sample there are 23 (8%) female sole breadwinner and one (0.4%) female primary breadwinner couples and families. However, attempting to investigate income dominance among the partners of the sampled men presents two interesting findings.

Firstly, the category 'female breadwinner' has the most item non-response for the income variable. Data are missing for 21% of female breadwinner families and couples, as opposed to 0% for women in dual earner, 0% for no-earner, and 0.7% for male breadwinner families. Secondly, and most interestingly, where data are available, in all cases but one the male partner records higher earnings for himself than his female partner. Only one male working part-time to his female partner's full-time discloses higher earnings for his partner. In all other cases the male has no form of paid employment, yet records higher earnings for himself than his female partner.

The majority of men in female breadwinner families and couples are retired (46%), with seven unemployed and not looking for work, one working part-time and four unemployed and looking for work. It may be the case that these respondents have independent sources of income or wealth that exceed the earnings of their female partners. (It is unfortunate that the pilot study did not encounter any female breadwinner families. Had this trend been identified during analysis of the pilot study data, questions could have been included on alternative sources of income). Pahl (1989) finds that there is sometimes an inaccurate exchange of information within couples about income, and it may be that the male is unaware of his female partner's earnings. The anomalies in the female breadwinner income data may also be explained by Macarthur's (1909) observation that "man has never objected to women working.....It is her wage earning which distresses the masculine mind" (Quoted in Land, 1980, 61).

The pattern of response to the question of income dominance in female breadwinner families is certainly intriguing. Men of female breadwinner families appear wholly reluctant to acknowledge any dependency on female earnings. Not only this, but the males position themselves as income dominant within the family when all evidence points to the contrary. Further research on income dominance in female breadwinner families, perhaps looking at the validity of Macarthur's (1909) comment in the twenty-first century would be very interesting.

### **Family background**

The final section of the questionnaire requested information on the patterns of participation in paid work of the respondents' parents when the respondents themselves were aged between approximately 14 and 16. The data were requested with a view to assessing whether any parity exists between the form of household organisation employed in the

parental home and the model of household organisation subsequently employed in the respondent's home.

Mothers' employment trajectories were measured with reference to the following categories: 'always employed', 'sometimes employed' and 'never worked'. A relatively high proportion of respondents (39%) classed their mothers as 'always employed' (of these, 40% worked part-time only, 33% full-time only, and 27% worked a mix of part-time and full-time). However, the data for the 'always employed' category should be treated with some caution. As discussed in Chapter 3, it is likely that mothers' participation in the labour market was interrupted by childbirth, and periods of child-rearing and increased domestic responsibility. It may therefore be more appropriate to consider the term 'always employed' to mean as circumstances or caring responsibilities allowed. (The author does not wish to contribute further to the aligning of women - and disassociation of men - with caring and domestic responsibility. However, a gendered relationship with unpaid forms of work exists (for contemporary discussions see e.g. Speakman and Marchington, 1999) and its influence on women's employment histories must be acknowledged). Equally, the validity of the 'never worked' category may be complicated by mothers' potential participation in informal forms of work, or exchange of services, of which respondents may have been unaware. Additionally, respondents may not have defined informal forms of work, such as child minding or taking in laundry or lodgers, as 'work'. The questions pertaining to the respondents' mother's employment history evidently required further thought and greater detail.

Table 24. Forms of household organisation over two generations (%).

Respondent's family type	Parental Family Type (%)				
	Male breadwinner	Female breadwinner*	Dual earner**	No Earner	Total
Male breadwinner	20	9	59	11	44
Female breadwinner	55	5	25	15	20
Dual earner**	25	11	54	11	140
No earner	55	2	28	15	40
Total	77	21	117	29	244

\* Data refer to couple households in which male experienced unemployment and for an unspecified period of time the female was the sole family provider. Data do not include female-headed single parent families.

\*\* Data refer to various employment arrangements i.e. part-time employed male, full-time employed female.

The table above summarises the models of household organisation of both the respondents and their parents. The table only includes data that are directly comparable, and hence is not complete. Data are missing, for example, on female and male-headed single-parent households. Moreover, as data were gathered on parental household organisation for a period of only two years, the data cannot be considered as fully indicative of the form of household organisation or family composition that was experienced by the respondents. The parental data provide a 'snap-shot' of family life, just as the respondents' family data do.

The table shows that the overall distribution within the four household types is reasonably consistent over the two generations. The dual-earner family type is reported more frequently for both generations, with 48% of the parental families, and 57% of the respondents' families adopting this form of organisation. The prevalence of this family type among the two samples challenges the traditional ascendancy of the breadwinner family in social policy and the workings of the welfare state as discussed in Chapter 2. Among the earlier generation only 31% lived in a breadwinner family. Over the course of one generation this has fallen to 18%. The fall in the number of breadwinner families among the respondents has been offset by the rise in dual-earner (+9%) and no-earner

households (+4%). The proportion of female breadwinner families appears surprisingly stable (around 8%).

Looking at the intra-family data, there appears to be little parity of family type over the two generations. Of the respondents who lived in breadwinner households (at least between the ages of 14 and 16), only 12% currently adopt this model in their own adult families. Indeed, of the four family types it is the respondents brought up in a breadwinner family who are least likely to choose this model of household organisation. Instead, these respondents have more frequently chosen a dual-earner arrangement (45.5%). The table above shows that the respondents most likely to adopt a breadwinner family as adults are those brought up in dual-earner households (59%).

Interestingly, the male respondents of breadwinner families are also more likely than the respondents of the other family types to currently live in no-earner families (29%). This may of course be indicative of local economics and employment opportunities. It is also probable that the gender pay gap and welfare disbenefits discourage female employment within no-earner families. For some families the wages of part-time and sometimes full-time employment may not be adequate to cover child care costs, and compensate for supplementary unemployment benefits such as free dental care, school meals and prescriptions, and full or partial assistance with accommodation costs (Goode *et al*, 1998). However, as Table 24 shows, the fact that, in this sample, children of breadwinner families are the most likely respondents to live in no-earner families as adults is perhaps also indicative of the impact that male unemployment can have on gender beliefs. McKee and Bell (1985, 394) suggest that male unemployment has not been found to diminish traditional beliefs about male economic provision and female dependency. Indeed, unemployment has been found to even reinforce a perception of the 'correct' order of gender roles (e.g. McKee and Bell, 1985; Morris, 1987). Cross tabulating the data provided

above with the scores gained in the sex roles sub-scale (not shown) demonstrates that respondents who lived in breadwinner families as children and currently live in no-earner families perhaps do hold more traditional gender role beliefs. The respondents are more likely to disclose intermediate attitudes (41%) or traditional attitudes (41%), while only 18% gain scores that denote non-traditional attitudes. This suggests that in addition to structural constraints, the number of no-earner couples among these respondents may be partly explained by a more traditional perception of gender roles, and perhaps some opposition to female breadwinning.

The respondents most likely to live in dual-earner families as adults are those brought up in female breadwinner families. It may be the case that these respondents matured with a familiarity of gender-neutrality in sourcing the family income, and hence view income earning as a non-gendered task. In the sex roles sub-scale 53% of respondents brought up in female breadwinner families gain non-traditional scores, while just 6% disclose traditional attitudes. In contrast to the respondents brought up in breadwinner families, these respondents appear more supportive of egalitarianism in participation in paid work.

### **Concluding comments**

The findings of this chapter demonstrate that the sample shows an approximate correspondence to the target population. There are some discontinuities, but these appear to be explained by the diversity of the sampling frame. This is particularly the case with the socio-economic characteristics of the sample. As the discussion of the socio-economic profiles of the four sampled districts highlights, Plymouth city has a profile that is distinct to those of its peripheries. In addition, there is a limited degree of parity between the profiles of the three peripheral districts. The fact that the sample's socio-economic classifications fail to fit well either the averages of the four sampled districts, or the profile of any one of the districts, appears to be a product of the study's chosen sampling frame.

The analysis of the respondents' socio-economic and demographic statuses, and certain characteristics of their female partners, allows us a reasonably intimate insight into the internal workings of their households. On the basis of their external structure, very few sample families and couples can be classed as 'traditional'. Just over one in ten sample males live in a sole, male breadwinner family or couple household. However, there are some patterns and trends at the intra-household level that are indicative of traditional relations between men and women.

Firstly, even among non-traditional family forms such as dual-earners, men appear to retain traditional patterns of dominance in the family. The majority of men are found to be occupationally, and earnings dominant over their female partners. As noted in Chapter 3, these are the material bases on which women's economic dependency is reinforced, and men's powers and privileges in the family are maintained.

Secondly, there is some discrepancy in how men perceive their roles and those of their female partner in the family. Of the economically inactive men, only one chose to define his economic activity as 'looking after the family/home'. For economically inactive female partners, the majority of men chose this category. This is consistent with Ruxton's (2002) claim that women are mostly defined by their carer, rather than economic roles. Explaining this trend seems to lie with men's perceptions of 'men's work' and 'women's work': either the men do not participate in this type of work, or if they do, it is secondary in importance to their relationship with paid work. The economically inactive women were not defined by the (absence of a) relationship with the labour market, suggesting that the men perceive unpaid work in the home and family to be of greater relevance to women's lives.

Thirdly, there is a very strong trend among men of female breadwinner families to

disparage the economic contributions of their female partners. Only one respondent of 24 female breadwinner families and couples acknowledged earnings dominance for his female partner. Where data are available, the remaining men report a higher income level for themselves than their female partners, even though they have no obvious source of income. As noted, many data points are missing for the income variable, and information was not requested on alternative sources of income. As such, conclusions should perhaps be drawn with some caution. However, this trend suggests that for many men, renegotiating their position in the family following the transition to economic inactivity, and acknowledging some degree of economic dependency on their female partner may be problematic.

These three findings are consistent with the claim of Levy *et al* (2002) regarding Swedish families; that families are increasingly untraditional on the outside, but traditional on the inside. Most of the families and couples of this study are non-traditional in structure, given the prominence of dual-earner families and couples. On the inside, however, the intimate relationships between men and women, or at least the way these relationships are classified by men, certainly appear to be shaped to greater or lesser degrees by some attachment to traditional notions of gender roles.

The chapter has demonstrated that the respondents are fractured into a variety of socio-economic and demographic clusters. The following chapter now turns to structuring and simplifying the attitudinal data and classifying the respondents according to their index scores. This is then applied in Chapter 7 to explore the relationships between the respondents' characteristics and their attitudes. The findings of this chapter imply that the sample will demonstrate some attachment to the traditional gender order. However, this is found to be the case for only a handful of men.

## Chapter 6

### Responses to the attitudinal index

This chapter consists of two sections. The first is concerned with organising, reducing and simplifying the attitudinal items and the raw attitudinal scores in preparation for statistical analysis (which is the focus of the following chapter). As part of this, factor analysis and conceptual analysis are applied to reduce the 26 attitudinal items into three construct subscales; the validity and reliability of the scales is examined; the respondents raw scores are standardised to allow for effective comparisons between the different scales; and finally, using the new scale attributes, the process of categorising the respondents' attitudes as traditional, non-traditional or intermediate is defined. The second part of the chapter presents univariate analysis of the sample's responses to each of the attitudinal items. As the following chapter concentrates on relationships based on a amalgamated scale scores, patterns and trends concerning individual items are concealed. The opportunity is therefore taken here to overview trends in responses to individual items.

An additional method of simplifying the data set and analysis was trialled but found to be inappropriate. Drawing on Goodwin's (1999) approach to the analysis of male attitudes, cluster analysis was applied to the independent variables with the aim of creating clusters of respondents based on their socio-economic and demographic characteristics. It was anticipated that, once established, the clusters would be examined for attitudinal similarities and differences. Ideally, conclusions could then be drawn that, for example, a cluster of retired, married respondents without children in the home were more or less likely to support a traditional division of labour than other clusters of respondents.

However, far from simplifying the data set, the cluster analysis results suggested complex, disordered groupings of respondents that made little conceptual sense. Reducing the

number of cluster variables only served to increase the number of respondents excluded from the analysis, which was equally undesirable. It became apparent that applying cluster analysis to human characteristics (rather than, say, environmental characteristics), is to seek a purposeful homogenisation of respondents. Conceptually, this stands in opposition to sample diversity which, as stated in the methodology chapter, is one of the main features of the study. Cluster analysis was therefore deemed unsuitable for the purposes of this research.

### **Part 1: Simplifying the dataset: Creating sub-scales from the pool of 26 attitudinal items**

Factor analysis refers to a group of techniques that are applied mostly as a means of data reduction (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994, 279). The chosen factor analysis technique reduces a number of variables concerned with a general topic (in this case the breadwinner role) into clusters comprised of associated variables, or supervariables (Howitt and Cramer, 1999). The method is well suited to reducing a number of interval-level, closed questionnaire items into meaningful sub-scales.

A criticism of factor analysis techniques is the somewhat subjective labelling of the analysis output. Factor analysis groups together variables found to be associated, but it is the analyst who must determine the underlying conceptual similarity between the variables. As de Vaus (1996, 258) suggests, it can be relatively easy to identify similarities. In some cases however, as the extraction of factors is based on correlations between the selected variables, factors may be suggested that appear to make little conceptual sense (de Vaus, 1996, 258). Even if statistically significant, incomprehensible factors should not be used in analysis.

The following section discusses how exploratory factor analysis and conceptual analysis

were applied with the aim of reducing the set of 26 attitudinal items into a small number of meaningful and internally reliable sub-scales. While the total scale scores are useful in some analyses, separating the 26 items into sub-scales allows greater attitudinal discrimination between respondents, greater precision in terms of the particular attitudinal object, and an additional means by which to simplify the dataset and analysis. Analysis of the 26 items resulted in three sub-scales; one unweighted factor-based scale, and two unweighted conceptual factor scales. The results are outlined below.

### **Results of factor analysis**

Using factor analysis with a similar purpose, namely to construct attitudinal sub-scales, Fischer *et al* (1998) note two sample size requirements for satisfactory factor analysis. Firstly, in order to secure factor stability every attitudinal item included in the analysis requires between five and ten responses. With a scale of 26 items, a minimum of 130 respondents is therefore required. Secondly, 'stable factor solutions' are obtained when the sample size is approximately 20 times the number of factors drawn from the analysis (Fischer *et al*, 1998, 140). In this study three to seven factor combinations were tested, suggesting minimum sample sizes of between 60 and 140. The study sample of 330 respondents fulfilled both sample size requirements, and was deemed more than adequate for factor analysis.

The initial factor analysis<sup>39</sup> identified seven factors with an eigenvalue<sup>40</sup> greater than one. With such a large number of factors, a good proportion of the variance in responses was explained by these factors (55.6%). However, while the first factor accounted for 20.5% of the variance, the second factor only accounted for 8%, the third 7%, and so on, until a negligible amount of variance was explained. As de Vaus (1996, 263) notes, factor analysis usually entails some sort of trade-off between maximising the total explained variance and,

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<sup>39</sup> Based on principal components analysis as recommended by Kline (1994).

in order to achieve the aim of data reduction, restricting the number of factors needed. In total, seven factors were deemed too many for a meaningful analysis (factor 7 is also adequate given that it includes only one item). It was also evident that, with the exception of the first factor, the factors appeared conceptually inconsistent, both internally and comparatively. The theme of unemployment, for example, is diffused over three factors; 3, 5 and 6. Table 25 demonstrates the initial factor loadings (the correlation of the item with the factor) of all items in the analysis. The highlighted cells represent the factor with which each item is most correlated.

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<sup>40</sup> Eigenvalues refer to the combined amount of variance that is explained by that factor (de Vaus, 1996, 261) and should be greater than one (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994).

Table 25. Results of factor analysis: initial factor loadings.

Item	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. A woman should stay at home and take care of the house and family	.825	.065	.006	.108	.078	.064	-.012
22. It is fair that men should be employed and women should take care of the home and any children and relatives	.802	.207	.041	.144	.095	.006	.063
8. It is right and natural that a man should be the main family provider	.722	.238	.017	.260	.058	.082	.025
16. A couple should share the responsibility for earning the family income	.628	-.351	.156	-.068	-.168	.183	.122
11. A married/cohabiting woman with young children should not work full-time	.593	.219	.112	-.134	-.038	.062	-.200
26. It is unmanly for men to stay at home and look after their children full-time	.488	.254	.038	.253	.291	-.117	-.123
24. A woman's family should always be more important to her than her job	.429	.149	-.012	.033	.087	-.082	-.625
*15. I have little respect for men who quit, or are sacked from, their jobs too often	.066	.647	-.008	.101	-.107	.316	.010
5. I find it difficult to respect a man who can't get a job	.133	.540	.101	-.078	.179	-.076	.345
*13. The best way for a man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it seriously and do well at it	.245	.528	-.063	.274	.189	.187	.093
*23. A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either	.298	.494	-.032	.218	.081	-.113	-.128
21. It is a man's duty to work and earn money for his family	.429	.463	-.051	.373	-.034	.091	.028

(continued) Table 25. Results of factor analysis: initial factor loadings.

Item	Factor						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
*1. Men should choose interesting jobs even if the pay is very bad	.061	.021	.697	-.011	-.206	-.023	.026
*20. I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will suffer financially	.045	-.013	.666	.107	.112	.236	-.088
*17. It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work	.192	.171	.588	-.242	.150	-.081	-.074
12. An unemployed father can usually be a good role model for his children	.084	.465	.489	-.255	.058	.018	-.009
*4. A man should generally work overtime to make more money for his family whenever he has the chance	.111	.062	.084	.674	.174	.091	.135
*25. A man owes it to his family to work at the best paying job he can get	.277	.291	.176	.580	.008	.057	-.203
14. Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden	-.058	-.019	.180	.344	-.579	.145	-.155
19. If I became unemployed I would worry that my friends and family would lose respect for me.	.027	.122	.041	.111	.727	.202	.015
3. If I lost my job I would find it difficult to be with my family and friends	.036	-.065	-.121	.320	.588	.202	.188
6. If a man earns a low salary he cannot be a good provider	.150	.158	.225	.326	.409	-.156	-.114
2. I would like to work part-time	.089	.081	-.067	-.149	-.042	.697	.064
9. It is very important to me that I always have a full-time job	.206	.118	.126	.286	.074	.660	-.015
7. It would not bother me if I became unemployed for a few months	-.107	.003	.172	.157	.320	.564	-.120
10. It is sometimes necessary for a man to put his work before his family	.108	.205	.066	.051	.199	-.055	.724

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

\* Item taken from the Brannon and Juni (1984) sub-scale 'The breadwinner'.

The first three factors in the seven-factor solution showed relatively high eigenvalues (5.3, 2.1 and 2 respectively, as compared to 1.5, 1.3, 1.3 and 1 for the remaining factors). Interestingly, the eight items taken from the Brannon and Juni (1984) 'scale for measuring attitudes about masculinity' are clustered within the second and third factors, with none appearing in the first, strongest factor. Evidently, Brannon and Juni's items have a 'work' theme and are distinguishable from the items in the first factor (which as discussed below is termed 'sex roles'). However, it is encouraging that the items devised on the basis of the findings of a small number of qualitative interviews performed relatively better than those of Brannon and Juni's (1984) scale. This finding appears to add validity to the method chosen to construct the items; namely that respondents themselves (in this case, men) should be given the opportunity to define the important themes of the research (Williams, 2003).

On the basis of the high eigenvalues for the first three factors, a factor analysis was run with a three-factor request. The three-factor solution was found to include all items except item 2 (I would like to work part-time), but there were many cross-loadings, with some items associated with more than one factor to a similar degree. The solution accounted for a cumulative total of 36% explained variance. In contrast to the seven factor solution, the three identified factors showed some conceptual consistency. After examining the distribution of items between these three factors, the first, second and third factors were labelled 'sex roles', 'social reputation' and 'work' respectively.

As these factors comprised potential sub-scales for the set of 26 items, internal consistency reliability testing was required to measure the extent to which each sub-scale was consistent in measuring the attitudinal object. The Cronbach alpha test was run on each of the factor items. To be accepted as reliable each sub-scale must ideally gain an alpha coefficient of .70, although alphas of between .60 and .69 are commonly accepted as

adequate (e.g. Howitt and Cramer, 2000). The sex roles and, to a lesser degree, social reputation scales had good internal reliability (alphas .7982 and .6829 respectively). The work sub-scale, however, had an inadequate reliability alpha of .4837. The 'alpha if item deleted' statistics showed that the work sub-scale alpha could not be significantly improved by excluding any particular variables from the analysis. The work sub-scale was therefore rejected.

With the inability of factor analysis to provide a distribution of the 26 items that was conceptually sound and internally consistent, with acceptable alpha coefficients, it was determined that a combination of factor analysis and conceptual analysis would provide the best data reduction solution. As the first factor showed a good amount of explained variance (20.5%), good internal consistency (.8) and good conceptual sense it was termed 'sex roles' (see Table 26 below). All items in this scale are cognitive and refer to the desirability or appropriateness of a traditional gendered division of labour between men and women generally. Summated scores were calculated for the seven items in this scale and saved as a new variable for further analysis. Several other factor analyses were run with the aim of associating the remaining 19 items but none were found to provide either adequate solutions or adequate internal consistency reliability.

A conceptual analysis was performed on the remaining items. It was evident in examining the 19 items that there were potentially a few ways of associating them with different factors. The items were all work-related, with reference, for example, to work satisfaction, unemployment, and earning power. However, the strongest conceptual solution was found to be a division of the items into two scales: a scale consisting of cognitive ('Men should') items, called the work-general scale, and a conative ('I would') scale, called the work-intention scale. This solution meant that none of the questionnaire items would be excluded

from the analysis, and distinctions could be made between cognitive (general) and conative (individualised) beliefs.

The conceptual scales were found to have better internal consistency reliability alphas than the data reduction solutions suggested by factor analysis. The first scale, sex roles, which was constructed with factor analysis had good internal reliability of .8, while the conceptual scales work-intention and work-general had lesser, but still adequate reliability alphas of .6 and .63 respectively. In employing the conceptual, rather than factor, analysis method the explained variance of the two work-related sub-scales is unknown.

The following tables illustrate the accepted solution to the division of the 26 questionnaire attitude items (see below for table of responses to the attitudinal items).

Table 26. Sex roles sub-scale items.

Item	Sex roles scale (alpha = .8)	Internal consistency reliability alpha if item deleted
8	It is right and natural that a man should be the main family provider	.7420
11	A married/cohabiting woman with young children should not work full-time	.7795
16 r	A couple should share the responsibility for earning the family income	.8002
18	A woman should stay at home and take care of the house and family	.7418
22	It is fair that men should be employed and women should take care of the home and any children and relatives	.7370
24	A woman's family should always be more important to her than her job	.8007
26	It is unmanly for men to stay at home and look after their children full-time	.7808

r denotes that the score for this item was reversed in all analyses.

The sex roles scale consists of seven items, with each referring in some way to the underlying construct of a gendered division of labour. Each item tests whether respondents perceive men and women to have differential relationships with the labour market and domestic and caring responsibilities such as childcare. As perhaps the most contentious items in the questionnaire, that elicited the strongest responses (be it positive or negative), all items in this scale showed good consistency alphas and were found to have among the strongest item-item and item-total correlations.

Table 27. Work-intention scale items.

Item	Work-intention scale (alpha = .6)	Internal consistency reliability alpha if item deleted
2r	I would like to work part-time	.5798
3	If I lost my job I would find it difficult to be with my family and friends	.5603
5	I find it difficult to respect a man who can't get a job	.5909
7r	It would not bother me if I became unemployed for a few months	.5327
9	It is very important to me that I always have a full-time job	.4945
15	I have little respect for men who quit, or are sacked from, their jobs too often	.5605
19	If I became unemployed I would worry that my friends and family would lose respect for me	.5346
20r	I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will suffer financially	.5783

r denotes that the score for this item was reversed in all analyses.

The eight items in this scale concern work-related attitudes and behaviour intentions. The items that focus on unemployment are proxy measures of strength of attachment to paid work as the male role norm and a source of masculine identity. Each item refers to the male respondents themselves, and their own behavioural tendencies and perceptions of other men.

The internal consistency reliability of this scale (alpha = .5883) was not ideal, but was not considered so poor as to warrant exclusion from the analysis. The 'alpha if item deleted' statistics show that none of the variables in particular contributed to the low alpha coefficient and were thus clearly worthy of rejection.

Table 28. Work-general scale items.

<i>Item</i>	Work-general scale (alpha = .63)	Internal consistency reliability alpha if item deleted
1r	Men should choose interesting jobs even if the pay is very bad	.6360
4	A man should generally work overtime to make more money for his family whenever he has the chance	.6006
6	If a man earns a low salary he cannot be a good provider	.6084
10	It is sometimes necessary for a man to put his work before his family	.6397
12r	An unemployed father can usually be a good role model for his children	.6139
13	The best way for a man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it seriously and do well at it	.5888
14	Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden	.6599
17r	It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work	.6097
21	It is a man's duty to work and earn money for his family	.5799
23	A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either	.6051
25	A man owes it to his family to work at the best paying job he can get	.5708

r denotes that the score for this item was reversed in all analyses.

The work-general scale comprises 11 items that examine in more detail how the male respondents judge 'men' as a social group on work-related topics. All items concern the male rather than female role, and test strength of attachment to the notion of a gendered economic obligation in the family. The internal consistency reliability alpha of .63 suggests that collectively the items are measuring the same construct rather than being repetitious, as would be concluded with an alpha of .9 or above (e.g. Howitt and Cramer, 2000)

Across all scales marginal improvements to the internal consistency reliability alpha could

have been achieved by excluding particular variables. The work-general scale, for example, could have gained a maximum coefficient of .66 if item 14 had been excluded (an increase in alpha of .0259). As the potential reliability gains in all scales were minimal, this was judged to be a less desirable end than the inclusion of all items in the analysis.

### **Reliability and validity of the attitude scale**

With any measurement tool it is necessary to investigate issues of reliability and validity to demonstrate that the research has integrity, if appropriate reproducibility, and that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Reliability refers to the dependability of measurements, in that repeated use of the instrument, by the original researcher or others, should yield similar results (Hammersely, 1987, 74). Reliability is mostly a quantitative, statistical matter, involving the calculation of various reliability coefficients, and, as such, is not typically referred to in qualitative work. There are two distinct strands to reliability; internal and external reliability. This study is only able to assess the internal reliability of the attitude scale (the extent to which the instrument consistently measures the research construct), as no external measures of reliability are available (such as the results of repeated use of the instrument, or comparison with other instruments measuring the same construct).

Validity mostly involves the collection of qualitative evidence to demonstrate the instrument is accurately measuring what it is intended to measure. Hammersley (1981, 169) suggests there are a number of 'validity threats' in any research context. Of these, one of the most fundamental threats stems from the researcher's need to be both an 'insider' and 'outsider' in order to lend the study interpretation and objectivity for example. However, as Hammersley (1981, 169) notes both roles 'have their insights *and* their blind spots' (original emphasis). At its worst, this tension within the researcher's role could lead to poor research design and misinterpretation of findings. As noted in Chapter 4 particular

steps were taken in the design of the research instrument to 'distance' the researcher from the research, and so curtail such validity threats.

