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WOMEN AND WORK IN TRANSITION:  
THEIR WORK PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL  
CLASS, SEX ROLE AND POLITICAL  
ATTITUDES, AND ALIENATION

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**WOMEN AND WORK IN TRANSITION: THEIR WORK PARTICIPATION,  
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ALIENATION**

*University of New Hampshire*

**PH.D. 1981**

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WOMEN AND WORK IN TRANSITION:  
THEIR WORK PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL CLASS,  
SEX ROLE AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES,  
AND ALIENATION

BY

Lawrence Allen Rosenberg  
B.A., Beloit College, 1971  
M.A., University of New Hampshire, 1975

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire  
in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Sociology

December, 1981

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Lawrence Allen Rosenberg

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

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*December 4, 1981*

Date

To the memory of my grandmother,

Bella Berlin Hardy

1889-1976

whose life spanned 8 decades of  
the transition of women and work in America

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been a long time in coming and has been affected, altered, and transformed even before the first words were written on paper. My decision to become a sociologist was primarily influenced by Don Summers at Beloit College, whose comment on my first sociology term paper, suggesting that I had the makings of a sociologist, had the effect of transforming an interest into a career. My interest was reinforced by such people as Menno Froese, Chuck Curtis, and Warner Mills, who added their insights and encouraged my desire to know more about the field of sociology. The amount and quality of my interaction with them, which, in undergraduate education, could rarely take place outside of a small liberal arts college, encouraged the breadth of my interests in sociology.

Walter Buckley and Dick Dewey have had the greatest influence on my years of graduate school. I am indebted to them both for their support with this dissertation and for contributing to my maturation as a sociologist. Walter Buckley is widely known for his work in modern systems theory and its application to sociology, and shared with me his enthusiasm for this and many other diverse fields. He is the kind of person who takes time to discuss current issues in social theory, computer technology, methods, and other areas, inside and outside the classroom. The graduate students were always able to draft him for a celebration at

Hannon's Saloon or at his own house.

I want to especially thank Dick Dewey who provided a model for me to emulate not only as a sociologist, but as a teacher and a person. He also taught me a lot about the patience required for repairing old cars and the virtues of owning them. He never doubted my wisdom and always treated me as a colleague (although I cannot recall winning an argument with him). I have benefitted greatly from his encouragement, his gift of teaching, and his ability to help develop the proper attitude necessary for doing research in sociology.

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The most important influence on my work and life has been my wife Pam. Few sociologists are fortunate enough to live with another, especially one who is also a computer freak, methodologist, statistician, editor, word processor operator, mechanic, and fellow old car lover.

Nothing seems to come easily in life, and this seems to be the case with being a sociologist. The joy and relief of finishing the dissertation will only be surpassed by getting a job in the field. Today's chances for this must be weighed in relation to a job market that is quickly reducing the number of academic positions to keep up with low college enrollments and even fewer students who want to study or major in sociology. I take solace in knowing that I am not alone in this predicament, and I shall forever be competing with a post-war birth cohort that will always be struggling for a part of the job market, housing space, and later on for social security benefits, just as we did for a place in college and graduate school. The few of us who stay in sociology are those who had the endurance, dedication, and luck to continue in a field whose rewards, while certainly not monetary, are great.



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ABSTRACT

WOMEN AND WORK IN TRANSITION:  
THEIR WORK PARTICIPATION, SOCIAL CLASS,  
SEX ROLE AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES,  
AND ALIENATION

by

LAWRENCE A. ROSENBERG

University of New Hampshire, December, 1981

The focus of this dissertation is the transition of American women's economic positions during the last two centuries. Women's participation in the economy has developed from that of the preindustrial period, in which women were primarily partners in an agricultural economy, through several stages during the development of industrialism and urbanism, when most women were housewives, to the present situation in which over 50% of women are active participants in the labor force of an advanced industrial economy. This transition has been characterized not just by increasing numbers and changing characteristics of women participating in the work force, but by interrelationships between this participation and the social and economic forces of a dynamic social system.

Historical and survey analyses are combined in this dissertation in order to detail the social and economic processes to which women have been subjected up to the present. In keeping with this dynamic orientation, a

systems analysis of relationships between change in women's participation in the labor force and major social, political, and economic events and ideologies of the last two centuries is presented. In addition, the dissertation includes examination of the attitudes and feelings of contemporary employed women and housewives, in order to reach conclusions on the present condition of women in America. A contemporary assessment of the relationships between the work experience and women's attitudes and feelings is made by comparing characteristics of women who work and women who keep house, using the 1978 NORC GSS data.

Three main sets of relationships are examined: between background variables and women's work participation; between women's background characteristics and their sex role and political attitudes and alienation, with and without controlling for work participation; and between the social class (both objectively and subjectively defined) of working women and their sex role and political attitudes and alienation. It is found that women's work participation is related to many demographic characteristics. It is also shown that differences in women's attitudes concerning active participation by females in the political and economic systems, in their attitudes related to many socio-political issues, and in their alienation, are related to their own participation in the employment sector and to certain other social characteristics.

## INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the 1970's will be remembered in sociology as the decade in which women emerged as a new focus of attention for research. More research on women, by women, and for women has occurred during this decade than at any previous time in history. Why did sociology only recently heighten its interest in exploring the concerns of women in our society? Certainly the sexual revolution of the 1960's led to a raising of the general consciousness of both men and women to inequalities in jobs and family responsibilities that exist between the sexes. In the 1970's America took a wide range of steps to try to change old world notions and stereotypes of female positions in society. The early image forming media of the primary school reader and other elementary school texts have been undergoing change to adopt an image of a more equal partnership between men and women in society and to try to present women in various occupations outside the home, especially in professional and skilled craft jobs.

The decade saw significantly more women in the political arena holding important State and Federal government positions. During the 1970's, Ella Grasso of Connecticut and Dixie Lee Ray of Washington won their state elections for the Governorship, Nancy Katzenbaum was elected as a senator from Kansas and Dianne Feinstein and Jane Byrne were elected mayors of two of the largest cities in America

(San Francisco and Chicago), and in 1981 Kathy Whitmire was elected mayor of Houston. Finally, also in 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor of Arizona became the first woman appointed to serve on the Supreme Court. In the 1970's and 1980's more women ran for political offices at the local level, and they are winning more elections than ever before. In addition, women have increased their participation in political campaigns and their voter turnout over the last 30 years to the point where they now approach equal levels with men (Anderson, 1975; Welch, 1977).

The discussion of women's positions in society has accelerated as a result of the proposed adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution. Concerns about the rights of women in society have led to greater demands on the legal and political community to begin to cater to the needs of women who are no longer content to take the role of housekeeper as their master status. Growing concerns over discrimination in hiring and in job assignments, and over pay differentials, have been the main focus of many women's organizations, which seek to make the transition of women from housewives to employed workers smoother. Many women, charged with the responsibility of taking care of young children yet wanting a job, have pressed for a greater sharing of child care responsibilities within the family and, outside the family, for an increase in the number of day care centers.

Women and women's groups have used the law and the

courts to further legal and social change. A stronger effort has been made in many communities to deal with wife beating by the funding of safe houses for battered women who seek shelter and a place to get away from abusers. Women have made the greatest impact on the area of law by drawing attention to the crime of rape and the need to change society's image of the rapist and the victim. The introduction into the legal and medical professions of specialists who deal with problems particular to rape has led to a criminal justice system which, at least in theory, deals more humanely with the victim and more harshly with the criminal. These changes in the system have helped to increase the number of committed rapes being reported, by lessening the stigma for women who are victims of such crimes, and at the same time have helped the legal establishment apprehend and prosecute sex offenders.

Legal changes dealing with the rights of married and divorced women are also being made. Women can now share equally in the establishment of credit as well as in any debt for which the family may be liable. Divorce settlements are becoming more equitable, with, for example, alimony payments often being decided on the basis of which spouse is the larger wage earner in the family, rather than an automatic payment being made by the husband to the wife. While problems still remain in the area of child support and custody, various forms of joint custody are now becoming more acceptable for divorced couples in American society,



and the norm includes contact by both parents.

Cases dealing with sex discrimination by businesses and colleges have been a prominent feature in the courts over the last decade. Suits for discrimination in hiring, promoting, and pay have been brought against telephone and telegraph systems, banks, television stations, factories, and corporations, and against Tufts, Boston, Duke, and Rutgers Universities (Hirsch, 1979:xx), as well as Cornell and Harvard Universities and the University of New Hampshire.

In addition, women have used the courts to change university policy in the area of sports. Under Title IX, female athletes are entitled to similar athletic facilities, instructors, and athletic scholarships as those granted men in the same university. Women's sports programs have been growing, but not without a great amount of pressure applied by Federal and State officials to encourage universities to speed up this process. Continued involvement by the government on issues like these is not guaranteed and women may have to apply other kinds of pressure to insure progress in these areas.

Language is another area in which women have been making changes; some have tried to change the American language through the use of terms such as 'Ms.' and 'person', and the elimination or restriction of use of others such as 'girl', 'Miss', and 'man'. Many women are no longer content to accept their identification based upon

their father's or spouse's status: increasing numbers of women have begun to retain their maiden names after marrying, and some combine their maiden name with their husband's name.

Despite the widespread impact of changing women's roles and attitudes on society, law, and language, the mass media have been slow to change. Radio and television have taught boys and girls, side by side with parental instruction, to accept certain culturally approved groupways and practices. The mass media may rarely have the impact on children that family members do, but they help the social scientist in identifying some commonly held gender stereotypes accepted not only by advertisers and mass media executives, but by a large portion of the audience (Johns-Heine, 1949; Makosky, 1966; Flora, 1971; Franzwa, 1974; Philips, 1978; Brown, 1978, 1981).

Researchers of the media indicate that women are greatly underrepresented on television screens and have been since the earliest days of broadcasting. When women are shown on television they are usually cast as characters in situation comedies or as sex objects, to bolster the ratings. According to Gaye Tuchman (1978:11) "the paucity of women on American television tells viewers that women don't matter much in American society". In the 1980's some headway has been made in casting women in positions not traditionally occupied by them. On almost every police, detective, and action drama, a woman is now a regular member

of the crime fighting team. Women are rarely portrayed, however, as doctors, lawyers, or managers, or in other high level professional careers, except in supporting roles in entry level positions such as trainee or intern. One noticeable change is that it now seems to be established practice to have at least one woman per newscast on local television stations, even in very small markets in rural areas. These women are no longer relegated to giving the weather, but are, for the most part, anchorwomen. While these newswomen still appear to be tokens, they are shown in a more realistic representation than are most female characters in their television roles.

It appears that this image has been changing the most rapidly in the printed media. Magazines which publish for a more selective audience than that for which prime time television broadcasts have been quicker to respond to an increasingly large female work force in order to capture specialized advertising revenues. By the late 1970's traditional women's magazines, such as Women's Day and Family Circle, were including more articles on working women. For many women this was not enough. More special interest magazines were rushed to print in 1979 under the titles of Working Women, Working Mother, and Argosy, all to serve the new American community of working women.

As women have made the transition from housewife to employee, sociologists have taken a greater interest in women and the problems they face in leaving traditional

sex-linked positions. Sociological studies in the past took a stereotypic view of the differences between men and women. The main thrust of most studies, especially in the area of social stratification, was to see a man's assignment as that of breadwinner and provider for the family as the major factor in determining the social class of his family and its relationship to the rest of the world. Traditionally the work of women has been in the home providing for the care and maintenance of the family, and, although women have always had a part in the American economic system, their participation has been largely ignored by social science research.

Despite the growth of women's participation in the work force, traditional values concerning 'a woman's place', i.e. traditional sex role values, have not died. The strongly held belief in woman as mother and housekeeper is still adhered to by less educated, unskilled, lower class females, even among those who work. Such characteristics are apparent when one realizes that most working women continue to do most of the cooking and cleaning, and are responsible for childcare in families whether both spouses work (Duncan and Duncan, 1978) or not (Oakley, 1974), and that working class husbands, in particular, refuse to help with housework (Rubin, 1976).

We hope in this dissertation to shed some light on the current expression of women's social and political attitudes in relation to their background characteristics, their

participation in the work force, and their social class. In this study we will reexamine a number of relationships between women's work participation and their demographic characteristics, attitudes, and feelings, in an attempt to confirm previous findings. In addition, major contributions of this research include, first, more comparisons of social characteristics of women who keep house and women who are employed. We will be able to examine on the same sample of women many variables which have been previously explored only a few at a time by various researchers using diverse samples.

Second, we will conduct an examination of women's responses to several items related to their approval of traditional female sex roles. This will include not only comparisons of sex role attitudes of women who work with women who keep house, but also analyses of relationships between women's background characteristics and their sex role attitudes. This study will, in addition, extend the number of sex role attitude items which have been examined by researchers of women. Third, in this dissertation we will examine housewives' and working women's beliefs concerning a number of socio-political issues, a substantive area which to date has been neglected by researchers of women. Relationships between these issues and women's background characteristics will also be discussed.

Fourth, we will be able to contribute to filling a gap in knowledge of women's alienation by examining the

relationships between women's reactions to a number of items related to alienation and both their employment participation and many of their social characteristics. Finally, a fifth major contribution of our analyses is a set of comparisons of working women of different social classes on their sex role attitudes, political attitudes, and alienation. This is a significant step toward treating women on an equal basis with men, for while most sociological research concerning men makes distinctions between their occupational classes, to date most research on women has made primary distinctions between working and not working, and treated women who work as a homogeneous group.

To the ends discussed above, the dissertation will be organized in the following chapters. In Chapter I, we briefly describe how women have been treated in the economic system of America, from the Colonial period to the present, including discussion of how the position of women in the economic system is related to the prevalent values and beliefs of people in various periods. The historical description touches a large number of bases but keeps short the discussions of some matters of historical importance. We note when possible some works the reader may want to investigate for further historical details.

In Chapter II we invite the reader to understand modern systems theory and how it may offer a very important theoretical perspective for understanding the relationships between change in women's labor force participation and

'appropriate' female roles. We believe that understanding of the contemporary state of women's participation in the work force is enhanced by realization of the dynamic interactions which have led up to the current situation, and thus consider the systems perspective presented to be one of the main contributions of the dissertation. It should be noted that, while data appropriate to a systems analysis are not readily available, the examination in this dissertation of static data is not contrary to the systems perspective, as it adds to the knowledge concerning progressive periods of time.

Chapter III offers a rather complete and up to date review of recent research relating women's work participation, women's social and political attitudes, and their feelings of alienation, with certain background and social standing variables. There may be, of course, some oversights and omissions attributable to materials of which the author was unaware. Barring these possible omissions, the review of the literature illustrates the major research themes being examined in this dissertation.

Chapter IV describes the administration of and data from the National Opinion Research Center General Social Survey, which was used in this dissertation. In addition we detail the choice of questions and creation of scales used in this research, the limitations of the data, and the choice of method of analysis.

In Chapter V we examine the 1978 NORC data, in order to

both describe the contemporary state of affairs and make comparisons with previous research findings. The chapter is organized into several parts, describing first the relationships between background variables and women's work participation, next the relationships between women's background characteristics and work participation and their social and political attitudes and alienation and, finally, relationships between the social class of working women and their social and political attitudes and alienation.

We expect to find in the first set of analyses that women who work will differ from women who keep house on a number of background variables, such that employed women will be more likely than housewives to have higher levels of education and more highly educated family members; to have mothers who worked, either while the respondent was growing up or ever; to have fewer children, and, especially, fewer preschoolers; to have grown up in a smaller family; to be younger; to be unmarried; to live in urban areas; to have independent or Democratic political affiliation; to not live in the South; to be non-Catholic; to have lower strength of religious feelings; and to have less frequent attendance at religious services.

In the second set of analyses we expect to find that working women will be more likely than women who keep house to have egalitarian attitudes towards female sex roles; to be politically liberal; and to not be alienated. In addition, in this section we expect to find that the



measures of sex role attitudes, political attitudes, and alienation will be related to many of the background variables such that those values which accompany the likelihood of women working will also be associated with more egalitarian sex role attitudes, with political liberalism, and with lower alienation.

Finally, in the third part of the analyses, we expect to find that white collar or nonmanual working women will be more likely than blue collar or manual working women to profess egalitarianism concerning female sex roles, to feel politically moderate or conservative, and to not be alienated. We expect, in addition, that there will be no difference in these relationships whether we use objective or subjective measures of social class.

In the conclusion, Chapter VI, we assess the study's findings in the light of past studies, discuss possible consequences of the increase of women's participation in the work force, and suggest new areas of research to be pursued.

It is appropriate at this time to clarify the use in this dissertation of certain terms which will be used throughout. Distinction between women who 'work' or 'keep house' was made on the basis of women's responses to the question "Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?" in the National Opinion Research Center General Social Survey. Those who responded that they worked, either full time or part time, are called 'working' or 'employed' in this dissertation, and

those who responded that they were 'keeping house' are called either 'keeping house' or 'housewives'. The use of these terms is intended to allow distinction between women who do or do not hold employment, i.e., who are or are not considered to be members of the labor force, and is in no way meant to connote that women who keep house do not work. Where 'work' denotes any other meaning, it should be clear from the context, as in "women's work in the home...".

The term 'role' has been abused and misconstrued in both social science and popular literature. 'Role' can be used ambiguously, as it has many meanings (Dewey, 1969), including the theatrical meaning as well as its use to describe the behavior either expected of a particular person or of anyone occupying a given position. In our use of the term 'sex role', we mean to convey expected behavior either prescribed for a person of a specific gender or associated with a position which is generally filled by a person of a specific gender.

Finally, the words 'liberal' and 'conservative' have several meanings. When we use the word 'liberal' in this dissertation, we denote a political philosophy which encompasses beliefs in progress and in the protection of civil liberties, among other things. We do not mean that a person who is 'liberal' has been trained or schooled in a liberal arts education, or that a person is generous to his friends. When we use the term 'conservative' we are talking about someone who has a political philosophy which stresses,

among other things, social stability based on traditionalism and the support of established institutions, and who takes a more laissez-faire approach to economic and social welfare issues.

In summary, the emphasis in the dissertation is to present three important phases in the transition of women's economic positions in the last two centuries, from agricultural working partners, to 'idle' housewives, to active participants in the labor force. The reintroduction of women into the work life of America has been occurring since the turn of this century and has been accelerated by the events of World War II and subsequent postwar economic and societal changes. We make a contemporary assessment of the relationship between the work experience and women's attitudes and feelings by comparing characteristics of two sets of women from a 1978 national sample, those who work and those who keep house. If the trend of the increasing entry of women into the work force continues we can expect to find the attitudes held by working women to become more prevalent. If women should ever reach a point of participation equal in proportion to that of men, across all occupations, we might find a social system with more egalitarian marriages and work environments, which will undoubtedly lead to greater understanding of and cooperation between the sexes.

## CHAPTER I

### WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

#### The Emergence and Growth of the Female Labor Force

The process of industrialization has been accompanied by a greater participation by women in both the political and economic systems. By examining the differences between women's early positions in the American economic system and their positions in the 1980's, by identifying the dominant socio-cultural ideas of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and by delineating the effects of significant technological innovations and certain historical events on both the positions and the ideas, we can offer some explanation of the changing amounts of female participation in the labor force.

During the nineteenth century, America was mostly rural, and agricultural production was a major part of this country's early economy. Husbands and wives were not paid wages for their work, but produced the needed commodities for the family by working together on the farm. The importance of the family as a primary economic unit was constant throughout the 1800's as the majority of Americans lived in rural areas. Today, as a result of the industrial revolution, we distinguish between a person who works and one who doesn't work on the basis of earning a wage or salary, usually outside the home, and ignore work that was

traditionally done at home for no remuneration in an agricultural economy. This kind of 'home-work' is being more fully explored by social scientists in the 1970's and 1980's who are examining the contribution made by all working women, whether directly paid or not, to the family and the American socioeconomic system (Oakley,1974; Zick,1981).

According to Blau (1978) women have participated in and been an important part of the American economy since its inception. Many of the jobs held by females were jobs that related to women's domestic responsibilities in the colonial home. For example, she explained how women did spinning and weaving work in the home which was then sold to merchants under a commission system. The births of many female occupations were initially stimulated by sharp rises in the demand for specific products or services. Some of the earliest work that women did at home was for shoe manufacturers. The first heavy demand for women laborers came during the American Revolution with the need for ready made boots for the army (Abbott,1969). By the 1790's the stitching and binding of leather for the construction of shoes was known as a women's industry. It was not until the late 1850's with the advent of the sewing machine that women felt they could no longer participate in the same kind of work: because the early sewing machines were bulky and hard to operate, and because they were placed in a factory setting, this became defined as work that men should do

(Baxandall et al.,1976:51). (By 1979 shoe stitching had apparently become redefined as women's work: 77.3% of shoe making machine operatives were women (U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980a:A-23).)

When the first textile factories were created women and female children, with experience from weaving in the home, made up the new work force to run the looms for cloth production. It appears that there was no male backlash towards women who took a job in an industrial setting at this time in American history. By the turn of the nineteenth century, America was moving toward an urban expansion. In this early capitalist setting women and children were useful allies to industrial entrepreneurs who sought a cheap labor supply that was untapped and unorganized.

Women also worked in family businesses, which were usually in the home, in the growing cities of the early nineteenth century. This early American business world involved everyone in the family. However, as factories and businesses began to grow in the cities and require more workers in locations outside the home, families had increasingly segmented lives. The male members of the family became divorced from the home, leaving the women and children. Women whose family businesses ceased to exist because their husbands went to work in industry found themselves without much of their own work, excluded from the production process, and confined to housework and child

care. In rural areas, the house tasks done by women were valued because they were deemed important to the family's survival. In the cities, these same tasks were not considered as important as the man's employment status, which, alone, provided the family's food and shelter, and thus women's (home) work in the nineteenth century urban centers was devalued (Wilson,1979).

In the 1800's a new urban middle class emerged that was to change the role of women. Members of the middle class lived in the big cities of the East and made their wealth from commerce. The increased affluence of many middle class urban families led to changes in the expected behavior of women in these families, as the wealth obtained by the middle class in the industrial revolution allowed them to copy the life style of the upper classes. The 'idle' wife became a symbol of a husband's success in the middle class. The fact that middle class woman did not have to work for pay only widened the division between them and working class women.

At the same time, the economic value of children was declining. Where in the rural environment children were regarded as economic assets, in the urban areas children were considered to be economic liabilities. The recognition of childhood and adolescence as important to the socialization and development of the individual was being encouraged among the upper classes and emulated by the urban middle classes. This new emphasis on childhood created new

demands for parents to rear, protect, and educate their offspring for longer periods of time. As the change in economic responsibility in the family progressed, the child rearing responsibilities became more the duty of mothers (the 'idle' wives at home) to perform than fathers (Wilson,1979). Within this emerging middle class, women became separated from men and the world of work and money. Middle class women were confined to their homes, where they were relegated to performing the tasks of cooking, cleaning, making clothing and other household goods, and taking care of the children. As a result of the industrial changes in nineteenth century America, what women did in their homes was no longer deemed as important as the work that men performed for money.

The rise of the industrial revolution was accompanied by low numbers of women in the work force. Few women in the late 1800's had strenuous jobs or jobs that required a lot of technical expertise. In general the jobs available to women were very low paying and offered little opportunity for advancement. Most of the women who did work outside the house in the 1800's worked in the cities, and were single women from poor or working class backgrounds. It was the young single female immigrants who found work in newly automated linen and cigar making industries (Abbott,1969).

