Role conflict among women graduate students: A matter of gender

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Role conflict among women graduate students: A matter of gender

Downey, Nancy Lee, M.A.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1991

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APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This sociological study explores the ways in which women balance the demands of graduate school with the other social positions or roles they occupy and expands upon prior research by examining a wide array of factors affecting the role conflicts they encounter. Based on responses from a self-administered mail questionnaire, the survey describes experiences of 461 women enrolled in graduate degree programs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in the fall of 1989 and focuses on the interrelation between their various roles and variables thought to influence their role conflicts.

In an attempt to move beyond research that often considered only structural or static indicators as causes of this conflict, gender ideologies within the marriage relationship, ranging from traditional to egalitarian, are introduced and shown to have a significant effect on the experience of wife-student role conflict. Various coping strategies are seen as indicators of role negotiating processes initiated by women in an effort to achieve their full range of personal goals harmoniously. It is argued that for the successful resolution of role conflicts to take place, behavioral expectations for women's societal roles must be jarred from their basis in traditional gender values and evolve toward egalitarian ones.

It is recognized that symbolic interactionism is not closed to macrosociological issues and can be effectively used to further our understanding of role as a conceptual link between the individual and social structure. By defining a role as a perspective (a basis for organizing the world as well as a basis for action) it becomes possible to see how roles allow for individual differences, originality, and ultimately social change. Through the exploration of structural and socio-psychological factors which influence these perspectives, social behaviors in the form of role conflict coping strategies illustrate how role definitions and norms can be changed through individual actions and desires where social structures sufficiently allow. Finally, the idea of analyzing gender as a perspective in itself is introduced in order to more fully explain the causes of role conflict among women graduate students and demonstrate the reflexive relationship between social interaction and social structure in general.
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PREFACE

As the joke goes, if you were a woman over thirty on a college campus twenty-five years ago, you were either someone’s mother or a member of the faculty. But by the time I ventured back to college in 1983 as a 31-year-old married mother of two, that stereotype was beginning to change and I found to my relief, that I was not the oldest student in the lecture hall. There we sat in the front row of desks with our textbooks highlighted in yellow all over the place, anxiously awaiting every chance to exercise our new-found right to think: the returning mature women students. Although we were diverse in our life stages, motivations, and experiences, we had something very important in common - we were different than traditional college students. And some of that difference was evidenced by conflicts of roles.

So with that, I became an acknowledged member of a growing group of women discovering institutes of higher learning all over America. I was not alone in facing the modern contradictions and challenges of blending family and professional career training. But what is it we seek to gain and moreover, what does society gain, by our increasing movement into the realms of higher education and on to the professional levels of the economic sphere? Why did this become important for women at this particular point in history? Why do women, moreso than men, experience role conflicts when they pursue higher education? What are the costs and the benefits for college women and their families and for society as a whole?

My research into role conflict theory emerged as a way of beginning to answer some of my own questions and seeking to illuminate my own life in the light of understanding the experiences of other women students. I agree with Sandra Harding that "while studying women is not new, studying them from the perspective of their own experiences so that women can understand themselves and the world can claim virtually no history at all". ¹

¹ Sandra Harding, Feminism and Methodology, 1987; page 8.
Quite possibly, in order to understand the whole human experience, the emotional knowledge of women, under-valued and berated for so long, must be re-connected to logical thought and the monopoly of reason which have been over-valued and over-rated for just as long. The sham of objectivity in social analysis must be revealed for what it truly is - a destructive illusion disguising the values from which human beings can never be free. And feminist perspectives offer the clearest opportunities for accomplishing such revelation in the form of a healing unity which escapes the limited vision of social blinders and inspires praxis and beneficial social change on the road to a higher global consciousness.

Since the best feminist analysis insists the inquirer be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter², I present myself, my assumptions, beliefs, and biases for scrutiny along with my research. I specifically acknowledge the potential disadvantages and advantages that my personal experiences and quirks of socialization imply. For me, being in the same critical plane means having dealt first hand with the role conflicts associated with being a married woman and mother seeking higher education and a career within the context of a patriarchal/capitalistic system.³ I am influenced by a strongly white, liberal, upper-middle class bias as a result of my up-bringing, but that does not mean I assume everyone discusses Neomarxism and the feminization of poverty over white zinfandel and brie. Neither do I presume that there are any simple solutions to any of the complex problems facing women or society today. I will however, diligently attempt to continue a process begun by insightful leaders in feminist thought: "that of analyzing society from out of the female experience in a way which neither accuses men of constant plotting against women nor exonerates them from their misbehavior, which neither assumes all women are super-women because of their suffering nor attacks them for behaving in the only ways they are allowed to behave in this

² (Harding 1987:8)
³ My first husband used to ask: "Why can't you just be a normal woman?"; my second husband asks: "Why can't you be just a little less radical?" and my mother has always advised: "Be true to yourself at all costs....".
society." ⁴ In this way I hope to produce understandings and explanations which are freer from distortions of the past and which accurately reflect the social phenomena I study. Like Ann Withorn, I believe this to be a positive, future-oriented approach which can lead us to "constructive discussions of realistic strategies toward achieving revolutionary ends." ⁵ To me, being a woman sociologist means being tuned into the same rhythm of circumstance as those I am studying and it may just give the extra edge we need to strike up a meaningful dialogue for evolutionary social change instead of talking past each other for lack of an empathetic chord.

---

⁴ (Withorn 1971:16) Ann Withorn refers here to Shulamith Firestone (1970. The Dialectic of Sex: the case for feminist revolution. New York: William Morrow.) although she later emphasizes that Firestone does not have all the answers either. ⁵ Ibid.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was completed with the help of two generous grants from the Graduate Student Association of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas which made the size and scope of the survey project possible.

I am greatly indebted to my graduate committee chairperson, Maralee Mayberry, for her excellent theoretical and methodological guidance, persuasive encouragements, persistence, patience, and emotional support. I also appreciate very much the valuable editorial input and teachings of the other members of my committee: David Dickens, Barb Brents, and Bob Rucker. Thanks also to my graduate faculty representative, Shirley Emerson, for helping to pave the way for this study with her earlier research.

I would like to thank all of the professors in my department under whom I have been privileged to study. When first considering sociology as a major I was asked by one of them: "What is it that you want to do in life?" After I replied: "Change the world," I was told: "Then you're in the right department." My years of undergraduate and graduate study in sociology have proven to be more than a learning and growing experience - they have helped me to redefine my concept of self and shape my career as well as my life.

I want to especially thank my children, Brett and Kayli, for understanding my role conflicts and educating me in 'Real-life Family 101'; my husband Bill, for helping me fine-tune the art of interpersonal role negotiations through love; and my soon-to-be-born son Tyler (due date on graduation day), for providing me with yet another challenge and opportunity to balance all of my many social roles with harmony and joy.

For their unfailing support and endless faith in my abilities, I wish to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Dorothy and Howard Cannon, with much love and gratitude.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women graduate students in America are members of a growing group who are redefining traditional societal roles as a necessary and creative part of the adjustment process that higher education and career goal commitment requires. Since an increasing number of women graduate students are married with children and are returning to school to complete their college education begun at an earlier stage or to make a change in their careers, there exists a continued impetus to expand sociological understanding of this group with regard to the conflicts of roles they experience.

Research has indicated that women, moreso than men, report experiencing difficulties in combining traditional family roles with their roles as students, while also attempting to meet a greater number of multiple role expectations simultaneously. Since it was often assumed that women who occupy multiple role positions would necessarily experience role conflict and negative personal consequences of role related stress irrespective of intervening variables, studies commonly focused only on individual responses to these role problems. This approach failed to recognize important variations and interrelationships between social status, life stage, coping strategies, gender beliefs, and role perceptions experienced by women. The limitations of established role conflict theories become especially evident when descriptions of responses to role-related problems of women graduate students take the form of 'how-to-manuals' recommending unrealistic strategies for surviving the return to school which ultimately place the burden of responsibility for conflict resolution and compromise upon the woman alone. Insufficient attention has been given to determining the causes of these role conflicts or the ways in
which women from various socio-economic backgrounds differ in the types of problems they encounter and the kinds of coping strategies they employ, either successfully or unsuccessfully, to deal with these problems. Also, the effect of gender beliefs in relation to degrees and types of role conflicts associated with the graduate school experiences of women has not been explored. Gender ideologies, or the beliefs regarding male/female role enactments and expectations for behavior held by both women and men, point to the underlying social values which often are at odds in role conflict situations. In order to have a more complete view of role conflict within this group, new dimensions relating to the academic role and intellectual development of women must be considered, as well as the effect of structural forces and dynamic processes which transform societal role expectations and acceptable norms for women.

This study expands upon prior research by examining a wide array of factors affecting role conflicts of women in graduate school in order to demonstrate their relative importance. The study describes the experiences of women enrolled in graduate school degree programs at UNLV for the 1989 fall semester and focuses on the interrelation between their various positions or roles in society and factors thought to influence the degrees and types of role conflicts they report experiencing. In an attempt to move beyond research that often considered only structural or static indicators as causes of this conflict, an additional group of variables will be introduced as possible indicators of a pattern of dynamic processes of role negotiation and redefinition of normative expectations for role behaviors. Information regarding role position (wife, mother, student, employee), social background (life stage, income, occupation, education), and role involvement (number and ages of children, social networks, career commitment) are considered along with an examination of other aspects of social interaction such as gender ideologies and coping strategies as possible indicators of role negotiating processes initiated by women in an effort to achieve their full range of personal goals harmoniously.

It will be shown how the process of role bargaining and the mechanisms facilitating
successful resolution of role conflict act as important contributors to the dynamics of normative social change. Also, the idea that women become increasingly aware of gender based inequalities when role conflicts interfere with their abilities to combine career education and families will be developed. More specifically, it will be argued that for the successful resolution of role conflicts experienced by women graduate students to take place, behavioral expectations for women's societal roles must be jarred from their basis in traditional gender values and evolve toward egalitarian ones.

As more women prepare to enter the labor force by enrolling in graduate degree programs, educators must first become aware of the needs and potentials of these students and then be encouraged to adapt the institutional structure of higher education to better meet their collective requirements. Those who counsel women with regard to personal difficulties as well as educational and career decisions will benefit from the increased knowledge about the occupational motivation, career development patterns, and successful coping strategies of these women graduate students. Women themselves will learn that they need not meet and handle these conflicts as totally private problems when they can realize the patterned form they take and identify and utilize the mechanisms by which role conflicts can be effectively reduced.

Consequently, in seeking a deeper explanation for the causes of role conflict among women graduate students, a more complete understanding of the experiences of all women who simultaneously occupy family and career positions will be gained. This in turn will demonstrate how the successful mechanisms women use in role conflict resolution become dynamics for beneficial normative change in society. Further, when the importance of using women's experiences as resources for social analysis is more fully recognized, practical implications for social structures will become obvious.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although the social position of women in America has undergone profound changes during this century, the existence of role conflict in women's present-day experiences points to the continual need for progressive and beneficial change. At one point in history, the female roles of raising the family and participating in the economic life of our society were fused into one by virtue of home centered work activities. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the 1800's however, these roles were forced to become separated as men moved into the public realm of work leaving women to carry on the primary responsibility for the family function (Myrdal and Klein 1968). Women's cultural mandate thus prescribed that their primary allegiance be to the family and that men stood as the providers of their economic means and social status. Granted this premise, women who wished to pursue avenues of higher education or careers were said to have 'role conflict' and this conflict was viewed as a disruption in the social order. To many women, the family began to appear as a "greedy institution" demanding their total loyalty, time, and energy (Coser 1971:535).

In order to recover the economically active positions they had lost, women first had to assert their right to work alongside men and then prove that they could handle both functions, work and home, without generating negative consequences or disruption for society as a whole. The difficulties women faced when they began to reclaim a place in the scheme of economic production led professionally active women to feel as though they were always on trial. For women, the adjustment process accompanying their behavioral
changes was rendered problematic because certain habits of thought (specifically those held by men regarding appropriate roles for women) belonging to past phases of development became established as absolutes in situations where they no longer applied (Myrdal and Klein 1968). As Myrdal and Klein pointed out, "Men have, for a variety of reasons, found it difficult to adjust themselves to the idea of a wife who so radically differs from their mothers" (1968:8).

Coser attributes the difficulties involved in these social role adjustments to the fact that conflict derives from incompatible values underlying contradictory demands. Although modern American society values equality of opportunity for its members in principle, "women can hardly avail themselves of opportunities as long as they accept the cultural mandate that their major loyalty should be to their family. What is offered them formally is withdrawn normatively" (Coser 1974:99). The clash between ideology of opportunity and patriarchal culture is manifested here. Such contradictory value patterns which surround women's attempts to grow beyond the traditionally accepted gender relationships are seen to be highly anxiety-producing for many women and result in feelings of ambivalence and resentment often without an understanding of the true cause (Benjamin 1979).

A vital aspect of women's adjustment into the economic sphere has been the availability of academic training for professional careers. The doors to higher education for women in America did not open until 1837, two hundred years after the founding of Harvard College. Generally, the slow development of women's educational opportunities is attributed to objections by men who argued that there existed physiological, mental, and social barriers which blocked the participation of women in this previously male sphere of endeavor. Strong beliefs in immutable differences between men and women were used as justifications for their differential education. It was popularly felt that college-educated

---

^{1} We are reminded of the song that goes: "I want a girl just like the girl who married good old Dad" in a respondent's comments about the causes of her role conflicts. (See results and analysis chapter.)
women would be ill-prepared for the duties that home, mate, and childcare demanded and therefore they were not properly socialized for their true gender role (Feldman 1974). In Feldman's analysis, coeducation gradually became established and gained acceptability instead of being regarded as a 'passing fancy' only when it appeared that the human race was not in danger of extinction by virtue of intellectual mothers, wives, and daughters; the implication here being that men's attitudes alone allowed coeducation to exist without a corresponding consideration of the changing demands of the economy calling to women.

In Coser's analysis, as women began to realize that becoming involved with higher education and upper levels of the professional world brought realistic chances for gaining greater resources and equal status with men, "the greedy family was in trouble" (1974:99). The traditional terms upon which the marital dyad had been built began to change. Women were no longer as ready and willing to support their husband's careers by providing the same degree of emotional and domestic services irrespective of their own desires and needs. Coser reminds us though, that "the desires of social actors are never enough if structural conditions are not conducive to their realization" (1974:99). She shows that the structure of both the occupational order and of the household is being strongly impacted by technological advances, especially in the area of time and labor-saving developments, allowing the management of the home to be considerably simplified and schedule flexibility to be introduced into many working environments. She expected this to open the way for a new family constellation wherein men and women act as co-providers of income, co-managers of the home, and true partners in child-rearing so that their power resources are more nearly equal (1974).

Structural changes in the economy have not, however, automatically led to a more equitable division of labor in the home or parental sharing of childcare responsibilities. As a result, conflicts between roles persist for women on psychological as well as structural levels. Today, women who choose to pursue their goals of higher education, career, and family apparently have more freedom to do so, but also face many of the same problems
which confronted women in the past. Feldman notes that "at no stage in history has higher education for women been without controversy and opposition" and our contemporary stage is certainly no exception (1974:36). The salient elements which must be considered with equal emphasis in light of contemporary issues are ideology, culture, and economy.

B. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

Since the early 1970's there has been an increased interest in studying the sources of conflict arising from combinations of family and work-related role expectations among women (Cox 1985; Gerson 1985; Hall and Gordon 1973; Jones 1985; Richardson 1976). As more and more women began returning to college after a period of employment in the labor force, studies began to examine psychological issues relating to their reasons for returning to school, their career aspirations (Astin 1969) and the effect of re-entry education on women's later employment status (Felmlee 1988). Role conflict research soon focused on the sources of internal constraints and external barriers to women's achievement in both the realms of professional employment and higher education (Angrist 1975; Benjamin 1979). Comparatively few studies, however, have specifically explored the area of role conflict among women graduate students in search of underlying causes that emanate from and extend into the structure and dynamics of society itself.

Early research findings indicated that women, moreso than men, reported experiencing difficulties in combining traditional family roles with their roles as students, while also attempting to meet a greater number of multiple role expectations simultaneously (Dyk 1987). Feelings of guilt associated with the returning woman student's perceived neglect of her family responsibilities were seen as pointing to the conflicts she faced by transgressing the limits of traditional, acceptable female roles in society (Emerson 1977). Reentry women were described as serious, dedicated, enthusiastic, highly motivated, and hungry to learn and, in general, achieving greater academic success than younger students (Benjamin 1979). Yet, it was often assumed that women who occupied multiple role
positions would necessarily experience role conflict, role overload, and negative personal consequences of role related stress due to their academic commitment irrespective of intervening variables (Greeson 1984). As a result, popular books directed at the new audience of re-entry women students promised to help them survive the return to college but often trivialized the "role juggling" with which they were expected to cope (Mendelsohn 1980). In fact, Mendelsohn states "There is no way to resolve the problem of role conflict. Your aim, really, is to adopt an attitude about it that feels comfortable to you" (1980:77). Professional studies that purport to examine the counseling needs of reentry women do so while barely alluding to the broader social factors affecting and underlying their clashes of roles (Benjamin 1979; LeFevre 1972).

C. THE CONCEPT OF ROLE CONFLICT

The operative definition of role conflict used throughout most of the literature reviewed is based on the assumptions of Merton (1968), and Goode (1960) wherein individuals occupying statuses or positions in society are confronted with the task of articulating and managing to organize countless sets of role behaviors so that extreme conflicts between roles will not interfere with their functionality. Individuals, who possess a finite amount of time and energy physically available in order to successfully perform their roles, must also contend with differing expectations as to the behavior deemed appropriate for their particular status. This view assumes that commitment to multiple roles will necessarily lead to either incompatible or excessive role expectations resulting in physical and/or mental exhaustion. According to these definitions, competing demands of a person's social tasks and expectations, as well as perceptions of contradictory social norms can lead to situations of role conflict. Additionally, and as might be expected, the incidence of role conflict and pressure tend to relate negatively to a woman's happiness and satisfaction in life (Hall and Gordon 1973).

Greeson (1984) further clarifies the general concept of role conflict by making
important distinctions between inter-role conflict, intra-role conflict, and role overload. She uses the term 'role overload' to refer to constraints imposed by time, whereas 'role conflict' is said to involve discrepancies in expectations irrespective of time. Inter-role conflict occurs when a person is the target of two or more expectations arising from separate status positions where conforming to all of these expectations is not possible due to incompatible underlying values. Intra-role conflict can be seen as the result of decision-making dilemmas within the sphere of a single status or role and will herein be referred to simply as role stress.