The literature makes reference to many different types of validity including construct, content, predictive, discriminant and face validity. It may sometimes involve comparison of the results of different instruments (such as this project's use of a questionnaire and interviews) to demonstrate agreement between the methods: with agreement, each can be deemed valid in measuring that particular trait (Hammersley, 1987, 76). Or, with face validity for example, it may simply require the researcher to look closely at the instrument to ensure that 'on the face of it' it is measuring what it is intended to measure. The process of instrument construction, which usually requires a literature review, and later pre-testing and piloting testing, generally assures a study some degree of face validity. It is discussed below that this study is also assumed to have sound convergent and construct validity.

The reliability of the full scale and three sub-scales was tested with reference to internal consistency and item discrimination. Good internal consistency coefficients are required to show that the way an individual responded to an item is consistent with their overall score. For example, respondents gaining a low total score should generally have gained a low score on each individual item. Poor internal reliability coefficients denote that there is little consistency between the overall score and the pattern of response to the items, which devalues the meaning and applicability of the total score.

Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability tests showed that the full scale and the sex-roles sub-scale had good reliability (Alpha 0.81 and 0.8 respectively). The work-general and work-intention sub-scales had acceptable reliability coefficients of 0.63 and 0.58 respectively. The tests were conducted to confirm that the attitudinal scale is a reliable means of tapping the respondents' attitudes, and is statistically and conceptually

defensible. The lower coefficients of the two work-related scales are not ideal. However, in sociological studies, as opposed to psychological, less coherence, and greater variability reflecting socio-cultural diversity, can be assumed. As a result, less good fits can be legitimately tolerated (see Appendix 6 for a discussion of outlier cases). It is therefore assumed that the lower coefficients are, in part, a product of sample diversity.

The attitudinal index used in this study consists of 26 items. However, using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula (e.g. Brown, 2001) it is possible to investigate the relationship between index length and reliability; in particular whether the reliability coefficient (.81) could have been bettered with an alternative number of attitudinal items.

The Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula is summarised as:

$$\text{Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient} = \frac{n*r}{1+(n-1)r}$$

Where:

$n$  = a derivative of the test length under investigation (desired  $n$ /actual  $n$ )

$r$  = the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the existing index

The formula was applied to investigate a number of potential index lengths to determine the influence on reliability. A worked example (for a potential index length of 40 items, and using as the basis of the equation, the actual number of items used and the reliability coefficient achieved) is shown below.

Figure 4. Applying the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula to investigate potential reliability: worked example of a 40-item index.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Reliability} &= \frac{(40/26) \cdot .81}{1 + ((40/26) - 1) \cdot .81} \\
 &= \frac{1.6 \times .81}{1 + (1.6 - 1) \cdot .81} \\
 &= \frac{1.296}{1.486} \\
 &= .87
 \end{aligned}$$

The following table presents the results of applying the formula to potential index lengths of 40, 35, 30, 20 and 15 items, and includes the achieved reliability based on the actual 26 items for comparison.

Table 29. Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula reliability coefficients for different index lengths.

Index length	Reliability Coefficient
40 items	.87
35 items	.85
30 items	.83
26 items	.81
20 items	.77
15 items	.66

The Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was applied to investigate the reliability coefficients that may have been gained with scales consisting of 15, 20, 30, 35 and 40

items, as opposed to the 26 actually used. The table shows that lengthening the attitudinal scale enhances reliability. As Oppenheim (2000) notes however, there is a point of diminishing returns. In this case it appears to be between 26 and 35 items. Increasing the scale by 5-item increments within, or above this range shows very little gain in reliability. Conversely, if the scale had been reduced to 20 or 15 items, a lower reliability coefficient would have been achieved.

This analysis can only be done post-survey, and is a means of validating the chosen length of the attitudinal index. In this case it is evident that increasing the number of items to 40 would have resulted in only marginally increased reliability. If a scale of 15 items had been used the reliability coefficient (.66) would have been at the margins of acceptability. The 26 item scale appears to have been a sound compromise between having enough items to ensure acceptable reliability and not over-facing the respondents with a large number of items.

Index reliability was also investigated with the application of item discrimination tests (item-item, and item-total correlations). The tests were conducted on the 33% highest and lowest scoring respondents. Item discrimination showed that to greater or lesser degrees each item contributed positively to the measurement of the attitudinal object, and discriminated between respondents in the same way as the overall score. The data were found to mostly fit Ajzen's (1988) assertions that item-item correlations should be low, and item-total correlations should fall between the 0.30 and 0.40 range.

As the Likert scale contained a neutral option (a score of 3), one data concern was that relatively high scores (denoting a traditional attitude to household organisation) could be gained by consistent neutral scoring. Although the scale data do not strictly fit Guttman's (1950) data assumptions for scalogram testing, two scalograms were conducted on two

random samples of 30 respondents to check how their scores were obtained. The scalograms show plausible gradients suggesting that respondents with high (traditional) scale scores generally responded strongly to items concerned with the appropriateness and desirability of a traditional division of labour, and much less strongly to items concerned with egalitarianism. The low scoring (untraditional) respondents in this analysis had responded diametrically to the high scoring respondents. The scalograms were constructed by hand and were found to be very time consuming. However, it was a useful technique for checking the influence of neutral scoring. As the scalograms also showed that similar scores had been obtained in similar ways, the scale was found to have some reproducibility.

In any form of educational or psychological measurement there is error (Nunnally, 1978). In educational forms of measurement such error can stem from the test writer (e.g. by writing a poorly worded test item) or examiner (e.g. by attributing the wrong answer to a multiple choice question). In this case, the respondents' scores could be influenced by their mood and well-being at the time of completing the questionnaire. If they had completed the questionnaire on another day at perhaps another time of day their score may have differed. The standard error of measurement (SEM) statistic calculates the average amount of error variance and shows the range within which an individual's true score<sup>41</sup> lies (e.g. Nunnally, 1978).

Although it is not applied for analysis purposes, a SEM was calculated for each scale to demonstrate how reliable the scale scores are as a measure of the respondents' true scores. The formula (see e.g. Brown, 2001) is shown below:

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<sup>41</sup> A 'true score' is a theoretical construct that is the average score an individual would gain if they completed the same questionnaire or test many times (e.g. Nunnally, 1978).

$$\text{SEM} = S \sqrt{1-R}$$

Where:

S = standard deviation

R = reliability coefficient

The scales have the following SEMs:

Full scale = 3.5

Sex roles scale = 5.7

Work-general scale = 5.5

Work-intention scale = 6.5

We can be reasonably confident that the full scale is a reliable measure of the respondents' attitudes as the SEM for this scale is relatively small. A respondent's true score lies within  $\pm 3.5$  scale points of their observed score. The work-intention scale, as a stand-alone scale, is evidently less reliable with true scores ranging between  $\pm 6.5$  scale points. The larger SEM of this scale reflects its lower reliability coefficient and larger standard deviation. There is evidently greater variance of scores on this scale suggesting that the sample's attitudes show greater dispersion throughout the range.

Mueller (1986) suggests that the minimal requirements for attitude scale reliability and validity are internal consistency and construct validity. Some construct validity is assured if, as in this study, reasonable internal consistency correlation coefficients are achieved (suggesting that the study construct has been adequately tapped). A measure of convergent validity is assured by collecting similar results about a given behaviour or trait with the application of different methods (Litwin, 1995). As noted above, interview responses were instrumental in the construction of the attitudinal items. As the research items were, to all intents and purposes, written by a random group of men for another random group of men the research appears to have sound convergent validity. If the female researcher had

written the attitudinal items the research may have had rather less convergent validity. It is suggested that the good internal consistency reliability, and use of interview data, all lend the study good construct and convergent validity. The results of the scalogram, test length reliability and standard error of measurement analysis also imply sound reliability and validity.

### **Standardising scores: The distinction between relative and absolute upper and lower limits**

Calculating the upper and lower limits of a scale is necessary to attribute meaning to the scores achieved by respondents. As de Vaus (1996, 272) notes, in itself a score of 48 has little meaning unless it is situated within a range of values with a known minimum and maximum score. Setting limits also allows for standardised comparison between sub-scales that may have different means of scoring, weighting, or numbers of categories for each item. In this case, using the same standardised upper and lower limits for the four scales (the full scale and three sub-scales), each of which has a different number of items, allows similarities and differences in responses to the scales to be examined.

Where score ranges are applied, scores are typically situated within a range based on the observed, rather than potential, minimum and maximum values (e.g. Aube and Koestner, 1995; Fischer *et al*, 1998; Huber and Spitze, 1981). However, this approach is deemed to be problematic. Using observed scores as a basis of upper and lower limits, as advocated by de Vaus (1996), results in definitional boundaries that are relative rather than absolute. Say, for example, a highest observed score of 68 out of a total potential score of 100 is used to define the upper limit. The respondent with this score, and others close to it, will be defined as traditional even though their observed scores fall some way short of the score that could have been achieved. Although thus defined as traditional, such respondents have not expressed attitudes that are commensurate with the extreme of traditionality that the

scale measured. Forcing scores, and respondents, to fit within one of the two extremes is unrealistic and, arguably, leads to misrepresentation of the sample.

Instead it is suggested that upper and lower limits must be based on the extreme scores that *could* have been achieved on the scale. In this way respondents are classed in an absolute sense, on their own terms as measured against the attitudinal extremes, rather than being judged against the standard of the highest and lowest scoring respondents. Once the research instrument has proved valid, reliable and internally consistent, this approach also appears more conducive to effective comparisons over time and with different populations.

Table 30. Full scale and sub-scale attributes prior to score standardisation.

Scale	Minimum score		Maximum score		Observed range	Mean
	Potential	Observed	Potential	Observed		
Full (n = 26)	26	37	260	194	157	116.8
Sex roles (n = 7)	7	7	70	68	61	28.3
Work-intention (n = 8)	8	9	80	68	59	39.7
Work-general (n = 11)	11	12	110	95	83	48.7

The table above provides further justification for the focus on potential rather than observed scores. The full scale shows a maximum observed score (194) that falls considerably short of the potential score (260) that could have been gained. Had z scores or the mean or median values of these scales been used to categorise respondents, the validity of the 'traditional' category would have been questionable.

To allow standardised comparison between scales, and meaningful interpretation of scores, new upper (60) and lower (0) limits of the scale were calculated using a slightly modified version of the formula provided by de Vaus (1996, 272). An upper limit of 60 is applied for two reasons. Firstly it allows the spread of scores to be divided easily between three

score-based categories. Secondly, the spread of score points within each attitudinal classification is considered sufficient for discriminating adequately between respondents in discussions that refer to actual scores rather than categories.

The following formula was adapted from de Vaus (1996, 272) for calculating scores with standardised upper and lower limits:

$$\text{New scale} = ((S - M)/R) * n$$

Where:

New scale = score on scale with upper and lower limit

S = raw scale score

M = lowest *potential* score on old scale

R = range of *potential* scores on old scale

n = the chosen upper limit for new scale

Using this formula the highest observed score on the full scale of 194 becomes 43, while the lowest observed score of 37 becomes 3. As the maximum or minimum score was achieved only on one occasion (sex roles minimum value), the new upper limit of 60 in particular has little purpose. However, once the limits are established and the spread of scores divided by the number of desired categories (three), the limits allow for a more accurate and equitable distribution of the sample between the traditional, non-traditional and intermediate categories.

Following the conversion of scores the scales have the following attributes (see below for discussion of mean values):

Table 31. Scale attributes following score standardisation.

Scale	Minimum score		Maximum score		New observed range	New mean
	Potential	Observed	Potential	Observed		
Full	0	3	60	43	40	23
Sex roles	0	0	60	58	58	20
Work-intention	0	1	60	50	49	26
Work-general	0	1	60	51	50	23

The table above demonstrates that the scores gained on the sex roles scale come closest to the attitudinal extremes measured by these items. Accordingly this scale shows the greatest range of observed scores. The observed range and other attributes of the sex roles scale suggest this group of 7 items discriminates more effectively between the respondents than the other scales.

The two work-related scales show a sound range of scores. However, the fact that the maximum observed scores fall some way short of the potential score of 60 indicates that on these scales respondents did not consistently disclose strong traditional-directed responses. This also appears to be the case with the full scale which shows the lowest observed range of 40. Although concerned with the breadwinner role, the factor and conceptual analysis outlined previously shows that the 26 items can be divided into three underlying breadwinner-related constructs. The relatively low observed range on the full scale appears to conceal the strength with which some respondents responded to some items, and overall provides further justification for the use of sub-scales.

#### Creating sample categories

The purpose of the questionnaire was to test for measures of association between socio-

economic and demographic status and attitude scale scores. Responses to each attitudinal item were given scores of 1, 2, 3, or weighted scores of 8 and 10 (double scores of 4 and 5). The weighted scores were applied to agreement with traditional items and disagreement with non-traditional items. The aim was to polarise traditional and non-traditional respondents along the score continuum. de Vaus (1996, 268) suggests that researchers sometimes wish to weight more heavily particular items in a scale. They may do so by doubling respondents' scores on the selected items (de Vaus, 1996). This study modified this approach by weighting equally all items in the scale, but weighting more heavily all traditional responses. The scalograms presented in Appendix 4 test the validity of the traditional, non-traditional and intermediate categories. The scalograms confirm that the score weighting was effective in distinguishing traditional respondents from non-traditional and intermediate respondents.

A high full scale or sub-scale score denotes an attitudinal preference for a traditional division of labour, while a low score represents a preference that is non-traditional. Those classed as traditional demonstrate greater cognitive attachment to a traditional division of labour between couples, and attachment to the hegemonic form of masculinity. The low-scoring, non-traditional respondents show a preference for more egalitarian roles within the family, and reject to greater or lesser degrees traditional notions of masculinity. As it was deemed more difficult to gain high scores, this method of scoring was chosen to reduce the influence of social desirability responses (see below). The attitudinal scores, and respondents, are now further categorised to aid analysis, and elaborate on the distribution of attitudinal attachment to features of the hegemonic masculinity.

Classifying respondents as traditional or untraditional is relatively common in the field of gender-role or family-related attitudes. It was anticipated that guidance would be drawn from this literature in choosing the technique by which to categorise the attitudinal scores

of the respondents. However, in reviewing the literature two weaknesses were identified. The first is that most studies apply a simple, arguably crude and over-simplistic traditional/untraditional distinction. This distinguishes between extreme favourableness and extreme unfavourableness to the attitudinal object, but fails to account for the grades of uncertainty or moderation between these two extremes. It has been applied by many including Aube and Koestner (1995), Fischer *et al* (1998) and Huber and Spitze (1981). As no reference is made to the intermediate states between the two extremes, each classification includes those of low, moderate and strong attachment to, or rejection of the attitudinal object. This appears to have poor validity, in that the classifications applied to some respondents may not be particularly accurate or true. It therefore makes questionable the distribution of traditional and untraditional attitudes reported in these studies.

The second weakness is a by-product of the first, and concerns the means by which authors in this field have created the traditional/untraditional split. All the authors noted above have applied the mean score, (or equally) the mean of zero in a distribution of *z* scores, or the median score as the cut-off point between traditional and untraditional. (In an approximately normal distribution the mean and median score will produce the same or very similar results).

In their study of marital satisfaction Aube and Koestner (1995) apply a traditional/untraditional sample divide that uses the median score. Respondents gaining scores above and below the median are defined as untraditional and traditional respectively (Aube and Koestner, 1995, 896). In this study, applying the median score results in 162 traditional respondents, and 168 untraditional respondents. Applying the mean score, (or the mean of zero in a distribution of *z* scores), as Fischer *et al* (1998) have done, results in 181 non-traditional and 149 traditional respondents. Neither of these methods takes account of how dispersed or clustered the respondents are throughout the score range.

The techniques reported in the literature were rejected for this study. However, in testing out alternative means of categorising the respondents it was evident that some compromise was necessary. The ideal approach involved using the new range (based on potential rather than observed scores) between the standardised upper and lower limits and dividing this equally into three score bands; non-traditional (scores between 0-20), intermediate (20-40), and traditional (40-60). While considered to be a fair, accurate and objective representation of the respondents' beliefs, this resulted in a poor, unbalanced distribution, with too few 'traditional' respondents for any meaningful comparative analysis.

Various means of combining the categories and changing score boundaries were explored, but reducing the score range of the intermediate category appeared to be the best compromise. The accepted solution applies the three score categories; non-traditional (scores ranging from 0-25), intermediate (25-35) and traditional (35-60). The traditional category is marginally better populated in this distribution, and it appears that the compromise entails little loss in validity. The distribution of respondents between the three categories is discussed in the following chapter, where chi-square analysis is applied to explore the distribution and strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role.

### **Part 1: Summary**

The chapter thus far has been concerned with transforming the raw, unstructured attitudinal data. The rationales for manipulating the raw data were for purposes of data reduction, simplification, and to aid the analysis and discussion of statistical tests performed in the following chapter. As this study is concerned with the (socio-economic and demographic) distribution of attitudinal attachment to a traditional gender division of labour, the conversion of scale scores is also necessary to allow for clear identification of the respondents with traditional, non-traditional and intermediate perceptions of gender roles

in the family.

The application of factor analysis and conceptual analysis demonstrates that all 26 items have a logical, and in the case of the sex roles scales a statistically defensible, sub-scale membership. An analysis of the internal consistency statistics shows that all items are worthy of inclusion in the analysis, albeit to greater and lesser degrees. Various techniques were applied to investigate the reliability and validity of the scale. Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations, scalograms and a review of test length reliability and each sub-scale's SEM suggest that the scale has good reliability. Determining the validity of the instrument is a more subjective matter. However, the application of interview data to construct the items (as demonstrated in Chapter 4) is considered to lend the scale sound convergent validity. The use of the literature in constructing the scale, and the results of factor and conceptual analysis, also suggest that 'on the face of it' the instrument has sound construct validity.

The data preparation work discussed in this section of the chapter is of value for future research purposes. The standardisation and categorisation of scores denotes that the research instrument, having proved internally reliable with some measure of validity, could be applied with some ease to different populations. Such research could be used to test whether the findings of this study, with a spatial focus on the Plymouth TTWA, are similar to those among men living and working in other localities.

### **Part 2: Univariate analysis of attitudinal items**

The chapter now turns to examining the frequency data in more detail. Firstly, the performance of the research instrument is investigated with reference to measures of dispersion and central tendency. Secondly, the distribution of responses to the items in each sub-scale is discussed. The conclusion draw together the main themes of the analysis.

## Score distributions

The table below details the descriptive statistics for each of the attitudinal scales.

Table 32. Descriptive statistics of the full scale and sub-scales.

<b>Descriptive statistic</b>	<b>Full scale</b>	<b>Sex-roles scale</b>	<b>Work-general scale</b>	<b>Work-intentions scale</b>
Number of respondents	330	330	330	330
Mean score	23.3	20.3	22.9	26.4
Std. Error of Mean	.45	.69	.50	.57
Median	21.8	18.1	22.4	26.7
Mode*	20	13	24	30
Interquartile range	11.6	15.2	12.7	14.2
Std. Deviation	8.1	12.6	9.0	10.3
Variance	66.1	158.6	81.5	106.0
Range	40	58	50	49
Minimum	3	0	1	1
Maximum	43	58	51	50

\*Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The new mean for each scale represents a relatively low score. Indeed, the mean values almost rest on the statistical border between the non-traditional and intermediate categories. This is most notably the case with the sex roles scale, which also shows a low mode and median value. The low values reflect the positively skewed distribution of the sample in favour of non-traditional attitudes on this scale, and indeed overall. However, the somewhat higher values of the work-intention scale suggests that the scores of this scale show greater dispersion, and, on average, higher scoring.

The median and interquartile range (IQR) are often considered more accurate measures of central tendency than the mean (McLachlan and Whiten, 2000). The mean has the potential

to be distorted by extreme outliers and can be a misleading statistic. In comparison, the median and IQR reflect the mid-point and mid-section respectively and, as such, show greater resistance to the effects of outliers. Appendix 7 provides a brief discussion of outliers, in which the argument is made for their inclusion, rather than exclusion from the analysis. Comparing the median and mean values above provides further evidence for the inclusion of outliers. The median values of the work-general and work-intention scales do not differ to any significant degree from the mean, suggesting that there are few outliers distorting the mean on these scales. On the full and sex-roles scales, the median values are marginally lower suggesting that the mean has been boosted by some relatively high scores on these scales.

The variability statistics also highlight that the scores for each scale show adequate dispersion throughout the range. The relatively large standard deviation and IQR for each scale suggests that the scores are fairly well dispersed, although this is less so in the case of the full scale. The comparatively better balanced distribution of the sex roles scores is reflected in the standard deviation and IQR, which exceed those of the other scales and suggest greater dispersion around the mean score, and greater discrimination between respondents.

The variability statistics can be applied to calculate the range of scores within which 95% of the population lie. The normal distribution of the data and probability theory suggest that the score ranges identified below would be found in 95% of the population from which the sample was taken.

Table 33. Predicting population parameters: confidence intervals for the full scale and sub-scales.

<i>Scale</i>	<b>Lower Confidence Interval Score</b>	<b>Upper Confidence Interval Score</b>	<b>Confidence Interval Range</b>
Full	22.4	24.16	1.76
Sex roles	18.97	21.7	2.73
Work-general	21.89	23.84	1.95
Work-intention	25.32	27.55	2.23

The confidence interval data show that it can be assumed with 95% certainty that the mean score of the population lies within a range of scores that is indicative of intermediate attitudes. The exception to this is that of the sex roles scale where the lower interval falls, albeit marginally, within the untraditional category. With the largest standard deviation, the sex roles scale also shows the greatest range within which 95% of the population would score.

### **Responses to attitudinal items**

This section of the chapter is concerned with the distribution of respondents regarding each of the attitudinal items. The items are organised into the three sub-scales introduced earlier.

#### **1. Sex roles sub-scale**

The following table demonstrates the responses to the items of the sex roles scale.

Table 34. Responses to the sex roles sub-scale items (%).

Attitude item	% of respondents (n=330)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8. It is right and natural that a man should be the main family provider	12.7	20.6	21.8	30.9	13.9
11. A married/cohabiting woman with young children should not work full-time	12.4	35.2	22.7	22.7	7
16. A couple should share the responsibility for earning the family income	13.9	35.8	32.1	15.8	2.4
18. A woman should stay at home and take care of the house and family	5.5	10	30.3	40.6	13.6
22. It is fair that men should be employed and women should take care of the home and any children and relatives	5.2	17.3	26.4	40.3	10.9
24. A woman's family should always be more important to her than her job	20	37.6	22.4	17.9	2.1
26. It is unmanly for men to stay at home and look after their children full-time	3.3	7.9	13.9	43.9	30.9

The above table shows that respondents clearly tend towards untraditional attitudes in the sex roles sub-scale. Items eight, 18 and 22, for example, all contribute directly to measuring the degree of support for a traditional housewife/breadwinner division of labour. On average, two out of four respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the traditional sentiments in these three items, while only one in four agree or strongly agree. The results of item 16 show that approximately half of the male respondents believe that wage earning should be shared within couples and, it can be inferred, do not support a strict gender coded division of labour in the household.

Three out of four respondents disagree or strongly disagree with the suggestion that it is 'unmanly' for a male to take on the full-time care of children (item 26). Cross tabulations (not shown) reveal that these respondents cross all age quartiles and marital and economic

statuses. However, it appears that at least some of this support for the full-time care of children is ideological. Item 21 of the work-general scale (see below) shows that 65% agree with the proposition that men have a *duty* to provide an income for their family. In practice, completing this duty would preclude the opportunity for caring for children full-time. Similarly, as is detailed in the work-intention sub-scale below, 42% of respondents claim they would not like to work part-time (item 2). This may be extrapolated to mean that these respondents do not desire fewer hours in paid work, and, by definition, increased time in the household. The majority of respondents suggest that there is nothing 'unmanly' about caring for children full-time, but this study finds little evidence to indicate that such a lifestyle change is desirable in practice.

Few respondents support the notion that female roles should revolve solely around the family and household. However, it appears that greater significance is attached to female household and caring tasks than participation in paid work. A total of 58% agree with the proposition that a woman's family should be of more importance than participation in paid work. Similarly, 48% agree (as opposed to 30% who disagree) that women with young children should not be in full-time employment. These responses suggest that underlying norms of a gendered segregation of work persists, and a more traditional division of labour may be deemed more appropriate or preferable during particular family life-cycle stages. The following results of the work-intention and work-general sub-scales show that the respondents also show some attachment to traditional discourses surrounding male employment.

## 2. Work behaviour-intentions sub-scale

The table below details the responses to the work-intention items.

Table 35. Responses to the work-intentions sub-scale items.

Attitude item	% of respondents (n=330)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2. I would like to work part-time	8.8	28.8	20	28.5	13.9
3. If I lost my job I would find it difficult to be with my family and friends	3	15.8	10.9	37	33.3
5. I find it difficult to respect a man who can't get a job	3.6	15.8	18.8	34.5	27.3
7. It would not bother me if I became unemployed for a few months	4.5	20.3	12.7	31.8	30.6
9. It is very important to me that I always have a full-time job	33.6	35.2	15.5	11.8	3.9
15. I have little respect for men who quit, or are sacked from, their jobs too often	16.4	44.5	25.8	9.7	3.6
19. If I became unemployed I would worry that my friends and family would lose respect for me.	3.3	23	14.8	41.5	17.3
20. I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will suffer financially	2.1	25.2	22.1	38.2	12.4

The responses to the sex roles scale noted previously suggest that the sample majority oppose the traditional model of household organisation of a female housewife/carer and male breadwinner. The responses indicate attitudinal preferences for flexibility in the family distribution of labour, with 50% supporting equality of paid work and family economic obligation, and 75% not opposing, at least ideologically, the full-time male carer. However, the responses to the work-intention scale suggest that in considering specifically

the male role, many of the respondents show attachment to traditional male roles in the labour market.

To 69% of the respondents, having a full-time job is very important. It may also be inferred from the responses to item seven that three out of four respondents *would* be 'bothered' if they became unemployed. The general direction of the responses to items seven and nine appears to contradict the role flexibility that is favoured in the sex roles scale. Evidently for many respondents participation in employment is important. Due to the nature of the data gathered this study is unable to explain the sample's attachment to work. However, this attachment adds weight to the suggestion made above that support for the full-time male carer role is more ideological than is in practice desired.