By 1890 only 5% of the married women in America had jobs outside the home. This does not mean, however, that married women did not contribute to the economy during the



nineteenth century. They did, but the types of work that they engaged in were done in the confines of the home and were not included in many census counts of the 1800's (Wilson,1979; Smuts,1959:23). Women who worked at home took in boarders, did laundry, or did sewing and mending to earn money. Married women also supplemented the family's need for extra money by keeping livestock and poultry, and by growing fruits and vegetables in home gardens which could after harvesting be preserved, pickled, canned, and baked for consumption by the family.

While most married women were housewives, there were major exceptions in New England and the South. In the South it was fairly common to see black women working as field hands or as domestic servants, work that black women had customarily done under slavery (Smuts,1959:10,56).

Throughout the latter part of the 1800's and the early 1900's, the number of working married black women exceeded the number of married white women who were working for pay. The reason so many black women sought employment can be attributed to the fact that black men were not able to obtain very high incomes (Blau,1978:34) and to the preponderance of black women heading households.

Women in New England participated by working in the textile industry from its inception around the early 1800's. Initially this work was done by native born females, but by 1850 most of the women working in the mills were first or second generation immigrants from French Canada or Ireland.

Wages in most textile mills were extremely low and the labor supply plentiful. The mill towns in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine created conditions where it was necessary for all members of a family, including children, to work in the mills. (For a detailed discussion of women's work in the mills, see Dublin, 1979.)

Women who had gone to school and received a modest education (usually considered to be an eighth grade level) could find a good job in teaching. About a quarter of a million women in 1890 were employed as schoolteachers, which was a big opportunity for women who desired a career outside the home. Even so, this occupation was primarily for single women, as women who were teachers and got married usually gave up the job to become middle class housewives. For a long time this was the best job a single woman who aspired to middle class status could hope to obtain. But even here, in the one bright spot for women to achieve success, the economic rewards were lacking because there was a surplus of women with the same skills and desires needed for teaching. As a result of the vast number of women wanting to teach, the salary for women teachers was half of what a male might have received (Smuts, 1959:20).

The plight of the school teachers was well illustrated at a state teacher's convention in Rochester, N.Y., in 1852. The Assembly listened to male teachers complain about the low status of their profession. Why weren't teachers being treated with the same respect given doctors and lawyers?

Susan B. Anthony was at that meeting and delivered this answer:

It seems to me, gentlemen, that none of you quite comprehend the cause of the disrespect of which you complain. Do you not see that as long as society says a woman is incompetent to be a lawyer, minister, doctor, but has ample ability to be a teacher, that every man of you who chooses this profession tacitly acknowledges that he has no more brains than a woman. And this too is the reason that teaching is less a lucrative profession, as here men must compete with the cheap labor of women (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978:115).

Anthony rightly assumed that as long as women were viewed as inferior they would be exploited and paid less for work than men were, and her point that occupations with low pay and status are that way when women make up a large portion of the employees in that occupation is still true today. Any real change in wages for women may be severely hampered until women have equal access to all jobs that are considered to be for men only.

In the 1890's nursing was also seen as appropriate for females, but there was no great concern about its lack of prestige because it was generally voluntary charitable work, and thus not considered an occupation in the same way as teaching was. Except for the areas of teaching and nursing, men typically dominated all professional occupations at the turn of the twentieth century.

By the late 1890's the industrial cities began to form an environment that was conducive to the growth of a less restricted life style for middle class women. Housework was diminished by mass production of clothing and prepared food, by the inventions of household appliances, and by the

installation of indoor plumbing (which eliminated the task of hauling water). Women had had few options other than marriage, but the cities allowed singlehood to be a respectable and readily available option. While there was no place for single women in rural areas, in urban areas there was the availability of both boarding houses (with no housework required of the women) and jobs appropriate for middle class women in such varied places as restaurants, department stores, laundries, and beautysshops (Wilson,1979). Thus single and, to a lesser extent, married, middle class women in the cities found both more freedom from the home and 'proper' jobs available outside the home.

At the same time that young single women were migrating to the cities looking for a more independent and affluent life style, the amount of correspondence, record keeping, and office work in general was rising at a staggering rate. In order to fill the demand for clerical workers, businesses turned to a growing sector of educated women underutilized in the labor force. In 1900 56,808 females had high school degrees compared to 38,075 males, yet most of them were unable to find suitable jobs with high pay (Baxandall et al.,1976:233). Since women were excluded from most industry jobs and professions, the opportunity to enter office work was very attractive. It did not take long for women to discover this new job opportunity. In 1880 only 4% of the clerical work force was made up of women, but by 1920, women comprised over half of all clerical workers (Baxandall,

1976:234).

Another reason for the influx of women to office work can be attributed to the invention of the typewriter. In as much as the typewriter was a new invention it was not identified as either a man's or woman's job, and thus it became a 'sex neutral' job. "When Phil Remington introduced the typewriter to the public in 1873, he hired women demonstrators. Called typewriters themselves, the women created a sensation. Business firms that bought the machines wanted the women operators themselves" (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978:303). By the 1890's the typewriter was being widely used in office work, and became the preferred tool for business communication and for record keeping. (Of course the increase in correspondence and record keeping was probably caused in part by the existence of the machine itself.) The typewriter has to an enormous extent helped to bring women into the clerical labor force.

There are also two other factors that contributed to an increase in the number of women who went to work in offices. First, women did not encounter attacks by men that they were taking over a 'man's job', and second, men did not immediately try to compete for this new job because they had many opportunities to find work in a myriad of other high paying occupations. Clerical work attracted a lot of women because it paid much better money than most of the jobs a woman could get at that time. In many large cities in the 1890's clerical wages were as high as \$15 a week, or double

the highest wage for department store clerks and factory workers, and triple the weekly earnings of domestic servants (Baxandall et al., 1976:234). Clerical workers also attained a higher level of social status, most likely due to the high wage differentials that were created between office workers and females in other occupations.

Probably the largest factor that contributed to the vast number of women drawn to clerical work was the lack of other job opportunities requiring some degree of formal educational training. Women at this time were ostracized from participating in the main flow of industrial-managerial opportunities, and this occupation was the only one that was not biased by physical or emotional stereotypes thought to be necessary to perform the job. It should be pointed out that the takeover by women of the routine clerical tasks that had been men's work restructured business organizations by creating new managerial positions for men, thus increasing the status of the men's jobs. This, by comparison, decreased the status of the female clerks' work, widening the male-female status gap.

Just because women found new opportunities for higher paying work didn't mean that they were warmly accepted by the men with whom they worked. By the 1900's the desire of women to work became a major public issue. According to Blau (1978:33) the change in attitudes about women working outside the home seems to be related to the gradual decline of the supply of unsettled land in conjunction with a rising

influx of immigrants that provided a large supply of surplus wage laborers and shifted public attention toward providing jobs for men. However, this sophisticated argument was not usually given as a reason for why women should be kept from working. Instead, most arguments in the 1900's in support of keeping women at home and responsible for child care were derived from the dominant beliefs in the nineteenth century in the social and natural sciences that in temperament, physique, and mentality women were best suited for their functions as mothers and caretakers of the home.

One of the major influences that the country was exposed to in the late 1800's, which may have contributed to the country's temperament against permitting women to work, came from Europe in the form of new scientific developments and theories. European scientists began to offer biological explanations for almost all forms of social behavior. Charles Darwin (1859,1871) was instrumental in introducing this new thinking in the area of biological evolution, suggesting that mankind's evolutionary success was based on a process of natural selection among life forms on the planet. Those species that exist on the planet today exist at least partly because they were able to adapt to the changing environment better than other species that previously inhabited the earth. This theory was applied to societies by Herbert Spencer (1876) who believed that certain societies were superior to others due to their successful adaptation and triumph over other societies with

less sophisticated social structures (to use Spencer's term: 'survival of the fittest'). Such thinking was extended to substantiate men's superiority over women due to their greater physical strength.

Cesare Lombroso (1876) used a physiological theory to explain why certain members of Italian society turned to criminal behavior. It was his contention that criminals were atavistic to some earlier uncivilized man. He researched the physical characteristics of thousands of male prisoners in Italian jails, and developed a typology for identifying criminals. He found that criminals had elongated foreheads, large ears, and tattoos. Unfortunately, Lombroso did not measure the physical characteristics of the general population. It was not until 1913, when Dr. Goring, an English physician, conducted a systematic review of the physical characteristics of the general population, and found that there was no difference between them and Lombroso's criminal types, that Lombroso's theory was refuted.

Biological reasons for social behavior were also employed to explain why there were behavioral differences between men and women. This emphasis on a biological need for social differentiation helped to keep women from being employed. Primarily it was argued that women were not able to cope with the rigors and dangers of work because they lacked the physical and emotional strengths necessary for work. Smuts (1959:113) summarized the thinking of this era:



...if men and women were molded in such antithetical patterns, it seemed clear that the entire social order depended upon a precisely balanced adjustment of functions and relationships and that any disturbance of woman's position would topple the whole structure. In particular, the employment of women was viewed as a threat to moral standards to the economic foundation of the family, and to the self esteem of men.

In addition to the biological claims made against women being able to perform work outside the home, women were not employed in many occupations for social-psychological reasons.

Stereotypes concerning the sexes were perpetuated in part by the continued separation of the genders into distinct spheres. Men and women had little opportunity to interact during their lives, either in courtship or in other social activity, and any subjects even remotely related to sex (including the subject of differences or similarities between the genders) could not be discussed in mixed company. In as much as men and women could not learn about each other, there certainly was no chance for change in the system of distinctly defined gender roles.

This same thinking also prevailed in sociology, both in America and in Europe. Emile Durkheim, one of the founding fathers of sociology, advanced this functionalist point of view to justify various behavior patterns in a society. The functionalists have used the biological or organic model of system as a method for describing the complex operation of human societies. From a functionalist perspective, society is made up of subsystems, in the same way that the body is made up of various organs, muscles, nerves, cells, etc.,

each of which works in unison to keep the body in a state of equilibrium. If a part of the social system failed to work properly it would have the same consequences on a society that a malfunctioning organ would have on a body. In the event of an organ failure, other organs would also fail to function and the entire body would be doomed to extinction.

Durkheim, in his work The Division of Labor in Society (1892), suggested that the traditional sex role differences between men and women are most suitable to a well ordered society. Further evidence for the natural differences between the sexes came from Alfred Radcliffe-Browne (1948) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1932), two anthropologists, who used functionalism to explain the universality of family life. In their studies of primitive societies they found some form of family life to be omni-present and concluded that a family structure must be purposeful to the success of a social system. By making this conclusion they were suggesting that sex role differentiation is necessary for the functioning of a society.

Even as late as the 1940's Talcot Parsons (1949) and other contemporary functionalists were still emphasizing the need for role differentiation between husbands and wives. The care of children was relegated as a woman's duty due to her natural maternal propensities, and the designated role for the male was to get a job in order to financially support the family. Any deviation from the accepted behavior patterns for husbands and wives was believed to

lead to family problems, chaos, and social disorganization.

Whether a biological, psychological, or social reason was given for why women shouldn't work, the results were the same for those who wanted to work. The consensus in 1900 was that women had innate physical and emotional properties essential to the maintenance of the family. Yet, at the same time, it was believed that their instincts were weak enough to be corrupted by working in a man's environment. Even the Supreme Court, in a 1908 decision limiting the hours that a women could work, ruled that the ten hour workday was likely to leave a woman's higher instincts (the virtuous and maternal ones) dulled, resulting in an increase in and desire for excitement and sexual pleasure (Hymowitz and Weissman,1978).

Finally, the large scale employment of women in the labor force was seen as a threat to men and their position in society. Not only were men threatened by women taking over their jobs, but also by the changing standard that women could enjoy the same freeing aspects of work that men had. The fears of being controlled by a member of the opposite sex, of losing decision making power both at home and at work, and of the possibility of equal pay for equal work were strongly felt by men who were concerned that they might lose their position of dominance.

This prevailing viewpoint was slow to change, even among scientists, but eventually, through changes in technology, two World Wars, increased literacy among women,

and a dwindling labor supply coupled with rapidly expanding industrial concerns in need of cheap, plentiful laborers, women were drawn and accepted into the labor force in increasing numbers.

The record of female participation in the labor force shows a slowly increasing rate of increase since 1870:

TABLE I.1: Women in the Labor Force 1870-1980

<u>Year</u>	<u># in millions</u>	<u>% of all workers</u>	<u>% of female population</u>
1870	---	----	14.7
1890	3.7	17.0	18.2
1900	5.0	18.1	20.0
1920	8.2	20.4	22.7
1930	10.3	21.9	23.6
1940	13.7	25.4	28.9
1945	19.2	36.1	38.1
1950	18.3	29.6	33.9
1955	20.5	31.6	35.7
1960	23.2	33.4	37.7
1965	26.2	35.2	39.2
1970	31.5	38.1	43.3
1975	36.9	39.9	46.3
1980	44.2	42.4	51.4

Note: 1870 figures include women ten years of age and over; 1890-1940 figures include women fourteen years of age and over; other years include women sixteen and over.

Sources: U.S.Dept. of Labor, 1969:10; Wilson, 1979:6; U.S.Dept. of Labor, 1980b:2.

Many of the census techniques used before 1930 have been subjected to criticism for their inaccuracy on the grounds that they excluded and undercounted various minority segments in the population. Many women in the labor force, it is feared, were just not counted. Inconsistencies from count to count severely jeopardized comparability of census data (see Wilson, 1979, for examples). By 1940, with gradual

improvements in counting and a broader definition of labor force status, a more accurate accounting of all working people was accomplished (Blau,1978).

The pattern of discrimination against working women did not change much in the early twentieth century. Working women continued to be paid very low wages, segregated in female jobs, and treated by businesses as temporary workers. World War I was not accompanied by a surge in female workers; only 5% of the women working during the War were first time workers. While the status and pay of women did see some increase from working women moving into some higher level positions formerly held by men, the women went back to their original jobs with the return of the men from the War.

Between 1920 and 1940 the numbers (see Table I.1) and kinds of women who worked remained almost constant. Only a quarter of the female population held paying jobs, and a majority of them were young and single. During the Depression women were more likely to be secretaries, file clerks, saleswomen, waitresses, or hairdressers than they were to be household and factory workers. Due to an expanding white collar and service sector of the economy after World War I and restrictive immigration laws in the 1920's, businesses could not be assured of a steady amount of new immigrants to fill their labor requirements. There were also not enough well trained and educated males to move up in the ranks of white collar work, and those who were promoted to higher levels in the expanding

corporations. It was because of these factors that middle class, better educated, white women were able to enter more so-called 'white collar' office jobs.

Women were hit very severely by the Depression. Many who were employed found their jobs terminated: first garment and textile work employees, and later women in white collar office and sales jobs. Once out of work, single women found it harder than men to get their old jobs back or find new ones. Even though women as a group faced increasing unemployment, the proportion of married women in the work force increased from 11.7% to 15.2% during the Depression (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978:306). It is likely that many wives had been forced to look for work because their husbands were laid off, and many employers may have made hiring decisions to accommodate these women whom they knew needed whatever money they could earn to help support an entire family. In addition, many employers undoubtedly saw advantages to hiring a new group of women, whom they could pay less than they could men or females who had more seniority.

Married women were prohibited, by the laws of 26 states, from being employed in some occupations. At the Federal level, between the years 1932 and 1937, it was against the law for more than one family member to be working in a civil service job. This meant that women were discriminated against in getting a government job. Many women circumvented laws designed to exclude married women

from work by removing their wedding bands. Any woman who held a job during the Depression was still suspected of stealing a job from a man and faced harassment from unemployed males.

The tragic events of World War II had a dramatic effect on the work force in America. Large numbers of women were recruited to work in the mills, steel and rubber plants, shipyards, and other kinds of manual jobs as many men gave up their civilian jobs in order to join the military. Women comprised 12% of the shipyard workers, 40% of the aircraft plant employees, and made up a large portion of the workers in the steel, electrical, and automobile industries (Hymowitz & Weissman, 1978:312). When the War ended in 1945 many women left their wartime jobs and returned to household work and raising families so that many male War veterans could return to their old jobs. "Such companies as IBM and Detroit Edison resurrected their prewar policy against hiring married women. By the end of 1946 two million women had been fired from heavy industry" (Hymowitz and Weissman, 1978:314). Participation of women in the work force resumed its prewar levels and did not reach wartime levels again until the sixties.

Between 1940 and 1980 the percentage of women workers increased from 25% to over 50% of the female population (see Table I.1, above). As female labor force participation has increased there has also been a shift in the types of women who are employed outside the home. Before 1940 the labor

market was dominated by women who were young and single. By the 1950's a new trend had emerged: older married women were entering or reentering the labor force in increasingly higher numbers (Smith,1979).

Oppenheimer (1970) attributed this trend to an expanding service sector of the economy during the late 1940's, which continued into the 1950's. At the same time the traditional single female employee was marrying earlier and having children sooner than in the past. As a result of these postwar shifts there was a decrease in the supply of young single females at a time when service industries were expanding. Oppenheimer suggested that employers went to older, married women to fill the needed jobs, which explains why the last thirty years show very large increases in the work rates of older women. The percent of women in the work force who were married and living with their husbands rose from 21.6% in 1950 to 30.5% in 1960 and 40.8% in 1970, and by 1979 had reached the level of 49.4% (U.S.Dept. of Labor, 1980b:Table 5).

Another reason given for the dramatic changes in the amounts of female workers is the rise in the level of education attained by women. According to Duberman (1975:91),

Female participation in the labor market increased as a result of the new stress on education for women, which made the traditional role of wife and mother less attractive and less satisfying. College stimulate[d] intellectual interests, and many college educated women [were] not content to devote their lives exclusively to home and children.



During the late 1960's and 1970's America saw the greatest acceleration in the labor force among married women with children under age six. In just 19 years their likelihood of participation increased from 18.6% in 1960 to 43.9% in 1979 (U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980b:Table 6). It appears that as wives and mothers entered the work force, there was more tolerance and acceptance of working women from the public and other women in particular, allowing more women the choice to work or keep house (Bowen and Finegan,1969). As of 1980 the profile of the female laborer was more in line with the characteristics of the total female population than ever before.

A new trend to be aware of is that women are marrying later than they did in 1950 and marital breakups are increasing. The number of never married women in the work force has been steadily increasing since 1950, as has the number of working divorcees. Never married working women as a percent of those never married increased from 16.3% in 1950 to 62.7% in 1979, and the proportion of divorcees working jumped from 32.6% in 1950 to 74% in 1979 (U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980b:Table 5). It is apparent that work is becoming a greater part of women's lives and will continue to change the image of women in this society as their presence in the work force becomes more pronounced.

Many factors influence whether a woman will look for work. The lack of certain skills, a possibly limited education, and the real possibility of interruptions during

the work years may present serious obstacles for women who want high paying jobs. A number of studies in the social sciences indicate that the more education a woman has, the more likely it is that she will work outside of the home. Another factor which may be a big push for women to enter the job market is the financial need of the family. The U.S. Department of Labor has monitored women's reasons for work for a number of years, and its analysis reveals that married women most frequently say they go to work for economic reasons (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1973; Sweet, 1973). If a woman has children, the difficulty of finding and, often, paying someone to watch after them can be a serious deterrent to leaving the home to work.

The options of women in America have been increased from doing housework to becoming part of a traditionally male dominated work force. But what kinds of jobs are women doing outside the house? Women still dominate such areas of work as nursing, teaching, bookkeeping, waiting tables, and secretarial and office work. Women also constitute a large portion of the workers in many other kinds of work, as shown in Table I.2.

Table I.2: The 25 Occupations most Dominated by Females, 1979

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>% Women Employed in Occupation</u>
Secretaries	99.1
Practical Nurses	97.9
Dental Assistants	97.8
Lodging Quarters Cleaners	97.8
Private Household Workers	97.6
Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Teachers	97.4
Receptionists	97.2
Registered Nurses	96.8
Typists	96.7
Dressmakers (except factory)	95.4
Sewers and Stitchers (mfg)	95.3
Stenographers	93.4
Teachers' Aides	93.4
Demonstrators	93.2
Bank Tellers	92.9
Telephone Operators	91.7
Bookkeepers	91.1
Billing Clerks	90.1
Waiters	89.4
Hairdressers and Cosmetologists	89.2
Welfare Service Aides	88.3
Cashiers	87.9
Nursing Aides, Orderlies and Attendants	87.5
Food Counter and Fountain Workers	86.0
Elementary School Teachers	84.3

Source: U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980a:A-22-23.

Occupations that women may still feel restricted from holding include engineering, medicine, the law, and the clergy, with the percent in each occupation who were women as shown in Table I.3, and such other occupations as architecture (6%), dentistry (4.6%), crafts and kindred (5%), protective services (8.8%), and truck driving (2.1%) (U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980a:A-22-23).

Table I.3: Percent Women in Selected Occupations, 1900-1979

	<u>1900</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1979</u>
Lawyers	-	1.4	2.4	3.5	12.8
College Profs and Instrs	-	30.0	27.0	19.0	31.6
Clergy	4.4	2.6	2.2	5.8	4.6
Doctors	-	5.0	4.6	6.8	10.7
Engineers	-	-	.3	.8	2.9
Dentists	-	3.2	1.5	2.1	4.6
Biologists	-	-	-	28.0	36.4
Chemists	-	-	-	8.6	15.2
Nurses	94.0	96.0	98.0	97.0	96.8
Librarians	-	88.0	89.0	85.0	80.9
Social Workers	-	62.0	67.0	57.0	64.3

Sources: 1979 figures from U.S.Dept. of Labor,1980a:A-22; 1960 figures from U.S.Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census,1960:528-33; 1900-1940 figures from U.S.Dept. of Labor,1954:57.

Although women have been entering the work force in larger numbers, in Tables I.2 and I.3 it is clear that they are still very segregated by the kind of work that they do. Two common explanations usually given for why women are lumped in low paying and low ranking occupations are women's lack of training and their low commitment to jobs due to marriage and child-raising. Both explanations, according to Collins (1971), are false. He contested the first because many working women are overtrained for their present positions, and the second he attributed to a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, if women's opportunities are limited to work in only menial jobs, being a housewife might be viewed as a more preferred kind of employment. Collins, instead, offered a third explanation in which he suggested that women are a subordinate class in a system of sexual stratification.

One sociologist noted that the work women do on the job is very often a facsimile of the work women have engaged in as housewives. What business has done is exploit females in the workplace much as they have been exploited in their own homes (Hetrick, 1979). To make matters worse, in the occupational areas in which women congregate the most, many are controlled by male superiors. The most noted examples are the male school principal, the male head librarian, and the male office or store manager. This problem is the biggest obstacle for the women who want to see total emancipation accompanied by elimination of wage discrepancies between men and women in the labor market. According to Barrett (1979) if women continue to look for work in the usual female occupations, conditions in those jobs could deteriorate even more. Women's jobs have traditionally paid less than men's jobs and, as a result, often have lower status. If the demand for workers in traditionally female occupations does not keep pace with the increasing number of women entering the labor force, wages in these occupations could decline and/or higher rates of female unemployment could result.

