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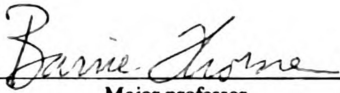
Blue Collar Families in the 1981-1983 Recession:
An Examination of Family and Gender in a Period
of Economic Decline

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Judy R. Aulette

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BLUE COLLAR FAMILIES IN THE 1981-1983 RECESSION:
AN EXAMINATION OF FAMILY AND GENDER IN A PERIOD
OF ECONOMIC DECLINE

By

Judy Root Aulette

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ABSTRACT

BLUE COLLAR FAMILIES IN THE 1981-1983 RECESSION: AN EXAMINATION OF FAMILY AND GENDER IN A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC DECLINE

By

Judy Root Aulette

This study examines effects of the economic recession of 1981-83 on blue collar families in a small industrial city in Ohio. It focuses on specific issues of family, and of gender, as systems of authority and tradition that may be "shaken" during a period of economic decline. Comparisons are made to research on families during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The study is based on closed-ended questionnaires given to 164 couples, and on 22 in-depth interviews. The subjects of both questionnaires and interviews were both husbands and wives in families where either the man or the woman had been laid off from a blue-collar job. Comparisons are made between the questionnaire and interview data, with a discussion of the development and utility of this blend of methods.

The analysis is organized around six issues: labor force participation, finances, economizing, organization of housework, family decision-making, and ideas and opinions about gender equality. In half of the families with husbands who had been laid off, wives increased their labor force participation. The decision about whether the wife would enter the labor market was affected by beliefs about the "proper" allocation of domestic work and the roles of women and

men in paid labor. Family finances were more severely affected when a husband was laid off than when a wife was laid off. However, women spoke of the "hidden opportunity" of the husband's job loss; it pushed wives into new experiences, sometimes bringing them greater responsibility and authority in their families and communities.

Families used varied strategies to economize, both as an immediate response to unemployment of a wage earner, and as a more gradual response to the effects of the economic recession. Reducing the number of meals at restaurants and the hiring of babysitters were the most common methods of economizing. No one took in boarders or relatives, a popular method of economizing during the 1930's.

Most of the unemployed men increased domestic work after their layoff, although the change was usually slight. The employed wives of these men continued to do much more housework than their husbands. Women who were laid off slipped into the housewife role, not always happily. The doing of housework became more egalitarian in families where the man was laid off and less egalitarian in families where the woman was laid off. In contrast, decision making was more egalitarian in families where the wife had been laid off and less egalitarian in families where the husband had been laid off. However, when asked directly about changes in authority, most respondents said that authority had passed from the laid off person to his or her spouse. The interviewees had a wide variety of definitions of gender equality. They tended toward greater support of equality for women since the layoff, although some men thought their layoff was a result of affir-

mative action. Opinion polls in the 1930's indicate that people much more clearly blamed working women for the high rates of unemployment.

In order to capture a full picture of the effects of the recession on families, we need to conceptualize families as arenas where there are both unity and conflicts of interests among members. Theorists have tended to either emphasize the ways in which families cooperate as a unit, OR ways in which they are sites of inequality and conflict. In the families in this study, both of these characteristics are operating and were intensified by the economic hard times.

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From the Ohio State University at Lima, I would like to thank Judy Von Blon for her assistance in preparing the proposal and questionnaires. In addition, I would like to thank the students from Ohio State University and Lima Technical College who collaborated with me in the collection of data for this project. I would also like to thank the many people in Lima, Ohio who so graciously allowed me into their lives and provided me with the information that I have reported and analyzed here.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
PREFACE.....	viii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Family: an arena of gender politics.....	3
The economic context.....	4
Rusting out in Lima, Ohio.....	7
Specific issues.....	9
2. LITERATURE.....	11
Families during the Depression.....	12
Post-depression research.....	23
Families and economy.....	23
Relations within families.....	29
3. METHODS.....	36
Research Setting.....	36
Development and administration of the questionnaire.....	38
Questionnaires.....	40
Administration of the questionnaire.....	43
The sample population.....	46
Defense of the survey method and limitations on generalizing.....	50
Personal interviews.....	53
The couples.....	57
Data presentation.....	62
Blending methodologies.....	63
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ECONOMY AND FAMILY.....	70
Labor market participation.....	71
Family finances.....	82
Economizing.....	90

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Continued

	Page
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: HOUSEWORK.....	98
Time spent on housework.....	99
Changes in housework since the layoff.....	103
The distribution of specific tasks.....	110
Satisfaction.....	120
Reactions from others.....	121
6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: DECISION-MAKING AND IDEOLOGY.....	125
Decision-making.....	125
Changes in authority.....	135
Gender ideologies.....	140
Extenuating circumstances.....	149
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	152
Everyday life in a recession.....	153
Comparison to the Great Depression.....	161
Unity and conflicts of interests in families.....	163
Dual nature of family.....	171
APPENDIX A: OLD QUESTIONNAIRE.....	174
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSON.....	178
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SPOUSE OF UNEMPLOYED PERSON.....	184
APPENDIX D: RESEARCH METHODS ASSIGNMENT.....	190
APPENDIX E: DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH REPORT DONE BY STUDENTS.....	192
APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION OF SUBJECTS IN THE RESEARCH.....	193
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	194

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Comparison of research samples to census of Allen County, Ohio, 1980.....	48
2. Questionnaire reponses: "Has your work changed since your spouse was laid off?".....	72
3. Occupations of interviewees at the time of the interview....	76
4. Questionnaire responses: what is the unemployed person's spouse doing?.....	77
5. Questionnaire responses: "Who decides what job <u>you</u> should take?".....	81
6. Questionnaire responses: "How much has the layoff affected your finances?".....	83
7. Questionnaire responses: "How much money per week is currently being brought into your household?".....	90
8. Questionnaire responses: "In which of the following ways have you attempted to economize?".....	91
9. Questionnaire responses: "Has economizing created more work and, if so, who does it?".....	95
10. Questionnaire responses: If more work is created, who does it.....	95
11. Responses to interviews: "Has economizing created more work and, if so, who does it?".....	96
12. Questionnaire responses: average hours of housework on a typical weekday.....	100
13. Questionnaire responses: average hours of housework on a typical weekday-spouse estimate compared to self report..	101
14. Questionnaire responses: "Have there been any changes in who does the housework since you (or your spouse) was laid off?".....	103

LIST OF TABLES--Continued

Table	Page
15. Questionnaire responses: If there has been a change in housework, who is doing more work?.....	104
16. Responses to interviews: change in amount of housework done by unemployed person.....	105
17. Questionnaire responses: "Who does the housework?".....	111
18. Questionnaire responses: "Considering the chores in your household, do you feel your partner does his/her fair share?".....	116
19. Questionnaire responses: "Have arguments about housework increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the layoff?".....	117
20. Questionnaire responses: "How much satisfaction do you get from doing housework?".....	121
21. Questionnaire responses: Who makes decisions?.....	128
22. Questionnaire responses: "Who makes day-to-day decisions?".	132
23. Questionnaire responses: "Who makes big decisions?".....	132
24. Questionnaire responses: "Do you think your authority has become weaker or stronger since the layoff?".....	136
25. Questionnaire responses: Do you think your authority is stronger.....	136
26. Questionnaire responses: "Do you think your role in the family is more important, less important, or has remained about the same since the layoff?".....	138
27. Questionnaire responses: percentage favoring equal rights for women.....	141
28. Questionnaire responses: "Has your opinion of equal rights changed since the layoff?".....	142

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Questionnaire items illustrating the relationship between the economy and the family.....	71
2. Questionnaire items illustrating relationships within families.....	98

PREFACE

The last few years have been a period of economic decline, especially in the industrial Midwest. During the years 1981-1984, I lived in a small industrial town in Ohio that was changed profoundly by the recession. As I became close to many of the people in the town where I lived, I realized that I was in the midst of a large "social experiment" because of the recession, and I wanted to record its history. Because the economic and social events were disconcerting and sometimes devastating to the subjects of this "experiment", I felt that the events should be recorded and analyzed. My purpose is not only to preserve the history, but also to learn something from the events so that, possibly, something of benefit can come of the changes taking place.

C. Wright Mills (1959:3) wrote that, "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both." This dissertation is an attempt to understand both and to illuminate the connection between the economic decline that has come to characterize the current history of our society, and the lives of individuals who are living through these times. It is my hope that the information in this dissertation can help us to understand the effect of recession on human lives and thereby allow us to more knowledgably determine the kinds of changes we would like to see in our society and the best ways to implement those changes.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the middle of the 1970's the American economy has experienced significant decline. After more than three decades of expansion, every indicator of economic growth has begun to reverse. Unemployment, inflation and fiscal crisis have increased. Real wages have declined. Banks have closed and countries have defaulted on loans. There is much debate about the cause, direction, and solution to the economic crisis, but there is no doubt that the period of the last decade is marked by serious and problematic changes in our economy.

An economic system is not an abstraction set apart from humans. It is a social organization of people creating themselves as well as the means to their survival.

"The mode of production must not be considered simply as being the production of physical existence of individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of the individuals expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life so they are. What they are therefore, coincides with their production, both what they produce and how they produce," (Marx and Engels, 1973:42).

An economic crisis does not remain at the level of "things"- wages, banks and money- but is a social crisis as well. If an economic system is an arrangement of many people working together to create subsistence and self, a crisis in that economic system will not only

create a breach in our ability to produce and distribute commodities like food and shelter, it will also create a crisis in our selves. Such times call into question who we are and how we live.

The link between economic crisis and social crisis was observed during the Great Depression of the 1930's in the United States.

"The depression of the early 1930's was like the explosion of a bomb dropped in the midst of society. All the major institutions such as government, family, church and school, were obviously profoundly affected and the repercussions were so far reaching that scarcely any type of human activity was untouched" (Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937:v).

Stouffer and Lazarsfeld also noted that during such a crisis fundamental ideas and patterns of behavior, particularly about maintaining traditional relationships of power, are called into question. We are forced to examine the way in which our social system is maintained when that system seems unable to justify itself.

"It may be that in the effort to adjust to the shock of depression, war, or other dramatic crisis situations, change itself becomes temporarily a habit. Certain traditional ideas may have received a shock in the depression. The depression stimulated an increasing questioning of the validity of authority and tradition" (1937:4).

Questions begin to be asked that were not asked before- questions about who we are and how we shall live. As scholars living through similar times, our job is to identify the variety of answers to these questions.

Stouffer and Lazarsfeld argue that all facets of society are affected by an economic crisis. In this dissertation I focus on the particular issues of family and gender as systems of authority and tradition that may be "shaken" during a period of economic decline. Zaretsky (1978:213) noted that "the problematic and difficult trade-off between women and men in families tends to become unstuck during a

period of unemployment." In this dissertation I will look at problematic and difficult trade-offs between women and men in families, evidence that traditional trade-offs may becoming unstuck, and I will examine the kinds of alternative trade-offs that are being created.

FAMILY: AN ARENA OF GENDER POLITICS

I have chosen families as the site at which to look for the impact of economic recession. I made this choice, first, because in our society families often mediate relationships of women's and men's individual lives. Families are primary units of resource pooling. For example, although it is individuals who are laid off, it is often families that are called upon to reorganize in ways that can allow individuals to survive (Morgan,1978; Kolko,1978). One cannot capture a true picture of the hardship caused by recession without measuring family unemployment rates and family wage decline, since multiple earners may buffer the effect on individuals who live in families (Watts and Skidmore,1978). On the other hand, unemployment of one person may affect many others if they are her/his dependents. Therefore, families can interact with the economy as units tied as a whole through wages. If the tie is broken by unemployment, the family as a whole is affected. Although, as we shall see, this effect occurs in gender stratified ways.

The second reason for choosing family as a site is because a central concern of this research is the question of the political relationship between women and men. It is in families where many of us literally confront each other as woman and man. Those people who do

not literally confront a member of the other sex in their household, are still defined by the ideology of intimate heterosexual relationships.

"Gender division of social production in capitalism cannot be understood without reference to the organization of household and the ideology of familialism. This area represents the primary site of relations between women and men, of the construction of gendered individuals and is closely related to the organization of social production. The structure and ideology of family in contemporary capitalism is surely the most salient issue for any Marxist feminist approach to address" (Barrett, 1984:186).

Families are units tied to the economy as a whole, but they are not homogeneous. They contain within themselves their own set of relationships and both conflict and consensus of interests. One of the major factors which makes families non-homogeneous is gender.

THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT

This research was carried out in the Midwest. In recent years, the Midwest has been especially hard hit by economic crisis. "The Midwest was once the bedrock of the wealth that made the United States the envy of the world. Recovery will come to the rest of the economy, but the Midwestern depression belt and other pockets of traditional industry will be 'left out'" (McGrath, 1983:29). The departure of industry from the Midwest to other states and other nations and the automation of those industries that were left behind, have created changes in the economy and especially in the number of jobs that will undoubtedly have a very long term effect.

I collected the data for this dissertation during the 1981-1983 recession. This recession marked a culmination of a series of

recessions that characterized recent economic history. "Since 1969, recoveries from each recession have generally been weaker and shorter in duration than their predecessor" (Urquhart and Hewson, 1983:3). Following on the heels of the 1980 recession, the economy entered a severe recession in 1981, and labor market conditions deteriorated throughout the year. The recession of 1982 was unique because it was the first time since 1920 that a second recession began so soon--12 months after another one had ended (McGrath, 1983).

The major characteristic of the 1981-1983 recessions was the rise in unemployment rates. During this time period the popular press was filled with statistics describing the intensity of the recession. For example: "The official rate of unemployment in Flint, Michigan is 24.6% reflecting the loss of 20,000 jobs at General Motors. Hibblings, Minnesota claims a rate of 28.4% but local officials privately put it closer to 40%. Rockford, Illinois lost 17,000 jobs in manufacturing in the last three years. The steel industry alone laid off 86,000 workers in the Monogahela Valley" (McGrath, 1983).

In 1980 a total of 21.4 million U.S. workers experienced unemployment (Terry, 1982). The unemployment rate was already high in 1981 and reached 10.8% by the end of 1982, higher than any time since the Great Depression (Urquhart and Hewson, 1981). In addition, a large proportion (22%) of those who were employed were only working part time (Bednarik, 1983). For example, one report on auto workers (Lansing State Journal, 1985) indicated that 21% of laid off workers had found jobs, but they were part time, without benefits and averaged \$5.62 an hour.

The duration of unemployment for the individuals who were laid off during this series of recessions was also unusually long. In 1979 the proportion of all jobless who had been unemployed more than 15 weeks was 33%. In 1980 that proportion rose to 41%. By 1985 in the auto industry, the average worker had been laid off 66 weeks and 20% of the laid off workers had been without work for two or more years (Lansing State Journal, 1985). The situation has remained difficult. In 1986 the government reported that of the 11.5 million workers who lost their job because of plant shut downs from 1979 to 1984, 40% had not found new jobs (New York Times, 1986). People who have never been called back after their layoff are called "job losers" in government reports, and according to Urquhart and Hewson (1981) they accounted for an extraordinary proportion in the 1981-1983 recession.

The problem of unemployment was not evenly distributed across the economy. The large numbers of unemployed were concentrated in production jobs in the industrial sector. "Housing, steel, and auto plus the industries that supply these basic industries were in a prolonged down turn spanning three years or more and bore the brunt of the job cut backs" (Urquhart and Hewson, 1981:13). The goods producing sector represented 30% of jobs but accounted for 90% of the jobs lost in 1982. In 1980 one quarter of all blue collar workers experienced at least one week of unemployment compared to one tenth of white collar workers (Terry, 1982).

The buying power of people who were laid off during this period was greatly reduced. The impact of unemployment on income was severe. In 1980 the median income of persons who had experienced unemployment was \$4,046 or 38% of the median income of persons who had not been

unemployed in 1980. In addition to unemployment and declining income, this time period was also marked by rising prices and high interest rates. Inflation rose from 2% in the 1950's to 7.5% in the 1970's to an unprecedented 10% in the early 1980's (Weiskopf, 1981). In his work on the social impact of economic decline, Caplowitz (1979) found that inflation affected all groups adversely, but blue collar workers were a particularly disadvantaged group.

The picture painted by these numbers is a grim one, particularly for industrial workers in the Midwest United States. Lima, Ohio was the site I chose to examine the experience of economic decline. Lima is located in the Midwest. Its economy is dominated by manufacturing in industries hardest hit by the recession. The people of this study are blue collar families.

RUSTING OUT IN LIMA, OHIO

In the course of my work in Ohio as a university teacher, I met many people who have been personally jolted by the economic recession. As I will explain in more detail in my description of the setting in the Methods Chapter of this dissertation, Lima is an industrial town, where men and some of the women work, or more likely used to work, in plants making cars, buses, trains, televisions and tractors. Many of the women stayed home to raise families and/or have been employed in one of the three large hospitals in town, or in some other pink collar job.

During the 1981-1983 recession, industry in the area shut down, moved out, automated and laid off at an alarming rate. Teledyne Steel

Scheller-Globe and Clark Equipment shut down in the late 1970's. In 1982, Westinghouse moved half of its plant to Mexico. Ford Motor Company retooled its engine plant, automating about 50% of its previously manual production jobs in 1982. The unemployment rate at the time of this research was officially 15% in Lima (Lima News, 1982).

A large proportion of my students were people who were scrambling to obtain degrees in fields like nursing or computer programming in hopes of getting a job. Previously, the men had counted on blue-collar work, and until the recent recession many had lived fairly well and securely. The older men worked in the plants; the younger men planned to do as their fathers had done. Many of the women had primarily relied on husbands for an income, and certainly did not plan to become the only breadwinners in their family. The recession of 1981-1983 changed all that.

In very concrete ways the lives of the people I met in Lima illustrated the increased questioning of authority and tradition to which Stouffer and Lazarsfeld (1937) referred. A failure of the economic system illustrated by layoffs, unpaid bills, lowered aspirations and poverty existed side by side with a failure in the system of traditional gender relations which required men at work earning a family wage and women at home. As I talked to the people, the question which began to emerge was what would be the response of the people to their altered circumstances? Would they respond by creating new ideas and patterns of behavior? And, if so, what would those altered ideas and activities look like?

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The empirical data collected for this dissertation are organized around two specific issues. The first has to do with the effects of economic decline on families as wholes. Within this topic, I examined financial decline, labor force participation, and the substitution of purchased goods and services with unpaid domestic labor (one aspect of economizing). The second specific issue concerns the question of the impact of economic decline on relationships between husbands and wives, including the division of housework, control of decision making, and ideologies about gender equality.

To pursue these questions, I used a blend of survey research and in-depth interviews. I relied on many people in the community to help with collecting data. This was an important reflection of my desire to make this research a cooperative effort between the researcher and subjects.

In the next chapter I will review the literature on the effects of the Great Depression on family and gender, and research since the 1930's on the themes which center this work: labor force participation, wages, economizing, decision making, housework, and gender ideologies. The third chapter describes the methods I used to conduct the research and relationships between the questionnaire data and the interviews. This is followed by three chapters describing the results of my research and an analysis of the findings. These three chapters are organized around 1) the impact of economic recession on families as whole units, and 2) the impact of economic recession on relationships between husbands and wives within families. The

concluding chapter summarizes the research and describes the way in which the empirical data of this work can contribute to the theoretical conceptualization of family.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

The "social experiment" of recession and its impact on families has been conducted several times in the Twentieth Century, the most notable of these being the Great Depression of the 1930's. During the Depression there were a few sociologists who conducted research on families, including: Angell, (1936), Bakke, (1940), Cavan and Ranck, (1938), Komarovsky, (1940), Pidgeon and Mettert(1939). More recently, others, such as, Elder, (1974), Humphries, (1976), Kessler-Harris, (1982), Milkman, (1976), Scharf, (1980), and Wandersee, (1981), have used historical documents to re-examine gender and family during the period of the Great Depression.

Because the Great Depression provides such a dramatic example and perhaps a prototype of subsequent recessions, it is an appropriate starting place for examining the questions of this dissertation. In this chapter I will begin by reviewing the research on family during the Depression, comparing that time to the present, and also noting differences between the two eras. I will then review the literature on the six issues around which I organized my research: labor force participation, wages, housework, decision-making, economizing and gender ideology.

FAMILIES DURING THE DEPRESSION

Milkman's (1976) work on the social impact of the Great Depression was especially important for the conceptualization of my work. Writing in the 1970's, Milkman examined documents from the 1930's. From this historical information, she proposed a model relating economic decline, family organization and gender. Her analysis examined specifically the links among labor force participation, domestic work, economizing and ideology about gender equality. Milkman's conceptualization of the importance of these particular issues and the way in which they fit together were the basis of my choice of issues to examine for data gathered during the recession of 1981-1983.

Milkman notes that women and men had different unemployment rates during the Great Depression. Men were more likely to become unemployed than women, because the occupations that were considered women's work contracted less than those in which men were concentrated. However, this advantage for women narrowed as the Depression progressed.

The Depression also affected the employment rates of women and men differently. Many women who had previously not worked outside of the home were drawn into the labor force in increasing numbers in the 1930's because, as their husbands were laid off, they sought paid employment to compensate for their husband's loss of wages (Brown, 1929; Cavan and Ranck, 1938; Komarovsky, 1940).

The net result was that the employment rates of women and men became more similar. In addition, the Depression tended to draw women into the labor force, or allow them to stay, at the same time as

men were being pushed out. This trend toward greater similarity for women and men in terms of labor force participation is important to the social construction of gender. The definition of "femininity" becomes more similar to "masculinity" as both include the factor of working outside of the home for wages. In addition, to these ideological changes, participation in the labor force may also provide a material basis for women to obtain greater equality to men. For these reasons, the introduction of women into the paid labor force has been argued to be a key to gender equality.

Another change that took place during the 1930's, because of financial necessity, was the introduction of more widely accepted birth control. "One of the most remarkable events during the depression was the widespread acceptance by Roman Catholic leaders of the safe period theory. The number of medically directed birth control clinics rose from 40 to 288 between 1930 and 1936. The birth rate declined" (Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937:137). Freedom from numerous pregnancies and large families has also been cited as an important key to creating greater equality between women and men. During the 1930's the situation seemed to have changed around the questions of work and reproduction, in ways that could have allowed for greater equality.

However, it was during this same period that public opinion about the desirability of women working took a large step backward. In contrast to the increased necessity of women working outside of the home and their increased labor force participation, ideology about women working actually became more conservative. Disapproval of married women who worked for wages was especially fervent. Scharf

(1980) observed that the attack against women workers was two pronged. Women workers were criticized for competing with those who had a rightful claim to jobs. And working women were criticized for having abrogated their domestic social responsibilities.

Several sources note the strength of the expression of these criticisms. For example, a 1936 Gallup Poll, indicated that 82% of Americans polled felt that married women whose husbands worked should not earn money (Gallup, 1936). Good Housekeeping (Halle, 1932) reported that many of the thousands of letters that piled high in the offices of the emergency unemployment relief committees suggested the elimination of the woman worker as a means of ending the unemployment distress. New York Assemblyman Arthur Schwartz, among others, announced that "the employment of married women was reprehensible" and admonished our federal, state and local governments "to cooperate to remove these undeserving parasites" (Scharf, 1980:405).

The criticisms of wage-earning women did not remain as only opinions. Many states reactivated laws which dismissed female civil servants when they married. In 1932, the marital status clause, known as 213 in the Economy Act, provided that when reducing personnel in any branch of civil service, married persons must first be dismissed (Parkhurst, 1935:742). The National Education Association found in 1931 in 1500 city school systems that 77% refused to hire married women as teachers and 63% discharged women who married (Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937:37). In some cases the dismissals did not wait for legal sanction. "In 1925, without legal sanction, married women were dismissed from the Federal Bureau of Printing and Engraving" (Scharf, 1980:45).

The critical opinion polls and the legislation punishing women who worked for wages is especially striking when contrasted to the expectations for the future that early feminists had projected in the decades prior to the 1930's. Since the turn of the century, significant economic progress had been made, suffrage had been won, and the socially emancipated flapper was the woman of the 20's decade (Chafe, 1972). However, by 1935 Genevieve Parkhurst was asking "Is Feminism Dead?" She wrote, "In 1920 it looked as if the first paragraph of a happy ending to the century long struggle for equal suffrage had been written, (but) during the past 15 years women in our western world had lost more than they gained; that indeed, instead of having progressed they had retrogressed legally, politically, and economically" (Parkhurst, 1935:736).

She further notes that this link between economic decline and the degradation of women occurred not just in the United States, but throughout the world. "In all other occidental nations, women have taken their losses in varying degrees, German womanhood being the greatest losers. That this is so is all the more startling, since for twelve years before the rise of Hitler the German women were the marvel of the feminist estate. In Britain it was declared that if all women were put in their place there would be no unemployment situation" (Parkhurst, 1935:737).

The impact of these regressive changes on the women of the Depression era is obvious. Scharf (1980:64) argues that loss may have been more long term than is first apparent. "The loss of the right to gainful employment for women was short termed as the war occurred with its labor shortage. Of a more lasting impact was the erosion of femi-

nist rhetoric and thought. By the time the employment of married women burgeoned during and after World War II, a positive ideology encouraging personal and occupational progress and equality had vanished, a casualty of the depression decade."

In spite of the opinion polls and legislation, women continued to enter the labor force. "The total female labor participation rate rose in the period from 1930 to 1940 more than any previous decade in the twentieth century" (Milkman, 1976:80). Married women increased their labor force participation by 50% in the decade, while their numbers in the population increased by only 15% (Bolin, 1978).

Although the ideology did not prevent women from entering the labor force, it did diffuse people's discontent away from the economic system and toward women. Prescriptions for domestic bliss and family stability were only a few steps removed from more hyperbolic pleas for social and political order based on traditional family structure and roles (Scharf, 1980). Scharf (1980:143) quotes Florence Birmingham scolding "Working wives are deserters from their post of duty, the home, which in the American system of government is the only unit of society on which the country depends for existence." It appears that in the 1930's the critical questioning of the system of government that Stouffer and Lazarsfeld (1937) described was deflected to changing the institution of family. As the economic and political system became less able to justify itself, criticism was transferred to the family; the deterioration of one system of authority and tradition (the economy) was blamed on the deterioration of another system of authority and tradition (the family). And, the deterioration of the family was blamed on women.

Milkman also describes the impact of the Depression on unpaid domestic work. She observed that not only did women increase their work load by entering the paid labor force and take the blame for a failure in the economy, they also took up the slack in the economy by increasing their work load in the unpaid labor force in a struggle to make ends meet. Many women managed to approximate their family's standard of living despite lowered income by substituting their own labor for goods and services they had previously purchased in the market place.

During this time there was also a revival of domestic industry such as taking in laundry and selling baked goods. In this way women further buffered the economic impact of depression by turning their unpaid domestic skills into cottage industries. Stouffer and Lazarsfeld (1937:37) estimated that three million families took in lodgers in 1930.

As another example of the increased burden of work for women, Milkman argues that women's role as nurturer and psychological and emotional center of the family was undoubtedly intensified as the husband lost the basis of his identity. The need for a "personal life" that Zaretsky (1976) argued was characteristic of capitalism, apparently was intensified by economic distress.

Interestingly, changes that demanded an increased contribution from women to their families were not perceived as an intensification of the exploitation of women's labor. Instead, the changes were perceived as women capturing control over family activities and power over family members. There was much criticism of women and concern for the husband who was no longer able to contribute in a proper manner to

his family. The changes that took place which increased wife's participation in both paid and unpaid work were understood as a loss of authority for men.

This problem of loss of authority of unemployed men, captured the attention of most of the small number of sociological writers who examined family during the Great Depression. For example, a central issue of Komarovsky's work (1940) during this period was determining the basis of authority of men in families and how that authority was affected by unemployment. Komarovsky cited several reasons why men's unemployment creates a loss of authority for men in families. First she argued that if the husband's claim to authority is based upon his ability to support his wife, then unemployment will undermine it. Komarovsky also argued that the increased presence of the husband in the home might diminish his authority. Finally, she wrote that personality changes might occur in the unemployed husband that result in a loss of authority.

Komarovsky and another sociologist of the era, Bakke (1940), found that gender interferes with families making a decision to respond to economic crisis in a way that would benefit the family as a whole. One example of this concern is the allocation of housework. Although it would "make sense" for the unemployed man to do more housework, "the husband picks a few strongholds and does not yield power within them. Frequently his stronghold is housework. Housework is so closely identified with women's role, performing it is a symbol of degradation." (Komarovsky, 1940:44). Instead of housework becoming a place to be productive and contributing for an unemployed man, it became one more challenge to his proper place. Therefore, moving from

the position of being without a role to being a househusband was experienced as a loss and not as a gain.