The male respondents evidently view work as an activity from which respect can be gained (which in part may explain the sample's support for participation in paid work). Item 13 of the work-general scale detailed below shows that 45% of respondents believe that respect from others can stem from cultivating a 'good worker' image. In this scale, a higher proportion of 61%, have 'little respect' for men who cannot sustain such an image (item 15). Interestingly though, in responding to items directed at themselves, rather than men in general, the respondents do not believe that unemployment would impact negatively on their relationships with family or friends. A total of 59% claim that they would not be concerned about the perceptions of family and friends if they became unemployed. Similarly, 70% did not anticipate any problems in being with family and friends, should they become unemployed. It may be the case that at the time of the survey these respondents had not experienced unemployment and hence may be incognisant of the often far-reaching negative outcomes of unemployment. However, of the 94 respondents currently not in work, 60 (64%) also disagree with item three, that unemployment complicates relationships with family and friends.

The results outlined above suggest that the respondents currently in paid work do not view work, and the intrinsic practices of consummating a daily work routine and (some) freedom from the domestic sphere, as central to the maintenance of familial relationships. No doubt the respondents perceive their close relationships as strong enough to weather any potential impacts of unemployment. Interestingly the responses from the majority of non-working respondents also challenge the idea that unemployment may be detrimental to family relations. This suggests that the respondents of this study have not generally experienced the same difficulties as found among the studies noted earlier. However, as most of the non-working respondents are retired or long-term unemployed perhaps over time they have cultivated effective coping strategies, or successfully rebalanced their close relationships in the light of the changes to routines and economic and social well-being that often accompany unemployment.

### **3. Work general sub-scale**

The table below shows the responses to the work-general items.

Table 36. Responses to the work-general sub-scale items.

Attitude item	% of respondents (n=330)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Men should choose interesting jobs even if the pay is very bad	3.3	22.7	27.6	39.7	6.7
4. A man should generally work overtime to make more money for his family whenever he has the chance	9.7	26.1	26.1	29.4	8.8
6. If a man earns a low salary he cannot be a good provider	2.7	11.5	10.3	46.7	28.8
10. It is sometimes necessary for a man to put his work before his family	5.2	45.5	14.8	21.2	13.3
12. An unemployed father can usually be a good role model for his children	6.7	30	36.7	21.5	5.2
13. The best way for a man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it seriously and do well at it	13	32.4	15.8	31.2	7.6
14. Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden	7	45.2	14.5	24.5	8.8
17. It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work	7.9	42.7	28.2	19.4	1.8
21. It is a man's duty to work and earn money for his family	21.5	43.3	16.4	16.7	2.1
23. A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either	2.7	12.4	15.5	39.4	30
25. A man owes it to his family to work at the best paying job he can get	10.9	33	23.3	30	2.7

The work-general sub-scale moves away from the individualised beliefs of the work-intention scale discussed above and instead accesses how the respondents feel about the enduring association of men with the public sphere of paid work. The scale primarily focuses on whether the respondents believe men have a 'duty' to participate in paid work

and earn a wage, and if such a duty may extend so far as to become burdensome, or a restriction on their lifestyle or employment choices.

The items concerned with the importance of earning a 'good' wage show an interesting anomaly. Items one and 17 test how important fulfilling wage earning potential is to the sample. The majority of respondents prioritise earning capacity over participation in work that is interesting or satisfying (47% item one, 51% item 17). This suggests that to some extent the respondents are prepared to, or believe in, sacrifice of personal ambitions or interests in the fulfilment of family economic obligations. However, three out of four sample males also oppose the notion that failing to provide well for a family equates with failure (item 6). Similarly, 69% do not think poorly of men who are unable to provide a family income (item 23). The results of the work-general scale suggest that many men perceive a duty to provide an income, and are prepared to sacrifice their creative or career ambitions in order to do so. If men do not fulfil these obligations it is not necessarily seen as failure or as any indication of the man's ability in other spheres of life. However, as 61% of the sample claim they find it difficult to respect a man who quits, or is sacked from his job too often (item 15 of the work-intention scale above), there is perhaps a fine line between acceptance and denunciation of males on the basis of their earning power and patterns of participation in work.

The sample identify participation in paid work as a male duty and obligation (though not exclusively so), and many are prepared to sacrifice satisfaction in work in the fulfilment of this duty. However, 52% of respondents suggest that providing for a family can be a burden. (Interestingly, a lesser proportion (38%) would like to reduce any such burden by working part-time.) It may be the case that such a burden is exacerbated by the noted propensity to prioritise earning capacity over personal satisfaction in work. The disparity of these responses points to some cognitive sense of familial economic duty, some

attachment to traditional discourses concerning the male role in relation to work and the labour market, yet some intrinsic dissatisfaction with the male role as traditionally conceptualised.

The sample data are characterised by an overall trend for attitudes that favour egalitarianism over traditionalism in the distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women. However, in considering specifically the female role somewhat greater emphasis is placed on the family, home and caring responsibilities than participation in work outside the home, especially during particular lifecycle stages. The table above demonstrates that the sample consider the traditional male and female roles to be somewhat reciprocal. Approximately 65% of the sample believe that men have a duty to work and provide an income for the family (item 21), while 44% suggest that men have an obligation to fulfil their wage earning potential for the benefit of the family (item 25). For both the male and female role there is some attachment to the ideology of 'duty' and a reciprocal exchange of labour in the family.

The majority of respondents evidently make distinctions between forms of work and role priorities on the basis of the gender binary. This is demonstrated by contrasting the results of item 10 (It is sometimes necessary for a man to put his work before his family) with item 24 of the sex roles scale (A woman's family should always be more important to her than her job). A significant proportion of the sample agrees with both sentiments (51% with item 10 and 58% with item 24). A total of 35% disagree that it is sometimes necessary for men to prioritise their work, while only 20% disagree that women should prioritise their family over work commitments. These results suggest that not only do the sample perceive a gender division, but the question of female role priorities is marginally more clear-cut.

### Concluding comments

This chapter has been concerned with the attitudinal index; firstly structuring the raw data and investigating the reliability and validity of the scale, and secondly overviewing the patterns of response to the items in each of the sub-scales.

The results suggest that overall the sample shows little attitudinal support for a clear-cut gendered division of labour within couple households. The majority reject the most contentious items that suggest a gender-coded division of labour between the private and public spheres is 'natural' and/or desirable. Instead, the sample shows greater support for the notion of role flexibility, and some degree of egalitarianism between men and women.

It appears however, that at least some of the support for egalitarianism in the intra-household division of labour may be ideological. The results demonstrate that while the majority show some support for role flexibility, a large proportion of the sample associate males and females with different roles and role priorities. Many respondents identify that they and men in general have a 'duty' to provide an income for the family, sometimes prioritising work over family, and income earning capacity over work satisfaction. Moreover, while few respondents oppose female participation in paid work, the female role priority clearly centres on the traditional spheres of the family and home. The sample is not strongly opposed to the notion of role reversal, but very few suggest this is something they would choose to apply in their own lives.

These results suggest that there is some ambiguity within the sample in the pattern of response to the items. On the one hand, the respondents reject the traditional gender order. On the other, they demonstrate some attachment to the 'male as economic provider', and 'female as carer' doctrines. This may be indicative of a disparity between what may be possible in family and economic life (egalitarianism, role reversal), and what is achievable

and/or desirable in practice. It appears that the intimate and co-dependent nature of relationships in the home and family, and the distribution of paid and unpaid work in the family, may be more resistant to empirical change than beliefs about the gender order.

## Chapter 7

### The distribution and strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role

This chapter moves the analysis forward from the analysis of individual items in the previous chapter to exploring relationships in the amalgamated scale scores. The chapter has two aims. The first is to determine the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role among the sample. The second is to identify which measures of socio-economic and demographic status can be applied to explain and predict the observed distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role.

This study has two measures by which these aims can be explored; the attitudinal categories (traditional, non-traditional and intermediate), and the standardised scale scores. In order to make full use of the data provided by the respondents the chapter is split into two sections. The first applies the chi-square technique to the attitudinal categories and independent variables. The aim is to explore and highlight statistically significant intra-cohort differences in the strength and distribution of attitudinal support for the breadwinner role. The second section builds on this analysis by applying the actual scores gained on the attitudinal scales and using more powerful parametric techniques. This section applies correlation and uses the General Linear Model (GLM) with a view to explaining and predicting the distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. With a large number of independent variables to assess, these techniques are applied progressively, with each step of the analysis reducing the number of variables until only those with explanatory and predictive power remain.

### Part 1: Attitudinal categories: Chi-square

This section uses the chi-square test to determine the statistical significance of relationships between the respondents' attitudinal classifications and measures of their socio-economic and demographic statuses. Prior to this, the distribution of respondents between the three attitudinal categories created earlier is discussed.

Table 37. The strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role (%).

Scale	% of respondents (n = 330)		
	Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional
Full	61	30	9
Sex roles	71	15	14
Work-general	63	27	10
Work-intention	42	36	22

This study finds that 9% (29) of respondents gain traditional scores on the full scale, rising to a maximum of 22% (71) on the work-intention scale. In comparison to what could have been found using the categorisation techniques discussed in the previous chapter, these results are not particularly impressive. However, they are considered to fairly represent the range and strength of attitudes in the sample. In applying the potential, rather than observed score range, and in using the three categories, we can be confident that the numbers of respondents identified as traditional truly responded to the attitudinal index in a way that differs to those classed as intermediate and non-traditional.

It is evident that on each scale the larger proportion of respondents discloses attitudes that are non-traditional. This is particularly marked on the sex roles scale, where seven out of ten reject the notion of strongly gender-segregated roles in the family and labour market. As noted previously, this scale consisted of the strongest, most contentious items. Over six out of ten men in the sample also reject the items concerned with the traditional relationship between men and paid work.

As many as three out of ten respondents are clustered in the intermediate category on each scale. These respondents show a strong leaning neither towards traditional nor non-traditional attitudes. In applying the traditional/untraditional distinction common within the literature, the attitudinal uncertainty of these respondents would have been lost to the study.

Interestingly, the scale which gains the smallest number of non-traditional responses, and the most traditional responses, is the work-intention scale. This scale is concerned with the respondents' attitudes towards their own work experiences, work satisfaction, and work-based perceptions and intentions. The distribution of respondents between the three categories on this scale is consistent with the observation made in the previous chapter; that while overall the sample demonstrates opposition to strict gender-coded roles for men and women generally, at the micro level of the individual, there is some attachment to the traditional association between men and paid work. Regarding their own work-intention beliefs, only four out of ten respondents oppose the traditional working male norm; this compares with six out of ten when referring to men generally. For some respondents there appears to be some difference in how they perceive the breadwinner role in general terms, and the way that they perceive their own role and behaviour regarding paid work.

The remainder of this section applies chi-square to this distribution data to explore where the differences lie within the sample according to various independent variables. This technique is used to investigate the significance of any differences in the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role on the basis of the various levels of the independent variables. The null hypothesis for such analysis is that there is no relationship between the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role and, for example, the respondent's age.

All variables used in the analysis meet the assumptions of chi-square testing, notably that no more than 20% of cells should have values (frequencies) of less than five. As the test statistic becomes increasingly inaccurate with the number of cell violations (Howitt and Cramer, 2000, 151), very few of the variables noted below include more than one cell with a value less than five. Where conceptually appropriate, some levels within variables have been combined. As with all analyses presented in this chapter, a significance level of .05 was set prior to the analysis. This means that the probability of a Type I error (rejecting the null hypothesis erroneously) is one in twenty occasions.

The following table summarises the statistically significant results of chi-square analysis on the attitudinal categories (non-significant variables are noted below). The chi-square statistic and significance value are reported for each variable.

Table 38. Chi-square analysis summary.

Independent variable	Test statistic/ statistical significance			
	Full	Sex roles	Work- General	Work- intentions
Age quartile	52 .001	62 .001	35 .001	
Marital status	25 .001	23 .001	21 .002	
Parental status	13 .001	11 .004	10 .007	
Age youngest child	41 .001	42 .001	35 .001	
Education	35 .001	21 .002	33 .001	
Economic status	37 .001	45 .001	15 .001	
Income				18 .021
Female partner's economic status	18 .001	15 .001	13 .001	
Female partner's SEC		11 .022		
Household tenure status	22 .001	32 .001	19 .001	
Family type	50 .001	45 .001	30 .001	15 .021
Parental family type	13 .040	22 .001		

The chi-square analysis shows that in most cases the difference between the observed and expected distributions (the test statistic) is reasonably large. Bryman and Cramer (1999, 173) note that large test statistics can be a by-product of the size of the cross-tabulation; the more cells in a chi-square contingency table the more likely the analysis will produce a large test statistic. However, many of the tables in this analysis are relatively small (crosstabulating the three attitudinal categories by three types of household tenure status for example). The large test statistics found in the above analyses, therefore, appear to reflect true differences between the observed and expected frequencies. In the majority of cases the differences between the observed and expected distributions are also highly statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). This strongly suggests that the respondents with non-traditional, intermediate and traditional attitudes represent different populations.

The variables showing the largest disparity between the observed and expected values include the respondent's age, the age of their youngest child, and the respondent's family type. The trends regarding age are consistent across the full scale and three sub-scales. To illustrate this trend the sex roles scale analysis is reproduced here. As the table below shows more respondents in the younger age quartile are classed as non-traditional, and more respondents in the older age group are classed as traditional, than would be found by chance alone. The chi-square statistic for the sex roles scale based on age is reasonably large (62). Over a third of the variance (41%) between observed and expected values is attributable to the number of non-traditional attitudes among respondents aged 47 or under. An additional 28% of the variance is explained by the greater number of traditional attitudes among respondents aged over 60.

Table 39. Chi-square results: distribution on the Sex roles scale by age quartile.

Age quartile		Sex roles scale category (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
17-36	Observed	70	10	2	82
	Expected	57.9	12.4	11.7	
37-47	Observed	71	7	4	82
	Expected	57.9	12.4	11.7	
48-59	Observed	59	21	13	93
	Expected	65.7	14.1	13.2	
60-85	Observed	33	12	28	73
	Expected	51.5	11.1	10.4	
Total		233	50	47	330

The relationship with household tenure status (shown below for the full scale data) is significant. Most of the difference between the observed and expected frequencies is accounted for by home-owners. As opposed to those who rent their homes or have a

mortgage, men who own their homes outright are more likely to disclose traditional or intermediate attitudes, and less likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes than would be expected by chance alone. As noted below, however, the relationship between tenure status and strength of attitude becomes non-significant when controlled for the age of the respondent.

Table 40. Chi-square results: distribution on the full scale by household tenure status.

Tenure status		Full scale category (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
Renting	Observed	26	9	1	36
	Expected	22.0	10.8	3.2	
Owner-occupier: with mortgage	Observed	124	49	9	182
	Expected	111.4	54.6	16.0	
Owner occupier: owned outright	Observed	52	41	19	112
	Expected	68.6	33.6	9.8	
Total		202	99	29	330

The trend noted above towards non-traditional attitudes among younger age groups, and traditional attitudes among the more mature age groups, is also evident in respect of the age of the youngest child and the respondent's family type. Only the respondents with mature children (defined here as aged 20 or above) fall short of the expected distribution of non-traditional attitudes; this group is more likely to disclose traditional attitudes. This is particularly marked on the work-general scale (shown below) where almost half of the variance (49%) between observed and expected values is accounted for by the traditionality of respondents with mature children.

Table 41. Chi-square results: distribution on the work-general scale by age of youngest child.

Age of youngest child		Work-general scale (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
No children	Observed	67	15	7	89
	Expected	55.8	24.3	8.9	
Pre-school (0-5)	Observed	35	13	1	49
	Expected	30.7	13.4	4.9	
Primary age (6-11)	Observed	26	7	3	36
	Expected	22.6	9.8	3.6	
Teenage (12-19)	Observed	32	14	1	47
	Expected	29.5	12.8	4.7	
Working age (20-25)	Observed	10	5	1	16
	Expected	10.0	4.4	1.6	
Mature (26+)	Observed	2	6	1	9
	Expected	5.6	2.5	.9	
Empty nest*	Observed	35	30	19	84
	Expected	52.7	22.9	8.4	
Total		207	90	33	330

\* Respondents defined as 'Empty Nest' in cases where children have left the family home.

In terms of the respondent's family type, there is very little difference between the observed and expected values for men of breadwinner families or female breadwinner families (data shown below for the full scale). Among breadwinner families, 61% of the respondents disclose non-traditional attitudes compared with 60% expected. Similarly, 58% of men in female breadwinner families disclose non-traditional attitudes, with 60% expected. Most of the variance by family type is accounted for by men in dual-earner and no-earner families. Far fewer non-traditional attitudes (-32%), and more traditional attitudes (+19%), are found among men in no-earner families than expected. In contrast, men of dual-earner families are more likely to be clustered in the non-traditional category (+22%), and there are fewer traditional respondents (-7%) than would be expected by chance alone.

The attitudes of over six out of ten men in no-earner families deviate from what would be expected. This compares with just over four out of ten men in dual-earner families, one in ten of breadwinner families, and less than one in ten of female breadwinner families (although splitting the men of female breadwinner families into the three attitudinal categories results in relatively small numbers). The men of no-earner families are mostly clustered with the intermediate category. However, the difference between the observed and expected values for the traditional category is consistent with the findings discussed in the previous chapter concerning men's attachment to the traditional gender order in no-earner households.

Table 42. Chi-square results: distribution on the full scale by respondent's family type.

Family type		Full scale (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
Breadwinner	Observed	77	43	6	126
	Expected	75.7	39.5	10.8	
Female breadwinner	Observed	14	8	2	24
	Expected	14.4	7.5	2.1	
No earner	Observed	14	22	14	50
	Expected	30.0	15.7	4.3	
Dual earner	Observed	56	11	1	68
	Expected	40.9	21.3	5.8	
Total		161	84	23	268

As the family type variable includes a summary of economic activity in the family, very similar trends to those noted above are found on the basis of the male respondent's economic status (data shown below for the sex roles scale). More traditional attitudes are found among men who are economically inactive (+20%) than would be expected by chance alone. In contrast, among the men who are economically active there are more non-traditional (+9%), and fewer traditional (-20%) and intermediate attitudes than expected.

Table 43. Chi-square results: distribution on the sex roles scale by economic status.

Economic status		Sex roles scale (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
Economically active*	Observed	187	34	15	236
	Expected	166.6	35.8	33.6	
Economically inactive**	Observed	46	16	32	94
	Expected	66.4	14.2	13.4	
Total		233	50	47	330

\* Includes those in full-time and part-time work, whether employed or self-employed.

\*\* Includes unemployed, economically inactive, retired, and respondents in full-time training or education not engaged in paid work.

In terms of parental family type it is again the men of dual-earner and (less so) no-earner families that show the greatest deviation between the observed and expected values (data not reproduced here). The variance of the men who were brought up (at least between the ages of 14-16) in breadwinner or female breadwinner families contributes very little to the test statistic (although men of breadwinner families are marginally less likely to disclose traditional attitudes). Instead, men brought up in dual-earner families are more likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes, and less likely to disclose traditional attitudes. In this case, men of no-earner families are less likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes and more likely to disclose intermediate attitudes. Men of no-earner families with traditional attitudes show very little deviation from the expected values.

It is interesting that there are only two statistically significant associations on the work-intentions scale. This scale was concerned with the respondents' attitudes regarding their own current or future work behaviours. The items included 'I would like to work part-time' and 'It is very important to me that I have a full-time job'. The strength of attitude to these items only differs significantly according to the male respondent's income (interestingly, this is the only attitudinal scale for which this variable is significant) and

their family type. The biggest differences regarding income concern those earning between £500-999 per month, where fewer non-traditional attitudes and more intermediate attitudes are observed (38) than expected (24) (see table below). Further analysis (not shown here) shows that among those with intermediate attitudes and an income of between £500-999 per month, 60% (23) are within five score points of the traditional category. This suggests that these respondents tend towards more traditional than non-traditional attitudes regarding their work-intentions. All other income bands show only marginal variance from the expected distributions. It may therefore be the case that the work intentions and behaviours of these respondents are shaped in some way by their relatively low earnings.

Table 44. Chi-square results: distribution on the work-intentions scale by gross monthly income.

Gross income		Work-intentions scale (count)			Total
		Non-traditional	Intermediate	Traditional	
Up to £499	Observed	13	5	5	23
	Expected	9.9	8.4	4.7	
£500-999	Observed	18	38	11	67
	Expected	28.7	24.6	13.7	
£1000-1499	Observed	39	29	20	88
	Expected	37.7	32.3	18.0	
£1500-1999	Observed	20	10	8	38
	Expected	16.3	14.0	7.8	
Over £2000	Observed	15	8	6	29
	Expected	12.4	10.7	5.9	
Total		105	90	50	245

The variance on the work-intentions scale according to family type is again mostly attributable to men in no-earner families. There are nearly twice as many traditional attitudes observed among men in no-earner families than would be expected. These men are not currently in work and only one in ten is currently seeking paid employment. However, it appears that compared with those who are economically active, a greater proportion of these men are strongly attached to traditional patterns of male participation in the labour market.

Like the income variable, the female partner's socio-economic classification is significant for just one scale, the sex roles scale. Where the female partner is classed as 'working' (the lower class of Rose and O'Reilly's (1998) three-class scheme) more respondents disclose traditional, and fewer disclose non-traditional attitudes than expected, although the deviation from expected values is mostly small. Where the female partner has the higher socio-economic classification more men disclose non-traditional attitudes. It may be assumed that women with a higher socio-economic classification have participated in forms of education, training and/or paid work that have challenged women's economic dependency and the traditional relationships with caring and domestic work.

Although the relationship is significant there are few differences between the observed and expected values according to educational attainment. The majority of respondents disclose non-traditional attitudes, and there is little variance within this category on the basis of educational attainment. Most of the disparity in the values is attributable to men without formal qualifications (who are more likely to disclose traditional attitudes) and men with higher educational qualifications (who are marginally more likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes).

Given that educational attainment may be applied as a measure of socio-economic status, it is somewhat surprising that no relationship is found on the basis of the respondent's class status. (Although the relationship between these variables is not necessarily linear; here educational attainment is found to explain only 14% of the variance in socio-economic status). On the basis of the chi-square analysis it appears that status related to economic activity and family type are far more useful for explaining the distribution and strength of attitudinal attachment to (and rejection of) the breadwinner role than class divisions between men.

The other variables that were suitable for chi-square analysis but were found to be statistically non-significant were the respondent's GB Profiler residential classification, their ward deprivation classification, car ownership and the socio-economic classification of the respondent's mother and father. The preparatory work undertaken to define geodemographically the respondents' areas of residence was useful for sampling purposes. However, the data appear to contribute very little to explaining the distribution and strength of attachment to the breadwinner role within the sample.

### **Summary of chi-square findings**

The chi-square analysis demonstrates that the majority of respondents hold attitudes towards the breadwinner role that are non-traditional. Marginally fewer respondents have intermediate attitudes, and very few disclose traditional attitudes.

Although many of the independent variables proved statistically significant, it is evident that there are a couple of themes within the findings. The first concerns the age of the respondents. The chi-square analysis demonstrates that among the more mature respondents there are more traditional attitudes and fewer non-traditional attitudes than would be expected by chance alone. Among the younger respondents (aged under 47) there

are few traditional attitudes, and more non-traditional attitudes. These findings appear indicative of a generational effect, with the more mature men showing stronger attachment to the traditional gendered division of labour. As noted in Chapter 3, although the significance of the breadwinner role remains strong in contemporary masculinity discourses, there is an increasing emphasis on different elements of the male role among younger men, such as fatherhood. It certainly appears that the younger men attach less significance to the gendered division of labour and the breadwinner role. Unfortunately this study is unable to comment on the other aspects of the male role to which these respondents may show greater attachment.

The second theme concerns the respondent's family type, and inter-relatedly their economic status. It appears that, proportionately, the men most likely to disclose traditional attitudes are those who are economically inactive. (This relationship is compounded by the respondent's age as most economically inactive men are retired). Economic inactivity also appears to explain the significance of the family type variable, as most of the variance is attributable to men in no-earner families. Where the male is economically inactive but the female partner is in paid employment, there is little variance. This suggests that where the female takes on a non-traditional female role (that of family breadwinner) the male's attitudes are no more traditional or non-traditional than what could be expected from chance alone. It may be that the female's role as breadwinner mediates the strong attachment to gender-coded roles that is otherwise found among economically inactive men.

### **Part 2: Scale scores**

The aim of this section is to explore, explain and predict the distribution and strength of attitudinal attachment to breadwinner role among men. Two techniques are applied to achieve these aims.

Firstly the results of Pearson Product-Moment (including point-biserial) and (non-parametric) Spearman-rank correlations are overviewed. Correlation is applied to establish statistically significant relationships between the independent variables and the full scale and sub-scale scores. Using correlation prior to the GLM allows us to investigate the nature of all the relationships, and also highlight those that are worthy of more in-depth analysis.

Following this, the GLM is applied to test the influence of the independent variables found to be significant. The extent to which factors such as the respondent's age can be applied to predict attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role among the target population is examined. This technique cuts significantly the number of significant relationships between socio-economic and demographic status and attachment to the breadwinner role.

This part of the chapter applies the attitudinal scale scores. As noted earlier, the scores have been standardised and are treated as interval-level data. Where the independent variables are of an appropriate level of measurement, more powerful parametric techniques can be applied to explore the relationships between attitudes towards the breadwinner role and the measures of socio-economic and demographic status. The way in which each of the independent variables is applied is discussed in each section.

### **Explaining the distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role:**

#### **Correlation analysis**

Non-directional, two-tailed correlations are presented. One-tailed analyses are generally appropriate where hypotheses are based on strong pre-existing evidence that indicates the direction (positive or negative) of the relationship (Howitt and Cramer, 2000; 173). As the aim here is to explore the nature of any relationships, rather than confirm or falsify

hypotheses defined in the literature, a two-tailed approach is preferred. It is worth noting, however, that with both one- and two-tailed testing, as sample size increases smaller correlation coefficients are required to establish statistical significance. The relatively large sample size in this case ( $n=330$ ) may to some extent diminish the effects of two-tailed testing. Where appropriate, reference is made to the total explained variance ( $r^2$ ) to ensure that statistical significance is not predominantly a by-product of sample size. Spearman Rank and Pearson Product-Moment (including point-biserial) correlations are applied, depending on whether the independent variable is categorical (Spearman Rank), dichotomous (Pearson Product-Moment point biserial) or ordinal or ratio (Pearson Product-Moment).

The table below presents statistically significant relationships with the full scale and sub-scale scores, and notes each variable's level of measurement and the correlation technique used. (Non-significant relationships are noted below).

Table 45. Results of correlation analysis: statistically significant variables.