Table I.4: Earnings Distributions of Full Time, Year Round Workers, Ages 14 and Older, 1977

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Less Than \$5,000	5%	12%
\$5,000-\$9,999	14%	41%
\$10,000-\$14,999	32%	35%
\$15,000 and over	48%	10%

Source: U.S.Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1978

As a result of job segregation, many women are in low paying jobs with little or no chance for advancement. Much of the difference in the income distribution shown in table I.4 is due to different types of jobs. In addition, the average levels of income show that women earn less than men in almost all occupational groups (Halaby,1979), partially due to less seniority and partially to different levels of work. Of greater concern is the indication that some women working in the same types of jobs as men receive a lower salary for doing the same kind of work. On the topic of comparing salaries between men and women Duberman (1975:92) adds this cautionary note:

Although there is no question that income varies by sex when all other factors are held constant, it is difficult to determine the extent of the difference. Among several reasons, two stand out: Women are usually employed only intermittently and part time, and they are typically employed in low salaried positions. Therefore, any comparison has limitations and must be examined with caution.

#### The Future for Women in the Work Force

The projection for the 1990's indicates that the number

of women in the work force should continue to increase, but not as rapidly as it has in the last two decades. In the year 1990 the Department of Labor expects about 55% of the female population between the ages of sixteen and sixty-four to be working. This is a 5% increase over the number of women working in 1978. This increase amounts to roughly 11 million additional women entering the labor force in the next ten years, bringing the total number of women workers to 52 million (Smith, 1979).

The newest additions to the female work force, according to Smith, will be women between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-four who are married and who have young children. Smith's projections for the Department of Labor are based on an array of factors that when combined can account for the continued trend of more females joining the work force. First, the job outlook for many white collar and service workers is good, and since many women work in these occupational categories they should be able to compete effectively for jobs in these areas. Second, the continued stress on following equal opportunity laws should increase women's chances for employment in areas not traditionally open to women (e.g. engineering and other technical fields and skilled trades). Third, the educational levels of women are expected to increase, which will affect the rates of women working in academic jobs and other professional areas including law and medicine. Fourth, the more women enter work and the longer they stay

on the job, the greater is their opportunity for higher pay and benefits and greater chances for advancement.

Furthermore, Smith mentioned factors which are not economic in nature. The important effect of an attitude change occurring principally among younger women can not be cast aside. Smith (1979:18) explained the changing pattern in the following way:

The women who will be between the ages of twenty and sixty-four in the year 1990 are now between the ages of nine and fifty-three. There is considerable evidence that younger women's attitudes toward the role of women in the labor market are more liberal than those of older women. Even if no individual woman's attitude changes any further, just the replacement of less liberal older women with the younger ones over time will itself result in a working-age population more oriented toward the labor market.

It must be realized that severe economic change since Smith's projections (e.g. rising interest rates and the recession of the early 1980's) will of course affect any projection concerning the labor force. While increasing numbers of women may be compelled to work because of economic hardship, a depressed employment sector should hinder chances for more women to enter the work force. In addition, current Reagan administration lack of support for affirmative action and equal opportunity policies backed by previous administrations may well provide a depressing effect on women's increased work participation. Despite these influences, women's participation in the employment sector should continue to increase. At this time there exists a certain momentum that women have created for themselves as they have increased their numbers in the labor



market. As the women who work outside the house become the dominant role model for women, there will be additional pressure placed on those women who do not work to take a job just so they won't be considered deviant.

A final point dealing with the economy has certainly become more pronounced in the last 10 years and has pushed many women to look for work. Traditionally a family's position in the income distribution was determined solely by what the husband earned. In the 1980's, even if the husband makes a good salary, the family could have a below average amount of income if the wife does not have a paying job. A wife's income is not seen any more as money to be spent on frills and vacations (the 'egg money') but is something that is needed to bolster a family income that is unable to keep pace with the spiraling costs of inflation. Thus, as a result of these economic and social changes, the full time housewife is finding her position in the social structure not only becoming atypical but also being a very costly decision in terms of the net family income and life style.

Having said this, however, we should not automatically think that all women will be compelled to or want to leave home and get a job immediately. The process of change will inevitably continue for some time, but it is clear that we have seen the emergence of a new force in the labor market that will create greater job opportunities for women, change the differences between men's and women's salaries, and continue to redefine the roles of women.

## CHAPTER II

### A SYSTEMS VIEW OF WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY

During the 1970's, social scientists were exploring the relationship between sex role attitudes and the employment of women. Mason and Bumpass (1975) and Stolzenberg and Waite (1977) employed in their research causal models which assumed that attitudes affect employment. On the other hand, Molm (1978), Thorton and Freedman (1979), and Ferree (1980) contended that it is work experience which affects sex role attitudes. To say that one is responsible for the other is not an accurate assessment or an appropriate way of showing such a relationship. Rather, we believe that changes in sex role ideology and women's employment occurred together, involving some sort of feedback amplifying process.

Similarly, we believe that attempts to isolate causes of increased participation by women in the labor force or of changes in beliefs concerning women's positions are fruitless unless they take into account effects of women's work force participation on the social system, including effects on beliefs and on future increases in women's employment. The changes in women's employment and in beliefs concerning their 'proper' positions did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, the changes were encouraged, enhanced, and sometimes jolted by other events in the social milieu.

We have discussed, in Chapter I, changes in women's work participation in the context of accompanying historical events. In this chapter, we expand our historical perspective to examine how these events and changes in societal values and beliefs are causally entwined with changes in women's work participation. The modern systems paradigm employed in this discussion enhances our understanding of what are clearly related and historically rooted changes in both the numbers of women in the current work force and in the values and beliefs concerning women's position in society.

A brief outline of the systems approach will be necessary before we discuss the case at hand. First, we must preface our remarks by making clear that by 'systems approach' we are not referring to the old functionalist normative model popularized by Talcott Parsons in The Social System (1951) and The System of Modern Societies (1971). Rather, the approach which we are using comes from a long line of interdisciplinists such as Ludwig von Bertalanffy in Biology, Norbert Weiner and W. Ross Ashby in Cybernetics, Kenneth Boulding in Economics, Anatol Rapoport in Organization Theory, Karl Deutsch in Political Science, and Walter Buckley in Sociology. The systems approach is an important one for a clear theoretical conception of a complex social phenomenon which is in a state of change. The predominant mode of social research unfortunately addresses itself only to fixed structures and processes,

which is often inappropriate for explaining a social world which is constantly changing due to various disturbances (which in some cases can be accounted for but in many more still remain a mystery and are explained in terms of 'random effects' or 'errors').

The systems approach acknowledges the facts that the social world is by no means perfect, and that a social system, which may remain relatively stable over a continuous period of time, is nonetheless always composed of changing facets or parts. Eventually these small level changes may create a change in the overall social system that can be catalogued and accounted for. It must be realized that the overall change in the social system is not just the simple sum of all the lower level changes that have occurred before.

The approach provides a clear way to express changes over time in a social system by addressing itself to the level of analysis to be examined and by considering time and feedback processes as important factors in explaining social phenomena. A modern systems approach is not a replacement for exchange theory, symbolic interaction, or critical theory, but rather takes a perspective that says that each theoretical design may be an important contribution to a certain level of analysis in the social structure. For instance, symbolic interaction may be very appropriate for the sub-system level analysis of the group and interaction between its members, but not useful for explaining changes

in social institutions. On the other hand, we may find a neo-Marxist approach to be more appropriate for analyzing the organization and control of macro level processes that occur in a society's political and economic institutions. A systems design may incorporate these theoretical models, but a systems theorist adopts the most applicable approach of all because this perspective is capable of accounting for the entire social system, at all levels. Even though most systems theorists have not undertaken a complete analysis of society, they are aware and accept in principle that a multi-disciplinary and multi-level approach in the social sciences is probably necessary if we are to understand patterns of social behavior at the individual, group, and societal levels.

An important systems approach concept is that of society as a complex, open, adaptive system. Complexity is in the organization of the structures as well as in the networks along which information is exchanged. The system is open both to the environment (physical world), and from within, where it engages in information interpretation (decoding) and communication (encoding). Societies are in a constant state of adaptation, in their structures and in their symbol systems, to the changes in their internal, external, and symbolic environments. Societies are goal-directed and contain feedback mechanisms which operate to create systems that can respond to outside interferences (disturbances) or can develop their own planning designs as

a result of internal social needs (pressures). The feedback concept is clearly an important one for the development of any social system and its ability to cope with an ever changing and transforming world.

As complex adaptive systems have developed they have incorporated more and more complex mediating processes that intervene between external forces and human behavior. For example, the developing of sociocultural systems incorporates the development of greater complexity at all levels in divisions within the social institutions of economy, government, religion, education, and family. In more primitive societies these divisions were closely tied to family and kinship networks which provided the basic institutional priorities for social adjustment and survival. The advanced industrialized societies have developed by separating and making more autonomous these institutional processes, (still mutually dependent parts of the social system), each characterized by higher order feedback mechanisms.

One way systems theorists have tried to discuss how societies or open systems develop and grow is by delineating the processes of morphostasis and morphogenesis.

The former refers to those processes in complex system-environment exchanges that tend to preserve or maintain a system's given form, organization, or state. Morphogenesis will refer to those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure, or state. Homeostatic processes in organisms, and ritual in sociocultural systems are examples of 'morphostasis'; biological evolution, learning, and societal development are examples of 'morphogenesis' (Buckley, 1967:58-9)

Morphogenesis may take either of two different paths along a continuum. One ideal type of morphogenesis ( $MG_1$ ) usually is characterized by violence and conflict between two or more groups in a society. The other ideal type of morphogenesis ( $MG_2$ ) creates change through peaceful cooperation between two or more groups with differing views. Morphogenesis is not just any change in the system, but adaptive changes, which include structural elaboration, structural rearrangement, and even alteration of the operating goal structure of the system. All living systems (including sociocultural ones) manifest both morphostatic and morphogenetic processes for the integrity of the system. As sociocultural systems develop, they build into their structure new mechanisms for coping with either internal or external changes. Initially, sociocultural systems institutionalized certain morphostatic processes, although it has not been until recently that sociocultural systems have instituted morphogenetic properties through more democratic systems which assume more communication between all parts of the system. Advanced industrialized democratic societies have institutionalized morphogenesis in order to use adaptive change for cultural improvements in management and communication between the parts of the system.

The morphostatic process that maintained social control is best illustrated by behavior in a small town. In rural domains behavior is controlled by gossip and certain people in the town ruling structure, rather than by explicit rules

(i.e., behavior is characterized by informal rather than formal social control). The morphogenic processes going on at the time included the practice of defining some people as deviant (i.e. witches, derelicts, etc.) in order to maintain uniformity of behavior. Any radical massive restructuring was almost always characterized by violent conflict as described by  $MG_1$ . Structural change came about through social conflict such as a revolution, a war, or other destructive conflict.

The new morphogenesis ( $MG_2$ ) is institutionalized, bringing change about through constructive decision making with explicit procedures for changing the rules. For example, there is in many Western industrialized societies a great deal of instituted conflict, such as between union and management, with the threat of a strike. Instead of a violent confrontation between owners and workers over wages and working conditions, a recognized representative for workers (i.e. a union) negotiates a contract with management over these issues. While it may be necessary to threaten a strike or engage in one to convince management to negotiate, it is no longer the case that people involved become physically injured. The strike or threat have become necessary to the beginning of the negotiation process, which is now firmly entrenched as an instituted practice for reaching agreements in a nonviolent manner. By incorporating such mechanisms for dealing with conflict, tensions are released and varying perspectives in the



society are discussed.

Maruyama (1963) has added greatly to the general systems model of societal change by discussing mutual causal processes of the morphogenic type. Traditionally some sociologists have focused on the equilibrium (or morphostatic) aspect of systems as a conceptual tool to explain counteracting deviation through feedback mechanisms. Maruyama suggests, however, that social scientists have often overlooked the "processes of mutual causal relationships that amplify an insignificant or accidental causal kick, [which then] build up deviation, and diverge from the initial condition" (304). Such a process is called 'deviation amplification' or 'positive feedback', and appears to be relevant in explaining a change in women's station in the American economy.

An example of Maruyama's morphogenetic deviation amplification process is illustrated in a discussion of the development of a city in an agricultural area. A farmer and his family who come by chance to an open plain decide to cultivate the land. Later, several other farmers move nearby and more families settle in. One of the farmers sees a need to help the others and opens a tool shop which becomes a meeting place; other stores open up next to the tool shop and a village begins to grow. The village helps to market the products from the farm, and more farmers and farm support systems are drawn to the area. The increasingly agricultural productive region has necessitated

the development of industry, and the village gradually develops into a city.

Each stage of this process is of course probabilistic, and may not result in the development of a city; just as a city may not have developed from this beginning. (See Buckley, 1967:60, on multifinality; von Bertalanffy, 1960:142ff, on equifinality.) According to Maruyama there are some very important theoretical implications in such a familiar process. Where the city starts growing is of course dependent on where the first farmer settled; by plan, accident, or necessity.

But once he has chosen a spot, a city grows from that spot, and the plain becomes inhomogeneous. If a historian should try to find a geographical 'cause' which made this spot a city rather than some other spots, he will fail to find it in the initial homogeneity of the plain. Nor can the first farmer be credited with the establishment of the city. The secret of the growth of the city is in the process of deviation-amplifying mutual positive feedback networks rather than in the initial condition or in the initial kick. This process, rather than the initial condition, has generated the complexly structured city. It is in this sense that the deviation-amplifying mutual causal process is called 'morphogenesis' (Maruyama, 1963:305).

The plain, in turn, has been affected by the city, as now other cities will not grow too close to the same area .  
 "...just as the presence of large trees inhibits with their shade the growth of some species of small trees around them"  
 (Maruyama, 1963:306).

Buckley offers a generalization of the morphogenic process as it applies to the sociocultural system.

There is not enough information, knowledge, or decision-making power when simply summed over all the relevant individuals or groups to account for the full

blown complex organization, the metropolitan agglomeration, the body of scientific theory, or the developed religious dogma. The sociocultural pattern is generated by the rules (norms, laws, and values - themselves generated in a similar matter) and by the interactions among normatively and purposely oriented individuals and subgroups in an ecological setting. Full understanding and explanation can appeal, alone, neither to early history nor common human characteristics (initial conditions), nor to final structure and functions. Attention must finally be paid to the interaction generated by the rules, seen as only limiting frameworks of action; to the new information, meanings, and revised rules generated by the interactions; and to the more or less temporary social products that represent the current state or structure of the ongoing process (1967:62-63).

The systems approach provides sociologists with an important conceptual tool that can help to outline major socio-cultural changes in a society. The following discussion of women's changing economic and social positions is guided by the systems approach which provides a concise model for the examination of the transition from women as housewives during the 1800's to the point where over 50% of the female population is employed in the 1980's. In Chapter I it was shown that certain changes in the economic structure of society brought more women into the paid labor force. Figure II.1 is a systems model that depicts change in women's roles as a morphogenic process which includes time factors and feedforward processes that have often been ignored by sociologists who adopt a more static view of the social system (see Buckley, 1967, for a more detailed discussion).

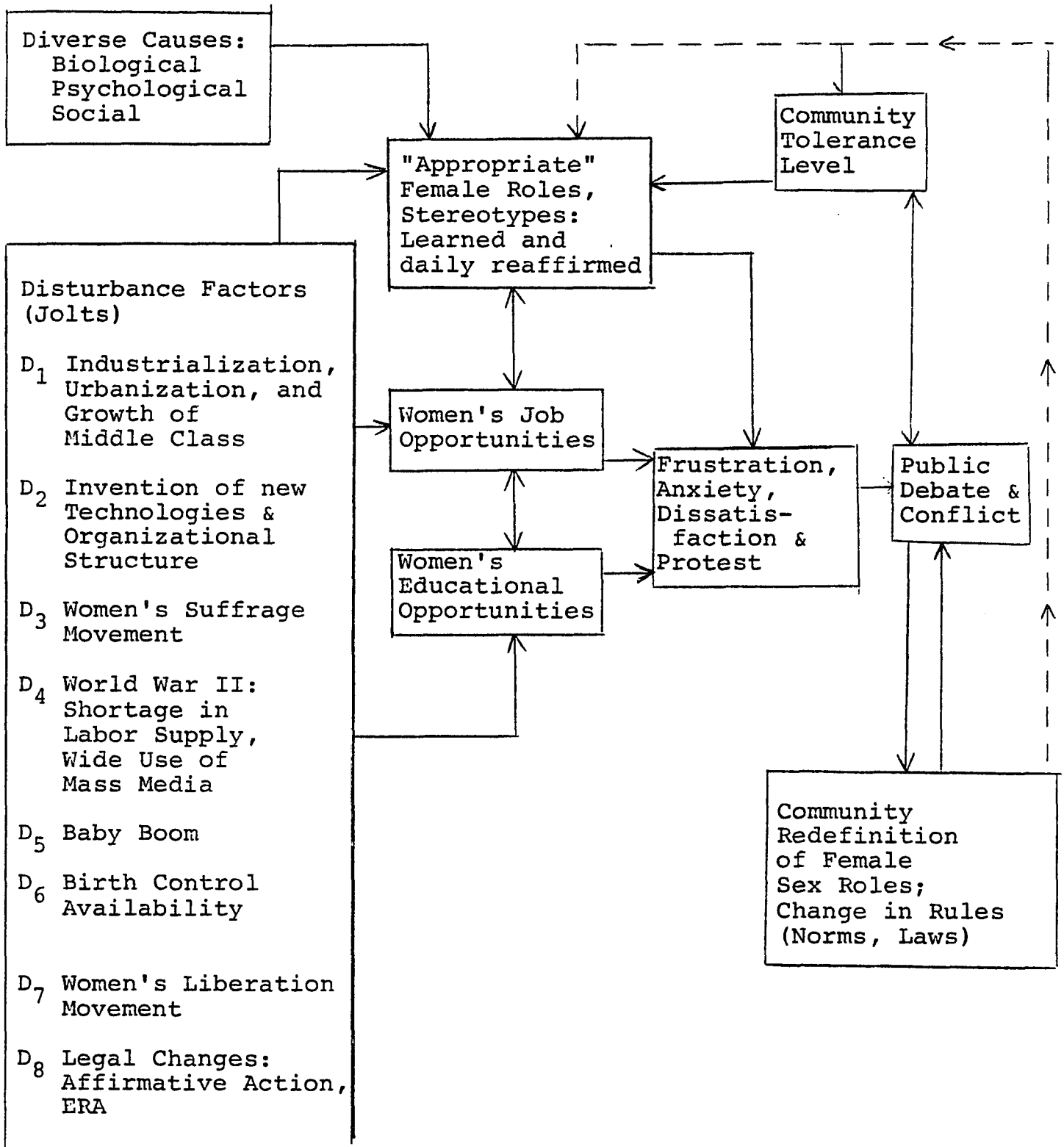


Figure II.1: Systems model of Change in Women's Economic Opportunities and Sex Role Stereotypes.

Originally women worked side by side with men in an agriculturally based society. With industrialization, urbanization, and the growth of the new middle class, women were excluded from entering the production process and were effectively kept out of the market place and the chance, like that of men, to earn money ( $D_1$  in Figure II.1). Certainly women continued to work, but the definition of work now had a new meaning, and what women were doing was not considered by men to be of significance. Even with the industrial revolution and changes in the modes of production, women were unable to participate fully in the world of work in industrial capitalist society as they had in agricultural economy, with the exception that when needed as cheap labor some women were exploited by new assembly procedures in factories.

It was not until much later, with the advancement of technologies, that women were recruited by businesses to use the new device called the typewriter ( $D_2$  in Figure II.1). If we use a deviation amplification analogy to discuss women in the economy we can say that the invention of the typewriter and the increased need of industry for printed correspondence and records seems to have been the 'initial kick' by which women got into the world of men's work. This was facilitated by the availability of a large number of women in urban areas looking for work.

Within a relatively short period of time (from 1880 to 1900) after the typewriter's introduction, many women,

especially those with high school educations or more, found that businesses welcomed them as typists, paying well above usual salaries for other types of jobs available to women. Later on, women who wanted to work applied specifically for these relatively highly paid and highly skilled typing positions. The norm for women in the business world then was to be a typist, but as the number of women entering the work force exceeded the number of typing positions they entered other kinds of work not previously occupied by women. Some women were able to become doctors, lawyers, managers, etc., perhaps not in large numbers, but more than was probabilistic in the nineteenth century.

The participation of America in a World War from 1917 to 1920 did not change the economic status of women. Only 5% of the women in the work force during the War were first time workers, showing the lack of entry of previously unemployed women into the labor market. Women were not encouraged to join the work force to take over the vacant positions left behind by male army recruits. Those women who did find good paying jobs were women who were working prior to the War, but when the War ended they were ousted from their jobs by returning war veterans (Chafe, 1972:52).

During the 1920's there was a big change in the morals of young Americans but not in the economic positions of men and women. A relaxation in morals concerned a liberalization of women's political and social behavior. In 1920, after 100 years of intense struggle with the male

political establishment, women gained the right to vote (see  $D_3$  in Figure II.1). In addition, smoking, swearing, drinking and even contraception were no longer forbidden to women, allowing them some of the individual freedom formerly enjoyed only by men. While these changes may well have contributed to setting the mood for the next generation's push into the job market, there was no immediate jump in the still slow trend of increasing participation of women in the labor market. Thus the increase in sexual freedom and political efficacy enjoyed by women in the 1920's did not alter the basic distribution of economic positions.

The prevailing pattern of work for a woman until 1940 was that if she were young and single, certain jobs were available, until marriage. At that point, a middle class woman was supposed to stop working, have children, and take care of the house and children while the husband was the primary wage earner. This normative pattern was, in general, mutually agreed upon by both sexes. Despite some attempts at change by such factors as the women's suffrage movement, the country did not really make any effort to change role patterns until the conflict in Europe in the 1940's, which caused a disturbance in Americans' usual patterns of behavior.

A later kick to introducing more women into the male dominated work force was the evacuation of large numbers of males to fight in World War II. The young men of the 1940's rallied in support of American ideals of freedom and

democracy and quickly rushed to enlist in the armed forces to fight against the Fuhrer and the Emperor. They left behind many strategic factory jobs that needed to be filled in order to continue to supply needed war materials to Europe and the Pacific. Women were asked to make a sacrifice for the War and leave the confines of their homes to join in the battle by helping fill the vacant slots in the assembly lines ( $D_4$  in Figure II.1).

Of course, the increase in women's work participation would never have taken as sharp a rise as it did if it had not been encouraged and advocated in the mass media. In a Gallop poll conducted in 1936, 82% of the respondents (and 75% of the females) answered negatively to the question of whether wives should work if their husbands were also employed (Chafe, 1972:108). By 1942, in another poll, 60% of the respondents believed wives should be employed in the War Industry and 71% said that there was a need for more married women to take jobs (Chafe, 1972:148).

One possible reason for the greater participation by women in the work arena during World War II as opposed to World War I might be the widespread ownership of the radio as a common household item. The radio effectively brought the War into the living room where a far greater segment of the American population, and certainly more women, were exposed to the news of the War and the country's need to keep the War machinery going. Newspapers, magazines, and radio broadcasts contributed by conducting a publicity build



up which introduced 'Rosie the Riveter', a female riveter of war machinery, as a national heroine for other women to emulate. The extensive use in World War II of the mass media to encourage and praise women's work in War related jobs undoubtedly was a great influence on the rapid growth of women's participation in the labor force.