Bakke who studied the distribution of domestic work found patterns similar to those in Komarovsky's research. He found that housework remained women's work even when men were unemployed and women were in the labor force.

"The chief change comes when the wife tries her hand at gainful employment. Her activities take her time away from domestic duties making it necessary for her to place those duties on other members of the household, usually this means children...There is some difference of opinion as to whether unemployment resulted in a greater amount of domestic work on the part of the husband...In many cases the hold of custom is strong. Both husband and wife feel that any thorough redistribution of domestic duties is somehow not proper procedure." (Bakke, 1940:182)

Beyer (1931) found that other female relatives helped working women with housework, especially with childcare.

Bakke (1940:178) emphasized the impropriety of men doing domestic work by commenting on the psychological state a man must be in to succumb to doing women's work. "The change wrought in him is evidenced by the fact he submitted to his wife's insistence that he help with scrubbing floors and doing the wash (though he still refused to hang out clothes, an activity in which he would be seen)."

Bakke (1940:128) describes the flow of events as proceeding from the layoff of the man to his emotional decline, resulting in his involvement in housework, and finally, as in the following case, to the domination of the entire family by the wife.

"Unemployment presented a necessity which freed the mother from the bondage of cultural standards which had here to fore held some of her abilities in check. Mr. Milano pushed aside in the dynamic processes of family functioning was a sorry figure. His unemployment pushed into the position of open leadership in

family affairs, the one person competent to fulfil the obligations of leadership-Mrs. Milano."

Not only does the husband lose his breadwinning role, he also eventually becomes so disheartened he gives up his parental role as well.

"The wife assumed a greater degree of responsibility for management and for distribution of the available income. The husband considerably discouraged and tired out by his search for work, usually takes this excuse to withdraw from his parental responsibilities in other respects so that decisions as to the activities of the several members of the family customarily descend on the mother also" (Bakke, 1940:184).

Finally, Bakke (1940:202) says that the control over family that the wives had gained was inflated by the economic situation.

"Decisions which are taken for granted when the husband is earning normally are raised to large proportions when the husband is out of work. For example, the family must carefully decide which doctor to go to or whether to cash in the insurance policy."

Scharf (1980:142) argues that that the transference of responsibilities occurred without the conscious manipulation or even approval of wives. "Studies indicate the lengths to which women regardless of social class carried attempts to mitigate the effect of the changed status (woman as primary breadwinner) on their husbands. With few exceptions, those wives who assumed new work roles within the traditional family framework exhibited little desire to usurp positions of authority." Her description is quite different from the one Bakke gives of the tyrannical wife.

In any event, it is clear that a decision to divide work more evenly, which seems more rational given the need to increase domestic work because of economizing, and the husband's lack of other opportunities to contribute to the family, ran counter to the social

construction of gender during the 1930's. The power of men relative to women and ideas about what is appropriate for women and men to do created a barrier to making a decision to redistribute domestic work in a less gender stereotyped manner.

Another example of this conflict between the needs of the family as a whole and the need to maintain gender stratification within families is illustrated by the problem of replacing the unemployed husband's wages by having wives enter the labor market. Komarovsky's sample only included families where both the husband and wife were not employed, because the families she interviewed came from relief rolls. Bakke, however, looked at families where the man had been laid off, and his wife was in the labor force. In his research, he found that families faced two serious problems when the man was unemployed. One was the adjustment to the financial loss. The other, equally important problem, was deciding whether the wife should enter the labor market. Here again gender ideologies interfered with making a decision that would be rational for the family as a whole.

Research on families during the Great Depression suggests some interesting lessons for our times. However, it is important to note that there are some critical differences between the two eras. First, there are many more women now in the labor market and much more legitimization of their presence. Work for women is no longer seen as an option but as a right (Scanzoni, 1978). Families are, therefore, more resilient because they have an experienced "secondary" earner. On the other hand, families are less resilient in situations of unemployment, because they already depend on two incomes (Chase, 1979).

Second, the possibility of economizing by substituting domestic labor for market labor is different now than in the 1930's. There are many more items now purchased in the market which could be made at home. But it is doubtful whether it would really be cheaper to do so. For example, it is probably cheaper to purchase second hand or even new, low quality clothes than it is to buy yard goods and patterns (Milkman, 1976). Brown (1982) also shows that compared with the 1930's, a higher percentage of household income is now spent on housing and fuel, items that are not replacable by domestic labor.

Third, there is the question of the strength of feminist ideology and the impact of the women's movement. Both of these would seem to be rather impressive in our times. Their tenacity in a declining economy is yet to be seen.

In sum, observers of the Depression found that economic decline did have an impact on family organization and gender relations. In addition they found that gender ideologies and the gender stratified way in which families are organized, "interfered" with the response of families to economic distress. Women's work increased both in the paid labor force, and in the home. Men's work declined in the paid labor force, but it is unclear whether men increased their participation in domestic work. It is clear that they did not greatly increase their domestic work. Several authors describe how men lost authority in families. In contrast to these changes in activities and authority which seemed to diminish gender inequality, ideology about gender equality regressed dramatically.

POST DEPRESSION RESEARCH

Since the Great Depression there have been eight major recessions (Baxter, 1982). There has been little research examining the questions delineated by Milkman as they have developed through every subsequent recession. Increasingly, scholars are beginning to look at the social impact of the recessions of the past decade (Aldous, 1983; Ferman and Blehar, 1983; Moen, 1979; 1983; Nowak and Snyder, 1985; Rosen, 1982; Snyder and Nowak, 1983; 1984; Willson, 1985). In addition, since the Depression several researchers have looked at the issues in Milkman's work, but only as they existed abstracted from economic change. The next section of this chapter is a history of the literature on the questions outlined by Milkman: women's labor force participation, ideologies about equality, economizing, and authority within families as measured by housework and decision making.

FAMILIES AND ECONOMY

How do families as distinctive units relate to the economy? Specifically, what are the implications for dynamics of labor force participation rates, wages, and economizing? Labor force participation is the placing of a family member into the economy. Wages are the monies flowing from the economy into the family in exchange for labor force participation. To complete the cycle, wages should then be used to purchase goods and services from the market. During a period of economic difficulty economizing is a special form of consumption that reduces purchases from the market and substitutes as much as possible with goods produced in the home.

In this research, unemployment was designated as the sign of economic decline within individual families. Therefore, each of the three issues were examined relative to the unemployment of a major breadwinner in a blue-collar family. For example, I did not examine labor force participation in isolation, but rather, labor force participation rates of husbands and wives were examined given the layoff of their spouse.

One hundred and fifty years ago the family wage was established, pulling women and children out of the labor force and creating a wage for married men which would supposedly allow them to support their families (Humphries, 1977; Pinchbeck, 1969; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1975). The family wage has increasingly become inadequate, and women have steadily been brought back into the labor force (Matthaie, 1980). Ninety percent of women will work outside of their home sometime in their lives, and the proportion of women now in the labor force is over 50% (Antos, Wesley and Triplett, 1979). Of the 13.8 million people added to the work force in the 1970's, two thirds were women (Guzzardi, 1980). The exclusion of women from wage labor was never complete (Kessler-Harris, 1982), but a sign of our times is the ever increasing numbers of women moving into paid jobs (Ferber, 1982).

The labor force participation rate of husbands may have an important effect on their wives' movement into the labor force. There is evidence that a substantial number of women enter the labor force as a direct result of their husbands being laid off (Burgess and Kingston, 1979; Caplowitz, 1979). Although women may enter the labor force because their husband becomes unemployed, research indicates that there is not a simple cause and effect relationship. Ideas about

women's place and the inability to replace the domestic work of the wife may interfere (Rank, 1982; Blackwelder, 1978). There is no research on whether husbands increase their labor force participation when their wives are laid off.

The labor force participation rate of men in the U.S. in this century has remained higher than women's. However, men's participation rates have steadily declined during this time period, while women's have steadily increased. (The reasons men's rates have increased include an aging population with an earlier age of retirement and a greater number of adult men in school.) For example, between 1947 and 1980, men's participation rates declined from 86.8% to 78%. During that same period women's rates went from 31.8% to 51.4% (Berch, 1982:5). Therefore, one obvious reason why women may be more likely than men to enter the labor force when their spouses are laid off is because wives are more likely to be outside of the labor force at the time of the layoff.

One of the interesting aspects of the current economic situation in the Midwest in terms of labor force participation, is the differential impact of unemployment on women and men. In the Midwest, jobs in manufacturing have been the first to disappear, and in some areas they have traditionally been men's work. At the same time, work in the service sector has been female dominated, and has been much less affected by the recession (Terry, 1982; Urquhart, 1981; Wall Street Journal, 1983). For example, nationwide in 1983 the unemployment rate in manufacturing and construction was 20.3%. In wholesale and retail trade it was 10.4%, and in finance and service it was 7.7% (Monthly Labor Review, 1983). As a result, the unemployment rate for men rose

above the unemployment rate for women. It is important to note, however, that there may be higher rates of "hidden unemployment" for women than for men (Blau, 1984).

Traditionally, women have had a higher rate of unemployment. However, in 1982 the unemployment rate for men was 9.8% and 8.4% for women (Monthly Labor Review, 1983). This is a historically unique situation, although it was noted previously during the Great Depression in the 1930's (Monthly Labor Review, 1934; Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937), and during the 1974-1975 recession (Women's Work Project, 1978). In sum, throughout this century women have entered the labor market in greater and greater numbers, especially during periods of economic contraction.

The theoretical importance of the relationship between recession and women's labor force participation rates is described by Willson (1985). Several authors (Benston, 1969; Ferber and Lowry, 1976) have described women as a reserve army of labor. This theory claims that women are brought into the labor market when labor shortages occur and are pushed out as unemployment rises. As Willson notes, the relationship is actually the reverse.

Wages is a second issue within the question of the relationship of family to the economy during a period of recession. Between 1972 and 1981 the purchasing power of the average worker's earnings declined by 16%. The standard of living was lower in 1981 than it was in 1956 (Monthly Labor Review, 1983). These numbers include only the wages of people who are working. Therefore, people who are unemployed are trying to exist on unemployment benefits or welfare during a time when all wages are declining and prices are rising.

Obviously, when there is no breadwinner in the household, income and purchasing power are drastically reduced. Even when a secondary breadwinner is laid off, the household is negatively affected.

In the case where the major breadwinner is a man, and his income is lost because of unemployment, and his wife either enters or remains in the labor market, the problem of reduced income is present because of the inequality of women's wages. Women's wages continue to hover at about 60% of men's (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980). Therefore, if a wife enters the labor market to replace her husband as a family breadwinner, the question of unemployment is resolved, but the question of financial distress is not.

Economizing or replacing purchased market labor with domestic labor is the third topic addressed within the question of the relationship of families as wholes to the economy. The trend in the last century has been to move many tasks from unpaid domestic production to the paid labor market (Brown, 1982; Ehrenreich and English, 1978; Reilly, 1983; Zaretsky, 1976). There is some evidence that this trend is reversed during recessions as families attempt to economize (Advertising Age, 1979; Diggs, 1982; New York Times, 1977; Reilly, 1983; Stover, 1975; Strober and Weinberg, 1980; Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937; Stowell, 1979).

Caplowitz (1979) divided economizing strategies into three categories: bargain hunting, self reliance and sharing. Sharing is illustrated by what is popularly referred to as "doubling up". Over the past century there has been a trend toward smaller numbers of people in households because of a decline in the number of non-kin sharing homes with nuclear families (Laslett, 1978). Recently, some

researchers have found an increase in multiple generation or multiple family households (Angel and Tienda, 1982; Christian Science Monitor, 1983; Thornton, 1981). The significance of this in terms of total numbers is not clear. Statistics indicate that, on the average, the number of persons per household has actually decreased from 3.3 in 1970 to 2.8 in 1980 (Dunn, 1983). This is not just a result of a falling birth rate, but of an apparent change in household types from husband-wife households to single parent and "non family" households, which is the reverse of a trend toward "doubling up". However, it is important to note that the statistics in these reports only give averages. It may, therefore, be possible that both trends are occurring depending on the social class of the respondents.

There are two factors which discourage "doubling up". Unlike the Depression era, many people today live in small urban apartments. The sharing of living quarters that may have been possible in the rural environment of the 1930's would be much more difficult now. In addition, recent changes in government subsidies, specifically food stamp rules may discourage doubling up. The number of food stamps allowable is reduced for people living with others (U.S. Senate Hearings, 1982). Other examples of sharing which Caplowitz (1979) found in his work, are lending and borrowing money, exchanging baby-sitting and repairs.

A second area of economizing is what Caplowitz refers to as "self reliance" or cutting back on purchased commodities and replacing them with one's own labor. After several years of increased use, commodities like frozen foods have declined in sales in recent years (Reilly, 1983; Stowell, 1979 Strober and Weinberg, 1980). Another

example of self reliance is gardening (Diggs, 1982). One witness at the U.S. Senate Hearings (1982) on unemployment among auto workers stated that his family of five could survive on \$135 worth of food stamps per month only because his wife gardened and canned and he hunted.

Gardiner (1975) argues that during periods of high levels of female employment there is an increased use of convenience foods, restaurants, laundries and the like. Land (1978) adds that cuts in social spending which characterize recessions, also increase domestic work. During the recession of 1981-1983, female employment was increasing, but money available to purchase convenience foods, eat in restaurants, or send one's laundry out became more scarce. In a period of economic decline, the way in which the labor market is sex-segregated and the way in which domestic work is allocated may intensify women's work both inside and outside of the home, while men's productive activities diminish.

RELATIONS WITHIN FAMILIES

How are authority or power expressed in activities such as the assignment of domestic work and decision making and beliefs about the ideal construction of gender? As noted above observers of the Depression era were impressed with the changes in authority that took place during that period. There are many arenas in which marital power is exercised. Decision making is one that has been especially popular in sociological literature. More recently, Hartmann (1981) has argued that housework is a key site of the power struggles between

husbands and wives. Ideologies about gender, and especially, opinions of the proper role for wives is a third arena of power examined in this dissertation.

In this research I obtained information on family decision making from self reports. Self reports about decision making in families is a common technique for gathering data, perhaps the most common in sociological research. "Decision making outcomes continues to be the primary indicator of marital power" (McDonald, 1980:846). However, McDonald points out that there are several unresolved problems with this method. First of all, power may be a multidimensional phenomenon (Cromwell and Olson, 1975). Secondly, it may be the process of the interaction of the various dimensions that should be the focus of our inquiry, if we want to capture the reality of marital power. For example, Scanzoni (1979) suggests that we look at processes rather than assume that marital power and decision making are static phenomena. This would allow us to examine factors such as "1) who controls the definition of the family situation which determines the range of relevant decisions, 2) who decides which decisions are to be confronted and which are not, and 3) in the case of delegated authority, who decides which individual will implement the final decision" (McDonald, 1980:844). Safilios-Rothschild (1976) refers to these as orchestration and implementation powers.

These kinds of complexities are not captured by reports of decision making outcome. From such reports, researchers find only who is most likely to make certain kinds of decisions. Although such outcomes may indicate the amount of power or control a family member has, the route to that decision is lost.

McDonald (1980:845) points out another problem with self reports of decision making outcomes. Although the technique is understandably attractive, because of the ease with which data may be gathered, it may be inadequate. "The difficulty with self reports is that while the individual is able to report what decisions have been made, they have difficulty determining who has made them. Thus, many self report measures may be tapping perceived authority or ideals of authority rather than actual power."

Still another problem is inconsistency within households in the perceptions of spouses. A considerable amount of research has relied exclusively on wife's responses (Bokemeier and Monroe, 1983). However, it is becoming more accepted that the generalizability of wife's-only reports is questionable. Although we may have made progress in acknowledging inconsistency within households, we still have no idea which report (if any) reflects the reality.

A final problem with self reports of decision making outcome is that they do not address the question of power resources, that is, what gives individuals within families the power to control, orchestrate or implement decisions. Several sources of power have been suggested. Most frequently economic sources are cited (Blood and Wolf, 1960). Others have suggested that there may also be normative and non-economic components. These include, for example, cultural definitions of who has authority (McDonald, 1980), the level of commitment to the relationship (Safilios-Rothschild, 1976), and personal resources (Bacharach and Lawler, 1976; Heer, 1963; Waller and Hill, 1951). Fully aware of these difficulties, I have used self reports on decision making outcome in the survey questionnaire portion of this

research. Some sense of the complexities behind decision making outcomes were obtained through the interviews. In addition, in both the questionnaires and in the interviews, I obtained information on decision making from both the husband and wife in each couple. In reporting the data, I have contrasted the two points of view--husbands' and wife's--and have discussed the differences I found.

The second arena of gender relationships in families examined in this research is housework. Hartmann (1981) has argued that men maintain control over women by controlling women's labor. This is expressed within households by women doing more housework than men. The unequal distribution of housework that characterizes most families is both, a sign of, and a technique for maintaining, male dominance within families. Not all researchers have agreed with this conceptualization of housework. Berk (1980) observes that in Blood and Wolf's (1960) work, they assume that doing housework is a result of greater resources. Those members of a family who have more leisure time and more skills in domestic work do more housework.

Citing several researchers (Morgan, 1978; Szalai et al., 1972; Walker and Woods, 1976), Hartmann makes the following conclusions:

"First the majority of time spent on housework is spent by women. Second, the wife is largely responsible for childcare. Third the woman who works for wages finds her husband spends very little more time on housework than the husband of the woman who is not a wage worker. Fourth the wife spends perhaps eight hours a week on account of the husband. Fifth the wife spends on average a minimum of 40 hours per week maintaining a house if she does not work for wages and 30 hours if she does."

Others (Blood and Wolf, 1960; Lopata, 1971; Meissner et al., 1975) add that the actual tasks done by men during the time they do spend on housework is different than the tasks done by women. In addition,

if domestic work is redistributed, children are more likely to take up the slack than are husbands (Hedges and Barnett, 1972).

Beer (1983) points out that, in spite of these general tendencies in the division of domestic labor, there is a great deal of variation among households. Sources of variation include the size of the family, the amount of time between marriage and the birth of the first child, and the amount of time between the births of children (Campbell, 1970).

An important question that emerges is: Have changes in the distribution of housework occurred? Pleck (1979:288) argues that although the increments are small, men may have in recent years, increased their family work. Furthermore, he states that the pace may be slow, but "change in this magnitude at the national level represent a substantial phenomenon." Hartmann (1981) has criticized Pleck's position. She claims that the methodology of the research on which he bases his argument, consisted of self reported estimates of time spent on housework instead of time diaries.

Hartmann, in addition states that there is a tension produced as women attempt to get out of the house and into decent jobs, while their time is demanded in domestic work. "We must hope that the new equilibrium (of the double shift for women) will prove unstable, since without question it creates a situation in which a woman's work day is longer than when she served as a full time houseworker, the male as breadwinner" (Hartmann, 1981:381).

In sum, there are two major points made by the literature on housework that are pertinent to this dissertation. First, if doing less housework is an indication of power, men are clearly in a domi-

nant position. Second, changes in women's labor force participation may undermine gender inequality, but they have not eliminated it.

Ideologies of gender is a third dimension of marital power explored in this research. There is a popular notion that public opinion has become more supportive of equality for women in recent years. The research on ideas about equality show a trend toward greater support of equality for women in both their public role and in terms of private relationships (Acock and Edwards, 1982; Campbell, 1978; Gallup, 1982; McBroom, 1984; Scanzoni and Fox, 1980). Hartmann (1981:388) writes that this arena--ideas about inequality--is important because, in order for changes to come about in gender relations, a change in consciousness needs to occur. "The question of whether people are aware is important because the first step in the struggle is awareness."

I examined ideology for changes resulting from economic decline. In addition, I noted the impact of gender ideology on families' responses to economic decline. Much of the literature on this question conceptualizes gender ideology as primarily a cause in the system of gender inequality. For example, Acock and Edward (1982) argue that sex role attitudes explain income inequity in the labor market. Others have argued that ideology has an impact on the division of labor in families (Bird et.al., 1984; Perucci, 1978; Scanzoni, 1978; Stafford, 1980).

In summary, women have continued to enter the labor force in ever increasing numbers, while men's labor force participation rates have declined slightly. Wages rose until the 1970's and, since then, have declined. Women's wages have consistently been much lower than men's.

The substitution of market labor for domestic labor has been associated with the entrance of women into the labor market. Within families, decision making has been a primary arena of gender politics in sociological literature; decision making appears to have become more egalitarian. Most researchers report that ideologies about gender have become more egalitarian and that housework remains women's work.

In the next chapter I will describe the methodology I used to examine each of these issues in the recession of 1981-1983.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This investigation into the effects of unemployment on families made use of a blend of both survey research and personal, in-depth interviews. The many different aspects of this research, including the idea itself and the investigative techniques, came together rapidly as I, literally, moved into the research setting. In this section, I will discuss in detail, 1) the research setting, 2) the development and administration of the questionnaires, 3) the sample population, 4) the survey method, 5) the personal interviews, 6) the relationship between the two types of methods, and 7) data presentation.

RESEARCH SETTING

In 1981, I came to live in Lima, Ohio to work in the Sociology Department of a branch of Ohio State University. Lima is a small (population 50,000) industrial city surrounded by farm lands and small rural towns. Lima is comprised primarily of two distinct social classes. Most people are working class, employed or previously employed in the many factories in town. At the upper end of this class is a small number of people who work at large unionized plants,

such as Ford. At the lower end are the unemployed and poor. The second social class is a small number of people who are upper middle class, and are employed as professionals and business people. At the upper end of this group are physicians and medium size business owners, for example, owners of car dealerships. At the lower end of this group are teachers, social workers, and registered nurses. In addition to a marked segregation by class, many of the people have lived in Lima (or the area) for a long time, and I perceived the community to be relatively closed to newcomers.

Because of my occupation I became part of the small elite upper middle class. This fact and my newness segregated me from the working class people in the city who made up a substantial number of my students. I found myself in the peculiar position of being separate in many ways from my students and the working class community, while at the same time I was constantly in contact with them as a teacher. My peculiar position placed me at the edges of a community of people who, I was to discover, were passing through an important social transition because of changes in the economy.

Partly, perhaps, because I was an outsider, and undoubtedly because I am a trained sociologist, I was able to see the impact of the recession on the working class in a way that was not immediately apparent to the insiders. My students and other members of the community whom I met were aware, of course, of the experience and their feelings about the economic and social changes taking place. But, they did not connect their experiences and feelings--their biographies--with a larger picture of history. This Millsian connection was to become our project. C.Wright Mills (1958), in his essay

on the purpose of sociology, called for sociologists to examine the relationship between biography and history. He explained that as people live their own individual biographies, they also live the history of the society in which they find themselves. These two evolving stories--individual biography and social history--are intrinsically tied together, although most people are unaware of their connection. It is the task of sociologists to illuminate the connection between them and to make participants aware of the link.

My students, as insiders, were to become my allies in the community. As I will describe later, part of the data of this work came from 328 questionnaires administered by my students. In addition, through their own analysis of the data they collected, and through informal discussions of the project, students helped me to formulate and clarify the issues of the research.

The idea of organizing and supervising students as data collectors in their own community on questions of economic decline and family, is not a new one. Angell (1936) had his students interview subjects (their own families) during the Great Depression. Their research remains a classic and one of few collections done during that momentous, but largely undocumented, era.

DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

After having informal discussions with my students about their lives and community and, after having read Milkman's (1976) description of the 1930's, I set out to develop a questionnaire to examine the impact of economic decline on family relationships. I divided the

questionnaire into eight sections: 1) demographic information on subjects, 2) employment history and family finances, 3) housework, 4) decision making, 5) economizing, 6) opinions, 7) expectations for the future, and 8) characteristics of the interviewer.

There were eight issues examined in the questionnaire, although I describe only six in this dissertation. The six issues were organized around the following questions: 1) changes in labor market participation of spouses when a husband or wife is laid off, 2) the effect of unemployment on family finances, 3) changes in the allocation of housework and childcare when a husband or wife is laid off, 4) decision making in families, 5) strategies for economizing during economic decline, and 6) gender ideologies in families where a husband or wife has been laid off.

A pilot study was conducted in the fall of 1983. As part of the requirements of the course, students in my Introductory Sociology class administered a questionnaire (see Appendix A) to a married couple of their choosing (see Appendix D for description of the assignment). After collecting data, students assembled themselves into groups of five or six and summarized and analyzed the data they had collected. They also critiqued the questionnaire and the methodology of the research (see Appendix E for description of report assignment).

Based on their written critiques, their description of problems encountered during the pilot study, and a meeting with my dissertation committee, the questionnaire was revised (see Appendix B and C for revised questionnaires). The revised questionnaire was then administered by students in my Introductory Sociology courses in the

Winter and Spring quarters of 1983 to both husbands and wives in 164 couples. (Actually they were administered to a slightly larger number of people, but some questionnaire could not be used because of faulty subject selection or questionnaire administration.) The data from these 328 revised questionnaires are reported in this dissertation. They are referred to as the questionnaires (as opposed to the interviews). They are summarized in tables in the next three chapters.

The questionnaires used in this research are original, but are based on several sources. From Blumstein and Schwartz's Study of American Couples (1983) comes the wording of the questions on housework, decision making and impact of lay-off on finances. This format was suggested by committee member, Harry Perlstadt, and was one of several changes from the original pilot survey. The questions on economizing are from Caplowitz's (1979) Making Ends Meet. The question of how would you ideally divide up housework and work outside the home was suggested by committee chair, Barrie Thorne. Students suggested that there be two distinct questionnaires--one for the unemployed person and one for the spouse.

QUESTIONNAIRES

The following is a description of the questionnaires and some of the problems and successes observed during its administration. (Please see Appendix B and C for a copy of the questionnaires themselves.) There are two forms of the questionnaire. The first is for the person who has been defined as unemployed, and the other is for his or her spouse. These two are essentially the same except for

the specific wording which is appropriate for an unemployed person or his/her spouse.

The first section of the questionnaire asks demographic information on the subject, such as age and members of the household. Sex and employment status are two important characteristics by which the data are categorized. I compared the responses of the unemployed person to his/her spouse. And, I divided unemployed people and their spouses into men and women. Therefore, nearly all of the tables are divided into four categories: unemployed man, his wife; unemployed woman, her husband.

The second section of the questionnaire covers employment history and finances. A problem in this section was the question of income, about which many students felt uncomfortable asking and which some respondents declined to answer. The normal reticence about revealing income in American society may have been exaggerated by the financially difficult situation in which many of these people found themselves. The average income for the families was slightly over \$5000 a year, and the average household size was four people. This is well below poverty. Answering this question not only was revealing what is commonly felt to be private information, but also an admission of poverty. The questions which dealt with the amount of money earned by family members and with the impact of unemployment on family finances proved to be quite interesting because of the influence of gender, and are further discussed in the next chapters.

The third section was on the division of housework among family members. The first two parts of this section distinguish between weekdays and weekends because research (Meissner, 1980; Robinson,

1972) indicates that weekends are frequently a time of intense housework as a means of 'catching up' for working women. However, the question on the number of hours spent on housework on weekends was unclear. Some people thought it meant hours per two days; others thought it meant hours per day.

Question 11 specifies tasks and proved to be an efficient format for obtaining information, except for one problem - it is not detailed enough for households where children take a lot of responsibility for housework. The questionnaire allows people to respond to questions about who does the housework by saying "the children do it." However, the proportion of the work done by children is not recorded. The question of the effect of economic decline on children in families is an area of great interest that was not covered in this research. (See White and Brinkerhoff, 1981) for a discussion of the importance of children in household work.)

Question 12 was problematic. I was trying to determine if people divided up housework based on patterns they had learned as children, because someone with authority within the household dictated that it be divided that way, or based on individual talent or preference. Most people responded too vaguely to reveal any pattern. The question apparently was not clear enough and perhaps should have been closed-ended with a set of my speculative options as choices.

Question 18, which asked people how they would ideally divide wage labor and domestic work with their spouse, was also unclear. Many people responded, "The way it is now" when in fact their answers to other questions indicated their distress about the layoff

and the current division of work and housework. Here, I was looking for people to say they preferred either a traditional male-breadwinner/female-houseworker arrangement or some alternative. I was especially interested to see if there was some kind difference in response to this question between women and men.