Variable	Variable type	Technique	Full scale	Sex roles Scale	Work-general scale	Work-intention scale
Age of youngest child	Nominal	Spearman	.331**	.315**	.317**	.136*
Age of respondent	Ratio	Pearson	.408**	.466**	.351**	.125*
Marital status	Nominal	Spearman		-.110*		
With/without children	Dichotomous	Point-biserial Pearson	-.155**	-.179*	-.166*	
Highest educational qualification	Nominal	Spearman	-.222**	-.193**	-.231**	
Economic Status	Nominal	Spearman	.284**	.351**	.251**	
Female partner's full SEC	Nominal	Spearman	.149*	.182**	.129*	
Female partner's income	Nominal	Spearman	-.168*	-.223**	-.153*	
Household tenure	Nominal	Spearman	.254**	.303**	.245**	
Father SEC (8 SEGs)	Nominal	Spearman	.202**	.131**	.188**	.149**
Mother hours worked	Nominal	Spearman	-.195**	-.228**	-.118*	-.110*
Parental family type	Nominal	Spearman	-.178**	-.182**	-.122**	-.111*

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As with the chi-square analysis, the work-intentions scale scores are associated with far fewer independent variables than the other scales. This scale contained eight items that refer to the respondents' work-related intentions and behaviours. In comparison to the other scales it may be suggested that the lack of statistical significance is a derivative of a

range of other factors that were not tapped by the questionnaire. Work intentions, for example, may be directed by practical concerns in a way that beliefs about family-related issues are not. As noted in Chapter 3, beliefs and actions represent two different spheres. It may be that the respondent's work-intention attitudes may be better explained by past work experiences, local labour market opportunities and work aspirations. None of these were assessed by the questionnaire. In this case, the measured variables such as marital status, educational attainment and family type cannot be applied to explain the distribution of scores regarding work intentions.

Of the 12 statistically significant variables it is evident that the age of respondents shows the strongest relationship. Excluding the work-intention scale which shows a fairly weak correlation, the coefficients range between .351 and .466 (giving explained variances of between 12% for work-general scores, and 22% for sex-roles scores). The correlation coefficients are positive denoting that as the age of the respondent increases, so do their scores on the attitudinal scales. This is consistent with the conclusion drawn from the chi-square analysis above; that the more mature respondents (especially retired respondents) are more likely to gain high scale scores and be classed as 'traditional'.

It is interesting that the age of the respondents' children (where appropriate) is significantly associated with scale scores. It may be assumed that the younger the child the greater the attitudinal support for a traditional division of labour. Younger children generally require a greater time and labour commitment and couple families may choose a traditional division of labour during such times of increased domestic responsibility. However, the data suggest otherwise. Firstly, the positive correlation denotes that the older the child/ren, the more traditional the attitudes disclosed by respondents. Parents with young children do not appear to show attitudinal support for a traditional division of labour. Secondly, there is no statistically significant correlation ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p > .05$ ) between

the age of the youngest child and the female partner's economic status. As the cross-tabulation table shows below, a greater number of mothers with dependent children (defined here as under 20) are employed in paid work than are engaged full-time in the home; even among those with pre-school age children. Among these young families, the traditional breadwinner/home-maker model of household organisation is unsupported both attitudinally and in practice.

Table 46. Female economic status and the age of youngest child (%).

Age of youngest child	Home and family	Employed f-t	Employed p-t	Self-employed f-t	Self-employed p-t	Total count
Pre-school	39	10	47	2	2	49
Primary age	20	15	56	3	6	34
Teenager	7	44	44		5	41
Working age (20-25)	37	19	37	6		16
Mature (26+)	25		75			4
Empty nest	41	25	30	2	2	56
Total count	59	45	86	4	6	

The age of the youngest child clearly does not help to explain the chosen means of household organisation, nor the distribution of traditional attitudes. A Pearson correlation coefficient between the age of the youngest child and the age of the respondent is high ( $r = .706$ ) and significant at the .01 level. This suggests that the relationship between scores and children is at least in part compounded by the age of the respondent. A partial correlation between the age of the youngest child and scale scores controlled for age, finds only the full and sex roles scale scores significantly correlated with the youngest child, and to a lesser degree than previous ( $p < .05$ ,  $r = .12$  and  $.13$  respectively). The relationship between the age of the youngest child and the respondents' scores is heavily influenced, therefore, by the age of the respondent.

Housing tenure appears to provide further evidence of the strength of the age variable. Statistically significant correlations ( $p < .01$ ) with housing tenure are found across all scales except work-intentions. The variable was coded from 'living in parental home', 'renting', 'mortgage' to 'home-owners, and a correlation with age ( $r = .362$ ) is significant at the .01 level. It can therefore be said that attitudes among the respondents become more traditional with movement up the tenure ladder, and that such movements are significantly associated with age.

Marital status is only significantly associated with scores on the sex roles scale, with the correlation being negative ( $r = -.110$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, the variance in scale scores explained by the respondents' marital statuses is negligible at only 1% ( $r^2 = .01$ ). As noted earlier the fact that this weak correlation is statistically significant is most likely due to the effect of sample size, rather than any real relationship between the variables. Indeed, the lack of correlation between marital status and the other scale scores would appear to support this conclusion. It may be expected that married and single (or widowed) men would have different perceptions of work, in having different economic responsibilities and needs. However, no difference between these cohorts is found in the data.

The type of family the respondents grew up in (in terms of its internal organisation) has a statistical association with their scale scores. This is an interesting but undoubtedly complex variable. Its inclusion was based on a hypothesis that childhood familial experiences may in part explain the respondents' adult perceptions of gender roles and family organisation; be it in a positive or negative way. The correlations are statistically significant, but again, the variance explained by parental family type is minimal ranging from 1% (work-intentions) to 3% (sex roles).

As part of the family history data, information was requested on the employment patterns of the respondent's mother and father (where applicable). The mother's employment (whether she worked largely part-time, full-time, a mix of part-time and full-time, or was predominantly engaged in the home) is negatively and significantly correlated with all scale scores. This suggests that the more hours the mother was engaged in work outside the home, the lower the scores gained by respondents (denoting non-traditional attitudes). This supports the hypothesis that men brought up in families where the mother was continually engaged in work outside the home may be less likely to view the female role solely in terms of domestic and family responsibility. Interestingly though, there is no correlation between the fathers' employment history (measured as an always employed/experienced periods of unemployment dichotomous variable) and scale scores (see below). On the basis of the data available it appears that the mother's employment history makes a greater contribution to the respondents' later perceptions of gender roles, than does the father's history. It is evident, however, that the father's role is relevant in another way to the formation of the respondents' attitudes. The father's socio-economic classification (measured on the eight-class scale) is the only variable that is statistically significant at the .01 level across all attitudinal scales. The results suggest that the higher up the socio-economic classification scale the father's occupation was, the less traditional the attitudes disclosed by respondents. More traditional attitudes are found among men whose fathers held occupations lower down the socio-economic scale. Interestingly, the socio-economic positioning of the respondents' themselves shows no significant correlation with attitudes (see below).

The male respondents' highest educational qualification and their economic status are significantly correlated on all scales except the work-intention scale at the .01 level. The educational qualification variable produces negative correlations suggesting that the higher the level of academic achievement the lower the scores gained. It may be surmised that

participation in further and higher education leads to the attainment of skills, knowledge and experiences that challenge perceptions of traditional gender-coded roles in the domestic and public spheres. In terms of economic status, the relationship is positive denoting that respondents not engaged in employment (whether through retirement, unemployment or inability to participate in paid work) are more likely to gain higher, traditional scores. This is consistent with the findings of chi-square analysis noted above. A relatively high correlation ( $r = .596$ ,  $p < .01$ ) between age and economic status again suggests that the age of respondents has some bearing on their economic status.

Finally, only two of the variables concerned with the respondents' female partners (where applicable) produce statistically significant correlations; socio-economic classification and income. With the exception of the work-intention scale, the findings suggest that the higher the female partner's classification, the more likely their male partner is to gain lower, non-traditional scores. To sustain a reasonably high socio-economic positioning these females must be engaged in patterns of work, training and perhaps education, that challenge traditional perceptions and expectations of the female role. The explained variance is small however, at just 2%.

For the sex roles and work-general scales, the correlations are positive suggesting that lower female positioning on the classification scale is associated with higher scale scores by their male partners. As a measure of this relationship, the females' incomes also show negative correlations. In other words, the less the female earns the more likely the male will disclose more traditional attitudes. Again, explained variance is negligible and conclusions must be drawn cautiously. Indeed, as female socio-economic classification and income are significantly related to male attitudes it may be surmised that the female's economic status (whether engaged in work inside or outside of the home) would be an important, significant variable. However, somewhat surprisingly, the female's economic

status shows no correlation with the male's attitudes. Whether the female partner is engaged in the home or labour market has no statistically significant bearing on the way the male respondents perceive gender roles and the division of labour.

Before summarising the findings of the correlation analysis, an overview is provided below of the non-significant variables.

Table 47. Results of correlation analysis: non-statistically significant variables.

Variable	Full scale	Sex roles scale	Work-General Scale	Work-intention scale
Number of children	.100	.055	.091	.079
Deprivation classification	.012	.022	.006	-.013
GB Profiler classification	.001	.005	-.007	.013
Reply: response to 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> mailing	-.041	-.051	-.028	-.017
Household status: couple/single	-.048	-.044	-.024	-.049
Marital status	-.102		-.093	-.032
Respondents with and without children				-.067
Highest educational qualification				-.092
Economic status				.045
Length of time unemployed	-.051	-.098	-.045	.082
Male income	-.023	-.034	-.020	-.041
Female partner's economic status	.021	-.028	.034	.013
Female partner SEC (14 SEGs)				-.005
Female partner's income				.005
Male SEC (14 SEGs)	.042	.013	.059	-.018
Male SEC (8 SEGs)	.056	.021	.072	-.002
Male SEC (4 SEGs)	.097	.051	.099	.038
Household tenure				.039
Type of accommodation	-.011	-.024	-.028	.038
Car ownership	-.078	-.098	-.093	.017
Mother SEC (8 SEGs)	.067	.074	.097	-.034
Father unemployment	.037	.013	.041	.032
Mother work history	-.078	-.094	-.026	-.073
Mother hours worked				.065
Family type (family variable)	.038	-.009	.045	.061

There are 17 independent variables that fail to correlate with three or more of the attitudinal scales. Fifteen of these variables are at the nominal level of measurement and their significance was determined using Spearman correlation. As dichotomous variables, Pearson Point-biserial correlation was used to assess the significance of the mailing (response to first or second mailing) and household status (couple or single person) variables. The null hypotheses, that there is no difference in sample scale scores on the basis of these variables must be accepted.

In the case of the reply variable the lack of statistical association is reassuring. This suggests that there is no significant difference between the men who responded to the first and second mailings of the questionnaire. There is therefore no need to consider them as comprising two unrelated samples.

There are two unanticipated findings to be drawn from the table above. The first is that, surprisingly, there is no correlation between family type and scale scores. The family variable is ranked according to Crompton's (1999) amended model introduced earlier; from those expected to be most non-traditional (such as female breadwinner and dual-earner families), to those expected to be most traditional (such as sole, male breadwinner families). On the basis of the arguments presented earlier, a significant positive correlation was expected here demonstrating that the more traditional the family type, the higher the scores gained on the attitudinal scales. However, the data do not support this hypothesis.

In the discussion of the attitudes literature in Chapter 3, it was suggested that people will often show linearity between their actions and beliefs to avoid the psychologically undesirable state of cognitive dissonance. The findings of this study provide evidence to challenge this argument. The male sample has not disclosed attitudes that are significantly consistent with their family type. Men of sole, male breadwinner families are not any more or less likely to hold traditional perceptions of the family and gender roles than men living in other family types. This includes female breadwinner families which are positioned at the polar extreme of the family typology. Equally, it was anticipated that the female partner's economic status would be a strong measure of attitudes. Men with partners in paid work, whether part-time or full-time, were expected to show strong support for non-traditional attitudes. However, the female partner's economic status is unrelated to scale scores.

The second unanticipated finding is a dearth of relationships between scale scores and measures of socio-economic status. Arguably the strongest socio-economic measures, those of socio-economic classification and income, fail to correlate. Socio-economic class is a cornerstone of substantive sociological research (Lockwood, 1986), and it was anticipated that class would have a significant bearing on the samples' perceptions of gender roles. Three class scales are applied (the full 14 class, and eight and four class scales), but each means of classifying the respondents proves to be non-significant. Income is an indirect, (although not always accurate), measure of socio-economic status. It is a variable that lends itself well to quantitative analysis, and it was hypothesised that men with greater economic resources (to support and sustain a breadwinner/housewife division of labour) may be more inclined to show attitudinal support for this family type. However, the results suggest that there is no relationship between economic resources and attitudes towards the breadwinner role.

It was discussed in Chapter 4 that the two-step sampling process generated two other measures of socio-economic status. Townsend Material Deprivation Scores were gathered for all wards in the Plymouth TTWA, and score quartiles calculated. This gives each of the respondents a deprivation classification for their area of residence, ranging from high and medium high deprivation, to low and medium low deprivation. This variable is non-significant for all scale scores suggesting that whether respondents live in areas of relative deprivation or affluence has no bearing on their attitudes towards family organisation and gender roles. GB Profiler summaries provided another means of testing for the relationship between the socio-economic classification of the area of residence and strength of attachment to the breadwinner role. Given that the GB Profiler summaries and TMDS were found to be highly and significantly correlated ( $r = .94$ ,  $p < .001$ ) (although it was discussed in Chapter 4 that on the face of it there appeared to be some disparity between

the two measures) it was no surprise that this variable also failed to correlate with the respondents attitudes.

It is noted in the literature review that unemployed men tend towards more traditional perceptions of gender roles the longer the period of unemployment. This was based on empirical evidence that the state of unemployment tends to reinforce the 'naturalness' of a gendered division of labour. The findings of this study challenge this assertion. It appears that economically inactive men are much more likely than economically active men to support traditional gender roles. However, there is no evidence to suggest that a longer period of time unemployed or economically inactive is associated with greater attachment to the breadwinner role.

#### **Summary of correlation analysis**

Far fewer independent variables appear to explain the variance in attitudes than was anticipated. Of the 34 measured variables, only 12 are significantly associated with scores gained on the attitudinal scales. Where correlations are controlled for the influence of age even fewer statistically significant relationships are found. The work-intention scale produces the least number of statistically significant correlations (five). Of all the significant relationships, the explained variance is in most cases minimal.

The significant variables are drawn from both the socio-economic and socio-demographic pools; one set of variables is not found to be any more relevant than the other. However, it is surprising that the socio-economic variables income and particularly class, did not make a stronger showing in the analysis. Indeed, it is interesting that these two variables are only found to be significant with respect to the male respondent's female partner.

The age of respondents provides the greatest amount of explained variance (21.7%). It is notable that age compounds the relationships identified between scale scores and two other significant variables, the age of the youngest child and housing tenure. The influence of age on the respondents' attitudes is further analysed and discussed below.

### **Predicting attitudes towards the breadwinner role: General Linear Model**

This section applies the univariate GLM technique to the variables identified in the previous section as statistically significant. The aim is to build on the correlation analysis by identifying whether any of these variables are strong predictors of attitudes towards gender-coded roles in the public and private spheres. This will be achieved by using the GLM to assess the 'direction of causation', or the numerical extent to which the independent variable accounts for change in the dependent variable (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994).

One model is constructed for each of the scales; the full scale and the three sub-scales. In each case the dependent variable is the continuous scale score range. With the exception of the respondent's age, all the independent variables (the predictors) are at a nominal level of measurement. Nominal variables such as economic status or household tenure status are categorical and non-numerical, and have no inherent order or structure. As a linear method of analysis, a GLM therefore requires that nominal variables are recoded into dummy variables prior to the analysis (Garson, 2003). Dummy variables are most usually binary coded and, as such, become numerical and dichotomous (Garson, 2003). Binary coded dummy variables consist only of values 0 and 1, with 1 indicating the presence of an attribute and 0 indicating the non-presence of the attribute. Linear techniques such as multiple regression and linear modelling can treat such dichotomous variables as interval or near-interval level variables (Garson, 2003).

The GLM is the basis of many other statistical techniques such as multiple regression, analysis of variance and analysis of covariance (Field, 2000; Garson, 2003). As such, there are many elements of overlap between the techniques, with sometimes little to choose between them. For the following reasons a GLM was chosen over, for example, multiple regression:

1. Like multiple regression, a GLM can analyse nominal (categorical) variables in the form of dummy variables. However, unlike multiple regression, the GLM process in SPSS recodes variables automatically, making the process quick and easy.
2. A GLM is able to incorporate dummy variables and interval variables. Although the study contains only one interval variable (the respondent's age), the most appropriate technique for a mixed model is the GLM (Field, 2000).
3. The GLM can determine the significance of each of the individual dummy values and the significance of the original variable 'construct' (for example economic status). In contrast, multiple regression assesses the significance of the individual dummy variables; determining the significance of the variable 'construct' requires further, complex calculations (Field, 2000; Garson, 2003).

The GLM was therefore chosen for its ease of use, appropriateness and breadth of output.

The statistics of most interest in the findings of the GLMs are the B coefficient (a measure of change in the dependent variable), R-squared (the proportion of variance explained by the model<sup>42</sup>), *t* and significance of *t* (a test of the variance each independent variable accounts for), the Durbin-Watson statistic (which determines whether residuals are independent), and the multicollinearity tolerance statistic (a measure of inter-correlation between the independent variables) (Field, 2000; Garson, 2003; Shaw and Wheeler, 1994).

For dummy variables, the B coefficients are relative only to the chosen reference category (see below). In other words, the B coefficient is a measure of how much change is observed in the dependent variable as a result of the independent dummy variable, but only in comparison to the reference category (see below for illustration). Reference is made to these statistics in each of the GLMs detailed below.

Each dummy variable has a reference category: a variable element that must be omitted from the analysis to prevent perfect multicollinearity (Garson, 2003). In a GLM the reference category is automatically the last value in every variable. However, if variables are reordered prior to building the model, any chosen value can represent the reference category. An example of how the GLM recodes a variable, in this case marital status into binary-coded dummy variables is shown below.

Figure 5. An example of recoding nominal variables into dummy variables: marital status.

<b>Original variable</b>	Cohabiting	→	1 Cohabiting
	Single	→	2 Single
	Widowed	→	3 Widowed
	Married	→	4 Married
<b>Binary-coded dummy variables</b>			
Dummy 1. Cohabiting	Cohabiting	→	1 Cohabiting
	Single	→	0 Not cohabiting
	Widowed	→	0 Not cohabiting
	Married	→	Omitted as reference category
Dummy 2. Single	Cohabiting	→	0 Not single
	Single	→	1 Single
	Widowed	→	0 Not single
	Married	→	Omitted as reference category
Dummy 3. Widowed	Cohabiting	→	0 Not widowed
	Single	→	0 Not widowed
	Widowed	→	1 Widowed
	Married	→	Omitted as reference category
Note that if there are no missing values, a respondent who is coded as 0 on all three dummy variables is married.			

<sup>42</sup> The contribution that individual variables make to the explained variance was discussed as part of the correlation analysis.

Reference categories are usually chosen on the basis of three criteria:

1. The reference group should be well defined.
2. It should not have a small number of cases.
3. It is better to compare a 'middle' group with the extremes, rather than using the smaller, extreme groups to measure and predict change in the larger, middle group (Garson, 2003).

On the basis of these criteria, the variables were reordered so that the value considered most suitable as the reference category became the last value in the variable. The GLM then automatically left this value out of the analysis.

A GLM shares many of the data assumptions of other linear analyses such as correlation and multiple regression. These include:

1. Data are normally distributed - if normal distribution of the particular variable would be expected in the target population (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994). (See Appendix 7 for a discussion of the distribution of scale scores).
2. Residuals have a) a mean of 0, and their distribution is b) normal, c) random and d) unrelated to the independent variables (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994).
3. The independent variables are not strongly correlated (Garson, 2003).

As appropriate, these assumptions are considered in the discussion of the models below.

The correlation analysis highlighted that the following 11 independent variables are significantly associated with scores on one or more of the attitudinal scales:

Table 48. Independent variables for GLM.

Variables		6	Respondent's female partner's SEC (3 class)
1	Age	7	Respondent's female partner's income
2	Age of youngest child	8	Household tenure status
3	Marital status	9	Respondent's father's SEC (8 class)
4	Educational attainment	10	Respondent's mother's hours worked
5	Economic status	11	Parental family type

The analysis of the work-intentions scale is based only on variables 1, 2, 9, 10 and 11. The three remaining scales are based on all of the above variables, with the exception of marital status which is significant only for the sex roles scale.

The table below shows the dummy variables (D) and reference categories for each of the nominal variables. Where necessary some levels were combined to create a better distribution within the variable.

Table 49. Recoding nominal variables.

Original variable	Dummy variables	Reference category
Age of youngest child	D1. No children D2. Primary school age (6-11) D3. Teenage (12-19) D4. Working age (20-25) D5. Mature (26+) D6. Empty nest	<i>Pre-school age (0-5)</i> (n = 49)
Marital status	D1. Cohabiting D2. Single D3. Widowed	<i>Married (n = 237)</i>
Educational attainment	D1. No qualifications D2. GCSE D3. A' Level D4. HND D5. Degree D6. Post-graduate D7. Professional	<i>BTEC, ONC, City and Guilds</i> (n = 88)
Economic status	D1. Part-time employed (employee and self-employed) D2. Unemployed D3. Full-time education/training D4. Economically inactive D5. Retired	<i>Full-time employed (employee and self-employed)</i> (n = 218)
Respondent's female partner's SEC (3 class)	D1. Managerial and professional D2. Working	<i>Intermediate</i> (n = 78)
Respondent's female partner's income	D1. Up to £499 D2. Between £500-999 D3. Between £1000-1499 D4. Over £1500	<i>Economically inactive: no independent income</i> (n = 69)
Household tenure status	D1. Rent D2. Owner-occupied: owned outright	<i>Owner-occupied with mortgage</i> (n = 182)
Respondent's father's SEC (8 class)	D1. Higher managerial and professional D2. Lower managerial and professional D3. Intermediate D4. Small employers/own account D5. Supervisors/craft D6. Routine	<i>Semi-routine</i> (n = 95)
Respondent's mother's hours worked	D1. Part-time only D2. Mix full-time and part-time D3. Full-time only	<i>Full-time home-maker/carer</i> (n = 114)
Parental family type	D1. Female breadwinner D2. Dual-earner D3. No-earner	<i>Breadwinner</i> (n = 87)

### General Linear Model: Full scale scores

The GLM for the full scale scores was based on the variables noted above, with the exception of marital status. The following table shows the variables that are statistically significant predictors of the full scale scores.

Table 50. Significant predictors of full scale scores.

Variable	Dummy Coding	B	Std. error	T	Sig. of T	Tolerance	Dummy reference category
Economic status	Retired	6.5	2.3	2.8	.001	.83	<i>Full-time employed</i>
Economic status	Economically inactive	-4.8	2.1	-2.2	.03	.99	<i>Full-time employed</i>
Father's SEC (8 class)	Supervisors/craft occupations	3.9	1.7	2.2	.03	.94	<i>Semi-routine</i>

R-squared = .40 (Adjusted R-squared = .29)

The table shows that only two of the variables found to be statistically significant in the correlation analysis show significance in the GLM. The multicollinearity tolerance statistics for the dummy values are above .8 denoting a limited probability of confounding inter-correlations between the independent variables. The Durbin-Watson statistic for the model is 1.9, which is close to the ideal value of 2 (Garson, 2003), and suggests that the assumption related to the independence of residuals has been met.

The adjusted R-squared value suggests that a total of 29% of the variance observed in the full scale scores is explained by the model. The unadjusted R-squared value suggests 40% explained variance. Given the difference between the two values it seems appropriate to refer to the adjusted value. With a fairly large number of independent variables, R-squared values can be artificially boosted on the basis of chance variations in the independent variables explaining small parts of the dependent variable (Shaw and Wheeler, 1994). This

appears to explain the discrepancy between the adjusted and unadjusted figures, and suggests that the adjusted figure has greater validity.

The model shows that there are statistically significant differences in scale scores on the basis of economic status and the respondent's father's SEC. However, examining the significance of individual dummy variables shows that just two elements of the former, and one element of the latter, are significant.

The chosen reference category for economic status is full-time employed (self-employed and employees). As noted above, this was chosen on the grounds that it is a well populated, well defined value in the variable. There are two groups of respondents whose scores differ significantly to those of full-time employed respondents; economically inactive and retired respondents. The B coefficient for economic status denotes that retired respondents score an average 6.5 score points (11%) more than the average for respondents in full-time paid work. Economically inactive respondents score on average 4.8 score points (8%) less than respondents in full-time paid work. As no other values in the economic status variable make a showing in the analysis it can be determined that the scores of men who are in part-time paid work, unemployed or in full-time education or training do not differ significantly from those in full-time paid work. It appears that the scores of retired and economically inactive respondents represent the higher and lower extreme groups, with the other groups noted above falling between these two, and not being significantly different to either. The difference between retired and full-time employed respondents is consistent with earlier findings. The mean age of retired respondents is 70, while the average age of those in full-time paid work is 41. Those among the more mature, retired group show a greater leaning towards traditional attitudes than the younger, working group.

Of all the independent variables noted above, the only other significant variable in the full scale model is the respondent's father's SEC. Where the respondent's father held a supervisory or craft-related occupation, scores are on average 3.9 points (6.5%) higher than those gained by the respondents whose fathers held semi-routine occupations. This is a small score margin that suggests a leaning neither towards strong traditional attitudes among the former group, nor strong non-traditional attitudes among the latter group. It is difficult to conceive how this finding may be explained; it can only be surmised that the score differential between these two groups is explained by other, associated measures of SEC such as the father's level of educational attainment or income, on which data were not requested.

#### General Linear Model: Sex roles scale scores

The analysis using the scores on the sex roles scale as the dependent variables is based on the same independent variables as the analysis for the full scale. It also includes the marital status variable. However as the table below shows, of the 11 variables entered into the model, only the economic status variable is significant.

Table 51. Significant predictors of sex roles scale scores.

Variable	Dummy Coding	B	Std. error	T	Sig. of T	Tolerance	Dummy Reference Category
Economic status	Retired	7.8	3.6	2.1	.03	.56	<i>Full-time Employed</i>
Economic status	Unemployed	11.3	5.4	2.1	.04	.97	<i>Full-time Employed</i>

R-squared = .42 (Adjusted R-squared = .31)

The independent variables explain slightly more of the observed score variance on the sex roles scale than on the full scale (31%). Again, there is quite a disparity between the adjusted and unadjusted R-squared values, suggesting that the adjusted R-squared should be applied to compensate for chance contributions to the explained variance among the

independent variables. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.98 is very close to ideal and denotes that the assumptions relating to the independence of residuals has been met. Although the tolerance statistics of the two significant dummy variables are acceptable, it is notable that the tolerance statistic for retired respondents is significantly lower. Garson (2003) suggests that tolerance below .2 should be taken as problematic. With tolerance of almost .6, it appears that being retired correlates with other variables, but that the inter-correlations are not so strong as to confound the analysis, nor warrant excluding the variable from the analysis.

