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**RE-ENTRY WOMEN STUDENTS: VARIABLES INVOLVED IN THE DECISION
TO RETURN TO SCHOOL**

City University of New York

PH.D. 1986

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RE-ENTRY WOMEN STUDENTS: VARIABLES INVOLVED IN
THE DECISION TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

by

SHIRLEY S. ATLAS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in
Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
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1986

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Psychology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

RE-ENTRY WOMEN STUDENTS: VARIABLES INVOLVED IN THE
THE DECISION TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

by

Shirley S. Atlas

Advisor: Professor Florence Denmark

To investigate variables involved in the decision to return to school, 191 re-entry women completed a questionnaire and the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. The sample was divided into four groups: new students, advanced students, ex-students, and non-students; eight volunteers from each group were interviewed by the author.

Demographic data indicated that subjects were significantly more likely to be students if they had graduated from high school with an academic diploma, if they were presently married, and if their husbands had gone to college. Responding to the question, "What was happening in your life when you first thought about returning to school?", advanced and ex-students were most apt to list a concern-for-self life event, new students a concern-for-others event, and non-students might name either one. Although the correlations were not statistically significant, the advanced and the ex-students had, on the average, the most internal LOC

scores and the most concern-for-self responses, while the new students had the most external LOC scores and the most concern-for-others responses. Since the subjects with the most internal scores were also the oldest, two questions arose: is there a relationship between LOC and age, or LOC and stage of motherhood?

Interview data produced three life patterns: (1) In high school, subjects converged in their goals of marriage and motherhood; in the intervening years, subjects had diverged into the four groups; at re-entry, subjects re-converged by advising high school girls to postpone marriage until training for a career or profession has been completed. (2) In high school, concern for self is sole concern; during young married years, concern for others dominates concern for self; at re-entry, concern for self increases and begins to dominate concern for others. (3) In high school, subjects' personal goals focused on the future relationships of marriage and motherhood; at re-entry, subjects have difficulty setting goals that focus mainly on themselves.

DEDICATION
TO
MY HUSBAND EUGENE
WITH LOVE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To FLORENCE DENMARK with appreciation and affection for her support, encouragement, and friendship.

To SUSAN SAEGERT and SUE ZALK, the members of my dissertation committee, and to ANNE BLOOM and IRENE DEITCH, the readers, for their time and effort.

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To the memory of STANLEY MILGRAM for the pleasure and privilege of having known him and been his student.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION DESCRIPTION OF RE-ENTRY STUDENTS

American women's lives and lifestyle have changed dramatically in recent decades. One of these changes has occurred in education and has resulted in the appearance of large numbers of mature women on college campuses throughout the country. These are women whose education was interrupted after high school or part way through college often for the purposes of marriage and child rearing. Since 1970, these women have been returning to college at an ever increasing rate (Geisler & Thrush, 1975; Ladan & Crooks, 1975; Marple, 1976; Schrader, 1979). The Yearbook of Higher Education (1982-1983) estimates that in 1970 there were 880,000 women students over the age of 25 enrolled in American colleges, in 1975 there were 1,791,000, in 1980 2,461,000, and projects totals of 2,816,000 for 1985 and 3,076,000 for 1990. This phenomenon has led to the use of such terminology as: mature women students (Karelius-Schumacher, 1977; Ladan & Crooks, 1975), returning students (Letchworth, 1970), and re-entry women (Denker & Tittle, 1976). It is generally agreed that this trend will continue as more and more women begin to emerge from their traditional roles of

full-time homemaker, wife, and mother.

Students who progress directly from high school graduation into and through college are generally in the 18 to 22 year old bracket. Since re-entry women have not followed this traditional path, an examination of their characteristics might properly begin with their age. An early article by Brandenburg (1974) described the typical re-entry women student as 35 to 40 years old. Ladan and Crooks (1975) reported the average age to be 34.8, while Karelius-Schumacher (1977) located the average age in the 30 to 45 year range. Disagreeing somewhat, McCrea (1979), in a survey of 1067 women students over 25, found 48% in the 25 to 29 year group, thereby suggesting that women are returning to school sooner than anticipated. This finding, however, was not corroborated by the Yearbook of Higher Education (1982-1983) which showed only one-third of its total of women students over 25 to be in the 25 to 29 year category. Be that as it may, pinpointing the exact age group of the re-entry women students seems less important than the fact that there are indeed sizeable numbers of women students well beyond the conventional college age.