According to role conflict theory then, women graduate students may find that their expectations of full-time motherhood are in direct opposition to their individual goals of educational or career ambitions. Their desires to be a good mother, a caring wife or partner, a responsible employee, and a successful student often cause several kinds of conflict due to the contradictory behaviors the positions themselves may require. In a situation of role overload, the woman may confront a time barrier which forces her to honor some role activities at the expense of others because she is physically not able to meet all the demands placed upon her by her various role relationships. It is common for role conflict to be thought of as "a natural consequence of not having enough time to do everything that needs to get done" (Mendolsohn 1980:75). However, this attitude effectively reduces all role conflict to merely situations of role overload and fails to introduce any deeper explanations as to why these "needs" are themselves excessive and who defines the needs and expects things to get done. After Astin (1969) reported that seventy percent of respondents in her study cited conflicting demands on their time as a major source of stress, it was suggested that time management skills and ability to delegate authority could offset some of these pressures since certain household responsibilities can be assigned to other family members or hired help. However, the traditional division of labor places overall responsibility for organizing and supervising household and family affairs on the woman's shoulders (Benjamin 1979).
A woman experiences role conflict over and above role overload when she is forced to make a choice between role activities because compliance with the expectations of one role will violate or disturb the expectations of another role (Greeson 1984). However, Coser stressed that the conflict experienced by career oriented women who also have families does not stem simply from participation in two different activity systems calling for time allocations which are incompatible. When professional women are expected to be committed to their work just like men while at the same time they are normatively required to give priority to their families, she felt that role conflict due to contradictory values is inevitable given the time it would actually take to fulfill all expectations (1971).

So, in contrast to previously held assertions, Greeson classifies contradictory expectations as causing role conflict, and excessive expectations as the cause of role overload. In this way, the role problems experienced by many women are sometimes more a matter of competition for her time than an issue of incompatibility between the roles or statuses themselves. She sees the limiting of role conflict discussion to inter-positional occurrences as creating an incomplete and narrow view of the concept of role conflict. Moreover, she stresses that strategies for resolving role conflicts must necessarily vary according to the source and type of conflict which is individually experienced.

Greeson sees research in this area as being especially salient for women today as they attempt to shed traditional gender role expectations and develop new roles based on the changing needs and desires of individuals and emphasizes legitimacy of gender role expectations as an important point of controversy for role theorists to address. She points out that Parsons (1966) requires conflicting expectations to be legitimate (actor justified) for role conflict to occur and consequences for compliance or non-compliance to exist for the actor. So when an individual becomes aware of contradictory expectations and perceived consequences, the use of coping strategies or role bargaining efforts would be conscious and deliberate response behaviors on the part of the actor indicating acceptance of those role expectations. Therefore, the ways in which a woman perceives herself to be
the recipient of conflicting expectations (including cause and legitimacy) become important considerations with regard to the type of coping strategies she will employ to deal with the resulting situation. Expectations for behavior may originate from the environment, the self, or a combination of both, leading to the experience of three distinct categories of role conflict: structural, psychological, and structural/psychological.

Structural conflict occurs when others in the environment of the actor (role senders) hold expectations for the actor (individual) which the actor perceives as being contradictory in relation to other expectations. Self-imposed expectations are the cause of psychological conflicts, where conflicting expectations for one's own behavior are held by oneself - the actor is both source and recipient of demands (Greeson 1984). In differentiating these categories of conflict however, Greeson does not acknowledge the difficulty associated with determining the original, often sub-conscious, source of self-expectations (i.e. to please parents, comply with traditional social norms of motherhood, or internalized values wherein the person takes on societal values as her own). Structural/psychological conflict is said to occur when environmental expectations are in opposition to psychological (self) expectations. The actor perceives that a contradiction exists between expectations which originate in the environment and are directed at the actor and expectations that are held by the actor herself. For example, when the values, morals, or needs of an individual are contrary to the expectations associated with activities required by a certain position, the individual may leave or discontinue that position in order not to jeopardize her own moral convictions. This type of conflict also occurs when the feelings or ambitions of an actor cause behaviors which are contradictory to those expected by individuals (role senders) in the actor's environment.

It has been noted that women graduate students may gain new feelings of independence and assertiveness as a result of their academic experience thus necessitating behavioral as well as value adjustments by husbands, children, family and friends in their environment (Mendelsohn 1980). Therefore, structural vs. psychological role conflicts are
especially evident where women attempt to shed traditional sex role expectations and
develop new role behaviors which are better attuned to their own individual needs and
desires (Greeson 1984).

Expectations, whether arising from self or others in the environment, may also
create a situation of role overload. Sieber (1974) distinguishes between role conflict and
role overload stating that role conflict refers to discrepant expectations irrespective of time
pressures whereas role overload means constraints are imposed by time. When a time
barrier is confronted that forces an actor to honor some roles at the expense of others, the
individual is forced to make a choice, but simply by virtue of the time limitation, not the
roles or positions themselves.

However, I would like to point out that excessive demands for the time and
attention of an actor may in fact be inherent in the role or position itself, so efficient time
management may not be enough to solve what appears to be a problem brought on solely
by the limits of time. The question which needs to be posed here is: "What is the true
source of the perceived time constraint?" We are all given the same number of hours in the
day within which we must arrange our role activities and performances, and if the
expectations we encounter require the accomplishment of an excessive number of role
behaviors or duties in relation to the expectations of another simultaneously held role due to
the values upon which that role is based, we are at this point back to the original definition
of role conflict. Lack of time then, may often be considered a minor cause of role conflict
for women when in fact it is the values held by others and their expectations for the use of
her time that do not coincide with the way in which she desires to spend her time.

In keeping with Greeson's analysis, authors from the fields of sociology,
psychology, and women's studies have recently been addressing the problem of role
conflict with reference to contemporary patterns of role combinations, by further expanding
or challenging earlier role conflict theories. The new approaches tend to affirm not only the
possibility, but the desirability, of women's participation in multiple roles. They emphasize
that individual well-being can be negatively affected moreso by the scarcity of roles, than by the multiplicity of roles as previously asserted (Fowlkes 1987). These are theories of expansion, rather than limitation, suggesting that individuals may in fact benefit from enacting multiple roles. This idea is in contrast to previously held views which implied negative stress feelings result when the limits of human energy and resources become overburdened by too many role relationships and responsibilities (Pietromonaco 1986). Having multiple roles is now seen as contributing to a woman’s self-esteem because interacting with more role partners and performing a variety of tasks can increase her sense of competence, facilitating development of a more complete view of self and enhanced sense of well-being (Pietromonaco 1986). It is currently felt that women with many roles, although actually leading more stressful lives by some measures, may reduce their amount of role conflict and role stress by redefining what they consider to be stressful or by adjusting their role expectations and, in effect, making new roles compatible with what they want their lives to become.

In many of these new studies, we are reminded that social roles are negotiated interpersonally allowing for a certain degree of choice and commitment within their definitions and enactments. Epstein’s (1987) work with women lawyers who have successfully combined work and family roles, suggests that multiple role successes are possible as long as a woman is willing to let go of family-based roles as the sole indicator of her personal achievement and worth. In addition she must find ways to modify, share, or purchase the work traditionally associated with those family roles. Her ability and willingness to accomplish these changes depend a great deal on the encouragement, support, and tolerance of the people closest to her life. Stewart and Malley (1987) found that in and of itself, role combination is neither beneficial nor detrimental to a woman’s physical or psychological health, but it is the balance or pattern of agentic and communal orientations between roles that enhances emotional and physical well-being. Further, it has been demonstrated that a woman's well-being is related to the quality of her role
experiences (Barnett and Baruch 1987). For both women and men, plentiful role responsibility is now linked to good mental and physical health, especially at a time when issues of individual identity and accomplishment become important during the midlife stage (Coleman, Verbrugge 1987). Recent work by Smith and Moen underscores the significance of family role transitions for employment decisions, economic well-being, and quality of life in the middle years of women's lives (1988).

Much of this new research brings into question the relevance and logic of previously held assumptions concerning multiple role participation and the concept of role conflict itself. Expanding these recent approaches, Thoits (1987) suggests that role conflict can be significantly avoided to the extent that structural and normative freedom permit bargaining in definition of roles and expectations. Money, education, and social networks are presented as the three major factors affecting the possibility of role bargaining for the activities and defining values of the roles. Thoits sees the long-prevailing view of potentially harmful consequences of multiple roles as being "grounded in an oversocialized and deterministic conception of human beings deriving in part from Parsonian theory" (1987:12). She asserts that it is the underlying assumption of Parsonian and structural/functionalist theory that individuals are motivated to conform to role expectations, and to the degree that these expectations are internalized, incompatible or excessive expectations will create personal dilemmas resulting in harmful effects. To Thoits, assuming role expectations to be this clear, consensual, and rigid leaves little room for the enormous possibilities for negotiation, compromise, and innovation among role partners. It is from an alternate, constructionist perspective that Thoits argues for the active manipulation of multiple roles for personal benefit rather than harm. She cites new developments on this theme which indicate that the individual rewards, privileges, and resources provided by participation in multiple roles can be used to gain more rewards, privileges, resources, and advantages in society. Participation in multiple roles can provide legitimate excuses for failure to meet the normal obligations of another role without
ensuing feelings of neglect, guilt, or failure. A greater number of roles may provide a sense of purpose in life along with self-gratification, security, and increased self-esteem. Multiple social roles can also act as a buffer for the individual against psychological trauma resulting from role failure, loss, or disengagement.

Thoits asks not whether the "harmful effects view" or the "potentially beneficial view" of multiple roles is more valid, but "under what conditions will the costs of multiple roles outweigh their benefits?" (1987:16) Her argument begins with the simple assumption that roles are reciprocal - in other words, it takes two individuals to make a role. These patterned exchanges of behavior between people depend on role-taking abilities which rest upon shared meanings, understandings, and perceptions of each other. To facilitate smooth interaction, congruence between partners' role definitions and expectations for behavior should exist. In this way, role conflict can be seen as a consequence of incongruence between mutual expectations where two or more role participants do not define their roles in the same way. Thoits suggests that interpersonal bargaining is a way in which shared meanings can be reached and role conflicts minimized. However, it is the structural arrangements of society as well as the degree of social consensus about a particular role which limit the individual's freedom and flexibility to bargain in a given role relationship. For example, the expense of childcare facilities or assistance is a structural arrangement which might limit the ability of a woman graduate student to complete her education at a certain point in her life stage. A husband who believes that he will be seen as less of a man if he cleans house or cares for the children while his wife attends graduate school exemplifies how social consensus and pressure regarding a man's gender role can constrain the woman's range of bargaining possibilities with her mate.

To Thoits then, it is not the number of roles that causes the problem, but the constraints upon the negotiation process between partners whose role expectations are incongruent. Role conflict can be expected to be high among individuals faced with structural and normative constraints on interpersonal bargaining and low wherever there is
greater structural and normative freedom from bargaining constraints. She identifies three major factors that affect bargaining within role relationships: money, education, and social networks. Money buys freedom from structural constraints, thus eliminating role overload due to such things as housework and childcare when others are hired to assist in those responsibilities. Furthermore, money can be seen as buying freedom from normative constraints as well, since non-conformist behavior is more likely to be sanctioned and admired by society when it is practiced by the rich than the poor. Education, also linked to money through increased earning power and occupational opportunities, exposes both men and women to a greater selection of social arrangements from which to choose allowing for more flexibility within existing structural realities. The more exposure one has to a variety of expectations for the same social role, the more traditional norms will be perceived as less constraining. So, coupled together, education and money open up new and diverse social networks bringing more potential for attempting innovative lifestyles.

Because money, education, and social networks are seen as indicators of social class, Thoits hypothesizes that middle and upper-class women are better able to negotiate successful and satisfying role rearrangements than women of a lower social class. She cites evidence from studies which imply that women of lower education and social class are more likely to experience role strain and role conflict and therefore higher levels of psychological distress due to their multiple role obligations than women with higher education and social status. Further research also suggests that those men and women who earn considerable amounts of money have more opportunity to negotiate obligations within their role relationships in a satisfying manner which reduces the strains and conflicts of managing multiple roles (Hall 1973, Jones 1980).

Thoits advocates that future research move away from an intensely individual orientation toward the viewpoint of role interaction between both significant others and the larger social structure. She expects innovation in interpersonal role negotiations to occur differently in different strata of society, and sees the gradual emergence of a pattern of
acceptance for beneficial alternative role arrangements beginning at the interpersonal level within more privileged groups and slowly becoming generalized to the larger society, thus resulting in normative change (1987).

To Angrist (1985) also, the traditional role conflict approach neglects individual potentials for playing many roles. When roles are seen as static, then role conflict is inevitable. But if roles are viewed as flexible, role conflict becomes avoidable. It is her feeling that "instead of struggling to unravel the threads of women's role conflict, the research should be to analyze the contingency orientation, the strategies women use for meshing different roles" (1985:32). It is her contention that most of the traits attributed to and expected of women are the opposite of those qualities that would enhance performance in a professional career field. This leads to uncertainty and ambivalence and a type of role strain that exerts a paralyzing influence on the woman through indecision and hesitation with regard to her career goals. The multiplicity of her roles present contingencies to which she must adjust, especially due to the "other-oriented" values women are expected to hold. The contingency orientation Angrist describes is reflected in the woman's hesitancy to form career commitments, emphasis on traditionally female fields of study, and frequent changes of mind relative to the needs and desires of others in her role set and environment. She emphasizes that "at each point in her ascent up the career ladder, potent forces pull the woman down or make her stand still" (1974:39). Angrist believes it is the socialization process which acts upon the woman in such a way that her potential aspirations are deflected in advance. Young girls seldom think of themselves as physicians, scientists, or lawyers and because of this women often decide against a career without actually testing reality. She is taught to anticipate the consequences and accept her limitations, which may not be inevitable in her particular case at all. The fields of study women choose are seen to mirror the kinds of values and interests they develop in growing up female, and the drift toward feminine career fields persists even among women who pursue advanced work in graduate school. Because of their contingency orientation and retention of traditional gender
values, women are more interested in an occupation which can be easily combined with family responsibilities, allows for helping others, and working with people rather than with things (1974). This can be seen as a rational response to a role conflict situation, but also as a way that women themselves perpetuate their own lack of freedom by making the concessions and compromises to others instead of engaging men in role negotiating processes that foster growth in human potential and beneficial normative social change.

I suggest that in order to overcome patriarchal knowledge that women can't succeed in certain roles, women must first experience the conflict of roles in their own lives and bring the power and wealth of their own personal resources to the process of conflict resolution. It is in this way that a discussion of role conflict can become a forum for presenting the question: What power do women have in defining the direction of their own lives? This question must first be approached by looking at theories which debate how much control we as individuals have over the way we behave within our social roles - do we simply 'take' roles or do we 'make' them?

D. STRUCTURAL ROLE THEORY VS. AN INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

In order to help identify the character and uses of his middle-range theory, Merton (1968) uses role theory as an illustration. Beginning with the theory of role-sets as an image of how social status is organized in the social structure, he then defines social status itself as a position in a social system with an associated and distinctive array of designated rights and obligations. The concept of social role refers to the behavior of status-occupants that is oriented toward the patterned expectations of others. Whereas it is observed that each person in society inevitably occupies multiple statuses with their associated roles, role-set theory stresses the concept that each social status involves not a single associated role (as in the traditional view) but rather an array of roles. Role-set therefore, refers to the complement of social relationships in which individuals are involved due to the particular social status they occupy. Role-set in this sense differs from what has previously been
described as 'multiple roles' - referring to the various social statuses of an individual. Merton calls this complement of distinct social statuses of a person a status-set, with each status having its own role-set. This image of role-set as a component of social structure, leads to analytical problems because, by inference, men and women are confronted with the task of articulating, or managing to organize, countless role-sets so that extreme conflicts between or among these role-sets will not ensue and interfere with functionality of the individual in society. For Merton, this generates the sociological problem of identifying the social mechanisms and consequences of articulating the expectations of role-set participants sufficiently to reduce conflicts for the status-occupant. How these mechanisms emerge and why they operate effectively, or fail to operate effectively if at all, are the relevant empirical research questions to be answered. Descriptions of diverse types of formal organizations thus develop empirically-based theoretical extensions of how role-sets operate and illustrate a direction for middle-range theory to follow. The fact that Merton sees the theory of role-set as consistent with other theoretical orientations such as Marxist theory, functional analysis, social behaviorism, or Parsonian action theory, points to his belief that comprehensive sociological theories are "sufficiently loose-knit, internally diversified, and mutually overlapping" to allow for departures or discrepancies presented by theories of the middle range (Merton 1968:45).

As a middle-range theory, role-set theory departs from the traditional concept of roles first by its assumption that a single social status involves an array of associated roles rather than a single role; and secondly, by its leading to the problem of identifying the social mechanisms for reducing role conflicts. Thirdly, the idea of role-set leads to the structural problem of finding the social arrangements which serve to integrate or oppose the expectations of individual role-set members, whereas the multiple role concept is limited to the issue of how individual status occupants deal with many, often conflicting, demands made upon them. Fourth, the questions of how these social mechanisms come into being offers accounts for the instances where the role-set operates ineffectively. The logic of
analysis exhibited by this middle-range theory is thus meant to bridge, or transcend, the apparent problem of a theoretical conflict between the general and the historically particular.

According to Merton's role-set theory, it is evident that there is always a potential for role-set members to have differing expectations as to the appropriate behavior for a particular status occupant. The basic source for this conflict potential is seen in the structural fact that other role-set members differ from the status-occupant in the various social positions they hold. Because they can be diversely located within the social structure, their experiences, interests, sentiments, values, and moral expectations will differ from the status-occupant with whom they interact. Merton sees this as congruent with one of the principle assumptions of Marxist theory, that "social differentiation generates distinct interests among those variously located in the structure of the society" (1968: 44).

Merton thus demonstrates how the theory of role-sets, as a representative theory of the middle-range, generates a variety of theoretical problems and directions for empirical research. He does not assume that role-sets necessarily operate with efficiency at all times, but is instead concerned with identifying the social mechanisms which produce a greater degree of order (less conflict) than would be evident without their functional existence. He recognizes that the concepts of social status and social role are "fundamental to the description, and to the analysis, of a social structure" as they serve to connect culturally defined expectations with patterned behavior and relationships comprising social structure (1968:422). Merton sees the need to identify social processes which cause disturbance or disruption of the role-sets and/or status-sets of individuals and then asks which social mechanisms bring about better articulation and reduce conflict between or among role-sets and status-sets.