Retired respondents differ significantly from full-time employed respondents on both the full scale and sex roles scale. On the sex roles scale being retired produces a greater change in the dependent variable. On this scale, retired respondents gain an average 7.8 score points (13%) more than the average for full-time employed respondents (compared with 6.5 score points on the full scale). Interestingly, being unemployed produces the greatest change in the dependent variable. The nine unemployed respondents gain an average 11.3 (19%) score points more than the average for full-time employed respondents. The claim made earlier that unemployment tends to exaggerate attachment to traditional gender discourses certainly has some resonance here. As noted earlier the sex roles scale consists of the most contentious, strongly gender-coded items. It is these items that consistently generate the greatest divides within the sample. However, regarding explanations for these divides, it appears that conclusions should be drawn cautiously from the sex roles GLM; the two significant dummy variables have fairly large standard errors (suggesting greater dispersion of sampling errors on this scale, and somewhat reduced generalisability), and the findings related to unemployment are based on just nine respondents.

### General Linear Model: Work-general scale scores

The table below shows the GLM output for the work-general scores. The model has less explained variance than the previous two – an adjusted total of 21% - and has only one significant dummy variable.

Table 52. Significant predictors of work-general scale scores.

Variable	Dummy Coding	B	Std. error	T	Sig. of T	Tolerance	Dummy Reference Category
Economic status	Economically inactive	-5.5	2.4	-2.2	.03	.96	<i>Full-time Employed.</i>

R-squared = .34 (Adjusted R-squared = .21)

The significant variable has a tolerance statistic of .96, suggesting a limited probability of inter-correlation with other variables. A Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.1 suggests that the assumption regarding the independence of residuals has also been met.

The table shows that economically inactive respondents demonstrate less attachment to the work-general items than those in full-time employment; scoring on average 5.5 score points (9%) less than the average for those in full-time paid work. The work-general items are concerned with attitudes towards the traditional association of men with the world of paid work. It is perhaps somewhat intuitive that men without a regular commitment to the labour market will demonstrate less attachment to such items than those who are routinely engaged in paid work. The fact that the model excludes unemployed respondents suggests that men who are unemployed hold work-related attitudes that are closer to those in part-time paid work, or education and training, than those who are economically inactive. It appears that the significant differences on the work-general scale are between those who have some attachment to the labour market and those who are excluded from it.

### General Linear Model: Work-intention scale scores

As noted in the correlation analysis above, far fewer variables are significantly correlated with the scores gained on the work-intentions scale. Five variables were worthy of inclusion in the GLM<sup>43</sup>. However, the significance value for each of these variables exceeds the .05 level, denoting that none of the variables are statistically significant predictors of scores on the work-intentions scale. To illustrate, the following table shows the analysis output for the variable 'age of youngest child'.

Table 53. Work-intentions scale: Age of youngest child.

Dummy coding	B	Std. error	T	Sig. of T	Tolerance
No children	-.18	2.0	-.08	.9	87
Primary school age	3.7	2.6	1.4	.16	96
Teenage	-.31	2.5	-.12	.9	94
Working age	.95	2.4	.40	.70	98
Mature	.55	3.6	.16	.88	98
Empty nest	2.7	4.5	.60	.55	99
Pre-school	<i>Reference category</i>				

Like all the dummy variables in the work-intentions model, none of those concerned with the age of the respondent's youngest child are significant. With the exception of respondents with 'empty nests' and primary school aged children, the B coefficients are small denoting that there is little change in the dependent variable according to these differences in the sample. The significance values show that none of the observed differences in score suggested by the B coefficient are significant. As such, all the differences must be attributed to chance occurrences.

On the basis of the GLM it is evident that none of the variables covered by the questionnaire sufficiently tapped into the factors that could be applied to predict attachment to the work-intention related attitudes of the male respondents. It may be the

<sup>43</sup> Age of youngest child, age, respondent's father's SEC, respondent's mother's paid work participation, and parental family type.

case that the sample's work-intentions may be shaped by more practical concerns (such as current financial commitments, or local employment opportunities) than their socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

### **Summary of GLM analysis**

Three of the models identify economic status as a strong predictor of attitudes, with retired, unemployed and economically inactive respondents gaining scores that are significantly different to those of respondents in full-time paid work. The full scale model also identifies the respondent's father's SEC as a significant predictor, with the sons of supervisors or craft-related workers gaining scores that are significantly different to the sons of semi-routine workers. Given the full pool of dummy variables noted above, it is surprising that only these four proved to be significant.

The multicollinearity and Durbin-Watson statistics suggest that the findings on the full scale, and the sex roles and work-general sub-scales are, to a sound degree, generalisable to the target population. However, the three significant models have large proportions of unexplained variance (ranging from 69% on the sex roles scale, to 79% on the work-general scale) suggesting that there are other significant explanatory variables that have not been identified in this study. This is particularly the case with the work-intentions scale, where none of the measured variables can be applied to predict change in the dependent variable.

The findings of the GLMs challenge many of the assumptions made previously about the respondents' attitudes towards work and the family. The construction of the questionnaire was guided by the assumption that sample differences regarding marital status, for example, would be significantly related with the individuals' beliefs. These variables were prioritised in the questionnaire, in that they were explored in great detail. It may be the

case that the explanatory power of socio-economic and demographic differences (the significance of which are stressed in the literature) are becoming marginalised relative to other influences. Alternatively, and the author believes less likely, the lack of explanatory and predictive power of the measured variables may be particular to men living in the Plymouth TTWA.

### **Concluding comments**

This chapter could have been written and presented in many different ways. As the score data are normally distributed there was a broad choice of statistical tools from which to sample. Rather than applying a technique such as multiple regression to the entire pool of variables, for example, it was decided that a more detailed approach was required. The chosen approach was built on a concern that the analysis should explore all potential relationships but gradually whittle down the relatively large number of independent variables until only those of significance remained. This involved using correlation to establish statistically significant relationships between the independent variables and the scale scores, and applying the GLM to determine which of the variables hold predictive power. On the basis of this detailed approach, and the data preparation undertaken in the previous chapter, it is hoped that conclusions can be drawn with some confidence. It is evident, for example, that if only correlation analysis had been applied very different conclusions, most likely stressing the importance of the respondent's age, would be under discussion in the ensuing chapter.

The first theme to emerge from the analysis is the sample's rejection of the traditional male role. The distribution of respondents between the three attitudinal categories shows that the majority disclose attitudes that are non-traditional. This is consistent with the findings of the item analysis in the previous chapter, where it was noted that very few respondents sympathise with strongly gendered items. The intermediate category is the next most

populated, with three out of ten men disclosing intermediate attitudes on the full scale. As discussed previously, depending on the classification technique, this category could have been significantly larger (if the score range had been divided equally), or lost altogether (if applying a traditional/non-traditional dichotomy). The number of respondents with mid-range scores demonstrates the importance of distinguishing these respondents from those demonstrating either extreme favourableness or unfavourableness to the attitudinal construct. It is also deemed to be evidence of the suggested unreliability of the traditional/non-traditional distinction that is commonly applied in the literature. Finally, only a minority of respondents disclose traditional attitudes. Less than one in ten men demonstrate strong attachment to the breadwinner role (as measured by the full attitudinal index). Interestingly, the work-intention scale gains the largest number of traditional responses (almost one in four). It seems that in reflecting on their own lives, men are more likely to show attachment to traditional patterns of participation in paid work. In terms of sex roles and men's relationship with paid work in general however, men's views are much less traditional.

The chi-square analysis highlights that the distribution of respondents between the three attitudinal categories is largely a product of age. Many of the measured variables have an interdependent relationship with age. Respondents aged above 60 are the most traditional cohort within the sample, and are most likely to be economically inactive, have mature-aged children, live in no-earner households, have no formal educational qualifications, and be home-owners. The analysis suggests that traditional attitudes are most likely to be found among men with these attributes. Conversely, non-traditional attitudes are more likely to be found among younger men, who are also more likely to be economically active, live in family types other than no-earners, and have young or no children.

Work-intention attitudes are poorly explained by the measured variables. This applies whether analysing the distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role by attitudinal classification or actual scale score. The statistically significant relationships noted on the work-intention scale differ to those of the other scales. Where relationships are found on this scale, they are not generally found on the other scales, and vice versa. It appears that the socio-economic and demographic approach that has been taken in this study to explaining the distribution and strength of attachment to the breadwinner role is not relevant to the respondents' views on work-intentions. These beliefs are evidently shaped by other concerns or attributes that were not covered by the questionnaire.

Interestingly, some of the most consequential distinctions between people – those of class, income, and educational attainment for example – cannot be applied to explain or predict the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role to any notable degree. Demographic status (such as age and the age of the youngest child) is found to explain more of the observed variance in attitudes towards the breadwinner role than measures of socio-economic status. However, it appears that the more we test these relationships the weaker they become. In terms of predicting the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role only economic status, and to a lesser extent, the respondent's father's SEC, are statistically significant.

## Chapter 8

### Discussion of results

This thesis applies Pawson and Tilley's (2002) framework for realist research, which is built on the premise that observed regularities in the social world are attributable to mechanisms in operation in the contemporary context. The chief aim of this chapter is to bring together the earlier literature reviews and the research findings to theorise about the relations between the sample's attributes and attitudes. As part of this, links are made with the various bodies of literature introduced earlier to explain the observed trends. The aim is to clarify what knowledge this study is able to contribute to the debates about the current relevance of the breadwinner role to men's lives.

There were three aspects to the analysis on which this chapter is based. Firstly, Chapter 5 reviewed the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the sample, and within this outlined some patterns of dominance and dependency in the family. Secondly, Chapter 6 provided a univariate analysis of the responses to the attitudinal items. Finally, Chapter 7 applied the amalgamated scale scores to explore statistically significant relationships between the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role and the respondents' socio-economic and demographic statuses.

This chapter offers two discussions which build on the research findings. The first concerns the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. On the basis of some definition and measurement issues, the debate is noted to be far from straightforward. The second part of the chapter explores the distribution of attachment to the breadwinner role, looking at how effectively socio-economic and demographic characteristics can be applied to explain the distribution. It is noted that in a context of attitudinal inconsistency, very few of the research hypotheses stand up to scrutiny.

### **Part 1: The strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role**

There are many unanticipated results in this study. However, most of these stem from and are by-products of the lack of traditional attitudes observed among the sample males. This study finds that only one in ten respondents disclose attitudes that support a traditional division of labour in the family between men and women. At the most, two out of ten respondents disclose traditional attitudes towards their work-intentions. The majority of men disclose attitudes that are defined as non-traditional (four out of ten on the work-intentions scale, rising to a maximum of seven out of ten on the sex roles scale).

As detailed in Chapter 4, steps were taken during the sampling process to achieve the aim of securing a sample of men of working age. Given that 22% of responses were from men aged 60 or above, this was only moderately successful. A statistically significant linear relationship was found between strength of attitude and age, suggesting that as the age of the respondent increases so does the attachment to the breadwinner role. A large proportion of the chi-square variance regarding age is attributable to the larger number of observed (than expected) traditional attitudes among men aged 60 or above. As strong support for the breadwinner role is found mostly among this age group, it appears that if the aim of securing a working-age sample had been completely successful, this study would have found negligible support for the breadwinner role.

The findings of this study regarding the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role are consistent with those of recent attitudes studies. However, it is suggested that there are three issues that challenge the conclusions that can be drawn from this study and those of other studies. Each of these is discussed in turn.

### **The problem of categorisation**

The British and European Attitudes Survey (Jowell *et al*, 1998) finds that fewer than 3 out of 10 Europeans support the traditional model of household organisation with a sole, male breadwinner and unpaid, female home-maker/carer. In his study of men's attitudes toward work and gender equality in the family, Goodwin (1999) also finds that approximately a third of respondents support the traditional gender-coded roles. This study finds marginally less, at one in ten respondents, although this rises to two in ten on the work-intentions subscale.

However, the findings related to the number of 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' men are wholly dependent upon how we define such categories. The methods that are typically applied in the literature to classify respondents are surprisingly unsophisticated. Aube and Koestner (1995) and Fischer *et al* (1998), for example, apply the median score and mean score respectively to split their samples into traditional and untraditional cohorts. This takes no account of the dispersion of respondents throughout the score range, and arguably creates categories that have limited validity. Indeed, with knowledge of the applied technique, the results of such studies can be known *a priori*; using the mean or median score results in an approximately equal split between the two categories, regardless of sample size and attitudinal diversity. It is difficult to conceive how the application of these techniques adds value to the debates.

As Williams (2003) suggests, the process of categorisation is relative. Every time we move the category boundaries, the results change. How do we determine then which of the boundary changes takes us closer to the 'true' cut-off point (if one exists) between a set of traditional and non-traditional attitudes?

In response to the criticisms made of the literature regarding respondent categorisation this study created an 'intermediate' category. This allows distinctions to be made between those scoring within the mid-range, and those demonstrating extreme favourableness and unfavourableness towards the attitudinal object. It was concluded that only those with extreme scores could be defined with any validity. (Although this is also relative, given that the most 'traditional' scores observed among the sample fall some way short of the highest score that could be achieved on the attitudinal scale). The creation of the intermediate category took away the need to treat these mid-range scores as anything other than 'uncertain'.

This study took a more detailed approach to the categorisation of respondents with the aim of increasing the validity of the categories. However, the solution that was deemed most valid resulted in a poor distribution (notably that less than one in ten men could be defined as 'traditional'). This precluded the analysis of results using the chi-square test. The accepted solution entailed some compromise and represented the next 'best fit'. It was one of many potential solutions to the problem of categorisation. The findings are therefore relative and the distribution of respondents between the categories must be considered as 'approximations of the truth' (Hubner, 1983; Tudor, 1982).

The issues encountered regarding the definition of respondents as traditional or non-traditional, and in defining 'breadwinners' (see below), highlights that the respondents should have been given the opportunity to define themselves. Categorisation is applied in the literature as a relatively simple matter, and there is much scope for the development of more creative and sophisticated techniques (for example, using standard errors of measurement or normal distribution rules). However, giving respondents the opportunity to define themselves is probably just as valid (if not more) than any categorisation solution the researcher can devise.

### **Linking attitudes and behaviour**

The literature concerned with men's attitudes towards gender roles, work and the family suggests that men (particularly younger men) place increasing emphasis on their roles as husbands and fathers (e.g. Jowell *et al*, 1998; Stringer and Robinson, 1993; Mac an Ghail, 1996). It is argued that the importance or relevance of the breadwinner role to men's lives is declining over time. Bernard (1981) suggests that the turning point occurred during the 1970s when attitudinal studies began to find greater dissatisfaction among men and women in regards to gender roles. Between the late 1950s and late 1970s, Bernard (1981) reports that dissatisfaction with gender roles more than doubled from 25% to 58%. The impetus for this change supposedly lies in women's increased participation in paid work, and the claim that the breadwinner role is increasingly unachievable and/or undesirable in practice (Donaldson, 1993; Jowell *et al*, 1998; Stringer and Robinson, 1993).

Suggesting that a relationship exists between the number of breadwinners in practice and attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role is problematic however. As discussed in earlier chapters, the argument that there has been a decline in the number of breadwinner families is misleading. Harkness *et al* (1995) suggest that in 1991, 67% of married and cohabiting couple families were of the dual-earner type. With a greater number of women participating in paid work, the number of breadwinner families fell to around 23% (Harkness *et al*, 1995) or a third (Gregg and Wadsworth, 1994). Yet, as the evidence of Oakley (1973), Pahl (e.g. 1980) and Speakman and Marchington (1999) suggests, the breadwinner role remains a central feature of 'dual-earner' families in which the female partner is in part-time paid work.

In dual-earner families the female partner is twice as likely to work part-time as full-time (Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). Yet, the literature that considers the rise of this family type fails to acknowledge that women who work part-time have just as much (perhaps more) in

common with women in breadwinner families, than those in full-time paid work. Oakley (1973), Pahl (e.g. 1980) and Speakman and Marchington (1999) note that the burden of unpaid work and the degree of economic dependence (given the gender pay gap and the inequalities women experience in the labour market) remains relatively constant between women who work part-time and those who are engaged full-time in the home.

It was also noted that in no-earner households, men (and women) employ strategies to sustain (the illusion of) a breadwinner/home-maker division of labour (Goode *et al*, 1998; Brannen and Wilson, 1987; Kempson *et al*, 1994). This can be based on the handing over of the 'family wage' in the form of welfare benefits (Goode *et al*, 1998). The evidence suggests that it is not necessary for men to actually perform the role of breadwinner to gain the powers and privileges of the role in the family. These two themes have not been taken up within the literature on family change or the breadwinner role. Yet they are strong evidence of the continued relevance of the breadwinner role, and the prevalence of 'breadwinners' at a household level.

If we apply the typical definition of dual-earner families to this study, we find that 56% of all families encountered in this study are dual-earners. Together with the proportion of no-earner families, this study finds that three out of four sample families and couples do not have a traditional male provider. On the basis of arguments made in the literature this could be applied to explain the dearth of traditional attitudes found in this study. It could be argued that as less than two in ten men maintain breadwinner status in the family, the breadwinner role is evidently less relevant to the lives of the respondents.

It is problematic then to suggest that declining support for the breadwinner role is a product of the declining number of breadwinners. Indeed, introducing the concept of the 'primary breadwinner' family suggests that almost half of the sample males are

breadwinners. Goode *et al* (1998) offer no indication of how prevalent the trend is for men among no-earner families to cultivate breadwinner status. However, if we accept that breadwinner status can be sustained in no-earner families, this study could argue that almost seven out of ten sample males are 'breadwinners'. If as many as seven out of ten men maintain a dominant, powerful role in the family, more or less akin to the breadwinner role, then explanations for the low level of attachment to the breadwinner role evidently lie elsewhere.

There is another complication in suggesting that men show little support for the traditional division of labour in the household. This complication lies within the debates about attitudinal consistency.

#### **The inconsistency of attitudes towards the breadwinner role**

On the basis of amalgamated scores this study does indeed find that few men hold 'traditional' attitudes. The majority of respondents score within a range that indicates non-traditional perceptions regarding the breadwinner role (42% on the work-intentions scale, rising to a maximum of 71% on the sex roles scale). Steps were taken to check the validity of the amalgamated scores by applying, for example, scalogram analysis and item-total correlations (as part of an analysis of reliability). These analyses suggested that those with high 'traditional' or low 'non-traditional' scores had responded to the items in a consistent way.

However, in examining the responses to individual items in Chapter 6, there appears to be an element of inconsistency in some of the respondents' attitudes. For example, it was noted that approximately half of the respondents support the notion of democratic sourcing of income in the family. Yet, marginally more respondents suggest that the 'female role'

centres upon the home and family. Almost six in ten also suggest that the 'family' should be more important to a woman than participation in paid work.

The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975), as discussed in Chapter 3, proposes that people are predisposed to demonstrating consistency between their beliefs and behaviours. It is claimed that this is to avoid the psychologically uncomfortable state of cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). The body of literature concerned with the more practical matter of designing and implementing attitude measurement scales also refers to the propensity of people to demonstrate consistency. Phillips *et al* (1999) note that the responses to first few items in a scale can pattern the responses to the remaining items (an order effect known as primacy). In considering the remaining items, the individual may think back to their previous responses and respond in a way that appears conceptually consistent.

The literature suggests that a researcher can anticipate consistency in the responses to an attitudinal index, as respondents either attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance, or (to a lesser extent) are influenced by the ordering of items. However, social surveys, such as this one, deal with emotions, perceptions, beliefs and experiences. Perhaps it is simplifying matters to expect consistency in a study of this kind. Interestingly, it is the two men who returned their questionnaires uncompleted that brought this issue to the fore. The two (non)respondents commented that the lack of contextual detail within the items made it impossible for them to respond to the survey. They commented to the effect that their perceptions would change according to the context. (As noted in Chapter 4, the lack of context in the attitudinal items was a considered decision made with the response rate, and the generalisability of items in mind).

The patterns of response to some of the items suggest that for many of the respondents attitudes towards gender roles are contextual. For example, only one in five men agree or strongly agree with item 5 'I find it difficult to respect a man who can't get a job'. Where further detail is added in item 15 and 'the man' is found to be a 'quitter' or is frequently sacked, agreement increases to just over six out of ten. Similarly, only 15% agree that a woman should be solely involved in the home and family. If 'the woman' has young children however, almost half the respondents agree with the proposal that she should be engaged full-time with the family and home.

If attitudes towards the breadwinner role and gender roles in the family more generally are highly contextual, then it appears that the number of 'traditional' men and the level of support for the breadwinner role can be a product of the questions asked and the way questions are posed. The findings of this study suggest that the less contextualised the items, the more uncertain the response. Where greater detail is available it appears that respondents are more likely to give strong positive or negative responses.

The examples above suggest that the low level of support found for the breadwinner role may, in part, stem from the lack of contextualisation in the attitudinal items. However, the inconsistency in the responses to the attitudinal items may be more general than a question of how the items were composed. In the bodies of literature on the breadwinner role and masculinity, inconsistency and context are somewhat central themes.

As noted in the introductory chapter the literature on the breadwinner family has so far failed to produce a succinct theory to explain the rise and 'decline' of this family type. The history of the breadwinner family is wholly disparate; socially, economically, temporally, spatially and occupationally. It is also complicated by the invisibility of many women's economic contributions to the family (Folbre, 1991). Indeed, in Chapter 2, it was only by

applying Savage's (1987) typology of local labour markets that some structure could be imposed on debates that are otherwise complex and disordered. Here it was discussed that during the industrial period the adoption of the breadwinner model of organisation to some degree reflected local socio-economic conditions and labour market opportunities. Where opportunities existed for women to participate in paid work, for example in areas dominant in textile manufacture, the literature suggests they generally did so (Creighton, 1996; Taylor, 1977; Savage, 1987; Seccombe, 1986). In areas where women were excluded from the labour market, and employment opportunities were curtailed by legislation, families were typically of the breadwinner type (Seccombe, 1986).

In the contemporary period, it was noted that the decline in the female economic inactivity rate has accompanied the rise of the service sector (Bazen and Thirlwall, 1992). In a relatively buoyant economy, with a greater number of employment opportunities available (DED, 1999), more women participate in paid work and fewer families are of the breadwinner type (e.g. Harkness *et al*, 1995; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). The majority of couple families have a concentration of work, with both partners able to take advantage of paid work opportunities (e.g. Meadows, 1996). A knock-on effect of this is that some families have an absence of (formal) paid work, and may be constrained in re-entering the labour market on the basis of welfare disincentives (Goode *et al*, 1998).

The masculinities literature was also applied in Chapter 2 to provide a more theoretical framework in which to discuss the breadwinner family. Here it was noted that among the different interpretations of 'masculinity' there are some core elements. Key authors in the field such as Connell (1993, 1995) and Hearn (1994, 1996) are drawing the debates away from the essentialist-based accounts of masculinity, such as Bem's (1974) work on masculine character traits. Instead, the contemporary focus is on the multiplicity of masculinities, how they may be performed in different contexts, and how some

masculinities are more powerful and dominant than others (e.g. Brod, 1987; Connell, 1993, 1995; Hearn, 1996; Kimmel, 1987).

However, in discussing 'masculinity' the literature frequently invokes the notion of the hegemonic masculinity. As the culturally dominant 'ideal' type of masculinity (Donaldson, 1993), it has remained relatively conceptually stable throughout the industrial and post-industrial periods. Although men's dominance over women (and other men) is rooted in social processes, the hegemonic masculinity provides the underlying framework that legitimises and naturalises male dominance and privilege (Connell, 1995) (in this case in the family). As an idealised type of masculinity, it is suggested that the hegemonic masculinity is not achieved by men to any notable degree (Donaldson, 1993). However, in a post-structuralist framework, Edley and Wetherell (1995) and Connell (1995) note that masculinity is a performance that is context-sensitive, changeable and socially scripted. This suggests that, in some social arenas, men may demonstrate differing degrees of alignment with and performance of the hegemonic masculinity.

The literature applied to explore the rise of the breadwinner family strongly suggests that the decision to adopt this method of internal organisation is not made in isolation of other factors. Men with a strong attachment to the hegemonic masculinity are more likely to be attitudinally attached to the traditional form of household organisation, given its relationship with (male) dominance, power and privilege, and (female) dependency. However, the review of socio-economic trends in recent history, and their impact on the organisation of the family, shows that what is achievable in practice may be shaped by wider social mechanisms, opportunities and constraints.

The arguments presented from the literature concerned with labour market change and masculinities help to explain the inconsistency that is apparent in some of the responses to

the survey. The strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role is arguably shaped by alignment with the hegemonic masculinity. However, as Connell (1995) and others note, this is not a constant in men's lives. Alignment with the hegemonic masculinity may change between asking about men's 'duty' to participate in paid work, and asking whether it is desirable for women to combine motherhood with paid work. Similarly, some men may be strongly attached to a traditional division of labour but cognisant of the economic challenge in reality. Others may be less predisposed to compromise.

Discussions of inconsistency in the attitudes literature appear solely confined to Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance in the context of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. The findings of this study, regarding the inconstant and contextual nature of an individual's attitudes, do not appear to have been of relevance to the debates. However, in addition to demonstrating the limited strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role, the responses to the attitudinal index demonstrate the inconsistent nature of men's attitudes towards family and gender-related matters.

### **Part 2: The distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role**

This study applies measures of socio-economic and demographic status to explain the distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. This approach was based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Here, the arguments of, for example, Creighton (1996) and Savage (1986) demonstrated that the breadwinner family is intertwined with socio-economic status and opportunity. The rationale for the inclusion of demographic status was based on the arguments of Land (1980) and Humphries and Horrell (1995) that the breadwinner family is a household strategy applied to cater for a family's needs at some stages throughout the life course.

Based on the literature it was hypothesised that relationships would be found between the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role and individual attributes such as age, economic activity, and class. It was also explored whether the family type of the respondents' adolescent years was in any way related to their adult form of household organisation.

There are few studies to which this study can be compared. As noted in Chapter 4 most of the work on masculinity and men has been theoretical, qualitative or has relied on unrepresentative student samples. It was also noted that large scale attitude surveys tend to analyse responses by item (rather than amalgamated score), and rarely categorise respondents further than by gender.

The study to which this one is most closely aligned is that of Goodwin (1999) who examined secondary data from the 1991 National Child Development Study (NCDS). Goodwin's (1999) aims were very similar to those of this study: to explore the strength and distribution of attitudes towards gender-coded roles in the family. Goodwin chose cluster analysis as his chief method of analysing the respondents' attitudes. However, as noted earlier, on the basis of a trial in this study, it is suggested that this technique is not wholly appropriate for a study of human characteristics, and some of Goodwin's (1999) findings appear questionable. This study also challenges some of the empirical claims made within other studies.