The next characteristic of re-entry women students to be considered is their marital status. According to Brandenburg (1974), almost all were married, while Chitayat and Hymer (1976) reported 71% married and 14%

separated or divorced. McCrea (1979), however, compared the proportion of married students (66%) with the proportion of total married population (75%) and concluded that "women are twice as likely to return to college if they are not presently married" (p. 14). Similarly, in Ladan and Crook's sample (1975) of mature women students, 62% were married and 27% were divorced. Since the literature agrees that only a small percentage of returning women students are single, it seems safe to say that the majority of these women are, or have been married.

Most of the returning women have at least one child, and many of them, especially those in the younger age group, have one or more children still at home. Manis and Mochizuki (1972) found the typical woman student to be the mother of two or three children, of whom the youngest was about nine years old. In McCrea's sample (1979), the typical student had one seven-year old child, while Chitayat and Hymer (1976) found 90% of their sample to be mothers with a median of two children. Ladan and Crooks (1975) reported a typical returning student to be the mother of two or three children with an average age of 11. These women are in what Bernard (1975) classifies as the "middle motherhood stage" in which their children have reached school age. The older students, those over 35, are generally in the "late motherhood stage" in which their children are no

longer living at home.

From these descriptions, therefore, a picture of re-entry women students can be drawn. Typically, they range in age from 30 to 45, although they can be either younger or older. The majority are, or have been married. They are homemakers and mothers, their children are in school and making fewer demands on their time and energy. Most of them have a high school degree and some have attended college, but they have all experienced an interruption of a number of years in their education, generally because of family responsibilities.

In the words of Tittle and Denker (1980), "It seems that all the pieces of the picture have to be ready before a woman can return to school. Her youngest child needs to be at least three or four years old; good child care arrangements must be available; money has to be accessible from earnings, from company policy, or to borrow; and husbands must be supportive, at least verbally. When these factors are in place a woman can begin her student life as long as she maintains responsibility for the children, housecleaning, meals, and laundry." (p. 151).

REASONS FOR RETURNING TO SCHOOL

The characteristics of re-entry women students have been described in the section above, but no attention has so far been paid to the motivation involved, to the reasons behind the decision to resume an interrupted education. Why do women want to add the student role to the wife, homemaker, and mother roles which are already playing such a large part in their lives?

Brandenburg (1974) considered the stage of motherhood to be a very important factor in the return to school. These women are experiencing reduced home and family demands, they feel less needed, and are more aware of advancing age. According to Astin (1976), the major reasons given by re-entry students included training or retraining for work or a career, an effort to combat the boredom and discontent of a homemaker, and, in some instances, a way of evading volunteer activities. Ladan and Crooks (1975) and McCrea (1979) cited the need to learn a new skill to make a living or to change occupations rather than merely a way of filling leisure time. Steele (1974), Muskat (1978), and Driscoll (1975) included personal enrichment and intellectual stimulation as well as simply a desire to earn a degree.

"A woman's decision to continue her education is rarely guided by a single motivation, but is likely to emerge from personal enrichment needs, degree needs, job-related needs, and, for some cases, family needs." (Hendel, 1983, p. 41). According to Muskat (1978), the majority of women returning to school are seeking the education, training, and skills necessary to enter or to re-enter the job market. A lesser number of women simply want to earn a college degree or want to advance themselves in jobs they already have. However, all the women seem to feel that a college degree will bring them increased personal fulfillment, productivity, and self-expression.

McCrea (1979) described the re-entry students as housewives wanting to complete their interrupted education, widows or divorcees needing to learn a new skill to earn a living, and women wanting to improve or to change their present employment. The main impetus for the return seemed to be the realization that additional training and education would be needed for career advancement.

Ladan and Crooks (1975) reported that re-entry students are seeking a realization of their personal needs and a self-fulfillment outside the traditional women's sphere. It is thought that this may be the result of a growing discontent with traditional roles. However, these women are not simply filling their spare

time, but instead they are purposefully acquiring the training necessary to join the labor force. It is interesting to note that none of the 18 to 22 year old women students who constituted the control group in this study (Ladan & Crooks, 1975) mentioned self-fulfillment as a goal for their education.