The major structural basis for potential disturbance of a stable role-set is said to be the fact that any individual who occupies a particular status has various role partners who are located in different areas and stages of the social structure. As such, the values and moral expectations these role partners have and bring to the interaction process will differ
from those of the status-occupant. This leads to differing expectations for the behavior of
the status occupant depending on the extent of disparate social statuses they represent. By
inference from Merton's indications, the degree to which cultural values and beliefs are
adhered to or held sacred may thus be measured by the degree of observed conformity with
social norms.

Merton explains that it is possible for the statuses to be neutral toward one another,
wherein the values and obligations upon which they are based are not likely to cause
conflict. However, other statuses, by virtue of their underlying values, may be mutually
reinforcing or conversely, clearly subject to conflicting demands. Insofar as it is the value
system itself, and not a physical time limitation, which causes conflict between statuses, the
concept of role-conflict becomes elevated to the level of societal structure of
institutionalized normative behavior. Discrepancies in behavioral expectations between
members of a role-set can be seen as contributing to this larger level of conflict, in that each
individual we interact with as a role partner is subject to his or her own array of values and
beliefs which may or may not coincide with our own. The amount of role bargaining that
can be accomplished between any two role partners then, becomes dependent upon the
compatibility of their values and their degrees of commitment to them. Merton does not
adequately discuss the idea that adjustments of priorities within and between status-sets and
role-sets constitute the coping mechanisms employed by those status-occupants who wish
to maintain several social positions which may not blend without creating conflict. Nor
does he explain or allow for the increasing flexibility of individuals with regard to
contemporary normative standards, which appears to act as a force for change upon the
normative structure itself.

For Merton then, the role-set is not as much a matter of personal choice as it is a
matter of the normative social structure which created the status. Therefore, when conflicts
arise among role-set expectations, it is often not possible to eliminate or adjust a role
relationship within the set, leaving the individual to face the option of removing him/herself
from the status instead so: "the individual goes, and the social structure remains" (1968:433). This places more emphasis on the individual for adapting him/herself to the existing values and norms of others than upon the normative structure evolving to accommodate the needs of the individual, therefore limiting many possibilities for change.

Structural role theory is seen as constituting a static and overly deterministic vision of human social interaction by those adhering to the symbolic interaction paradigm as represented by the work of Herbert Blumer. In the book *Symbolic Interaction*, published in 1969, Blumer seeks to depict the theoretical scheme of human society implicit in the work of George Herbert Mead. His book is essentially a collection of essays in which he presents his own interpretation of Mead's theory with the intention of putting it into practice. His work became popular at a time when structural/functionalism was under attack and there was a shift in focus toward gaining more meaningful understandings of social behavior. For Blumer, the nature of the individual is an active conscious being possessing a creative self. He stresses the idea that established patterns of group life continue only as long as the same schemes of interpretation are maintained by the individuals who define their acts or behavior as meaningful. In contrast to structural role theory, Blumer feels "the reliance on symbolic interaction makes human group life a developing process instead of a mere issue or product of psychological or social structure" (1969:67). The danger with other schemes which assume the primordial form of human interaction to be a "complementarity of expectations," lies in their imposing an image upon all human interaction which has been derived only from studying one form of interaction (1969:68). For Blumer and Mead, the social act is the fundamental unit of society and "the essence of society lies in an ongoing process of action - not in a posited structure of relations" (1969:71). Established behavior patterns appear then as a result of individuals having common definitions of joint actions which serve to account for the regularity, stability, and repetitiveness of those actions in group life. Blumer states that it is "sheer gratuitous assumption" to assume that the diversified joint actions comprising human
society are set to follow fixed and established channels (1969:72). This constitutes an attack on the tendency of role theory to place excessive emphasis upon norms, status positions, and the enactment of normative expectations. He shows that uncertainty, contingency, and transformation are very much a part of the process of joint action, where people meet situations by aligning their acts to one another. Those joint actions that encounter obstructions, or have no pre-established pathways to guide definitions of the situation and decision-making, must be constructed along new lines.

So, Blumer sees human society in the same way as Mead: a diversified social process in which people engage in forming joint actions to deal with situations thrust upon them by their life conditions, and he states, "this picture of society stands in significant contrast to the dominant views of society" in sociology (1969:72). For Blumer, the structural/functionalist perspective does not see human beings as organisms having selves, but rather as merely responding organisms. When human behavior is accounted for by such factors as role requirements, values, or status expectations, the nature of human beings and social action is grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. Instead of just responding to the play of factors upon him, the individual constructs and directs his action to meet situations. The symbolic interaction position then, focuses on "how human beings handle and fashion their world, not on disparate responses to imputed factors" (1969:73). To Blumer, action should be viewed as something constructed by the actor, not as something evoked from him. The interpretive process is seen to be neglected by the structural/functionalist view of roles and statuses.

Role theory seems to concentrate a great deal of research effort on what is considered abnormal social processes, such as role conflict or role strain. This often causes the normal processes of human interaction to be ignored and does not provide a clear enough picture of the totality of the experiences being studied. In this respect, role theory has not utilized the concept of role-taking in the same sense as Mead and Blumer intend. For Merton, role-taking means accepting a pre-determined set of behaviors, and passively
accepting or taking a role that has been established as normative for their particular situation or status. In contrast to Mertonian thinking, Blumer sees roles as creative constructions of individual actors, not acts of conformity to norms. In this way individuals can be seen as engaging in role-making as opposed to merely role-taking, although they do take the role of the other as part of their interpretive process for defining each situation and their own subsequent interactions. Because norms are not spelled out clearly for each particular situation, humans are often faced with only a loose cultural framework or vague definition of expected behavior. They must discover the role that other individuals are acting out or assumed to be playing, and then make a role for themselves according to how they wish to interact or cooperate with the others. In this process view, individuals are given more credit for choosing behaviors they will enact, although the structure is still present due to myriads of common definitions associated with similar situations throughout society. These previous patterns of behavior act as guidelines which help to shape each individual's decision-making process, but do not act as the strongly determining force upon behavior which structural theory stresses.

Methodologically, the study of action within the perspective of symbolic interactionism must be made from the position of the actor with the meanings of objects and situations ascertained as they are perceived by the actor. It is Blumer's belief that in order to test the validity of the basic premises of symbolic interactionism, examination of actual human group life must be made directly, not through laboratory settings, hypotheses testing, or limiting protocols of research procedures. He stresses the flexible nature of exploratory inquiry, using "any ethically allowable procedure that offers a likely possibility of getting a clearer picture of what is going on in the area of social life" (1969:41). This may involve direct observation, participant observation, interviews, life-histories, group discussions, or public records. Contrary to Merton, Blumer advocates no specific protocol to be used with these procedures, but says that they should be adapted to the circumstances of the study. An observer must also be sensitized and alert to new and different
perspectives so his/her images, beliefs, and conceptions of the subject matter can be inspected and revised as needed. Since people act toward things based on the meaning the things have for them, Blumer warns that if we wish to understand the action of people it is necessary to see their objects as they see them and not substitute or impute our own meanings for those objects, which would constitute "the greatest kind of error that the social scientist can commit" (1969:51).

Symbolic interactionism sees human behavior as being built up in the light of the actions of others, thus we must study a given sphere of life as a moving process where the individuals are constantly defining and interpreting each other's acts. This type of study cannot be done if we operate under the premise that group life is the result only of determining factors, as is the view of structural role theory. Blumer and Merton differ then at their very points of departure - their basic assumptions and definitions of human social behavior and "where they lodge social action" (1969:84). This in turn leads to differences in methodologies, as they focus on different units or areas within the social process, and finally results in vastly different theoretical inferences or conclusions and policy implications. Following Merton's structural/functionalist approach to roles would lead one to study larger groups and use quantitative methods to locate mechanisms thought to cause overall patterns of behavior. Whereas using the symbolic interactionist approach of Blumer, one would qualitatively seek to discover the processes by which individuals construct their meanings for objects and definitions of situations to arrive at decisions for certain actions. Blumer assumes that we do not have the transitivity needed to utilize numbers with human concepts. He would focus research on how people are socialized - how they learn appropriate ways of attaining societal goals. The question of values and beliefs arises for both, but the power that the values exert over the actions of individuals is in dispute.

Either way you look at it, social interaction cannot take place without some sort of identification with or understanding of social roles and expectations for behavior resulting
from them. So where Merton and Blumer agree in a sense, is in the area of expectations. It is important for individuals to ascertain the expectations others have for them in order to know what they themselves should do. But where Merton sees people responding as if by cue to the behaviors previously dictated through normative expectations, Blumer prefers to give people credit for mapping out goals and consciously choosing to fit their actions to the on-going activities of others. For him, success of interaction depends more upon the ability of individuals to express themselves (display their expectations and intentions) with regard to each other and each situation than it does upon the normative behavior that may have preceded them or surrounded them. Society is an ongoing process constantly subject to unpredictable outcomes where roles are flexible and followed only as long as they are useful for the individual (evidencing the pragmatic element from Mead). Understanding formal processes is the goal of this kind of theory, rather than substantive predictions. Blumer stresses that it is the process by which one arrives at a decision for action that should be the central object of study for sociologists where Merton believes we should study the structure which causes or molds the individual's action. For Blumer, social roles, systems, and culture set the conditions for individual action but do not solely determine what the acts will be - ultimately only individuals can do that. "From the standpoint of symbolic interactionism the organization of a human society is the framework inside of which social action takes place and is not the determinant of that action .....and changes in it are the product of the activity of acting units and not of forces which leave such acting units out of account" (1969:87). With this however, Blumer may have gone to the other extreme, leaving the effects of social forces out of account and allowing individuals too much autonomy.

It is my feeling that both approaches may be productive for explaining certain types, aspects, or levels of human behavior and that more emphasis should be placed on their situational relevance and potential value for the discipline of sociology as a whole. Rather than confrontationally stressing the differences in their theories, we should be energetically
applying both theories to the testing grounds of social reality. Blumer's is an optimistic conception of the possibilities inherent in our humanness whereas Merton can be seen as representing a more limited, middle-range vision, yet possibly also a more realistic account of human actions in many instances. Nevertheless, I feel that both Merton and Blumer fail to acknowledge a critical aspect of the human interpretive process with regard to social interaction. Although Merton mentions that varying values and moral expectations of role partners leads to differing expectations for behavior of an individual, nowhere does he note that all interacting individuals will also vary according to their general level of consciousness in relation to themselves and others in society. It is my contention that the level of consciousness, or degree of awareness of universal inter-relatedness, with which a person meets each moment, situation, or interaction is a crucial factor in the determination of that person's resulting thoughts, responses, actions, or inactions. One can observe what appears to be the same action or set of behaviors being carried out by two different people, yet underlying these outward displays there exist two separate and distinct conscious beings who have come to act in an outwardly similar manner, but who define or understand their actions in totally different ways. What constitutes "reality" for one human being may be totally incomprehensible to another. Moreover, it may well be possible that specific social forces thought to influence individual action may only exist at certain levels of human consciousness. As long as one's awareness or realization is concentrated in one sphere or limited view, such forces can have a formidable reality and action is in effect only a reaction to that force. An awareness that goes beyond conventional thinking, and deeper than intellectual rationalizations, is called for in order to begin to escape the overwhelming power and determining influence of such forces as collective values or societal norms.

Blumer does in fact allude to the idea that interpretive tools with which new situations in life are met vary with individuals, and sees change as the result of new situations where people must construct corresponding new forms of action. He does not however, adequately explain what these interpretive tools consist of nor how they are
acquired in varying degrees. He states that variations in interpretation may occur as people give differing weights to the objects defined within situations or piece together objects into different patterns but he does not indicate how the cumulative experiences of each individual, (other than through socialization) may have led to their differing modes of interpretation. Blumer thus stops short of exploring the concept of differing levels of reality, awareness, and consciousness, although I find an invitation for research in this direction to be implicit within his focus on the human interpretive process itself. Perhaps he intended for sociological research to progress in this way. Perhaps this is what he meant by being sensitized and alert to new and different perspectives as we observe life. If Symbolic Interactionism is to advance as a useful theoretical perspective, I think it must take into consideration the points of similarity it now holds with structural theories (build upon the work of the past as Merton suggests) while simultaneously expanding to encompass an awareness of human evolution toward a higher consciousness. I look to Symbolic Interactionism as a way to understand both the relativity of our consciousness and the inherent illusions of any sociological perspective.

Callero offers a conceptualization of role that both unifies and transcends traditional structuralist and interactionist concerns. He stresses the emerging recognition that the work of George Herbert Mead is not closed to the macrosociological issues of social structure and can further our understanding of role as a conceptual link between the individual and the social structure. Where "interactionists emphasize situational environment...the structuralists on the other hand, emphasize the conflicting pressures produced by structural constraints without discussing or explaining the manner in which they are resolved" (1986:344). In making explicit the Meadian conceptualization of role, Callero notes that "actors are defined by multiple roles and thus possess multiple perspectives in unique combinations" (1986:348). When the focus of sociological study is on intra-individual role conflict, the flexibility of role as perspective is not fully recognized. Actors need not have perspectives that overlap in total agreement in order to carry on interaction, but only
functional agreement is required. The issue then becomes whether or not there is enough agreement for the interaction to continue, not who wins the conflict of meaning. Particular roles continue to exist in society because they have been able to successfully facilitate a form of social action. The roles in turn define the self and they also function as a perspective - a basis for organizing and classifying the world as well as a basis for action. By defining a role as a perspective, it becomes possible to see how roles can allow for individual differences, originality, and ultimately social change. Callero sees the relationship between the actor and the social structure as a reflexive one in which roles are used by actors to produce social activity and interaction while becoming structured in the process when they are successful over time. Mead's central notion of actors producing structure thus has clear implications for the empirical investigation of role-related behavior.

In the past, there has been an over-emphasis on role conflict and identifying the expectations, rules, and norms which define a role. Role analysis must now proceed from the standpoint of the actor while at the same time including the universal factors shared by actors in a social community. In Callero's view, "the direction suggested by the Meadian conceptualization of role is one that rejects the structuralist emphasis on role-playing and the interactionist emphasis on role-making, in favor of a new emphasis on role-using" (1986:355). The research questions that become important through this new conceptualization include: "Under what conditions does a role become problematic and lead to the frustration, rather than facilitation, of individual action? Under what conditions does an individual perspective with regard to a role lead to a change in the community perspective? And what factors lead to the emergence and use of a novel role?" (1986:355).

For the purposes of this study, the positions of student, wife, mother, and employee along with their concomitant roles will be examined as individual perspectives. Structural factors thought to influence these perspectives will be explored and social behavior in the form of coping strategies employed to reduce role conflicts will be used to illustrate how role definitions and norms can be changed through individual action and
desires where social structures sufficiently allow. Finally, the idea of analyzing gender as a perspective in itself will be introduced in order to more fully explain the causes of role conflict among women graduate students.

E. RESPONSES TO SITUATIONS OF ROLE CONFLICT AMONG WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENTS

A discussion of the causes for role conflict cannot be complete without an examination of the efforts taken toward role conflict resolution. In her 1984 study, Greeson undertook the challenging task of reviewing, organizing, and synthesizing the many categories of responses to role conflict situations identified within the fields of role theory, psychology, and education. She distilled ten major types of coping strategies as follows: "emotional coping, superperson, leaving the position, avoiding, role simplification, delegation, increasing capacity, organizing roles, prioritizing, and discussing" (1984:21).

Her categories were based on the definition of coping as a response to role conflict, negative role stress, or a problematic situation and it is her premise that the intent or 'why' of the strategy is more relevant than the specific behavior. Two broader categories were also discussed which divided coping responses into direct actions designed to alter a problematic situation or palliative actions seeking to relieve stress arising from a problematic situation. The role bargaining and gender strategies introduced by Thoits (1987) and Hochschild (1989) can be included quite easily among these categories, all of which will then be utilized as a basic framework within which analysis for the current study can proceed.

When a woman enters a graduate degree program, she is agreeing to commit a certain number of hours out of each week to accomplish her academic goals. If she already occupies several other roles or positions, she may have the rest of her time divided between such things as caring for her children, maintaining the household, time with her husband, working full or part-time, or enjoying leisure activities. However, if her academic work
takes more time than expected, she may have to implement strategies to accommodate this imbalance, beginning with cutting down on her own leisure time activities or little luxuries of time-consuming self-care she can no longer afford. The next activities to be shortened in time allowance might be time spent cooking or cleaning the house. She may switch to meals which require less lengthy preparation time and lower her previous standards of house-cleaning so that less time will be consumed by these duties and more time can be given to school work. This may be an effective series of strategies employed to solve the role overload dilemma, until however, family members perceive a loss in the services that they enjoyed prior to their wife or mother's time rearrangements. What at first seemed to be a logical and efficient adjustment of a woman's time allotments, has now escalated to the level of interpersonal conflicts - discrepancies between expectations of role senders and the actor. Role bargaining is the next step the actor may take in order to bring harmony to the situation and its effectiveness is dependent upon the degree of flexibility each individual exhibits with regard to her/his own behavioral habits. Assuming the woman's husband is supportive of her academic goals, he may elect to take over some of the household chores which were previously the sole responsibility of his wife and thus the issue is again relegated to a quite solvable problem of efficient time management through duty sharing. However, if the gender ideology of the husband does not allow a willing acceptance of duties and responsibilities traditionally held by women alone, then the situation can be seen in the full light of structural vs. psychological role conflict. The values and gender role beliefs of each individual are contradictory.

Spreadbury (1983) explored adjustments in the families of undergraduate adult women who returned to school after an interruption in their education. She contends that the traditional expectations for women to place their families ahead of their own educational and career needs is changing. However, she found that one of the most important determinants of whether a wife remains in college is her husband's attitude toward her education. Lack of support from and negative attitudes of significant other in a woman's
life pose a serious barrier for the re-entry student (Benjamin 1979). Several studies have indicated that even after some husbands offered support for their wives' return to school, when school obligations conflicted with social life, domestic duties, or leisure activities, supportive attitudes were withdrawn (Astin 1976, Benjamin 1979). Strategies suggested by those who counsel re-entry women recognize the importance of having a husband's support (Benjamin 1979). An emphasis on communication between husband and wife is seen as essential and ways to encourage family understanding and involvement with campus extracurricular activities (such as plays, films, football or basketball games, etc.) are often suggested. It is acknowledged however, that when faced with a conflictual situation, some women consciously opt to limit their career and/or educational ambitions because they value their marital relationships over their own success (Benjamin 1979).