#### **The relevance of socio-economic and demographic attributes**

Across all analyses some variables proved more significant than others. In terms of clarifying the distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role, we can summarise the main variables and effects as being:

- ◆ *Age*: the more mature the respondent the more traditional their attitudes.
- ◆ *Age of youngest child*: the older the respondent's youngest child the more traditional their attitudes. Most of the variance is attributable to respondents with children aged 20 or above.
- ◆ *Marital status*: widowed men are more likely to hold traditional views about sex roles.
- ◆ *Family type*: men of no-earner families are more likely than we would expect to disclose traditional attitudes.
- ◆ *Education*: the higher the degree of educational attainment the more non-traditional the respondent's attitudes. Men without formal qualifications are marginally more likely than we would expect to disclose traditional attitudes.
- ◆ *Economic status*: Men in paid work (whether full-time or part-time, employed or self-employed) are more likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes. The most traditional attitudes are found among retired, unemployed and economically inactive men.
- ◆ *Female partner's socio-economic classification and income*: the higher the female partner's socio-economic classification and income the more non-traditional the male partner's attitudes.
- ◆ *Respondent's father's socio-economic classification*: the higher the father's socio-economic positioning the less traditional the respondent's attitudes.
- ◆ *Respondent's mother's participation in paid work*: the greater the mother's participation in paid work the more non-traditional the respondent's attitudes.
- ◆ *Parental family type*: respondent's brought up in dual-earner families are more likely to disclose non-traditional attitudes.

Notably absent from this list of statistically significant relationships are the respondent's socio-economic classification and their income. There appears to no relationship between

these variables and the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. This sits rather oddly with the review of the breadwinner family in Chapter 2 which was framed by socio-economic factors. It also contrasts with the findings of Goodwin (1999) and Willinger (1993). These authors find that higher levels of income and socio-economic status are associated with traditional perceptions of the gender order.

The lack of significance found in this study may reflect some of the socio-historical arguments made in Chapter 2. The arguments made by Gittins (1982), Horrell and Humphries (1997), Savage (1987) and Seccombe (1986) suggest that, during the industrial period, there was little consistency in terms of the relationship between income and socio-economic status and the breadwinner family. Taylor's (1977) work on female employment rates in Nottingham, for example, suggests the breadwinner family was not solely a question of income, but of the opportunities available locally for women to participate in paid work. On these grounds we would not expect to find clear linear relationships with class or income. The disparity between the findings of this study and those of Willinger (1993) and Goodwin (1999) is discussed below.

This study finds the respondent's age to be the most statistically significant factor in explaining the distribution of attachment to the breadwinner role. The strength of the age variable is found to compound many of the other statistically significant relationships, including that with the next strongest variable, the age of the youngest child. The interesting finding that traditional attitudes are found more frequently among no-earner families than any other family type, is also partially explained by age; most men of no-earner families in this study fall within the more mature age groups.

In comparing the 1981 and 1991 cohorts of the NCDS, Goodwin (1999, 129) also finds a relationship with age. In relation to work-based items, he suggests that this trend is

explained by the fact that as men age they become more attached to work, and their work ethic becomes stronger. This may be correct up to a point, but Goodwin appears to neglect the possibility of a finite end-point here. Rather than the linear relationship that Goodwin suggests, it appears that the relationship may be curvilinear, with attachment to work reaching a peak in the middle stages of a respondent's working life. As Gorman (1999) suggests, this is when men may enjoy the greatest returns on their work, education and/or training. Indeed, it may be this curvilinear relationship that prevents age being a strong *predictor* of attitudes towards the breadwinner role. Although age is the strongest variable in the correlation and chi-square analysis, it was non-significant in the GLM analysis. The degree of attachment to the traditional gender order certainly appears to increase with the age of the respondent. It appears questionable whether attachment to work follows a similar linear trajectory.

Interestingly, the men showing the strongest attachment to work are those unemployed and economically inactive at the time of the survey. This is consistent with the arguments of McKee and Bell (1985) and Willott and Griffin (1997), who suggest that economically inactive men show strong support for the breadwinner family and its gendered division of labour. Given that the men are not in paid work, the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role seems rather odd. Age is a significant influence on this relationship. Where age is not a factor, however, the strength of attachment to the breadwinner role among economically inactive men may reflect the respondent's desire to return to the labour market, or be a measure of their dissatisfaction at not being able to participate as a result of injury, illness or disability.

Toby (1966) suggests that it is men who feel relatively powerless in their lives who are most likely to assert a strong, exaggerated sense of masculinity. Participation in paid work is noted as a central source of power in the family, and is the basis on which the power and

privileges of the breadwinner role lie. As noted earlier, it may also be the case that, although the men do not perform the role of breadwinner, they maintain breadwinner status within the household. This may be on the basis of participation in informal work, or receipt of welfare benefits or pensions.

Wherever the roots of this trend lie, it certainly challenges the efficacy of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory that there is a consistent relationship between beliefs and action. In this case, the beliefs and behaviours of the respondents appear wholly contradictory. However, this is based on the notion that performance of the breadwinner role necessarily involves participation in (formal) paid work. At the level of the no-earner household, a slightly different interpretation of the 'breadwinner' appears to operate. It appears that further work is necessary to clarify the distinctions between the formal definition of the 'breadwinner' and how the 'breadwinner' is defined at a household level, particularly during retirement, unemployment and economic inactivity.

Goodwin (1999) finds that men of breadwinner families show strong support for the breadwinner role. This seems logical given that the men are actually performing the role, and is consistent with Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action. However, the relationship is not replicated here. It was noted that 61% of men in breadwinner families disclose non-traditional attitudes, and that this proportion is no different to what would be expected by chance alone.

It could be argued that this inconsistency reflects the desire of the respondents to share the economic provider role. The respondents of breadwinner families certainly show an attitudinal preference for a more egalitarian division of labour in the family. Just over half the respondents agree with item 14 that 'Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden'. Half the respondents also agree with item 16 that 'A couple should share the

responsibility for earning the family income'. There are numerous accounts in the 'men's rights' literature from authors such as Thomas (1993) to suggest that men are dissatisfied with the work-based obligations of the breadwinner role (although the privileges are rarely challenged). Alternatively, and more credibly though, it appears that the breadwinner model is not chosen on the grounds that it is compatible with the male partner's beliefs about the gender order. Rather it is a household strategy that meets and reflects the needs of the couple at that stage in their lives.

The breadwinner role is one of many 'hegemonic' practices that as Connell (1995) notes can be taken to guarantee the dominant position of men and the subordination of women in the family. A chief focus of the literature on hegemonic masculinity is the claim made by Connell (1993, 1995) and Donaldson (1993) for example, that many men may be attached to the hegemonic masculinity, but are unable to practice it in reality. This appears increasingly relevant given the polarisation between work-rich and work-poor families, and the relative decline of breadwinner families. However, in the masculinities literature there is little reference to men who - like the breadwinners in this study - maintain a hegemonic role in the family, but demonstrate an attitudinal preference for non-hegemonic practices.

Gorman (1999), Korenman and Neumark (1991) and Willinger (1993) find that attitudes towards work are also strongly related with marriage. These studies suggest that married men are more committed to work and earn more than single men. Gorman (1999) finds that married men are more likely to work longer hours, put more effort into their work in the hope of being rewarded with a pay rise, and make more frequent job shifts in the pursuit of higher earnings. However, in this study, marital status makes a relatively poor showing in the analysis. Most of the score variance is attributed to the traditional attitudes found among the widowed respondents, particularly in respect of the sex roles scale. Marital status is not related at all to the respondent's attitudes concerning work-intentions.

Gorman's (1999) argument suggests that married men would be more inclined to reject items such as 'I would like to work part-time'. The evidence suggests that the work-intentions of married men are no different from those of cohabiting<sup>44</sup> or single men.

Rathbone (1940) identified early that 'one wage per family' was an unachievable ideal for many families. The evidence of, for example, Horrell and Humphries (1997) suggests that many families had two earners (whether through participation in formal or informal forms of work) and were of the dual-earner, or as suggested in this thesis, the primary breadwinner type. In the contemporary period the rising contributions of females to family incomes (e.g. Harkness *et al*, 1995) suggest that Rathbone's (1940) arguments maintain relevance. Many families chose a two-earner strategy over the sole male breadwinner.

The masculinities literature suggests that many men aspire to the hegemonic form of masculinity, but are constrained from doing so (Connell, 1995; Donaldson, 1993). Writers from the mythopoetical or 'men's rights' movements, such as Greenstein (1993), suggest that it is women's participation in paid work and desire for economic independence that prevents men from performing the roles and behaviours they aspire to.

The results of this study challenge this argument. The findings suggest that no relationships exist between attitudes towards the breadwinner role and all the measures that appear to go hand in hand with an economic capacity to adopt this model of household organisation: income, socio-economic status, economic status and educational attainment. In fact where relationships exist in the case of education and economic status, the inverse seems to be true: the higher the level of education and the greater the participation in paid work, the more men reject the breadwinner model. Moreover, the higher the female's level of attainment in the labour market (measured by socio-economic class and income), the less

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<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, Oakley (1973) also finds that the formal state of marriage cannot be applied as a basis for

attached men are to the traditional gender order. The arguments of Greenstein (1993) and others suggest that men are thwarted in their attempts to establish their 'rightful' or 'natural' role in the family, and are frustrated as a result. Even non-masculinist texts such as Goode *et al* (1998) suggest that the dual-earner family represents a compromise for men; that the breadwinner family is the ideal for men, but in practice few are able to achieve it. However, the findings of this study suggest that men have a low level of support for the role. In contrast to what is proposed in some sectors of the masculinities literature, it appears that few men actually support the hegemonic practice of the breadwinner role in the family.

### **A comparison of results**

In explaining the distribution of this low level of support for the breadwinner role, the findings of this study contradict those of existing studies. As noted earlier, the literature on men and masculinities has neglected quantitative work built on random samples, and there are only a couple of studies to which this one is directly comparable. These are Willinger's (1993) USA-based study of college men's attitudes towards work and the family, and Goodwin's (1999) 'Men's Work and Male Lives', a secondary analysis of the NCDS data for 1991. It may be erroneous to suggest that any one set of findings is more valid than the other. However, for two reasons the conclusions drawn by Willinger (1993) and Goodwin (1999) are deemed to be questionable.

Firstly, at a practical level, the application of a student sample (Willinger) and cluster analysis (Goodwin) are problematic. It was noted in Chapter 2 that much of the research into men's attitudes and alignment with masculinity discourses is Canadian or USA-based, and has relied on student samples. It was argued that these samples are unrepresentative and can only tell us a limited amount about men, and their attitudes and experiences of and

in the family. As discussed earlier, there are some warnings in the literature that securing a male random sample may be difficult. However, it is surprising that the limitations of college-based samples have not been used as the impetus for the development of alternative, more innovative approaches to sampling.

Goodwin's (1999) use of cluster analysis to structure the 1991 NCDS data on men's attitudes towards work and the division of labour in the family has implications for (the validity of) the conclusions that can be drawn from his study. Cluster analysis is an appealing technique, and in the right circumstances, and on the right type of data, may be a very useful research tool. Indeed, it is only on the basis of a thorough but unsuccessful trial of cluster analysis in this study that the criticisms of Goodwin's (1999) work can be made.

Cluster analysis allows the researcher to summarise the characteristics of a relatively large data set by clustering respondents on the basis of some defined characteristics (Everitt, 1977). The ideal outcome is the creation of a number of internally coherent clusters that show a good degree of separation (Everitt, 1977). The researcher may, for example, establish that men aged between 35-45 also tend to be married with children, work full-time, be home-owners, and earn over £1000 per month. With a number of coherent clusters the researcher can then apply them to explore attitudinal differences and similarities. In studies such as this one and Goodwin's the aim would be to establish that one set of characteristics is associated with more or less traditional attitudes than another set of characteristics.

The main difficulty with this technique is establishing separation between the clusters (Everitt, 1977). This appears particularly applicable to sociological work. In this study cluster analysis was rejected as an analysis tool because considerable overlap was found between the clusters, and the clusters lacked coherence. The best cluster solution used only

a small number of variables, which were applicable to only a small proportion of the sample. Moreover, it was recognised that although steps had been taken to secure a diverse sample, the application of cluster analysis only served to homogenise the sample.

Goodwin's (1999) clusters suggest he found similar difficulties. The table below demonstrates Goodwin's four cluster solution and some selected variables on which they were based.

Table 54. Selected results from Goodwin's (1999) cluster analysis (NCDS, 1991) (%).

Variable	Clusters (%)			
	1	2	3	4
1. Full-time employee	36	93	95	39
2. Works 20+ hours per week	19	93	96	27
3. Mean number of jobs	2.6	2.1	2.1	2.6
4. Voted Conservative	63	56	47	59
5. Partner not employed	46	47	45	50
6. Has children under 14	61	61	70	68

Derived from Goodwin (1999, 119).

There are three weaknesses in Goodwin's (1999) analysis. Firstly, there is little coherence within the clusters. Each variable level is shared by each cluster, when ideally individual clusters should represent, say, a different form of economic status. Goodwin also provides no rationale for the inclusion of voting behaviour or the respondents' work histories, making the clusters somewhat conceptually incoherent. Secondly, clusters 2 and 3, and 1 and 4 do not show good separation. It is difficult to conceive how anything meaningful could emanate from these clusters. Finally, with the exception of the first two, the variables do not discriminate between the clusters. Again, it is difficult to conceive how attitudinal

difference may be established between a cluster with 46% economic inactivity among partners, compared with a cluster with 45%, 47% or 50%.

It is suggested that these weaknesses have a significant impact on the validity of Goodwin's (1999) findings. Goodwin (1999, 128) suggests for example, that having a child aged under 14 is associated with less traditional attitudes. This relationship could just as easily be attributed to voting Conservative or the mean number of jobs held by the respondent. After establishing the clusters, one variable cannot be considered in isolation and highlighted as the basis on which the difference lies. However, Goodwin's findings are, in the main, built on this approach to the analysis.

The second issue with the findings of these two studies is that they appear to reinforce some commonsensical, and arguably out-dated perceptions of the breadwinner role. Goodwin (1999) and Willinger (1993) both suggest that the higher the income, socio-economic status, and level of educational attainment, the more traditional the male's attitudes. They also suggest that those in breadwinner families show strong support for this model of household organisation. Their claims imply that men who are attitudinally attached to the breadwinner role, and have the economic resources to sustain a breadwinner/home-maker division of labour, generally tend to do so.

The debates are arguably far more complex. As noted above, men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role appear contextual and to some degree inconsistent. Strong attachment to the role is found among men who do not participate in paid work, and, using the formal definition at least, do not perform the breadwinner role. Conversely, we find weak attachment to the breadwinner role among men who do perform the role. Socio-economic class and income do not appear to have any statistically significant power in explaining the distribution of attachment to the breadwinner role. Moreover, it appears that the higher the

level of educational attainment, the less attitudinal attachment men disclose – not more as Goodwin (1999) and Willinger (1993) suggest.

In the chi-square and correlation analyses, the strongest variable in explaining men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role appears to be their age. Age is found to explain the (relative) prevalence of traditional attitudes among economically inactive men and men of no-earner families. Analysis of this variable is missing from the studies of Willinger and Goodwin. No doubt it is missing from Willinger's (1993) work because, as college students, the sample was relatively homogeneous in terms of age. Goodwin (1999) probably experienced the same problem as the author regarding cluster analysis and the inclusion of the age variable: the relationship with age is so strong as to overpower, and ultimately negate the influence of all other variables. For this study, it was decided that this was good cause to abandon the analysis. In contrast, Goodwin continued, leaving out what appears to be the strongest explanatory variable.

### **Concluding comments**

Concepts and processes that were taken for granted and which appeared relatively concrete prior to the study have, upon analysis, proved somewhat complex and opaque. Integrating the existing literature with the findings of this study challenges how we identify and measure the breadwinner family, and the continued relevance of the breadwinner role to the internal dynamics of the 'family'.

It was noted that establishing the strength of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role is wholly relative to the means of respondent categorisation. This study could make claim to having identified traditional attitudes in 162 respondents (if, following the example of Aube and Koestner (1995), the median score had been applied) instead of the 29 of the accepted solution. Similarly, typical definitions of the breadwinner role have been

challenged in this and earlier chapters. This makes questionable whether the suggested 46 breadwinner families should actually be 176 breadwinner families. It appears that further work is necessary to establish the basis on which we can measure the breadwinner role; evidently the traditional measures are not robust enough to absorb the definitions and processes that apply at the level of the household.

In the light of the debate about the relative nature of the measures, this study finds limited attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role and the traditional gender order. To greater or lesser degrees, most of the relationships found to explain the distribution of this attachment can be reduced to one factor, the respondent's age. Some of the strong relationships that were hypothesised have not transpired; notably based on measures of socio-economic status. Moreover, no relationship is found between the respondent's family type and his attachment to the breadwinner role; a finding that challenges the efficacy of the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). Indeed, there seems to be little that is intuitive or consistent about men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role. As the two (non)respondents pointed out, in terms of perceptions of the breadwinner role, context appears to be highly influential.

## Chapter 9

### Conclusions

This chapter has two aims. The first is to evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology in achieving the research aims. The second is to clarify what this study is able to contribute to our current understanding of the breadwinner role. It is suggested that this study is able to comment on four themes: men's attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role, men's alignment with the hegemonic masculinity, the division of waged labour in the family, and the types of family that shape the fabric of contemporary British society. Prior to discussing these themes, the chapter offers some methodological conclusions, and reviews the ways in which the theoretical framework was applied to reveal the mechanisms that appear to explain the strength and distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. Some possibilities for future research are also offered. The chapter begins by summarising the aims of the project.

#### **Research summary**

This project was built on three research aims. The first stems from claims in the literature that throughout its (limited) history in Britain, the breadwinner family has been of greater ideological than empirical importance. The claims of Rathbone (1940) in relation to the concept of the 'family wage', for example, suggest that the idea of one wage per family can be unattainable and unsustainable in practice. This appears relevant to the contemporary context in which the 'dual-earner' family is considered the dominant family type (e.g. Harkness *et al* 1995; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994). It is seemingly even more relevant to the geographical context of this study, given the disparity that was noted in Chapter 5 between average earnings in Devon and Cornwall and the national average. This project set out to investigate the patterns and trends in household organisation and identify the dominant family type in a probability sample. From the literature and findings it

emerged that some of the definitions we commonly apply to identify different types of families are questionable. This has implications for the validity of the claims that the breadwinner family is in decline, and that the breadwinner role is of less relevance to families in contemporary Britain.

Following on from this, the second aim was to explore men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role and gendered division of labour. Some strands of the men and masculinities literature suggests there is a 'crisis of masculinity', or at least much dissatisfaction among men, based on the fact that few men are able to fulfil traditional roles in the family and labour market (e.g. Dench, 1994, 1996; Lloyd and Woods, 1996; Messner, 1998; Popay *et al*, 1998). Given that the breadwinner role affords men considerable status, power and privilege in the family (Bernard, 1981), are men attached to the ideology (if not practice) of the breadwinner role? On the whole, this study suggests not. Only a cluster of men who are economically inactive or retired show a statistically significant attachment to the breadwinner role and a gendered division of labour. However, it does not appear a simple question of whether men support or reject the breadwinner role; this study suggests that men's attitudes are contextual and to some degree inconsistent. Further, instead of attachment to the breadwinner role, the sample seem more attached to the ideology of the 'female role'. In the light of claims made in the literature, these are unanticipated findings.

The final aim was explore these issues among a representative sample, and using a quantitative research tool. As noted throughout the thesis, the men and masculinities literature is heavily biased towards work that is theoretical or qualitative, or dependent upon secondary sources or student samples. It is suggested that this acts as a barrier to what we can know about 'men' and 'men's lives'. This study aimed to contribute towards bridging this knowledge gap by applying a quantitative research tool to a socio-

economically and demographically diverse sample of men. This would allow us to quantify, and generalise about men's attachment to the breadwinner role, and explore attachment according to some of the distinctions between men. This approach was taken despite warnings in the literature that men are disinclined to participate in quantitative research on gender and family-related matters.

### **Researching men and masculinities: methodological issues**

One of the most important factors that framed the design and implementation of the project was Dench's (1996, 22) claim that participation in surveys about family or gender-related matters is typically low among men, and in particular younger men. No other reference could be found in the literature to validate this claim. However, at the time, the notable dearth of quantitative work, the neglect of random samples, and Goodwin's (1999) experience of a 4% response rate seemed compelling enough evidence.

This study secured a response rate of 50% which appears exceptionally good in the light of Goodwin's experience. It also appears good relative to the response rates of general social surveys. Kent (2001) suggests that 20-30% is typical in surveys of a non-sensitive nature (although this may be on the slightly pessimistic side). This study's response rate poses a strong challenge to Dench's (1996) claim, and suggests that the explanation for Goodwin's (1999) experience lies elsewhere (see below).

Indeed, the evidence from this study appears to wholly contradict the claim that men are poorly inclined to participate in surveys. It was noted in Chapter 4 that the pilot survey received a response rate of 60%. This was on the basis of a pre-letter and first mailing only. A follow-up postcard and second mailing were only used during the main survey but were found to increase participation by 22%. Had the main survey applied the full survey kit of a pre-letter, first mailing, follow-up postcard and second mailing, it seems that an

unusually high response rate could have been secured. (Pre-letters were not sent as part of the main survey in order to target a larger sample).

In outlining his own experience, Goodwin (1999, 78) suggests that:

'Out of a pilot sample of fifty, only two questionnaires were returned with differing levels of completion. This suggested that an original and highly quantitative survey approach would not be the most suitable method for this kind of research.'

The experience gained from this study suggests that researchers need not be deterred from attempting a quantitative, family or gender-orientated study of men. In the light of this study, the claims noted above seem unduly alarmist. There is a clear need for the publication of other, more positive experiences of male-only quantitative research. However, it must be noted that without the claims of Dench (1996) and Goodwin (1999) this study may not have achieved such a sound response rate. Their claims were of such concern that the literature was searched thoroughly for experiences that could be learnt from and avoided. In addition to the pre-letters, follow-up postcards and second mailing, the steps that were taken to ensure all correspondence was correctly named seemed particularly worthwhile.

As this study and Goodwin's attempted survey were based on random male samples, it does not appear that the gender of the sample, nor the sampling strategy can explain the disparity in response rates. Instead, the disparity may be more attributable to the research tool. With the response rate in mind, the questionnaire was designed to be relatively undemanding and quick to complete. This contrasts with Goodwin's (1999) questionnaire which requested detailed work histories and responses to attitudinal items. It appears therefore that the more we ask of respondents the less inclined they may be to commit themselves to participating. There may be some truth in the claim that men are predisposed to decline participation in research that is quantitative and/or focused on gender or family-

related issues. However, it appears that if this problem exists, it is not insurmountable with the use of a user-friendly research tool.

The self-completion postal questionnaire survey proved to be an efficient means of gathering and analysing the respondents' attitudes. This was aided by the application of an attitudinal index and Likert scale. However, as noted by some of the respondents themselves, the chief criticism of the scale is that it did not allow for the possibility that attitudes would change according to the context. This project was, in part, built on the notion of context; that men of different socio-economic and demographic 'contexts' would demonstrate differing levels of attachment to the breadwinner role. That attitudes (in this case towards the breadwinner role) may be changeable *within* the individual according to different situations was not a theme encountered in the literature. The literature is primarily concerned with consistency between attitudes and action (e.g. Festinger, 1957) or the changeable nature of attitudes over time (e.g. Aube and Koestner, 1995; Goodwin, 1999; Scott *et al*, 1996). (See below for further discussion of this finding).

With the centrality of socio-economic factors to this study, and in the pursuit of a probability sample, it appeared necessary to structure the sampling frame. This was done using the GB Profiler database and the Travel-to-Work Area (TTWA) boundaries. The GB Profiler postcode unit classifications were used to select a random sample of districts in which the population was summarised to be of working age. This data was then applied to purchase, and randomly sample, names and addresses from the electoral roll. GB Profiler proved to be a useful tool for structuring the sampling approach, and providing variables in regard to the socio-economic profile of the respondent's area of residence. The profiles were applied as another measure of socio-economic status but, together with the more direct measures of socio-economic status (class and income), proved insignificant. No

relationships were found between residential classification and the respondent's attitudes towards the breadwinner role.

Given that few anomalies are found between the sample and the TTWA population the application of GB Profiler data appears to have been relatively successful. However, as noted in Chapter 4, the database has some limitations. Although classifications suggesting enclaves of families of, or near retirement age were excluded from the sampling frame, almost one in four respondents were found to be aged 60 or above. The smaller spatial unit of analysis of GB Profiler classifications (postcode units) therefore appears prone to some degree of inconsistency, as do enumeration district and ward-level classifications.

The use of the TTWA boundary provides the study with a relevant and coherent spatial context, given that the boundaries represent a core labour market with at least 75% containment (Green *et al*, 1991). Although the boundaries have been in existence since 1984 (Green and Owen, 1990), they appear to have been under utilised in social research and by local authorities. This situation is perpetuated as, locally at least, only a limited amount of information is available on the TTWA population, which may be a deterrent to would-be users. TTWAs offer the researcher a convenient mid-point between a ward or city-based analysis and one that is based on county boundaries. If more researchers were to make use of TTWA boundaries, local authorities may be more inclined to collate information about their populations.

It is interesting that in what is considered to be a male-dominated discipline, there is such limited knowledge on the methodological issues and practicalities associated with male-only research. Connell (1993) and Hearn (1989) note that in 'malestream' sociology there is actually little research that looks explicitly at 'men'; there is plenty on male dominance, the public sphere of paid work, different occupations, socio-economic classes etc, but only

a limited amount that regards 'men' as a truly heterogeneous population. The debates on the different 'types' of masculinity and of the hierarchical relations between them, are usefully being applied as a framework for exploring the ways 'men' and 'men's lives' differ (e.g. Connell, 1995; Hearn, 1994; Mac an Ghaill, 1996).

Securing a random male sample is arguably troublesome and costly. However, as noted in Chapter 4, the continued use of student samples in this field hinders the progression of the debates about men and their alignment with masculinity discourses. It seems fair to say that there is a limited amount we can learn about men from the experiences of university-educated men. Yet, this tradition in Canadian and USA-based research is so strong as to characterise the men and masculinities literature (e.g. Aube and Koestner, 1995; Bem, 1974; Brannon and Juni, 1984; Brooks-Harris and Heesacker, 1996; Fischer *et al*, 1998; O'Neil *et al*, 1986). This study demonstrates that the quantitative survey has sound acceptability among men, and that it can be applied with relative ease to access and measure men's attitudes. It would undoubtedly be of benefit if researchers in this field made greater use of the survey method; particularly if they move away from student samples towards the broader male population.

This study has also drawn attention to the influences that analysis techniques can have on the validity and reliability of findings. Firstly it was noted that similar studies have split samples into two groups using a simple traditional/untraditional dichotomy based on mean or median scores. It was suggested that this leads to convenient but crude categories that have limited validity. Steps were taken in this study towards offering a more reliable, valid and sympathetic categorisation of respondents. Secondly, the importance of applying appropriate statistical techniques was discussed, with the issues exemplified with reference to Goodwin's (1999) use of cluster analysis. This study took a sequential approach to the data analysis process, using chi-square, correlation and the General Linear Model to fully

explore the properties of the research variables. This approach to statistical analysis complemented well the goal of the theoretical framework, which was to offer multi-layered interpretations of the research construct.