It should be recalled that the young women starting work during World War II were the daughters of the women who during the years preceding World War I were influenced by more permissiveness and emphasis on individuality. These mothers may well have thus been able to provide an atmosphere more approving of and conducive to their mature daughters' ability and willingness to participate in the labor force. The chances for women occupying future positions in industry were no doubt increased as a result of women's performance during the War (Nottingham, 1947). Many women may have been somewhat reluctant to assume traditionally male held positions in industry, but they found that they were very capable of doing the work men did in the factories and offices of America. After the War, however, returning veterans wanted the jobs they had back, and women did not make any organized effort to keep the jobs they had so admirably performed.

During the War years many colleges and universities, facing the threat of depleted or at least dwindling enrollments due to a loss of young males to the draft, accepted far greater than usual numbers of young women. The

university as a system adapting to the change (lack of male applicants) in its environment, elected to admit women as a means to maintain its level of size, operation, and output. The boon to women was a byproduct of the goal attainment of the university. The normative practice of discouraging women from entering higher education, while instead encouraging them to raise a family, was thus redefined at the same time that women were asked to actively participate in the work force. The overall change in college admission not only increased women's educational possibilities during the War years, but changed the higher educational expectations of future generations of women. The women who went to college in World War II most likely encouraged a large number of their daughters in the late 1960's and early 1970's to go to college. This ultimately contributed to the women's liberation movement of those decades, which found its origins on the college campuses in the Civil Rights and Peace movements.

At the micro level women had experienced the kind of work men usually engaged in and found that they could do it. Certain stereotypes that men held about women, such as the inappropriateness of women working in dangerous places with heavy machinery, were no longer deterrents to women who wanted these types of work. Women exposed to the dangers and rigorous demands of factory work did not incur any higher rates of industrial accidents or deaths. At the macro level, economic changes after the War created a higher

demand for female office workers, and more opportunities for women in a growing service sector. The number of single females in the country was at an all time low, since many eligible women got married after the War. By the 1950's, many corporations were seeking the employment of married women to fill the job openings that were appearing as business were expanding (Oppenheimer,1973). Women were realizing that they were wanted by business, and to get them interested in working more businesses were willing to pay higher salaries (which were, nonetheless, lower than males' salaries for comparable work).

An additional stimulus for a change in women's job opportunities thus seems to have come directly from businesses and corporations needing the low wage skills of women in their organizations. Women who were working were not changing their images of themselves as wives, mothers, and homemakers; they were only adding a job to bring home extra needed cash to feed the large baby boom families of the postwar era (see  $D_5$  in Figure II.1).

At this time in American history, the postwar consumer economy had come to rely on a work force of women who did not think of themselves as workers and who were not taken seriously by their employers. Before working women could effect any change, they would have to confront the double exploitation they faced as both workers and women (Hymowitz and Weissman,1978:322).

A real change in attitudes toward women does not appear to have blossomed until the late 1960's. In the early 1960's, President Kennedy established the first Commission on the Status of Women, chaired by Eleanor

Roosevelt, which published reports on how women were being denied rights and opportunities available to men. A second major event that occurred was the inclusion of sex in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. As a result of these two events, there was a growing awareness and concern by women about women's issues (Evans,1979:17). Many well organized groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), Federally Employed Women (FEW), and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, which were at least partly responsible for the views that women began to mold for themselves, began to draw attention to the participation of women in society and work, (for a detailed discussion, see Freeman,1973). Another issue that became more pronounced at this time and which focused greater attention on women's freedom to choose their role as mothers or workers (these two were relatively mutually exclusive, at least among higher educated middle class women) concerned new contraceptive devices (i.e., the pill) (see D<sub>6</sub> in Figure II.1).

The women's liberation movement was a catalyst for an open questioning of the traditional female role in society (see D<sub>7</sub> in Figure II.1). The movement provided an alternative view of women in society that opened the door for more women to work, get an education, speak out, and otherwise be involved in political and economic issues. All of these in the past had been more or less denied to women based on the sociocultural beliefs that women were

functionally important to the maintenance of the family, which was a key element in the overall stability of the social system.

The movement had its greatest impact on the youth of American society, particularly on young women in college. Many of these women, educated in the 1960's and 1970's, are now working at the managerial level in businesses and corporations, and they are represented in many professions. They have convinced men of their ability to work and desire to have a career; they have set an example for other women that they can compete in occupations usually monopolized by men. These women, however, do not constitute the average female worker. For the most part, women are still confined to working in low paying office type jobs, with little or no chance for promotion. Working women of all social classes may, however, be more closely aligned in their attitudes than they are with women who have adopted the traditional female role and kept house.

By the 1980's women with varying skills and educational backgrounds have found their occupational choices expanded from the initial employment conditions of the late nineteenth century. As more women engaged in work not traditionally considered feminine, they provided models and created an encouraging environment for other women to feel confident in applying for jobs and to compete effectively in these new occupational areas. It appears that the changes that have occurred dealing with the integration of women

into the mainstream of work in America can be described as the morphogenic ( $Mg_2$ ) kind of change. This has involved the peaceful change of society's values and goals as they are interpreted through the social, cultural, economic, and legal systems. According to Strober (1977:296-297) a systems interaction model could explain in the following way the changes which have occurred in the female labor force participation rates since the turn of the century:

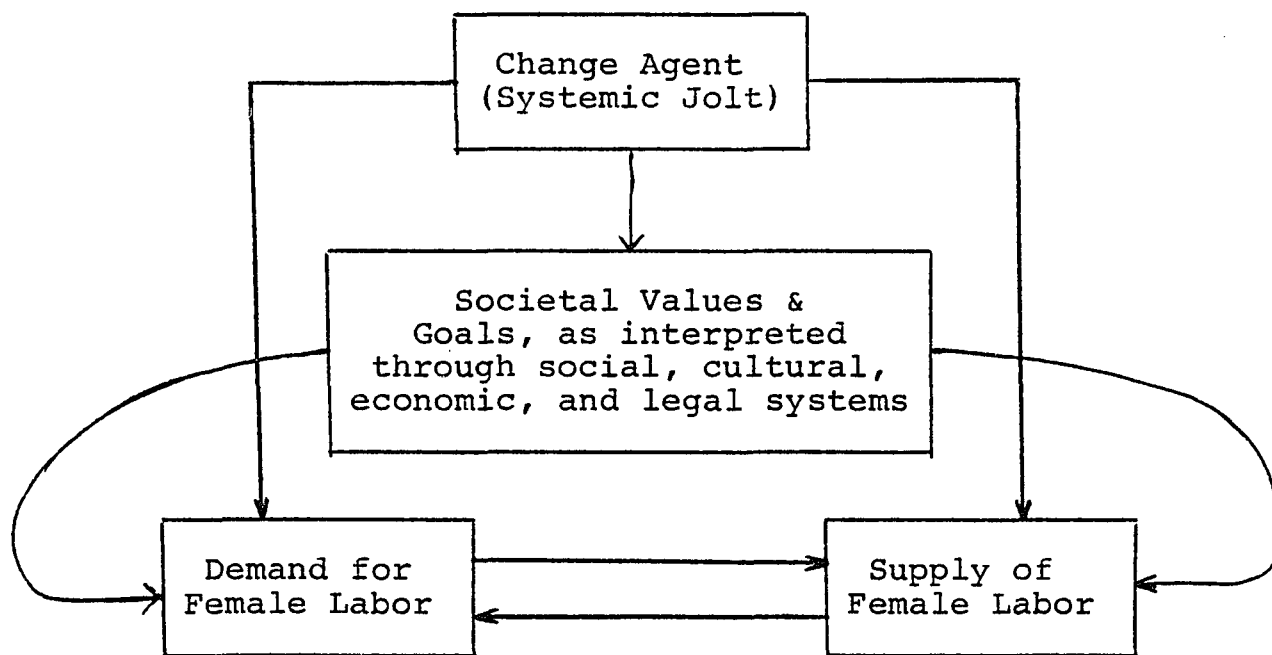


Figure II.2: Flow Chart of The Female Labor Market (Adapted from Strober, 1977:297)

The exclusion of women in the work force was broken only by change agents which caused jolts to the entire system. Examples of such change agents include a war, the invention of a new machine (e.g., sewing machine, typewriter, teletype, or word processor), the introduction of a new way to organize work (e.g., typing pool, assembly

line, grade schools), or a change in the supply needs of large companies or corporations. According to Strober, "the jolt need not be sudden, it can also build slowly over time" (1977:296). These jolts or disturbance factors can, of course, occur from within or outside of the system. A major consequence of the disturbance element or event is that it affects both the demand for labor and the social beliefs and values of the society. This usually is aided by the mass media, legal institutions, universities, families, social organizations, etc.

In the particular case of World War II, for example, once war (the disturbance agent) had effectively altered the perceptions and goals within the American social system, employers felt freer to begin to seek and accept married women as employees to meet their changed labor demands. At the same time, changes in American values were also affecting the way women thought of themselves. Both phenomena, however, had catalysts, in that the baby boom had occurred, and the wages of one working parent were not enough income to supply the postwar desires or needs of most families.

The overall consequence of these systemic changes was for employers to seek the employment of more women workers, while at the same time more women were finding it acceptable to work (even though they may have been primarily interested in work for no other reason than for monetary gain). Positive response to questions concerning agreement with

married women holding a full time job outside the house has also changed from the 1930's to the 1970's. In the 1930's, only 18% of women answered positively, while in 1964 54% agreed, and by 1970 73% answered yes (Oppenheimer,1970).

Strober(1977:298) also aptly pointed out that "systemic jolts which do not affect both demand for labor and societal values will not break the vicious circle". For example, women may be ready to enter certain occupations and professions long before private businesses and public institutions receive the necessary push to hire them.

We may be beginning to see a change in job segregation of women due to a systems jolt of women in the legal system establishing laws that deny employers the right to discriminate on the basis of sex. Affirmative action in hiring and equal opportunity to the means of acquiring the necessary skills required by employers have enhanced the job chances for women in occupations and professions usually reserved as all male bastions (see  $D_8$  in Figure II.1).

A note of caution provided by Strober (1977:298) is still necessary at this potentially optimistic point in time for women; she concluded that:

If women begin to realize that employers are willing to hire them in a particular occupation and at the same time societal codes are encouraging them to work in that occupation, it is certainly possible for the increase in female labor supply to that occupation to be greater than the increase in the demand. And if women are crowded into that occupation (and they can't or won't enter other occupations) then decreases in wages in the occupation and increases in female unemployment rates will result.

Women have been slow to organize in the occupations



where they are in the majority. It is mostly in the past few years that women teachers, nurses, and federal and municipal secretarial and clerical workers are organizing and striking, usually with negative public sentiment. Although, as with most labor disputes, a main issue is usually salary, this is not the only issue. Current media exposure on such issues concentrates on status and pay differences in men's vs women's jobs, with a lessening of the emphasis earlier in the 70's and 60's on 'equal pay for equal work'. The point currently being made is that this emphasis is meaningless when equal work is not yet a reality. Only now is recognition being made of the basic fact that women's work is frequently different from men's work, with correspondingly lower rewards in the forms of status and money. Media and popular recognition of these differences should help steer the issue away from earlier emphases on equality, and help with the eventual improvement of conditions in female dominated occupations.

The declining economy of the 1970's and 1980's may be an important systemic jolt for both workers and employers. The impact of the skyrocketing oil prices has had a tremendous effect on the average family income's buying power. The toll of inflation has certainly required that two adults in the family must now work full time to pay the bills. More women are being drawn to the labor market to maintain a middle class standard of living for their families than to find satisfaction in performing meaningful

work (Smith,1979). Employers are also finding that women in lower positions within the organization are quite capable of performing the tasks usually handled by male supervisors. Employers can usually anticipate paying women less money, and offer less benefits. One tactic that some employers have aggressively pursued is hiring women as part time employees. Benefits and government regulations that apply to full time workers are sidestepped by the employment of part time workers.

It appears that only another major systems jolt will catapult women into higher paying and more prestigious occupations in our society. Women, by organizing and pressing employers to hire more women in managerial and professional positions, will certainly hasten the day when women can share the rewards of work at all levels in the economic system.

The factors discussed in the preceding pages have evolved to the current (though of course continually changing) state of affairs, in which certain relationships between characteristics of women in the labor force exist. It would be instrumental at this point to examine these current relationships in order to add to the body of historical knowledge of progressive stages of the system's evolution. Thus, we will in the next chapters examine relationships between women's decisions to work or not and various attitudes which they hold, including those concerning sex role stereotypes. Various preconditions and

correlates of women's choice to or not to work will be examined, as will differences in various attributes between working women of varying social classes.

## CHAPTER III

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent changes in female participation in the labor force appear to be instrumental in creating new conceptions of the roles of women in work and in the family. In 1980, according to the U.S. Department of Labor (1980) 51.4% of the adult female population was working, and 42.4% of the entire work force was female. The increasingly large proportion of women in the labor force presents a new and very important factor to be considered in the sociology of work.

In this chapter we discuss the most relevant sociological research dealing with the relationships between women's work participation, social class identification, sex role and political attitudes, and degree of alienation. We have divided the chapter into several parts that will help to identify important results of previous research which are relevant to the topics examined in the analyses (Chapter V). First, what do we already know about the differences between women who work and women who keep house? Second, what has prior research found concerning how background characteristics and work affect the sex role and political attitudes and degrees of alienation of women? In the final area of the literature review we examine how social class has been used to explain differences in working women's and

housewives' attitudes and feelings of alienation.

### Who Works

A number of sociological studies have examined demographic variables for differences between women who are employed and those who keep house. In general, these studies have shown that a woman's participation in the labor force is related to family size and age of children, the respondent's educational attainment and age, her spouse's income, the respondent's mother's work experiences, and her mother's educational attainment.

A plethora of studies have found the relationship between employment and childbearing to be negative: women who have large families are not as likely to be in the labor force as women with small families (Cain,1966; Collver,1968; Clarkson et al.,1970; Sweet,1973; Mason,1974; Stolzenberg and Waite,1977; Molm,1978; Waite,1980). While this relationship may still be a negative one, there is evidence that the number of working women with children under the age of six has risen sharply, which may indicate that children living at home are no longer having as much of an effect of deterring women from working (Moore and Hofferth,1979; U.S. Dept. of Labor,1980b). Increasing reliance on day care centers and extended family networks to assume child care duties has certainly contributed to this change. In addition, it has been found that the presence of older children between the ages of 14 and 17 in families with

children under age 6 makes it easier for a woman to keep a job (Finegan,1975).

It has been shown that a woman's educational experience is very important in determining whether she may decide to work or not. With almost perfect agreement, researchers have found that those women who attain high amounts of schooling (or advanced degrees) are much more likely to be working than are women with little educational experience or a high school education or less (Cain,1966; Bowen and Finegan,1969; Sweet,1973; Finegan,1975; Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer,1978; Astle,1978; M.D.Smith and Self,1980). Molm (1978), however, found no significant relationship between a woman's education and her work participation.

Many of the researchers who have studied women's work used data in which the participants are either members of the same 10 year age cohort, or from the same high school class. Thus age, with little or no variation, could not be examined as a possible correlate of women's work participation. Astle (1978) and Smith (1979), using data sets in which age varies, have found that the younger women seem to be the ones who are most likely to work.

It has been found in some studies that women whose mothers worked while they were growing up are much more likely to be in or plan to be in the work force than daughters of mothers who kept house (Peterson,1961; Roy,1961; Astle,1978; Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer,1978). In addition, the higher a respondent's mother's education, the

more likely the respondent is to be working (Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer,1978; Smith and Self,1980). Finally, as a respondent's spouse's income decreases, the likelihood that the respondent will be employed increases (Cain,1966; Molm,1978; Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer,1978). This dissertation provides a current assessment of the effect of many of these demographic variables, and others, on the employment status of women.

Women's Work, Sex Role and Political  
Attitudes, and Alienation

According to a number of researchers, as a result of the women's movement, which has provoked a greater questioning of traditional societal positions for women, there has been a general shift in the values and beliefs concerning the prescribed positions for women in society (Erskine,1971; Ferree,1974; Mason et al.,1976; Spitze and Huber,1980).

Cherlin and Walters (1981) examined change in sex role attitudes held by men and women, using the NORC GSS from 1972 to 1978. They indicated that support of nontraditional sex roles that began in the 1960's continued into the 1970's and the support of these sex role images was similar for both men and women.

With the new interest in women, sociologists and psychologists have begun to study the relationships between women's attitudes and their employment and backgrounds. Recent articles on women's employment have usually included

some sort of a measure of sex role attitude in attempts to relate a woman's sex role attitudes to her work participation (Dowdall,1974; Mason and Bumpass,1975; Mason et al.,1976; Waite and Stolzenberg,1976; Molm,1978; Thorton and Freedman,1979; Ferree,1976b,1980). The correlations found in these studies are dissimilar, which may reflect the different attitude measures used in each study (in some cases only a single attitude indicator was used).

In a recent panel design study Thorton and Freedman (1979) concluded that labor force participation and working many hours appear to produce nontraditional gender related attitudes on the part of females. They found small relationships to exist between sex role attitudes and having few children or being divorced. They found that there were cohort effects on women's sex role attitudes, but not aging effects.

The most recent discussion of women's attitudes has concerned the direction of the relationship between sex role attitudes and employment of women. Mason and Bumpass (1975) and Waite and Stolzenberg (1976) employed causal models which assume that attitudes affect employment. However,

The assumption that attitude affects employment, rather than the reverse, may be a reflection of both the attitude literature and the emphasis of the women's movement on 'consciousness-raising' as a means of changing behavior. It has been assumed that adhering to attitudes that favor the restriction of women's roles to the care of home, husband and children is likely to reduce the probability that a woman will work, whereas attitudes that favor the expression of women's roles to include careers outside the home are likely to increase this probability (Molm, 1978:523).



Molm (1978), Thorton and Freedman (1979), and Ferree (1980) contended that it is work experience which affects sex role attitudes. The basis of such claims comes from an earlier Marxist philosophy which saw the economic experience as shaping the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of the individual. It was hypothesized that as women enter the work force they will change their attitudes to conform to their current work experience.

According to Mason and Bumpass (1975) the variable with the most pronounced effect on the adoption of egalitarian sex role attitudes by females is the degree of formal educational attainment, followed by, but to less significant degrees, race and religiosity. Women with high amounts of education, black women, and those who feel religion is unimportant have more egalitarian sex role attitudes. Other variables which they investigated (marital status, age at marriage, and number of children) did not seem to be related significantly to women's sex role attitudes.

Mason et al. (1976) found that women with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to accept nontraditional norms and beliefs than are other women. Furthermore, women who are married to men with high amounts of schooling tend to accept more liberated viewpoints than do other women. One unusual finding was that although women with large families tend to be less egalitarian in outlook than those with smaller ones, the women with no children are often the least egalitarian. Of all the cultural variables

examined by Mason et al., the only one having a significant effect was religious affiliation. Catholic women were found to be more traditional in their outlook than women from other religious denominations, and Jewish were the most egalitarian. Age and region of the country appeared to have no effect on sex role attitudes.

Two very recent dissertations using the NORC GSS from 1972 through 1977 have analyzed the social and political attitudes of women. Astle (1978) used factor analysis to examine relationships between participation of women in the labor force, attitudes on abortion, female control over childbirth, and certain feminist political issues, as dependent variables, and 18 independent variables. Her findings suggest that women who are younger, single, later married, employed, middle and upper class, higher in income, politically independent or Democrats, more politically liberal, nonfundamentalist Protestants, low in religious service attendance, who have fewer children or siblings, whose mothers worked, whose parents's and spouse's educations were high, and whose own education was high are more likely to work, favor abortion, agree with female control over childbirth, and have feminist political views.

In 1979 Hetrick completed a dissertation dealing with dual career families in which both husbands and wives worked outside the family. She was interested in comparing the attitudes of men and women in dual career marriages with those of men and women in single earner relationships, and

in the impact of full and part time work on women's attitudes concerning personal well-being, life satisfaction, job values, and sex roles, and on their social isolation and involvement. Her findings on sex role attitudes are of particular interest to this investigation. She made the following conclusions: younger women, women with more years of schooling, and full time employed women have more liberal sex role attitudes than either older women, women with fewer years of education, and part time employed women or housewives. She compared men and women, and found that having babies and older children in the family seem to be associated with less egalitarian attitudes among men and more egalitarian attitudes among women.

Additional studies have focused on not just the individual's background characteristics, but also on the importance of the respondent's mother's characteristics. The consistent findings from a number of studies indicate that daughters of mothers who worked outside the home tend to be less traditional in sex role outlook than are daughters whose mothers did not work (Nye and Hoffman, 1963; Meier, 1972; Vanfossen, 1977). In addition, findings indicate that the more highly educated mothers are also likely to be more nontraditional in their sex role outlook and will tend to transmit this orientation to their daughters (Meier, 1972; Mason and Bumpass, 1975; Brogan and Kutner, 1976; Vanfossen, 1977). In an effort to confirm these findings, we reexamine some of the background variables, including

mother's education and employment, and their relationships with the social and political attitudes of women in 1978.

For the social scientist a question that is often raised is: 'is life psychologically more rewarding for women who work or for women who keep house?'. Several researchers have explored answers to this type of question. Early research on the changing pattern of women's work and family lives focused either on the woman as housewife (Lopata,1971; Oakley,1974) or on the working woman (Smuts, 1959; Cain,1966; Sweet,1973; Cook,1975). One early exception to this separation of research is the work of Nye, who studied differences in satisfaction between employed and unemployed women and concluded that "women employed full time find more satisfaction in their work than non-employed women find in housework" (1963:323). For some years, such comparisons were dropped, but were picked up again with the rising interest in the employment patterns of women.

Ferree (1976a:76), concluded from comparing working women from mostly blue collar backgrounds with housewives who shared a blue collar neighborhood in Boston that the working women "were happier and more satisfied with their lives". A revealing aspect of her findings is that almost certainly the motivation of the women in her sample to work was for reasons of economic necessity, not self satisfaction. This point is supported by evidence provided by Sweet (1973) and U.S.Dept. of Labor (1973) that a majority of women indicate that their reasons for work are

economic. In a more recent study, Wright (1978) found, using the NORC GSS collected over the period 1972-76, that "the data do not reveal strong or even consistent difference in overall happiness or life satisfaction between working women and housewives" (304). Thus Wright's research does not support Ferree's earlier conclusions that working women in Boston were more satisfied than housewives.

While these previous researchers have explored the relationship between a woman's work status and her happiness, we now need to answer a more important sociological question: 'is life more alienating for women who work or for women who keep house?'. In this study we look more closely at how women's work relates to feelings of alienation. Besides the relationships between women's work participation, sex role attitudes, and alienation, we must investigate the relationships among these variables and political attitudes. We must distinguish whether the issue of acceptance of traditional or nontraditional sex role attitudes is related to an overall liberal or conservative political philosophy, and whether the whole issue of feminism in work and family life is nothing more than a fight between politically liberal women versus politically conservative women, or whether sex related issues cut across all political lines among women.

The recent literature on women has not included much discussion of women's political views or of the relationship of their work participation to their political attitudes.

Some evidence, however, has been given to show a link between a person's education and his or her attitudes on socio-political issues. The higher one's years of schooling, the more likely he or she is to have liberal attitudes towards these issues (Glenn,1966; Laumann and Segal,1971; Knoke,1979). The relationship is generally attributed to two main factors: first, more schooling leads to increased exposure to values which increase tolerance to other social groups and ideas; and, second, colleges and universities usually enroll students from varying backgrounds and encourage student interaction between students with different life styles and beliefs (Knoke and Isaac,1976; Knoke,1979). One cannot overlook the fact that education is a very important factor in relation to various social, economic, and political attitudes.