Nero (1975) found that the primary motivation for women's return to the classroom was economic, while Posner-Cahill (1978) added that educational enrichment was also a relevant factor. Letchworth (1970) noted that women returned to college for many of the reasons mentioned above and, in addition, to relieve boredom, to escape from community responsibilities, and to complete a part of their life that was necessary for their sense of identity.

After questioning 200 re-entry women students about their reasons for returning to college, Brandenburg (1974) listed their answers as a search for identity, for constructive interests outside the home, for self-fulfillment, self-improvement, confidence, a meaningful career, and financial independence. Margolis (1974), from personal experience as a re-entry woman, cited the need of the women who left college in the 1950's to do what at that time was unthinkable--to launch a career.

Folland, Pickett, and Hoeflin (1977), at the conclusion of an in-depth survey of 107 mature women students, stated that the most important factor in the decision to return to school was a sense of emptiness and of unfulfilled potential. Some of the women also said they need personal stimulation, a change in their daily routine, and something they called self-preservation. Steel (1974) reported most of the above reasons plus one more: 40% of the women said they had always wanted to do it.

In summary, it would seem there are many reasons why women return to school. Their children are getting older and no longer need so much of their time and energy. They may feel bored or restless. They may be seeking intellectual stimulation. They may want to train or retrain for jobs or careers. They may want to complete the education and earn the degree they had not achieved at an earlier age. These are some of the most commonly cited factors, and one or more may have contributed to the decision which lead each re-entry woman to her place in the classroom.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY RE-ENTRY STUDENTS

Women who return to school after a number of years face particular problems and challenges which are not the same as those encountered by traditional-age students. Many studies have reported on this aspect of the topic.

Brandenburg (1974) found that women in school suffered varying degrees of guilt about their children and experienced differing amounts of resistance to their return from husbands, families, and friends. Conflicts of time and home responsibilities were also reported as problems by the subjects of their survey of mature students (Folland, Pickett, and Hoeflin, 1977).

Chitayat and Hymer (1976) portrayed the recurring problems of re-entry students as fear and guilt when they contemplate taking steps to improve their career potential, indecision regarding career goals, and anxiety about their ability to succeed in school while continuing to manage their home responsibilities.

Emerson (1977) reported that mothers who return to school make changes in their family's life style. They tend to experience guilt if they perceive themselves as being selfish in meeting their own needs, in neglecting their roles of mother and homemaker, in delegating household responsibilities to others, and in taking on roles which society has not considered appropriate for

women.

In a survey of 269 mature women students, Geisler and Thrush (1975) discovered their most common problems to be financial difficulties, time conflicts, and lack of self confidence, role definition, and sense of direction. Frieze (1978) wrote that re-entry women students tend to feel embarrassed and inadequate because of rusty academic skills and, in addition, to suffer from guilt.

Children and husbands were found (Ladan & Crooks, 1975) to be very supportive of re-entry women in their first year of college. Second-year women, however, reported their husbands as having a somewhat negative attitude toward their education perhaps as a result of the wife's increasingly liberalized perception of her roles and a decrease in traditional services due to time conflicts.

Lance, Lourie, and Mayo (1979) compared male and female returning students and found the women experienced more difficulties with their children over their return, more guilt for spending family income on their education, more fear of dulled memory, more difficulty with their spouse and with friends over re-entry, and more guilt about pursuing one's own goal than did the male students.

According to Tittle and Denker (1980), returning women students in their 20's or early 30's with young children often encounter intolerable demands on their roles of student, homemaker, and mother. They experience feelings of guilt about the appropriate amount of time to devote to child care. Women students in their 30's and older need to face career issues and to confront their fears of identity definition. They are not suffering from the "empty nest syndrome" but rather from the fears, confusions, and anxiety involved in making decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. "Both internal and external pressures combine to form barriers to returning women. Many of these barriers rest upon a fundamental social fact: the power relationship between men and women. Women have less power than men in marriage, divorce, the job market, and in major institutions of social and economic life in this country." (p. 47).

Jeanne W. Smith (1981) addressed the issue of marital conflict as a consequence of educational or career re-entry and concluded that the survival of the marriage after the wife's college or career re-entry, regardless of motivations, appeared to be primarily dependent on the husband. As detailed by Tittle and Denker (1980), "The reality of the power relationship between husband and wife may be expressed directly, in threats of withdrawal of financial support or divorce."