Although it is accepted that entire family must make adjustments to the woman's changing role, it has been reported that the husbands and children of returning women students were generally encouraging and supportive and suffered little, if at all, as a result of the woman's new role (Spreadbury 1983). When women received this kind of support at home, the stress of making changes is diminished for all involved and her chances for successful completion of academic goals are greatly increased (Berkove 1976). In her study of returning women students and stress, Berkove (1976) further concluded that despite the strains and problems encountered in returning to school, the impact of education on women has been profound and the benefits well worth the perceived costs.

Spreadbury expects that as other women become aware of the success of their friends and neighbors, more women will be encouraged to return to school. She also reasons that "as husbands find other men accepting changes in their wives' roles, and even encouraging them to go to school, they will be less reluctant to respond affirmatively when their wives express a desire to reenter college" (1983:29). This change in attitude may well help to reduce the initial friction of role conflict experienced by women students as Spreadbury hopes; however, as Coser (1974) reminds us, changes in desires of individuals
will never be enough to induce social change unless structural reforms are conducive to acceptance of the new desires.

Hochschild (1989) illustrates a similar scenario when she describes the ways in which married couples deal with the contradictory demands of family and career. She asserts that as things now stand, women pay a cost no matter what they do. "The housewife pays a cost by remaining outside the mainstream of social life. The career woman pays a cost by entering a clockwork of careers that permits little time or emotional energy to raise a family" (1989:X). She argues that sharing work at home is vitally linked to marital harmony. In her study of over 50 working couples with families, Hochschild found there to be a split between traditional ideals and egalitarian ideals. "Indeed, a split between these two ideals seemed to run not only between social classes but between partners within marriages and between two contending voices inside the conscience of one individual" (1989:188). Where working class men tended toward traditional ideology, both middle class men and women tended to have an egalitarian ideology. Most marriages, she learned, were either torn between these two ideals or had settled on a compromise. Those who held egalitarian ideals believed that men and women should share housework and childcare more equally, while those maintaining traditional ideals maintained that domestic labor and childrearing was the primary responsibility of the woman. Hochschild's way of measuring the ideals valued by individuals centers around her concept of gender ideology, defined as a set of beliefs about women and men and marital roles. She stressed that the emotional meanings gender ideology evokes in a person can reinforce or undermine that same ideology as well as cause conflicts between couples holding contradictory beliefs. Gender strategy then, becomes a complex of thought, feeling and action which each individual uses in the interplay with their spouse and ultimately determines how they divide responsibility and work at home (1989). In this way, strategies can be seen as the direct means by which expectations for gender role behaviors are changed or negotiated.

Hochschild reasons therefore, that it is women who "bear the weight of a
contradiction between traditional ideology and modern circumstances" since they must assume the extra work of changing the division of labor (1989:194). Women with an egalitarian gender ideology may confront a traditionally minded husband by actively trying to change their husband's understanding of his role at home. A more common strategy however, is for women to cope with work at home without imposing on their husbands. Supermoming is thus seen as "a way of absorbing into oneself the conflicting demands of home and work (1989:195). In a recent report by TIME magazine, Hochschild charges: "men are trying to have it both ways; they're trying to have their wives' salaries and still have the traditional roles at home" (Brown 1989).

Further, it is Hochschild's contention that most employed women work one shift at the office or factory and a "second shift" at home (1989:4). As women become aware of this inequality, then quarrels within marriage are mainly caused by "a friction between faster changing women and slower changing men" (1989:11). She sees this as resulting from the fact that the influx of women into the economy has not been accompanied by an adequate cultural understanding of marriage and work relations that would serve to make this transition smoother. What constitutes a stalled gender revolution is this lack of social arrangements that ease life for working parents and the lack of men who are willing to share the second shift with their wives. She feels the gender revolution is primarily caused by changes in the economy "but people feel it in marriage" (1989:257). Instead of seeing the problem as arising from the unequal system of power and rewards within arrangements between the sexes, most see the problem as an interpersonal conflict.

Hochschild asserts that beliefs about manhood and womanhood forged in early childhood and thus anchored in deep emotions determine what sphere (home or work) the woman wants to identify with and how much power she expects to have in a marriage relationship. She identifies three types of gender ideologies for marital roles: traditional, egalitarian, and transitional. In traditional gender ideology, the woman wants to identify with her activities at home, wants her husband to base his identity at work and accepts
having less power than he does in the marriage. In egalitarian gender ideology, the woman wants to identify with work spheres as much as men do, and have an equal share of power in a marriage. Transitional gender ideology refers to a woman who wants to identify with her role at work as well as home but thinks that her husband should base his identity upon his work moreso than she does, thus accepting the major share of work at home and deferring to an unequal power arrangement in the marriage. For Hochschild, gender strategies are the plans of action through which a person tries to solve problems at hand, given the cultural notions of gender at play (1989). It is from these gender strategies for coping, and their underlying values, that an analysis of role conflict, its deeper causes, and means for resolution can proceed.

Going beyond Hochschild's discussion of gender ideology is necessary in order to effectively account for the persistence, power, and pervasiveness of the ideology she terms traditional. Patriarchy, although never mentioned by name in her book, is taken for granted as the source of the traditional values which place women in a subservient position to men with respect to their career status and their power in a marriage relationship for example. If we view patriarchy solely as an ideological form of women's oppression represented in the unconscious by the widely accepted Oedipus complex hypothesis, it becomes difficult to adequately explain the very real material base for the structure of gender relations in society exemplified by men's historical control over women's labor power. Hartmann has defined patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enables them to dominate women" (as quoted in Tong 1989:180). The material-based control over women's labor power is evident where women have restricted access to important economic resources and also lack control over their own reproductive capacities. To Hartmann, patriarchy operates mostly in the material, not the psychological realm, and is perpetuated by the institution of monogamous heterosexual marriage, female childrearing, female responsibility for devalued domestic work, and women's economic
dependence on men. In this way, "male control assumes very concrete forms," reaching to
the deepest levels of structure and the value systems of our society (Tong 1989:180). It is
these patriarchal values which underlie the gender ideology we are socialized to accept and
which become imbedded in our individual and collective psyches.

So, when authors like Spreadbury (1983) or Mendolsohn (1986) suggest that
women who decide to return to college in effect take the burden of change entirely upon
themselves, it can be argued that they are not providing women with a deep enough
understanding to succeed. Although extensive and valuable information is given with
regard to the process of re-entering college, they do not address the woman's right and
power to negotiate a more equitable distribution of gender role responsibilities along with
fair access to the professional spheres which higher education justly should allow. Instead
of a tentative and contingency oriented approach toward the possibilities that higher
education holds for her, a woman should be encouraged to become aware of the true basis
for the conflicts of roles she experiences. She can be shown from where her feelings of
guilt truly arise: a fear of male disapproval and negative consequences. Male control thus
appears "in the shape of women's need to please her husband or lover so that he does not
leave her and their children" (Tong 1989:180). Not living up to the traditional gender role
expectations for women as prescribed by patriarchy can be seen as a primary source of
structural vs. psychological role conflict among women graduate students. How the
woman confronts this problem, and what factors enhance her ability to successfully
mediate interpersonal conflicts which result from it, must be analyzed in terms of psycho-
social as well as structural variables which strongly consider gender inequalities and the
very real fact of male domination of women.

Kaplan (1982) begins to show us these gender inequalities when she notes that the
women in her study used graduate or professional school as a means to change their
identity and to develop a previously neglected part of themselves, either intellectually or
vocationally. Those women students over thirty were extremely committed to their fields
despite difficulties faced in meeting responsibilities as students along with other areas of their lives. She found older women to be still very much affected by the set of values prevailing prior to the feminist movement. "They simply add the load of school work onto their home responsibilities and then suffer guilt as well... finding it hard to do it all" (Kaplan 1982:14). Emerson (1977) asserts however, that re-entry women students' feelings of guilt tended to decline as time went on and as the women succeeded in school, lending support for a negative relationship between guilt and self-esteem. As a woman gains a sense of independence, competence, and self-confidence from her school involvement and handling of multiple role demands, her self-esteem is bolstered. It is further suggested that as a woman's educational level increases, traditional female roles are perceived as constraining and activity in or awareness of feminist causes may result (Benjamin 1979).

E. INVITING FEMINISM INTO THE ROLE CONFLICT DEBATE

The previous discussions of role conflict have led me to the unavoidable conclusion that where women graduate students are concerned, role conflict is really a woman's fight against static gender role values which limit her ability to achieve her immediate goal - a graduate degree, and her ultimate goal - a more complete fulfillment of her human potential. So, it is at this point both timely and imperative that we formally invite feminism into the role conflict debate.

For all its long history of struggle, feminism has had to continually reinvent itself. As Barbara Ehrenreich puts it: "There have been waves of 'new women' arriving on cue almost every decade for the last 30 years or so - from the civic-minded housewife, to the liberated single, to the dressed-for-success executive" (1990:121). The women's movement, which has held a threat for some and a promise for others, is established today as a fact of American life. But the price we have had to pay for change is high and seems to be also unequally shared. Women often feel they have given up a great deal in exchange for
gains in higher education and the professional spheres, and that scaling the occupational
hierarchy created by men is not all it was cracked up to be.

In fact, the glossy advertising image of the woman with the flowing hair, smiling
baby in one arm and stylish briefcase in the other, that Hochschild (1989) so often uses for
fanning working women’s outrage, has had a make-over right on the front page of TIME
magazine. Instead of literally and figuratively moving ahead, epitomizing the strides that
working mothers have made, she’s now standing stock still, carved from a block of wood,
supposedly pondering what to do after doing it all.\footnote{I found this visual image ironically representative of the way in which a woman experiencing role conflict can literally be frozen in action - unable to move in any direction in her life because the conflicting demands and emotional tug of war becomes so unbearable that she settles for inaction or retreats into a state of depression as a form of defense.} The cover says: "Women face the
'90's. In the '80's they tried to have it all. Now they've just plain had it. Is there a future
for feminism?" Inside, the lead-in for the cover story entitled "Onward Women!" reads:
"The superwomen are weary. The young are complacent, but feminism is not dead. And,
baby, there's still a long way to go" (Brown 1989). In this popular culture analysis, many
women are said to be resentful because society is not coming to the aid of women in their
new roles. They feel there will be no balancing the demands of work and family life for
either men or women without some kind of national consensus and comprehensive legal
action on family policy. In the words of one woman: "we were promised that we could do
it all and we would be as successful as men, but the trade-offs and sacrifices a woman has
to make are far greater than a man's" (Brown 1989:81). A question put to Gloria Steinem:
"Why didn't you tell us that it was going to be like this?" received this answer: "Well, we
didn't know" (Brown 1989:82).

There are a lot of things feminists didn't know when they took the road to
assimilation into male territory in the 1980's. "As feminism loses its critical edge, it
becomes, ironically, less capable of interpreting the experience of its pioneer
assimilationists, the new corporate women. Contemporary mainstream feminism can understand their malaise insofar as it is caused by sexist obstacles, but has no way of addressing the sad emptiness of success itself" (Ehrenreich 1990:170). Ehrenreich further charges us with being more or less in the same epistemological situation as Betty Friedan's alienated middle-class housewives of the early 1960's - referring to the 'the problem without a name' (1990). She sees that some seemingly successful women are finding a socially acceptable way to back out of hostile, unyielding corporate structures by "using babies as a polite excuse for abandoning the rat race (1990:171). Her outlook is not, however, without hopefulness.

Someday, I believe, a brilliantly successful corporate woman will suddenly look down at her desk littered with spread sheets and interoffice memos and exclaim, "Is this really worth my time?" At the very same moment, a housewife, casting her eyes around a kitchen befouled by toddlers, will ask herself the identical question. As the corporate woman flees out through the corporate atrium, she will run headlong into the housewife, fleeing into it. The two will talk. And in no time at all they will reunite those two distinctly American strands of radicalism - the utopianism of Goodman and the feminism of Friedan. They may also, if they talk long enough, invent some sweet new notion like equal pay for... meaningful work.

(Ehrenreich 1990:171)

As to the complacency of the younger generation of women, especially college students, there are those who believe they will "catch on to feminism after a little reality therapy. They don't recognize discrimination as undergraduates because it's so much less overt than in the outside world. Many women do not see sexism as an obstacle until they are well along in their careers and angling for a promotion or until they have their first child and their juggling act begins. Feminism is a movement where women get more radical as they get older" (Patricia Ireland, Executive Vice-President of NOW in Washington; TIME article, p. 86). Participants of all ages however, in a TIME/CNN telephone poll taken October 23-25, 1989, rated "helping women balance work and family" as the most important goal for the women's movement today. They expressed a desire for change in
role definitions, not only for women, but also for men and a profound frustration with the structure of institutions and values which seem to be preventing, rather than encouraging, the growth that is needed in these areas (Brown 1989).

But for all the discontent and frustration expressed by women today, a vast majority revels in the breakthroughs made during the past quarter-century: the explosion of roles for women, their far greater participation in the country's political and intellectual life, the many options that have come to replace their confinement to homemaking.

In the '80's American women learned that 'having it all' meant doing it all, and some look back wistfully at the simpler times before women's liberation. But very few would really like to turn back the clock.

.........TIME Dec. 4, 1989 pp.3, 82

There is no 'turning back the clock'...there is only looking back critically and analytically in order to better understand the ground upon which we build our individual and collective futures - beginning with our own relationships. If anything, we should be striving to make the clock tick faster by encouraging social change and gender justice. Because when we glimpse the past from an all-inclusive angle, it becomes glaringly evident how "major contemporary theories of social justice pay little or no attention to the multiple inequalities between the sexes that exist in our society, or to the social construct of gender that gives rise to them. Neither mainstream theorists of social justice nor their critics have paid much attention to the internal inequalities of the family" (Okin 1987:134). By overlooking the internal justice of the marriage and family structure, Okin believes we under-value a sphere of life that is not only absolutely crucial to learning and moral development, but one that has a history of perpetuating inequality between men and women. She asks: "if the relationship between a child's parents does not conform to basic standards of justice, how can we expect that child to grow up with a sense of justice" toward the world? (1987:135) Her analysis centers on the facts of contemporary gender-
structured marriage and theories of power and vulnerability and the issues of justice that they raise. She argues that marriage and the family are unjust institutions as they are currently practiced in our society and that they "constitute the pivot of a societal system of gender that renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation, and abuse" (1987:136). Okin looks at the distribution between husbands and wives of social goods such as paid and unpaid work, prestige, power, self-esteem, opportunities for self-development, and physical and economic security and finds socially constructed inequalities between them all. She points out that the traditional idea of sex-differentiated marital responsibility, based on husband as provider and wife in the domestic support role, continues to be a strong influence upon the behavior of both women and men. It is her belief that in order to make the family more just, socially created vulnerabilities of women stemming from the divisions of labor and power must be eradicated. Toward this end, people should work to build family and work institutions that enable individuals to structure their personal lives in more beneficial ways - thus equalizing opportunities and obligations in general. Only when families themselves can be governed by the principles of justice will they be able to morally educate citizens who can sustain a just society (1987).

Krausz emphasizes the importance of focusing on the family as well when she states: "new realities require certain changes in family functioning" (1986:457). She points to recent data that suggest a greater movement toward egalitarian decision-making within marriage and stresses that these issues need to be viewed as social and family problems, rather than simply women's issues alone. Her research suggests that the absence of egalitarian role behavior in households is not due to personal weakness or pathology, but to conflicts in male and female roles and lack of familial and social supports. The egalitarian marriage also needs to be seen as having the most potential for extending more freedom to the mother, allowing the father to enter more fully into the pleasures and responsibilities of childrearing, and giving children the love and concern of two parents rather than one (1986).
There are many who write about a modern revolution of planetary consciousness wherein men and women frontally challenge the male-dominator/female-dominated model of human relations on this path toward a just society. Eisler (1987) presents evidence of our growing awareness of the interconnectedness of all humanity to support her view that "the emerging higher consciousness of our global 'partnership' is integrally related to a fundamental reexamination and transformation of the roles of both women and men" (1987:189). She asserts that this process encourages new ways of imaging reality, giving rise to new definitions of what it means to be male and female and building fuller models of the human psyche. The older Freudian model which depicted human beings in terms of elemental defensive drives is giving way to a newer humanistic model which takes these needs into account while also allowing for the actualization needs, or needs for higher levels of growth, that distinguish us from other animals. Eisler further suggests we are beginning to recognize that "like the artificial conflict between spirit and nature, between woman and man, and between different races, religions, and ethnic groups fostered by the dominator mentality - the way we view conflict itself needs to be reexamined" (1987:191).

* * * * *

In previous sections I have introduced myself as researcher, outlined the historical component of the women's movement toward equality in educational and economic spheres, and described the conflicts of roles that result from these challenges to the patriarchal system operating in our society. I have shown how the link between individual action and changes in social structure, as demonstrated by the Meadian conceptualization of role, suggests that individual men and women possess the potential to create beneficial evolutionary change in society but actualize this potential unequally. Barriers, both structural and psychological, continue to exist wherever women attempt to attain equal access to resources (financial, educational, or status) and equal division of domestic and childcare labor, as evidenced by the incidence of role conflicts, especially with regard to
women graduate students. Women will continue to seek personal fulfillment beyond their traditional roles as wife, mother, and homemaker, but when their search for independence and autonomy involves expectations for achievement and commitment which run contrary to their traditional roles, women experience anxiety, stress, and diminished potential for beneficial contributions to society due to role conflicts.

In order to better understand how conflicts of roles come about for women graduate students, their attitudes, beliefs, coping strategies, and situational conditions will be studied and compared. The following chapter introduces these variables and presents the questions and hypotheses developed from the review of literature.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The previous literature review encompasses many different aspects surrounding the problem of role conflict among women graduate students. I believe its broadness is necessary in order to provide a comprehensive basis from which meaningful theoretical and research questions can be identified. One such question concerns the linking of structural role theory and an interactionist role-making approach in a way which takes structure seriously, instead of for granted. By exploring macro-structural variables as well as values and role behavior expectations of individuals, a better understanding of structure and process (macro and micro) can be accomplished.

Following the research direction proposed by Thoits (1987), a sociological study of women is needed which will measure their perceived levels of role conflict in relation to the structural and normative constraints on interpersonal bargaining they face. An empirical examination of Thoits' work has yet to be done and women graduate students may offer an excellent testing ground for her hypotheses. In addition to the academic role/status, dealing with professors, other students, and the university system, women graduate students must often face the responsibilities and expectations of husbands, partners, children, friends, relatives, employers, and others in their lives. When they experience uncertainties, stress, or conflicts stemming from the inter-relationships of their various activities within and between multiple roles, potential negative effects can occur. The development of personal coping strategies and role bargains are ways in which women graduate students learn to creatively adapt to their new roles as students and thereby facilitate their successful
adjustment to new experiences and lifestyles. In the process, it appears that they are beginning to supersede some of the old norms of society and establish newer, more efficient patterns of social interaction which may become the guiding norms of societal roles in the future.