In Chapter V, we examine relationships between a large number of variables, including women's work participation, with a set of socio-political attitudes. This should help to fill the gap left by the paucity of research concerning the political attitudes of women.

#### Women's Social Class Orientations, Attitudes, and Alienation

It appears that values pertaining to the place of women in society may be affected by class culture. Many blue collar families may not encourage or provide the value base necessary for women to achieve high aspirations and mobility as do families with white collar occupational backgrounds

(Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; Kohn, 1969, 1976; Gecas, 1974, 1979). In as much as the process by which values and norms are internalized usually occurs through familial socialization of the individual to accept the values of his parental class group, a strong bias toward conservative sex role attitudes may continue to linger in working women from blue collar backgrounds who occupy blue collar jobs, and the converse should hold for women with white collar backgrounds and white collar jobs (Vanfossen, 1977). This enculturation process will thus make it very difficult for some women to appreciate or even be cognizant of the different values that are held and fostered in the life styles and occupational activities of other social classes.

According to Rainwater et al. (1959), Komarovsky (1962), and Rubin (1976) working class (or blue collar) women are more socially conservative than other women who work, and are particularly accepting of traditional sex role attitudes and submissive forms of behavior. Recent studies have shown a change in the attitudes held by working class women towards more liberated points of view concerning sex roles and political organizing (Roby, 1975; Howe, 1977). Ferree's (1974) research dealt with women's answers to whether they would vote for a female president. Based on this question, she contended that working class women's social attitudes, especially those concerning the roles of women, are not particularly different from those of middle class women. She assumed, since she knew that women's

feminist attitudes vary, that if she could not explain this variation by a woman's class position, that there must be an alternative explanation. In a 1980 paper she tried to explain this variation by using data from a 1975 sample of 135 women from a working class community and including a wider range of sex role attitude items than in her earlier work. In this research she focused on differences in sex role attitudes between a set of housewives and a set of blue collar employed women. She concluded that employed working class women are significantly more feminist than full time housewives and suggested that the reason for this may be differing social contexts which encourage or discourage the adoption of feminist ideas. She failed, however, to contrast her blue collar female workers with other working women in white collar occupations (or to contrast blue collar housewives with white collar housewives).

Overall, in the last several decades social scientists have repeatedly found strong correlations to exist between social class characteristics and political attitudes. The relationships that exist between these two factors were aptly summarized by Lipset (1963:92) in the following way:

The poorer strata everywhere are more liberal or leftist on economic issues, they favor more welfare state measures, higher wages, graduated income taxes, support of trade unions, and so forth. But when liberalism is defined in non-economic terms -- as support of civil liberties, internationalism, etc. -- the correlation is reversed.

These same conclusions have been reached in studies conducted by Kelly and Chambliss (1966) and Erikson and



Luttbeg (1973). Hamilton (1972) showed evidence confirming that working and lower class respondents in his sample supported liberal solutions to economic problems, but contrary to previous studies found them to be no more prejudiced against blacks, no less supportive of civil rights, and no more conservative on foreign affairs than the middle and upper classes. There does not, however, appear to have been research concerning women's social class and their political attitudes.

The earlier research on women's feelings and attitudes has concentrated on the differences in marital and familial satisfaction and sex role attitudes between housewives and working women. We think that it is also necessary to consider, besides the life satisfaction of these women, differences in the overall feelings of alienation, and that the groups which should be compared on these variables should be not only housewives and workers, but women who work in white collar and blue collar occupations as well. Since women are entering various types of occupations we must, in particular, examine whether social class divisions (such as manual vs nonmanual) relate to the degree of alienation experienced by women as they do with men. We need to examine whether there is more or less alienation among women who work than among those who keep house.

Alienation among housewives and working women of differing social classes has not yet received a great deal of attention from social scientists. One exception to this

is Wright (1978) who examined questions from the 1972-1976 NORC GSS to determine if general and marital happiness is related to different social strata of working and nonworking women. He did not find any measurable difference in satisfaction between blue collar working women and blue collar housewives, but did find a larger, though still modest, difference to exist for middle class women. He concluded that:

this class difference reflects mainly that the outside jobs of middle class women are more satisfying to them than outside jobs for working class women (not, as might be expected, less satisfaction among middle class women with household work). It would, however, be premature to conclude much of anything on the basis of these results, since the differences are modest (307).

Wright's cautionary conclusions and Ferree's work have left social scientists with the need to continue to look at the differences between women who work and keep house in terms of their social class.

In Chapter V we investigate the relationships between working women's class and their sex role and political attitudes and alienation, in an effort to find out if blue collar working women and white collar working women differ in these attitudes and feelings, as do men of different occupational classes. This study enables us to make contrasts such as those discussed above based on data from a recent representative national sample, and will further our knowledge of the relationships between women's work participation and social class orientations and their sex role attitudes, political attitudes, and alienation by

including more variables than in much of the previous research and by using more contemporary data.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS

The analyses in this study are directed toward first examining the demographic characteristics of women to determine differences between women who work and those who keep house. In the second section we analyze the effect of women's demographic characteristics and labor force participation on a selected group of attitudinal variables. The third part is an assessment of differences between blue collar and white collar working women in attitudes concerning sex roles and political orientation, and in alienation. To these ends, the data and methods discussed below are used.

#### The Sample

The data set used in this study is part of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) General Social Survey for the year 1978. NORC solicited interviews from 1,532 respondents in the Spring of 1978 using a standard questionnaire which took approximately one hour to administer. NORC has conducted interviews like these on a national sample from 1972 to 1980 (except 1979) and has funding to continue its data gathering until 1982. Some 150 sociologists and other social scientists reviewed drafts of the questionnaire, made suggestions for additions and changes, and chose questions

for future surveys. The topics and questions advisory panel is made up of many noted sociologists, who include: David Featherman, Norval Glenn, Herbert Hyman, David Knoke, Otto Larson, and James Short.

The 1972 survey was supported by grants from the Russell Sage foundation and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Since 1973 complete research support has been provided by NSF. "Each survey is an independently drawn sample of English-speaking persons 18 years of age or over, living in non-institutional arrangements within the continental United States" (Davis,1980a:1). Previous NORC Surveys (before 1975) used a modified probability sample design which included a quota element at the block level to insure greater representation of minority groups and males. This approach has been criticized by a number of social scientists, including Glenn (1977,1978), leading NORC to adopt a different sampling procedure to minimize error in the selection process.

The 1975-1976 General Social Surveys adopted a transitional sample design which included a full probability design on one half of the sample but, in addition, continued the practice of a block quota for the rest of the sample. This was done to provide interesting methodological comparisons and to insure, "on the chance that there are some differences over time, that it would be possible to assign these differences to either shifts in sample design, or changes in response patterns" (Davis,1980a:188). The

1977 and 1978 General Social Surveys adopted the practice of using a full probability sample. The most recent samples were based on

a stratified, multistage, area probability sample of clusters of households in the continental United States. The selection of geographic areas at successive stages is in accordance with the method of probabilities proportional to size (P.P.S.). [In addition, household clusters were] divided into replicated subsamples in order to facilitate estimation of the variance of sample estimators of population characteristics (Davis, 1980a:188).

There were two stages of probability sampling in the 1978 survey. The first stage consisted of choosing equal size strata groupings within a region of the 1970 Census Report of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's) and Non-Metropolitan counties.

The second stage procedure involved the direct selection of census block groups or enumeration districts (E.D.'s) within SMSA's or counties...Lists of separate households contained in the second stage...were constructed by field personnel or obtained from directories (Davis, 1980a:189).

Households were then probabilistically chosen from the available lists of addresses for block and E.D.'s for interviews. "Thus, the principal NORC national probability sample is, in effect, an inventory of identifiable households, each with a known probability of selection" (Davis, 1980a:189).

The 1978 GSS is used in this study because it provides information from a large national sample, using full probability sample selection, and contains questions that are related to the theoretical issues under investigation. The GSS data, while gathered yearly, are not longitudinal

because the information was gathered from interviews with different respondents in different years. As a result, the social researcher who uses the GSS does not have access to the effects of historical events on patterns of social behavior or beliefs and attitudes on an individual sample over a number of years. Furthermore, while in some cases items on the questionnaire were identical from one year to the next, often it appears that there is an elimination or change in wording of questions from year to year, which makes comparisons from one year to the next difficult. For this reason we have chosen to only look at one year in time to make an assessment of the relationships between the variables.

The analysis is thus limited to an assessment of the relationships between variables, and will not include an attempt to indicate the effects of changes during the six year period that information was gathered by NORC prior to this sample. As this study is concerned with the differences in the associations among certain variables between women who work and those who keep house, and the relationships between differences in the work experience itself with women's sex role and political attitudes and their alienation, only the females from the 1978 NORC GSS are being studied.

#### The Data

The data set includes items of personal data such as

region, information about the respondent's family background, the employment, income and education of the respondent, spouse, and parents, race, religion, social class identification, and political party identification. In addition the data set includes items concerning family social participation, work satisfaction, and respondent's political and social views. Respondents were also asked a number of questions about sex roles, including opinions on whether women should take care of running their homes and on the emotional stability of men and women to participate in politics, and a series of six questions dealing with alienation.

As is often the case with social science research, most of the variables in the NORC data (and all of those used in this study, except age) are at best ordinal. The great majority are limited as to possible responses. Given these constraints, categorical data analysis must be used. Although logit, probit, or loglinear methods would be appropriate for many of the analyses in this research, they are not used here because of their lack of familiarity to and ready interpretation for most social scientists. Crosstabulation, with the associated tests for chi-square goodness of fit and its significance level, allows clear assessment of existence and strength of relationships between categorical variables. In addition, the information provided by this method of analysis is well suited for both graphic and verbal presentation to readers of all levels of



quantitative background. Thus the analyses done in this research use crosstabulation procedures, both bivariate and multivariate (with control variables). Where necessary, variables were collapsed so as to render them more appropriate for use with this method.

The analyses were performed using the CROSSTABS subprogram of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which displays joint frequency distributions of cases on two or more variables and calculates several appropriate measures of association and significance (Nie et al., 1975). This allows statements as to the frequency or proportion of cases which have a particular combination of characteristics or values of the variables of interest. For example, crosstabulation shows whether proportions of cases having a given value on one variable change or remain relatively similar across differing values on one or more other variables. For any given crosstabulation, the joint frequencies which would be expected if no relationship existed between the variables under investigation can be readily calculated. A cell by cell comparison between these 'expected' (if there were no relationship) and the observed frequencies allows determination of how different the observed relationship is from that which would be expected under the condition of independence.

This comparison is accomplished by the chi-square statistic, which is the sum over all cells of the ratio of the squared difference between the observed and expected

frequency with the expected frequency. The larger the value of chi-square, the more difference there is between the observed and expected frequencies, i.e. the further away from no relationship (independence) is the observed situation. The magnitude of the resultant statistic is, however, not directly interpretable, as the probability of obtaining any particular chi-square value depends on the number of cells of the table. The exact probability of observing any chi-square can be computed by comparison of it with the 'degrees of freedom' (related to number of cells) of the given table. This probability expresses the likelihood of the difference between the observed crosstabulation and that which is expected in the case of independence being due to sampling error. If this probability is very small, customarily less than .05 or .01, it is concluded that the relationship between the variables under investigation is statistically significant, i.e. the observed situation is so different (as measured by chi-square) from the no relationship situation, that the probability is very small that the difference between the two tables could have occurred by chance (i.e. sampling error). (For more information on the CROSSTABS procedure and its associated statistics, see Nie et al., 1975:218-248.)

Several main sets of variables were constructed from data obtained through the GSS, including variables relating to work status, social class identification, sex role and political attitudes, and alienation. The relationships

among these variables and women's demographic characteristics, work participation, and subjective and occupational class categories form the main themes of the analyses.

The work status of the respondent was determined from the answer to the question 'WRKSTAT': Last week were you working full time, part time, going to school, keeping house, or what?" (Davis, 1980a:15). Respondents selecting responses other than working full or part time or keeping house (i.e. retired, student, not working) were excluded from the analyses, leaving 758 women to be studied.

Three scales were constructed, to measure sex role attitudes, political attitudes, and extent of alienation. All of the scales are summary variables, consisting of sums of like responses to between 4 and 10 items in the NORC schedule believed to be related to a single dimension. If respondents had answered at least half of the questions to be included in the scale, missing values were adjusted for by averaging for the actual number of items answered, otherwise the respondent was treated as missing on the given scale. The following is a summary of the items included in each scale (Variables are identified by their GSS mnemonics; the actual GSS wording of the items follows):

#### Sex Role Attitude Scale

A dichotomous variable representing traditional vs nontraditional attitudes towards female sex roles was created from the following four items, such that 0 through 2

nontraditional responses were considered traditional, and 3 or 4 nontraditional responses were considered nontraditional:

'FEHOME': "Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men." (disagree: nontraditional)

'FEWORK': "Do you approve or disapprove of a married woman earning money in business or industry if she has a husband capable of supporting her?" (approve: nontraditional)

'FEPRES': "If your party nominated a woman president, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?" (yes: nontraditional)

'FEPOL': "Tell me if you agree or disagree with this statement: Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women." (disagree: nontraditional)

### Political Orientation Scale

The scale items consist of answers to the following questions:

'EQWLTH': "Some people think that the government in Washington ought to reduce the income differences between the rich and the poor, perhaps by raising the taxes of wealthy families or by giving income assistance to the poor. Others think that the government should not concern itself with reducing this income difference between the rich and the poor." Respondents were asked to choose a response between: "government should do something to reduce income differences between rich and poor" (liberal) and "government should not concern itself with income differences" (conservative).

'CAPPUN': "Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?" (oppose: liberal)

'COURTS': "In general, do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?" (too harshly: liberal)

'WIRTAP': "Everything considered, would you say that, in general, you approve or disapprove of wiretapping?" (disapprove: liberal)

'GRASS': "Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal or not?" (yes: liberal)

'DIVLAW': "Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?" (easier: liberal)

'PORNRAPE': "...Please tell me if you think sexual materials do or do not...lead people to commit rape." (do not: liberal)

'PORNMORL': "...Please tell me if you think sexual materials do or do not...lead to breakdown of morals." (do not: liberal)

'ABANY': "Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if the woman wants it for any reason." (yes: liberal)

'POLVIEWS': "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives...the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal--point 1--to extremely conservative--point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?"  
[As the presence of liberal political views is the attribute of interest to this study, 'POLVIEWS' was dichotomized, with both moderate and conservative responses (4 through 7) treated as not liberal and 1 through 3 treated as liberal.]

The scale was made into a three part variable consisting of liberal (7 through 10 liberal responses), moderate (4 through 6 liberal responses), and conservative (0 through 3 liberal responses) categories.

### Alienation Scale

The alienation scale is made up of the number of responses in the alienated direction (agreements) to the following:

"...Do you tend to feel or not"

'ALIENAT1': "The people running the country don't really care what happens to you."

'ALIENAT2': "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer."

'ALIENAT3': "What you think doesn't count very much any more."

'ALIENAT4': "You're left out of things going on around you."

'ALIENAT5': "Most people with power try to take advantage of people like yourself."

'ALIENAT6': "The people in Washington, D.C. are out of touch with the rest of the country."

The resultant summed measure was condensed to three categories: low (0 through 2 agreements), medium (3 or 4 agreements), and high (5 or 6 agreements).

For compatibility with the analyses, many NORC variables were recoded or collapsed. In most cases, the changes made will be evident from the use of the variable in the discussion of the analyses. The following less evident changes are delineated here for clarification.

'REGION' was collapsed from the NORC data (The NORC Codebook [Davis,1980a:37] lists states in each region) to include four general areas: New England and Mid-Atlantic were treated together as Northeast; East North Central and West North Central were combined and called Midwest; South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central made up the South; Mountain and Pacific regions were coded together as West.

City Size ('SIZE') was broken down into the following categories: (1) less than 10,000; (2) 11,000 to 50,000; (3) 51,000 to 100,000; (4) 101,000 to 500,000; (5) 501,000 or more.

Due to the very low number of responses of 'lower' or 'upper' to the question on social class identification, ('CLASS'), such that by far the great majority of respondents identified themselves as 'working' or 'middle', the variable was dichotomized to (1) 'lower or working' and (2) 'middle or upper'.

Objective social class was measured by categorizing the U.S. Occupational code in two different ways; the first way was constructed by following a typology discussed by Levison in The Working Class Majority (1974). He suggested, following a Marxian approach, a separation by manual and nonmanual types of work, which he referred to as working class and middle class. According to Levison, professional, technical and kindred workers, managers, administrators, and salesmen and salesclerks make up the middle classes or nonmanual forms of work in America. He disputed the regular categorization by the Census Bureau and others of secretaries and most service workers as middle class or white collar, believing that they are performing mainly manual types of labor, and suggested that they really should be seen as belonging to a working class (manual) majority in America. Thus the working class, according to Levison, is made up of clerical and kindred workers, craftsmen and kindred workers, operatives, laborers, service workers, and private household workers. We have created a social class measure which closely simulates Levison's categories.

The second measure of social class, devised by David

Knoke (1978) breaks up the census categories into five dimensions. Knoke's categories are: upper nonmanual work, consisting of professional, technical, and managerial; lower nonmanual work, or clerical and sales census categories; upper manual, the same as the census craftsman designation; and lower manual, comprising operatives and service workers. Farmers were considered a separate group by Knoke, but were excluded from this study. As secretarial and clerical work, one of the predominant female occupations, is treated as white collar (nonmanual) by Knoke, and blue collar (manual) by Levison, the difference between the Knoke and the Levison categories is particularly important to the classification of women's occupations.

#### Characteristics of the Sample

The 758 women in this subset of the 1978 NORC GSS are nearly equally divided between those who are working full or part time (384) and those who are keeping house (374). The 131 respondents who comprise the rest of the 1978 NORC women are either in school, retired, or unemployed, and are excluded from this study. In addition, the women in the sample have the characteristics delineated in Table IV.1.



Table IV.1: Characteristics of 758 NORC GSS Women, 1978

<u>Work Status</u>	
Working	50.6 %
Keeping House	49.4
<u>Race</u>	
White	88.9
Black	10.0
Other	1.1
<u>Religion</u>	
Protestant	64.6
Catholic	27.7
Jewish	1.2
None	5.4
Other, N.A.	1.1
<u>Highest Degree</u>	
Less than H.S.	31.2
H.S. Degree	54.8
Associate's Degree	3.4
Bachelor's Degree	8.2
Graduate Degree	2.4
<u>Marital Status</u>	
Married	63.1
Not Married	36.9
<u>Age</u>	
18-35	43.9
36-50	23.2
51-65	21.5
66+	11.4
<u>Social Class (Self Identified)</u>	
Upper or Middle	46.7
Working or Lower	53.3
<u>Occupational Class (Levison)</u>	
Middle Class	28.8
Working Class	71.2
<u>Occupational Class (Knoke)</u>	
Upper Nonmanual	22.4
Lower Nonmanual	38.0
Upper Manual	2.3
Lower Manual	37.3
<u>Region</u>	
South	35.6
Midwest	29.2
Northeast	20.2
West	15.0
<u>City Size</u>	
under 10,000	37.2
11,000-50,000	25.9
51,000-100,000	11.5
101,000-500,000	14.9
501,000 and over	10.6

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS

#### Who Works

In the first part of the analysis we deal with relationships between demographic variables and women's work participation. We find that working women differ significantly from women who keep house on a number of background characteristics. Women who hold jobs are significantly more likely than women who keep house to be more highly educated and have more highly educated mother, father, and spouse; to have a mother who has worked since marriage; to come from smaller families and have fewer children; to have fewer preschoolers; to be unmarried; to be younger; to live in more urban areas; to have no religious preference; and to attend religious services less than once a week or never.

The most striking difference (significant at the .0001 level) appears to be in the schooling levels attained by each group. We find many more housewives than women in the labor market who have not completed a high school degree. Of those women who work, 19% have less than a high school degree, 61% have a high school diploma, and 20% have earned an associate's degree at a junior college or a higher degree. Among the women who keep house, 44% have no degree, 49% have a high school diploma, and only 8% have a higher

level degree. Women who have completed an associate's or higher degree are much more likely to be employed than not (74% vs 26%), whereas, of those with less than high school, only 31% work and 70% are housekeepers.

In addition, the educational backgrounds of the respondent's parents are highly associated with whether or not the daughter is working. The completion of a high school degree by the respondent's mother appears to be an important motivator, (and is significant at the .0001 level), for a daughter's later employment. Those mothers who had less than a high school degree were most likely to have daughters who keep house: only 45% had daughters who are employed. A majority (62%) of the daughters of mothers who had completed high school are working, and 76% of the daughters of mothers who finished at least a junior college program are working. The significance of mothers' educational attainment cannot be underscored enough in explaining a daughter's work decisions. An educated woman appears much more likely to encourage and foster the attitudes necessary for her daughter to work.

Father's education was also significantly (.01) related to the daughter's work status, such that, of the fathers with less than a high school degree, 47% had daughters who are working, while 57% of those with a high school diploma had employed daughters and 70% of fathers with an associate's degree or more had daughters who work. It is interesting to note that both groups of women are much more

likely to know their mother's educational background than their father's, as evidenced by more missing values on the latter variable. Spouse's education has less of an effect but is still significant at the .05 level: less educated spouses have wives who kept house, while those with higher education levels are more likely to be married to working wives.

Mother's work experience is another significant (.0001) and very important factor in a daughter's participation in the labor market. Of those mothers who worked since they were married, 70% had daughters who work, while of those mothers who never worked since marriage, only 42% of the daughters work. Interestingly, however, neither whether the mother worked before the daughter was six years of age nor whether she worked when the respondent was sixteen has a significant relationship with the daughter's employment. It thus seems more plausible that either these working mothers are simply part of the contemporary increase in working women, perhaps having some current influence on their daughters (or vice versa), or that they were part of the World War II female workforce, perhaps before the daughter's birth, rather than that they provided any sort of an early role model for the daughter's later worklife.

Women who keep house are significantly more likely to come from larger families of origin than women who work. Over 45% of the women who are housewives came from families with four or more siblings, compared to 30% of the working

women. Of those women who came from large families, 40% work while 60% keep house. Only 20% of women came from small families with 0 or 1 child, but, of them, 62% are in the labor market and 38% keep house.

In addition current family size, and especially the presence of preschoolers (children under six) at home, seem to affect whether a woman is employed or not. It is no surprise that working women are more likely (33%) to have no children than housewives (9%). Women who have four or more children in the family are the least likely to have a job, while 79% of the women who have no children, compared to just 34% of the women who have four or more children, work. The relationship between work participation and number of children is significant at the .0001 level. It appears, however, that this relationship is primarily due to presence of children under the age of six. When number of children is broken down into different age groups, it becomes clear that neither the number of preteens (6-12) nor of teens (13-17) has a significant relationship with whether a woman works outside the home. Women in the group that have children under six, however, are almost twice as likely (64%) to stay at home as they are to go out to work (36%). Of those who have no preschoolers, 55% work. Only 20% of the women who are employed have one or more preschoolers, compared to 35% of the women who keep house. The relationship between women's work participation and the number of preschoolers is significant at the .0001 level.