### **Explanatory mechanisms**

The theoretical approach adopted in this study has proved useful. Pawson and Tilley's (2002) framework for realist research encourages the researcher to consider carefully the ways in which any observed regularity in the social world can be linked (positively or negatively) to unobservable social processes that are contingent upon the present-day context. It allows the research to be shaped by broad hypotheses that are grounded in theory, and which the researcher can simplify until a range of measurable items is obtained. More pertinently for this study, it encouraged the author to consider the influences of social processes, rather than stand-alone variables.

Chapter 2 framed the discussion of the rise and 'decline' of the breadwinner family in terms of macro socio-economic factors, and some demographic factors. This is a conventional approach in the literature, and was replicated here to explain the strength and distribution of attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role. Based on the literature review, the questionnaire was designed around the hypothesis that attachment would be explained by the attributes of the individual male; factors such as their income, class, and level of educational attainment for example. In Pawson and Tilley's (2002) framework such factors constitute mechanisms; the unobservable social processes that can explain regularities in the social world. This study finds, however, that socio-economic and demographic mechanisms mostly have poor explanatory and predictive power. The most significant differences between men regarding attachment to the breadwinner role, and the most important explanatory mechanisms identified by this study, concern age and economic status.

Using Pawson and Tilley's (2002) framework encourages us to look beyond the fact that 'age' has a strong relationship with attitudinal attachment to the breadwinner role, and to explain how the factor of age operates as a mechanism. In this case it was illustrated in Chapter 2 that the older and younger respondents would have matured in very different social contexts. The older respondents (the oldest being 83) would have some experience of the war or post-war years, or at least the cultural legacies of this period. In contrast, the younger respondents would be more familiar with the socio-economic context of the deindustrialisation period and, concurrently, the 'service economy'. As demonstrated earlier, these eras are distinct in terms of gender role expectations, rates of female participation in paid work, forms of household organisation and economic opportunity. Age appears to operate as a proxy indicator of the context in which the respondent matured, and the apparent longevity of early experiences of the gender order. A number of inter-relationships with age were observed (with, for example, economic status, the age of the youngest child, and household tenure status), suggesting that age is a mechanism that shapes other social regularities and processes which can assist in explaining attachment to the breadwinner role.

Economic status is another stand-alone variable that on closer inspection operates as an important mechanism. One of the strongest and most surprising findings of this study is that men who are economically inactive demonstrate attachment to the breadwinner role, and to a greater degree than men who are economically active. However, on the basis of the literature reviews presented earlier, it is apparent that it is not the status of economic inactivity in itself that can explain the distribution of traditional attitudes, but the impacts this has on the individual's attachment to hegemonic masculinity discourses, the internal dynamics of the family, and the distribution of power and economic dependency within couples. These processes appear to converge to produce what on the face of it is a counter-intuitive relationship between economic status and attachment to the breadwinner role.

It is of equal interest to note that factors such as income and socio-economic classification have no observed influence on the strength or distribution of the sample's attitudes. We may hypothesise that these factors shape many life decisions and opportunities, including the means of household organisation. The findings of this study suggest, however, that the processes we may assume are related to income and class do not operate in such a way as to inform individuals' attachment to the breadwinner role. Adopting a multi-layered approach, and situating findings within social processes and the wider social and economic context has not only clarified what contributions to knowledge this study is able to make, but also challenged some commonsensical notions of how the family operates in society.

### **Contemporary families: traditional or non-traditional?**

Is it the 'family' that is under-going change, or is 'change' relative to the way we define, measure and label practices within the family? The literature suggests that the family has changed; with a greater number of women participating in paid work, the 'modern family' has two earners (e.g. Harkness *et al*, 1995; Machin and Waldfogel, 1994), suggesting that the relations between men and women in the family are, to greater or lesser degrees 'egalitarian' (e.g. Crompton, 1999; Young and Willmott, 1973). This implies that the breadwinner family and breadwinner role are of less relevance to contemporary society and the exchange of labour in the family. This study disputes the claim that the 'family' has undergone transformation; it appears that some core features of the family have remained remarkably resilient and stable over time. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, these core features include men's dominance and privilege, and women's economic dependency and dual burden of work.

This study has questioned what appears to be a taken-for-granted view in the literature that there is a conceptual distance between male breadwinner, female breadwinner, no-earner and dual-earner families. The literature takes these as distinct family types, and rarely

raises any issues regarding the degree of separation between them. Based on the literature reviews and the findings of this study, it is argued that this approach is problematic and can only misinform the debates. More importantly it disguises the continuation of male dominance in the family. If it is claimed that the 'modern family' has an egalitarian distribution of paid work then it is easy to suggest that relationships between men and women are more egalitarian, and the traditional dominance of the 'breadwinner' is dissolving. The results of this study suggest this is not the case. In the majority of families men continue to be dominant in terms of paid work, earnings and occupation. They also continue to regard work in the domestic sphere to be a primarily female concern. In times of increased domestic responsibility it appears that men consider it to be the female's obligation to absorb the extra labour. The sample suggests that there is nothing 'unmanly' about domestic or caring work. However, it appears that they are not ready to take on such roles in practice, and relinquish the privileges and rewards that paid work affords in the family and community.

This study shows that the public face of the family is not always consistent with the private attitudes or practices within the household. Families headed by a female breadwinner are the conceptual antithesis of the male breadwinner family. With a sole female provider and, to greater or lesser degrees, an economically dependent male, it seems credible to suggest that such families are non-traditional. However, the findings of this study suggest that if such families are non-traditional, the male partners are not fully accepting of this. It was noted in Chapter 5 that all but one of the men living in female breadwinner families disclose higher (non-earned) incomes for themselves than their employed female partners. It cannot be determined whether these non-earned, relatively high incomes genuinely come from other sources. This trend does suggest, however, that men of female breadwinner families are reluctant to relinquish the 'male as provider' doctrine, publicly if not privately.

Further work would be required to establish whether men with higher non-earned incomes than their working female partners regard themselves as breadwinners.

The literature review and findings from men in no-earner (and perhaps less so female breadwinner) families tell us that there is a fundamental difference in how 'breadwinners' are defined within the household and within the academic world. This study applied Janssens's (1997) definition of the breadwinner, which only summarises succinctly what many others imply; that the breadwinner is defined on the basis of his (or her) participation in formal paid work (relative to their partner's full-time engagement with the home and/or family). As the evidence from Goode *et al* (1998) suggests, in the household, breadwinner status may simply depend on the process of the transfer of money from one partner to another, and may not necessarily involve participation in paid work at all. It was noted in Chapters 2 and 3 that this has implications for the debates on the 'rise and decline' of the breadwinner role and the number of 'breadwinner families'. It also challenges the claims that men are increasingly unable to fulfil the breadwinner role (e.g. Dench, 1994, 1996; Lloyd and Woods, 1996; Messner, 1998; Popay *et al*, 1998) and that the 'modern family' is more or less egalitarian (e.g. Crompton, 1999; Young and Willmott, 1973). If we are to dissolve the tension between how a concept is interpreted by researchers and interpreted by the people whose social world is under study (Williams, 2003), this disparity in the definition of the breadwinner should be addressed.

One of the key findings of this study is that men of breadwinner families do not show strong support for the breadwinner role. This is an unanticipated finding in the light of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action that posits a relationship between beliefs and action. Festinger's (1957) concept of cognitive dissonance suggests that disparity between beliefs and actions creates psychological discomfort within the individual; something that individuals will attempt to avoid. This study is unable to gauge

the efficacy of Festinger's (1957) theory. However, it does challenge the theory of reasoned action. The findings suggest that attitudes towards the 'family' and behaviour within the household are wholly inconsistent. Men of no-earner families are strongly attached to the traditional gender order, while men of breadwinner families show very little attachment.

The claim of Levy *et al* (2002) that the 'modern family' is non-traditional on the outside, but retains a core of traditionalism on the inside seems quite credible. This study suggests that the dominant type, perhaps the 'modern family', is the primary breadwinner family; a means of organisation in which the male works full-time to the female partner's part-time participation in paid work. Although the public face of this family appears egalitarian, the internal dynamics appear shaped, to greater or lesser degrees, by alignment with traditional roles. This study suggests that alignment is not so much with the traditional male role – as noted very few of the study men are strongly attached to the notion of the breadwinner role – but the traditional female role, that of carer and home-maker. If the female role continues to be regarded as shaped by the weight of domestic labour and responsibility, it is unconvincing to proclaim that the 'modern' family is the non-traditional, egalitarian dual-earner.

### **Men's attachment to the breadwinner role and hegemonic masculinity**

This project was framed by the concept of masculinity, and particularly hegemonic masculinity. This was usefully applied as a starting point from which to explore 'men's lives' inside the family. However, as noted earlier, it is taken for granted in the men and masculinities literature that 'men' view the hegemonic masculinity as the ideal. It is commonly claimed that it is the form of masculinity that is aspired to but rarely achieved (e.g. Carrigan *et al*, 1985; Donaldson, 1993). This study challenges this assumption on two counts. They are seemingly contradictory.

Firstly, very few men are attached to the 'idealised' hegemonic masculinity, in this case in relation to the breadwinner role. Only a minority of men appear to have traditional perceptions of the gender order. These 'traditional' men are likely to be among the more mature generations and/or be retired or economically inactive.

Secondly, this study finds that many men undertake a role in the family that is more or less akin to the breadwinner role. If we accept as credible the arguments made earlier regarding the breadwinner status of men in primary breadwinner and no-earner families, then the debate about the historical rise and contemporary 'decline' of the breadwinner family changes. The process of defining men of primary breadwinner families (which are typically referred to in the literature as dual-earners) as breadwinners re-establishes the relevance of this role in contemporary society. Further, it suggests that, at the least, the breadwinner element of the hegemonic masculinity is not idealised or unachievable; it is a central feature of many British families. If this is indeed the case, then also central to 'the family' is the continuation of male dominance, power, privilege and reward, and female dependency and inequality.

There is an inconsistency then between finding that few men support the breadwinner role, and suggesting that many men actually perform the role. However, this relationship appears to be a product of the process of categorisation and analysis. As noted in Chapter 6, the application of total scale scores (which suggest that the majority reject the breadwinner role) conceals attachment to some elements of the traditional gender order; specifically attachment to the traditional female role.

As noted earlier the items used to measure attachment to the breadwinner role are relative measures. A whole host of different items could have been used, and a different set of

measures may have produced different results. As discussed in Chapter 3, the items used in this study were created on the basis of findings from exploratory interviews. The items focused on the traditional male role with only a few referring to the traditional female role, largely as proxy measures of attachment to the breadwinner role. However, the findings suggest that, had the scale included more items concerned with the female role in the family, this study may have identified more 'traditional' men. It would be interesting to compare the results of this study to another focusing solely on men's attitudes towards the traditional female role.

It appears less likely that the disparity between 'traditional' behaviour (performance of the breadwinner role) and non-traditional beliefs is explained by some of the arguments in the 'men's rights' and mythopoetical movements in the men and masculinities literature. Here it is suggested that men are dissatisfied with the breadwinner role; either that they are unable to perform it (as a result of increasing female labour market participation) or the role is, or has become burdensome (e.g. Bly, 1990; Brittan, 1989; Greenstein, 1993; Grønseth, 1972; Kinnunen *et al*, 1996; Lewis *et al*, 1999; Lyndon, 1992; O'Neil, 1981; Palme, 1972; Pleck, 1981; Thomas, 1993). It could be suggested that the disparity between beliefs and actions are explained by men's desire to share the responsibilities of the breadwinner role with female partners. However, as noted above, men's attachment to traditional gender roles (men's and women's) is more complex than this argument suggests. It is unlikely that men's non-traditional attitudes reflect disenchantment with the provider role. Moreover, it was discussed in Chapter 2 how much of the mythopoetical literature particularly, lacks a sound, or any, methodological basis, and mostly applies anecdote as evidence. The claims of some of these authors are therefore highly questionable.

One of the unanticipated findings of this study is the contextual nature of men's attitudes. That men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role and family may be contextual was not a theme encountered in the masculinities literature. Nor was it encountered in the attitudes literature. The focus there is on the consistency between behaviour and attitudes or consistency over time and actions, and seemingly not on the consistency of attitudes within the individual (e.g. Ajzen, 1988; Festinger, 1957; Rosenberg, 1956; Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960; Salancik, 1982; Wicker, 1969). In this study the concepts of context and consistency appear intertwined. However, with only a couple of relevant examples in the attitudinal scale, we cannot at this time determine what affect the degree of context within attitudinal items has on the consistency or inconsistency of an individual's attitudes. On the basis of the discussion in the previous chapter, we may speculate that the more contextual the item, the stronger the response, be it positive or negative.

Establishing that men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role may be contextual and hence somewhat inconsistent has implications for future research. In reviewing the literature it was found that the use of contextual attitudinal items is generally considered inadvisable (Ajzen, 1988; Ayidiya and McClendon, 1990; Mueller, 1986; Phillips *et al*, 1999). Adding context to an item usually means increasing its complexity, and the propensity for misunderstanding (Mueller, 1986). If attitudes are indeed contextual, then the researcher's task of constructing an attitudinal scale becomes more difficult. The more context that is added to an item, the less we are able to generalise. The researcher must then weigh up the benefits of adding context against a potential loss of generalisability. As an unanticipated finding, and one that does not appear to be referenced within the literature (at least the men and masculinities literature), further research into the contextual nature of men's attitudes regarding the family and breadwinner role may be fruitful.

It was noted in reference to the hegemonic masculinity that men can be hegemonic and non-hegemonic in different contexts (Connell, 1995). The evidence of this study suggests that attitudes towards work, gender roles and the family are similarly contextual. In different circumstances it appears that the degree of alignment with the breadwinner element of the hegemonic masculinity changes. It may be that any potential relationships with socio-economic factors were concealed by the inconsistency noted within the respondents' attitudes. With greater knowledge of how men's attitudes towards the breadwinner role are shaped by context, it may be of benefit to re-examine the importance of socio-economic factors.

Although this study can only point to the potential propensity of men's attitudes to be contextual, it is an interesting finding. As noted above, in the contemporary period some authors argue that men are increasingly dissatisfied with (the obligations of) the male role (e.g. Brittan, 1989; Grønseth, 1972; Kinnunen *et al*, 1996; Lewis *et al*, 1999; Palme, 1972; Thomas, 1993). However, as Segal (1990) points out, men are increasingly able to 'have it all'; the ability to choose their level of participation in the household while reaping the public and private rewards of the breadwinner role. The findings of this study suggest another element to Segal's (1990) claim. It appears that men are also inclined to choose the contexts in which they feel the breadwinner role is appropriate, necessary or desirable. This study has identified that in all family types, but particularly behind the socially acceptable façade of the dual-earner family, a gendered distribution of inequality and privilege continues to shape the experience of 'the family' for women and men respectively.

#### **Possibilities for the future**

As noted previously, perhaps the greatest need in the men and masculinities literature is a methodological one. There is an imbalance in the literature in favour of work that is

theoretical or qualitative. It is doubtful whether this stems from the claims in the literature that men are disinclined to participate in quantitative surveys. However, this study shows that the application of a quantitative method can be rewarding.

There appears to be much scope for the use of new technologies in this field of research. The future of quantitative research into men's lives, their attitudes and experiences, may well lie in Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). CATI programmes are indispensable tools for market researchers, and are slowly infiltrating the world of academic research (Lavrakas, 1993). As noted in Chapter 4, the telephone survey has some advantages over the postal survey, chiefly that the researcher and respondent are able to interact. With greater use in the academic sphere it will be interesting to see what sampling issues emerge and the response rates that are secured, particularly in respect of surveys with men.

Researchers may also wish to make greater use of e-mail and Internet facilities. Although there are some sample access issues, the fast-paced innovation in e-mail and the Internet, their potential for research purposes and ease of use, means that these resources may shape the future of research into men and masculinities (see e.g. Coomber (1997) for a discussion of the practicalities of using the Internet for survey research). However, before moving on to the new technologies it appears that the men and masculinities literature has yet to fully utilise the social survey. Greater application of quantitative methods, chiefly the social survey, would undoubtedly lead to the bridging of some of the knowledge gaps identified in this study.

Researchers may also wish to explore further the noted disparity between how we, as researchers, define the 'breadwinner' and how it is defined at the level of the household. The evidence presented from Goode *et al* (1998) suggests that there are intra-household

processes which operate to preserve men's dominance in the family – and of which we know little about. This appears to constitute a significant breach in our knowledge, and has far-reaching implications for the debate on the 'rise and decline' of the breadwinner role. With greater knowledge of the interpretations that are applied at a household level, it may be of benefit to re-visit the socio-historical literature. We may ultimately gain a new understanding of (the dominance and persistence of) the breadwinner role and breadwinner family in industrial and post-industrial Britain.

Leading on from this, one of the issues that have complicated the debate in this study concerns how we apply the label 'dual-earner'. It is noted in the literature that 'dual-earner' families include those in which the female partner participates in paid work. The extent of participation, and the implications this has for the balance of power and inequality between men and women, does not appear to have informed the debates. Evidently it should. The work of Oakley (1974) and Pahl (1980, 1983, 1989) shows that female participation in paid work does not necessarily dissolve gendered inequality in the family. Rather, there appears to be a cross-over point where the balance of the female's contribution to the family economy affords greater status and power in the family. It appears that the concept of the 'dual-earner' needs sub-dividing to acknowledge the different experiences of women who participate in paid work on, say a part-time or full-time basis (although there are some obvious definitional problems with this). This study offered the notion of the 'primary breadwinner' family, simply on the basis of part-time paid work (as defined by the respondents). Other researchers may wish to explore the issues further and develop a more sophisticated family typology.

The debates around the breadwinner family are shaped by taken for granted notions about the differences between, primarily, breadwinner families and dual-earner families. This study suggests that internally, these families may not be as different as the literature

implies. We may need to identify new principles on which to distinguish these families. In doing so we may need to re-examine the debates on how (and if) 'the family' has changed, women's contributions to the sustainability of their families, the relationship between the 'family' and macro socio-economic processes, and the continuance of male power in the family.

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Appendix 1: Study sampling frame: Map of Plymouth-Travel-To-Work Area.



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## APPENDICES

1. Study sampling frame: Map of Plymouth Travel-To-Work Area
2. Questionnaire
3. 'The family you want' (Woman Magazine, 1958)
4. Scalogram analysis
5. Research correspondence
6. Analysis of outlier cases
7. Normal distribution of scale scores

Please answer the questions by putting a tick in the appropriate box or writing your answer in the space provided. Your answers are confidential and will only be used in statistical analysis.

## SECTION 1: YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT WORK AND FAMILY

In this section I would like to find out about your attitudes towards work and family. Please give each of the following statements a score between 1 and 5.

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree

- Q1. Men should choose interesting jobs even if the pay is very bad.....
- Q2. If I could afford to, I would like to work part-time.....
- Q3. If I lost my job I would find it difficult to be with my family and friends.....
- Q4. A man should generally work overtime to make more money for his family  
whenever he has the chance.....
- Q5. I find it difficult to respect a man who can't get a job.....
- Q6. A man cannot be a good provider if he earns a low salary.....
- Q7. It would not bother me if I became unemployed for a few months.....
- Q8. It is right and natural that a man should be the main family provider.....
- Q9. It is very important to me that I always have a full-time job.....
- Q10. It is sometimes necessary for a man to put his work before his family.....
- Q11. A married/co-habiting woman with young children should not work full-time.....
- Q12. An unemployed father is a poor role model for his children.....
- Q13. The best way for a man to get the respect of other people is to get a good job, take it  
seriously and do well at it.....
- Q14. Having to provide for a family is sometimes a burden.....
- Q15. I have little respect for men who lose or quit their jobs too often.....
- Q16. A couple should share the responsibility for earning the family income.....
- Q17. It is not important for a man to make a good salary as long as he enjoys his work.....
- Q18. A woman should stay at home and take care of the house and family.....
- Q19. If I became unemployed I would worry that my family and friends would  
lose respect for me.....
- Q20. I think a man should change his job if he's tired of it, even if his family will  
suffer financially.....

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR Q21.

(1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree)

Q21. It is a man's duty to work and earn money for his family.....

Q22. It is fair that men should be employed and women should take care of the home and any children and relatives.....

Q23. A man who is not a good provider for his family probably isn't too much of a man in other ways either.....

Q24. A woman's family should always be more important to her than her job.....

Q25. A man owes it to his family to work at the best paying job he can get.....

Q26. It is unmanly for men to stay at home and look after their children full-time.....

## SECTION 2: YOU AND YOUR HOUSEHOLD

**In this section I would like to ask some questions about you and your family. I must ask these questions to make sure I get a good cross-section of the male population.**

Q27. Please record the following details for every person who normally lives in your household (please also include children who do not always live with you, but who you have a regular financial responsibility for).

Adults	Male / Female	Age	Relationship to you (e.g. wife, partner/girlfriend, father-in-law)
Yourself	Male		
Adult 1			
Adult 2			
Adult 3			
Children	Male / Female	Age	Relationship to you (e.g. son, step-daughter)
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			

If there are more people living in your household please give details here

Please tick if you are widowed  Please tick if your children have left the family home

Q28. Which of the following is your highest educational qualification? Please tick

No educational qualifications		A/As Level or equivalent	
City & Guilds/Trade Apprenticeship		HND/C	
BTEC or equivalent		Degree or equivalent	
ONC/D		Post-graduate qualification/ Higher degree	
GCSE/O Level or equivalent		OTHER. PLEASE SPECIFY	

**PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE FOR Q29.**

Q29. Which of the following best describes your current position? Please tick all that apply

Employee, full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed, but looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee, part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed and not looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed, full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	In full-time education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed, part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	On a government employment or training scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking after family / home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired from paid work	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q30. Please state the full job title of your current or last main job

Q31. If you are an employer or manager, please indicate how many workers you employ/manage

Q32. What does the firm/organisation you work/worked for mainly make or do?

Q33. If you are currently unemployed, please record the length of time since you have had a paid job.

Please tick

Less than 3 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	Between 1 and 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 3 and 6 months	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between 6 months and a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never had a paid job	<input type="checkbox"/>

**IF YOU ARE CURRENTLY SINGLE, PLEASE GO STRAIGHT TO Q38 ON THIS PAGE.**

Q34. Which of the following best describes your wife/partner's current position? Please tick all that apply

Employee, full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed, but looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee, part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed and not looking for work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed, full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	In full-time education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-employed, part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	On a government employment or training scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking after family / home	<input type="checkbox"/>	Retired from paid work	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q35. Please state the full job title of your wife/partner's current or last main job

Q36. If your wife/partner is an employer or manager, please indicate how many workers she employs/manages

Q37. What does the firm/organisation your wife/partner works or worked for mainly make or do?

Q38. Do you own your own home? YES  NO

Q39. Is your home a: ROOM/ROOMS  FLAT  MASONETTE  TERRACED HOUSE

SEMI-DETACHED  DETACHED  BUNGALOW  OTHER  \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE TURN OVER TO THE LAST PAGE FOR Q40.**

**Q40.** If you are employed, please identify which monthly income you receive. Please do the same for your wife/partner if applicable. Please tick.

Monthly income after tax and National Insurance deductions	YOUR-SELF	WIFE/PARTNER
Up to £499		
Between £500-£999		
Between £1000-£1,499		
Between £1,500-£1,999		
Over £2000		

### SECTION 3: YOUR PARENTS

**Please think back to when you were aged approximately between 14 and 16.**

**Q41.** If applicable and known, what were your parents' main occupations at this time?

Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

**Q42.** When you were living in your parent's home, did your father ever experience unemployment?

YES  NO  DON'T KNOW

**Q43.** How would you say your mother spent most of her time? Please tick all that apply

She worked full-time now and again	<input type="checkbox"/>	She worked a mixture of full-time and part-time	<input type="checkbox"/>
She always had a part-time job	<input type="checkbox"/>	She always looked after the family/home	<input type="checkbox"/>
She always had a full-time job	<input type="checkbox"/>	She worked part-time now and again	<input type="checkbox"/>
Looking after the home/ family was always her main job	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other. Please specify			

**Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.**

**Please put it in the FREEPOST envelope provided and post as soon as possible to ensure I can use your answers in this study.**

Are there any comments you would like to make on the issues covered in this questionnaire?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# The family you want

by EVELYN HOME



AT the back of the dreams of every engaged couple is the family they may have.

The girl possibly has much more vivid dreams of this kind than the boy, for happiness to her is more naturally allied to motherhood and child-rearing. She cannot imagine the future without peopling it with her own babies, any more than she could have enjoyed the past without peopling it with her dolls.

In the deep imagination of the man there will also be a desire for fatherhood—for the handing-on of his own cherished aims and qualities. He may not allow these subterranean thoughts to come to the surface—men today are less consciously paternal than they have ever been—but they exist nonetheless.

And so, when a couple marries, nature has already prepared them, in a sense, for parenthood.

But these modern times are not easy days for families—especially very young families.

Many a boy and girl decide to postpone parenthood. (Some, of course, feel this to be against their conscience.)

So their family remains an ambition yet to be achieved, while the girl retains her job, and they both save and wait for the right circumstances.

Often waiting proves to have been an excellent idea. The couple learn more about each other in their "saving year" than they might have done if plunged rapidly into baby problems. They have to share chores, and this sharing is good practice—it will need to be carried on into parenthood.

They also learn to be wary about money. It is much more expensive for two to pay their way as a married couple than when they were single living at home, giving Mum a small sum for their keep. They realize that a baby may well break the bank if he isn't properly budgeted for. But it is

a mistake to wait too long, to set the standard too high, to wait until the keen ardour and strength of young love has been lost.

Most couples don't wait more than a year or so; the wife becomes impatient for the fulfilment of her whole life as a woman; the husband recognizes the yearning in her eyes and yields to it.

And once the babies begin to grow up, fatherhood is as much fun as motherhood.



Today's young men are sweeter with their children, more ready to help with them than ever before.

Parenthood today can be so great a pleasure, if families can be planned so that mothers are not overworked and made old before their time. What is more, husbands and wives who some years ago might never have had the joy of parenthood can be helped to overcome health or nerve troubles to achieve their dearest wish.

If there are couples who wish for information about these things, I hope they will write to me privately—there is such good

help available that no one need feel too shy or too frightened to apply.

It has been found that, in perhaps fifty per cent of cases, it is masculine deficiency which is responsible for childlessness, so it is not enough for the wife to be examined. For a man to be unsuccessful as a prospective parent is no slur on his manliness. He may need simply a change of régime or diet.

But what if everything fails?

There is adoption—when successful, perhaps the most wonderful cure for the frustration. There is the opportunity to be foster-parents.