It should be noted that women graduate students are not a homogeneous group and variations in background characteristics may produce variations in the kinds of role conflicts they experience as well as the ways in which they respond to these problems. By surveying only women students at the graduate level of education, we will no longer be including variation in levels of education, but will concentrate the analysis upon effects of various income levels, SES (socio-economic status) levels, gender ideologies, and types of coping strategies. Thoits (1987) assumes that women with higher income will have more advantages and resources with which to resolve their role conflict problems than women with lower income, and therefore will tend to utilize role-bargaining strategies to solve problems of role conflict more often. This assumption is supported by Beeghley when he states: "Hierarchical location in the social structure systematically influences people's choices and their consequences. The lower the social class, the fewer choices people have and the less effective they are in solving personal problems" (1989:21).

Two relevant questions for this study then become: Do women with higher income experience less role conflict than women of lower income? and Do women with higher income utilize role-bargaining strategies more often than women of lower income?

Integrating the concept of gender ideology from the discussion of Hocschild's work (see section E.) as it relates to a woman's ability to negotiate new role behaviors, a third question can be identified: Can gender ideology be considered a constraining structural variable which affects interpersonal bargaining and the experience of and resolution of role conflicts? Therefore, within the context of this study, it will be asked: Do women with traditional gender ideologies experience more role conflicts than women with egalitarian gender ideologies? Also, do women with egalitarian gender ideologies utilize role-
bargaining strategies moreso than women with traditional gender ideologies?

B. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses attempt to clarify and test the assertions of the above-mentioned theorists and researchers.

1. Women graduate students with high incomes will experience less role conflict than women graduate students with lower incomes. (The higher the income the lower the role conflict.)

2. Women graduate students with high incomes will utilize role-bargaining coping strategies more often than women graduate students with lower income. (The higher the income, the more likely to use role-bargaining coping strategies.)

3. Married women graduate students with egalitarian relationships will experience less role conflict than women graduate students with traditional marriage relationships. (The more egalitarian the relationship, the less role conflict experienced.)

4. Married women graduate students with egalitarian relationships will be more likely to engage in role-bargaining coping strategies than those women with traditional relationships. (The more egalitarian the relationship, the more likely to use role-bargaining coping strategies.)

The research questions and hypotheses presented above are to be considered guides for this study as well as forming the basis for future research in this area. It is hoped that the exploration of these questions within the context of testing the hypotheses derived from them will increase the understanding of role conflict among women graduate students, what structures the role experiences women have, and how social change is thus affected.
CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This chapter describes the methods and research procedures used in this study of women graduate students.

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

To explore the questions of how women perceive role conflicts and utilize coping strategies, this study focuses on women graduate students at UNLV and seeks to compare their experiences by examining correlations between the roles they occupy, their life stages, socio-economic statuses, gender ideologies, perceptions of role conflicts, and types of coping strategies. Qualitatively, little is known about the women who are currently pursuing graduate degrees at UNLV. What are their reasons for choosing graduate education at this point in their life stage? What are their perceptions of the roles they occupy, what problems or conflicts do they face, and what strategies have they developed to balance the demands of graduate school? No sociological study to date has specifically targeted women graduate students at UNLV or attempted to explore the various social factors affecting their academic work or their abilities to bargain within social role interactions.

The data for this research were gathered through the use of self-administered mail questionnaires. The survey instrument contained both open-ended and fixed-choice question formats. Questions were designed to provide demographic information, as well as specific insights into the kinds of role conflicts experienced and the types of coping strategies employed by the respondents. The open-ended and general nature of certain
questions allowed a respondent to describe her personal experiences and perceived explanations for them in her own words, while other fixed-choice questions provided further clarification of meaning in a more easily categorized form. Using this method allowed the entire population of 700 women graduate students to be surveyed, and in this way, a descriptive as well as an explanatory study was possible. Although the data gathering method did not have the flexibility that could have been achieved through structured personal interviews, the open-ended question format encouraged many insightful and detailed responses. Altogether, this method allowed for the accumulation of anticipated as well as unanticipated data presented in a concise and easily coded manner.

The mail survey method is not however, without its faults. Due to the unavoidably impersonal nature of written instructions and the overall time-consuming length of the questionnaire itself, there were many potential respondents who did not feel they had the time to complete the survey and indicated so by returning the uncompleted questionnaire along with an explanatory note to that effect. Those not responding for this reason are possibly the very ones most likely to experience role conflict due to time constraints. Therefore, self-selection in this sample becomes a potential limitation of the method. Additionally, some who did respond may have written shorter responses due to these constraints and thus offered less informative data than if they had been interviewed in person to allow probes for meaning or had the questionnaire been shorter, more direct, and less complex. Quality and depth of the data would more than likely have been enhanced had not time and budget constraints precluded the use of personal interviews.

Interviewer bias however, often a problem with the personal interview design, was reduced by the use of such a structured self-administered questionnaire. An attempt was made to eliminate the use of biased language in writing the questions, although the subject matter itself indicated a certain predisposition toward discovering problems of gender roles. During the review of literature, previously tested questions were sought as a guide and variations of successful formats and content were introduced. A detailed pre-test was
conducted wherein respondents were interviewed after completing the questionnaire and encouraged to offer a critique of any questions that seemed unclear or slanted in meaning. New fixed-choice categories were introduced as a result of the pre-testing input, and many of the questions and instructions re-worded to accommodate suggested improvements. Some questions were however, intentionally worded in a slanted manner to encourage a more definite reaction and elicit a response concerning potentially emotional issues. Improvements in the questionnaire stemming from qualitative pre-test information proved valuable in enhancing the flow of questions, easing data entry efforts, and also may have been effective in reducing non-returns of mailed surveys.

As the researcher, I am aware that I am similar to many of the women in the study. Yet I am also aware that my life experiences and interpretations are sufficiently different and unique that they may or may not be shared by other women students. I talked with many women over the course of my academic involvement and drew upon their stories during the conception and execution of all phases of this project. I consider this to be a form of qualitative fieldwork since, "broadly conceived, qualitative fieldwork includes any source of personal familiarity with a setting or group to be surveyed. These sources can provide insights and privileged information that can make a major contribution to the development of a meaningful survey design...As a rule, the more knowledgeable the questionnaire designer is about his ultimate population, the more sophisticated the instrument and the smoother its administration" (Sieber 1973:1342). In this way, the researcher's nonprofessional familiarity with the social group prior to the conception of the survey proved to be beneficial. However, hoping to reduce any possible predetermined expectations and develop a better understanding of the variation of these women's experiences, final response categories were not defined for the open-ended questions until all of the data had been collected, coded and partially analyzed. This method allowed the data to speak for itself and insured that the data were not forced into pre-existing categories which may have fit previous assumptions better than they reflected reality. In this way, the
full range of responses were identified first, then examined for patterns of similarity and differences so that categorical distinctions were not imposed upon the responses, but rather flowed as a natural consequence of the responses.

The grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was utilized as a model to assist in identifying and ordering attitudes toward role conflict and strategies among respondents. Specifically, the constant comparative method of analysis allowed responses to be compared continuously for similarities and differences. Data were initially coded with substantive codes that reflected the substance of what women wrote. Codes were then compared and similar codes clustered under a label or general category. The data were then analyzed for patterns of relationships between categories or other variables thus laying the groundwork and direction for further investigation and development of theory.

Although no research method is without bias, every effort has been made to clarify the position of the researcher and adhere to effective and reliable methods and procedures throughout the research process.

B. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Before the research was conducted, proper permission was obtained through the university regarding the use of human subjects. Utilizing information from an extensive literature review as well as the insights gained from the pre-testing analysis, the final questionnaire was developed and incorporated into a mailing packet sent to the sample population. For this survey, a mailing list of all women students enrolled in a graduate degree program for the fall 1989 semester was selected by computer from the complete population of women graduate students attending UNLV and obtained with permission from the registrar's office. These 700 matriculated students were selected as the study population for several reasons. First, the entire original population list of women graduate students included an additional 610 women who were taking graduate courses as special,
or non-degree seeking students. It was felt that women who were enrolled in a degree program (the 700 selected), rather than those taking graduate courses on a part-time basis as a special student (the 610 not used), would constitute a group with a greater degree of career commitment and be more inclined to identify strongly with their role as student and with problems of a role conflict nature. In addition, by confining the population under study to a previously and naturally defined group within the university system, the data obtained could be useful in describing the characteristics of this group for future policy consideration. Finally, when the scope and budget of the project were outlined, it was felt that due to limited amounts of funding and time available, one researcher would realistically only be able to effectively handle an analysis of data on the smaller 700 member group.

To complete the mailing packet, a cover letter accompanying the survey questionnaire introduced the researcher as well as the purpose of the study in such a way that would persuade the recipients to respond. The packet, including a stamped pre-addressed return envelope, was mailed to each of the 700 sample subjects on October 31, 1989. The survey instrument is an 8-page self-administered questionnaire consisting of 64 questions which cover standard demographics, background characteristics, and the following general areas of sociological concern: reasons for pursuing graduate degree, levels of academic achievement, conflicts associated with student role, wife role, mother role, types of emotional and financial support, self-concept, marital status and satisfaction, life stage, social networks, amount of involvement in work, family, and community, perceptions of role expectations, and coping strategies. Eighteen questions were open-ended and the remaining 48 were formatted with various fixed-choice responses. Questions were designed to discover and measure the amount, if any, of role conflict, role overload, and role stress experienced by the respondents and in all, 186 variables are considered. (See appendix A and B for cover letter and questionnaire.)

By February 9, 1990 a total of 461 questionnaire responses were received which represents approximately a 66% rate of return. Such a high return rate reflects the interest
this group of women have in the subject matter and the timeliness of the survey. These responses were numerically coded, entered into a computer data file, and statistically analyzed in a manner consistent with the SPSS-X processing program to discover significant correlations or associations among variables and facilitate elucidation of the research questions. Descriptive data in the form of a 'trends and marginals' report was compiled and sent to each of the survey respondents who requested information on the results of the survey. (See appendix C for the trends and marginals report.)

C. OPERATIONALIZATION OF CONCEPTS

In order to compare the types of role conflicts, gender ideologies, and coping strategies reported, the married women were divided into two groups based upon their scores on a 12-item scale which described their current relationship. The unidimensional questions were adapted from an earlier questionnaire which had been shown to demonstrate reliability and validity in measuring leadership in the marital dyad (Altrocchi 1989). The concept of traditional vs. egalitarian marriages was utilized as a way of making a distinction between those women who demonstrated egalitarian or traditional forms of gender ideologies within their relationships. ¹ It was determined by application of a factor analysis of the scores obtained on the 12 questions that 6 of the questions represented a task leadership dimension or factor and 6 of the questions comprised a socioemotional factor. As determined by previous research, task leadership responsibilities in the relationship (such as earning the most money, making major decisions, having the most important career, and heading the family) are considered traditional when attributed to the husband and egalitarian when attributed both husband and wife equally. The socioemotional dimensions of the relationship (including initiation of communication and conflict

¹ As mentioned in Altrocchi’s article, I would also like to emphasize that "this is a scale by which people describe their perception of their respective roles in the couple relationship and not a scale that necessarily measures their actual behavior" (1989:643).
resolution, promoting cooperation, expressing feelings, providing housework support, and being adaptable) are considered traditional when attributed to the wife and egalitarian when attributed to both husband and wife equally. Each respondent's score on these distinct factors was computed separately and then crosstabulated to provide further distinct criteria upon which group classification could be made. In the final determination, this variable of gender ideology within marriage relationships was divided into five categories: very traditional, somewhat traditional, transitional, somewhat egalitarian, and very egalitarian.

The variables which were used to compute levels of socio-economic status of the married respondents were husband's income, husband's occupation, and husband's level of education. This means was selected in acknowledgement of the status-borrowing process whereby it is assumed that married women in the U.S. will consider their husbands' characteristics when deciding with which social class they will identify (Beeghley 1989). Respondents' scores from each of these three variables were computed to create a new variable which was divided into low, middle, and high levels of SES.

Responses to three different open-ended questions were used in order to determine the incidence of role conflict in various role combinations. Respondents were asked to consider their roles as employee and student, wife and student, and mother and student were appropriate for their situation. Then they were asked to indicate the major problem (if any) they had in combining these two roles successfully. If no problem was indicated, the respondent was classified as having no role conflict in this area. Where a problem was

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1Beeghley makes a further distinction between employed married women with these hypotheses: "Employed married women who believe in traditional gender-role norms will consider only their husband's characteristics in deciding with which class to identify. Employed married women who believe in egalitarian gender-role norms will take both their own and their husbands' characteristics into account in deciding with which class to identify" (1989:48). His data also has shown that women who express support for the Equal Rights Amendment and favor women's employment outside the home use a status-sharing approach whereas in contrast, women who oppose the ERA and do not favor married women's employment, use a status-borrowing approach (1989). For purposes of this study, these various distinctions, although relevant and important, will not be used.
noted, role conflict was considered in evidence. Further classification of the types of role conflict problems, the perceived causes, and the problem-solving strategies utilized brought about the distinctions between role-bargaining strategies (other-oriented) as opposed to non-role-bargaining strategies (self-oriented) as another variable.

Several different correlational techniques were selected as statistical methods for analyzing the research data and testing the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. As most of the variables were described in the form of nominal or ordinal level data, Kendall's Tau c was used for asymmetrical tables to determine whether or not a significant correlation existed between variables. Certain data were tested using Pearson's r before final categorizations were determined to allow for the possibility of unforeseen associations between relevant variables. These parametric tests were chosen based on the interpretation of data, and although in some instances the data may not rigidly adhere to the assumptions of interval scales and population parameters for parametric tests, it was felt that such deviations were not of significant magnitude to preclude the use of such useful statistics. Further details and results of the data analysis are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER V

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSES

The previous chapters provided the theoretical basis and methodological approach used in this research. This chapter will present descriptive data gathered from the survey responses, a discussion of the major variables and their interrelationships, and analyses of statistical tests employed to test the research hypotheses presented in Chapter 3.

A. BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

A summary of background characteristics allows a profile to be formed of the varied life stages and experiences of the women who constitute the subjects of this study. Complete details of the full range of categories and percentages can be found in the appendix section within the trends and marginals report.

1. EDUCATION

The majority of the 461 women who responded to this survey were enrolled as graduate students at UNLV for the fall 1989 semester. Ninety-five percent were in a masters degree program, with 4% working on their doctoral degree, and 1% not officially active in a degree program at the time. Education was the most popular major field of study, while psychology/counseling and business/marketing majors were also listed frequently. While most women said they chose their major field of study before or during college, very many did not select their major until sometime after they left college. Fifty-six percent expect the masters degree to be the highest degree they will receive, while 43% expect to go on to achieve a Ph.D. Their main reasons for entering graduate school are varied with intellectual challenge and increasing earning power being cited by nearly all
respondents. To realize their full potential, gain self-worth, and improve society were also mentioned often. Twenty-seven percent of these students are involved in research work which they expect will lead to professional publication in their name. Eighty-six percent intend to put their degree to full use and were happy with UNLV as a university in general.

As students, these women tended to maintain high grade point averages throughout their high school and college years as well as in graduate school. Seventy-nine percent entered college directly after completing high school. Of those whose college education did not begin directly after high school, the wait ranged from 3 years or less to 29 years. Marriage and/or financial and work limitations were the major reasons given for not entering college directly after high school. Twenty-eight percent entered graduate school directly after graduating from college with the rest waiting from between 1 to 25 years to begin their graduate work. Wanting to work was the reason most often mentioned for delaying their graduate education. The majority relied upon their own income to finance their graduate school studies.

2. EMPLOYMENT

Of the 88% of respondents who were employed at the time of the survey, 74% were in full-time jobs and 26% were part-time employees. For the most part, they considered their job as being part of their career and their occupations were most likely to be in the teaching or nursing/medical fields with an average yearly individual income of between $20,000.00 and $29,999.00.

3. FAMILY

The marital status of the respondents was described as follows: 45% married (once only), 14% married (remarried), 2% married (separated), 23% single (never married), 16% single (divorced) 1% single (widowed). Overall, 61% were married and 39% were single.¹

¹ Eight percent of respondents indicated they were both single and cohabitating with a male partner. This figure is 19% of all single respondents; however,
Fifty-two percent of the women had children, and the average number of children per woman was two. Eight percent of respondents indicated that their mother had a graduate or professional degree and 18% reported that their father had a graduate or professional degree. The majority of respondents listed homemaker as their mother's occupation.

4. AGE

The respondents ranged in age from 21 years to 65 years (R=44) with the mean age being 35, the median 34, and the mode 26. Percentages by age categories are as follows: 21-29 years: 30%, 30-39 years: 38%, 40-49 years: 27%, and 50-65 years: 5%.

5. RACE

Ninety percent of respondents were White/Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 2% Black, 2% Oriental/Asian, 1% Mexican, 1% American Indian, and the remaining 1% indicated their race within the “other” category.

6. RELIGION

Eighty-four percent of respondents said they were raised in a particular religion, with the most frequently mentioned being Catholic, while only 48% indicated that they were an active member of a religion today. Among those who were currently active, the Catholic and Mormon faiths were indicated most often.

7. GROUP ASSOCIATIONS

Politically, the women characterized themselves as follows: 42% moderate, 29% conservative, 23% liberal, 4% left, 2% right, with less than 1% being radical left or radical right. A good number of respondents belonged to professional groups (43%) while only 10% reported that they belonged to any type of feminist oriented group.

the percentage was not considered high enough to warrant distinction as a separate category for the analyses to follow.
B. OPINIONS OF RESPONDENTS

Many questions dealt with the opinions that women held regarding various topics or issues related to their academic or social experiences. These were categorized by Likert-type statements with seven response categories ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

1. ACADEMIC ISSUES

Seventy-six percent of these women students felt they have had to sacrifice in other areas of their lives to complete graduate school requirements, but only 22% reported they lowered their own standards or expectations for academic achievement as a result. Thirty percent have thought of postponing their graduate education and 32% have felt like dropping out altogether. When asked to rate their performance as students, 76% rated themselves as above average or among the best in their department and 75% felt they were above average or among the best at UNLV. Sixty percent rated themselves as above average or among the best of all graduate students in the United States. Ninety-one percent felt they were as dedicated to their career field as the male graduate students in their department. When asked if they felt somewhat to very guilty for attending graduate school, 31% of women answered yes. However, 77% of all respondents disagreed that they may have been happier if they had not entered graduate school. For 95% of the women, completing their degree was very important to them. Only 40% agreed that they should attempt to separate their academic work more from their personal lives. It was reported by 79% of women that they had fathers who were supportive of their academic goals and 87% had supportive mothers.