It was difficult to ask unemployed people questions 22 and 23 on loss of authority because, as I explain in more detail in the chapter on results, there is some real sadness being felt about change that is elicited by these questions. The fifth section of the questionnaire is on economizing. The sixth section is on opinions. This section was surprisingly problematic. First of all, people's ideas about equality, at least when elicited by these questions, were narrow and superficial. Secondly, many people were unwilling to even give their opinions. These questions, more than any others were not answered by some subjects. The last two sections were on subjects' expectations for the future and characteristics of the student interviewer. These two sections are not reported in this dissertation.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

About halfway through their Introductory Sociology course, students were given the research assignment for this project. Each student received two questionnaires, one for an unemployed person and one for his or her spouse, a description of the assignment and a statement to be read to subjects explaining the project and guaranteeing their anonymity.

In describing the assignment, I focused on three issues: the importance of the project, the option for non-participation and finding suitable subjects. First of all, I explained to students what the project meant in terms of my career. I then pointed out to them how it was an opportunity for them to participate in recording a piece of history of their community. Next, I explained that they could substitute another assignment if they would rather not be involved in the project. Finally, I discussed the problem of finding suitable subjects. There were two basic criteria for being a suitable subject: 1) the two subjects must be a couple living together as husband and wife, and 2) at least one of the subjects must have been laid off from a blue collar job and be unemployed at the time of the interview.

The major purpose of discussing these three issues was to assure the validity of the data. In all survey research an underlying problem is "are the subjects telling the truth?" In this project I was also concerned about insuring that students were telling the truth. I feel that they were. In addition to discussing the above issues, I used additional techniques for insuring quality data. Students wrote reports on their findings in small groups. The problem of good data became their problem as well. They seemed to police the members of their group. For example, in a small number of cases students informed me that they believed another student's questionnaire was falsified. I did not use those suspect questionnaires in this report.

Another set of concerns in the administration of the questionnaires was obtaining two separate questionnaires from one household.

All individuals in the questionnaire group (and in the interviews) were questioned separately. Subjects were guaranteed anonymity even from their husband or wife. Logistically arranging two separate meetings was sometimes difficult. In addition, even with private meetings, people were very curious about and conscious of what they imagined would be the responses of their spouse. In other words, although their responses were not effected by what their spouses really said, their responses may have been effected by what they thought their spouses had said. For example, subjects would say, "Now I know my husband (or wife) will say differently, but the truth of the matter is that this is the way things get done around here..."

Finally, in reference to the issue of separate interviews, the two sets of answers to the questionnaires obtained from one household were always different. The direction and variation of response is reported for some questions in the next chapter. Jessie Bernard (1972) was one of the first to recognize the phenomenon of two marriages. She argued that each marriage actually consisted of two marriages--the husband's and the wife's. Each spouse attached his/her own subjective meaning to the experience of the relationship. It was anticipated in this research that there would be two sets of responses. This anticipation, however, does not allow for any better understanding of "the truth". This characteristic of the data indicates the need to do time studies and participant observation of family life as well as questionnaires and interviews.

THE SAMPLE POPULATION

The subjects chosen by students were mostly family, friends, and neighbors. However, some found subjects through their church, union, or workplace. The number of subjects who were known closely by students is an indicator of their position as inside allies in this project. Table 1 is a summary of demographic characteristics of the people who responded to the students' questionnaires, the interview subjects and the 1980 United States Census. The census data give the mean age of people living in Allen County, which includes Lima, between the ages of 18 and 65 (the working population). The ages of the three groups are fairly similar. The interview subjects are the youngest, and this younger age may really be a better average for the population of families with a breadwinner who was laid off from production work. The census data may include retired blue collar workers, because production workers with UAW contracts frequently take retirement at an age earlier than 65. Therefore, the average age of the potentially unemployed would be slightly younger.

The number of children in the home as well as the total number of people living in homes are very similar for the general population and the questionnaire group. The interviews were done with people from slightly larger families. Race is clearly the biggest discrepancy among groups. Among all married couples in Allen County, 17.5% are Black, but none of the questionnaire respondents (nor the interview subjects) were Black. Overall, except for the question of race, these comparisons strengthen the argument that the sample was probably

representative. The problem of representativeness is further addressed in the next section of this chapter.

Two other problems lay with the selection of subjects. The two criteria were that the questionnaires must be given to two people living together as husband and wife, and at least one must be unemployed. It was surprisingly difficult to define "unemployed". The problem of definition of unemployment may have important implications for the conceptualization of economic trends. My interest was in examining how economic decline affected families. I projected that many families in an industrial midwestern city would have one adult who had been laid off and was now unemployed. However, in many households, the person who had been laid off was not entirely without employment. For example, in seeking subjects my students and I came across the following kinds of unemployed people: a man who worked for Ford and became laid off, but now works a few hours a month doing maintenance for the school system; a woman who was laid off from a job at a local plant and has since received a real estate license and makes about \$100 a month showing houses; a woman whose plant shut down, and now babysits and does the neighbor's hair for money. Two other variables that confounded this issue were the varying amount of time since the layoff and the varying amount of income due to unemployment benefits and sub-pay. So, for example, the woman who went from a production job to doing the neighbor's hair may have been more affected by economic decline than the person who was now entirely unemployed, but who was still receiving unemployment and sub-benefits.

In these cases I decided who was unemployed by examining each situation and declaring that a significant downward trend in work and

Table 1. Comparison of research samples to census of Allen County, Ohio, 1980.

	<u>US Census</u>	<u>Subjects of Questionnaires</u>	<u>Subjects of Interviews</u>
<u>Mean Age</u>			
Women	38	35	29
Men	37	36	32
<u>Marital Status of Persons Over 15</u>			
Single	23%		
Married	64%	100%	100%
Separated	1%		
Widowed	8%		
Divorced	6%		
<u>Mean Number of Children in Home for Married Couples</u>			
	2	2	3
<u>Mean Number of People Living in Home (Greater than 2)</u>			
	3.5	3.2	5
<u>Race Among Married Couples</u>			
	17.5% Black	0% Black	0% Black
<u>Occupation</u>			
Bluecollar	39%	100%	100%

income was "unemployment." All of the above examples were approved as suitable subjects. The issue of defining unemployment has a much greater importance to the central conceptions of this work, not to

mention public-policy, than choosing subjects. It indicates that researchers and policy makers need to examine economic decline, not as a sharply delineated event in the lives of individuals and communities, but as a gradual sinking process. We perhaps need to look at not just unemployment trends as a sign of economic recession, but employment trends as well. The economic situation is characterized by runaway shops and high unemployment. It is also characterized by changes in employment from secure well paid work to insecure, low-pay, temporary jobs. Although I had anticipated this kind of trend within households, I had not considered it in terms of individuals' work histories. That is, one of the effects I anticipated was that if one person in a family were laid off, another person would enter the labor market at a lower paid job. I neglected to consider that the person who was laid off might also re-enter the labor market at a lower paid job.

The other critieria for choosing subjects was that they be married couples. This may have created a bias that was important to the findings. These couples may be unique in some ways because they were married rather than divorced. For example, one of the major findings discussed in the Chapter 5 is that arguments over the division of domestic labor escalated in households where the man was laid off. Questions such as these may have been affected by limiting the subject population to currently married people.

DEFENSE OF THE SURVEY METHOD AND LIMITATIONS ON GENERALIZING

The subjects who responded to questionnaires were not randomly chosen. Therefore, it is not proper to say that the findings are representative of anything except this particular group. Nevertheless, the data provide an interesting landmark in the process of looking at major social transitions. In addition, because of the relatively large sample from a restricted and relatively small population, the findings undoubtedly represent trends among substantial sectors of the population. Table 1 seems to strengthen the argument that my sample was representative.

The problem of non-randomness was not one that I have dismissed lightly. I considered trying to obtain a statistically representative sample. However, the difficulties in doing so seemed insurmountable in terms of time and money. Therefore, I decided that the importance of the investigation into the issue outweighed the importance of the research being the final definitive statement.

One of the reasons I became interested in this issue was that, in Lima and in other communities like Lima, the people seemed to be "falling through the cracks." At a United States Senate hearing(1982) a UAW representative stated,

"Nobody knows what is happening to these people. There is no list of laid off industrial workers in the Midwest. Once they use up their unemployment benefits they are not even counted as unemployed. If their spouses manage to keep the family off welfare the government has no idea who they are. Once they leave the company and the union, their name is dropped from those lists."

The only way, then, to select a representative sample was to sample the entire population and then select out for the criteria of "laid off

from blue collar work and married." This would be a difficult task without the proper connections and funding. I made the choice that the most meaningful information would be obtained by a less rigorously selected but larger and more intensively questioned subject group. The only other alternative was to delay the work until a research team could be organized and funding assured. It seemed to me that I had a unique opportunity, because I was one of very few able to conduct any research in this area of the country. Finally, there are several respected pieces of research that have recently been done on questions like those examined in this dissertation that have used non-random samples for their work (Hood, 1983; Beer, 1983; Rubin, 1976).

Rubin (1976:14) defends her non-random research "sample" by arguing that there are different and equally valuable contributions made by various methodologies. There is a missing element in quantitative studies in spite of their careful sampling techniques. "They tell us nothing of the experience of the flesh and blood women and men who make up the numbers. This is not a failure of those studies. They are not designed to do so. Therefore, we also need social science that is so designed." My work was designed to capture an important moment in history with a combination of qualitative methods through the interviews and a large sample from a relatively small area. Hood (1983) defends her research by warning readers that generalizability should not be done without qualification. In this chapter I have compared my "sample" with census data in order to give the reader a basis of comparison and a criterion for assessing the generalizability of the information and its limitations.

Using students as an avenue to select subjects was determined to be the best option of the various alternatives. This method provided an efficient way of obtaining relatively large numbers of respondents. In addition to efficiency and large number, a strength of this alternative is that it allowed collaboration of many people--students and their subjects--from the community being investigated. As I have suggested and will develop further in this paper, many students, themselves members of the working class community that was being so intensely effected by the economic recession, remained isolated from researchers like myself who were interested in examining and publicizing their plight. Recently, an Italian sociologist, Ferrarotti (1981) has for both political and scholarly reasons tried to organize his research in this kind of "cooperative mode." He refers to the technique as "conricera", that is, research with the people.

In spite of the breadth of information and the benefits of collaboration, there are some specific flaws in the data that are immediately discernible. Most important is the factor of race. Lima has a relatively large proportion of Black residents. The census reports that of all married couples in Allen County, 17.5% are Black. However, only a handful of OSU-Lima students are Black. The fact that nearly all of my students were white and that our society is socially segregated by race resulted in there being no subjects of this study who were Black. The question of variation by race is of course central to research on family and economy.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

The second data set consists of twenty two in-depth interviews which I personally conducted in the spring of 1984. The interviewees were eleven married couples who were living together at the time of the interview. In nine of the couples the husband had been laid off from a blue collar job. In two of the couples the wife, as opposed to the husband, had been laid off from a blue collar job. Each interview took from two to three hours. I interviewed husbands and wives separately. During the interviews I took notes, and all but four were recorded and transcribed. The couples who were interviewed were people I had met informally or who were suggested by friends or other interviewees. All but one couple were initially contacted through the wife, who then asked her husband if he would be part of the research. Arrangements for the interviews were made by phone or mail if they had no phone. All of the interviews took place at the subject's home except for one couple who chose to meet me at my office.

When I arrived at the home of the couple to be interviewed, I explained that I needed to do the interviews separately with the wife or the husband. They, then, decided who should go first. I chatted for a brief time about themselves, their house and their children. Then I explained to them what the research was about and why I doing it. In keeping with the ethics of informed consent, I gave them a copy of the statement approved by the Human Subjects Committee at Michigan State University (see Appendix F). Finally, I asked them if I could record our conversation. All of those I asked agreed to be recorded. I used the revised questionnaire as a guideline for the

interviews. I began by asking them the first few items on the questionnaire: their age, household members, and length of marriage. The next topic was their work and history and the specifics of their latest layoff. Then, I asked them about the five topics in the questionnaire: housework, decision making, economizing, opinions about gender equality and their future. For some people, I had only to mention the topic and they responded by talking about nearly every issue of importance to me. For others, we stuck quite closely to the questionnaire because they were less articulate about the issues and needed more specific questions. I also asked them to clarify their answers and to give examples of situations providing information that was not obtained with the straight questionnaires.

Some of the interviewees had given a lot of thought to the questions I raised. Most, however, had not apparently thought about the issues before I brought them up. All of the people were polite and tried to give clear answers. However, the women seemed to be more enthusiastic about discussing these issues and "getting their stories out." The men seemed less interested (perhaps a little puzzled by some of the topics) and their interviews were much shorter. This difference may have been because the women were the ones who originally agreed to be interviewed. Second, the interviewer was a woman. Third, women are more willing to self-disclose. Finally, it may have been because several of the topics of discussion were "women's issues", for example, housework, family life. The men seemed to warm up more when the topics came closer to their turf, for example, home repair projects.

It is also interesting to note the role of the interviewer and interviewee here. Oakley (1981) comments that in much research the interviewer constantly actively constructs the respondent as passive. The interviewer controls the situation by seeking out the respondent, creating and asking the questions and deciding when the questions have been answered. Oakley is critical of this relationship and has worked on alternative approaches. Nevertheless, it exists even among those who are trying to be less manipulative in their research methods. In my research, in half of the interviews a woman interviewer was actively and continually constructing the male respondent as passive. In particular, on the questions about losing power as a result of the layoff both the interviewer and the respondents were uncomfortable.

Oakley has also noted that women respondents being interviewed by women may be especially responsive for three reasons. First, they are more used to official intrusion into their lives by, for example, doctors and social workers. Second, an interview conducted in an informal way in their own home can easily take on the character of an intimate conversation among women. Finally, she suggests that the isolation of many women in their homes creates loneliness that may make them more accepting of the interviewer just as a diversion and an opportunity for an adult conversation.

Oakley (1981) has, furthermore, reflected on the ease of interviewing women as not only an opportunity for good data collection, but also a possibly exploitative situation because of the greater vulnerability of women interviewees. She describes how the situation of women interviewing women can take on the appearance of an intimate, sharing talk. This means that much information is disclosed to the

interviewer which would not be available to a more formal questioner. The data collected are richer. However, it is also of a more private nature placing the subject in a more exposed position. Therefore, my attempts to be more egalitarian may have actually made the subjects more vulnerable to my invasion into their lives.

The problem of vulnerability made interviewing the most difficult part of the research project for me. I felt that I was prying into people's lives, and I had nothing to offer them in return. I believe that the work benefits the subjects because it can perhaps draw attention to their problems, and because it at least records their history. However, those benefits seemed to me to be abstract ones to the specific people who invited a stranger into their homes and answered questions about their personal lives.

Although the research situation does have these kinds of problems in terms of potential exploitation, it is possible that subjects participate in research for reasons they perceived to be to their own advantage. Perhaps the participation of people in my interviews was not based on naivete or vulnerability; perhaps they could understand the benefit of "telling their stories" better than I knew.

My ambivalence, based on the concern mentioned above, was reflected in a confusion I felt between conversation and interviewing. For example, I sometimes shared my thoughts on the issues because it made me feel less of an intruder and more reciprocal. I was trying to set up a more mutual and equal relationship between us. This may have put people more at ease, but it may also have biased their answers. (I would argue, however, that their answers were undoubtedly affected anyway by what they thought my opinions might be on the different

topics.) Finally, in interviewing I had the problem of being unable to challenge people on their answers even if they contradicted their previous answers. This problem would probably have been at least partly alleviated if I had done more than one interview per subject.

THE COUPLES

The following is a brief introduction to the couples who participated in the interviews. The names are fictitious. The surnames are similar in terms of ethnicity to the real names.

1) Amy and Art Miller have been married for thirteen years and they have two children. Art worked for 18 years in skilled trades in a large plant in town that made farm machinery. He had been laid off for three years at the time of the interview. His job paid very well. Amy had stayed home through most of their marriage, and they had a very traditional division of labor in their family. They also were relatively affluent. They told me how their children took piano lessons, they could buy an RV when they wanted and they had bought their own home. Shortly before Art was laid off, Amy took a job in the school system as a teacher's aide. The pay was low, but she enjoyed the work. Since Art was laid off, their financial situation has plummeted. However, according to Amy, even more difficult than the money problems is the problem with Art's ego which has been crushed. She has, in her words, " become the strength of the family" - managing finances, dealing with the welfare office, arranging garage sales and becoming the main breadwinner. He wants to move south to get work. She doesn't want to leave her family and friends in Ohio.

2) Betty and Bob Johnson have been married for seven years and have two children of their own and two children from his previous marriage to Betty's sister. Bob had a semi-skilled but relatively well paid job at Ford for 15 years. At the time of the interview he had been laid off for six months. Betty has not worked outside the home since they were married "because Bob won't let her." Betty is from a very poor family, and is worried about their future "because she knows what its like to be poor and it isn't fun." Bob is less concerned. He is still drawing sub-pay and unemployment which brings him about 85% of his previous earning. He also plans to become an independent trucker and is buying a truck.

3) Candy and Chuck Evans have been married for three years and have two small children. A year ago he was laid off from his work in construction as a carpenter and had decided to go back to school to become a nurse. Candy had worked as a clerical and at several unskilled jobs before she became pregnant, but quit work to take care of the babies. They are currently living on ADC. Chuck sees his layoff as not just a negative event, but as an opportunity, since he likes working in the health care field better than carpentry. Chuck and Candy are concerned about creating an egalitarian relationship, particularly in terms of sharing childcare.

4) Denise and Doug Engels have been married for ten years and have two children. When they were first married, Doug was making good money at Ford and, in their own words, they were "having a ball." When Doug was first laid off three years ago, they thought he would be called back and enjoyed his time off as a vacation. However, he has not been called back and their economic situation has become very bad-

to the point where they often get food from relatives as their only way to survive. They are now living on ADC and Denise is going to school to get a nursing degree. Doug takes care of the home and the kids. They have both changed their ideas and their activities as a kind of rational response to the situation. However, the change has not been easy, and they both are still uneasy and unsettled.

5) Ginger and George Fitzgerald have been married for fourteen years and have four children. Ginger is Candy's sister (of Candy and Chuck). They also have another one of Ginger's sisters, who is currently unemployed, living with them. George had worked for ten years for a tire company that went bankrupt seven months ago, leaving him very abruptly without a job, in fact, without his last two paychecks. Ginger had worked on and off throughout their marriage in seasonal unskilled production at a popsicle factory. She had also done some part-time maid work. Since George was laid off, Ginger has begun working fulltime with quite a bit of overtime at the popsicle factory, and he stays home with her sister to run the house. They seem to enjoy their new responsibilities except for the poverty. Ginger especially loves her work and is doing well.

6) Heather and Hank Gates have been married 19 years and have four children. Hank was laid off from his job as a welder nine months ago and, since then, discovered he had become disabled because of his work. Although he could probably get similar work at lower pay in a smaller non-union shop, he cannot work because of his disability. Heather also worked in unskilled production in a small shop and had been laid off. Heather has become, in her words, "a Jill of all trades." She baby sits, does hair, bakes cakes, makes ceramics and

jewelry and occasionally fills in for an answering service. Heather and Hank seem to be determined to maintain a very traditional image of their relationship which contrasts sharply in some ways with the reality of their lives.

7) Julie and John Rogers have been married for nine years and have one child. John is a salesman. He likes his work, but it doesn't pay well. Julie is the unemployed person in this couple. She had done semi-skilled work at a large plant, making good money until a year ago. Julie welcomed her layoff because she wanted to return to school to earn a degree in order to obtain white collar work. Because she receives GI benefits as a student, their combined income since her layoff remains above poverty level. However, relative to her previous pay there has been a severe drop in their life style. Julie and John spend a lot of time trying to maintain an egalitarian relationship. Julie feels the strain of the main breadwinner role in addition to her role as wife, mother and student. Since our interview, I have learned that Julie reluctantly quit school when she was called back to her old job. She said, "We needed the money. Maybe later I can quit and get my degree."

8) Lisa and Larry Adams have been married for fourteen years and have two children. Larry had been laid off a year ago from his job of ten years at Libby's Canning plant. Lisa has worked on and off in sales and at unskilled production work. She is currently working as a janitor. Lisa is especially concerned with thriftiness, cutting corners and making do. Larry fills his time with working on their house and working on cars for fun and, also, to supplement their income. After some struggle, they have in their words, "reversed roles." He

has taken over most of the housework while she works outside the home. Her income is not good, but they are still living on savings and he expects to go back to work soon. Larry and Lisa are Bob and Betty Johnson's neighbors.

9) Rick and Rita Degraff have been married for ten years and have three children. Rick has had unsteady work in factories throughout their marriage, so this was "just another layoff." However, although layoffs are not unusual for Rick, their financial situation is especially bad because they have never been able to get ahead. Rita has been a housewife since she married Rick at the age of fifteen. Their relationship is very traditional. He is especially unable to do "women's work." Interestingly, he feels bad about not helping her at home, but says, "I just can't do it." She also feels that domestic work is really her responsibility. However, her ideas about a traditional division of labor are strained when he is home without work and she continues to do her housework.

10) Sara and Sam Wilson have been married for fourteen years and have five children. He had worked in semi-skilled production work until he was laid off two years ago. She has worked as a nurse's aide and is currently working part-time as a swim instructor and selling cosmetics. Their relationship is relatively egalitarian in terms of dividing up housework, although she is also the only one working outside of the home now. Sara feels ambivalent about her new role. On the one hand she worries that her role in the family has diminished, but she is clearly excited about her work outside the home. She described plans to increase her hours and open her own

business. Sam is not happy staying home with the children and housework.

11) Valerie and Vince Turner have been married for six years and have three children. She is the unemployed person in this couple. She had worked in skilled trades at Ford until ten months ago. He is a butcher and works fulltime, but is looking for a better paying job. In addition to the loss of income that resulted from her being laid off, Valerie lost their only medical insurance. Two of their children have chronic health problems that require frequent hospitalization. Although this is the most salient issue in her layoff, they also expressed some relief in her being able to stay home as a full time housewife. Vince is especially in favor of having Valerie continue to stay home if he can get a better job. Valerie would prefer to get her old job back, but likes the time to get her work done at home.

DATA PRESENTATION

The data from the questionnaires are presented in tables giving percentages of the total number (n) responding to the various questions. There were 164 couples in this group; 135 were couples where the husband had been laid off from a blue collar job. Twenty nine were couples where the wife had been laid off from a blue collar job. On most questions respondents were grouped into four categories: unemployed man, his wife, unemployed woman, her husband. The statistics are only descriptive and do not give levels of significance. This is because the "sample" is not random, so the concept of significance is meaningless.

The data from the interviews are reported by quotations from the respondents, and in a few cases in tables that are labeled "Interviews". There were twenty two in-depth interviews of 11 couples. Two were couples where the woman had been laid off. Nine were couples where the man had been laid off from blue collar work.

BLENDING METHODOLOGIES

In his examination of the history of sociology, Sieber (1972:1335) describes "the historical antagonisms between the proponents of qualitative fieldwork and of survey research." He characterizes the classic debate between Becker and Geer (1957) and Trow (1957) as the extreme point of the polemic. Becker and Geer (1957:28) professed the superiority of field research: "The most complete form of the sociological datum, after all is the form in which the participant observer gathers it; an observation of some special event, the events which precede and follow it, and the explanations and meaning by participants and spectators, before, during and after its occurrence. Such a datum gives us more information about the event under study than data gathered by any other sociological method. Participant observation can thus provide us with a yardstick against which to measure the completeness of data gathered in other ways."

Trow criticized this position by arguing that we need different methods for different questions. There were others during this period who took a much stronger position, arguing the superiority of scientific survey methods for all sociological research (Lundberg, 1961). Zelditch (1962) continued in the tradition of Trow by agreeing that

there was room within the discipline for different methods, and proposed a system for determining which among the methods of survey, participant observation and interviewing, was most appropriate for various types of questions.

Siebert concludes his history of the debate by going one step further. He advocates the integration of the two methods. He argues that it is unnecessary to use one method or another. Instead we should use combinations of techniques. The integration of methods will bring us both quantitative (literally more information) and qualitative (from the synthesis created) benefits. Lever (1981) in much more recent work describes an example of this synthesis in her work on multiple methods. She argues that multiple methods not only validate (or invalidate) each other as Webb (1966) contends. Lever says the divergence sometimes found in multiple methods is a source of information itself. For example, if people say one thing in response to a survey but do another in field observation, this divergence could be used by the researcher to illuminate the difference between what people think they should do and what they are able to do. In this way, in the synthesis--at the intersection of the two methods--we find a source of information that is not available from either of the methods alone.

Siebert carefully outlines the contributions fieldwork can make to surveys and the contribution surveys can make to fieldwork within the same project. The contributions field work can make to surveys include locating the collective for sampling that can best maximize advantages for a comparative study. In addition, field work can help to create the most effective questionnaire able to capture the atten-

tion of subjects, motivate them to respond and be understood in the way the researcher intends. Finally, field work can assist in the analysis and interpretation of data in seven possible ways: 1) theoretical structure, 2) validation, 3) interpretation, 4) construction of indices, 5) external validation, 6) case studies, and 7) clarification.

Siebert also describes how surveys can contribute to field work. Surveys can provide a statistical profile of populations to aid in the selection of informants and identify the representativeness or unrepresentativeness of cases. This is particularly helpful in order to prevent the "pitfall of the elite bias"-the tendency for fieldwork researchers to gravitate to a particular strata of informants, especially those at the top of an institution or community. Finally, Siebert describes four ways in which survey research helps us to understand field observations. Surveys can correct the holistic fallacy, which is the tendency to try to find congruency in the whole situation being observed, when in fact there are real incongruent factors. Survey data can buttress the generality of a single (or small number of) observation. Questions can be generated from serendipitous survey findings that may then be examined in the field.

I would like to comment briefly on the actual development of my methodology. It might be expected that I was aware of all of the above theoretical issues and simply applied them to my research interests. It did not happen this way. When I first came to Lima, I actually began to do an informal and largely undocumented version of participant observation. As a newcomer and an outsider I was not trying to do sociological research, but was trying to understand the

community and my role as a teacher and political activist within it. Out of the observations I made as a participant in the community and through some self reflection, I developed a questionnaire for my particular research interests; it was subsequently administered and revised by interactions with my students and additional observations. After being revised, the questionnaire was administered, with my students as data collectors, to a large number of respondents. Next I decided that the research required interviews where I could discuss the issues in a more structured and conscious manner, than in my informal interactions with students and other people in the community.

I thought the surveys would add breadth to the project, so that I could make a stronger argument about the representativeness of the data. In addition, the responses to the questionnaires were limited and easy to summarize in order to readily see similarities, differences and trends. I thought the interviews would allow the people to speak in their own words about the issues, and in turn, allow me to obtain information and worlds of meaning not previously known to me and, therefore, not accessible through the questionnaire I had designed. In other words, I thought the interviews would give me more of an insider's view. Moreover, the interviews would be useful to clarify the responses to the survey and would offer possible ways to analyze the survey data.

The entire project then, was really composed of participant observation (undocumented), surveys and interviews all weaving in and out for three years. My conscious conceptualization of the project during the time I lived in Lima was much more limited. Only after I had been involved in the research for three years, when I began to

reflect on my research and write my dissertation, did it occur to me that my research reached beyond the boundaries I thought it had.

This oversight stems from an incorrect definition of "the field". Schatzman and Strauss (1973:2) argue, "going into the field sometimes conjures up images of sharply circumscribed territories and exquisite control over a multitude of variables... the field researcher understands his field--whatever its substance--is continuous with other fields and is bound up with them in various ways." My definition of "the field" was one of a sharply circumscribed territory into which my students and I would enter as researchers at specified times. As I now reflect on my work, "the field" could more accurately be described as the social context of many of my interactions with relatives, friends, neighbors and respondents to the questionnaires and interviews. I am not trying to argue here that my informal observations as a participant in the community fit the much more rigorous definitions of that term as it is properly used in the discipline of sociology. I am, however, arguing that these undocumented, informal interactions and observations affected my thinking as I began to analyze the data I had collected from the questionnaires and interviews. And, I regret that I did not define "the field" more broadly and that I did not methodically record my observations over the three years I lived as a participant in the community I studied.

As it turns out, in my work, I had used several of Sieber's ideas. He suggests that field methods (here I am stretching the definition of field methods to include open-ended interviews as well as the undocumented informal observations I described above) can help to find a representative sample. From my informal observations of the rela-

tionship of Ohio State University to the community, I noted that the university is embedded in the community. It is a commuter school in a small city in an isolated agricultural area two hours from Toledo, Columbus and Dayton. The students are very much representative of their community. Many of my students were non-traditional and, therefore, represented a wider range in terms of age, marital status, and employment that is sometimes true of college students. In addition, many of my students were women and men who had been laid off from industrial jobs in town. These facts led me to believe that they had access to or were themselves the population I was interested in examining for my research on the effects of economic recession on blue collar families.