If we select just for those who are currently married, the relationship between working and number of children remains highly (.0001) significant: 69% of those with no children, but only 31% of those with 4 or more children, work. Among married women, both the number of preschoolers under six and the number number of teenagers between 13 and 17 are significantly (.0001 and .05) related to whether a woman works or not.

Marital status is also related to work participation: women who are not married are significantly (.0001) more likely (62%) to be in the work force, and married women are more likely (56%) to keep house.

The relationship between age and working is very important. The younger members of the sample (those between 18 and 35) are much more likely to be working than the older members of the sample. When we look just at the women in their 'workyears' (18-65), we find that 62% of the 18-35 year olds are working, among the 36-50 year olds 57% work, and finally, 44% of the 51-65 year olds are working. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level, and seems to confirm what Smith (1979) indicated in his prognosis of women in the labor force in the next decade. There are more women working in the younger and middle age years than before, and it is these younger women who will stay with the work force, ultimately increasing women's participation at all age levels as their cohorts age.

We find that city size is significantly (.05) related

to women's labor force participation. Women from small towns (under 10,000) and small cities (10,000 to 50,000) are just a little more likely to be keeping house (55% and 52%) than working. In cities over 50,000, the difference is more pronounced: almost 58% of the women are working. This relationship may be explained in part by the lack of job opportunities that may be available to women in smaller sized towns and cities in the U.S. This would affect the propensity towards work of women already in a given area as well as the attraction of women to a type of area (generally urban, at this time) which offers more job opportunities. If more jobs for women were available in smaller towns, we might find women's work patterns to be similar in both urban and rural areas.

Another factor significantly related to a woman's work participation is religious affiliation, with women having no religious preference the most likely to be working (73%). The major religious groupings appear to be fairly evenly split between women who are employed and those who keep house, with Protestants appearing to be a little more likely to be housekeepers (52%) than to be in the labor market, and the Jewish group having more working women (56%) than housewives. Another finding, significant at the .01 level, is that an individual's attendance at religious services seems to be an important indicator of whether a woman is working or not. Those women who attend religious services once a week are more likely to keep house than work. 57% of

regular churchgoers are housewives, while of those women who go to religious services less than once a year or never, 59% are working. It may be that regular attendance at religious services is an indicator of religious conservatism which ideologically encourages women to accept more traditional patterns of behavior for women.

Some additional variables which were investigated but found not to have significant relationships with women's work participation include: presence of teenage children at home, region, strength of religious affiliation, spouse's religion, happiness, happy marriage, father's occupational class, self-identified social class, and party identification.

### Background and Work Participation, Attitudes and Alienation

In the second part of the analysis we examine the associations between selected attitudes of the 758 women in the sample and their backgrounds and work participation. Within each of the three sections, which deal with sex role attitudes, political attitudes, and alienation, first relationships between each scale item and women's work participation are discussed, then each attitude scale and its relationships with demographic characteristics and work participation are examined.

#### Sex Role Attitudes

Individual items. The work experience seems to be strongly related to attitudes concerning nontraditional



female sex role behavior. Working women are strong (82%) in their disagreement as to whether women should take care of the home and not the country, compared to women who keep house (18%). Working women are higher in their approval (84%) of women working if their husband can support them than housekeepers (66%). The relationships of each of these items with work participation are significant at the .0001 level.

The other two sex role attitude questions deal more specifically with women's attitudes towards women as political office holders. There are significant (.0001) differences between the two groups of women in responses to these items, with employed women exhibiting more egalitarian attitudes. We find that women who keep house are more likely (24%) to disapprove of voting for a woman president than are working women (12%). Working women are also disapproving of the statement that women are not suited for politics. A plurality of 64% of the working women disagree, while only 40% of those keeping house disagree.

Sex role attitude scale. The sex role attitude scale was devised to illustrate differences in sex role images of women, measured by summed nontraditional responses to these 4 items, and was coded as either traditional or nontraditional (see Chapter IV). Women who work are significantly (.0001) more likely than housewives to profess belief in nontraditional sex role images for women, as measured by the scale. Over 76% of the working women

express nontraditional sex role orientations, compared to only 50% of the women who keep house.

For the entire sample, it was found that mother's work participation, religious preference, strength of religious affiliation, religious attendance, age, region of the country, number of siblings, party identification, and education of respondent, parents, and spouse, are all significantly related to the sex role scale.

Some of the greatest factors indicating sex role attitudes appear to be the educational achievements of the respondent, her parents, and her spouse. Women with a junior college degree or higher are more likely (79%) to be in favor of nontraditional sex roles than women with less than a high school degree (44%). The relationship is highly significant, at the .0001 level. Women with the highest levels of formal education are most in favor of nontraditional sex role attitudes probably in part because they have the most to gain from a woman being able to occupy non-family roles.

While for both housewives and women who hold jobs the proportion holding nontraditional egalitarian sex role attitudes increases significantly (.0001 and .001) with education, the proportion in each degree category for housewives is consistently less than in the same categories for working women. 61% of the working women with less than a high school degree and 87% with an AA degree or higher hold contemporary sex role attitudes, while 37% of the

housewives with less than high school and 57% with an AA degree or higher hold nontraditional sex role attitudes.

Father's and mothers' degrees have similar significant (.0001 in both cases) relationships with respondent's sex role attitudes. Women whose fathers have an AA degree or higher are more likely (86%) to approve of nontraditional sex roles than women whose fathers have less than a high school degree (55%), and 78% of the women whose mothers completed at least an AA degree have more nontraditional sex role attitudes, as do 55% of the women whose mothers did not finish high school. When we look at how parent's education relates to the sex role attitudes of working women vs those who keep house, we find the same relationships as observed for respondent's education.

Finally, a woman's husband's degree is significantly (.0001) related to her sex role attitudes. 75% of the women whose husbands earned an AA degree or more hold nontraditional sex role attitudes, compared to 37% of the women whose husbands have less than a high school education. Both groups of women still exhibit the same pattern of higher spouse's education significantly (.0001 in both cases) corresponding with higher proportions of women holding egalitarian sex role attitudes, and we find the previously observed difference between housewives and working women of consistently lower proportions of egalitarian attitudes among the housewives. (In minor contrast to the patterns exhibited by respondent's,

mother's, and father's education, no appreciable difference in likelihood of women's nontraditional sex role attitudes for spouses with high school or an AA degree is found, in any of the crosstabulations.)

As would be expected, older women (over age 66) are the least likely of our four age categories to support liberated sex role attitudes, and women in the youngest age category (18-35 year olds) the most likely. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level. The percent supporting nontraditional sex role attitudes for each age group is as follows: 18-35 (78%), 36-50 (61%), 51-65 (51%), 66 and over (34%). Younger women may be more egalitarian in their sex role attitudes because they have a greater opportunity to participate in varied occupations in the work force and the potential to remain in their jobs longer than older women, and because they have been exposed to the changing images of women in the media, from their parents and friends, and from their own work experiences.

Employed women in each of the age categories are significantly (.001) more likely to hold nontraditional than traditional sex role attitudes. In addition the proportion of working women in support of contemporary sex roles also decreases with age, from 85% of the 18-35 year olds to 64% of those 51-65. There is a more significant (.0001) relationship between age and sex role attitudes among those women who keep house. While the majority (68%) of those between the ages of 18 and 35 profess nontraditional sex

role attitudes, the proportions are even among the 36 to 50 year olds, with traditional sex role attitudes becoming the majority opinion for those over age 50: of those who are between the ages of 51 and 65, 59% profess traditional sex role attitudes, as do 69% of those who are 66 years old or more. The difference between housewives and working women is clearest in the over 50 age groups: 36% of the workers and 64% of the housewives in these age groups hold traditional sex role attitudes.

We find as expected that the size of the family (both current and the family of origin) does significantly (.0001 in both cases) affect sex role attitudes. 72% of the women who came from single child or two child families have liberal sex role attitudes, compared to 53% of the women who came from families with 5 or more children.

For working women, size of the family that the respondent was brought up in is not significantly related to sex role attitudes, while it is for women who keep house, with a significance level of .01. A majority of the employed women, no matter what their family of origin size, hold nontraditional sex role attitudes (80% with 0 or 1 sibling, 79% with 2 to 4 siblings, and 70% of those who had more than 4 siblings). Women who keep house are more likely (59%) to hold nontraditional sex role attitudes if their family of origin had 0 or 1 children than if it was composed of 5 or more children (42%).

Women with no children are more likely (78%) to adopt

nontraditional sex role attitudes than women with four or more children (53%). While this relationship, for the entire sample, is significant at the .0001 level, it is not significant for either housewives or working women. It thus seems that the observed relationship between number of children and sex role attitudes is considerably influenced by the relationship between number of children and work participation, in which it is clear that women who work are significantly more likely to have fewer children. The women with fewer children who are more likely to support contemporary sex roles are also those who are employed.

While there appears to be a significant relationship between the number of preschoolers, under age 6, and women's attitudes toward female sex roles, further investigation shows that the relationship seems to be due to age, and is insignificant. Surprisingly, the proportion of women who have egalitarian attitudes increases with the number of preschoolers, for the entire sample and for both employed women and housewives. In as much as older women are unlikely to be in the population of women with preschoolers, we examined the relationship between sex role attitudes and number of preschoolers for just women under age 36. For these younger women, the relationship between sex role attitudes and number of preschoolers is not significant. This is true for the entire sample, for working women and for housewives. Controlling for marital status does not change the lack of a significant relationship. We conclude

that the observed positive relationship for women of all ages between number of preschoolers and probability of having egalitarian attitudes is attributable to the influence of age, because older women, who have no preschoolers, are likely to have traditional sex role attitudes.

As expected, women who hold no religious affiliation are the most likely (88%) group to accept nontraditional sex role attitudes. A surprising finding is that it is not Catholic women, but Protestant women, who are the least likely religious group to accept nontraditional sex role attitudes. 71% of the Catholic women, 67% of the Jewish women, and 58% of the Protestant women agree with nontraditional roles for women. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level. The relationship between religious affiliation and sex role attitudes remains the same when work participation is controlled for.

Women who answer that their strength of religious affiliation is 'strong' are more likely (46%) to hold traditional sex role attitudes than women who answer that their strength is 'not very strong' (31%) or 'somewhat strong' (33%). This relationship is significant at the .001 level. The same type of relationship between strength of religious affiliation and sex role attitudes is exhibited for both working women and those who keep house, although we find that the employed women whose strength of religious affiliation is 'strong' are more likely to be nontraditional

in their sex role attitudes (67%) than women who keep house and answer that their strength of affiliation is 'strong' (43%). Each of these relationships is significant at the .05 level.

There is a significant (.0001) relationship between attendance at religious services and sex role attitudes. As might be expected, women who attend religious services more frequently are the most likely to hold traditional sex role attitudes, with the proportion holding this type of attitude declining along with religious service attendance. The proportions decline smoothly from 48% of those who attend religious services on a weekly basis professing traditional attitudes towards women's sex roles to 27% of those with attendance a few times a year or less. Similar significant (.001 and .01) relationships are observed for housewives and working women, although the pattern of increasing likelihood of nontraditional sex role attitudes with decreasing attendance is not as smooth for the working women. We believe that religion is a significant factor in predicting a woman's sex role attitudes because the religious dogma of the Judeo-Christian religions provides a very strong sex role image for women to follow and suggests women be housewives and take care of the children rather than compete with men for self satisfaction or economic gain.

We find that the West is the most likely section of the country to have women who support nontraditional sex roles (74%), and those in the South are least in favor of them



(50%). The Southern women are set well apart from those in the rest of the country: the proportions in all other regions are about 70%. This relationship is significant at the .0001 level.

Among employed women region is not significantly related to sex role attitudes: roughly 80% of the working women in each region hold egalitarian sex role attitudes. Region is, however, significantly (.0001) related to sex role attitudes for those women who keep house. The women who keep house in the Southern region of the country are much more likely to hold traditional sex role attitudes than those in the rest of the country. 64% of the housewives in the South, compared to 44% in the Midwest, 38% in the Northeast, and 35% in the West, hold traditional sex role attitudes. We thus find an apparent interaction effect between region and work participation, such that housewives' attitudes towards women's sex roles are affected by region, but working women's attitudes remain liberal despite region.

While size of city appears to be related to sex role attitudes, at only the .05 level, the relationship seems to be due to the relationship between city size and work participation. 56% of the women in the smallest areas, compared to 68% of those in the largest cities, hold nontraditional sex role attitudes. Thus Southern women and women in rural areas are the most conservative groups in their sex role attitudes. The significance of this

relationship disappears, however, when work participation is controlled for. It appears as though the original relationship is influenced by the predominance of employed women, who are more egalitarian in attitudes, in larger areas, and housewives, more traditional, in smaller areas.

The women who have declared their independence from any traditional party are more likely (70%) than any of those making any other political affiliation choice to hold nontraditional sex role attitudes. Of the women who profess a party affiliation, 63% of the Democrats and 56% of the Republicans support nontraditional sex role attitudes. Thus it seems that the women who hold egalitarian sex role attitudes have also rebelled in being affiliated with a traditional political party. Of those women with liberal sex role attitudes, 40% are Democrats, 22% Republicans, and 37% independents. One reason it is more likely for women with liberal sex role attitudes to be found in the Democratic party than the Republican party may be because of the rigid platform that Republican candidates have taken against the Equal Rights Amendment and for the right to life. These stands may also in part explain why the Republicans comprise by far the smallest group in the sample (189), third to Democrats (309) and independents (205). When women's work participation is controlled for, however, it is found that there is not a significant relationship between party identification and sex role attitudes for either working women or housewives.

The relationship between respondent's income and sex role attitudes is significant at the .05 level, such that the women with higher incomes tend to be more likely to respond in the nontraditional direction. This relationship, however, disappears when controlling for work participation. This can be attributed to the facts that it is the working women who have higher incomes and who are nontraditional in their sex role attitudes, and the women who keep house who have lower incomes (if any) and who are traditional in attitudes.

We find that the proportion of women supporting liberal sex role attitudes increases significantly (.0001) with family income. The proportion having liberated attitudes towards women's sex roles decreases from roughly 82% of the women with the highest level of family incomes to only 47% of those whose earnings are in the lowest category.

The relationship between family income and sex role attitudes is significant at the .05 level for working women, who are most likely to hold nontraditional sex role attitudes no matter what their family income. 73% of those working women whose families earn under \$20,000, and 86% of those with family income over \$20,000, have nontraditional sex role attitudes. While there is an overall increase in the proportion nontraditional as income increases, the trend is rough. Women who keep house exhibit a more significant (.0001) relationship between family income and sex role attitudes. They are most likely to profess traditional sex

role attitudes unless their family income is above \$20,000. Of the women who keep house, only 35% of those whose families earn under \$5,000 and 47% of those whose families earn between \$10,000 and \$14,000, but 82% of those who have family earnings between \$20,000 and \$24,999, hold egalitarian sex role attitudes.

Daughters of working mothers are significantly (.0001) more likely (74%) to have liberal sex role attitudes than daughters of mothers who haven't worked (50%). A working mother seems to provide an important link to daughter's future sex role attitudes as well as her desire to work. Mother's work experience is found to be more significant in its relationship with sex role attitudes for women who keep house (.0001) than for working women (.05). 82% of the working women whose mothers worked hold nontraditional sex role attitudes, as compared to 70% of working women with mothers who keep house. 64% of the housewives whose mothers worked, and 37% whose mothers did not, hold nontraditional attitudes. Thus we see that a mother working may affect through socialization a change and transmittance of nontraditional sex roles to a daughter whether she works or not. If a woman brought up in a traditional family environment (with a housewife mother) works, she may acquire nontraditional sex role attitudes; but if neither her mother nor she works, then she is much more likely to hold on to traditional sex role attitudes. Whether the mother worked when the respondent was a baby or was 16 years old is not

significant either for the entire sample, for the housewives, or for working women.

A woman's attitudes towards female sex roles are not related to the respondent's perceived happiness, the perceived happiness of her marriage, or to her marital status, and, as discussed above, to number of children, city size, and respondent's income.

### Political Attitudes

Individual political items. Housewives and working women are found to differ significantly in their responses to a number of items dealing with contemporary political issues. These items were selected for analysis because they are closely related to current conservative/liberal cleavages. It should be noted that most of the items are related to social, and not economic issues, and thus we expect different relationships with such variables as income, work status, and class, than we would for a measure of economic attitudes.

Both housewives and employed women are most likely to respond that the courts are not harsh enough in dealing with criminals, with working women tending to be significantly (.05) more likely (92%) to choose this response than housewives (88%). While neither group approves of legalizing marijuana, working women are significantly (.0001) more likely (34%) to be in favor of legalization than housewives (21%).

The majority of the sample of women is in favor of

making capital punishment legal, with working women somewhat more likely to favor capital punishment (70%) than housewives (64%) (although the relationship is not significant). When it comes to wiretapping to gain evidence, it is found that the majority (85%) of women disapprove of such procedures, with no significant difference between the two groups. There is no significant difference between working women and women who keep house on the statement concerning government reducing income differences, with about 33% of each group disagreeing.

One area of strong difference deals with the questions on pornography and its effects. It was found that housekeepers are significantly (.0001) more likely (71%) to conclude that pornographic materials lead to a breakdown in morals than working women (56%), and are also significantly (.0001) more likely (76%) than working women (57%) to respond that rape is increased by pornography. Women who keep house are significantly (.05) more likely to be in favor of making divorce laws more difficult. 51% of the housekeepers disapprove of making divorce laws easier, compared to 39% of the working women.

A striking difference, significant at the .0001 level, appears in women's attitudes concerning the abortion issue. Working women are much more likely to support abortion for any reason than are women who keep house. Over 40% of the women who work indicate a supportive position on this item, compared to 26% of the women who keep house. For women who

have no children, the relationship is not significant: both working women and women who keep house are slightly more likely to oppose abortion for any reason than to approve of it. For women with at least 1 child, however, we find much lower percentages favoring abortion for any reason. Working women with at least 1 child are significantly (.01) more likely (35%) to favor abortion for any reason than women who keep house and have at least 1 child (24%).

Employed women do not have very different responses to the problem of rating subjective liberalism or conservatism than the housewives. Both groups are more likely to be professed conservatives or moderates than liberals. While working women are more likely to indicate that they are liberal than housewives, by 30% to 24%, this difference is not significant.

Political attitude scale. We next turn our analysis towards looking at variables which relate to political attitudes. A scale was constructed from responses to the items discussed above (see Chapter IV). Overall, 60% of the sample have conservative ratings, 30% moderate, and 10% liberal. While employed women appear more liberated in their points of view concerning the individual items, and thus the summated scale, than women who keep house, most women have a conservative viewpoint, similar to men. Women keeping house are significantly (.001) more likely to be conservative on the political orientation scale than women in the labor market. Over 60% of the housekeepers have

conservative attitudes on the 10 question scale, as compared to 48% of the working women.

Those women who tend to be the most likely to be liberal are those who are working, who are the youngest, who are the most educated, who have the most educated parents and spouse, who have no religious group preference, not very strong affiliation, and infrequent or nonexistent church or temple attendance, who live in the West, who profess to be independent in their party identification, whose mothers worked, and who are contemporary in their sex role attitudes.

We find that women with high educational achievements are more likely to have liberal responses than those with less than high school educations. Although most of the respondents hold conservative political attitudes, there is significant (.0001) differentiation between those with varying educational backgrounds. Only 64% of the women with less than a high school degree, compared to 50% of those with junior college or higher degrees, profess conservative political attitudes.

While education is still significantly related to political attitudes when work is controlled for, the direction of the relationship is different for each group of women. For employed women, the relationship is significant at the .01 level, and the higher the degree the less likely the women are to be conservative in political attitudes. Of working women with less than high school 53% have



conservative political attitudes, compared to 38% of the women with AA degrees or higher. Among the women who keep house, however, the higher the education the more conservative the political attitude. 68% of housewives with less than a high school degree and 82% of the housewives with a junior college degree or higher have conservative political attitudes. The relationship for women who keep house is significant at the .05 level.

The relationships between women's political attitudes and their parents' educational achievements are significant at the .0001 level. If their father had a junior college degree or more, women are significantly more likely (20%) to be liberal in their political attitudes than women whose fathers had less of an education: only 5% of those whose fathers had less than high school are liberal. In a slight contrast to the monotonic relationship of father's education with daughter's political attitudes, it is found that the daughters of mothers with a high school degree are the most likely (18%) to be liberal, followed by daughters of mothers who had an AA degree or more (17%), then respondents with mothers who had attained less than high school (5%). It should be noted that only 7% of the mothers had more than high school, and this small proportion could easily have affected the observed frequencies.

There is a significant (.01) relationship between spouse's education and women's political attitudes. Again, the proportion of women with conservative attitudes

increases as education decreases, such that 53% of women whose husbands have at least an AA degree are conservative, as are 72% of those whose husbands have less than a high school degree.

When controlling for women's work participation, it is found that both mother's and father's degrees are significantly (.01 or lower) associated with daughter's political attitudes in the same manner. Husband's highest degree is significantly (.01) related only to employed wives' political attitudes, but not to housewives' political attitudes. 39% of the working women whose husbands finished junior college or a more advanced curriculum hold conservative political attitudes, compared to 73% of the women whose husbands did not finish high school.

Married women are significantly (.05) more likely to be conservative in their political attitudes than nonmarried women. 65% of the married women profess conservative attitudes, compared to 52% of the nonmarried women. When work participation is accounted for, it is found that marital status remains a significant (.05) factor in women's political attitudes, with married women overall more likely to be conservative in both groups.

The number of children in the current family is significantly (.0001) related to political attitudes for the entire sample and for working women, but is insignificant for women who keep house. This difference might be due to the greater variation in both marital status and number of

children among the women who are employed, such that there are both conservative (those who are married and have more children) and liberal (those who are unmarried or have less children) working women, and the lesser variation among women who keep house, such that most are married (more conservative) and have children (again, more conservative).

It is found that religious affiliation is significantly (.0001) related to political attitudes. Those professing no religious affiliation are most likely to also profess liberal attitudes. Unexpectedly, the Jewish group, which is a very small part of the sample, has no members who respond in the liberal direction. The majority of the Protestant, Catholic, and 'other' women are conservative politically, while Jewish women and women with no religious affiliation are for the most part moderate in their political attitudes. For both employed women and housewives, religion is significantly (.001 and .0001) related to political attitudes. The not affiliated group is most likely to be liberal, and the Catholic and Protestant groups least likely in both cases. The Catholic and Protestant housewives are the most likely of all to be conservative.

Women who feel stronger religious group ties and attend religious services more frequently are significantly more likely (.0001 in both cases) to indicate that they believe in more conservative political attitudes than women who are less strong in their religious affiliation, or who attend religious services less often. 78% of those who respond

'strong', compared to 49% who respond 'not very strong' have conservative ratings on the scale, as do 78% of those attending religious services once a week, compared to 39% of those attending once a year or never. For both housewives and working women, the stronger the religious strength or more frequent the attendance at services the more likely their political attitudes are to be conservative. While the relationships are similar, and all significant (.0001), the proportions of women with conservative attitudes are higher overall for the housewives.

Age is also found to be significantly (.0001) related to political attitudes. The proportion conservative progresses from the younger women (18-35), who are the least conservative age group, with 43% professing conservative political attitudes, to those over 50, with 78% choosing conservative attitudes.