And there is also the cheerful acceptance of this lack, and the determination to make a good marriage, even without a family of children to bless it. Happiness is not exclusively for parents.

Table 55. Scalogram 1: Random sample of responses to seven items by 30 respondents.

Respondent	Q21	Q25	Q8	Q24	Q11	Q22	Q16	Sum of items (count)	Scale score
U48	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	42
U51	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	35
La17	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	32
T1	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	5	27
Ly5	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5	26
Es11	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	5	38
Ck57	1	1	1	-	1	1	-	5	35
On34	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	5	33
S60	1	1	1	1	1	-	-	5	23
Ck12	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	4	24
T47	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	3	28
Es43	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	3	17
La42	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	29
H36	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	25
Es2	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	22
S9	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	21
La10	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	20
H31	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2	18
L150	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	31
I44	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	22
T31	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	21
On5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	17
Ly20	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13
S50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	19
T10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	18
S14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	16
On4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	15
Es59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	14
On19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	11
L152	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	9

\* 1 denotes a strong, positive response to the item.

- denotes a neutral or negative response.

Table 56. Scalogram 2: Random sample of responses to seven items by 30 respondents.

Respondent	Q1	Q20	Q2	Q17	Q4	Q23	Q6	Sum of items (count)	Scale score
W1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	5	38
W38	1	1	-	1	-	1	1	5	35
U48	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	5	21
La22	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	4	32
L150	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	4	31
H43	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	4	24
L123	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	3	32
On55	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	3	31
On33	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	3	25
La41	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	3	18
W58	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	28
T10	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	18
S50	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	19
Ck32	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	2	17
Ly21	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	2	25
Ly3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	21
Es16	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	26
U19	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	21
T41	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	20
Ck55	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	19
On11	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	18
T26	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	18
I53	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	17
L18	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	15
S12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	13
I17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	14
S33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	13

\* 1 denotes a strong, positive response to the item.

- denotes a neutral or negative response.

The first scalogram produces a more plausible gradient than the second. In the second, the respondents with the higher scale scores did not consistently respond in a strong, positive way to the random items. However, a gradient is still discernible, with respondents with higher scale scores responding to more of the items, than those with lower scale scores. It can be seen on both scalograms that a good proportion of high scale scores are a result of strong, positive responses, rather than neutral scoring.

Appendix 5: Covering letter

«Name»  
«Street»  
«Street2»  
«Ward», «Town»  
«County»  
«Postcode»

7 April 2000

# Work and Family Life

Dear «Name»,

During the next few weeks a 'Work and Family Life' survey is being conducted for the University of Plymouth. Your name and address were among those of 750 men selected randomly from the local electoral roll.

The purpose of this survey is to find out from local men like yourself how you feel about work and family. It is very important that men of all circumstances take part, so please don't be put off if you are currently single, retired, without children or unemployed – the views of every man count. This is also a MALE only survey, so please do not pass your questionnaire on to someone else.

The questionnaire has been designed to be completed easily and quickly. It should only take about ten minutes, and of course all your responses will be confidential. When your completed questionnaire is returned to me in the FREEPOST envelope provided, it will only be seen by myself during the analysis period. After that, all the questionnaires collected for this survey will be destroyed.

Your participation in this survey would be greatly appreciated, as mens' views on these subjects are under-represented. If you have any questions about this survey, please call me at the University of Plymouth on 01752 233293, or call the research supervisor Dr Kevin Meethan on 01752 233222.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

*S. Chamberlain*

Suzanne E. Chamberlain  
RESEARCHER

*Dr Kevin Meethan*

Dr Kevin Meethan  
RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Appendix 5: Postcard reminder



Dear «Name»,

Over half the men contacted for the University of Plymouth's and Family Life' survey have returned their questionnaires. Unfortunately, as the response from your area has been a bit slow we are re-contacting men in «Ward» who have not yet replied.

The success of the survey depends on the participation of men like yourself, and we would be most grateful if would you please complete and return your questionnaire as soon as possible.

If you have any questions about the survey or require another questionnaire please contact me at the University of Plymouth on 01752 233293.

Thank you in advance for giving this matter your attention.  
Yours sincerely,

*S. Chamberlain*

Suzanne E. Chamberlain (RESEARCHER)

Appendix 5: Letter reminder

«Name»  
«Street»  
«Street2»  
«Ward», «Town»  
«County»  
«Postcode»

5 May 2000

# Work and Family Life

Dear «Name»,

Everyone involved in the University of Plymouth's 'Work and Family Life' survey has been pleased with the response so far. Completed questionnaires have been returned from throughout Plymouth and the surrounding areas, and have shown that local men have a wide range of views on work and families.

In all but a few areas we have reached the target number of completed questionnaires that we require to make this survey a success. Unfortunately we are still quite a few short in «Ward», and it would be a great help to us if you were also able to participate. We would be most grateful if you could spare about 10 minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire.

There is currently little research that is focused solely on men, and it is intended that our findings will be published locally, nationally and, perhaps, internationally. The more men who take part, the more accurately we will be able to portray men's views. We will of course be very pleased if you would also participate and help us achieve this.

I would like to assure you again that all your responses are confidential. Your questionnaire will only be seen by myself, and it will be destroyed once the data input and analysis has been completed.

If you have any questions about the survey please contact me at the University of Plymouth on 233293 or call the research supervisor Dr Kevin Meethan on 233222.

Thank you again for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

*S. Chamberlain*

Suzanne E. Chamberlain  
(RESEARCHER)

*Dr Kevin Meethan*

Dr Kevin Meethan  
(RESEARCH SUPERVISOR)

**If you have completed a questionnaire in the last couple of days, I would like to thank you very much for your help and ask that you kindly ignore this letter.**

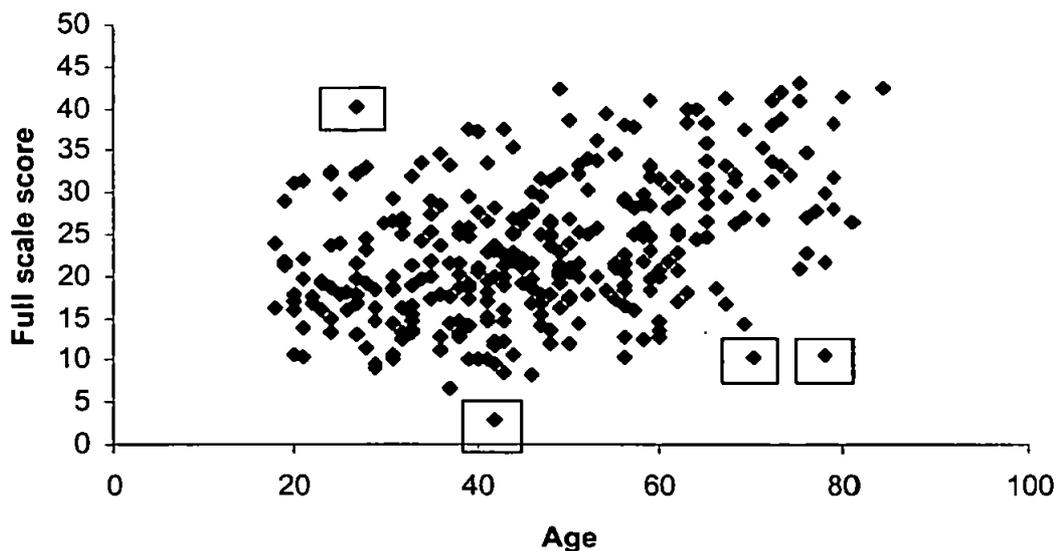
## Appendix 6: Analysis of outlier cases

It was discussed in Chapter 6 that outliers (extreme, highly influential high or low values) may distort measures of central tendency such as the mean. This also applies to the findings of statistical analyses. Including outliers in the calculation of correlation coefficients, for example, may lead to findings of positive or negative relationships that may not otherwise exist. For this reason the presence of outlier cases must be examined, and the decision taken to include or exclude such cases from analysis.

The influence of outliers in this study is checked by plotting respondent's scores on each scale against their age. Age was chosen as it shows the strongest linear relationship with scores, making the detection of outliers easy. Moreover, as a sociological study, many of the measured variables are nominal or ordinal, rather than ratio and as such are not suitable for exploring linear or non-linear trends.

The presence of outliers is examined for each scale, and Pearson correlation coefficients are compared when any such outliers are included and excluded. As noted in Chapter 6 the decision was taken to include all responses in the analysis. Securing sample diversity was a key aim of this study, and to exclude cases that failed to sit neatly within any trends would contradict this aim. Further, as a sociological study, we would in any case expect and can tolerate less coherence within the sample. This is an inevitable by-product of random sampling and socio-economic and cultural diversity.

Chart 2. Scatter plot of respondent's age and full scale scores.



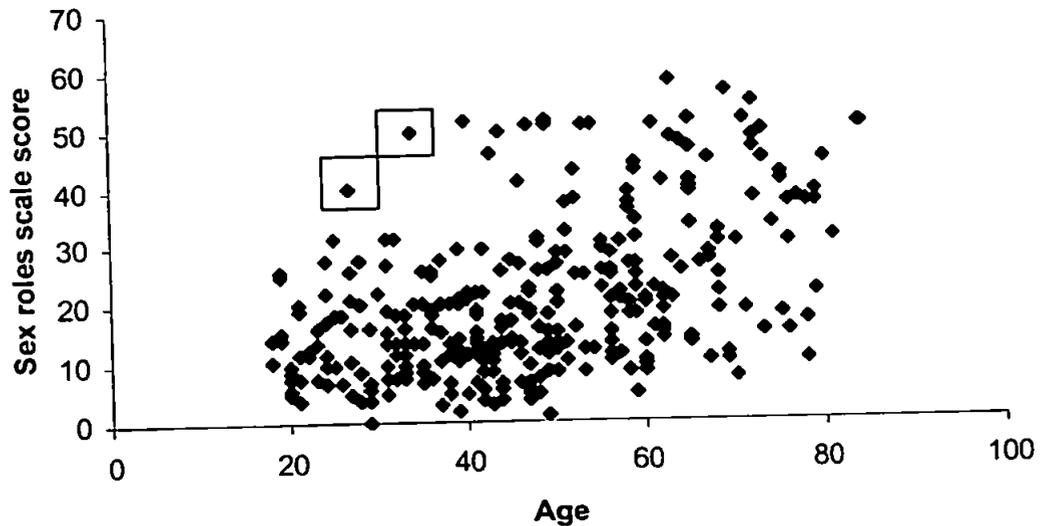
The full scale data show that there are four cases that could be considered as outliers. These represent three mature respondents who gained relatively low scores, and one younger respondent with a relatively high score. The table below demonstrates the difference in correlation coefficient when these four cases are included and excluded.

Table 57. Comparison of age and full scale score correlations.

Analysis	Pearson correlation Coefficient	Significance
Outliers included	.41	$p < .01$
Outliers excluded	.44	$p < .01$

The table shows that excluding the outliers results in only a marginal increase in explained variance. There is no change in the direction of the correlation or in the significance. This strongly indicates that there are no grounds for the exclusion of outliers on the full scale.

Chart 3. Scatter plot of respondent's age and sex roles scale scores.



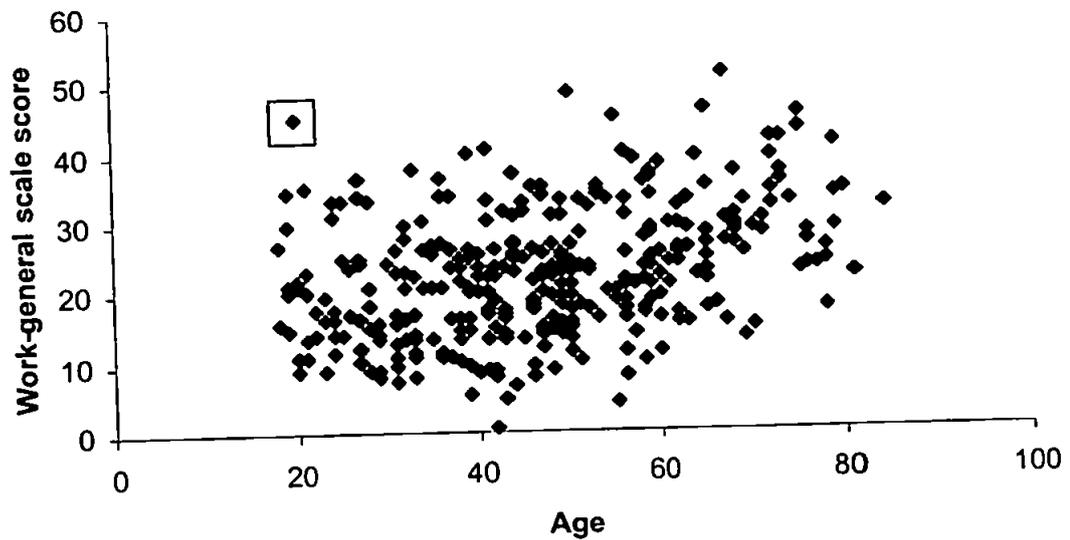
The sex roles chart shows that there two outliers, both of which represent relatively young men with high scores. (The argument could be made to also include the small cluster of cases to the right of these outliers). The table below shows that excluding these two cases makes no difference to the coefficient or the significance.

Table 58. Comparison of age and sex roles scale score correlations.

Analysis	Pearson correlation Coefficient	Significance
Outliers included	.47	$p < .01$
Outliers excluded	.47	$p < .01$

Only one outlier has been highlighted on the work-general scatter plot. All other cases fit well within the linear trend.

Chart 4. Scatter plot of respondent's age and work-general scale scores.

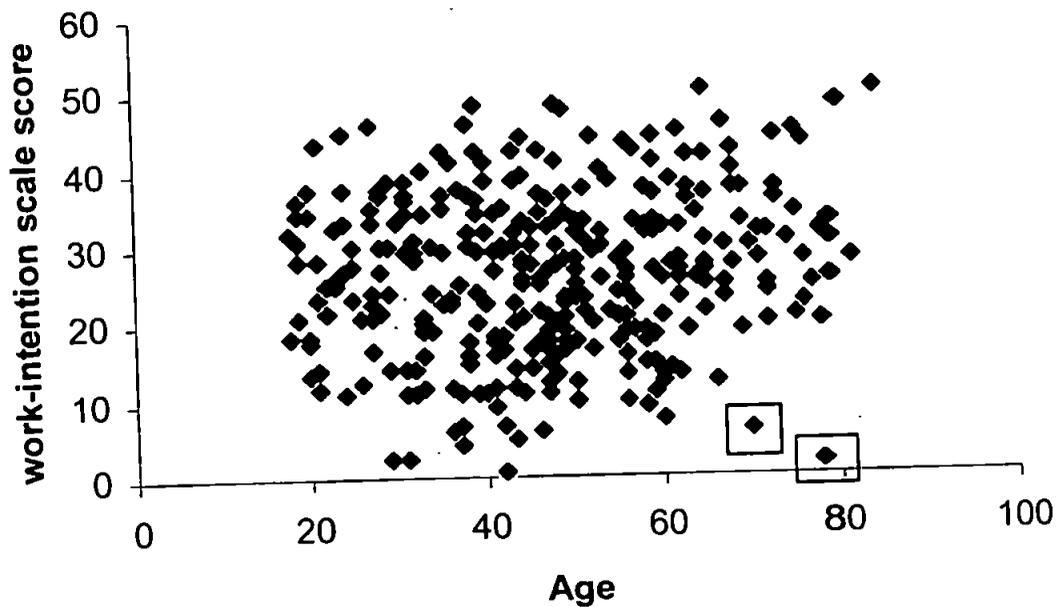


With just one outlier to exclude we would not expect to see a great difference in the results of a comparative correlation. The table below shows that there is a marginal increase in explained variance, with no change in significance. Again there appears to be little justification for excluding this case.

Table 59. Comparison of age and work-general scale score correlations.

Analysis	Pearson correlation Coefficient	Significance
Outlier included	.35	$p < .01$
Outlier excluded	.37	$p < .01$

Chart 5. Scatter plot of respondent's age and work-intentions scale scores.



The work-intention cases are well clustered together and only two cases appear to warrant investigation. Both cases refer to more mature men with very low scores on the work-intention scale. The table below shows that excluding these cases from the analysis results in a marginal increase in explained variance (1%), and an increase in the significance of the relationship. However, the improved statistics – of this and the other scales - do not appear to outweigh the benefit of keeping these cases in the analysis, for the integrity of the data and to properly address the diversity of the sample.

Table 60. Comparison of age and work-intention scale score correlations.

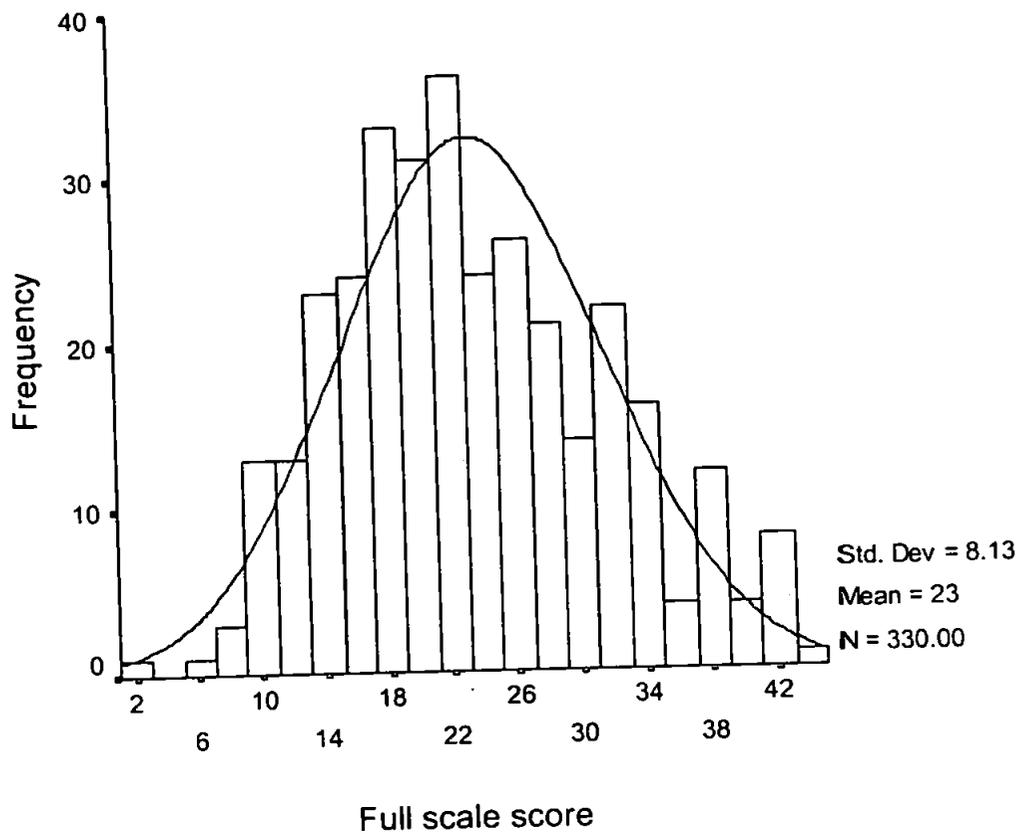
Analysis	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance
Outliers included	.12	$p < .05$
Outliers excluded	.15	$p < .01$

## Appendix 7: Normal distribution of scale scores

One of the data assumptions underlying some of the statistical techniques applied in this study is that of normal distribution. The following four figures demonstrate that to greater and lesser degrees the distribution of each set of scale scores fulfils this data assumption.

### Full scale

Chart 6. Distribution of full scale scores.



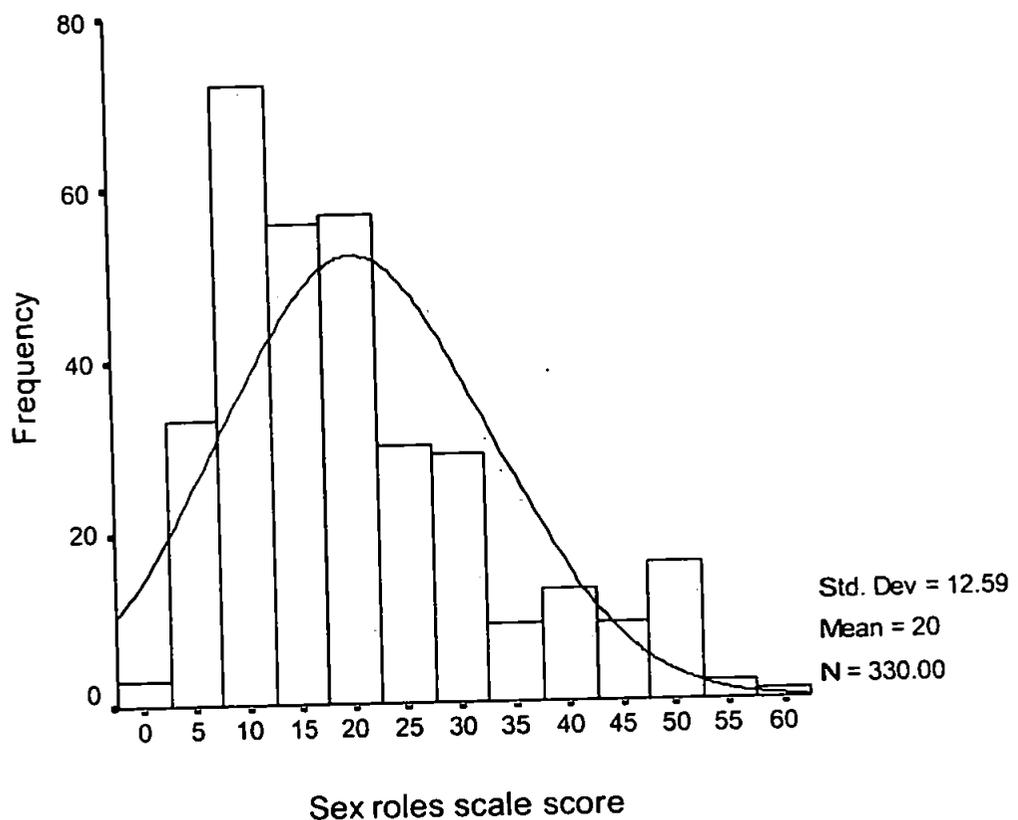
The distribution of full scale scores shows a relatively good fit against the normal frequency curve. It is evident however, that the scores are skewed to the left of the mean score value of 23. The skewness statistic for this data set is .333, denoting a positive skew in which more scores fall to the right of the mode (20), and the mean and median (21.8) values exceed the mode. While positively skewed, the data do not show an unacceptable

spread between the three measures of central tendency and can therefore be considered as normally distributed.

### Sex roles scale

In contrast to the distribution of full scale scores above, the sex roles data show a multimodal distribution, with scores extending throughout the whole range of possible scores. A small number of scores clustered around the high score extremes of the scale is also evident. As noted in Chapter 6, the sex roles scale consisted of perhaps the most contentious items, and was shown to discriminate more effectively between respondents than the other scales. The scale also showed the strongest consistency alphas and item-item and item-total correlation coefficients.

Chart 7. Distribution of sex roles scale scores.

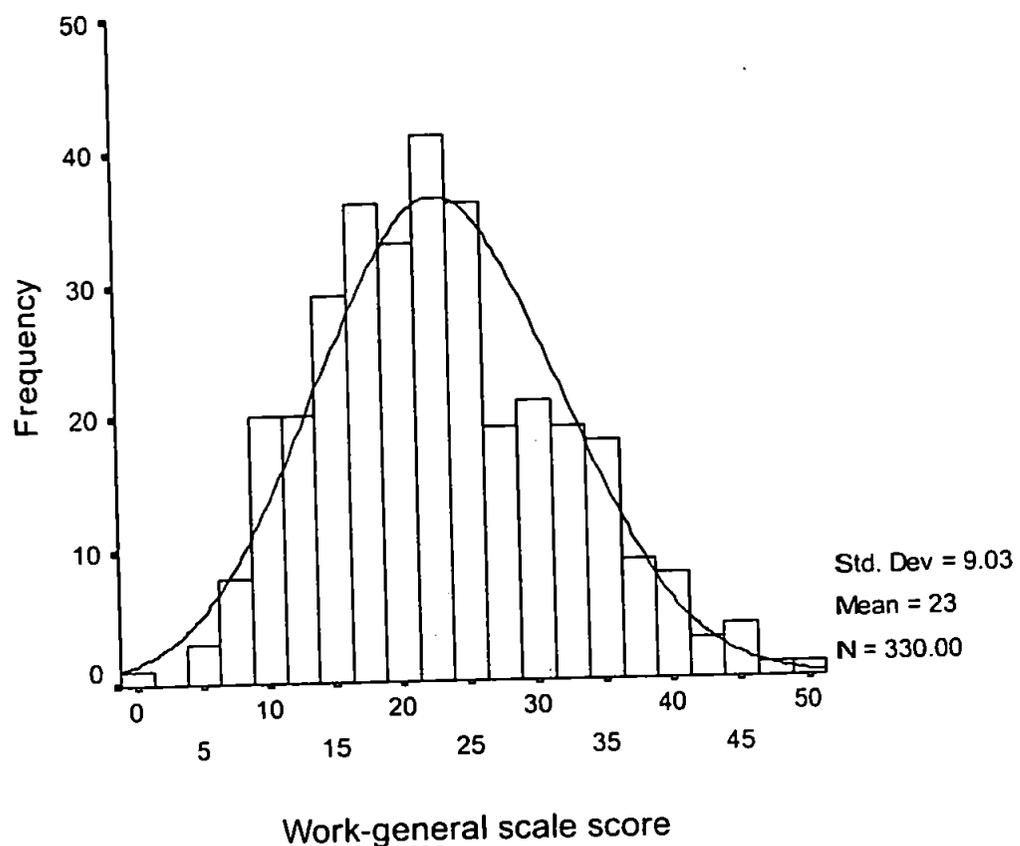


The spread of respondents throughout the range demonstrates the effectiveness of the scale. However, the skewness statistic of .963 is close to the threshold figure of 1 which is found for distributions that differ significantly from normal distribution. Although this scale's degree of positive skewness is not ideal, it falls within the realms of acceptability.

### Work-general scale

The work-general scale shows a good distribution of scores against the normal frequency curve, with scores relatively well distributed throughout the score range. The skewness statistic (.348) is a relatively low positive value, denoting a sound degree of symmetry between the mean (22.87) and median (22.42) values.

Chart 8. Distribution of work-general scale scores.



### Work-intention scale

The work-intention scale gains the best skewness statistic of the four scales. At  $-.06$ , which is close to the ideal value of  $0$ , the skewness statistic denotes an almost symmetrical distribution, with little difference between the mean ( $26.43$ ) and median values ( $26.67$ ). The distribution is multimodal, but otherwise fits the normal frequency curve well. The work-intention scores represent the best distribution of all four scales.

Chart 9. Distribution of work-intention scale scores.