Another way in which field methods contributed to the subsequent development of the survey was by actually creating the central question of the research. The focus of the work on the questions of family and gender was only partly influenced by my own concerns, which I brought with me to Ohio. Part of my decision to do research on these issues was based on my observation that these were issues discussed by people in the community. As Sieber suggests, I used my qualitative observations to create a project that I felt would capture the interest and support of the subjects.

More consciously, I used the interviews to assist in the analysis and interpretation of the data. In several places in the following chapters I point out how the interviews clarified, validated or "corrected" the survey results. For example, I note the complexity hidden beneath the numbers in several of the questions.

As Sieber has shown, surveys can also aid field research. The questionnaire data help to support the generalizability of the interviews. At several points in the next chapters I note the contrast between the interviews and the questionnaires and the possible unrepresentativeness of certain cases. Finally, the questionnaires pointed out a serendipitous finding that should be followed up. The differences in the impact of unemployment on families was very different depending upon whether it was the wife or the husband who had been laid off. This was not evident in the interviews because the number of couples in which a wife had been laid off was too small.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: ECONOMY AND FAMILY

This chapter examines changes in the relationship between the economy and the family during a period of economic decline. The various questions which illustrate this relationship are given in Figure 1. The topics within this section include 1) workers flowing from families into the economy (labor), 2) money flowing from the economy to families (finances), and 3) services and commodities flowing from the economy to families (economizing).

The remainder of the data reflect changes in relationships within families. This includes questions about housework, decision making and ideas about equality for women. The data from these questions are reported in Chapters 5 and 6.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six report responses to the questionnaires and the interviews. The questionnaire data are reported in tables, and the interviews are reported primarily in the form of quotes. However, there also some tables which summarize the interviews, and these will be labeled as such. In addition, patterns I observed in the interview data are reported and analyzed in these chapters.

ECONOMY

FAMILY

Labor

"What changes have taken place in labor force participation of family members since the layoff?"

Finances

"How much money is being brought in by family members?"
 "How severe have cuts in income been since the layoff?"

Economizing

"How have you economized?"
 (ie., replaced goods and services purchased previously in the market with goods and services produced in the home)

Figure 1. Questionnaire items illustrating relationships between the economy and the family.

LABOR MARKET PARTICIPATION

Table 2 summarizes responses to the question "Has your work changed since your spouse was laid off?" The questionnaire responses are divided in two categories: wife of laid off man and husband of laid off woman. The largest number of people in both categories said there had been no change. Fifty percent of the women who were married to men who had been laid off said their activity in the labor force had not changed. Seventy five percent of the men who were married to women who had been laid off said their activity in the labor force had not changed.

The response "no change" may hide the possibility that an attempt was made to find work or increase hours, but that it was unsuccessful. For example, in the interviews Lisa Adams and Betty Johnson answered this question "no change" because there was currently no change.

However, both had previously tried to change their position in the labor market, but were unsuccessful.

"I looked for more work, but you can't get much overtime there. If they did, I took it. I'm still hoping for full time."
Lisa Adams

"I just couldn't do it out there (at the college). There was no one to watch the kids. I have a hard time getting a babysitter for four kids. There aint nobody wants to watch four kids."
Betty Johnson.

Table 2. Questionnaire responses:

"Has your work changed since your spouse was laid off?"

	WIFE OF UNEMPLOYED MAN	HUSBAND OF UNEMPLOYED WOMAN
No change	50.0%	75.0%
Took a new job	17.2%	15.3%
Working more hours	16.4%	16.0%
Went back to school	6.7%	3.6%
Looking for work	14.2%	7.1%
Other	7.5%	3.6%
	n= 135	n=28

These two quotes illustrate two themes that develop throughout the research. One is the importance of the sequencing of events and the point in that sequence at which the families found themselves at the time of the research. Betty Johnson's husband was still drawing unemployment and Lisa Adams' husband still had savings and both men were optimistic about being called back. They were at a relatively early stage in unemployment and this may have influenced their responses to the layoff. Other researchers have noted the importance of the sequencing of events after a layoff. For example, Ferman and Blehar

(1972) distinguish among seven types of unemployed men in terms of their place in this process.

The second theme is the way in which the social construction of gender affects responses to the layoff. Betty Johnson's comment illustrates this theme. Betty's husband is unemployed and home full time. Therefore, although she doesn't verbalize it, her inability to find a baby sitter is a problem because her husband does not babysit. Her response to his layoff is controlled by the social construction of gender which discourages men from taking over domestic work and the inability of women to work outside the home and fulfill their obligation as wives. Lisa Adams's comment also reflects this theme. Women are more likely to be part-time workers in our economic system. Therefore, her inability to alter her participation in the labor market may be because she is a woman and is more likely to be "stuck" in part time work even though she would like to have a full time job.

Another kind of change that may have been registered as "no change" was when there was change in the perception of the labor market activity in spite of no change in the actual activity. For example, Amy Miller explained that she had had a job as a teacher's aide before her husband was laid off, mostly, as she put it, to get her out of the house. Her conscious commitment to the work, as well as its importance in her husband's eyes, increased greatly after his layoff because it was their only source of income other than welfare after his unemployment benefits ran out.

"I started work just before he was laid off. I wanted to get out of the house. The income is a lot more important to me now. In the beginning I didn't care, but everything's changed--not just the money. I am the strong one now." Amy Miller

It is also interesting to note that Amy perceives this as not just a change in her responsibilities within the family, but as a change in her relationship to her husband; that is, she is not just doing different things she has a different position relative to her husband. The way she expresses the change indicates a sense that authority has somehow passed from her husband into her hands. Their relationship was previously dominated by Art but now she is the "strong one". Komarovsky, (1940) and Bakke (1940) observed changes in authority within the family as an important effect of the Great Depression. I will further elaborate on the question of changes in authority in the next chapter.

An interesting process described in the interviews was the decision to take a job or look for work. Denise decided to return to school to get a degree in nursing after her husband was laid off from Ford. She explained how she decided to make the change from a full time housewife to nursing student.

"The worst thing about it was the depression. It got so I resented him, but then I thought 'what am I doing about the situation?' That's when I decided to go back to school. I would not have gone back to school otherwise. It was a blessing in a way. I enjoyed being at home. I felt only I could take care of the kids. When I first got married it was great. He made the money; I spent it. Now the kids don't need me as much as I thought. I see now where I would want to go back to school."
Denise Engels

A theme in Denise's comment is the juxtaposing of opportunity and necessity in her decision to take a job. The necessity of someone getting work in the family and the inability of her husband to do so, forced Denise to re-evaluate her beliefs about mothering. Although she infers that she would probably have wanted to enter the labor force after her children were a little older, the economic crisis at

least speeded up her transition and perhaps even allowed it since she said "I would not have gone back to school otherwise."

This theme of hidden opportunity in crisis was reflected in other interviews with women who went to work or to school to prepare for work when their husbands became unemployed.

(going to work)"was the best step I ever took, not just due to the fact that he was laid off right after, but because I went to work...Since I've started working everything has changed. I almost see myself growing past him. I have become independent."
Amy Miller

"I do enjoy working... the people, and like I said the money isn't good good, you know, but its pretty good and the responsibility, you know, that I can do something and I am important."
Ginger Fitzgerald

"I wanted to have a job and help out until he got back to work, but now I would really like to have an aquatic school of my own."
Sara Wilson

Heather Gates was the only one in the interviews in the category of having a husband who was laid off while she was in the labor force who did not say she welcomed the opportunity of working for wages. (See Table 3 for a summary of the occupational status of the people in the interviews.) However, even she implied that she found some pleasure in working outside the home in her enthusiastic description of the jobs she had. She talked at length about all of her various jobs and who she had met and what she had learned from her work. But her assessment of the situation was that it was mostly necessity. And when asked directly if she liked to work outside the home she said:

"I do a lot for the lady down the street I'd rather be doing my own. I think, God I wish I were doing my own." Heather Gates

Table 4 summarizes the responses from the questionnaires on the issue of the current work of the spouse of the laid off person. The data are divided into two categories: wives of men who had been laid

off and husbands of women who had been laid off. Table 2 indicated that on the questionnaires, 50% of the women respondents said there had been no change in their position in the labor market as a result of their husband's layoff. In contrast 75% of the men who were married to laid off women said there had been no change in their labor force participation as a result of the wife's layoff. Table 4 provides one possible explanation for this difference. As shown in Table 4, 86% of the husbands of women who had been laid off were working full time. In families where the man had been laid off, only 43% of the wives were working full time. There appears to be more untapped potential among wives than among husbands in terms of the possibility of entering the labor market.

Table 3. Occupations of interviewees at the time of the interview

Unemployed men with wives who were employed
or in school preparing for employment

Miller, Art.....	Clark Equipment	Amy.....	Teacher's Aide
Engels, Doug.....	Ford	Denise....	Nursing student
Fitzgerald, George..	Tire Co.	Ginger....	Production work
Gates, Hank.....	Welder	Heather...	Beautician, Baby-sitter, Cleaning Lady
Wilson, Sam.....	Scheller-Globe	Sara.....	Life Guard, Avon Lady
Adams, Larry.....	Libby's	Lisa.....	Janitor

Unemployed men with wives who are housewives

Evans, Chuck.....	Carpenter	Candy
Johnson, Bob.....	Ford	Betty
Degraff, Rick.....	Unskilled Production	Rita

Unemployed women with employed husbands

Rogers, Julie.....	Tank Plant	John.....	Delivery and Sales
Turner, Valerie.....	Ford	Vince.....	Butcher

Table 4. Questionnaire responses:
What is the unemployed person's spouse doing?

"What is the wife of the laid off man doing now?"		"What is the husband of the laid off woman doing now?"	
works full time	43.3%		85.7%
works part time	19.1%		3.6%
Housewife	35.1%		0 %
Unemployed	2.2%		10.7%
n=134		n=28	

An important missing question is "why did you (the spouse) not seek full time work?" Although this question was not directly asked in the interviews, people discussed the ways in which they had made the decision for the spouse to enter the labor force or to stay at home. In their discussions there appeared to be three reasons why the spouse did or did not attempt to enter the labor force: the husband decided, it was a mutual decision, it was beyond the couples control.

The Johnsons and the Degraffs were two families where the husband had been laid off and the wife was not in the labor force. The women did not seek work after his layoff. Their comments indicate that the reason the wives did not enter the labor force was that the husbands had decided that the woman should not seek work outside the home.

"Bob don't want me to get a job period. He says it will mess up his income tax. When the kids get older most definitely I'll be getting a job. I don't like staying at home. I like being around people. See there's really not much of anybody here (in the neighborhood). Everybody on this road works. I see these people very little. I don't like being by myself. I like lots of people all of the time." Betty Johnson

"I would just prefer to have me working and my wife doing the housework. I don't feel a woman should have to work for a living if I can make ends meet." Rick Degraff

"Rick's just used to me being around the house. He says he don't want me to work." Rita Degraff

Chuck and Candy Evans illustrate a second reason why a spouse might not enter the labor force. Their comments suggest they made a joint decision that Candy would stay home after Chuck had been laid off. Their responses to why Candy stayed home were similar. Both claimed that they believed that children are best cared for by their mothers and since their children were young, Candy should stay home to take care of them.

"I wanted to quit. I told Chuck which he agrees, I want to stay home with the kids- not to leave them with a baby sitter." Candy Evans

The underlying reason that Candy, Rita and Betty did not seek employment after their husbands were laid off may have been the same. All three families had young children and the wives' labor at home may have been especially difficult to replace. However, there is a difference in the way in which the decision was reached. Chuck and Candy Evan's decision was reached mutually. Rick Degraff and Bob Johnson decided in their families.

A third reason was illustrated by the Millers, Engels, and Wilsons. In these families the wife was working or had gone back to school because it was necessary, although neither husbands or wives were entirely happy about the decision. The decision was explained as a result of the situation which necessitated that the wife enter the labor market and which was beyond their control and their ability to express their real preference. The Millers, Engels and Wilsons had

made non-traditional decisions in spite of their traditional ideas about women working outside of the home.

"It bothered me more (going to school while he stayed home) because I felt my job was in the kitchen and in the home. But I felt like while he was unemployed I had to. It all came down to money." Denise Engels

"I've always been a good provider, a family man; I don't drink. But now its a whole different ball game. If you have any respect it gets to you. But if I'm not making money she has to." Doug Engels

"Maybe its the way I was brought up. I'm still a little old-fashioned. Women should be home. Its a 25 hour a day job. We need her pay. But I wasn't raised like that." Art Miller

"Its probably depressing not working and knowing I'm working. A lot of problems stem from him not working. More than just a lack of money, I've become independent (working outside of the home). He's threatened. I don't feel threatened. But he feels threatened about breaking up our marriage." Amy Miller

"My one problem is the children. I'd rather I'd never have a babysitter. I'd like it so I only worked the hours they were in school. I think he felt, in fact he said, I was trying to compete with him because I wanted to have a job and help out until he was back to work." Sara Wilson

"I prefer she would have a larger share of housework. She should do 70% and me 30%. She would work part time during the children's school hours...Sometimes we argue. I feel she is pushing a role change that I wasn't ready to accept." Sam Wilson

These quotes reflect a similarity in terms of having made a decision for a wife to work and not feeling entirely comfortable with that decision. However, there are several different reasons given for why the decision was a difficult one to make. Denise Engel's and Art Miller's explanation is based on beliefs, that is, they feel that it is not quite right for married women to work. The other explanation are more explicitly political. Doug Engels', Amy Miller's, Sara and Sam Wilson's statements reflect a concern for the political relationship between themselves and their spouses. And, in particular,

they reflect a concern for the change in this political relationship that seems to be related to the change in the division of labor.

It is also interesting in looking at these comments to recall from above that the women in these couples also had noted that, in spite of the difficulty of stepping outside their traditional "role", they had eventually come to see it as a positive step. The men do not convey that kind of feeling. For the men, the decision for the wives to work outside of the home while the husbands stayed home was difficult and remained problematic.

One comment made in the interviews illustrated another issue related to the question of married women working outside of the home. Lisa and Larry Adams made the decision to allow Lisa to work outside of the home, but her husband retained the right to limit her job options. Her comment illustrates a mixture of ideology, control and objective facts that create the decision for a woman to take a job outside of the home. We see here the idea that it is legitimate for a husband to decide about his wife's work outside of the home. We also see his authority in being able to implement that power through the acceptance of his word by the wife; we also see the objective basis of his authority, that is, a rational choice about the danger of one particular job.

"He doesn't want me to work in a gas station. Its too dangerous. I worked in a station where a guy got killed and he did make me quit that one." Lisa Adams

On the questionnaires there were a series of questions on decision making that are reviewed in Chapter 5. However, one question is appropriate here, and that is "who decides what job you should take?" Each respondent was asked this question and asked to indicate how much

influence his/her spouse would have on the decision on a scale from 1 to 9. For example, an unemployed man would be asked who decides what job he should take. If he answered 1 that would mean that he made the decision entirely on his own, and if he answered 9 it would mean that his wife made the decision entirely for him about what job he should take. Table 5 shows the average response to this question for each of the four categories: unemployed man, his wife, unemployed woman, her husband.

Table 5. Questionnaire responses:
"Who decides what job you should take?"

	Unemployed Man	His Wife	Unemployed Woman	Her Husband
Average responses on a scale from 1 to 9, where 1 means you decide and a 9 means your spouse decides.	2.1 n=134	5.7	3.1 n=28	3.6

Table 5 indicates that, on the average, the wives of laid off men were most likely to be influenced in their decision about what job they should take. Laid off men were least likely to be influenced by their wives. In families where the woman had been laid off, both she and her husband were a little more likely to think their spouse had an influence on what job they should take than men in families where the husband had been laid off.

In sum, then, almost half the wives of unemployed men were likely to change their position in the labor force. When a woman is laid off her husband is likely to change his position in the labor force only 25% the time. Based on the information from the interviews there is a complexity behind the apparently large number of spouses who say there has been no change in labor force participation. "No change" is interpreted differently in different situations and there are a variety of reasons for why changes in a spouse's labor force participation rate did or did not take place.

FAMILY FINANCES

How did layoff affect family finances? Wages generated in the labor market and brought into households constitute a major tie between the economy and families. A layoff creates a break in that tie. However, once again we will see that the break is not a simple event, but is experienced in a variety of ways. Table 6 shows the average responses given by the questionnaire group to the question "How much has the layoff affected your finances?" Respondents were asked to answer on a scale from 1 to 9 where a 1 meant not very much and a 9 meant severely. Once again in order to compare responses, the people who answered the questionnaire have been divided into the four categories: unemployed man, his wife, unemployed woman, her husband.

Table 6 indicates that, first, in families where the man was laid off the layoff was perceived to have had a bigger effect on finances than in families where a woman had been laid off. Second, within

families the laid off person (both men and women) perceived the financial loss as more significant than did her/his spouse.

Table 6. Questionnaire responses:
"How much has the layoff affected your finances?"

	Unemployed Man	His Wife	Unemployed Woman	Her Husband
Average responses on a scale from 1 to 9. A 1 means not very much. A 9 means severely	7.0 n=134	4.1	4.4 n=28	2.5

In the interviews there were a variety of responses to the question of changes in finances since the layoff. Some people commented on the heavy impact it had had on their life style. They emphasized the contrast between their lives before and after the layoff. Their description of the transition emphasizes the dramatic difference in their lives since the layoff. Before the layoff, spending money and buying some of the luxuries of life was a major part of their lives. Now they are concerned about the barest necessities. The comments also reveal some embarrassment about their situation. They feel ashamed at the welfare office, in front of their parents, and their friends. They lost, not just the "things," but a whole life style and a source of pride and identity.

"Now I'm beginning to see how people feel when they're on welfare. We ran out of unemployment and our savings. Its not easy for others, but its especially hard for us because we're not used to it. We have to live on ADC but we're criticized

for having life insurance and a van. I've never had to deal with this. They try to embarrass you. They make you feel guilty because we're not totally impoverished, like our daughter takes piano lessons. All of her friends are from families with good incomes. Its hard for her to continue friendships." Amy Miller

"A job is my biggest goal now. I used to have a goal to have so many thousand dollars. But now I just want a job." Art Miller

"When Jeff was at Ford's and the kids were little, my biggest highlight was going groceries. It was my time out. After the money quit coming in he did it (the grocery shopping). I hated to leave behind the things I wanted. His parents used to send home food, you know when we went there for dinner. I always hated it like they were treating us like kids. Now we take anything anyone would offer." Denise Engels

"When I got laid off it was supposed to be temporary. Because of taxes we actually made more for a year on unemployment. We had a ball, being off and making good money. We was always on the run. Now we mainly stay home to save on gas. She makes a list and we take one trip a week into Lima." Doug Engels

"It (the financial situation) became difficult because I wanted to give the kids pizza sometimes and it got so I'd order it and duck out to get it before he realized what I had done." Sara Wilson

"We used to visit a lot, but that's changed. As the money dried up its hard to have people over because we couldn't afford pop and snacks." Sam Wilson

"Its a big change because the money was so good you wouldn't believe it. We bought two cars. One a really nice fancy one and a king size bed. We had savings. We didn't go crazy but it was nice." Julie Rogers

"Sally really needs to work. When she isn't working we have no hospitalization, because my job doesn't provide benefits. Our two kids are in and out of the hospital a lot. Our bills are over \$4000." Vince Turner

"To me its affected it severely. To Bob, he could care less. He's one who don't worry about anything, but I worry more than he does because I think of the four kids. And I'm from a poorer background you know. My idea of security is somebody with a job with money coming in from week to week, and unemployment doesn't last forever." Betty Johnson

There were some people in the interviews who said they did not feel as dramatic a difference in their situation after the layoff.

Bob Johnson and John Rogers were examples of those who felt relatively unscathed financially. Their comments reflect an interesting difference of opinion within households, because their wives (Julie and Betty) said that the economic impact of the layoff was significant.

Their comments also point to an important factor that was not systematically explored in this research; that is the length of time since the layoff and the sequencing of events. Art Miller, Sam Wilson and Doug Engels had used up their unemployment benefits, while John Roger's wife and Bob Johnson were still receiving some. In addition, John was quite sure that his wife would be called back to work soon. Bob was in the process of buying a truck and starting a new career as an independent trucker.

"Her getting laid off hasn't really changed that much around here. It's not like she's unemployed or something with her going to school and money coming in." John Rogers

"It always affects you a little bit, regardless if you're unemployed. With me I get my unemployment plus sub pay with it. It isn't near as bad. I'm pretty close to what I was making--right around 85%. It comes down to where you are still losing ground but you're just not losing it quite as fast as you would a been." Bob Johnson

These two examples present an interesting contrast. In Betty and Bob Johnson's case, the spouse of the unemployed person was more impressed with the financial loss of the layoff. In Julie and John Roger's case the spouse was less impressed. Julie and John are consistent with the average findings on the questionnaire. But perhaps those averages hide this kind of variation.

Larry Adams, like John Rogers and Bob Johnson, thought the layoff was not devastating. Larry still had some savings from his severance pay and expected to be called back soon. Once again, it is the timing

of the interview plus the access the family has to other resources that makes the critical difference in their perception of the impact the layoff has on the family's financial situation. Lisa Adams agreed the layoff was not devastating, although she seemed a little more concerned.

"We had to cut back but not on necessities. Like I had to get ride of my motorcycle. One thing that helped us there was I got a good chunk of severance pay. Without that we would have been in a lot worse shape." Larry Adams

"Unemployment (benefits) paid all of the bills. Where as when he was working we had money extra to go places and to do things. With unemployment we never have any left, like you know going to the show or something. Mine (my checks) does the groceries. I buy all the groceries with my check. When he worked he paid all the bills and I paid the groceries. We divided it up kind of. That aint very good even. My checks aren't very big and that's about all I can buy." Lisa Adams

Before I began this research I had conceptualized the break between work/affluence and unemployment/poverty as being very sharp. I discovered that recession is more likely to be experienced as a slow sinking--what some have called "rusting out". The line is obscured in some cases by programs like unemployment benefits and sub pay.

Ferman and Blehar (1983:590) discovered this in their work on unemployment in Detroit.

"We began thinking that the actual episode of job loss was the big trauma; but we were dead wrong. What we're finding is that job loss in many cases is only mildly traumatic compared to what follows--searching for a new job, dashing of hopes that the old employer will call again, being rebuffed by new prospective employers. These are the events that try the patience and sanity of most workers."

For others the line is obscured in another way, because even when they are working their pay is so low, relative to their family's size, that poverty is always with them.

"We've always been pretty much the same because he never has made that much, and as the family increased, he wasn't making any more." Ginger Fitzgerald

"He's laid off, on and off every year. We never have our bills paid off." Rita Degraff

"If I can just get a job that I won't be laid off through the winter I'll be satisfied." Rick Degraff

Candy Evans felt the impact was severe, but she also felt there were some advantages to poverty.

"I'd like to make about \$150 a week, but on ADC we only get \$390 a month and our rent is \$375, and then we have our gas and electric. So everything is really short around here. My sister's working and if we don't have money for diapers she helps out. But I think both of us being unemployed right now - I think not having that money brought us closer together.(Interviewer:"Not having money or having the time together?") "Not having the money and having the time. As a matter of fact I told Chuck I don't ever want that much money because you fight more. It seemed that way when I was still getting money from my pregnancy leave and he was working. We fought more about what we wanted to buy and stuff and now its just for necessities.I think we get along better. In a way I like it this way." Candy Evans

Others were not as enthusiastic about the poverty, but also saw advantages that counteracted the financial loss. Earlier, I described the way in which wives of men who had been laid off explained the hidden opportunity for them in the layoff. In the following comments we see men and women who have been laid off cite opportunities as well. Valerie Turner and Julie Rogers were both laid off from well paid production jobs. However, they describe how their layoff was positive in some way. In Valerie's case, she welcomes the relief from the "double shift" that is especially difficult for her because her children aren't well. Julie and the men describe the layoff as an opportunity to participate in activities they enjoy and are not able to do when they are working full time. When I began this project I thought that the impact of unemployment might have a different effect on husbands

and wives. For example, in the family of a laid off man, I thought that the layoff might be experienced as bad for the family as a whole and bad for the man, but that it might be an good in some ways for the wife. From the comments below, we see that although my speculation was valid, the experience is not as simple as I had anticipated.

"We really need the money I make, but with three babies its kind of a relief to have time for them. The two little ones are sick a lot of the time." Valerie Turner

"I think being laid off hasn't been too bad because I really wanted to go back to school." Julie

"I haven't been looking that hard because I'm getting unemployment and plus I want to get this place fixed up so I don't have to worry about it." George Fitzgerald

"I didn't like being a carpenter. I wanted to quit. I like health care work better. If I wasn't laid off I wouldn't have gone back to school." Chuck Evans

"No I didn't like it (working at the job from which he was laid off.) I hated it out there. God, she can tell you that I hated working out there." Bob Johnson

Explanations for the variation in perceptions of the impact of unemployment on family finances fall into two categories. One category includes objective differences among families. For example the length of time of the layoff, whether sub-benefits, unemployment and savings were available, and what the difference was in pre and post-layoff household income.

The second category includes subjective reasons, for example, definitions of poverty. When asked to describe the impact of the layoff on family finances, respondents answered within the context of their definition of poverty. Some people felt the effects more, because they defined themselves as poor when they were unable to do the things they had been able to do previously. For example, above in

the discussions of the impact, some people spoke of R.V.'s, entertaining and owning two cars. For others, who had never been able to do those things, poverty was defined in a more minimal way. No one could be said to have had an extravagant perception of poverty. However, there was a range of definitions.

Table 7 summarizes the questionnaire responses to the question of how much money was being brought into the household currently. It shows that there were differences between households where the man was laid off and those where the woman had been laid off. Families where the woman was laid off averaged \$51 more a week than families where the man had been laid off. We could speculate that, because women earn less, the difference between post and pre layoff income was larger when the husband was laid off. A critical piece of information that was not obtained in this research was the pre-layoff income of the households.

Nowak and Snyder (1983; 1984; 1985) have compared the experience of women and men who lost their jobs in plant closings. They found that women were less able to find jobs after their layoff than men were, and if women did find work, they were more poorly paid. The economic effect of the layoff was more damaging for women than for men. My work suggests that families are especially important to women as buffers against economic decline. Families where the man was laid off had lower average incomes than families where the woman was laid off. Therefore, it is actually more advantageous economically, for married women to be laid off themselves rather than to have their husbands be laid off. This is especially interesting when we recall the "hidden opportunities" described by the women in families where their

husbands were laid off and they entered the labor force. Economic decline exacerbates both wives' dependence on and independence from their husbands.

Table 7. Questionnaire responses; "How much money per week is currently being brought into your household?"

Unemployed man's family			Unemployed woman's family		
husband	\$121		husband	\$185	
wife	56	n=135	wife	46	n=28
other	13		other	10	
total	190		total	241	

Average amounts.

ECONOMIZING

How did unemployment affect spending patterns? Did unemployment increase the replacement of labor purchased in the market in the form of commodities and services with labor performed in the home? In response to the questionnaire, many people said they had used various strategies for economizing. Table 8 summarizes these responses to the questionnaires. In Table 8 the option "fewer meals in restaurants" shows that at least 86% of the families had used at least one of the methods listed. Fewer meals at restaurants was the favorite way of economizing, followed by doing one's own car maintenance, using a wood stove or putting in insulation, canning and freezing, gardening, fewer babysitters, selling items and sewing.

Table 8. Questionnaire responses:

"In which of the following ways have you attempted to economize?"

others moving in.....0%	Gardening.....42%
fewer restaurant meals....86%	Fewer babysitters..40%
own car maintenance.....63%	Sold Items.....35%
wood stove or insulation..58%	Sewing.....25%
canning and freezing.....46%	Other..... %

This table includes the percentage of all respondents to the questionnaire who answered yes to having done any of the above listed as a strategy to economize since the layoff of themselves or their spouse.

Only one category was not used--"others moving in with you or you with them". This is very different from the observations of economizing in the 1930's (Milkman, 1976; Stouffer and Lazarsfeld, 1937). In the interviews, three families had "extra" people living with them, but the doubling up was for the other person and was not a means of cutting costs for themselves. However, their sharing their house may have been a way of creating some possible future security like that described in Stacks' (1970) work. It is possible that this option was an especially inefficient one for the sample I chose to interview; because they were married with children, it would have been quite problematic for them to find someone with whom they could live. On the other hand, because they had found quarters for their relatively large families, some were able to take in others.