Age is significant (.0001) in determining political attitudes for both working women and women who keep house. In both groups the majority in each age group is conservative except for the youngest age group (18-35) of employed women, in which only 37% express conservative political attitudes. The direction of the relationship, however, remains the older the age group, the more conservative the political attitudes, with housewives overall more likely to be conservative than working women. It is interesting to note that none of the women who are over age 65 profess liberal attitudes.

Women in the West, and not the expected Northeast, are the least conservative group, with somewhat under half of the Westerners and slightly over half of the Northeasterners choosing conservative responses. Women in the Midwest and South are the most conservative, with roughly two-thirds of the respondents professing conservatism. The relationship between region and political attitudes is significant at the .01 level.

Throughout the country a majority of the women in both groups express conservative political views except for working women in the West and Northeast, where only 38% and 41%, respectively, hold conservative political attitudes. The relationships remain significant at the .05 level and are similar for both housewives and women in the work force.

The relationship between city size and political attitudes is significant at the .0001 level. Women from the smallest areas, towns under 10,000, are the most likely (67%) to be conservative, and those from the largest cities, over 500,000, are the least likely (48%). City size is found to be significantly (.01) related to political attitudes for working women but not for housewives. In both groups, women in the smallest population areas are the most conservative, and those in the largest areas are the most likely to be liberal. The proportion conservative declines from 59% of the employed women in cities under 10,000 population to 42% of the women in cities over 500,000 in population. We attribute the decline in significance when

work participation is accounted for to the unequal distribution of working women in more populated areas. Women in more populated areas tend to be more likely to be working, and it is these women in the work force who influence the likelihood of finding more liberal women in more populated areas. Conversely, the women who keep house and who tend to be more politically conservative also tend to be more likely to reside in less populated areas.

Ratings on the political attitude scale are significantly (.0001) affected by women's political party identification. The Republicans are more likely (73%) to be conservative than the Democrats (60%), and the independents are the least likely (49%) to be conservative of all three groups.

Political party affiliation is found to be significantly (.0001) associated with political attitudes for working women, but not for housewives. 67% of the employed Republican women, 57% of the working Democratic women, and 34% of the independent women who work favor conservative political attitudes. At least two-thirds of the housewives in each party identification category are conservative in their political attitudes.

While family income appears to be significantly (.05) related to political attitudes, the relationship disappears when work participation is taken into account. While there is no consistent pattern in the likelihood of being conservative as family income increases, it is found that

the percent liberal increases with family income from 7% of those earning under \$5,000, to 19% of those earning over \$25,000. When work participation is controlled for, it is found that the relationship between family income and political attitudes is insignificant for both working women and housewives. We attribute this to the observation that working women are both most likely to be liberal and most likely to have higher family incomes. We conclude that political attitudes, at least the primarily social (as opposed to economic) attitudes which are measured by this scale, are not related to family income.

Women whose mothers ever worked are less likely (51%) to be conservative than women whose mothers hadn't worked (74%). This relationship is significant at the .0001 level. Whether mother worked or not is also significantly related to political attitudes for employed women, at the .01 level, and for housewives, at the .001 level. The decline in significance can be explained by the relationship of mother's work participation with daughter's work participation: daughters of mothers who worked are most likely to work and, at the same time, least likely to be conservative. There remains, however, at least some contribution of mother's work participation to daughter's political attitudes. Both women who keep house and women in the work force are more likely to hold conservative political attitudes if the mother did not work, with the proportions of housewives with conservative political

attitudes higher overall than the proportions of working women. 64% of the working women whose mothers didn't work hold conservative political views, compared to 81% of the housewives in the same category.

Women whose families of origin were smaller are significantly (.01) less likely to have conservative political attitudes than those from larger families. 50% of the women with 0 or 1 sibling profess conservative attitudes, compared to 65% of those with more than 4 siblings. For working women, family of origin size is significantly (.05) related to political attitudes, but it is not for housewives. Again, the larger the family size the more likely to be conservative the respondent is in her political attitudes. 57% of the working women with more than 4 siblings have conservative political attitudes, compared to 39% of women who were only children or had one sibling in the family.

Women who are liberal in their political attitudes are also significantly (.0001) more likely to be supportive of nontraditional sex role attitudes. 92% of those women who are liberal in their political attitudes also hold nontraditional sex role attitudes, contrasted with 54% of those who profess conservative political attitudes. Political attitudes are found to be significantly (.0001) related to sex role attitudes in the same way for both housewives and employed women. The more conservative women are in their political attitudes, the more traditional their



sex role attitudes. Overall, the women who keep house are both less supportive of nontraditional sex roles and less likely to be liberal than employed women.

Variables which were found to not have a significant relationship with women's responses on the political attitude measure included the number of preschoolers, number of teenagers, and whether the mother worked when the respondent was a preschooler or 16 years of age.

### Alienation

Alienation items. NORC included in the General Social Survey 6 items designed to measure alienation. The relationships between women's work participation and the 6 alienation questions are examined separately. It appears that women who keep house are a little more likely to be alienated than women who work, although the two groups of women are not significantly different on all questions.

It is found that there is no significant difference between women who are employed and those who keep house on opinions to the statements that: 'people running the country don't care', 'the rich get richer', 'powerful people take advantage', and 'the people in Washington D.C. are out of touch'. In each case women who keep house are at least somewhat more likely to choose responses in the alienated direction. There is, however, a significant (.05) difference between housewives and working women in responses to the item 'what you think doesn't count'. 54% of working women agree with this statement, as do 63% of women keeping

house. In addition, housewives and employed women are significantly (.01) different in reactions to the statement 'you're left out of things', with 24% of working women and 34% of housekeepers agreeing.

Alienation scale. A scale was formed from responses to these 6 items (see Chapter IV), with 36% of the respondents having overall low ratings, 31% medium, and 34% high (rounding). It is found that women who keep house are more likely to be represented in the high category of alienation than working women, who are dominant in the low alienation category. While the most prevalent rating on alienation for working women is low (38%), women who keep house are most likely (38%) to score 'high' on alienation. The relationship between women's work participation and the alienation scale is significant at the .05 level.

Next we examine the relationships of the alienation scale with demographic variables and the two attitude measures. The women who are significantly more likely to be alienated are those who have low formal education and parents and spouse with low levels of formal education, have more preschoolers, who have a lower family income, and who perceive themselves as being unhappier, and who are more likely to profess nontraditional sex role attitudes.

Alienation is significantly (.0001) related to respondent's educational attainment. Women with a post high school degree are much more likely (50%) not to respond that they feel alienated, compared to women who do not have a

high school diploma (27%). Likelihood of having a high alienation rating decreases with educational attainment, from 48% of those with less than high school to 19% of women with an AA degree or more. Significant (.0001) relationships with the same pattern are found between respondent's alienation and mother's, father's, and spouse's degrees.

Formal education of both housewives and employed women is found to be significantly (.001 and .01) related to feelings of alienation in the same way, such that the higher the degree earned, the less likely to be alienated the woman is. The same patterns, significant at the .05 level, are found for the relationships between parents' degrees and daughter's alienation, controlling for work participation. Spouse's degree achievement is significantly (.001) related in the same direction to wives' alienation for housewives, but is insignificant for working women.

Women who are not generally happy in their lives also are significantly (.01) more likely to feel alienated. 52% of the women who are 'not too happy', compared to 28% of the women who are 'very happy', have high feelings of alienation. General happiness is found to be significantly (.05) related to feelings of alienation for women who work. 21% of the 'very happy' working women have high feelings of alienation as do 49% of the 'not too happy' working women. Although the relationship is not significant for women who keep house, the direction remains the same.

It is found that region of the country is not related to women's alienation. Size of the area, however, appears to be. Women from small towns and cities under 10,000 are significantly (.05) more likely to feel alienated than women from larger areas. However, when women's work participation is taken into account, the relationship is found to be insignificant for both working women and women who keep house. Therefore, city size is not related to alienation, and the observed relationship seems to be due to the distribution of working women, low on alienation, in larger areas, and women who keep house, higher on alienation, in smaller areas.

Women who have high family incomes are also likely to report low feelings of alienation. 53% of the women with family incomes over \$25,000, compared to 29% of the women with family incomes under \$5,000, have low ratings on the alienation scale. The relationship between alienation and family income is significant at the .001 level. Family income is significantly (.001) associated with alienation for housewives but not for working women. 51% of the housewives with family incomes under \$5,000 have high levels of alienation, compared to 8% of the women whose families earn \$25,000 or more.

Respondent's income does not have a significant relationship with alienation for the entire sample, for working women, or for housewives. These relationships are, of course, all strongly influenced by the fact that few

women who keep house have an income, so most of the women included in the analysis are working. Although there is a slight tendency for working women's alienation to decrease with income increasing, their alienation is overall low. It appears as though it is the work experience itself, and not the monetary reward, which influences lower alienation.

Although women's feelings of alienation appear to be significantly (.05) related to the number of children in the respondent's family of origin, such that those coming from the larger families are also the most likely to feel alienated, the relationship is apparently influenced by work participation. 41% of the respondents from families with 5 or more children are high on alienation, but only 31% of those from 1 or 2 child families are. This relationship disappears when working women and women who keep house are examined separately. It seems as though the observed relationship is influenced by the fact that working women, who are low on alienation, tend to come from smaller families, and women who keep house, who are high on alienation, from larger families.

Women's feelings of alienation are not significantly related to the number of children the respondent has, either for the sample as a whole, for employed women, or for women who keep house. Having children under 6 years of age at home is not related to feelings of alienation for the sample as a whole or for women who work, but it is significantly (.05) related for women who keep house. For the mothers who

keep house, the more preschoolers, the higher their feelings of alienation. Housewives with 0 or 1 preschooler are similar to working women in their likelihood of expressing each level of alienation. Housewives with 2 preschoolers, however, have a lower probability (22%) of low alienation than working women with 2 preschoolers (72%). It seems that working women have escaped the alienation connected with having several preschoolers.

Alienation is not significantly related to religious preference for the sample as a whole, for working women, or for women who keep house. While its relationships with religious strength and religious attendance are significant at the .05 level, there are quite uneven patterns of alienation decreasing with increasing strength and increasing attendance. There are still inconsistent relationships between alienation and the religious participation variables when work participation is controlled for. It is plausible that the interrelationships of the variables measuring religious participation with work participation have led to the observed relationships. For example working women tend to have lower levels of religious participation and be lower on alienation, but, on the other hand, those with higher religious participation tend somewhat to be lower on alienation.

Women who profess liberal sex role attitudes are significantly (.01) more likely to be low on alienation. Women who approve of more traditional roles for women have

their highest proportion (40%) in the high alienation category, and women having nontraditional sex role attitudes are most likely (40%) to be low on alienation. The reason that low feelings of alienation may be associated with liberal sex role attitudes may speculatively be explained by its possible relationship to the well-being and mental adjustment of women who have adopted a new role image of themselves as women, and indicate this in their overall liberal attitudes.

Sex role attitudes are significantly (.05) related to feelings of alienation for women who are in the work force but not for housewives, although the direction of the relationship is the same for both groups. The lower the feelings of alienation, the higher the proportion of respondents favorable to nontraditional sex role attitudes. 42% of those working women who favor nontraditional sex roles have low feelings of alienation, while of those holding more traditional sex role attitudes 27% are low on alienation. Political attitudes are unrelated to feelings of alienation for both groups of women.

It is found that the probability of feeling alienation is not significantly related to mother's work participation, perceived happiness of marriage, age, marital status, or political party identification, or as discussed above, to region, city size, respondent's income, number of siblings, number of children, religious preference, and political attitudes.

### Social Class Differences Among Working Women

An important aspect of this research is the comparison of the attitudes of manual and nonmanual female workers. Among the most important findings from this research are the observed associations (to be discussed below) between social class (both self-identified and more 'objectively' measured) and the 3 attitude scales. It is found that subjective class identification is not related to political orientation or alienation, but is significantly related, at the .01 level, with sex role attitudes. Thus it appears that sex role images are related, as suggested earlier, to a cultural difference between white collar and blue collar women.

When we look at the relationships between objective measures of social class and the attitude scales, we arrive at similar findings for social class not being related to political attitudes, but we do not find that objective social class is related to the attitudes dealing with sex role images and we do find that it is related to alienation. Thus we find a conflict in the results we arrive at by use of the two different means of measuring social class. Although political orientation is not significantly different for working women of different social classes, using either type of measure, we must reserve judgment on the relationships of alienation and sex role attitudes with social class.

Self-identified social class is found to be



significantly (.01) related to the sex role scale. 84% of women who believe themselves to be middle or upper class profess contemporary sex role attitudes, as opposed to 70% of the women identifying themselves as lower or working class. The directions of the relationships between sex role attitudes and the two objective measures of social class follow the same pattern, although neither relationship is significant. In each class category (objective and subjective), the majority of women hold contemporary attitudes, with the middle (or nonmanual) group being the most likely to hold contemporary sex role attitudes.

It is important here to emphasize that only working women are being examined. They are far more likely to hold egalitarian attitudes than women who keep house, which explains the preponderance of those with nontraditional attitudes in all class categories. The observed relationship between subjective identification and sex role attitudes, however, poses an interesting problem. This relationship may well be attributable to the fact that subjective identification is composed of many characteristics, each of which may have at least some bearing on sex role attitudes. It should be recalled that many of women's demographic characteristics have significant relationships with women's sex role attitudes. Thus it is reasonable that the subjective identification, influenced by many of these characteristics, would also be related to sex role attitudes.

There are significant relationships between each of the objective class measures and the alienation scale. Although working class (Levison) working women are fairly evenly divided among the three levels of alienation, middle class working women are at least twice as likely to be either low (46%) or medium (36%) on alienation than they are to be high (18%). This relationship is significant at the .01 level. Thus it appears that middle class women are less likely to suffer from (or admit to) feelings of alienation than working class women. The significant (.001) relationship between the Knoke class categories and alienation follows the same pattern, with the percent of working women having high alienation increasing systematically from upper nonmanual (18%) to lower manual (43%).

The relationship of alienation with subjective social class follows the same pattern, but is not significant. Thus we see that a working woman's alienation is more related to class categories defined according to occupation than perceived class categories, which, of course, include many other factors. It should be noted that working women, as opposed to women who keep house, tend to be lower overall on alienation. It now appears, however, that although the work experience itself accompanies lower alienation, there is significant difference in alienation according to the type of work done. The type of occupational experience, then, does relate to a woman's alienation. The fact that subjective class identification does not relate to

alienation can tentatively be explained by the observation earlier in this chapter that many of women's demographic characteristics, which probably contribute to subjective identification, do not relate to alienation.

While none of the relationships between social class measures and the political attitude scale are significant, all show the same pattern, with about 50% of the working women in each class category responding in the conservative direction. There is a clear relationship between social class and just the liberal and moderate responses: the tendency is for the women in working or manual classes to be progressively more moderate and correspondingly less liberal than are those in the middle or nonmanual classes.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

As early as the late 1800's Charlotte Perkins Gilman asserted that equality in men's and women's positions could not be truly achieved until both sexes were equalized economically (Gilman, 1898). She observed that women's positions were biologically defined as childbearing and childrearing. Women were subjugated by men, and prevented from experiences and activities such as work, which would allow them to achieve mental maturity and freedom from men's control. Their economic dependence on men and their mental inferiority could only be eliminated when women could work to support themselves.

The world of the 1980's has changed from that of Ms. Gilman but maybe not as much as she would have liked to have seen. Her observation is still somewhat true today, with economic emancipation remaining a goal to be achieved by women. Many, if not most, women are still sexually dependent on the male gender for material and social well-being. Women are still being denied equal opportunity to use their full human potentials. Work is an essential part of human life, but women do not share the economic responsibilities of supporting a family on an equal basis with men. The transition, however, has begun for women to be treated in a similar manner to men in the economic world.

This change has not come about entirely by a series of smooth transitional stages, but also as a result of very sharp disturbances to the social system that have sped up the equalization process between men and women in sudden jolts (as argued in Chapter II dealing with the systems approach).

Prior to the 1890's women were for the most part excluded from participating in paid employment. The ideology of the day saw women as unfit to do any kind of work that would interfere with the so-called instinctual maternal needs of caring for children. Women were not allowed to participate in the political process nor were they part of any of the important business or social organizations that generally set policies for the community. The invention of the typewriter, however, made it possible for many women to go to work. Initially, young single women were the ones who took the clerical jobs made possible by the typewriter, but by the 1950's many married women were joining them.

During World War I and the 1920's not much occurred to increase women's participation in the work force, but during the 1920's women got the vote in an era in which there was greater permissiveness concerning the independence of women. During the Depression of the 1930's many men were without jobs, so there was certainly no room for women workers. World War II brought women back into the labor force, in larger numbers than ever before, and the postwar expansion

eventually created a booming economy with room for many women to work. There was much criticism of working mothers, however, for the possible harm that their being away from home might bring to their children. A frequent claim was that delinquent children were likely to come from homes where the mother worked.

The 1960's were filled with movements to change the access of minority groups and women to power structures. Women fought side by side with men to help blacks achieve more equality with whites. Some of the militant women saw that women were similarly discriminated against, and spearheaded the Women's Liberation Movement that began to question the male power structure in the business, professional, and political worlds. While many women did not identify with the women's movement, they certainly enjoyed the benefits that the movement provided in terms of changing the image and role of women and pressing legislators and businessmen to allow a greater participation of women in all areas of American life. The 1970's has seen more participation by women in political and economic spheres than ever before, but women still find themselves segregated in the workplace.

Women's participation in the economic sector, declared by Gilman to be necessary for their emancipation, has only just begun to be a major force. The percent of women who are in the American work force has increased to 51% in 1980, such that being a working woman is no longer deviant or

unusual. Being a housewife is not enough, either economically, intellectually, or in other ways, for many women in this society, who have responded by going back to college, joining self help groups and organizations that support political causes, and entering the work force in increasing numbers. Women's discontent with being housewives and their desire to do something else is being widely written about in women's magazines. In addition to articles by journalists, some research of social scientists is being condensed and reported for many women to read.

Many women are participating more in political campaigns and will probably continue to do so in the future. There is evidence in our study that more women are willing to vote for a woman president than earlier reported by Erskine (1971), Ferree (1974), Duncan and Duncan (1978), and Spitze and Huber (1980). Huber (1980) reports data from several different sources which show that the percent of women responding that they would vote for a woman president has increased (although not smoothly), from 40% in 1937 and 37% in 1947, to 58% in 1955 and 1959 and 54% in 1969, to 73% in 1972, and, finally, to 81% in 1978. The 1978 NORC data show 80% of women (including all the women in the original sample) agreeing with this item.

There are many indications that society is altering its economic sector, government policies, and legal system in adjustment to the changing forces of gender related attitudes and women's work participation. The latter half

of the twentieth century in America will probably be described in history books as a turbulent period of social adjustment, transition, and debate between various minority groups (i.e. blacks, the poor, women, etc.) and the dominant white anglo saxon Protestant male group over revising the distributions of wealth, power, education, jobs, child rearing, and household work.

It is very likely that the changes of the last two decades will be felt most of all by women in their work in the family and in the labor force. Since women are better represented in all social class backgrounds than are other minority groups they will probably have a greater chance of achieving their goals than other groups which lack the social, economic, and political resources at the command of many women. It is clear that working women are having an increasingly strong effect on political, economic and family life in America. Future changes will be necessary, however, if women are going to be treated in all occupations in the same manner as men. Whether change in women's positions will continue is a matter of society's reactions to unstable economic and political circumstances that appear on the horizon. Pressing concern over interest rates, high unemployment, and reduced social service programs threatens women's chances for permanent long range changes in their work positions.

While progress for women's participation in the work force has been seen on many levels a few old patterns still



prevail. Women are not yet entering professional and managerial careers in the same proportions as they do lower clerical and sales positions. Also, women in these higher level positions do not always receive the same pay for doing equivalent types of work as their male counterparts, nor do they necessarily get the same rank or title. This problem is, however, overshadowed by the fact that most women have no opportunity for equal pay because they are excluded from equal work. For the most part working women are still confined to the lowest ranking occupations in both manual and nonmanual types of labor. These types of jobs can be characterized as being very low paying, routine, lacking in promotional opportunities, and having little decision making responsibilities. While many businesses and corporate giants would like us to believe that women "have come a long way baby", and that opportunities exist for many young women, especially those with college degrees, to pursue new and interesting careers, the present employment and occupational figures do not warrant such conclusions. The employment figures of the 1990's may show a greater change in the occupational positions of women in the work force but for the time being only a small portion of those in the upper levels of professional and managerial work are women.

In this dissertation we have examined women who are in the work force and women who are housewives, both from a historical perspective as well as from a contemporary national study, to see if women whose situations are so

different may also differ in their backgrounds, in their attitudes about women's roles and certain political issues, and in their feelings of alienation. We have reexamined a number of relationships discussed in previous literature, in an attempt to confirm these findings, which were from diverse samples, by using a large, national, contemporary set of data. In addition to these confirmatory analyses, particular contributions of this dissertation include examination of a more extensive set of variables related to women's work; inclusion of additional items related to sex role attitudes; examination of women's beliefs concerning a number of socio-political issues; analyses of women's alienation; and comparisons between working women of differing social classes.

Our analyses of women in 1978 have shown that there are many great differences between working women and housewives. We found, similarly to Cain (1966), Bowen and Finegan (1969), Sweet (1973), Finegan (1975), Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer (1978), and Smith and Self (1980), that women who work appear to have as a group completed more advanced educational degrees than women who keep house. Our analyses confirm those of Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer (1978) and Smith and Self (1980) that a woman's mother's education is an important correlate of a daughter's desire for or incumbency in a job. In addition, we found that women who work are married to men who have higher educational accomplishments than the spouses of women who are

housewives.

Many researchers have found, as we did here, that whether a woman's mother worked has a significant effect on her work participation (Peterson, 1961; Roy, 1961; Astele, 1978; Smith-Lovin and Tickameyer, 1978). In some of these studies the data concerned whether the mother worked while the respondent was growing up, and in others the data concerned whether the mother ever worked. While the NORC data includes variables relating to both time frames, we found that only the 'ever worked' variable has a significant relationship with women's work participation.

We also found, as did Cain (1966), Collver (1968), Clarkson et al. (1970), Sweet (1973), Mason (1974), Stolzenberg and Waite (1977), and Waite (1980), that women who work are more likely to come from small families of origin than are housewives, and that employed women tend to have small families themselves. Although child care has always been a deterrent to women's participation in the work force, Moore and Hofferth (1979) pointed to an increase in the work participation of mothers of preschoolers. It seems from the current study of the NORC data that the care of small children under the age of six still prohibits many women from desiring or keeping a job, and having many children at home drastically increases the likelihood of a woman not working. In addition, our findings confirm those of Astle (1978) and Waite (1978) that younger women are much more likely to work than keep house. According to

Smith (1979), this is a trend that will probably continue.

In addition to confirming, on the same sample, the findings discussed above, which came from diverse samples, this research examined the relationships between women's work participation and a number of variables apparently not included in recent research. We found that both religious affiliation and attendance at religious services are significantly related to women's labor force participation, with women responding that they had no affiliation and those with the least frequent attendance the most likely to work. Variables which we found to have no significant relationship with women's employment include their number of teenage children, region, party identification, and self identified social class.