2. EQUALITY ISSUES

When presented with the statement, "Male professors don't really take female graduate students as seriously as male students", 81% did not agree. Eighty-eight percent felt that economic independence is crucial to a woman's autonomy, but only 38% strongly
agreed with the statement that a capable woman can go as far as she wants in the professional world. Sixty-one percent thought most men are willing to let women get ahead as long as women still do all the housework at home, and 38% said they have felt some pressure not to combine motherhood with their career. Out of all the respondents, 82% felt that a woman should not have to sacrifice her career work to meet the needs of her family more than her husband does. Of the married respondents, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they received emotional support for their academic work from their husbands, 9% felt their husbands made them feel guilty about attending graduate school, and 63% have asked their husbands to share the work at home more equitably.

3. ROLE CONFLICT ISSUES

Survey questions regarding role problems were divided into three areas: employee-student role conflict, wife-student role conflict, and mother-student role conflict. (See Chapter 4, Section C. for discussion of how the variables being described here were operationalized.) Of the respondents who were employed, 13% said they had no student-employee role conflict. Of the 87% who stated that they did have problems in that area, the following main types were cited: not enough time (68%) and excessive expectations of other persons, job, and school (32%). Causes for this conflict were given as: time (19%), self (20%), and other persons (61%), including family, job, society, roles, or school. Through the constant comparative method (previously described in Chapter 4, Section A.) three major descriptive categories of strategies for resolving this conflict were identified: positive self-oriented (69%), negative self-oriented (23%) and other-oriented/role-bargaining actions (8%).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Role Combinations</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee-student roles</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife-student roles</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-student roles</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 1: REPORTED ROLE CONFLICT
Twenty-three percent of respondents who were mothers indicated they had no role conflict in the area of mother-student roles. The following types of conflicts were cited among the 77% who had problems in this area: not enough time (62%) and excessive expectations of others (38%). The causes they gave for this conflict were: time (22%), others (64%), or self (14%). These mothers were more likely to use positive self-oriented coping strategies (52%) than negative self-oriented (22%) or other-oriented/role bargaining (26%) in response to their conflicts.

Within the group who were combining motherhood with their role as student, there appeared to be slightly less indication of role conflict problems but more of a tendency to
utilize other-oriented/role-bargaining coping strategies than among the employee-student group. Although they also blame others most often for creating their conflict of roles, there are varied responses to this depending upon the ages of their children. Those women with younger children tended to accept greater responsibility for resolving problems themselves (self-oriented strategies) whereas those with older children enlisted the assistance of husbands or children in balancing their family demands with those of school (role-bargaining).

In the area of wife-student role conflict, 27% noted they experienced no role conflict problems. Of the 73% who stated that they did have role conflict, the types given were: not enough time (60%) and excessive expectations of others, including home, family, job, or school (40%). The causes reported for this conflict were: time (22%), others (52%), self (20%), or society (6%). Coping strategies were nearly equally divided between positive self-oriented (38%) and other-oriented/role-bargaining behaviors (40%). Negative self-oriented coping strategies (22%) were chosen least often by this group.

In summary, it is the combination of the student and employee roles which seem to create the greatest number of role conflict problems for these women students. They are more likely to see their problems as arising from others while at the same time relying almost exclusively on self-oriented strategies in order to cope with this type of role conflict. The infrequent use of role-bargaining (other-oriented) strategies can be seen as a reflection of the inflexibility of the structure of both job and school environments and the necessity for employment income in order to remain in a graduate program. A feeling that only self-change is possible or likely in this situation leads women to select self-oriented strategies for conflict resolution or relief as the most rational alternative.

Further analysis of the area of wife-student role conflict is covered in more detail in the following sections of this chapter.
C. PERCEPTIONS OF ROLE CONFLICT AMONG MARRIED WOMEN STUDENTS

The major focus of the following analyses will be on the experiences of married women students in order to introduce income and gender ideology within the marriage relationship as variables affecting the experience of role conflicts and choice of coping strategies.

A total of 61%, or 262 respondents in this survey reported being currently married. Of these married women, 73% reported experiencing some type of problem in combining the roles of wife and student successfully, as noted above. The problems described have been categorized into two general types: time and others. The first sub-section will describe each of these types and provide exemplars (numbered as ex.1, ex. 2, etc.) taken from quotations of various respondents to illustrate variations within and between types. Next, the perceived causes of their problems will be discussed under the four main categories of time, others, self, and society. Finally, the coping strategies they employ as problem-solving or problem-avoiding solutions will be divided into three main categories: self-oriented, either positive or negative, and role-bargaining (other-oriented) responses. Within these broader categories, examples will be given which illustrate the various types of responses previously identified in Section E. (i.e. emotional, superperson, leaving the position, avoiding, role simplification, delegation, increasing capacity, organizing roles, prioritizing, discussing, direct actions designed to alter a problematic situation, or palliative actions seeking to relieve stress arising from a problematic situation.)

1. TYPES OF ROLE CONFLICT PROBLEMS

Many respondents (60%) defined the problem of combining their role as student with their role as wife in terms of "time".

ex. 1  "Time constraints - too little time to spend with husband and do things for self."

ex. 2  "School takes a lot of my time, thought, and effort."
In describing their problems of conflicting roles, a total of 40% mentioned an other-oriented type of problem including job, school, society, husband, or family. Some women spoke specifically in terms of their not being able to fill the needs, expectations, or demands of another, especially their husband or family.

2. PERCEIVED CAUSES OF ROLE CONFLICT

The cause of the problem of time is sometimes seen as just that - a problem of time itself (22%). Often however, in the description of the cause, respondents would include another person, most often their husband, or themselves, and later refer to a coping strategy which includes either the husband or a self-changing behavior. This would seem to
indicate that they do not believe the problem to be truly one of time alone, but that there are
other factors which enter into the equation wherein 'lack of time = a problem'. In other
words, women may be labeling the problem as one of "time", but may feel the source or
cause for that lack of time to be directly related to another factor such as their own inability
or desires (20%), excessive demands of others (52%), or society itself (6%).

Time as cause:
ex. 13    “There are only 24 hours in a day!”
ex. 14    “Time is limited for everything I want to do.”

Others as cause:
ex. 15    “My husband helps but doesn’t take responsibility for himself at home.”
ex. 16    “My husband seems, to me, to be particularly needy and somewhat
          insecure - always wants to be doing things with me.”
ex. 17    “His need to enjoy being home and not in an academic environment.”
ex. 18    “He has very traditional and conservative values and expects me to
devote more time and energy to home - not school.”
ex. 19    “Continuing thoughts that wife’s major responsibility is to husband’s
          welfare.”
ex. 20    “My husband’s dissatisfaction with my going to school.”
ex. 21    “My partner’s attitude that I should do the housework because I’m a
          woman.”
ex. 22    “Times have changed during the last 25 years but my husband still expects
          a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad.”
ex. 23    “My husband’s dissatisfaction with my going to graduate school.”
ex. 24    “Being raised a strict Catholic ad having a perfectionist mother.”
ex. 25    “The indoctrination of the Mormon religion wherein I was taught to obey
          my husband and be fertile and multiply.”
ex. 26    “The attitude I was taught by my family that mother and wife are my
          primary jobs.”
ex. 27    “Lack of support from family members.”
ex. 28    “He has very traditional and conservative values and expects me to devote
          more time and energy to home - not school.”
ex. 29  "My husband's thinking is still in the stone age."

ex. 30  "My husband feels he makes more money and it's more important than my career so I have to do everything in the house."

Self as cause:

ex. 31  "Both roles are demanding - I don't schedule time effectively."

ex. 32  "I procrastinate too much."

ex. 33  "I've not fully taken control of my own life so others direct me too much."

ex. 34  "Need for my own independence and self-worth. School takes most of my time to keep up grades."

ex. 35  "Because I am driven - my own need for achievement and to excel in school."

ex. 36  "I don't manage my time as well as I should."

ex. 37  "My inability to simplify, synthesize, makes everything take longer than it might."

ex. 38  "My virgo personality."

ex. 39  "I'm a perfectionist."

ex. 40  "Poor planning on my part."

ex. 41  "I try to do too many things at once."

ex. 42  "My own ambivalence about what I could/should be doing with my talents in life."

ex. 43  "My desire to accommodate my husband's needs."

Society as cause:

ex. 44  "Women are socialized to believe that our input should be limited to home, husband, family."

ex. 45  "I am not an equal partner."

ex. 46  "Old traditions for women's roles."

Relatively few women made statements to the effect that time was the only source of their problems and it is important to note that those who answered something similar to "That's just life!" or "That's the nature of the beast" still utilized some form of self-
changing or role-bargaining behavior as a coping strategy. So although they may have
given the impression that time was simply a problem shared by everyone, which could not
be avoided or remedied, they were also more likely to take it upon themselves to rectify the
problem on their own. Therefore, it seems to be more accurate to describe a role conflict
problem in terms of the woman's perception of its cause, rather than how she generally
described the problem.

3. TYPES OF COPING STRATEGIES

The strategies women use for solving these problems can be generally grouped into
those which employ a positive (37%) or a negative (23%) self-oriented behavior, and/or a
role-bargaining/other-oriented action or technique (40%). In brackets following the
quotations, the specific type of strategy will be noted in terms of emotional, superperson,
leaving the position, avoiding, role simplification, delegation, increasing capacity,
organizing roles, prioritizing, or discussing, and whether or not this is interpreted to be a
direct action (designed to alter a problematic situation) or a palliative action (seeking to
relieve stress arising from a problematic situation).

Positive/Self-oriented:

ex. 47 “Keep my promises to myself and spouse - and above all accept
responsibility for my actions.” [emotional]
ex. 48 “Learn efficient time management and organization skills.” [organizing
roles, prioritizing]
ex. 49 “Putting my personal/professional development in priority position and
realizing the ensuing difficulties with my spouse have been more
symptomatic than actual barriers to my progress.” [prioritizing]
ex. 50 “Exercise and take care of myself physically and mentally.” [increasing
capacity]
ex. 51 “Develop better time management skills.” [increasing capacity]
ex. 52 “Thinking positively that it’ll all have been worth it when I’m done.”
[emotional]
ex. 53 “Knowing I am achieving a life-long goal which makes me feel good.”
[emotional]
Negative/Self-oriented:

ex. 54  “Sacrifice sleep and recreation time.” [increasing capacity, palliative action]

ex. 55  “Work while everyone else is asleep.” [avoiding, palliative action]

ex. 56  “I sometimes have to insist on the study time, even when it makes the atmosphere uncomfortable.” [direct action]

ex. 57  “Work while he is busy or asleep; avoid bringing home work.” [avoiding, palliative action]

ex. 58  “Only take a few credits per semester.” [role simplification, palliative action]

ex. 59  “It’s one big juggling act!” [increasing capacity, superperson]

ex. 60  “Self-censorship so we don’t fight about it.” [avoiding, palliative action]

ex. 61  “I sacrifice and subordinate my desire for a degree to keep our relationship as excellent as it has always been.” [prioritizing, palliative action]

ex. 62  “Try to do homework on Sunday afternoons when he’s involved with sports.” [avoiding, palliative action]

ex. 63  “Keep praying no serious crises come about before I graduate.” [emotional]

ex. 64  “I tried to do it all but ended up withdrawing from graduate school to be with my husband and daughter.” [leaving position]

ex. 65  “Too late for me but my daughter’s eyes have been opened.”

Role-bargaining:

ex. 66  “Talking frustrations over with husband and planning ahead.” [discussing]

ex. 67  “Hire an outsider to help with household work.” [delegation, direct action]

ex. 68  “I have tried to balance my many roles in the fairest possible way, but he is still adamantly opposed to any time I spend on school work. We’re trying professional marriage counseling as a last resort.” [discussing, direct action]

ex. 69  “Talking about it and emphasizing the importance to me personally.” [discussing, direct action]

ex. 70  “Asking my husband to share housework and give me a break.” [delegation, direct action]

ex. 71  “Be flexible - let the children and husband fend for themselves more of the time.” [delegation, direct action]

ex. 72  “The positive support I have from my husband.” [emotional]
ex. 73 "You should have asked divorcees how these items applied in their marriage. Pursuing a graduate degree definitely changed our relationship. He felt very threatened, and tried everything to get me to quit."

Example 56 demonstrates an assertive strategy which sacrifices a certain degree of marital harmony for the work of school, thus subordinating the role of wife to the role of student at times. Example 57 illustrates a self-sacrificing behavior that places the demands and role of wife above the needs of the woman as student. (working around the husband's schedule so the two roles do not overlap.) This is avoiding the inequality of the situation and demonstrates a palliative action which seeks to relieve stress from the problematic situation rather than encourage change in that situation. Examples 66 and 69 show a discussing type of strategy which is a positive form of role-bargaining aimed at changing the definitions and understanding of the roles for the couple. Example 68 however, evidences a conflict that has escalated to the point of professional counseling and indicates that interpersonal role-bargaining has not yet been successfully accomplished, and the entire marital relationship is now in jeopardy due to the seriousness of conflict between these two roles - or more accurately stated, between the values underlying the role definitions held by the husband and wife. In examples 67 and 70, the women seek to delegate the responsibilities of housework more equitably and in so doing, are engaging in direct, role-bargaining actions which could change the definitions and expectations for their respective roles. Those with the financial resources to hire outsiders to perform household tasks would seem to have an advantage over those whose only recourse is to turn to their husbands for assistance with household responsibilities.

Examples 48 and 51 exemplify the tendency of women to increase their own capacity for managing a greater number of role responsibilities more efficiently through time management and organizational skills in order to accomplish academic goals in addition to their existing roles. This is usually mentioned as the first strategy tried, followed by palliative actions, such as examples 55 and 62, to reduce stress when it inevitably occurs. After what many term the 'superwoman syndrome' (trying to do it all)
has taken its toll, an other-oriented/role-bargaining strategy is often begun as a direct action designed to change the rules and expectations of the roles themselves.

Example 73 is included here to illustrate a point which was not considered before the survey began. There was no provision made in the questionnaire to allow divorced women students to describe their previous problems with husbands who may have been unreceptive to the changes in their relationship brought about by her returning to graduate school. In such a case, with all attempts at coping strategies resulting in failure, the couple may have resorted to the strategy of leaving the relationship in order to resolve their role conflict.

From this careful analysis of personal accounts which constitute the qualitative data for this study, a variety of important understandings and categorizations emerged. Lack of adequate time seemed at first to be a common role conflict problem among all respondents; however, when coupled with perceived cause, it becomes evident that the true problem most often lies within excessive role expectations from others. When lack of time is said to be the only cause, it is possible that the woman is experiencing a form of role overload and therefore a lesser degree of role conflict. But for those who focus on others as the cause, it was suggested that the excessive demands placed upon a woman’s time plus the addition of the graduate student role responsibilities creates dilemmas and stress because the woman feels she must take full responsibility for juggling all roles successfully. As stressed in the literature, it is not the inherent incompatibility of the roles themselves that constitutes the problem, but an incompatibility of values and expectations attached to the those roles.

The wife-student roles seem to be the most likely situation where women would use an other-oriented, role-bargaining strategy for conflict resolution since the structure of employment, university graduate programs, and the mother-dependent children relationships are often less flexible than the more intimate relationship of marriage. Changing the perceptions and beliefs of others regarding what behavior is valued for each role often proves to be more difficult than making self-oriented changes to adapt.
Moreover, what may be more relevant in the reduction of role conflict stress than the use or non-use of a role-bargaining behavior is whether or not the woman achieves success in negotiating her role combinations to her own satisfaction no matter what the strategy.

Now that the various types of role conflict and coping strategies have been adequately defined and discussed, the role-bargaining strategy can be introduced as an independent variable in the context of analyzing research results.

D. ROLE CONFLICT AND INCOME

The first hypothesis which was advanced in Chapter 3 states that women graduate students with high incomes will experience less role conflict than women graduate students with lower incomes. Conversely, the women with low income would be expected to experience more role conflict than those with higher income. To test hypothesis 1, three different sub-samples were selected based upon the manner in which their income was generated. Each group’s measures of income were compared separately with the amounts of role conflict they reported.

First, unmarried employed respondents were considered separately (N=170 or 37% of entire sample) and their pre-coded categories of annual personal income were ranked from 1 (less than $10,000) to 7 ($60,000 - $70,000). Twelve percent of this group of unmarried employed women reported no role conflict, leaving 88% with role conflict in the employee-student role. When incidence of role conflict for this group was compared with levels of income, the result was a slight positive association between level of income and experience of role conflict which was statistically significant. (Kendall’s Tau c = .12 p<.02, see Table 3) The higher their income, the more likely they were to experience role conflict in the employee-student role.
Table 3
ROLE CONFLICT AMONG UNMARRIED EMPLOYED RESPONDENTS
(in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Annual Income</th>
<th>High Role Conflict</th>
<th>Low Role Conflict</th>
<th>Row Freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - 19,999</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - 29,999</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 - 39,000</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 - 49,999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - 59,999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - 69,999</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 166

Kendall's Tau c = 0.12 p<.02

When non-employed married women were considered as a separate group (N=46 or 10% of entire sample), their income was based on the categories established for their husbands’ annual income. (See Chapter 4 regarding justification for utilization of this measure.) Of this group, 30% reported no role conflict, while 70% said they had role conflict in the wife-student role. The statistical comparison of these two variables yielded the conclusion that there is no significant association between a married woman graduate student’s experience of role conflict in the wife-student roles and her husband’s income. (Kendall’s Tau c = .125 p>.05)

Finally, a third group was considered to allow combined income of husband and wife to be calculated for those respondents who are both married and employed. (N=247, 54% of entire sample) Seventy-three percent of this group reported role conflict and 27% had no role conflict. When combined personal incomes were used as the measure of total annual income, this comparison also failed to yield any significant association between the
experience of role conflict and levels of income. (Kendall’s Tau c = .057 p>.05) Therefore hypothesis 1 is not supported.

These findings suggest that women graduate students who have higher incomes, whether from their own job, their husband’s, or a combination of both, do not necessarily experience less role conflict than those women graduate students with lower incomes. In fact, the opposite may be true in some cases where single employed women with higher incomes reported role conflict more often than those with lower incomes. The hypothesis suggested that having less of a financial barrier represented by a higher level of income would lead to more effective resolution of role conflicts. However, as the above results indicate, higher levels of income do not seem to translate directly into lower levels of role conflict. For this analysis, money (income) was in effect singled out from the other indicators of SES while education and occupation were held constant. So, by itself, income did not prove to be a significant predictor of less role conflict among these women graduate students.