"Her sister stays with us but its pretty much just to help her out until she gets on her feet. Chris (the sister) and I share the work around the house. We don't get no money for it."
George Fitzgerald

"Before, his mother lived with us for a while but it really didn't help us that much." Candy Evans

"Carol and her kids moved in as a favor to her when she was evicted." Betty Johnson

The people in the interviews also mentioned gardening and canning as strategies for economizing. Once again the fluidity of the line between employed and unemployed was illustrated by their comments. Many had gardened and canned as an economizing strategy before the layoff.

"I got this from my mom. My mom canned everything. If you stop and think, it costs you \$1 for a can of tomato juice, but if you grow them you can get 5 or 6 quarts from a plant. That's saving you money." George Fitzgerald

"We always had a garden. That's nothing new. But we save a lot of money from it in the summer." Chuck Evans

"We've always gardened as an economizing thing. I've always pinched pennies even when he worked." Rita Degraff

Selling things was another economizing measure mentioned in the interviews. Bob and Betty Johnson raised corn and hogs as an unsuccessful attempt to make money.

"The land is rented, its bartered. I just butcher them a hog and a half for a year. I only have about 6 acres I fool around with. That should be enough to feed my hogs." Bob Johnson

Larry Adams had expanded a method of economizing into a side business--doing car repairs.

"I do a lot of car maintenance. I don't usually charge friends. But when I got laid off I started charging people for it because they started coming all the time. They'd say "you're home. You've got all of the time in the world. It got to where every day they were coming. I just started charging. It was getting to be ridiculous. My brother would bring over people I didn't even know. I still didn't charge hardly anything. I went from free to \$5 to \$10." Larry Adams

One method of economizing, that was not on the questionnaire but was brought up in the interviews, was careful grocery shopping.

"We eat more one dish meals, pizza, chili. I pretty much on the groceries try to stretch every dollar. He likes canned peaches but we can't afford that any more. I have to shop around, buy generics and coupons." Rita Degraff

"I enjoy economizing by using coupons because I enjoy seeing how much money I can save. Its like my hobby. I enjoy seeing how much money I can get back on refunds and sometimes you can get items back. I keep records of it to see how much I get back in a year." Lisa Adams

Finally, considering the question of substituting domestic labor for market labor, every man who was interviewed, except Bob Johnson, spontaneously brought up the topic of home improvement projects he was working on since he was laid off.

"I do all the repair work. We had a plumber in once. I had to fix it after he left. I tell her the materials I'll work with like I won't work with wallpaper. We're pretty compatible though...I don't clean the bathroom. I remodeled it though." Larry Adams

"I built these cupboards since I was laid off. It was kind of a deal with the landlord where he reduced our rent." Chuck Evans

"I do odd jobs and also fix things around the house instead of having maintenance agreements." Art Miller

"I thought, since I did all the repair work, that it should equal out. If I'm going to share housework, she should share repair work. The only thing I could get her to do is the attic and the car...Women always leave you in the middle of a job." Doug Engels

"She arranges for repairs unless I can do it. I'm a pretty good handy man. She complains I work on cars even with a bad back." Hank Gates

"This place needs a lot done to it. You can see the dry wall out there (waiting to be hung). I've got a lot to do before I go back." George Fitzgerald

"At first I did a lot of repairs around the house. But the materials cost, so now I'm doing less." Vince Turner

There was an underlying implication in the discussions of the unemployed men about home and car maintenance and repair. It seemed that this work was an important part of their defining themselves and

their contribution to the family. Sara Wilson was the only person who explicitly articulated this feeling.

"There was a gradual change (he began taking the kids out more) as the money dried up and he couldn't feel as important doing major repairs at home." Sara Wilson

Betty and Bob Johnson represented an interesting difference from the other couples on the question of repair work. All of the other men seemed to feel that repair work around the house was good way of maintaining their masculinity during the layoff. Bob felt that any work around the house was for women. When asked about whether he ever worked on repair projects around the house he said,

"I don't give a damn what color the house is." Bob Johnson

Betty Johnson discussed her home maintenance work with much the same enthusiasm that many of the male interviewees did.

"I hung all this paneling in here. It don't look like it. But I've fixed this place up a lot." Betty Johnson

On the questionnaire I asked if economizing created more work, and, if so, who was doing it. Table 9 gives a summary of the responses to this item on the questionnaires. Table 10 gives a summary of responses to this question in the interviews. Table 9 shows that in more than half of the families, economizing had created more work. In the families where the man had been laid off, he and his wife thought it had created more work about 60% of the time. In families where the woman had been laid off, 56% of the laid off women thought it had created more work, but their husbands were likely to think economizing had created more work only 48% of the time.

Table 9. Questionnaire responses:

"Has economizing created more work, and, if so, who does it?"

	Unemployed Man	His Wife	Unemployed Woman	Her Husband
No extra work	41%	42%	44%	52%
Yes, we share it	22%	27%	22%	22%
she does it	8%	19%	30%	19%
he does it	29%	13%	4%	7%
	n=135		n=28	

Table 10 further elaborates on this question, showing only the responses of those who thought there was more work. Looking across the table we see that among those people who thought economizing created extra work, the laid-off person is more likely to say "I do the extra work." Looking down the table we see that among laid-off persons, little difference exists between women and men reporting doing extra work, but among spouses of laid-off people, wives are more likely to report doing extra work than husbands are.

Table 10. Questionnaire responses:

"If more work is created, who does it?"

	Percent responding "I do the extra work"	
	Laid-off person	Spouse of laid-off person
Men	49% (80)	15% (13)
Women	53% (15)	33% (80)

The interviews, which are summarized in Table 11, show a similar pattern. However, during the interviews it was apparent that people had not given this question much thought, except for the issue of home improvement which they perceived as a dramatic change. For example, on the more mundane tasks, such as cooking or childcare, people claimed they had increased economizing (fewer meals at restaurants and fewer babysitters), but when asked if anyone were doing extra work, they said no. It is impossible to know how the respondents to the questionnaire were interpreting this question. Did they note only big changes like home repair or did they include day to day tasks like cooking and childcare, or both or neither?

Table 11. Response to Interviews:

"Has economizing created more work and if so who does it?"

	<u>UNEMPLOYED MAN-WIFE</u>		<u>UNEMPLOYED WOMAN-HUSBAND</u>	
No extra work	2	6	1	1
Yes, we share it	1	1	0	0
she does it	0	1	1	1
he does it	6	1	0	0
	n=9	n=9	n=2	n=2

The responses to the questions about economizing reveal, not surprisingly, that people were trying a variety of methods to economize. However, change is more difficult to see, since many people

were economizing before the layoff. In addition, it appears that much domestic work is poorly delineated; there is no job description or production control. Changes slip in without any agreement as to what exactly has taken place. In the next Chapter I will elaborate on both the problem of describing housework and of perceiving changes in responsibility for doing it.

In this Chapter, I have described the way in which the layoff of a breadwinner, has affected the families in this study. I can argue that there has, in fact, been an impact. However, the effect contains both positive and negative elements with a variety of perceptions and experiences by the members of the households. Moreover, there is a fluidity in the lives of the people studied that indicates that economic decline is a long term process with effects, and the development of strategies to deal with those effects, reaching beyond the significant event of the layoff.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: HOUSEWORK

The last chapter reported the effects of the economic recession on families as units. Although, as I have noted, the impact was sometimes differently experienced and perceived by husbands and wives. In the next two chapters, I will describe how economic recession has affected relationships between husbands and wives within families. These chapters are organized around housework, decision making, and ideas about and opinions of gender equality. Figure 2 illustrates the specific issues to be discussed in the next two chapters.

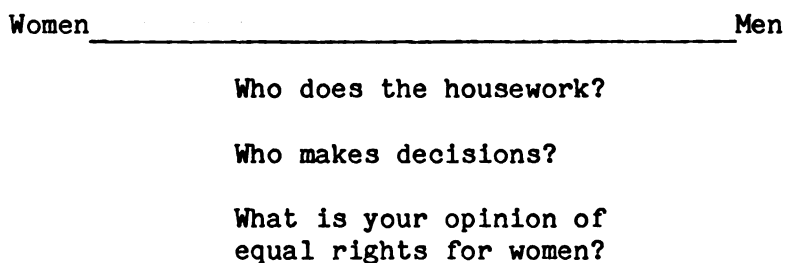


Figure 2. Questionnaire items illustrating relationships within families

The question of housework is divided into several sub-categories, including: time spent, changes since the layoff, distribution of specific tasks, satisfaction, arguments and reactions from family and friends to changes in the division of labor. For each of these

issues, I will report the data obtained from the questionnaires and discuss the findings. Then I will describe the interviews responses to these questions and show the ways in which the two sets of information fit together.

TIME SPENT ON HOUSEWORK

The data in Table 12 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires. The data are divided into several categories. The average number of hours of housework is reported for unemployed men and unemployed women. Beneath each of these two, I have broken down the responses for various kinds of spouses. This allows us to compare, for example, the number of hours of housework of housewives who are married to unemployed men (6.1) with the number of hours of housework of women who are employed full time and are married to unemployed men (3.4). Table 12 shows that women do more housework than men do, and that women employed outside of the home do less housework than women who are in the home. These findings are consistent with all of the major research on housework (Hedges and Barnett, 1972; Walker and Woods, 1976). In addition, Table 12 shows that the range of hours of housework is much greater for women than it is for men, which is also consistent with the literature (Berk and Berk, 1979; Walker and Woods, 1976). Finally, they show that unemployed men do only slightly more hours of work on the average than men who are employed full time.

The contrast shown in Table 12 between the number of hours worked by women who did not work outside of the home and the hours worked by other women is an example of a phenomenon described by Friedan (1963)

in her classic book, The Feminine Mystique. She explained that housework tended to expand to fill the time available. Two people in the interviews described their experience with the change in the amount of time spent on housework in their own household.

"When I started it took about three hours, but now its up to 6 or 7 hours, because after a while it got to be a drag. But I still clean house better than she did. Everytime I clean I pull out all the furniture. But I see why she didn't because after a while you get tired of pulling everything out." Doug Engels

"Once you do it over and over, it takes you longer because you dread getting out and doing it. I suppose he works about 4 or 5 hours a day and then bitches the other 3 or 4 hours because the kids tear it up." Lisa Adams

Table 12. Questionnaire responses:
Average hours of housework on a typical weekday.

	<u>Hours</u>	<u>n</u>
Unemployed Man	1.4	135
His wife who was:		
a housewife	6.1	47
unemployed	10.0	3
employed part time	3.4	26
employed full time	2.6	59
Unemployed Woman	3.7	28
Her husband who was:		
unemployed	2.0	3
employed part time	2.0	1
employed full time	1.2	24

These numbers are self reports

Since these are self reports, we would expect them to be inflated. However, Table 13 shows that the unemployed men slightly underestimated their hours of housework compared to what their wives said their husbands were doing. This is similar to Berk and Berk's (1979) findings. The inflation of self reports is more likely to occur when the work is gender stereotyped.

One problem with the estimate of time spent on housework is that there could be a distinction made between childcare and housework (Olson, 1979; 1981) but this was not specified in the questionnaire. In response to the question about time spent doing housework, some people included childcare in their estimates; others may not have included childcare. Also, apart from definitions of housework (that is, if it included childcare or not) the presence and ages of children in the home may have been an important factor in determining the amount of time spent on housework. Berk (1980) argues that the two greatest determinants of hours of housework for women is labor force participation and the number of children in the home. Furthermore, she explains that children in the home increase the hours of work in the home for everyone, but the increase is especially true for women.

Table 13. Questionnaire responses:
average hours of housework on a typical weekday-
spouse estimate compared to self report

Unemployed Men's Self Report	1.4 Hours	n=135
His Wife's Estimate of His Hours	1.5	
Wive's of Unemployed Men Self Report	4.1	n=28
Unemployed Men's Estimate of Wives Hours	3.6	

Her arguments are illustrated in comments made by Rita Degraff and Chuck Evans both of whom have small children. They answered the question about how much time was spent on housework by saying it took almost all of the waking hours in a day. This kind of distinction between childcare and other kinds of housework was not made in the questionnaire data.

"If you include kids, I guess (I spend) all day. I get up at 7 and I go to bed at 10 or 11. I guess about 12 or 15 hours."
Rita Degraff

"She takes care of the kids all day, maybe 15 hours. Except when I'm here she will hand them to me." Chuck Evans

Subjects were also asked to estimate the hours they spent on housework on weekends. These data from the questionnaires are not reported because there was some confusion over whether the question referred to the number of hours in two days or in one day of the weekend. The question about weekend work was asked because the literature (Meissner, 1977; Robinson, 1977; Szalai et al., 1972) reports that working women "catch up" on "their" housework on weekends. Amy Miller and Heather Gates, who both worked outside of the home during the week, were representative in this respect.

"On weekends we both do a lot more housework because I'm home. I'm here working and he feels more content working with me than working alone." Amy Miller

"I get spurts of energy on the weekends or at night, and clean, sometimes late at night. It's got to be done. The kids just surface clean all week." Heather Gates

In contrast, Betty Johnson, who was a full time housewife, did not work weekends.

"On the weekends, I don't do any housework. Well I told Bob when we got married he was always working five days and he always had the weekend off. I said, 'If you don't work, I don't work

either.' I mean personally I don't like the stuff myself, but you have to do it. But the weekends are made for fun. That's the only time the whole family is together. So, I view the weekend as party time. Anything besides housework." Betty Johnson

CHANGES IN HOUSEWORK SINCE THE LAYOFF

Table 14 summarizes questionnaire response to the issue of changes in housework since the layoff. Table 14 shows that in families where the man was laid off, about half of the time there was no change and about half of the time the man was doing more. In the families where the woman was laid off, both husbands (68%) and wives (57%) were more likely to feel that there had been no change than in families where the man had been laid off. This was especially true of the husbands of women who had been laid off. Wives in the families where the woman had been laid off were most likely to think there had been no change.

Table 14. Questionnaire responses:
"Have there been any changes in who does the housework
since you (or your spouse) were laid off?"

	Unemployed Man	His Wife	Unemployed Woman	Her Husband
No	48%	47%	57%	68%
Yes, Man does more	51%	47%	4%	0%
Yes, Woman does more	0%	1%	32%	16%
Other	1%	1%	6%	14%
n	135	135	28	28

Table 15. Questionnaire responses:
If there has been a change in housework,
who is doing more work?

Percent saying unemployed person does more		
	Laid-off person	Spouse of laid-off person
Men	100% (135)	96% (129)
Women	76% (21)	53% (15)

Table 15 shows who people thought were doing more housework, if they thought there had been a change in the distribution of housework. In families where the husband had been laid off, all of the husbands and almost all of the wives (96%) thought the men were doing more housework. In families where the wife had been laid off, the majority of husbands (53%) and wives (76%) said the women were doing more housework. However they were less in agreement with each other than the husbands and wives in families where the man had been laid off and less likely to think the laid off person was doing more.

On the questionnaires, if respondents said there had been a change in the distribution of housework they were asked to explain what kind of change had taken place. Comments on the questionnaires show a large range of definitions of what is "more". For example, one man said, "Yes, I'm doing more. I cook my own lunch." Another said, "Yes, I occasionally dust and run the sweeper." At the other extreme, were responses like, "Yes, I do a lot more" and "I do it all now." Most were like the first two examples, describing themselves as

helping a little more or doing some specific task they hadn't done previously. In the interviews, all of the unemployed people were doing more around the house, except one man, Rick Degraff. However, there was a wide range of change described in the interviews. Table 16 shows four kinds of changes in the distribution of housework, found among the interviews, and the people who fit into each category.

Table 16. Response to the interviews:

Change in the amount of housework done by unemployed person
(according to unemployed person)

Doing it all.....Doug Engels, George Fitzgerald, Larry Adams,
Julie Rogers, Valerie Turner

Doing much more.....Art Miller, Chuck Evans, Sam Wilson

Doing a little more...Hank Gates, Bob Johnson

Doing no more.....Rick Degraff

Denise Engels, Ginger Fitzgerald, and Lisa Adams described the change that took place which transferred all of the responsibility for housework into the hands of their laid-off husbands.

"He does almost all of it. I am gone in the morning until 2:30 and then work on homework until dinner. Somebody has to get the kids off and do dishes, and then he got to where he did laundry. He got real good at baking cakes because he wanted it and I wasn't home. He's exceptional. He never threw it in my face."
Denise Engels

"It depends on who is working the most. The other one does the most around the house. Like when he was working and I was laid off, I did it all. I don't do housework right now because I'm working 12 hour shifts 7 days a week." Ginger Fitzgerald

"He always has helped in the housework and cooking and things, when he felt like it. I mean he didn't do it all the time. I mean once a week or so. And then when he was laid off, he did everything. And then I helped when I felt like it. I went and changed the role. Like on weekends I would help, but I didn't do much through the week. He had to clean and do the work." Lisa Adams

The women who had been laid off had also, in their opinion taken over all of the housework.

"We used to share more. Now, I almost do it all, because I'm home all the time. I have more time. Sometimes I do things I didn't have time for before." Valerie Turner

This change was especially troublesome to Julie Roger who said,

"When I worked, we had a cleaning lady. Now we can't afford it. He knows I'm doing more, but he doesn't initiate change. A few times I have been able to talk about it (my doing all the housework) but its hard to do. There've been times I would be standing out there at 9:30 doing dishes and I'd be thinking, 'that sucks', you know. And I worry too about how it looks to Mary (her daughter) and what image that gives to Mary. You know, that bothers me." Julie Roger

Julie's husband, however, was not as sure that she was doing more housework. When asked if he thought that Julie was doing more housework now, he said,

"No, not really. I don't know. We've had discussions about it from time to time about things she wants me to do." John Roger

Other unemployed men were doing significantly more, but much was left for their wives to do. The question was not as settled an issue as it was for the Adams, Engels and Fitzgeralds.

"Yes, Sam does more housework. Before , he did major tasks like painting and re-modeling. I did general cleaning. Now, he does a lot more of my chores, but a lot of time he would be here and I would be gone and come home tired and the work wouldn't be done." Sara Wilson

"We didn't have a formal agreement. Since I wasn't working I told her I would do the chores she would normally do during the hours she worked. She didn't continue to do her fair share. She works part time and she could have continued to do her fair share. When I worked 12 hours I still pitched in." Sam Wilson

"He helps me but he is not a house person. He's been gone a lot during the day in the two years he's been laid off. He's off doing for others, but what about me? I found myself thanking him for running the vacuum." Amy Miller

"I help my wife. I don't know, I wash dishes and maybe later I will sweep. But, I don't know. I'm not being a male chauvenist, but I don't like to schedule. I should, to help her out, because she is out making a living and I'm not. Even when I was working, I thought you girls had a lot to do." Art Miller

"I used to do most of the cleaning, and I always used to bitch about that. We do half and half most of the time. Chuck will say 'Take the kids someplace and I'll straighten up the house for you.' Sometimes he'll take them, (the kids) although he can only handle one at a time If I leave both of them at home, forget it because my house will get so tore up." Candy Evans

In these comments, it is assumed that housework is really the wife's job. Sara Wilson refers to "my work", although her husband is unemployed and she is working outside of the home. Sam Wilson refers to "the jobs she would normally do." Amy Miller thanks her husband for doing the housework. Art Miller says "I help her out." Chuck Evans says "I'll straighten it for you." For each of these people and their spouses, it is perceived as being "rational", but still unsettling, for men to do the housework. And, even if its not consciously perceived as being unsettling, the housework remains the wife's responsibility in their use of language. The importance of the distinction between "helping" and "taking responsibility" was noted by Oakley (1974).

It is also interesting to note the problem of skill in the comments by Amy Miller and Candy Evans. Amy explains that part of the reason Art does not do much housework is because he is not a "home person". Candy says that Chuck can not do two things at once-- childcare and housework. These comments are reminiscent of the classic piece on housework by Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework"

(1970) which describes the interactions between husbands and wives and the rationalizations used by men for why they can not do the housework.

A third category of change was where the unemployed person was doing a little more housework.

"Cooking is all. He don't do much housework. Outside he works on cars. He put in a kerosene heater. But, no, not a real change." Heather Gates

"Betty does all the housework. I take care of the kids, as far as that goes. When I'm home, if she wants to go somewhere, I watch the kids. It's just second nature you know." Bob Johnson

"No, not when it came to around the house. Now in the barn, he does do all that. He does all the feeding and stuff. He does everything in the barn. When he is working, I feed them (the hogs)." Betty Johnson

Although Bob says there has been no change, Betty's perception is that he is doing more--not really "housework" but he has taken over some of her farm work. This is in contrast to Julie and John Roger above. In the Roger's family, the woman had been laid off and she was unhappy about what she perceived to be a significant increase in her responsibility for housework. Her husband, however, said he didn't notice much change.

Rita and Rick Degraff were the only couple in the interviews to report that there had been no change in the amount of work Rick did around the house. In Rick and Rita's case, Rick uses the question of skill, mentioned by Amy Miller and Candy Evans as limitations to the amount of housework their husbands do, to explain why he does not participate in housework at all.

"No, I don't know how to do housework. I wish Rita didn't have to do as much as she does. I wish I could do more, but I just don't feel right." Rick Degraff

"I don't think much has changed as far as that goes, because I'm still here doing all the things I had to do before." Rita Degraff

For most couples interviewed, uncomfortable changes had taken place. Even in the households where the men had taken over much of the housework, things remained unsettled. Only in the case of Ginger and George Fitzgerald was the "role reversal" smooth. Denise Engels, Lisa Adams, and Amy Miller described the struggle that took place in their household in order to redivide the housework after changes took place in the division of wage labor. Each of these women had entered or remained in the labor force after their husbands had been laid off. Since the time of the layoff, their husbands had begun to do more of the housework. However, they all explain that this transition had not been an easy one and was initiated by the wife after she was faced with doing both work inside of the home and outside, while her unemployed husband did neither.

Each of these cases is also somewhat different in the way in which the process took place. In Denise Engel's case, her husband Doug, has taken over all of the work, but this seems to be partly expressed as a sign of defeat on his part. Lisa Adams' husband Larry, has also taken over all of the work, but their agreement seems to be more mutually acceptable. Larry Adams had also not been laid off as long as Doug Engels had and was quite sure of being called back. Doug had been laid off for three years and did not have much hope for getting his job back. Denise and Doug's hopes were pinned to her obtaining work after she completed her nursing degree. In other words, the resignation with which Denise's husband had taken over the

housework may have been related to his perception that the arrangement was more long termed than Larry Adam's perception.

"It (the fact that Doug was doing more housework) came out of arguments. I would come home and he was still sitting where I left him in the morning. Then I would get mad. He would over-do and then I'd say, 'you don't have to do that much.'" Denise Engels

"Because I didn't think it was fair that I had to go out and work and he got to sit around and do nothing and I still had to clean, clean, clean. I felt like he had to get up and clean. I told him I didn't think it was fair and he got to cleaning everything. If he was going to be home, then he could just do it. I mean we really didn't argue or nothing. I just told him the way I felt about it, and he pretty much agreed. It went on for a month after he got laid off. I sat down and said 'Hey, this is the way I feel,' and he agreed. So that's why he took over everything." Lisa Adams

Art Miller had increased his participation in housework.

However, the increase was not as much as Amy would like and their struggle was much less resolved than it was for the Engels and Adams. Amy and Art Miller's situation was quite similar to Doug and Denise Engels's. Both men had been laid off for three years with little hope of returning to their old jobs. However, in contrast to Doug's acceptance of housework, Art and Amy maintained a battle over it. Rather than Art accepting housewifery, Amy seems to have resigned herself to accept his way of doing (or not doing) the work.

"In the beginning, I came home to French toast for dinner. He's learning things he didn't know. It's not easy to keep house. One problem I have is accepting his way of doing things. He does the laundry now, but he's ruined a lot of clothes. I put dinner in the slow cooker, because his idea of dinner is not my idea of dinner." Amy Miller

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPECIFIC TASKS

The third issue within the topic of housework is the division of specific tasks. Table 17 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires

Table 17. Who does the housework?

Self reports by:	Unemployed Man(n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Driving the car when we are going somewhere in town together	8.0	7.7	6.4	6.6
Repairing things around the house	7.5	7.2	6.1	7.2
Taking care of the lawn	7.7	6.1	4.7	6.9
Making arrangements to have repairs done	6.4	5.7	4.8	5.4
Taking out the trash	6.9	4.9	4.5	7.1
Punishing the children	4.1	4.1	3.1	5.4
Playing with the children	6.2	3.6	3.5	5.4
Take children to appoint- ments and activities	5.5	3.1	2.6	4.8
Vacuuming the carpet	3.2	2.8	2.5	3.2
Doing the dishes	3.5	2.8	2.9	3.2
Caring for the pets	6.6	2.7	3.2	7.9
Grocery shopping	3.2	2.7	2.7	2.7
Cooking breakfast	4.1	2.5	3.1	3.9
Cooking the evening meal	2.6	2.4	2.7	2.4
Doing the laundry	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.9
Cleaning the bathroom	2.7	1.8	2.3	2.3
Doing the ironing	4.5	1.3	2.3	3.8

Respondents were asked to estimate who was more likely to do specific tasks on a scale from 1 to 9 (average responses shown.)

A 1 means the wife does it all of the time.

A 9 means the husband does it all of the time.

A 5 means the task is shared about equally.

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Respondents were asked to rank on a scale from 1 to 9 who was more likely to do the specific tasks listed in Table 17. A 1 means that the wife performed the task all of the time. A 9 means that the husband performed the task all of the time. A 5 means that the task was shared about equally between husbands and wives. Table 17 has the average responses given for each task within each of the categories of respondents: unemployed man, his wife, unemployed woman, her husband.

Unemployed men, on the average, indicated that they were more likely to do the following tasks than were their wives: driving the car (8), Making repairs around the home (7.5), caring for the lawn (7.7), taking out the trash (6.9), caring for pets (6.6), making repair arrangements (6.4), playing with the children (6.2), taking children to activities and appointments (5.5). The responses of the unemployed men indicated that they felt that all of the other tasks listed were more likely to be done by their wives. The wives of the unemployed men said they felt that their husbands were more likely to drive the car (7.7), do repairs (7.2), take care of the lawn (6.1), and make arrangements for repairs (5.7). The wives felt that all other tasks were more likely to be done by themselves.

In couples where the woman was laid off, the wives ranked driving the car (6.4) and household repairs (6.1) as the only tasks more likely to be done by their husbands. All other tasks, they felt were more likely to be done by themselves. The husbands in these couples ranked caring for pets (7.9), making repairs (7.2), taking out the trash (7.1), mowing the lawn (6.9), driving the car, making repairs arrangements (5.4), punishing the children (5.4), and playing with the children (5.4), as tasks they were more likely to do.

Men are likely to say they are doing more tasks than their wives think they are; women think they are doing more. Unemployed men claim that they do more on 8 of the 17 tasks; their wives say only 4 of 17. Unemployed women claim that their husbands do more on only 2 of the 17 tasks; their husbands claim they do more on 8 of them.

The tendency was for all respondents to think that the men were doing more jobs that were outside and involved maintenance. Men also thought they were more likely to do those tasks that involved children, although their wives did not agree. Both women and men respondents, felt women were more likely to do jobs dealing with feeding people and cleaning. Jobs that are clearly identified as housework are most likely to be identified as women's work. Other domestic work is more likely to be shared with men.

It is difficult to explain the basis of this assignment of tasks. Meissner (1977) characterized the types of housework in which men participated as those tasks with clear and identifiable boundaries, the greatest discretion on how and when to perform them, and having a greater leisure component. This characterization fits my findings. Repairs and yardwork are clearly definable and could be done at variable times, unlike for example, cooking meals. Playing with children has a clear leisure component. However, Meissner's model is only partially satisfactory. Doing the laundry and ironing and cleaning the bathroom are jobs that can be done with a great deal of discretion in terms of how and when to complete them and these are the women's jobs.

Berk and Berk (1979) have suggested that husbands do housework when their wives are unavailable. This implies that those tasks which

are most discretionary in terms of when they can be performed are likely to be women's work. Clearly, there is some missing element in both Berk and Berk's and Meissner's explanation for why tasks are divided in the manner in which they are.

The people in the interviews offered suggestions for why they thought housework was divided in a particular way. One kind of answer to why jobs were assigned in the way in which they were was that the husband and wife did what they were best at.