There are great differences between housewives and working women in the kinds of attitudes women in each group hold. Working women are in general more likely to hold attitudes favoring nontraditional sex roles, are more likely to be liberal in their political attitudes, and are less likely to feel alienated than women who keep house. Thus it is clear that women who are employed perceive themselves, their gender, and the political system in different ways than do women who keep house. Women who work may have a more expanded view of how various people and organizations work to dominate the economic and political institutions, while housewives may only gain these insights through their spouse's experiences or from what they read. In addition to

the work experience, many background characteristics relate to differences in the sex role and political attitudes and in the feelings of alienation of American women.

In this study we examined four items related to the approval of traditional female sex roles. Examination of these items singly and combined into a scale confirmed the findings of many researchers that women's work participation is significantly related to their attitudes concerning female behavior. We included not only the two items (related to voting for a female president and to women working if their husband can support them) which have been most frequently looked at by previous researchers, but, in addition, items concerning women's place in the home and their emotional suitability for politics. Our analyses showed that women who work are far more likely than women who keep house to profess the belief that women should not take care of running the home and leave the running of the country up to men and to disagree that men are better suited emotionally for politics than women, and confirmed previous research that working women are more likely than housewives to approve of married women working even if their husbands can support them and to agree with voting for a qualified female presidential candidate.

These represent all four of the 1978 NORC items related to female positions, although there were additional items in previous NORC surveys. We believe that examination of more than the often examined one or two items can only increase

our knowledge concerning this important issue, and will help in alleviating some of the inconsistencies found in previous research. Our understanding of attitudes concerning 'appropriate' female positions and behavior will be enhanced by inclusion in future research on national samples of not only these items, which should be repeated for comparisons over time, but additional related items as well.

Strong relationships between sex role attitudes and several background variables have been confirmed by this research and by other studies. Mason et al. (1976) found that women with a high formal education, a spouse with a high formal education, a small family, and a Jewish background are more likely to adopt egalitarian sex role attitudes. Thornton and Freedman (1979) found divorced women, women in small families, young women, highly educated women, and employed women to be more likely to profess liberated sex role attitudes. In this study we confirmed the above findings that women who hold nontraditional sex role attitudes are more likely to have, and to have parents and spouse who have, obtained a high educational degree, to come from a small family of origin. In contradiction to Mason et al. (1976), we found that women who profess no religious affiliation, rather than Jewish women, are the most likely to hold egalitarian sex role attitudes.

Huber et al. (1978) indicated that the older women in their sample were more likely than the younger women to hold traditional sex role attitudes. They also found their older

women to have lower education and lower likelihood of current or ever employment, each of which offers a possible explanation for these women's nonegalitarian sex role attitudes. Waite (1978) found that young women are more liberal in their sex role attitudes than are older women. We found in the current study that women in the younger (18-35) age category are more likely to profess egalitarian sex role attitudes than are women in the older (50-65) age category. Waite (1978) and Smith (1979) pointed out that as cohorts age they will be replaced by younger, more egalitarian, cohorts. We can thus expect the proportion of women holding egalitarian attitudes towards women's sex roles to increase over time, so that this will eventually become the dominant perspective.

A number of researchers have found, and we have shown in this research, that a mother's educational achievement is related to a daughter's sex role attitudes (Meier, 1972; Mason and Bumpass, 1975; Brogan and Kutner, 1976; and Vanfossen, 1977). A compelling reason for this association was offered by Vanfossen (1977) who suggested that a daughter's sex role attitudes are affected largely by her mother's position within the family's sex stratification system. She indicated that a mother with a great deal of education is able to modify the traditional pattern of male dominance which enables development of the daughter's liberal sex role attitudes. Furthermore, she suggested that the educated mother may also provide an important model for

her daughter, regardless of the mother's sex role attitudes. Two possible explanations of how a mother's education affects a daughter's sex role attitudes were suggested by Smith and Self (1980). According to them, the degree of communication between an educated mother and her daughter is more frequent and therefore the college educated mother is afforded a greater opportunity to transmit her attitudes. A second possibility is that college educated mothers interact in a particular way with their daughters so as to effectively impress upon them their attitudes. The researchers of both studies agreed that the mother's attitudes are very important to the development of the sex role attitudes of their daughters.

Other researchers have found a strong association between a respondents mother's work experience and adoption of nontraditional sex role attitudes (Nye and Hoffman, 1963; Meier, 1972; Vanfossen, 1977). In this dissertation, however, we did not find a significant association between women's attitudes towards female sex roles and mother's work experience while the daughter was growing up, although whether the mother ever worked (which could have been before the daughter's birth or during the daughter's adulthood) is significantly related to the daughter's sex role attitudes. While mother's work experience may well provide an alternative to the traditional model of women as housewives, the findings from this study suggest that further research needs to examine whether the relationship is, in fact,



attributable simply to socialization of daughters to accept working as a woman's position, or whether other factors (e.g. the economy or other historical factors which might have led daughters and mothers with certain like characteristics to work, or attitudes of previously working mothers) have influenced the relationship.

This research adds to the knowledge concerning women's approval of egalitarian sex roles by examination of several additional variables. We found that women who approve of egalitarian behavior for women are most likely to have a low strength of religious affiliation and a seldom or never attendance at organized religious services. In addition, we found that women who live in the South are the most likely to profess approval of traditional behavior and positions for women. These findings are not surprising considering the knowledge of social scientists concerning the social traditionalism of the South, which is related to the Southern emphasis on traditional moral and religious beliefs. The traditional Southern attitudes have recently been particularly enhanced with the emergence in the last few years of new religious and moral conservatism in the country, as espoused by the Southern based Moral Majority.

An important contribution of this dissertation is examination of women's beliefs concerning a number of political issues in which we find significant differences between women who work and women who keep house. On one side, housewives are more likely to agree that pornographic

materials lead to the breakdown of morals or lead to rape than working women, and are also more likely to argue that the divorce laws should be made easier. On the other side, working women are more likely to favor the legalization of marijuana usage and are more in favor of abortion for any reason than women who keep house. There is no significant difference in political attitudes which favor harsher court sentencing and return of capital punishment, and which oppose wiretapping and the reduction of income inequality. While overall the women in the sample are strongly on the conservative side in their ratings on the political attitude measure, we found that housewives are significantly more likely to have conservative ratings than working women.

We found that the women who tend to be the most likely to be liberal in their perspective on political issues, in addition to being those who work, are those who have high educational degrees and whose parents and spouses have similarly high educational attainments, who have no religious preference, not very strong religious affiliation, and infrequent or non-existent religious attendance, who live in the West, who profess to be independent in their political party identification, whose mothers have worked, and who hold nontraditional sex role attitudes.

We found age to be significantly related to women's political attitudes, with younger women more likely to profess liberal beliefs than older women. As older women are replaced by younger, better educated women there is the

expectation of a long term trend toward increased liberalism in our society. Stouffer (1954), in a study dealing with the public's political beliefs during the McCarthy era, suggested what was termed the "Demographic Hypothesis": that, first, younger age groups receive more years of formal education than did older age groups; second, the more educated a person is, the more likely he or she is to be politically liberal (no matter what the age); third, younger people are more liberal politically (no matter how much schooling they have). Therefore, Stouffer hypothesized, as younger and better educated people replace older people in the population, the proportion holding liberal attitudes should increase. We expect that this will happen with women's political attitudes as the younger cohorts replace the older ones, leaving us with a higher likelihood of women holding liberal political attitudes.

A major contribution of this research is the examination of women's alienation. Although the issue of alienation has received considerable attention in studies of men and their work, the same attention has not been found in research concerning women. There is, however, no reason to believe that alienation is any less important to women than it is to men.

Although the recent researchers of women's work participation seem to have ignored women's alienation, the closely related issues of happiness and satisfaction have been addressed. Ferree (1976) showed that blue collar

working women are happier and more satisfied with their lives than blue collar housewives. Wright (1978), however, using the NORC GSS data from 1972-1976, concluded that there is no difference between working women and housewives in their general happiness. He also found that there is no difference in general happiness between blue collar workers and blue collar housewives, in direct contradiction to the conclusions reached by Ferree, and found no significant difference in satisfaction of middle class workers and middle class housewives.

In this research we have begun to fill the gap in sociological knowledge concerning women's alienation by examining, separately and in a scale, a number of items which are related to different aspects of alienation. While only two of the six alienation items from the GSS are significantly related to women's work participation, overall it appears that housewives are a little more likely to be alienated than women who work. The two statements that significantly differentiate between the two groups of women are "what you think doesn't count" and "you're left out of things", with the women who keep house more likely to agree than the employed women. Despite the lack of a significant relationship between four of the items and women's work participation, we found that the women who are the most likely to be suffering from alienation (as measured by the summated scale) are those who stay home, clean the house, cook, and supervise young children. Housewives are

clearly far less likely than working women to have strong feelings of self worth.

In our examination of how other background variables relate to alienation we found that women who are significantly more alienated are, in addition to being housewives, those who have a low number of years of formal education, who have preschoolers, who have a low family income, who perceive themselves as being unhappier, and who hold traditional sex role attitudes.

Another important contribution of this research is a set of comparisons between working women of different social class categories. Just as we know to be the case with men, the social class of women who work should be an important factor in their lives. However, women's social class characteristics have been largely overlooked by social science research. In this research we include this important variable by examining relationships between several measures of social class, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, women's attitudes towards female sex roles, their attitudes concerning political issues, and their alienation.

According to Rainwater et al. (1959), Komarovsky (1962), and Rubin (1976) blue collar women should be more conservative in their political attitudes. (It should be noted that Rainwater et al. and Komarovsky used husband's social class as the measure.) These conclusions are also supported by political scientists, who for years have

believed that people from poor or blue collar backgrounds are conservative on political issues that are non-economic, but liberal on political issues of an economic nature (Lipset, 1963; Kelley and Chambliss, 1966; Erikson and Luttbeg, 1973). Hamilton (1972) disagreed to some extent with this school of thinking. He agreed that less advantaged workers are more politically liberal on economic issues but found that the poor and blue collar workers are not very different from middle and upper class workers in their political attitudes on non-economic issues. Our measure of political attitudes, which used predominately non-economic political issue items, is not significantly related to social class (whether occupational or self-identified), confirming Hamilton's assertion.

Social class membership and its association with sex role attitudes was discussed by Vanfossen (1977) who found blue collar women to hold more conservative sex role attitudes than white collar women. Ferree (1974) found no significant difference between blue collar and white collar women in their response to the question "if your party nominated a woman president, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?", and concluded that there was no association between social class membership and sex role attitudes. In her later research Ferree (1980) focused less attention on the differences between social class orientations and more on the differences between working women and housewives of the same social class background.

Although there is no reason to believe that women should differ from men in having their alienation related, to some extent, on their occupational or self-identified class, the relationship between social class membership and alienation of women does not appear to have been explored by recent researchers on women and work.

While political attitudes were found to be not related to women's social class, using either objective or subjective measures, in our analysis of the relationships of social class with sex role attitudes and alienation we discovered a difference depending on the kind of social class measure that was used. Objective measures of social class (based on occupational positions) appear to be significantly related to alienation but not to sex role attitudes, while subjective (self-identified) social class is significantly related to sex role attitudes but not to alienation. A plausible explanation for the lack of a relationship between objectively measured social class and women's sex role attitudes comes from the observation that most working women have liberated attitudes, and there may not be much room for variation within categories of working women. Although the same type of explanation might well be used to contradict the observation of a relationship between working women's occupational class and their alienation, a supportive explanation comes from the observation that men's alienation varies significantly by class category. It seems reasonable to expect that women's experiences in blue collar

jobs may also relate to higher feelings of alienation, and those in white collar positions may say that they experience lower levels of alienation. When we used a subjective measure of social class, indicated by respondent's self identification (using the same type of question used in the 1949 Centers' study), we found social class to be significantly related to sex role attitudes but not to degree of alienation. The questions of whether and how alienation and sex role attitudes are related to social class remain for future research.

One of the strong indications of this research is that education plays an important role in the transition of women from housewives to workers. A college education is also something that correlates with the development of more liberal political and sex role attitudes. The more educated women are not only participating in the mainstream of American work but they have embodied the most nontraditional sex role attitudes as their own. The majority of women in America, however, have not had the educational opportunities that so many younger women have today, but they are still the largest growing segment of the female labor force. It is the women with less education who are generally in working class families, which are often characterized by worse financial situations than are middle class families.

Most working women respond that they need to work to keep their families economically solvent. They are now important contributors to maintaining a family income that



is increasingly shrinking as prices of necessary goods and services rise at a faster rate than incomes do. The current effects of an economic recession have contributed to a change in the family structure, as now wives as well as husbands must leave the home environment to pursue paid work to support the family. The responsibilities for care of both the home and the children have shifted as a consequence. Many companies and most communities now have begun day care centers and after school centers to supervise and educate children. The previous emphasis on the mother's importance in child development has already begun to wane and society has begun to adjust to the absence of a parent at home all the time to take care of the house and children.

According to Moore and Sawhill (1976) the marital arrangement in today's society is caught between very traditional marriage arrangements and very egalitarian marriage arrangements that could become more dominant in the future. They point out that wives who engage in work outside the home are able to exercise more power and influence within their marriages than are wives who keep house. They conclude that as more married women enter the work force that the relationships between husbands and wives should change toward more egalitarian partnerships.

While many more women are working than before, it must not be forgotten that the fact that they are away from home more and not around to supervise and clean as much as women who stay at home all the time does not mean that their roles

as housewives have changed all that much. Women still usually have to cook, clean, wash, etc., when they get home from a day of work (Oakley, 1974; Hofferth and Moore, 1979). Studies by Vanek (1978) and Berk and Berk (1979) indicate that working women spend far more hours working than do men, because of the hours demanded of them in fulfilling the demands of housework and child care in addition to their employment. Only in some middle class families has the sharing of housework become redefined as something both sexes are supposed to engage in. Even here, however, the division of labor in housework is defined along traditional lines, with 'women's housework' including dishwashing, housecleaning, child care, and most cooking, and 'men's housework' including garbage, dish drying, and cooking outside or perhaps creating one or two specialties.

While any change in family relationships is occurring slowly, if prices for goods and services continue to escalate rapidly, more women (especially middle class women) may find themselves looking for work. The current Reagan administration policies towards the poor and unemployed, which emphasize helping only the 'truly needy', may also increase the number of working women since the government is drastically reducing support (welfare, food stamps, etc.) for many families with dependent children.

Even though women have entered the work place in large numbers, there is still a curious discrepancy in the literature about the imagery of men and women who work. On

one hand, social scientists who focus on working class men tell us that the kind of work they perform is degrading, boring, unsafe, routine, unsatisfying, and alienating (Blauner,1964; Aronowitz,1973; Braverman,1974; Levison,1974). On the other hand, when social scientists (and the popular media, in attempts to appeal to women) discuss working women they characterize their work as positive, uplifting, liberating, and assertive, even though the fact is that most women are excluded from the most satisfying professional and technical fields, and usually occupy blue collar (or 'pink collar', according to Howe (1977)) manual types of work. Current Department of Labor reports indicate that over three-quarters of the working women occupy secretarial and clerical work, service jobs, and factory work, which according to Braverman (1974) and Levison (1974) are far from the most creative or self-directing occupations in the economy.

Despite the fact that women fill some of the most alienating kinds of positions in society (at least according to men's standards), a positive image of working women is enhanced when their work is contrasted with the often alienating job of being a full time housewife. Almost everyone who is an ardent supporter of women working makes the point that housework is generally unsatisfying routine drudgery, with nearly any other kind of work being preferable.

Where once being a housewife was a more or less

respected position for women to occupy, and a working woman was considered a deviant, especially if she had children, more and more the two statuses have seemed to begin to reverse themselves such that many housewives feel guilty if they are not doing something other than keeping house. Among scientists as well as in the popular media, the idea is professed that it is no longer acceptable to be 'just a housewife'. One strong reason for this appears to be the new image of an unfulfilled housewife provided by psychologists and social psychologists who have recognized a growing psychological strain placed on women, called 'the housewife syndrome'. A contemporary woman who is a full time housewife sees other women performing apparently meaningful work outside the house with men, while she is stuck at home with children and housework. Housewives caught in this psychological dependency on their husbands for financial and emotional support find that their lives are not fulfilled as housewives the way they thought they would be as they were growing up. Some women respond to this syndrome of not feeling they have an identity except through their spouse and children by suffering from psychological maladies such as deep depression, overeating, increasing occurrences of illnesses, and, in extreme cases, alcoholism and drug abuse.

As with most significant changes in a society, there is usually a point when there is a backlash from a certain segment of society that feels a threat to its way of life

and exhibits anger as a way of dealing with the coming change. This seems to be no less true with women's decisions to work. We have in the late 1970's and early 1980's seen a backlash by women who have jumped to defend the position and status of a 'homemaker'. The women who work have not set out to destroy the position of housewife or its status, but this is the way the situation is often perceived by those women who have decided to stay at home, raise children, and take care of the house. As a result of these impressions, many housewives feel more pressure to justify their importance and rely on previously dominant values to maintain their dignity and self worth in the family and society.

It may be that the real alienating experience for women is to be confined in a house with little opportunity for interaction on a daily basis with people in varied social, political, or economic activities, which leads to a feeling of having little control over their life. If this is so, it may indicate that the experience of work itself may be so strong a liberating influence on women that the degrees of alienation experienced by working women in blue collar vs white collar jobs may not be as different as those characteristic of working vs nonworking women, due to an overwhelming perception by women that they are participating in an area in which what they say and do is considered important not only for themselves but to others in the society as well. If the difference in alienation between

blue collar and white collar working women is not strong, as opposed to the class differences in alienation experienced by men, it may be because women have not occupied all types of jobs in the same proportions or for the same lengths of time as men have. As more women occupy those jobs and their length of time working increases, their impression of work may change along class lines to be similar to that of male employees in the same types of work. We need to look more closely at the effects that working has on middle class and working class women and the kinds of social and political attitudes that they hold and the extent of alienation that they may feel.

We believe that as women approach parity with men in the work force and if they occupy the same kinds of occupations that men do we may find more pronounced divisions in alienation between those women who work in manual and nonmanual types of jobs than we now observe. A more important comparison that needs to be made in future research is to compare men who work with women who work and men who don't work with women who keep house to see if they have comparable rates of alienation. A future consideration for all social scientists is to understand how an individual's position in the economic system can affect his or her overall well being, happiness, attitudes, and cultural isolation from other occupational groupings in American society.

We have witnessed a major change in the employment

figures of women from the 1870's to the 1980's. This change has been coupled with various social changes that have made it easier for more women and different kinds of women to enter the world of work. We expect the numbers and composition of women in the work force to continue to change. The decrease in family size and a change in the image of the childhood period have already begun to affect the work participation of younger women, who are no longer as likely to stay home to care for children, if they have any. In the next ten years we will certainly find more women working, especially older married women, who have to date been underrepresented in the work force. We will find an increase in their participation primarily from the aging of the currently younger cohorts, who have a greater predisposition towards work.

The increased participation of women in the economic world has set an example for more young women to follow than in the past. Barring the occurrence of a war or an economic depression (large systemic jolt) we do not foresee any drastic change in women's employment opportunities in the near future. Women's advances during the 1970's in economic, academic, and government positions have reached the level of instituted tokenism. The process of women working may continue to increase somewhat, but any change wherein women will obtain economic equalization with men still appears to be a far way off. The proportion of women in upper level occupations seems not to be increasing as

rapidly as that in other employment areas. Women's participation in high managerial positions, in college faculty, and in other professional occupations will probably not increase drastically from the levels that women had obtained in the 1970's as quickly as their participation in other occupations has. Where new female workers may continue to find a more immediate increased demand for their labor will be in lower level white collar work and in service work. On the other hand, it may be that women have saturated the present market for traditional women's jobs, and if more women enter the labor force they will be competing with one another for the few jobs that are available.

The greatest debate over women engaged in paid work concerns 'dangerous' blue collar jobs (i.e. police work, fire work, construction, mechanical repair work, and heavy industrial work) which have characteristically been closed to women on physical grounds. Women are still largely excluded from other male dominated blue collar work as well. Women seeking traditionally male dominated blue collar work will continue to find barriers to getting this high paying skilled work. The opposition will continue to come from the men who have the greatest antagonism toward women entering work, especially in jobs which they believe require the physical strength and judgment that only a man (believed to be biologically and socially superior) is capable of (Walshok, 1981; Zimmer, 1981). Women wanting these jobs,



however, will probably remain the minority.

In the dissertation we have taken a dynamic orientation which has focused attention on the processes by which the social system has been transformed to the point where over 50% of the women in the U.S. are actively engaged in some kind of paid employment. In addition to the dynamic processes that have occurred, we have studied the attitudes and feelings of women who work and women who keep house to reach conclusions on the present condition of women in America. An ongoing combination of historical, observational, and survey analysis must be continued to indirectly measure the processes of the past and the present in order to get a more complete picture of men's and women's positions in the American sociocultural system. We have followed this procedure in trying to detail the social and economic processes to which women have been subjected over time. Later on, we have shown that differences in attitudes concerning women's active participation in the political and economic system, and in positive feelings about self-worth, are related to their own participation in the employment sector and to certain other social characteristics which facilitate both more egalitarian attitudes and more egalitarian work participation.

While most research concerning women and work has concentrated on only two major distinctions between women - employment and keeping house - we believe that research must now address itself to examining finer distinctions between

women's positions. Future research must compare housewives of different social classes with each other, and, instead of continuing with the present emphasis on treating working women as being alike, must make comparisons between working women of different occupational groupings.

In this dissertation we have made a preliminary investigation into differences between working women with manual (blue collar) and nonmanual (white collar) occupations, and found that, just as with men, they are not all alike simply by virtue of their participation in employment. What we believe to be the case is the entry of not just women, but two different groups of women, into the work force. One group, which is the largest, continues to hold on to the old sex role attitudes more than the other group does, has conservative social and political attitudes, has a higher degree of alienation, has less years of formal education, and works out of necessity in the lowest paying jobs in both manual and nonmanual types of labor (most often in female dominated occupations). The other group is comprised of highly educated women who aspire towards a career and work because they want to. They have the ability to control their work environment much more than other women in our society do. It is the latter group that has enjoyed the benefits of the changing role assignments between the sexes, and has moved into the forefront of women's push for equality in the business, academic, professional, and government sectors. What is different today from before is

that many middle class women are entering the work force for the first time and finding greater opportunities to apply their college learned skills in the labor market, thereby benefiting from greater social and economic rewards.

1980 is characterized by over 50% of American women participating in the work force. We have come to a point where women's work is recognized as a major aspect of society in terms of women's increasingly effective voice in society as well as in terms of sheer numbers. Researchers must acknowledge, however, that, just as we find with men, those who make up most of the numbers do not overlap with those who have the effective voice. The time has come for researchers to recognize the heterogeneous composition of today's female work force, and to test much of previous research concerning the heterogeneous male work force on the female work force. In addition, much attention must be paid to comparisons between men and women of like and different classes.

Women's transition from partners in an agricultural economy to partners in an industrial economy has been characterized not just by increasing numbers and changing characteristics of women participating in the work force in a dynamic social system, but by interrelationships between this participation and changes in social and economic forces. Our understanding of the transition of any force in the social system is greatly enhanced by taking a wide view of that transition along with other events in the system.

When it is recognized that we are always dealing with many interrelated factors and events, it becomes clear that the future of women's participation in the labor force is not constrained to continue in the same increasing pattern, either overall or in specific occupational sectors, but that social and economic events will continue to affect, and be affected by, women's work participation. Regardless of the specifics of the growth of women's work participation as a major aspect of the American economic world, the significance and continuance of this participation cannot be denied.

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