Such results are not surprising for several reasons related to the characteristics of the sample and measuring of variables, as well as to the literature upon which that hypothesis was premised. Thoits (1987) indicated that middle and upper class women are better able to negotiate successful and satisfying role arrangements with less role conflict than women of a lower social class. However, income is only one indicator for measuring social class. When education levels and occupational status of the group under study are introduced along with income, it becomes difficult to differentiate between the resulting socio-economic status levels of these highly educated and relatively economically privileged women. Overall, very few had personal incomes below $10,000 (19%) or above $70,000 (1%). The majority of husbands of married women students had incomes of $30,000 or above (64%) and when income is combined for husband and wife, the percentage with annual incomes over $60,000 is quite high (53%). In addition, using the measure of SES (socio-economic status) described in Chapter 4, only 3% were considered having low SES
and 33% had high SES, further attesting to the relative homogeneity of respondents with regard to these variables. The comparison using SES rather than income alone also produced no significant correlation with incidence of role conflict. (Kendall’s Tau c = -0.084 p>.05)

The two important characteristics which exist among the women in this sample, relative homogeneity of income levels and relatively high, middle to upper-middle class socio-economic status, may have contributed to the lack of support for hypothesis 1. This lack of diversity is indicative of a limitation of the sample under study with regard to the concepts in question. Another reason for the difference in research findings may be related to the measurement of role conflict itself. Respondents were asked to indicate what major problem (if any) they had in combining their various roles successfully. The degree of stress they experienced from these stated problems was not determined or measured - only the presence or absence of a role conflict problem was noted. It is highly probable that women experience differing degrees of difficulty and stress as a result of encountering role problems which should have been taken into consideration for inclusion as an independent variable. It seems likely that not including measures of this type contributed to the inability of this research to substantiate findings of previous researchers. So, a better test for this hypothesis would have included a comparison between less educated women of lower income and the women graduate students of this study as well as a comparison with measures of stress regarding role conflict. As this would go beyond the scope of the current project, it now constitutes a suggested direction for possible future research.

E. COPING STRATEGIES AND INCOME

It was further suggested by Thoits (1987) that women who earn considerable amounts of money have more opportunity to negotiate obligations within their role relationships in a satisfying manner, thus reducing conflicts of managing multiple roles. Research findings from this study however, did not support these assertions. Hypothesis 2
states that women graduate students with high incomes will utilize role-bargaining coping strategies more often than women graduate students with lower income. (The higher the income, the more likely to use role-bargaining coping strategies.) Statistical comparisons of these variables did not produce any significant association between levels of income and choice of role-bargaining as a coping strategy. (Kendall's Tau c = .04 p>.05)

The preceding analysis suggests that women with higher incomes may have more opportunity and economic resources with which to negotiate roles, but whether or not they take advantage of those opportunities could be a function of many other intervening variables, both socio-psychological and structural. Apparently, the existence of a certain level of income, whether personal or from their husbands, does not automatically lead to the use of that income for the specific purpose of reducing role conflict problems.

Another factor which may have influenced the lack of support for this hypothesis has to do with a limitation of the study. The women who reported no present role conflict were not given adequate opportunity or direction to discuss the reasons why they had no role conflict. If they had problems in the past which they had successfully managed to resolve, concentration should have been placed on the successful strategies they utilized so that comparisons for this group could also be incorporated into the analysis.

F. EGALITARIAN MARRIAGES AND ROLE CONFLICT

As outlined in hypothesis 3, those women with egalitarian marriages are expected to experience less role conflict than those with more traditional marriages. For this comparison, an ordinal level variable was measured whereby respondents were categorized into five different types of marriage, ranging from very traditional (8.7%), somewhat traditional (40.6%), transitional (13.3%), and somewhat egalitarian (21.7%) to highly egalitarian (15.7%). The determination for inclusion in one group or another depended upon the respondent's computed scores on a 12 question scale. (See Chapter 4, Section B for explanation on use of scale.) When the marriage relationship type (representing gender
ideology of the couple) was compared to reported role conflict there appeared to be a slight negative (or inverse) association that was statistically significant between the two variables. (Kendall’s Tau $c = -0.154 p<.01$; see table 4) This would indicate that the more egalitarian the marriage relationship of the woman, the less likely she is to report role conflict for the wife-student roles. And conversely, the more traditional her marriage relationship (the less egalitarian), the more likely she is to experience role conflict. Hypothesis 3 is therefore supported by these results and traditional gender ideologies or values within the marriage relationship emerge as a possible contributor to role conflict for these women graduate students.¹

Table 4
GENDER IDEOLOGY WITHIN MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLE CONFLICT
(in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Conflict</th>
<th>Very Traditional</th>
<th>Somewhat Traditional</th>
<th>Transitional</th>
<th>Somewhat Egalitarian</th>
<th>Very Egalitarian</th>
<th>Row %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>(44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Column %)</td>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>(41)</td>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>(22)</td>
<td>(16)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 286 Kendall’s Tau $c = -0.154 p<.01$

¹ Interestingly, when age of respondent and gender ideology were crosstabulated, these variables were found to exhibit a slight negative (inverse) correlation which was significant. (Pearson’s $r = -0.124 p<.02$) The lower the age, the more likely to have an egalitarian relationship or gender ideology; and conversely, the higher the age, the more likely to have a traditional relationship. This would seem to be consistent with current literature indicating a trend toward more egalitarian gender values among the younger generation of married persons.
Chart 2: GENDER IDEOLOGY WITHIN MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS AND ROLE CONFLICT

Very Egalitarian

Somewhat Egalitarian

Transitional

Somewhat Traditional

Very Traditional

N = 286

Role Conflict

No Role Conflict
G. **EGALITARIAN MARRIAGES AND COPING STRATEGIES**

In hypothesis 4, married women graduate students with egalitarian relationships are said to be more likely to engage in role-bargaining coping strategies than those with traditional relationships. When these variables were compared however, no significant association was shown to exist. (Kendall’s Tau c = -.053 p>.05) Therefore hypothesis 4 is not supported.

At this point it is important to note that only those women who reported experiencing role conflict were measured with regard to the type of coping strategy they employ. Those respondents who indicated they had no role conflict problems were not inclined to complete the other questions in that particular section of the survey (possibly due to question formatting) and therefore the information regarding how they successfully avoided or resolved role conflicts was not available for analysis. The coping strategies and gender ideologies of those women who did not report experiencing role conflict need to be specifically addressed. This is an unfortunate limitation of this study and should be viewed as an important consideration for any future research in this area.

H. **DIRECT ACTION VS. PALLIATIVE ACTION IN ROLE CONFLICT STRATEGIES**

Because of the outcomes of the above comparisons involving coping strategies, it is plausible that the way in which the variable ‘coping strategy’ itself was defined needs to be reconsidered. Since Thoits (1987) had limited her definition of role-bargaining strategies to those which involve negotiating with another individual in the role set to change actions and/or role behavior expectations, this is the way responses in the survey were originally coded. However, if we expand the concept of role-bargaining to include all actions designed to induce role changes as a solution to a problematic situation, most self-oriented actions (especially the frequently cited ‘time management’ response category) can now be included under the broader classification of ‘direct action’. Most of the negative self-oriented strategies would then be seen as ‘palliative actions’ since they are designed to
temporarily relieve stress from the role conflict situation rather than affect a change in the cause of the conflict or the role behavior. Recoding the variable under this new classification, the women in this survey overwhelmingly chose direct actions as role conflict resolution strategies over palliative actions no matter what role combination was considered. (See Table 5) This new distinction between two major types of strategies - one designed to merely cope with an existing problem of role conflict (palliative) and one designed to alter the role situation (direct action), may serve to enhance the understanding of role conflict resolution as an avenue for normative social change. Further discussion and conclusions regarding the results of this research project will be presented in the final chapter.

Table 5

DIRECT ACTION VS. PALLIATIVE ACTION IN ROLE CONFLICT STRATEGIES (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role Combination</th>
<th>Role Conflict Strategy</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Action</td>
<td>Palliative Action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee-student</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>N=324</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife-student</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>N=206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother-student</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>N=163</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The review of literature (Chapter 2) pertaining to role conflict and coping strategies led to the presentation of four research questions and related hypotheses (Chapter 3). The design of the study and methods used were outlined (Chapter 4) and subsequent data and results were analyzed in order to describe the population under study and test the hypotheses (Chapter 5). In this chapter the major findings will be discussed summarily and conclusions offered along with suggested directions for future research.

In each of the three role combinations studied (employee-student, wife-student, and mother-student), a majority of women graduate students experienced a form of role conflict. Their descriptions of problems with regard to combining these roles consistently pointed to inadequate amounts of time for carrying out their role requirements. When asked to define the cause for these problems however, their emphasis shifted markedly from 'time' to 'others' or 'self'. Specifically, women were inclined to believe that the reason they lacked adequate time was directly related to excessive demands or expectations of other individuals (in their jobs, school, or families) or of society itself. There were relatively few who attributed the cause to their own needs, inadequacies, or inabilities to function in those roles.

Depending upon how the cause of their role conflict is perceived, women act to resolve the conflict in three different ways. Overall, self-oriented coping strategies predominated in every role situation studied. Positive, as opposed to negative, self-oriented types of strategies were the most likely to be utilized in the employee-student roles, although also highly evident in both wife and mother roles. Other-oriented strategies were
least likely to be chosen in the employee situation and most often utilized in the wife role relationship. A more egalitarian marriage relationship tends to produce less role conflict for women, however, such values do not necessarily imply that one particular type of strategy orientation will be selected over another. Level of income also does not appear to have a direct relationship to decreasing the incidence of role conflict or to use of particular strategies among this group of women.

In general, it can be said that these women prefer to take it upon themselves to affect changes toward conflict resolution by direct actions designed to alter the role situation (whether self or other-oriented) rather than simply engage in palliative actions which serve only to temporarily reduce their own role conflict stress. This distinction between two major types of coping strategies may prove to be more beneficial for comprehending role conflict resolution for this group than the categorizations previously adapted from the literature. A complete understanding of the influence of various coping strategies upon successful conflict resolution and normative change for role expectations would require research focusing on the effectiveness of both coping (palliative) and action strategies rather than simply on the utilization of one coping strategy over another.

As with any research, the findings of this exploratory study should be viewed within the limitations, considerations, and methodological problems already discussed. Despite those limitations, this thesis has addressed several important theoretical issues and provided preliminary findings with regard to the relationships among role conflict and coping strategies - social structure and social interaction. These discoveries, although not always consistent with the sociological literature reviewed, have important implications for those who seek a better understanding of women graduate students as a group and their contribution to normative social change. By virtue of their gender and their selection of the graduate student role, these women have embarked on a historically non-traditional path in society. For most, conflicts of roles are as inevitable as change itself. Because of role conflict, they are enmeshed in the vital process of negotiating new role arrangements and
altering role expectations whereby achievement of personal goals in multiple roles can be successfully and harmoniously accomplished. Role conflict can now be seen as the friction of change - one manifestation of a dynamic process in action. It has also become clear that within the relationship of marriage lies a great potential for balancing role expectations and reinterpreting values for women's roles held by both husbands and wives. As wives come to share the responsibilities and benefits of the traditionally male-oriented professional and academic spheres with men, they also struggle to share the responsibilities and benefits of the traditionally female-oriented spheres of home and family with their husbands. Furthermore, a reapportionment of gender role responsibilities and expectations can only effectively take place alongside a shift in the way individuals value those roles. As individual values shift, so societal values are molded and social structures are influenced. Role conflict resolution can be attained within existing structure as part of a transformative process of that structure - its roles, norms, values, beliefs, and constraints. The capacities of individuals for successfully making new roles however, is impacted by their position or location within the structural confines of the society (socio-economic class) as well as their adherence to predominant cultural ideologies (patriarchy/capitalism). So, we not only create, but are created by social structures and societal values.

Thus, utilizing the woman's perspective as a role from which all other roles are viewed becomes a powerful tool in understanding how social interaction shapes social structure as well as how social structure shapes interactions. Each actor will bring her or his own set of beliefs, conditions, and attitudes to a role bargaining situation which, in relation to the beliefs, conditions, and attitudes of others, will become advantageous or disadvantageous for successful resolution of conflicts in roles they face. These attitudes, beliefs, and situational conditions are variables which must be further studied and compared in order to clarify their relationships, to understand how conflicts of roles come about, and to learn what combinations will be most conducive to reducing the occurrence of role conflict in solving practical social problems. Gender ideology, when based upon
patriarchy, will continue to emerge as a constraining structural variable impacted and intersected by other structural variables such as money, education, and social class as well as by socio-psychological variables unique to each individual. Other approaches or perspectives often miss the importance of micro-structure in the form of interpersonal negotiations of roles when explaining macro-structural phenomena.

It is my contention that as long as role conflicts, which appear as controversies and oppositions to more egalitarian roles for women, persist in today's society (however subtly or disguised they may operate) women will continue to suffer from the disadvantages of a discriminatory system based upon their gender. In this context, role conflict is really women's battle against static gender roles which limit their ability to become fully autonomous individuals and achieve equality in all areas of society - home, workplace, and education. This role conflict and the direct strategies women employ toward its resolution, must now be seen as an avenue toward positive social change and evolution of higher consciousness rather than a dysfunctional departure from established social equilibrium. Instead of accepting that all women can do is 'cope' with the clashes of roles (implying putting up with the situation without expecting others to change), emphasis must be directed toward evolutionary role strategies which involve all members of a woman's set of role interactions. Within this thesis, areas for additional research in this direction have been identified and suggestions offered to aid future work methodologically and conceptually with its task of continuing this important exploration.

In a larger sense, this study attempts to present a model for understanding processes of human development and a method for analyzing the link between individual action and social change - to understand what is happening within ourselves as "minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society" (Mills 1959:7). "In the context of structural constraint, women actively build their lives out of the materials provided by larger social forces," shaping and reshaping the world that has shaped them (Gerson 1985:xiii). By examining differences and similarities among women graduate
students, I view them as unique individuals situated in variable social contexts who bring differing resources and degrees of power to their real-life situations. I have seen how their role definitions and normative expectations can be changed through individual action where social structures sufficiently allow and how this dynamic process leads in turn to the reshaping of those very same social structures and societal values. It is my hope that the question of how much power women have in solving gender role conflicts and thus directing the course of their own lives will ignite the 'sociological imagination' and allow us all to see each other as true "possible humans dancing to the Dromenon."1

1 Dromenon: "an ancient Greek term for a therapeutic rhythm, a dance of renewal that brings the participant into contact with a larger universe and a deeper humanity" (Houston 1982).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

A. Cover Letter
B. Survey Questionnaire
C. Trends and Marginals Report
October 27, 1989

Fellow Graduate Student:

The number of women in graduate schools across the country is steadily increasing, and UNLV is no exception. Right now women comprise 59% of all graduate students here and the total number of women enrolled in graduate degree programs has increased from 432 in 1981 to 702 in 1989. As a graduate student in the department of Sociology, I am exploring the various social factors affecting our career decisions and the quality of our graduate education.

The enclosed questionnaire has been sent to you as part of an approved study sampling all female graduate students currently enrolled at this university. By answering these questions as honestly and candidly as possible, you will assist me in understanding your specific experiences and concerns regarding educational and career goals as well as the dilemmas and challenges you face as a woman with many roles.

The accuracy of the survey and the worth of its findings are dependent upon your willingness to answer all questions. I believe the important insights to be gained by this study will justify the time I'm asking you to give it. If you wish to see the results of the study, I will be glad to send you a summary of my findings.

Finally, please be assured of the confidentiality of this survey. Your answers will not be linked to your name and the information obtained will be used only in combination with those of other survey participants to form composite profiles.

I hope you will find the questionnaire interesting to answer and that you will complete and return it to me while you have it at hand.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

NANCY LEE DOWNEY
Graduate Assistant - Sociology Department
WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY

1. What type of degree are you now working towards? (circle one)
   - Masters Degree (M.A., M.S., M.Ed. etc.) . 1
   - Doctoral Degree (Ph.D., Ed.D.) ............ 2

2. In what major field is this degree? (Please specify)______________________________

3. When did you choose your current major field of study? (circle one)
   - Before college ...................................... 1
   - During college ..................................... 2
   - Between college and graduate school .... 3
   - During graduate school ......................... 4

4. How many credit hours are you presently taking?______________________________

5. When do you expect to receive your degree? (circle one)
   - This year ................................................ 1
   - Within 2 years ........................................ 2
   - Within 3 years ....................................... 3
   - 4 or more years .................................... 4
   - I don't expect to receive degree ............. 5

6. Do you hold any other graduate or professional degrees?
   (circle one) Yes >>>>(Specify degree/s) _____________________________
   - No

7. What is the highest degree you eventually expect to obtain?____________________

8. I am in graduate school to: (circle one for each statement)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Not a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge myself intellectually</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escape boredom/restlessness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide sense of self-worth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change my previous career</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfy job requirements</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain an occupation with high prestige</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase my earning power</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a new self-image/identity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change/improve society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study my field for its intrinsic interest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize my full potential as a human being</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Specify other)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE NEXT GROUP OF QUESTIONS RELATE TO YOUR PREVIOUS EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

9. What was your grade point average in high school? (circle one)
   - A+ or A .......................... 1
   - A- or B+ ....................... 2
   - B or B- ........................ 3
   - C+ or C ........................ 4
   - C- or less ...................... 5
10. Did you enter college directly following high school? (circle one)

   Yes >>>>> (Skip to question 13)
   No

11. How many years were there between high school and college? __________

12. What was the major reason you did not enter college directly following high school?
   (circle one)
   Wanted to work ............................... 1
   Financial Limitations ...................... 2
   Marriage ....................................... 3
   Pregnancy/Children ............................. 4
   No set career goals ............................ 5
   Other ............................................. 6
   (specify other)__________________________

13. What was your undergraduate grade point average? (circle one)

   A+ or A ................................. 1
   A- or B+ ................................. 2
   B or B- .................................... 3
   C+ or C .................................... 4
   C- or less ................................. 5

14. Did you enter graduate school directly following college? (circle one)

   Yes >>>>> (Skip to question 17)
   No

15. How many years were there between college and graduate school? __________

16. What was the major reason you did not enter graduate school directly following college?
   (circle one)
   Wanted to work ............................... 1
   Financial Limitations ...................... 2
   Marriage ....................................... 3
   Pregnancy/Children ............................. 4
   No set career goals ............................ 5
   Other ............................................. 6
   (specify other)__________________________

17. Have you been enrolled in school continuously (except for summers) since you first started working on this graduate degree? (circle one)