"Because it's her job. I don't know how to do housework. Rita gets mad at me for not doing more with the kids. I don't feel a man should have to do that (housework). My mother helps her out." Rick Degraff

"Who does what best has a lot to do with it." John Roger

Others thought it was a result of socialization within their families. Julie Roger and Art Miller explained how the way which housework was divided in their homes was a result of the way in which they were raised.

"There's a time I think he did a lot more than he does now, like when Mary was first born. But it seems, since we've been back here (in his hometown) he's more traditional in terms of what he does, and maybe it's just being around your family. We're all real busy. We don't see each other so much. But I don't know. It's really changed since we've been here. John's a father in a lot of respects like his father, because that's how he learned. And I think that has a lot to do with how we divide up housework tasks because it's sort of like what you've learned from your parents." Julie Roger

"Maybe it was the way I was brought up. I should be out making a living, and she would be at home. I'm still a little old fashioned but the woman should be at home." Art Miller

On the other hand, Larry Adams and George Fitzgerald said they had responded to their families' ways of dividing work by being different. They were questioned about why they took so much responsibility for housework.

"A lot of it had to do with her brother. He's a chauvenist pig. He works part time and doesn't do any housework. I've always had a different attitude." Larry Adams

"When my dad was home, he didn't do anything around the house. He just wouldn't do it. If he went out in the kitchen to get a cup of coffee and reached in the silverware drawer, and there was a dirty spoon, he'd throw them all in the sink. That's just the way he was." George Fitzgerald

Julie Roger and Sam Wilson suggested that having children might also affect whether people maintained a gender stereotyped division of labor.

"Sometimes I worry about the kids, especially my son because of the role reversal. I want him to know what it would be like with a father who works." Sam Wilson

"But I think when you have kids, it sort of locks you into roles more so than if you didn't have them. I think you go back to traditional things. You know, you hear yourself saying something and you think 'Oh, I sound just like mom.'" Julie Roger

The fourth issue within the topic of housework was the question of whether people felt their spouse was doing his/her fair share. Table 18 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires on this question. Table 18 shows that wives thought their husbands did slightly less than their fair share. Husbands thought their wives did more than their fair share. Everyone seemed to acknowledge that the division of labor is unjust.

Table 19 indicates that the injustices may be more deeply felt that was apparent in Table 18. Table 19 summarizes the responses to the question about changes in the number of arguments over housework since the layoff. Table 19 shows that in about 40% of the families a change had taken place in the number of arguments since the layoff. In the families where the man was laid off arguments were likely to

have increased, while in families where the woman had been laid off arguments were likely to have decreased.

This difference illustrates the impact of gender on "rational" decisions. When a person is laid off from a job, and therefore, is spending more time at home, it would be rational for him or her to take more responsibility for housework. However gender ideologies interfere with a new division of labor. In the case of the man being laid off, he does not increase his participation in housework so that it is more fairly distributed, and this becomes a source of arguments. In the case of the woman being laid off, even though she is perceived to be doing more than her fair share, the new division is not problematic (as measured by the perceived change in the number of arguments) because it does not challenge a traditional definition of gender.

Table 18. Questionnaire responses:

"Considering the chores in your household, do you feel your partner does his/her fair share?"

	<u>Average Response</u>	<u>n</u>
Unemployed Man	3.4	134
His Wife	5.8	134
Unemployed Woman	5.2	28
Her Husband	3.7	28

Repondents were asked to respond on a scale from 1 to 9.

A 1 means their spouse does much more than his/her fair share.

A 9 means their spouse does much less than his/her fair share.

A 5 means their spouse does exactly his/her fair share.

Martin and Wallace (1984:247) found in their research on women who were laid off, that only 17% said that unemployment had caused an increase in tension in the family. Seven percent said there was an increase and that it was due to the loss of income and the woman's own depression. Sixty three percent of the women who had been laid off mentioned at least one advantage their family derived from their being laid off. With few exceptions, the advantages related to a higher standard of home comfort. Both Martin and Wallace's work and my research indicates that the layoff of a woman is advantageous in some ways to the maintenance of the family as a whole, although it is not advantageous to the woman.

Table 19. Questionnaire responses:
"Have arguments about housework increased, decreased,
or stayed the same since the layoff?"

	Increased	Decreased	Stayed the Same	n
Unemployed Man	35%	8%	57%	135
His Wife	37%	7%	56%	135
Unemployed Woman	7%	30%	63%	28
Her Husband	4%	36%	60%	28

It was noted above that in the interviews several people in families where the man had been laid off, spoke of arguments, especially, soon after the layoff. Some of them also described the way in which they were resolved (at least to some extent) by a redivision of labor.

However, for others, the arguments continued. The Degraffs, Johnsons, and Millers are families where the man was laid off. In each case arguments have increased, because the husband and wife have conflicting ideas about what changes should take place in the division of domestic work. The comments also indicate that more arguments may be the only change that occurs, that is, arguments may increase, bringing with them no changes in the division of work. Hartmann (1981) suggested that an unequal division of housework could put pressure on households, thereby eventually creating changes in who does the housework. These comments indicate that arguments can result from an unequal division of work, but those arguments may not necessarily lead to a more equitable arrangement.

"We fight a lot about it. I mean I always end up doing it whether I want to or not." Rita Degraff

"It increased because I felt like since he is laid off and he is doing absolutely nothing, then he should help. He disagreed. I can't tell you what he really said." Betty Johnson

(We argue) "Constantly, but I win." Bob Johnson

"Increased a little. I'm home more than she is. There's more of a demand on me. Oh, like sometimes the laundry will pile up and she will mention it. But she's pretty understanding. If she tells me I have to, then I don't. It's just like love; you can't demand it. She don't demand and I don't either." Art Miller

"We argue a lot more. I don't know where it's going to end. I know we're not going to split up." Amy Miller

Not all of the couples with a laid off husband experienced an increase in arguments. In one of the interviews a man explains how arguments actually decreased in his house since his layoff.

"We argue more when we're both working. We think the other should be doing it." George Fitzgerald

Another contrast to the questionnaire results, was illustrated by a couple in the interviews. The wife had been laid off, and there were more arguments over the housework.

(Arguments have)"increased because there is more to do, since we don't have a maid any more." John Roger

"We argue about that regularly. There's a time when I think he did a lot more than he does now. And I don't know. I've given it a lot of thought. I think we should discuss it and divide it up more evenly you know, and really make that effort. He knows I'm doing more, but I probably wouldn't want to change if I was on that side of things." Julie Roger

Vince Turner's comment was more consistent with the questionnaires.

"If I can make it I hope Valerie can stay home. We really need the money but things are a lot better around here without her working." Vince Turner

The question of standards was an issue that was not formally examined in this research. Standards of housework is an important consideration, because the amount of work actually done is a result of not only how the work is divided, but what is required. For example, in a household that has low standards, even if one person was doing most of the work, he or she might be doing less work than in a household where work is divided more evenly but standards are very high. Standards may also have an impact on arguments. More arguments might be related to higher standards, even when the work is shared. In addition, if a woman and a man have different standards, arguments might increase.

Another factor within the issue of arguments over housework is the question of interference. Even in households where women wanted their husbands to participate more in housework, they sometimes resented his "interference". Which, once again, points to the assumption that the housework is hers.

"The weekend's a hassle. I was home in my kitchen. But now it's his territory too. I wanted him to do it when I wanted him to do it." Denise Engels

"I can get more done when he's not around. He's in my way." Heather Gates

"We argue like about--well, we knew the kids would be gone during the summer, and he wanted to get them involved in ball teams (whose schedules run from spring through summer), and I told him it was stupid to go ahead and pay the money when they would be leaving half way through. He did it anyway. He was home and he had more time to do it (both overrule her and take the kids to practice)." Betty Johnson

SATISFACTION

The next topic was the amount of satisfaction people derived from housework. Table 20 summarizes the questionnaire responses to the question of how much satisfaction people derived from doing housework. Respondents were asked how much satisfaction they derived from doing housework on a scale from 1 to 9. A 1 means she or he felt very dissatisfied. A 9 means she or he felt very satisfied. Laid off men responded on the average 6.2; their wives responded with 4.6. In couples where the woman had been laid off, the husbands responded with 6.3 and the wives with a 4.3.

Women in both situations (married to a person who had been laid off or laid off themselves) were less satisfied, on the average, than their husbands were. In the interviews, comments by Betty and Bob Johnson were an illustration of the articulation of the relationship between being dissatisfied with housework and being the one responsible for it, or being relatively satisfied with housework and not being the one with the greater responsibility for doing it.

"Give me a 9. I do not like housework." Betty Johnson

"I get a lot of satisfaction, because I just say (to her) 'go baby go'." Bob Johnson

The interviews also revealed variation on this question. For example, Candy Evan's husband had been laid off, and although they shared housework more than Bob and Betty Johnson, Candy did more than Chuck. However, she said that she derived a lot of satisfaction from housework.

"I like to have my own house and stay home decorating my house and taking care of my kids. A normal family, what I consider a normal family." Candy Evans

Table 20. Questionnaire responses:

"How much satisfaction do you get from doing housework?"

	Average Response	n
Unemployed man	6.2	135
his wife	4.6	
Unemployed woman	4.3	28
her husband	6.3	

These are average responses given to the question for each category

A 1 means very dissatisfied.

A 9 means very satisfied.

REACTIONS FROM OTHERS

The last issue within the topic of housework is the response of family or friends to changes in the division of labor in families where the man had been laid off. Table 16 shows there were 6 men who

had been laid off and now were doing more housework: Doug Engels, Larry Adams, George Fitzgerald, Art Miller, Chuck Evans and Sam Wilson. Larry was the only one who had not felt that he had been criticized for changes in the division of labor in his family.

"No, not as I know of. They knew my opinion. Maybe they didn't want to say anything to me." Larry Adams

In all of the other couples in this category, there was a perception by the husband, wife or both, that there had been some criticism of them. Doug Engels was the only one who seems to have changed his behavior in response to the criticism.

"When he started doing laundry and hanging the clothes outside, some of the neighbors teased him. He may have cared deep down inside but he didn't care. He felt, 'piss on them'. But he doesn't hang clothes out any more." Denise Engels

George Fitzgerald says that he has not experienced any criticism. However, his wife disagrees, and recounts an incident where he was criticized for his doing "women's work."

"They better never, because I really don't care." George Fitzgerald

"No some guys used to make fun of him learning to bake. But eventually they had to learn, because more women are being hired because more women will take a minimum wage job." Ginger Fitzgerald

Sam Wilson cites his parents as the source of the criticism. The others said the source of the criticism was friends.

"Yes, because neither of our parents had experienced a layoff to this degree." Sam Wilson

Art and Amy Miller's comments indicate that their perception of the initial source of the criticism may actually be Art. He may or may not have been criticized by others, but it is his self criticism that seems to be most evident.

"Not to me. But I get the feeling they think I'm a lazy bum. It's not because I don't want a job because I do." Art Miller

"I've heard jokes. He starts it. Most people are supportive, because so many are unemployed. There aren't too many jokes. He initiates it. He'll say when we visit people and start to get ready to go home, 'Amy has to get up early and go to work. Somebody has to.'" Amy Miller

In summary, the layoff of a man creates both tensions over a traditional division of labor and changes, for some couples, in the way in which work is divided. In families where the woman is laid off, the woman seems to slip back into traditional patterns. The interviews suggest that the situation within the household is more problematic and complex than the questionnaires show. This section, particularly the interviews, illustrates how difficult it is to summarize the experience of people; there are a great variety of perceptions, experiences, and responses to those experiences.

This kind of variability and complexity contrasts with the research of people like Jane Hood (1983). In a study of two-job families, Hood traces the process of husbands and wives renegotiating their relationship when the wife enters the labor market. Her work conceptualizes the process as one which tends toward the re-establishment of an equilibrium, and is more or less successfully accomplished by various couples depending on factors like the husband and wife's commitment to the relationship or their ability to negotiate. An alternative conceptualization of the process would argue that the variability and complexity is not a sign of the failure of some couples to re-establish "equilibrium", but an indication that families are sites of fundamental contradictions between husbands and wives and that the tensions are exacerbated by unsettling changes in

the social context in which the families are embedded. This contrast between these two models and the way in which my research fits into the models is further developed in Chapter 6 where I summarize all of the findings and draw conclusions from the work.

CHAPTER 6

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: DECISION MAKING AND IDEOLOGY

In this Chapter, I continue the discussion of the results of this research from the questionnaires and interviews. The first section is a description and analysis of the questions on decision making. Decision making was examined as an arena of conflict for husbands and wives. The second section of this chapter examines the question of gender ideologies. It includes reports of questionnaire and interview responses to the question about equality for women. I also discuss the importance of taking a phenomenological approach, examining not just opinions on one particular question, but the reflection of ideas about gender as they occur throughout the research.

DECISION MAKING

The first major topic in this chapter is decision making. A series of questions examine who makes decisions about certain issues; major and day to day decisions are included. In addition, I will report more direct changes that took place in authority and the importance of husbands' and wife's roles in families since the layoff.

Table 21 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires. It shows a series of specific decisions. Respondents were asked to

estimate who had the most influence over each decision on a scale from 1 to 9. A 1 means that the woman had all the influence over the decision. A 9 means the man had all the influence over the decision. A 5 means there was about equal influence on the decision by the husband and wife. In the following paragraphs I have allowed a range of 4.7 to 5.3 to indicate "about equal influence."

In families where the man was unemployed, the husband said he had more influence on decisions about which car to buy (6.5), and where to live (5.4). He said that he and his wife had about equal say about where to go out to eat (5.1), how to discipline the children (4.8), where to go on vacation (4.7), and where to go for an evening (4.7). He indicated, on the average, that all other decisions were more likely to be made by his wife. His wife on the average, said he had more influence on decisions about whether to move (6.7), what car to buy (6.7), where to live (5.7), when to go out to eat (5.7), and where to go on vacation (5.6). She felt they had about equal say on where to go for an evening (5.3), how to discipline the children (5.2), and whom to have over (5.1). She felt she had the most influence on how to decorate (3.2), how much to spend on groceries (3.6), and what groceries to buy (3.8).

In families where the woman was laid off, the husband thought on the average, that he was more likely to influence only what car to buy (6.0) and where to go on vacation (6.0). He said he had equal influence on where to live (5.0), where to go out to eat (5.0), and how to discipline the children (5.0). On all other decisions he felt his wife had the most influence. She thought her husband was most influential on whether to move (5.7). She thought they had about

equal say on what car to buy (5.2), where to vacation (5.2), where to live (5.1), and where to go out for an evening (5.1). She felt she was more influential on all other decisions.

The unemployed men thought they had more influence in 2 of 11 of the specific decision areas. Their wives thought that the men had more influence in 5 of the areas. In the families where the woman was laid off, both she and her husband thought she had more influence in 5 of the 11 areas. The differences in the perception by husbands and wives in the families where the man had been laid off, could be interpreted in several ways. It might mean that men are willing to be more egalitarian in their relationships than women will let them. Perhaps it is women who are primarily responsible for maintaining gender inequality in marriages. Another explanation is that women have a more realistic perception of the relationship. Perhaps women know where they have control and where they don't, while men have a more idealistic and unrealistic perception of the relationship.

The interviews provided a more complex picture of decision making. First of all, during the interviews it was my observation that people were really unaware of who made decisions or how decisions were made in their families. Although they could be persuaded to give an answer, their discussions would sometimes contrast with their answers. For example, in response to the question about who would decide which car to buy, Julie Roger said they would share that decision. However, later, in an unrelated conversation, she described a real situation where they had purchased a car which she felt was entirely too expensive, but which her husband wanted.

Table 21. Questionnaire responses:
Who makes decisions?

	Unemployed Man (n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman(n=28)	Her Husband
Whether to move	5.1	6.7	5.7	4.2
What car to buy	6.5	6.7	5.2	6.0
Where to live	5.4	5.7	5.1	5.0
Where to vacation	4.7	5.6	5.2	6.0
When to go out to eat	5.1	5.7	4.6	5.0
Where to go for an evening	4.7	5.3	5.1	4.2
How to discipline the kids	4.8	5.2	4.0	5.0
Whom to have over	4.6	5.1	4.9	4.5
How much \$\$ on groceries	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.8
How to decorate	3.2	3.2	3.7	3.2
What groceries to buy	3.5	3.8	3.1	3.8

These are the average responses given by each category of response
Respondents were asked to answer on a scale from 1 to 9.

A 1 means the wife has all of the influence on the decision.

A 9 means the husband has all of the influence on the decision.

A 5 means they have equal influence on the decision.

Descriptions of whom to have over to visit provide another example of a hidden complexity behind the numbers. Respondents answered the question about this decision on the questionnaire by saying that it was either shared or the woman had slightly more influence than her husband. However, in the interviews it appeared that there are two somewhat contradictory factors in this decision.

First the woman was the social organizer. Second, her husband held a kind of veto power limiting possible guests. Betty Johnson, Rita Degraff, Heather Gates and Bob Johnson, described how the wives are the ones who make social arrangements, and, in that sense, control decisions about whom to have over. However, their decision is limited by restrictions imposed by their husbands.

"Friendwise, I'm the one that does all the inviting. Now he doesn't keep me from having my family come over, but he tells me if he prefers they didn't." Rita Degraff

Bob has no friends. Most of the people he has I've brought into the house. He doesn't associate with a lot of people." Betty Johnson

"If it were up to him, nobody (would visit). Usually I invite people He forbids certain people in my family." Heather Gates

"I don't tell nobody to come over. I have no friends."
Interviewer: Is there anybody you think shouldn't come over?
"Her family. They usually cost me a package of meat or something." Bob Johnson

George Fitzgerald and Candy Evans describe how the husband's veto is imposed. In George's case, he just avoids the social event. Chuck Evans is more aggressive in his control of whom to have over.

"She has all the influence. But if I don't like somebody I just stay away." George Fitzgerald

"Sometimes with certain people, Chuck'll tell me he doesn't want to see certain people because he thinks they're a bad influence. But when they come to the door, he is too soft hearted. He expects me to tell them." Candy Evans

Sam Wilson described another source of control of the decision of whom to have over. He said that since he had been laid off and they were unable to really entertain by having something to eat or being able to participate in any activity that required money, their social activities had declined. In his case the decision of whom to have over was made by the economic crisis.

Buying groceries was another issue in which the interviews provided a more complex picture than the questionnaires. In the questionnaires, all of the respondents said, on the average, that the woman was likely to have more influence on how much money to spend on groceries and which groceries to buy. However, in the interviews, when probed about these questions, people indicated that food preferences of family members and budgets, which women did not control, set the limitations within which she made her decisions.

"Well I always do the grocery shopping, but there's things I don't buy because he doesn't like them." Lisa Adams

"I decide what groceries to buy. He gives me a budget of \$100 a week. I keep telling him I want a raise." Rita Degraff

In addition, husbands may be making decisions within limitations set by circumstances over which they have no control. Money sets limits on how much as well as what will be purchased.

"She decides. I give her \$100. I give her all I can give her." Rick Degraff

Outside influences were also suggested as the ultimate decision makers by others in the interviews, particularly around the questions of taking a job or moving.

"We were actually discussing that (moving). Actually, if it were to come to that, it wouldn't be our decision. It would be where he could get a job." Lisa Adams

"The Huntington Bank would decide that. She would move in a minute, but we haven't got enough money to get out of the county." Bob Johnson

Also, although one could interpret control of decision making as an indication of power, Amy Miller and Sara Wilson said it could also indicate that the woman (or the man) was stuck with the job of decision making.

"I'm the one who figures up all of the bills. I decide which bills to pay. He doesn't want the responsibility. He hides beneath me. It's caused arguments. He sees me growing past him, but he doesn't want the responsibility." Amy Miller

"We had to buy a new car a while ago. I had to arrange everything. He went along, but I had to decide. I had to do all the work." Sara Wilson

The questionnaires also asked people who, in general, made day to day decisions and who made big decisions. Table 22 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires about who makes day to day decisions. Table 22 indicates that, in families where the man had been laid off, almost half of the men (42%) thought they had the most influence on day to day decisions. Twenty nine percent of the men in those couples thought day to day decisions were shared, and 28% thought their wives had the last say in day to day decisions. The wives of men who had been laid off were most likely to say the men had the last word in day to day decisions (40%), followed by themselves (34%) and equally shared (26%).

In families where the woman had been laid off, people answered quite differently. She was most likely to think that she had the last say on day to day decisions (45%), followed by it was equal (31%), and her husband had the most say (24%). Her husband was most likely to say it was equal (37%), followed by his wife had the most say (33%), and himself (30%).

Table 23 shows responses to the questionnaire on the question of who, in general, has the most influence on big decisions. In couples where the man was laid off, the husband was most likely to say he had the most influence (66%), followed by it was equal (27%). Only 6% of these men thought their wives had the last word on big decisions. The

wives of men who had been laid off agreed most frequently that their husband had the last word on big decisions (64%), followed by it was equal (27%), and only 9% said they had the last word on big decisions.

Table 22. Questionnaire responses:
Who makes day to day decisions?

	Unemployed Man (n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Husband is most likely	42%	40%	24%	30%
Wife is most likely	28%	34%	45%	33%
It's about equal	29%	26%	31%	37%

Table 23. Questionnaire responses:
Who makes big decisions?

	Unemployed Man (n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Husband is most likely	66%	64%	41%	50%
Wife is most likely	6%	9%	24%	14%
It's about equal	27%	27%	36%	36%

In couples where the woman had been laid off, the wife was also most likely to say her husband had the final word in big decisions (41%). However, this percentage is much smaller than for husbands and wives in families where the man had been laid off. Women who had

been laid off were almost as likely to think big decisions were handled about equally (36%). Twenty four percent of the women who had been laid off thought they had the final say on big decisions. The husbands of women who had been laid off were most likely to say they had the last word on big decisions (50%), followed by it was equal (36%), and their wives had the last word (14%).

These findings support research on marital power that correlates power in marriage to working for wages. Furthermore, these data indicate that the relationship between earning money and having more "say" creates marital relationships that are retained even after the woman (or man) leaves the labor market. More egalitarian decision making may be one reflection of marital relationships that allow wives to work outside of the home. Or, egalitarian decision making may be a result of women having worked outside of the home, and is retained even after she is laid off.

In summary, the questionnaire results on decision making show that couples where the woman had been laid off have a more egalitarian perception of their decision making than couples where the man had been laid off. Within couples, men thought men had more control over decisions than their wives thought men had. All respondents, on the average, thought women had more control over day to day decisions than women had over big decisions. They also all thought, on the average, that men had more to say than women did over both kinds of decisions.

These data on decision making contrast with the findings on housework. The data on housework indicate that there had been a change in the direction of greater equality for women in families where the man had been laid off, and a change toward less equality in

the families where the women had been laid off. On questions about decision making there appears to be greater equality among families where the woman had been laid off.

There are several possible explanations. First, it might mean that families, where the man was a breadwinner and his wife either a housewife or a secondary earner, were more "male dominated" before the layoff, so that even when change occurred toward greater equality in the distribution of housework, he remained much more likely to dominate in decision making. In contrast, in families where the woman had been working full time, a pattern of equality had been established which remained in terms of decision making in spite of the fact that her activities had become more traditional.

A second explanation is that the loss of the breadwinner role for men created a gap that could be filled with a greater degree of control over decisions. Komarovsky (1940) found that when men were laid off from their jobs and lost their economic importance as breadwinners, they sometimes "staked out" another area in which to claim "authority." The data from my work suggests that decision making was an area in which unemployed men made a claim to authority. In families where the woman had been laid off, she too may be "staking a claim" to her authority. However, her spouse is less likely to share her view of her control over decision making.

Thus far we have looked at two arenas of power in families--housework and decision making. Changes in the division of housework indicate a transfer of power from the person who is laid off to his or her spouse. On the question of decision making I did not look at change since the layoff. The average pattern during the layoff indi-

cates that laid off men have more control over decision making than their wives do and more control over decision making, relative to their wives, than husbands of wives who had been laid off.

CHANGES IN AUTHORITY

The next two questions address more directly the perception of the transfer of power since the layoff. First, respondents were asked if they thought they had lost authority in the family since the layoff. Table 24 summarizes the responses to the questionnaires. Table 24 indicates that in families where the husband was laid off, almost half of the men thought there had been no change. Thirty six percent thought there had been a change and his authority was weaker. Seventeen percent of the men thought their authority was stronger. His wife was most likely to say her authority had become stronger (43%), followed by no change (42%), and her authority had become weaker (16%).

In couples where the woman had been laid off, the man was most likely to say there had been no change (46%), followed by his authority was stronger (35%), and his authority was weaker (19%). The wife who had been laid off was most likely to say there had been no change (46%), followed by her authority was stronger (29%), and her authority was weaker (25%).

About half of the respondents felt there had been a transfer of authority. In families where the man had been laid off, if they felt there had been a change, both husbands and wives had a sense that authority had somehow passed from the husband to the wife. Table 25

further highlights this point. Table 25 shows the responses of those people who thought there had been a change which made their power stronger. Wives of laid off men were most likely to think their power had become stronger. Laid off men were least likely to think their power had become stronger.

Table 24. Questionnaire responses:
Do you think your authority has become weaker
or stronger since the layoff?

	Unemployed Man (n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Weaker	36%	16%	25%	19%
Stayed the Same	46%	42%	46%	46%
Stronger	17%	43%	29%	35%

Table 25. Questionnaire responses:
Do you think your authority is stronger?

Percent responding "My power has become stronger."			
	Laid-off person	Spouse of laid off person	
Men	17% (135)	35% (28)	
Women	29% (28)	43% (135)	

In the questions on decision making I did not ask specifically about changes since the layoff. I asked people various questions

while they or their spouse were laid off, but the questions themselves did not explicitly say "since the layoff what kinds of changes have taken place in decision making?" In contrast, the questions on authority specifically asked about changes "since the layoff". The difference between the responses given to the questions on decision making and the responses given to the question on authority may be a result of this methodological difference. Perhaps when people were asked about decision making and the question was not put into a time context, they answered by describing decision making as it existed throughout their marriage or over the past few years. The answers to the question of authority described the situation since the layoff. The contrast in the results in these two sections indicates that men who have been laid off have had a great deal of authority (as measured by decision making) but since their layoff they have felt a large decline in their authority.

Respondents were also asked if they thought there had been changes in the importance of their role in their family since the layoff. The answers to this question for the questionnaires are summarized in Table 26. Table 26 shows that in couples where the man was laid off he most often felt the importance of his role in the family had remained the same (63%), followed by it was more important (20%), and it was less important (16%). The wives in these couples were most likely to think their role had become more important (60%), followed by it had remained the same (34%), and it had become less important (6%). My intention in asking this question was to see if unemployed people who were staying at home and perhaps participating in more domestic work, felt they had gained some importance to their family.

Table 26 shows that most men did not think their role was more important since they were home more.

Table 26. Questionnaire responses:

Do you think your role in the family is more important, less important, or has remained about the same since the layoff?

	Unemployed Man n=135	His Wife	Unemployed Woman n=28	Her Husband
More important	20%	60%	36%	42%
Less important	16%	6%	11%	12%
Stayed the same	63%	34%	54%	46%

In couples where the woman had been laid off, her husband was most likely to say there had been no change in the importance of his role in the family (46%), followed by his role had gained importance (42%), and his role had lost importance (12%). The laid off wives were most likely to say there had been no change (54%), followed by her role was more important (36%), and her role was less important (11%).

There were a variety of answers to these questions in the interviews. George Fitzgerald, a man who had been laid off, thought his time with the family made him more important.

"I haven't looked too hard for work because I like to be around the house more, especially with the kids. I was working 16 to 18 hour days. I told her 'it's your turn now.' I stayed away too long. Our oldest son has a lot of problems Ginger can't handle. I'm better with him. You know he needs someone on him all the time." George Fitzgerald

Art Miller thought the time with the kids was important, but not nearly as important as him having a paid job.

"If you can speak about anything being good about being laid off it's nice to be with the kids, but I would rather be supporting them. I'm mostly dead weight. I'd like to feel important but I can't. I'm not the only one in the boat, but that's beside the point." Art Miller

Art's wife Amy said he spent more time with the kids, but because he had become so demoralized, her role in the family had actually become more important.

"We argue about his discontent and feeling worthless. We were all raised to think the primary goal in a man's life is to support his family and also not to cry. I tell him he should. I like to think I'm a comfort. I tell the kids things will be better when he gets back to work. He spends more time with the kids. I guess you could say he's become a bigger part of their lives, like the cub scouts. He's got to know his kids because he took over things I used to do. But the kids lean on me more for major decisions." Amy Miller

Sam Wilson also described the relationship between his demoralization and the loss of his importance that he felt within his family.

"Financially my role is a lot less important. I abdicated my authority because I'm not working. My family doesn't have to meet my time pressures." Sam Wilson

Julie Roger, a woman who had been laid off, concurred with Sam Wilson and Art Miller, although less emotionally.

"I think I feel funny not bringing in any money. It's not fair. I feel more right to some say if I'm bringing in money." Julie Roger

Heather Gates thought there had been no change.

"No, he's still the boss." Heather Gates

Lisa Miller said although activities had changed, authority and the importance of their role in the family had not.

"I don't think we did much different before. He just does more housework since he's laid off." Lisa Adams

Denise Engels, the wife of a man who had been laid off said she felt she had lost importance to the family since her husband's layoff.

"Because I backed out. I was going to school and I left everything to him." Denise Engels

GENDER IDEOLOGIES

The third major arena of gender relations examined in this research is ideology about equality for women. First, I will report the findings from the questionnaire and discuss the conceptual problems with this section of the questionnaire. Second, I will report the discussions about gender inequality in the interviews, and contrast them with the data from the questionnaires.

On the questionnaires I asked three questions: How do you define equal rights for women? What is your opinion of equal rights for women? Have your opinions on this issue changed since you (or your spouse) were laid off? All of the respondents to the questionnaires said that they defined equal rights for women as primarily an economic question. They mentioned issues like equal pay, equal work, equal job opportunities and equal benefits. I had hoped to tap a more general opinion of gender relations since I was interested in examining the broad issue of gender inequality. However, using the term "equal rights" made the question too narrow. It was fortunate that I did ask respondents how they defined equal rights, since their comments alerted me to the narrowness of their definition when responding to the question about their opinions of equal rights. Anyway, neither

question was particularly useful in examining people's ideas about gender inequality.

Table 27. Questionnaire responses:
Percentage favoring equal rights for women

	Unemployed Man(n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Strongly or moderately favor equal rights for women	69%	54%	43%	52%

Table 27 is a summary of the questionnaire responses to the question of whether they favored equal rights for women. It shows that more men than women favor equal rights which is consistent with the national polls. It also shows that laid-off women and their husbands are less likely to favor equal rights than are laid-off men and their wives. This contrast between families where the man had been laid off and families where the woman had been laid off is surprising. On the other two issues relating to gender relations--housework and decision making--families where the woman had been laid off were more egalitarian than families where the man had been laid off. Women who had been laid off did fewer hours of housework than women who were married to men who had been laid off. And women who had been laid off were perceived by both themselves and their husbands to have more power in decision making relative to their husbands than women who were married to men who had been laid off. This contrast between opi-

nions about equal rights for women, and housework and decision making, is another indication of the inadequacy of the set of questions on equal rights for tapping opinions about gender inequality.

Table 28. Questionnaire responses:

"Has your opinion of equal rights changed since the layoff?"

	Unemployed Man (n=135)	His Wife	Unemployed Woman (n=28)	Her Husband
Opinion has changed	10%	7%	14%	0%

Table 28 is a summary of responses to the question of whether opinions about equal rights have changed since the layoff. Table 28 shows a relatively small number of respondents indicating that their opinion of equal rights for women had changed since the layoff. This question should have had an immediate follow-up question of how had their opinion changed if it had changed. Unfortunately, this information was not collected on the questionnaires.

In contrast to the questionnaires, the interviews provided a much clearer and more elaborate response to the question of ideas about gender inequality and changes in those ideas since the layoff. The people who were interviewed also tended toward defining equality for women in terms of economic issues. However, they mentioned other issues, as well as explaining their diverse opinions.

Candy Evans said she thought equal pay was the only legitimate claim to equal rights that women have.

"I still think it is a man's world, but if a woman can do the same job as a man- I do not feel that a woman really is equal, but if she can do the same job, then I feel she should get paid for it." Candy Evans

Lisa Adams, Valerie Turner, and Amy Miller do not share Candy's opinion that this is a man's world but they are critical of people who claim equality in other arenas besides economic equality. This is interesting if we recall their discussion of housework. In the section on housework, these women described the struggle that went on in their homes when their husbands were laid off. They had insisted that their husbands do more of an equal share of the housework. In those discussions, these women were quite firm in their arguments that their husbands should do more; they thought that there should be more equality in terms of the division of domestic work. However, when I used the words equal rights, they limited their discussion to economic issues.

"If you're doing the same job as a man you should get paid the same. If you want to go into everyday life like opening doors for women, they can open their own doors. That stuff's out. The main thing is jobs. It should be paid the same." Lisa Adams

"I agree with the equal pay, women doing the same job and getting the same breaks--but I think some of the issues they're fighting for are silly. I really don't follow it (what the women's movement is doing)." Valerie Turner

"A lot of it (equal rights for women) I agree with. But it seems that some of them are going overboard. I agree with equal pay though." Amy Miller

Denise Engels and Sara Wilsons also defined equal rights as an economic issue, and were the most supportive without qualification.

(to me equal rights means)"that I could find a job with the same benefits even if the pay isn't as good. I feel like without me being able to get hospitalization on my job, things are really bad." Sara Wilson

"Mainly its just equal pay. It's ok. If I work I should get the same pay." Denise Engels

Others had a more general definition of equality which included not just economic equality, but a factor of power or "say", and they had different opinions about whether this was good or not.

"I don't see why it can't be equal all the way. If they can stand up and do jobs like a man they should be treated the same." Valerie Turner

"I don't care for it. Men shouldn't have a lot more rights, but I don't think women should wear the pants in the family. Men should wear the pants in the family. Men should have more to say because he is supposed to be the breadwinner." Heather Gates

Heather Gates' comment is particularly interesting because she is married to a man who has been laid off and is not likely to go back to work. She is the breadwinner in her family.

Rick Degraff and Ginger Fitzgerald both said equality referred to what women and men did, not to what they earned. However, they had very different of opinions on that question.

"Equal rights means women can do anything a man can do. I don't feel a woman should have to work for a living." Rick Degraff

"Well for me, the way I look at it, I think anyone, man or woman, can do any job they want to do and don't think just because they are a woman they shouldn't be given a chance to do it. Like at work, I have to lift and put machines together--lift a hopper up on a machine. Just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I can't do it. I don't like to told just because I'm a woman I can't do stuff. That'll get me hotter faster than anything." Ginger Fitzgerald

Julie Roger and Betty Johnson thought equality should include domestic issues. Julie was employed in production work and had been laid off. Betty has always been a housewife and is married to a man who had been laid off. In some ways these two women are quite different. However, it is not surprising that they both brought up housework as an issue when asked about equality for women. Julie is

troubled to be slipping into the housewife role after having been the main breadwinner in the family. In previous comments she described her concern about this and her attempts to create a more egalitarian situation in her family since she was laid off. Before she was laid off her pay was high enough for her to afford a maid, and when she was laid off she could no longer afford it; so most of the housework became her responsibility. Betty has always taken all the responsibility for housework, and she described this as relatively fair when her husband was working. When he became unemployed, however, her perception was that the deal they had made had been altered and he really should take more responsibility for housework. In both cases, these women discovered that housework was their responsibility no matter what else was going on in their family. Even when Betty's husband was no longer doing "his job", she was still responsible for nearly all of the housework. Julie had to either earn enough to hire a maid to do "her work", or she had to do it herself.

"You know, I don't know but talking about equal rights and women's rights, we always concentrate on women in the work place. But I think about women in the home as well. I think women need to get a little more credit for what they do, you know, as far as they say childcare is so important and it's such an important part of our culture and our society and motherhood and things. But I've always wondered if it's so damn important, why aren't more men involved in it. You know it makes you wonder. They say one thing and yet if you are a mother you get about zero status. Really, I mean you can be a mom or you can be a person." Julie
Roger

"I don't consider it equality I consider it justice. I just think it's--to me they're equal anyway and even though you got this big fight and I know that women don't get paid as much as men and stuff like that. But I believe there's no difference because I believe with training a woman can do as much as man can. And as far as around the house, I've always thought he should help me around the house. I mean the kids are just as much his as mine. Half the dirty dishes, half the dirty clothes are his, you know. Two people live in the same house together. Two people should share it." Betty Johnson

Another theme in the interviews was support for equal rights while adding a qualifier that women must earn those rights.

"Women should have equal rights, but they should make an equal contribution for those rights. I think equal rights means equal responsibility. A lot of women don't realize this." Sam Wilson

"They're going too far. They have a right to equal pay but not more of a right to a job than I do. I don't feel they should be pushed in just because you are a woman. It should be fair. Now it's being pushed." Art Miller

"Yeah, I aint too hep on it. A woman should get equal pay for doing the same job a man does. The problem is, though, that if a woman can't do a job a man does, she still demands equal pay, if you know what I mean. I don't mind women working around me. It don't bother me. I just get tired of hearing--like if there was a man sitting here typing and making \$40,000 and there's a woman sitting here doing the same job as him making \$20,000 I think she ought to make just as much as him or cut his pay. But if I got a job out there at Ford--say I worked there for 10 years doing the same job for 10 years--I worked my way up to this job and I started out doing every god damned rotten job there is, and I worked my way up to this job and was setting there doing it and all of a sudden they hired this woman in and she can't do the job down there, but she could do my plush little job, that I worked my way up to, and they take me off. That aint right." Bob Johnson

Another man had a comment on a equal rights and affirmative action.

"I do support it, but I don't go for women getting jobs just because they're a woman. But that's (reverse descrimination) because men have been in charge for so long. That's why things are screwed up. Maybe women should be in charge. Women are more logical. They say women are more emotional, but I don't buy that." Chuck Evans

The question of changes in opinion of equal rights since the layoff brought an equally diverse number of answers. Some people said they had become more strongly against equality for women since the layoff. Art Miller, Candy Evans, and Larry Adams explained that the situation of high unemployment rates in general and of their own (or their spouse's) layoff had caused them to become more critical of equal

rights for women. These three people seemed to blame the entrance of women into the labor market and affirmative action, at least partly, for their job loss.

"People should get jobs on qualifications, not on sex and race and it is that way (in favor of women and minorities). I'm strongly against that. This may be an especially sore spot because I lost my job." Art Miller

"There's lots of people out of jobs now and there's lots of families and I feel in some of these jobs if women, say if a woman is married, if she didn't have the job, well there'd be a lot of other men that are married who have a job. I think it would solve a lot of problems. Really like if I had a job that was paying me about the same as Chuck and there was a man out there that was married and didn't have a job and had kids, I feel that if I wasn't there he could have that job if he could do the work. I'm against women's rights really except for some divorced women. There are some divorced women out there. If the woman had the job and is raising a family on her own I feel she should do it. But if she is married, I can't see two of them working if some people don't have a job. Unless its just to take a minimum wage job like a waitress." Candy Evans

"Equal rights has been used against me because I was the wrong sex and color. But I've worked alongside of women. I guess I'm temporarily hostile. But it isn't the woman's fault it's politics." Larry Adams

However, not everyone blamed their job loss on women. Some of the people in the interviews said their opinions had become more favorable towards equal rights for women since the layoff. For example, Denise Engels had gone back to school when her husband was laid off. She was surprised and disturbed by the way in which she was treated at the university. Although she felt that her occupation of housewife and her age made her a responsible adult, the university treated her like a child.

"Yes, because when I got my grant to go back to school, they had to talk to my husband. That kind of upset me. They told me lots of kids come in for loans without their parents knowing about it. But I'm a mother with two kids. That should show I'm responsible." Denise Engels

Sara Wilson, Amy Miller and Rick Degraff said that they felt that the economic inequality of women was a contributor to their family's poverty. However, Amy and Sara are women who are the primary breadwinners for their families since their husbands were laid off. Rick's opinion of equality was hypothetical because he would not allow his wife to work.

"I work but the pay is low because teaching is women's domain. I took a course on that last year. In the beginning I didn't care. the income is more important to me now." Amy Miller

"Yes the extra money (if my wife worked) would help. But now its impossible for her to work with the kids." Rick Degraff

"No, not that much except I was much more of a Pollyanna before. My eyes have been opened more. I used to think, Oh, I could get a job when I wanted. You know, women could get good jobs. But now I don't know." Sara Wilson

Finally, there were those who explained why their opinions had not changed recently. Bob and Betty Johnson had considered the possibility that unemployment might be blamed on women. However, Betty concluded that there were other factors that were more likely to be the source of the problem. Bob did not suggest an alternative source of the problem, but he was quite sure women were not kept on or hired into his work while men were being laid off.

"No, because they were out the door before I was. No really, it's a matter of seniority." Bob Johnson

"Hiring women didn't have anything to do with Bob getting laid off. Bob got laid off because Ford sucks. It's because that turkey up there--Caldwell or whatever his name is--wanted to make \$7.4 million that year. I don't know. All I know is he made a lot of money. They're always saying Ford made this much profit." Betty Johnson

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

In concluding this chapter I would like to comment on what I see as extenuating circumstances. At the time of the interviews, several of the couples had other factors in their lives, that created individual differences in their experience of the layoff. I had identified the layoff as a sharply discernible and critical event in people's lives. However, in many cases the people seemed to focus in on other issues, which they found at the time of the interview, to be more salient.

Julie and John Roger had recently moved back from Germany, where she had been stationed in the army, to his hometown. Julie spoke of the newly re-established contact with his family as being at least as important as her layoff to the division of labor in her home and her opinion of the importance of equality for women.

Chuck and Candy Evans had two babies nine months apart. The older child was one and a half and the younger one a few months old when I interviewed them. Their new marriage and parenthood and the physical demands of two babies occupied center stage for them.

Heather and Hank Gates found after his layoff that he was seriously ill and would never be able to work again. His layoff and the demand for a new definition of himself and their relationship was compounded by the illness. This may have contributed to Heather's insistence on conceptualizing their relationship in very traditional terms, in spite of the fact that she was the major breadwinner. She may have been trying to obscure his loss of a contributing role in the

family by maintaining the image that he was still at the head of the family.

George and Ginger Fitzgerald had a son with some behavioral problems and George's health was recently deteriorating. Both of these influenced their feelings and activities in trying to deal with his layoff and her entrance into full time work. In spite of the similarity in some ways of their situation to Heather and Hank's, Ginger and George seemed to be trying to recreate new roles for themselves.

Valerie and Vince Turner had three children, two of whom were chronically ill. The economic and emotional pressure seemed to overshadow her layoff. Her job as a mother was particularly important. In contrast to Julie Roger who has been laid off and was troubled by becoming a housewife, Valerie was at least ambivalent. She liked working outside and she especially liked the money, but she also felt it was important that she stay home with the children.

The layoff, the loss of income and changes in family life were important events for the individuals in this research and their families. However, they were embedded in a set of circumstances that sometimes took precedence in their lives. Therefore, perhaps more than revealing the results of unemployment, this data may instead reflect the place of unemployment alongside everything else that goes on in these people's lives.

In this chapter I have examined the ways in which a layoff of a breadwinner affects relationships between husbands and wives. Two arenas of gender relations were examined: decision making, and ideology and opinions about equality for women. In families where the

man had been laid off, decision making was dominated more by husbands than in families where the woman had been laid off. In both situations men had more control over both day to day and big decisions. The questions used to examine ideas and opinions about gender inequality were not very efficient in the questionnaires because the use of the words "equal rights for women" was too narrow. The interviews, however, provided a varied and provocative picture of ideas and opinions about gender inequality.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

I will conclude my work by describing four areas in which it makes its most important contributions. The first contribution is the empirical description and analysis of the everyday life of blue collar families during a recession. These data are organized around the questions of finances, labor force participation, economizing, housework, decision making and ideology. Second, this research contributes to our understanding of ways in which gender affects people's experience of recession and unemployment. The data from the questionnaires provide an opportunity to compare families where husbands were laid off with families where wives were laid off. Third, this dissertation provides an opportunity to compare experiences of economic decline in the 1930's and the 1980's. Finally, my work points to theoretical issues about our conceptualizations of family. This research shows families operating simultaneously as arenas with both a unity of interest and conflicts of interests. Economic decline tends to intensify both of these characteristics. Based on these insights, I suggest that we need to incorporate both characteristics, and the tension between them, into our conceptualization of family.

EVERYDAY LIFE IN A RECESSION

In an article on families and economic decline Voydanoff (1984) remarked that work in this area is hindered by reliance on data collected primarily during the 1930's. Scholars have increasingly begun to gather information on the social impact of the recent recessions (Aldous, 1983; Rosen, 1982; Snyder and Nowak, 1983; 1984; 1985; Willson, 1985). This dissertation provides further empirical information about the human impact of economic decline in recent years.

There are of course, many governmental and academic reports that register the effect of recession through unemployment rates, numbers of people living below the poverty level, and changes in median incomes. In this dissertation, the statistics on unemployment, poverty and labor market participation have been brought to life with the stories of the people who participated in this study.

Gender was a critical factor in the picture created by the data of everyday life for blue collar families in a recession. I used two criteria for choosing subjects. One was that they be a married couple. The other was that either the husband or the wife had been laid off from a blue collar job. The gender of the person in the family who had been laid off turned out to be critical. For several questions the responses were completely opposite, depending on whether it was the husband or the wife who had been laid off.

Snyder and Nowak (1983; 1984; 1985) have focused their work on the differences in the experience of unemployment for men and women. They argue that gender has been previously ignored in the literature

on unemployment. Not only have researchers neglected to compare unemployed women and men, they have ignored the experience of unemployed women altogether. Snyder and Nowak have found that a large proportion of unemployed blue collar workers in certain areas (their work is in the milltowns of Pennsylvania) are women. In addition, they have found a number of differences between the experience of women who have been laid off and men who have been laid off. Their research has examined issues such as re-employment, poverty and mental health. My research investigated different topics but is similar in its conclusion that there are large and important differences in the impact of unemployment on women and men. My research also is different from Snyder and Nowak's, because I compared families where the woman had been laid off to families where the man had been laid off. I found differences in these two kinds of families in division of housework, arguments, decision making and opinions about equal rights. These differences are further described below in the summary of the findings of this dissertation.

In the following section I will summarize the empirical findings from Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In addition, I will draw attention to the differences between families where the man was laid off and families where the woman was laid off. I organized the research around six issues: labor force participation, family finances and economizing (these three are reported in Chapter 4), housework, which is reported in Chapter 5 and decision making and ideas and opinions about gender equality which are reported in Chapter 6.

The question of whether the layoff of one worker in a family resulted in an increase in labor market participation for her/his

spouse was the first issue considered. Half of the wives said they had changed their participation in the labor market when their husbands were laid off. They had taken a new job, increased their hours or returned to school to prepare themselves for a job. Only one quarter of the husbands of wives who had been laid off said they had changed their participation. The in-depth interviews revealed that there were probably even more attempts being made to find work or training especially by wives, but many times these attempts were unsuccessful.

The biggest explanation for the difference in the amount of change in labor force participation following a spouse's layoff, is that husbands of unemployed women were much more likely to already be working full time than were wives of unemployed men, and, therefore, could not increase their labor force participation. Wives of unemployed men had more room for change since more than half of them were full time housewives or working only part time. In spite of the "room for change", the interviews also revealed that the decision for a wife to enter the labor force was sometimes a difficult one to make because of ideas about gender and the way in which domestic work was divided which made women responsible for housework. There were several reasons given for why couples made the decision to have the woman enter the labor force or not. The interviewed couples were influenced by economic considerations, ideologies of gender and by the organization of decision making power in their household.

I also learned that some women whose husbands were laid off found that this new impetus to enter the work force and the subsequent change in their lives were positive ones. Although the unemployment

of their husbands was not something they wanted, its impact on their lives was not all bad. A few men in the interviews also perceived a positive side to their layoff, because it allowed them to leave jobs they didn't like.

The impact of unemployment on family finances was the next issue examined. In families where the man had been laid off, respondents felt that unemployment had a bigger impact on family finances than in families where the woman had been laid off. This is consistent with the weekly incomes reported by the two family types. The average weekly income of families where the wife had been laid off was \$241, and the average weekly income of families where the husband had been laid off was \$190. Within families, the unemployed person thought the impact was more severe than his/her spouse did. The interviews revealed that the impact of unemployment on family finances was obscured in some cases by programs like unemployment compensation and sub-pay. It was also observed that, not surprisingly, the length of time since the layoff had a critical effect on how difficult family finances had become. Finally, the way in which people in the interviews defined poverty determined their responses to the question of how much effect unemployment had on the family's finances. For example, people who defined poverty at a higher income level were more impressed with the relative change in their family finances. Others who conceptualization of poverty was more minimal did not perceive their situation as dramatically different since the layoff. Definitions of poverty appeared to be very different among the people who were interviewed.

Economizing was the third issue examined. Eighty six percent of the people who answered the questionnaire said they had tried at least one method of economizing. Fewer meals at restaurants was the most common economizing strategy. Other popular methods included doing their own car maintenance and installing a wood stove or insulation. The strategies to economize also seemed to serve a second purpose: they were a way in which unemployed men could contribute to their households. Especially in the interviews, economizing efforts by men, like working on cars or doing home repairs, seemed to be a way of maintaining a "breadwinner" image. Many men did these tasks as a way of economizing, and both husbands and wives were especially aware of the increase in this kind of work by laid off men. About half of the respondents thought that economizing had not created extra work. About one quarter thought there was extra work, and it was shared. About one quarter thought the unemployed person was doing the extra work. Although the unemployed woman's contribution to economizing was noted in the questionnaires, it was not described as enthusiastically in the interviews as were the economizing contribution of unemployed men.

Many families economized before the layoff. Economizing, like economic difficulty and increased labor force participation of women, was increased by unemployment, but the break between unemployed and employed was not as sharp as I had previously conceptualized it. Unemployment was an important event, but the recession had affected these families prior to the layoff.

The interviews revealed that many people were also affected by what I call extenuating circumstances. These include health problems,

new babies, and moving to new homes near in-laws. The layoff, the loss of income, and changes in family life were important in lives of the people. However, the issues which I designated as critical were embedded in a set of circumstances that sometimes took precedence in their lives. This research suggests that unemployment is mediated and intertwined with other circumstances.

The division of housework was the next issue I examined. I discovered that in families where the man had been laid off, women continued to do many more hours of housework, especially if the wife was home full time. However, even in families where the wife was working while her husband was laid off, women still did more housework than their husbands did. In families where the woman had been laid off, she did more housework than her husband did, but much less than housewives who were married to unemployed men. These are all consistent with the literature on the division of housework in families where the husband or both the husband and wife are employed.

Although women were doing most of the housework, in about half of the families where the man had been laid off, both husbands and wives said that the husband had increased the amount of housework he did compared to before he was laid off. The definition of "more housework" ranged from cooking his own lunch to doing everything.

The interviews described struggles that were necessary to increase the participation of unemployed men in domestic work. Both husbands and wives agreed that women did more than their fair share. In families where the man was laid off, this coincided with more arguments about housework. In families where the woman had been laid off, husbands and wives both thought that the wife was doing more than her

fair share, but this coincided with a reduction of arguments over housework.

In the questionnaires, about one third of the wives who had been laid off said they did more housework since they were laid off. But only 16% of their husbands thought that their wives had increased the amount of housework they had been doing before the lay off.

There was a difference not only in the amount of time spent on housework between husbands and wives, but in the kinds of work performed. Men more often did jobs that were outside, involved maintenance, and those tasks that concerned children. Women were more likely to do jobs dealing with feeding people and cleaning.

Decision making was the next issue examined. In families where the man had been laid off, about two thirds of the people thought big decisions were made by the husband. When asked about day to day decisions, about 40% thought the man was most likely to make these decisions, and about one quarter thought they were made equally. In families where the woman was laid off, the people, particularly wives, had a more egalitarian perception of decision making. About half thought the husband was the most likely to make big decisions. But when asked about day to day decisions, one third of the husbands said they had the most control, one third said their wives did, and about one third said it was equal. Almost half of the laid off wives said they made day to day decisions, and one quarter of the wives said their husbands did.

I also collected information on specific kinds of decisions. Although there were differences among the four categories (laid off man, his wife, laid off woman, her husband), there was some basic

agreement about which decisions were more likely to be made by men and which by women. Men tended to make decisions about whether to move, what car to buy, and where to live. Women tended to make decisions about what groceries to buy, how to decorate the home, and how much money to spend on groceries.

Once again, the interviews revealed a hidden complexity. Some decisions were claimed to be in the hands of the husbands, but were perhaps really outside of the families' control. An example of this is whether to move. People explained that they may be forced to move in order to find work. Some decisions that were claimed to be in the hands of the women were often limited by husbands. For example, several women described themselves as most likely to decide whom to have over to visit. However, they also noted that their husbands would not allow certain people to visit.

When asked about changes in authority since the layoff, in families where the man had been laid off, about half of the people thought that there had been no change. However, more than a third thought the husband had lost authority or the wife had gained authority since he had been laid off. In families where the woman had been laid off, about half thought there had been no change in authority. The women who had been laid off were almost evenly divided about whether their authority had diminished or increased. The husbands of women who had been laid off either thought there had been no change, or that they had gained in authority. The in-depth interviews showed an even clearer relationship between layoff and loss of authority for both husbands and wives.

Ideas and opinions about gender inequality was the last issue examined. The majority of respondents to the question of whether they favored equal rights said that they did. Most also said that they defined equal rights for women as being primarily an economic question. Very few said that their opinions had changed on this subject since the layoff. These questions were too narrow to provide information on the general question of ideas and opinions about gender inequality. The data from the in-depth interviews provided a much more interesting picture.

In the interviews, people mostly defined equal rights for women as an economic question. However, they mentioned several other issues as important to the question of equality for women, including, power, opportunity, and respect for "feminine" contributions like housework and motherhood. The interviews also revealed a much richer picture of what support for equality means. Many people said they supported equality for women, but added qualifiers about what women need to do in order to earn that equality. Some people described how their support of equality had diminished since they had been laid off, because they felt affirmative action was part of the context of their layoff. On the other hand, others said that their support had increased, because they could see the advantage of raising women's wages in order to improve their family's financial situation.

COMPARISON TO THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The patterns in this study closely resemble those in the data collected during the 1930's. The quotes from the interviews in this

dissertation were sometimes almost exactly the same kinds of quotes or descriptions of the same kinds of situations found in the research done by Bakke (1940) and Komarovsky (1940). Komarovsky noted that housework was an arena of struggle between unemployed men and their wives. This was strongly supported in my work. Bakke describes the problem of changes in authority in families where men were laid off. This too was supported in my work.

I would like to review Milkman's (1976) research and point out the comparisons that can be made between the two eras. Milkman observed that the Depression tended to push women into the labor market. This research also found this to be true. One important observation that was not made by Milkman and other observers of the 1930's was that the impact of the layoff of a wife is quite different than the layoff of a husband. This is because in the 1930's women were much less likely to be employed than they are now. In addition, the conceptualization of the labor force may not have included women. Therefore, although there were women working, especially, for example, minority women, their plight was not noticed.

Milkman also found that during the depression, domestic work was increased as families attempted to economize, and that women tended to do much of the extra work. In my research, economizing was not perceived to have increased work for women alone. The people in the interviews seemed to be more likely to notice and discuss the ways in which men had increased their work in car and home repair as a method of economizing. Taking in boarders or family as a method of economizing was popular in the 1930's, but was nearly non-existent among the people in this research.

Milkman argued that ideology about equality deteriorated during the Depression. This research shows that people have a very diverse set of ideas about what equality is and whether their ideas had changed during the recession. Perhaps there was a greater diversity of opinion than Milkman acknowledged during the 1930's as well. Much of the evidence cited by observers of the Depression era to support the argument that people's opinion of equality for women had declined, is based on opinions of whether married women should work for wages. It is very clear that public opinion around this question was very anti-feminist. However, we don't know why people held this opinion, and we don't know what the people who were polled thought about other issues relating to the question of equality for women.

UNITY AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS IN FAMILIES

This work raises theoretical issues about conceptualizations of families. A diverse group of theorists, including functionalists, exchange theorists, and Marxist feminists have emphasized the unity of interests within families (Parsons, 1955; Nye, 1979; Humphries, 1977; Elshtain, 1983; Currie, Dunn and Fogarty, 1980). These writers describe families as systems that organize themselves to maintain their unity and integrity in the face of change from the outside. A central feature of their conceptualization is the belief that family is a place in which all its individuals gain from being members, and, therefore, seek ways to maintain the system. Although these theorists understand the family to be internally differentiated by gender (as well as by age), they argue that this creates an interdependence that

makes cooperation and preservation of the family useful for the family as a whole as well as for its individual members.