   Yes >>>>> (Skip to question 20, next page)
   No

18. How many years were you not enrolled since you began graduate work? __________

19. What was the primary reason you did not attend graduate school continuously?
   (Please specify) ____________________________
20. How did you finance your graduate education? (check all that apply)

(1) ___ Scholarship or fellowship
(2) ___ Graduate/Teaching Assistantship
(3) ___ Research Assistantship
(4) ___ Parents/Relatives
(5) ___ My husband
(6) ___ Government/Institutional loan
(7) ___ My own income
(8) ___ Other (Specify)__________

21. What is your current graduate school grade point average? (circle one)

A+ or A ................................... 1
A- or B+ .................................. 2
B or B- .................................... 3
C+ or C ................................. 4
C- or less ............................... 5

22. Do you think any of these things are likely to prevent you from completing your graduate work as planned?

(circle one) Yes No Maybe
Lack of interest ......................................... 1 2 3
Lack of adequate finances.......................... 1 2 3
Inability to do academic work ..................... 1 2 3
Too much competition in graduate school 1 2 3
Personal characteristics not suited to field 1 2 3
Difficulty in working with professors ...... 1 2 3
Poor personal health.................................. 1 2 3
Family responsibilities ............................... 1 2 3

23. With regard to your current graduate studies, have you: (circle one for each statement)

Yes No
Attended a meeting of an academic or professional association? 1 2
Presented a paper at a meeting of an academic or professional association? 1 2
Published an article or articles in academic or professional journals? 1 2
Become involved recently with scholarly or research work which you expect
will lead to publication in your name?........................................ 1 2
Enjoyed a close working relationship with any faculty members in your department? 1 2
Thought seriously about a job you would like to have after finishing graduate school? . 1 2
Had a sexual harassment problem with any faculty member? ................. 1 2
Considered changing to another university? ............................... 1 2
Sought professional counseling in order to deal with any personal problems? 1 2
Considered changing your field of study? ............................... 1 2
Felt that you've had to sacrifice in other areas of your life to complete graduate school? 1 2
Lowered your own standards or expectations for achievement in graduate school? . 1 2
Thought of postponing your graduate education? ............................ 1 2
Felt like dropping out of graduate school altogether? ........................ 1 2

24. Please circle one for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Among the best</th>
<th>Above average</th>
<th>About average</th>
<th>Below average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate yourself among the graduate students in your department? 1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate yourself among the graduate students at UNLV? 1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate yourself among graduate students in the U.S. generally? 1 2 3 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think I would be happier if I hadn't entered graduate school........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My finances are adequate for my present needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I intend to put the degree I earn to full use.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I could begin my academic training again, I would still</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choose my present discipline.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In general, I am happy with UNLV as a university.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am as dedicated to my career field as male graduate students in my</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>department are.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel guilty about attending graduate school.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very important to me that I complete my degree.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male professors don't really take female graduate students as</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seriously as male students.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with my current academic performance.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should attempt to separate my academic work more from my</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personal life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have felt pressure not to combine motherhood with career................</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A capable woman can go as far as she wants in the professional world.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic independence is crucial to a woman's autonomy.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is up to women to bring an increased wholistic awareness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and healing unity to the human experience.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A woman should not have to sacrifice her career work to meet the</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs of her family more than her husband does.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most men are willing to let women get ahead as long as women still do</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all the housework at home.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father has been supportive of my academic goals.........................</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother has been supportive of my academic goals.........................</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. Are you currently employed? (circle one) Yes

No >>>>>> (Skip to question 34, next page)

27. What is your occupation? (Specify) __________________________________________________________

28. Is your job full-time or part-time? (circle one) 1. . . . Full-time

2. . . . Part-time

29. Do you consider your current job as part of your career or "just a job"? (circle one) 1. . . . Career

2 . . . Job

30. What is your personal (individual) yearly gross income (before taxes)? (circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$19,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$29,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-$39,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$49,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-$59,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$69,999</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000-$79,999</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000- or more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
31. Considering your roles as student and employee, what is the major problem (if any) you have in combining these two roles successfully? (Please describe briefly)

32. What do you think is the cause of this problem?

33. What strategies do you find most beneficial in helping you to solve or prevent this problem?

34. What is your marital status? (circle one)
   - Married (once only) . . . . 1
   - Married (remarried) . . . 2
   - Married (separated) . . . 3
   - Single (never married) . . 4
   - Single (divorced) . . . 5
   - Single (widowed) . . . 6

35. Are you living with a partner? (circle one)
   - Yes >>>>> (Then please answer questions 36-45 and replace "husband" with "partner").
   - No >>>>> (Skip to question 46, page 6)

36. When did you marry your present husband (or begin living with your partner)? (circle one)
   - Before college . . . . . . 1
   - During college . . . . . 2
   - Between college and graduate school . . . 3
   - During or after graduate school . . . 4

37. How many years have you been married to your present husband (or in your relationship with partner)? ____________ (yrs.)

38. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: Rate the following items according to the way your marriage or relationship actually functions now, not the way you would like it to function or think it should function. There are no right or wrong answers; we are simply interested in an accurate description of these aspects of your marriage or relationship. (Circle the one response for each statement that best describes your marriage or relationship.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIFE</th>
<th>BOTH EQUALLY</th>
<th>HUSBAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The person who is more adaptable in our marriage is . . . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person with the major responsibility for earning money is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who is looked to for leadership in times of crisis is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings/emotions in our interactions are usually expressed by . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual intercourse in our marriage is most often initiated by . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who makes the major decisions in our marriage is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who takes the initiative in resolving our conflicts is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person whose career is more important in our marriage is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;head of the family&quot; in our marriage is . . . . . . . . . . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who promotes cooperation in our marriage is . . . . . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person responsible for bank accounts and paying bills is . . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who consistently does the most housework is . . . . . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person initiating communication between us most often is . . . 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
39. What is the highest level of education completed by your present husband (or partner)? (circle one)

   Less than high school ............ 1
   High school graduate ............. 2
   Some college .................... 3
   College graduate ................ 4
   Some graduate school ............ 5
   Graduate or professional degree . 6 >>>(Specify) ________________________

40. What is your husband's/partner's occupation? _______________________________________

41. What is your husband's yearly gross income (before taxes)? (circle one)

   Under $10,000 ....... 1
   $10,000-$19,999 ......... 2
   $20,000-$29,999 ......... 3
   $30,000-$39,999 ......... 4
   $40,000-$49,999 ......... 5
   $50,000-$59,999 ......... 6
   $60,000-$69,999 ......... 7
   $70,000-$79,999 ......... 8
   $80,000- or more ......... 9

42. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (circle one for each statement)

   Strongly Somewhat Un- Somewhat Strongly
   Agree Agree Agree Agree

   I am satisfied with my present marriage relationship.............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   My husband is proud of my academic accomplishments.............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I share intellectual conversations with my husband.................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   My husband is emotionally supportive of my school work.............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I find I have more conflicts with my husband when I'm in school. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   My husband makes me feel guilty about attending school.............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I sense my husband may feel threatened by my degree.................. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I am currently considering divorce (or leaving)....................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I have adopted some new attitudes about women's roles which are not compatible with my husband's....................... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I make more compromises in our relationship than he does.............. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
   I've asked my husband to share work at home more equitably...... 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. Thinking of your roles as wife (or partner) and student, what major problem (if any) have you had in combining these roles successfully? (Please describe)
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

44. What do you think is the cause of this problem?
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

45. What strategies do you find work the best in helping you to solve or prevent this problem?
   ___________________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

46. Do you have any children? (circle one) Yes >>>> How many? ________ How many presently live with you? ______

   No >>>> (Skip to question 53, page 7)

47. What are the ages of your children? (Specify) ________________________________
48. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Circle one for each statement)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually feel stressed to get everything done each day. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel selfish when I must tell my child I cannot do what she/he wants because I have to study or go to class. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I deserve to pursue my educational interests and goals. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My children are understanding about my being a student. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishments of the women's rights movement have made it easier for me to combine family, career, and education ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there were just more hours in a day, I could satisfy my family's expectations for me as well as my own. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While in school I lower my standards for housecleaning ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I separate school from home as much as possible. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often sacrifice my own needs for those of others in my family. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've learned to manage my time efficiently. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men need to share the responsibilities of childcare and housework more equitably with their wives. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of &quot;supermom&quot; describes me well. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expect to have another child or children in the future. ........ 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. Do you have any help in these areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(circle one for each row)</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid babysitter/non-relative ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives babysitter ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day care center/nursery ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time housekeeper/cleaning service ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time housekeeper ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband helps with housework ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband helps with children ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older children help with younger ones ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older children help with housework ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/children stay at home alone ........</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

50. Considering your roles as mother and student, what major problem (if any) have you had in combining these roles successfully? (Please describe briefly)

_______________________________________________________________________

51. What do you think causes this problem?

_______________________________________________________________________

52. What strategies do you find most beneficial in helping you to solve or prevent this problem?

_______________________________________________________________________

53. What is your present age? ____________ (yrs.)
54. What organizations or groups (social, religious, political, women's, support, etc.) are you involved at all in? (Please list)

________________________________________________________________________

55. To what racial or ethnic group do you belong? (check one)
   (1) _____ American Indian   (3) _____ Caucasian/White   (5) _____ Mexican American
   (2) _____ Black/Afro-American   (4) _____ Hispanic origin   (6) _____ Oriental/Asian
   (7) _____ Other (Specify) ____________________________________________

56. How would you characterize yourself politically at the present time? (check one)
   (1) Radical left   (2) Left   (3) Liberal   (4) Moderate   (5) Conservative
   (6) Right   (7) Radical Right

57. Were you raised in a particular religion? (circle one)
   Yes >>>>> (Specify) ____________________________________________
   No

58. Do you consider yourself an active member of any religion today? (circle one)
   Yes >>>>> (Specify) ____________________________________________
   No

59. How many brothers and/or sisters do you have? _______________________

60. What was the highest level of education attained by your parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Father</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior high school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

61. What was your father's principal occupation while you were growing up? (Specify) ____________________________

62. What was your mother's principal occupation while you were growing up? (Specify) ____________________________

63. Where did you live for most of the time while you were growing up? (check one)
   (1) _____ Small town (pop. under 50,000)   (4) _____ Moderate size city (50,000-250,000)
   (2) _____ On a farm                     (5) _____ Suburb of a large city
   (3) _____ Rural community (not farming) (6) _____ Large city (pop. over 250,000)

64. If you would be willing to briefly discuss your experiences and opinions in a confidential telephone interview with a researcher, please write your telephone number: ___________________________ and best time/day to call: ___________________________

(Please use this space to add any personal comments if you wish.)

________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY - TRENDS AND MARGINALS
NANCY LEE DOWNEY
DEPT. OF SOCIOLOGY - UNLV
October 31, 1989 - February 9, 1990

N=461
Rate of response=66%

**NOTE: percentages may be rounded for simplicity and are computed as valid
percents where appropriate (with missing data excluded).

Descriptive Data

Current Program:
95% masters degree
4% doctoral degree
1% not in a degree program

Major field of study:

- Anthropology .9%
- Archeology .2%
- Art .2%
- Biology 1.3%
- Business/Marketing 11.5%
- Chemistry .2%
- Civil Engineering .4%
- Communication Studies 1.3%
- Computer Science 1.3%
- Dance .2%
- Economics 1.8%
- Education 38.2%
- Electrical Engineering .4%
- English 4.9%
- Ethics & Policy Studies 2.0%
- Exercise Physiology 1.1%
- Foreign Language .9%
- Geology .2%
- Geoscience .2%
- History 1.8%
- Hotel 1.8%
- Library Science 1.1%
- Math .4%
- Music .9%
- Nursing 5.3%
- Physics .4%
- Political Science .9%
- Psychology/counseling 14.1%
- Social Work 1.8%
- Sociology 2.4%
- Theater .4%

Chose major field:
18.1% before college
29.0% during college
43.7% between college and grad. school
9.2% during graduate school

No. of credits:

- 0 credits 4%
- 1-3 credits 34.1%
- 4-6 credits 41.5%
- 7-9 credits 12.4%
- 10-12 credits 4.3%
- 13-16 credits 3.8%

76% expect to finish their degree within 2 years or less.
16% already hold another graduate degree.
50% expect the M.A. to be the highest degree they will receive, while 43% expect to go on to achieve a PhD.
4% expect M.A.+32 and 2.6% are seeking to receive two masters degrees.

Reasons for entering graduate school:

- intellectual challenge 92.9%
- escape boredom 30.6%
- gain self-worth 74.8%
- change career 52.5%
- job requirements 52.1%
- high prestige 49.2%
- increase earning power 87.7%
- self-image 56.8%
- improve society 67.5%
- study field of interest 75.7%
- realize full potential 79.3%

High School Grade Point Average:

- A or A+ 27.5%
- A- or B+ 39.7%
- B or B- 23.1%
- C or C+ 7.9%
- C- or less 1.7%

Entered college directly after high school: 78.7%

Of those who did not enter college directly after high school:

- 27.4% waited 3 years or less
- 32.6% waited 4-10 years
- 32.6% waited 11-20 years and
- 7.4% waited 21-29 years.
Major reason for not entering college directly after high school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wanted to work</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial limitations</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pregnancy/children</td>
<td>08.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no set career goals</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needed rest from school</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combination of reasons</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entered graduate school directly after college: 27.5%

College G.P.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A or A+</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- or B+</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B or B-</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C or C+</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of years between college and graduate school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4 years</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 years</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major reason for not entering graduate school directly after college:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wanted to work</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financial limitations</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage</td>
<td>07.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pregnancy/children</td>
<td>07.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no set career goals</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needed rest from school</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>combination of reasons</td>
<td>07.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrolled in graduate school continuously:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate School G.P.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-or B+</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B or B-</td>
<td>06.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How financed graduate school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistantship</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research assistantship</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbands</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. Loans</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own income</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barriers to graduate school completion:

35% felt that family responsibilities possibly would prevent them from completing their graduate work as planned.

Scholarly Research Work:

27% are involved in research work which they expect will lead to professional publication in their name.

Sacrifices:

76% feel they have had to sacrifice in other areas of their lives to complete graduate school.

Lowered Expectations:

22.5% report they have lowered their own standards or expectations for academic achievement in graduate school.

Postponing:

30% have thought of postponing their graduate education and 32% have felt like dropping out altogether.

Self-rating as students:

76% rated themselves as above average or among the best in their department.
75% rated themselves as above average or among the best at UNLV.
60.4% rated themselves as above average or among the best in the U.S.

Happiness:

77% disagreed that they may have been happier if they had not entered graduate school.

Usefulness of degree:

86% intend to put their degree to full use.

UNLV:

85% are happy with UNLV in general.

Guilt:

31% feel either somewhat or very guilty for attending graduate school.

Professors:

81% do not agree with the statement "Male professors don't really take female graduate students as seriously as male students."

Pressures:

38% have felt some pressure not to combine motherhood with their career.
Economic Independence:
88% feel that economic independence is crucial to a woman's autonomy.

Getting ahead:
61% think most men are willing to let women get ahead as long as women still do all the housework at home.

Parental support for academic goals:
79% had supportive fathers and 86.5% had support from their mothers.

Currently Employed: 88%
full-time=74%  part-time=26%
87% consider their job part of their career.

Occupation: (of those currently employed)
38.7%  Teachers
12.0%  Graduate Assistants
08.5%  Nursing/Medical
03.5%  Financial Analyst
03.0%  Counselor
04.0%  Administrator
02.0%  College Instructor
02.0%  Social worker
02.8%  Managerial
23.5%  Other/misc.

Average Yearly Individual income: $20,000-29,999 (category)

Student/Employee Role Conflict: 11% said they had no role conflict

Of the 89% who stated that they did have role conflict, the following types were cited:
67.8%  Not enough time
15.9%  Excessive expectations of others, job, school

Causes for this conflict were given as:
19.4%  Time (only 24hrs. in a day)
80.6%  Others (job, work, school)

Strategies for resolving this conflict:
92%  Self-oriented
08%  Other-oriented (role-bargaining)

Marital Status:
44.7%  Married (once only)
13.7%  Married (remarried)
1.7%  Married (separated)
23.2%  Single (never married)
15.7%  Single (divorced)
1.1%  Single (widowed)

Re: husbands
81.7% agreed or strongly agreed that they received emotional support for their academic work from their husbands.
9% felt their husbands made them feel guilty about attending graduate school.
62.8% have asked their husbands to share the work at home more equitably.

Student/Wife Role Conflict:
18%  No role conflict

Of the 82% who stated that they did have role conflict, the following types were cited:
60.0%  Not enough time
40.0%  Excessive expectations of others, job, school

Causes for this conflict were given as:
21.8%  Time (only 24hrs. in a day)
58.3%  Others (job, work, school)
19.9%  Self ("I'm driven, a perfectionist", etc.)

Strategies for resolving this conflict:
59.7%  Self-oriented
40.3%  Other-oriented (role-bargaining)

Have Children: 51.7%

Average Number of Children: 2

85% Lower their housecleaning standards while in school.
94.6% agreed with the statement "Men need to share the responsibilities of childcare and housework more equitably with their wives.
58% felt that the accomplishments of the women's rights movement have made it easier for them to combine family, career, and education.

Student/Mother Role Conflict:
23%  No role conflict

Of the 77% who stated that they did have role conflict, the following types were cited:
62%  Not enough time
38%  Excessive expectations of others

Causes for this conflict were given as:
21.8%  Time (only 24hrs. in a day)
64.1%  Others (job, work, school)
14.1%  Self
Strategies for resolving this conflict:
73.6% Self-oriented
26.4% Other-oriented (role-bargaining)

Range in Age of Respondents:
21-65 (R=44)

Average Age of Respondents:
Mean= 35.184 Median=34 Mode=26

Age categories: 21-29 yrs. 29.6%
30-39 yrs. 38.4%
40-49 yrs. 26.9%
50-65 yrs. 5.1%

Political Characterization:
.2% Radical Left
4.3% Left
22.9% Liberal
41.5% Moderate
29.3% Conservative
1.5% Right
.2% Radical Right

Raised in a particular religion: 84%
Active member of a religion today: 47.7%

Mother had graduate or professional degree: 7.9%
Father had graduate or professional degree: 18.1%

Belong to Professional Groups: 43%
Belong to Feminist Groups: 10%

Gender Ideology:* 
Very Traditional 8.7%
Somewhat Traditional 40.6%
Transitional 13.3%
Somewhat Egalitarian 21.7%
Very Egalitarian 15.7%

*(Applies only to those who are married; N=286)