One of the most important contributions feminists have made in recent years, is to critique the assumption that unity and cooperation is basic to family structure (Thorne, 1982; Rapp, Ross and Bridenthal, 1979; Sokoloff, 1981). Theorists that have been especially interested in critiquing this position include: Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Barrett, 1984; Hartmann, 1981; Washington Area Marxist Feminist Study Group, 1980; Rich, 1980; Eisenstein, 1978; Beechey, 1978. They have pointed out that families are not primarily entities, with a unity of interests, but are sites of intense differences and conflicts. Feminists have argued that families are entities primarily characterized by conflicts of interests. These theorist have focused their work on the ways in which the interests of family members conflict, and the ways in which the system is maintained in spite of those conflicts of interests.

In this section, I will review these two positions, and conclude by showing how my research shows that families are sites of both unity and conflicts of interests. Furthermore, I will argue that economic decline appears to intensify both characteristics. I will suggest that we should recognize both of these characteristics and focus our attention on the tension between the two.

In 1958, George Homans first advanced his theory of social exchange in his paper: "Social Behavior as Exchange". That was followed by his book, Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms, in 1961, in which he laid out the basic components of a theory of social exchange. Burns (1973:188-189) describes the model of exchange

theory: "social interaction ... is an exchange of mutually rewarding activities in which the receipt of a needed valuable (good or service) is contingent on the supply of a favor or return (usually immediate)."

The use of social exchange theory to analyze families was introduced by Nye (1976; 1979). When applied to marriage, exchange theory presents a picture of unity. Husbands and wives enter the social exchange with their resources: education, income, occupational prestige, sexuality. An exchange is made, thereby creating a relationship. Safilios-Rothschild (1976) describes marriage itself as a series of exchanges. The tendency within the system is toward stability as exchanges are made. Changes outside of the family are resolved within the family by altering the exchanges between the husband and wife. Exchange theorists have been especially interested in the impact of labor market changes that have altered the resources of husbands and wives. For example, the trend of women entering the labor force drastically alters wives' resources, and presumably would demand equally drastic changes in the exchanges.

If we apply this model to the situation of marriages within the economic context of recession, we would focus on the way in which economic decline affects the family as a whole, and especially on the way in which equilibrium of the system was re-established. Those families that didn't re-establish equilibrium would be perceived as being dysfunctional. In popular culture, an example of this conceptualization of family and its expectations about the impact of unemployment and economic decline is the movie "Mr. Mom".

Feminists have developed their analysis of family alongside exchange theorists throughout the 1970's. However, their concep-

tualization is a very different one. Feminists have emphasized the power and conflict within marriages, and would argue that not only is "dis-equilibrium" (using the exchange theorists term) an intrinsic part of marriages, but perhaps its foundation. For feminist theorists, families are heterogeneous systems, characterized by different and opposing interests and by internal hierarchies. Rather than tending toward stability or equilibrium, they tend toward conflict. Feminists would argue that our focus should be on the differentiated experiences of husbands and wives and conflict between them. Economic decline would be expected to have a different and more severe impact on women than on men. Recession would be likely to increase or at least to maintain gender inequality within families, because women have less power and are, therefore, even more vulnerable in a system when the resources become scarcer (Washington Area Marxist Feminist Study Group, 1980).

This debate has really been at the heart of the feminist critique of consensus theory. However, the theoretical picture is more complex since a "family feud on the left" (Ehrenreich, 1982) has emerged in which some socialist feminists have begun to argue that families are primarily arenas with a unity of interests, and that leftists have been politically and theoretically naive to ignore that.

Jane Humphries (1977) is an example of a socialist feminist who argues that we must begin to think more about the unity of interests within families. In her work around the question of the persistence of the working class, she claims that the tenacity of the working class family is based on its usefulness not only to capitalists, but also to working class families and working class men and women. The

working class family is functional for capitalists as a reproducer of labor power. The working class family is also useful for working class women and men as a means to survival within capitalism and a vehicle for waging class struggle.

"Marxist analyses have generally failed to explain the persistence of the working class family as a central feature of capitalist social formation....The theme of this paper is that the resilience of the family derives in part from workers' defense of an institution which affects their standard of living, class cohesion and ability to wage the class struggle...The working class family has always resisted alternatives to the family, recognizing in the erosion of traditional family structures an infringement of its standard of living and a deterioration in the position from which it engages in class struggle" (Humphries, 1977:241-245.)

In describing the battle for the family wage in turn of the century Britain, Humphries admits that the fight for the family wage included advocating forcing women out of jobs. For example, she describes family wage advocates who supported the family wage because it would push women out of the labor force. However, Humphries maintains that in the final analysis the family wage served to benefit working class women. "Class action which tries to raise the price of labor usually had beneficial effects, if not directly on women's wages, then indirectly through increased family wages" (1977:253).

Humphries concludes (1977) that the working class family is at least partly a result of a rational struggle for its preservation that has been fought by working class people. Although differences within families exist, that should not obscure our ability to see the value of the integrity of the family.

Currie, Dunn and Fogarty (1980;27) concur with Humphries' analysis in their assessment of family during the recession in contemporary American society. Working class families "have always been a major

bulwark against the ravages of a market economy. Today they can remain a key source of social support and economic well-being for working people." Furthermore, the impact of the recession is experienced as an attack on this "basic source of stability and security." Currie, Dunn and Fogarty's essay reviews several of the ways in which the working class family has been attacked by the recession, and the ways in which the working class family has responded to that attack, by placing more family members into the labor market, economizing and sacrificing savings.

Barrett and McIntosh (1982) have criticized Humphries' position. They argue that the contemporary family-household system is not a system of equilibrium and stability with a unity of interests. It is not a source of strength for the working class, especially not for working class women. Families are "not only the central site of the oppression of women, but an important organizing principle of the (exploitative) relations of production of the social formation as a whole" (Barrett, 1984:211). Therefore, in direct contrast to Humphries, Barrett and McIntosh argue that families are not an important means of survival, but instead central in perpetuating an exploitative system. Working class women are doubly victims because the maintenance of nuclear families helps to maintain an exploitative class system and an oppressive sex/gender system both inside and outside families.

"The divisions of the labour force to which the relations of the family household contribute are politically divisive for the working class...Women's domestic labour in the home...tend(s) to lower (the standard of living for the working class) by enabling lower wage levels to be secured...The family-household system has resulted in the 'double shift'...for many working class women. It has proved oppressive for women living with men they have to be dependent on" (Barrett, 1984: 218-219).

This argument is a powerful one. However, when it is translated into recommendations for political strategy it appears problematic.

"Should we argue that men should no longer support wives, that pension schemes should not provide for widows, that divorced women have no right to support from their ex-husbands? In the long run undoubtedly we should. But in the present situation, if women cannot escape the responsibility for housekeeping and caring for children and, even if they do work outside the home, can seldom earn as much as a man, then any proposals we make must not be ones that would leave women without the little shred of compensation they now have" (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; 133).

What they describe as long term strategy is actually similar to changes being brought by the economic crisis to the families in my research. In families where the husband was laid off, the dependency of women on men's wages was halted, and women sometimes described this experience as a hidden opportunity. However, the layoff also created poverty and increased work for women.

The work of Currie, Dunn and Fogarty and its subsequent critique by the Washinton Area Marxist Feminist Study Group (WAMFSG) (1980) provide another example of Marxist feminists debating whether families should be perceived primarily in terms of a unity of interests or a conflict of interests.

"Currie, Dunn and Fogarty see the working class family as a mutual resource sharing unit with a communality of interests among family members which has acted as a focus of resistance to exploitative market relations under capitalism. The problem, as they see it, is that under stagflation the family can no longer function as a defense. But this is essentially a romantic view of the family. It ignores the reality that family is a central location for women's oppression, given its exploitation of female labor power, women's economic dependence and male control of female sexuality and reproductive power" (WAMFSG, 1980:107).

They also criticize Currie, Dunn and Fogarty's solution.

"As appealing as the family wage may be, it entails women's economic dependence on men and therefore their subordination" (1980:109).

Finally, WAMFSG conclude that it is the conflicts of interests of families, not their unity of interests that should be our focus.

"The appeal of anti-feminism is men's desire to regain privilege and women's fear that equal rights in law will mean the final destruction of the supra-legal edifice of male moral obligation through which so many of them hope to find security for themselves and their children" (1980:111).

Hartmann (1981) has also been involved in this debate, although not directly in response to Humphries or Currie, Dunn, and Fogarty. Her work predated theirs and was written as a critique of family historians (Haraven, 1975; Laslett and Wall, 1972; Anderson, 1971; Engels, 1958; Goode, 1963; Shorter, 1975; Lasch, 1977; Rossi, Kagen and Haraven, 1978), a diverse group who have different and sometimes contradictory interpretations. However, they "share a view (of family) that assumes the unity of interests among family members; it stresses the role of family as a unit and tends to downplay conflicts or differences of interests among family members" (Hartmann, 1981:368).

Hartmann (1981:368) strongly disagrees with the conceptualization. "I suggest that the underlying concept of the family as an active agent with unified interests is erroneous and I offer an alternative concept of family as a locus of struggle". Furthermore, when families are affected by events from outside, husbands and wives experience the event and react in different ways. "It may be misleading to hold, as family historians often do, that 'the family' resists or embraces capitalism, industrialization or the state." Hartmann does not mention economic decline, but one could easily add it to the list.

Hartmann (1981:374) describes family as having a dual nature.

"Recent...family... research has contributed to my understanding of the family as an embodiment of both unity and disunity." She explains this apparant paradox as a result of interdependence.

"The family historians may not have been sensitive to power relations within the family, but they have focused on another aspect of the same phenomenon--the interdependence of people within households and their common stance as a household against the incursion of forces that could alienate their resources or their control over decision making. Although I have focused on the potential for conflict among family members, particularly between men and women over housework, I want to point out that the same division of labor that creates the basis for that conflict also creates interdependence as a basis for family unity (Hartmann, 1981:393).

Interestingly, and I feel mistakenly, Hartmann ignores her insight of the dual nature of family. Although she theoretically acknowledges the dual nature of family, in her work she clearly emphasizes the primacy of the disunity of family relations to the exclusion of considering its unity.

"Women and men are no less mutually dependent in the household than are workers and capitalists, or slaves and slaveowners. In environments that are fundamentally coercive (such as patriarchy and capitalism) concepts of choice and adaptation are inevitably flawed--as is the belief that workers and capitalists or men and women have unified interests" (Hartmann, 1981:376).

DUAL NATURE OF FAMILY

May (1983:400-401) writes that the demand for the family wage was based on two premises. "The first premise of demands for a family wage promised one solution to inadequate wages and marginal subsistence.... The second premise of the family wage was that a male should be the family breadwinner." May argues that Hartmann has

focused on premise two, and Humphries has focused on premise one.

"Hartmann and Humphries each develop an analysis of family wage which is partial and reductive...For Hartmann the patriarchal elements of capitalism shape the wage demands so that the female subordination in both the family and the work force becomes the central issue. In Humphries' view, the working class response to new social relations of production used traditional gender roles to gain wages in the interest of the entire class, which included the interest of women" (May, 1983:408). Rubin (1976:61) was also troubled by the "either/or" quality of the debate around family. "Is it an institution of oppression or the only place of refuge and belonging in an otherwise frightening, alienating, and alienated world? From the outset it seemed clear that questions which force such alternatives upon us distort and simplify reality and deny the subjective experience of most people who live in families."

My work reflects the same contradictory relationship between unity and conflicts of interest. Economic decline and unemployment was an attack on "the family" and was experienced as such. Families as units feel strongly their dependence on the economic system and their vulnerability to unemployment and financial stress. This tends to intensify their shared interests in survival, causing them to pull together. Economic decline and unemployment also intensified the conflicts of interests in families. Economic crises tend to expose conflicting interests: women are not paid as well as men and cannot replace their husband's lost wages; women retain responsibility for domestic work even though their husbands do not work outside of the home; the basis of men's authority may disappear and husbands and

wives may sense some gain in authority by women, but his dominance remains. During a period of economic crisis, gender inequality may become a less important consideration, relative to the needs of "the family". However, gender divisions and asymmetries do not disappear as people sink into economic depression. In fact, gender inequality may actually become more pronounced.

There is always a strain between the two forces of unity and disunity within families. Economic decline does not resolve this contradiction, but intensifies it, making it more extreme and more easily discernible. This research shows that a full picture of family must include both of these dimensions, and the tension between the two.

This research suggests some of the variety, complexity and contradiction of family relations. Simplistic notions of families as either arenas of unity or of conflicts of interests are not adequate.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
OLD QUESTIONNAIRE

This is the first questionnaire used for the pilot study. It was distributed in the fall of 1982 and was subsequently critiqued by my students and the members of my dissertation committee. I then revised it creating the questionnaires in Appendices B and C. The data gathered with the old questionnaire are not reported in this dissertation.

APPENDIX A

OLD QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old are you?
2. How many people do you live with?
Who are they?
spouse
children (ages) 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____
other adults
3. How long have you been laid off?
4. What kind of work have done in the last 10 years?
5. Do you expect to go back? when? where?
6. What does your spouse (or other adult in household) do?
unemployed ____ former job ____ How long unemployed ____
housewife
works full time ____ or part time ____ occupation ____
7. Has your spouse's work changed since your layoff?

took a new job
working more hours
went back to school to get a new or better job
looking for work
other changes
no change
8. About how much money does each of the people in your family bring
in every week?

you
spouse
other
9. About how much time (hours) do the people in your family spend doing
housework on a typical weekday? What about on the weekend?
you
spouse
children
other

10. Who does the specific jobs around the house?

(NOTE TO THE INTERVIEWER: fill in the percentage of responsibility if subject indicates there is sharing of these jobs. For example if subject says we share the work ask about division by percentage, e.g., "Do you do 1/2, 1/4, 3/4, 90%?"

who does the vacuuming and dusting

you
spouse
children
other

Who does the cooking

you
spouse
children
other

yardwork

you
spouse
children
other

dishes

you
spouse
children
other

childcare

you
spouse
children
other

pick up

you
spouse
children
other

laundry

you
spouse
children
other

11. Is the question of who should do the housework ever a problem around your house? How?

12. Have arguments about housework increased or decreased since you or your spouse) got laid off?

13. Have there been any changes in who does the housework since you or your spouse) got laid off? What changes?

14. The next set of questions has to do with how decisions are made in your family. In each of the following cases, who would make the final decisions: You, your spouse, about equal between you and your spouse, someone else/decision is beyond family's control?

Who would make the decision about:

what job you should take
 whether you should work outside the home
 what car to buy
 where to live
 whether to buy life insurance or not
 where to go on vacation
 which Dr. to go to if someone gets sick
 how to discipline the children
 how much to spend on groceries

15. In general, who has the last word on day to day decisions?
16. Who has the last word on big decisions?
17. Do you think your authority has become weaker since you (or your spouse) were laid off?
18. Do you think your role in the family is less important since you or your spouse was laid off?
19. Has your layoff or the economic conditions in general, caused your family to economize in any of the following ways?
- others moved in with you or you with them
 fewer meals in restaurants
 less baby sitters
 more sewing
 more gardening
 more canning
 wood stove
 other
20. Has this created more work around the house?

Who is doing the extra work?

21. Has your layoff caused you to share work or money with others?

For example, have you lent or borrowed money from relatives or friends?

Have you helped others more by baby sitting for them or helping them with repairs?

Have they helped you in these ways?

Please explain.

How?

Who?

22. What is your opinion of women working outside of the home?

23. What does the phrase equal rights mean to you?

24. What is your opinion of equal rights for women?

25. Has your opinion on this subject changed since your layoff?

26. What would you like to be doing three years from now?

27. What do you expect to be doing three years from now?

FINAL NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:

1. What is the sex of the subject?

2. What is the race of the subject?

3. Was there anything about this subject or the conditions of the interview which might be useful to know?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSON

This is the questionnaire used to collect data for this dissertation. The data collected by this questionnaire are reported in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and are referred to as questionnaire responses in the tables. This questionnaire is similar to the questionnaire in Appendix C. It is designed for administration to the person in the couple who had been laid off. The questionnaire in Appendix C is designed for the spouse of the person who had been laid off. The questions are the same. The difference is only in the way in which the questions are phrased.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE--FOR UNEMPLOYED PERSON

1. How old are you?
2. How many people do you live with?

Who are they?

Adults other than spouse _____

Children (ages) 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

3. How long have you been married?

EMPLOYMENT

4. What kind of work have you done in the past 10 years?
5. How long have you been laid off?
6. Do you expect to go back? When? Where?
7. What does your spouse do?
Unemployed _____ Former job _____ How long unemployed _____
housewife _____
works full time _____ or part time _____ occupation _____
8. Has your spouse's work changed since your layoff?
took a new job _____
working more hours _____
went back to school to get a new or better job _____
looking for work _____
other changes _____
no change _____
9. About how much money does each of the people in your family bring in every week?
You _____
spouse _____
other _____
10. Has unemployment effected your family finances?

No, not much

1 2 3

4

5

6

7

8

Yes, severely

9

10

HOUSEWORK

11. About how much time do the people in your family spend doing housework on a typical weekday?

You _____
 spouse _____
 children _____
 other _____

What about on the weekend?

you _____
 spouse _____
 children _____
 other _____

12. Certain household tasks are necessary to keep things running smoothly. Who does each of these tasks more often, you or your partner? X indicates that children do these tasks.

	I do	we share					spouse does			
a.repairing things around the house.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
b.doing the dishes.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
c.cooking the breakfast..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
d.cooking the evening meal.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
e.vacuuming the carpets..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
f.doing the laundry.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
g.making arrangements to have repairs done around the house.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
h.cleaning the bathroom...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
i.caring for the pets.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
j.taking out the trash....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
k.doing the grocery shopping.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
l.taking care of the lawn..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
m.ironing my clothes.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
n.driving the car when we are going somewhere in town together.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
o.punishing the children..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
p.taking the children to their activities and appointments.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
q.playing with the children.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

13. Why do you and your partner divide household tasks in the way in which you have indicated?

13. In general, how much satisfaction do you get from doing household chores?

Extremely satisfied					Not at all satisfied				I don't do household chores
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

14. Considering the chores in your household, do you feel your partner does (his) (her) "fair share"?

Much more than their fair share			exactly their fair share			Much less than their fair share		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

15. Is the question of who should do the housework ever a problem around your house? How?

16. Have arguments about housework increased, decreased or stayed the same since you got laid off?

17. Have there been any changes in who does the housework since you were laid off? What changes?

18. If your family could live as you prefer, how would work and housework be divided?

19. For each of the different decisions listed below, first tell us (ON THE LEFT SIDE) who usually has the most influence. Then tell us (ON THE RIGHT SIDE) whether you feel this decision is a major or minor one.

Who Usually has the most influence?										Major or minor decision?									
1=I have all the influence										1=a very major decision									
5=We have equal influence										9=a very minor decision									
9=My spouse has all the influence																			
	I have			We have			Spouse			Very Major					Very Minor				
	all			equal			has all			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
a.what groceries to buy.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
b.how to decorate our home.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
c.where to go on a vacation.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
d.when to go out to eat.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
e.whether to move to another city, state or country.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
f.where to go out for an evening.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
g.whom to invite to our home.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
h.how to discipline the children.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
i.how much money to spend on groceries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
j.what car to buy....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
k.what job I should take.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
l.where to live.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	

20. In general, who has the last word on day-to-day decisions?

21. Who has the last word on big decisions?

22. Do you think your authority has become weaker or stronger since you were laid off?
23. Do you think your role in the family is more or less important since you were laid off, or has it stayed the same?

ECONOMIZING

24. Has your layoff or the economic conditions in general caused your family to economize in any of the following ways?

others moved in with you or you with them _____
 fewer meals at restaurants _____
 less babysitters _____
 more sewing _____
 more gardening _____
 more canning or freezing _____
 wood stove or kerosene stove or insulation _____
 sold items _____
 do own car maintenance _____
 other _____

25. Has this created more work around the house?

If so, who is doing the extra work?

26. Has your layoff cause you to share work or money with others?

borrowed or lent money _____
 babysitting shared _____
 repairs _____
 other _____

OPINIONS

27. What does the phrase equal rights for women mean to you?
28. What is your opinion of equal rights for women?
29. Has your opinion on this subject changed since your layoff?
30. If you are an unemployed man and your wife is working, has there been any reaction from your friends or family about changing roles?

FUTURE

31. What would you like to be doing three years from now?

32. What do you think you will be doing three years from now?

Final note to interviewer:

1. What is the sex of the subject?
2. What is the race of the subject?
3. Was there anything about this subject or the conditions of the interview that might be useful to know?
4. What is your sex?
5. What is your age?
6. How well do you know the subject?

HOUSEWORK

11. About how much time do the people in your family spend doing housework on a typical weekday?

You _____
 spouse _____
 children _____
 other _____

What about on the weekend?

you _____
 spouse _____
 children _____
 other _____

12. Certain household tasks are necessary to keep things running smoothly. Who does each of these tasks more often, you or your partner? X indicates children do this task.

	I do	we share				spouse does				
a.repairing things around										
the house.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
b.doing the dishes.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
c.cooking the breakfast..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
d.cooking the evening										
meal.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
e.vacuuming the carpets..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
f.doing the laundry.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
g.making arrangements to										
have repairs done around										
the house.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
h.cleaning the bathroom...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
i.caring for the pets.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
j.taking out the trash....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
k.doing the grocery										
shopping.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
l.taking care of the lawn..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
m.ironing my clothes.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
n.driving the car when we										
are going somewhere in										
town together.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
o.punishing the children..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
p.taking the children to										
their activities and										
appointments.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X
q.playing with the										
children.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

13. Why do you and your partner divide household tasks in the way in which you have indicated?

13. In general, how much satisfaction do you get from doing household chores?

Extremely					Not at all					I don't do
satisfied					satisfied					household
										chores
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X	

14. Considering the chores in your household, do you feel your partner does (his) (her) "fair share"?

Much more				exactly				Much less			
than their				their				than their			
fair share				fair share				fair share			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			

15. Is the question of who should do the housework ever a problem around your house? How?

16. Have arguments about housework increased, decreased or stayed the same since your spouse was laid off?

17. Have there been any changes in who does the housework since your spouse was laid off? What changes?

18. If your family could live as you prefer, how would work and housework be divided?

19. For each of the different decisions listed below, first tell us (ON THE LEFT SIDE) who usually has the most influence. Then tell us (ON THE RIGHT SIDE) whether you feel this decision is a major or minor one.

	Who Usually has the most influence?									Major or minor decision?								
	1=I have all the influence 5=We have equal influence 9=My spouse has all the influence									1=a very major decision 9=a very minor decision								
	I have all			We have equal			Spouse has all			Very Major					Very Minor			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
a.what groceries to buy.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
b.how to decorate our home.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
c.where to go on a vacation.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
d.when to go out to eat.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
e.whether to move to another city, state or country.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
f.where to go out for an evening.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
g.whom to invite to our home.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
h.how to discipline the children.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
i.how much money to spend on groceries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
j.what car to buy....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
k.what job I should take.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
l.where to live.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

20. In general, who has the last word on day-to-day decisions?

21. Who has the last word on big decisions?

22. Do you think your authority has become weaker or stronger since your spouse was laid off?
23. Do you think your role in the family is more or less important since your spouse was laid off, or has it stayed the same?

ECONOMIZING

24. Has your spouse's layoff or the economic conditions in general caused your family to economize in any of the following ways?

others moved in with you or you with them _____
 fewer meals at restaurants _____
 less babysitters _____
 more sewing _____
 more gardening _____
 more canning or freezing _____
 wood stove or kerosene stove or insulation _____
 sold items _____
 do own car maintenance _____
 other _____

25. Has this created more work around the house?

If so, who is doing the extra work?

26. Has your spouse's layoff cause you to share work or money with others?

borrowed or lent money _____
 babysitting shared _____
 repairs _____
 other _____

OPINIONS

27. What does the phrase equal rights for women mean to you?
28. What is your opinion of equal rights for women?
29. Has your opinion on this subject changed since your spouse's layoff?
30. If you are married to an unemployed man and you are working, has there been any reaction from your friends or family about changing roles?

FUTURE

31. What would you like to be doing three years from now?

32. What do you think you will be doing three years from now?

Final note to interviewer:

1. What is the sex of the subject?
2. What is the race of the subject?
3. Was there anything about this subject or the conditions of the interview that might be useful to know?
4. What is your sex?
5. What is your age?
6. How well do you know the subject?

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH METHODS ASSIGNMENT

This is the assignment I gave to students describing the research and the way in which I wanted them to find subjects. It also includes some suggestions about how to administer the questionnaire. This written description was discussed in class in detail.

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH METHODS ASSIGNMENT

One of the most important kinds of work sociologists are involved in is the collection of information to support (or refute) the various theories they have developed to explain social events. This assignment will give you the opportunity to do your own sociological research as well as to help me with my research. The recent economic recession has had a profound effect on all of our lives, but it is unclear exactly what that effect has been. In this assignment you will be asked to administer a questionnaire to two subjects to find out in concrete ways how the economic recession has affected families where at least one person has been laid off. You must find two subjects on your own. One subject must be a person who used to work at a blue collar production job in one of the plants in the Lima area, eg., Clark, Ford, Scheller-Globe. The subject must be presently unemployed and he or she must live in a household with his or her spouse. The second subject must be the spouse of the person who has been laid off. You must read the questions to those you interview--don't just give the questionnaires to the subjects to fill out. Do not interview anyone who has already been interviewed by another student in the class. Write the name of the person on the questionnaire and be sure to assure the person that their answers are confidential. We will be

discussing this assignment in class and you will be able to observe a sample interview during class. You have the option of not participating in this assignment. However, if you choose not to do an interview you will have to complete an alternative assignment in order to fulfill the requirements for this course.

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH REPORT DONE BY STUDENTS

This is the description of the format I asked students to follow in reporting their research findings. After having administered the questionnaires, they assembled themselves into small groups and summarized and discussed their findings. They submitted written reports on their summary and description. I used these reports as additional sources of information in my analysis of the research. The reports were also useful in ensuring good data since the problem of falsified or incomplete data became the problem of the students in trying to fulfill the assignment.

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH REPORT DONE BY STUDENTS

Research assignment

1. Name the people in your group.
2. Summarize the findings on all the questionnaires in your group.

Organize the findings around the following charts:

effect of layoff on spouse going back to work, increasing
hours, etc.
who does the housework
who makes decisions
attempts to economize
political opinions
ideal family organization

3. Select one of the charts

Discuss your findings

- a. Describe the findings in detail. For example, describe varieties of responses among the different interviewers.
- b. Offer some explanations for your findings

4. Describe any problems you ran into while collecting data.
5. What other questions would be helpful on this questionnaire?

Each group should submit one paper with all of the questionnaires attached. Each questionnaire should have the interviewers name on it. Your paper should be about 3 to 5 typewritten, double spaced pages. Papers are due in class on Friday. There is a penalty for late papers. Please submit them on time. If you need assistance, please ask me.

APPENDIX F

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION OF SUBJECTS IN THE RESEARCH

This is the statement given to prospective subjects for this research. Students were required to give a copy of this to prospective subjects. I also gave copies to the people in the interviews.

APPENDIX F

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION OF SUBJECTS IN THE RESEARCH

Statement to be given to prospective subjects for research project

I am a student at Michigan State University. As part of the requirements for a PH.D. degree, I am doing research on how people's family lives have been affected by the current recession. This project is solely an individual one; I am not collecting information for anyone else to use.

I'd like to ask you some questions about who you live with, who does the housework and decision making in your family, ways you have tried to economize lately and your opinions about equal rights for women. I hope you will be able to answer all of the questions, but if you want to discontinue the interview at any time or if there are a few questions you would rather not answer, please just say so. The questionnaire is purely voluntary; there is no penalty if you do not wish to answer some questions or if you do not wish to participate at all.

Your answers are strictly confidential and anonymous. There will be no record kept of who you are, and when I write up my paper there will be no identification of individual subjects.

Thank you for participating in this project. One of the reasons I became interested in doing this research was because I feel that working people in the United States are currently going through a very important historical period. But very little record is being kept of what is happening to the everyday person. I hope that the information that you give me about your experience will be able to inform the public about the needs of families during economic recessions. In addition, it will serve as a record of the history of working Americans in the 1980's.

If you are interested in the results of my research, please call me.

Judy Aulette, phone:228-2641, extension 368.

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