(p. 45).

Colleges across the country, aware of the constantly increasing number of returning women students and of their particular problems, have established special programs to answer these needs. Many of these programs follow a format similar to that described by Chitayat and Hymer (1976) which included pre-admission counseling to encourage women to explore their educational and vocational potential, workshops, self-awareness activities, college and career information, with recruitment taking place through mass media, cultural clubs, and parents' organizations.

As described above, women who return to school face many problems and challenges in their homes, in their schools, and in their communities. There are, however, on the other side of the coin, the positive results of the re-entry process. According to Astin (1976), women who have gone back to the classroom report great benefits to themselves in increased self-awareness and self-esteem. They are more confident, more self-assured, and more open to new ideas. In addition, they feel their families have benefited by becoming more organized and self-reliant.

PILOT STUDY

A great deal seems to have been written about re-entry women students, but little attention has been directed toward women who indicate an interest in returning to school but stop short of actual enrollment. Perusal of the literature finds few articles devoted to the topic of non-re-entry women students. Denmark and Guttentag (1966) compared women who became students with women who requested but did not return applications, in terms of self-concept and evaluation of the student role. They reported that students, compared with non-students, experienced a significant decrease of discrepancy between present and ideal self. A shift in evaluation of student role was indicated after one semester of college for students with no shift for non-students. The results of a second study (Denmark & Guttentag, 1967) supported the hypotheses that: 1. The discrepancy between present and ideal self is inversely related to the time and effort spent in pursuit of a college education, and 2. The positive evaluation of goal-related activities will vary directly with the effort expended in pursuit of college. The subjects were women who had become students, women whose applications had been rejected, and women who failed to return their applications.

O'Connell (1977) compared re-entry women students with women who were full-time housewives and intended to remain so. The results found the students to be significantly higher in dominance, ambition, self-confidence, self-acceptance, achievement via independence, and self-actualization.

Amstey and Whitbourne (1981) investigated differences between re-entry women students and women of similar age in the traditional housewife situation. They reported that students' husbands were in higher occupational levels than the housewives' husbands. They also found the students to have scored higher than the housewives on the BEM Androgyny Scale and to be more actively involved in questioning goals and religious beliefs.

Thus it seems a great deal has been written about re-entry women students, but little attention has been directed toward women who indicate an interest in returning to school but stop short of actual enrollment. To explore this topic further a pilot study (Atlas, 1982) was undertaken which attempted to differentiate women who return to school from those who do not. Its purpose was to find out more about the women who had taken some of the same steps and had followed much of the same path as the re-entry women students but who had not actually become students.

Who are these women? What makes them different from the re-entry students? Why do they approach the classroom door but fail to cross the threshold?

A demographic questionnaire to elicit information relevant to these questions was mailed to a list of women who had participated in pre-enrollment seminars in 1978, 1979, 1980, and 1981 at the College of Staten Island, CUNY. These seminars are sponsored by the ARC (Adults Returning to the Classroom) Program and serve as an orientation for women who are contemplating a resumption of their education.

The questionnaire requested data on age, marital status, number and ages of children, husband's occupation and level of education. Husband's occupation was coded into four categories: blue-collar, white-collar, professional, and self-employed. Husband's level of education was coded into five categories: less than high school, high school diploma, some college, college degree, and graduate degree. Respondent was asked about her work experience, occupational and educational experience and goals, if a non-student or an ex-student her reasons for not enrolling, and projected plans for the future.

Questionnaires were sent to 430 women whose names appeared in the ARC files. One hundred fifty-five questionnaires were completed (a return rate of 39.5%),

consisting of 67 currently enrolled students, 42 who had earned some credits but were no longer registered, and 46 who had not become students. The data indicated that the women in this sample are considerably older (average age 38.085) than the conventional college student, 95% are or have been married, and 90% have at least one child. Sixty-three percent work outside their homes in traditional female jobs. They like their work, but the majority have worked for less than five years. Since the average age of their youngest child is slightly over ten and a half, it would seem they have been at home during their children's earliest years.

The results of this study indicated certain significant differences between women who were currently students (called "students"), women who had become students but had discontinued their studies (called "ex-students"), and women who had not enrolled at all after attending an ARC Seminar (called "non-students"). The students, compared with the non-students, were significantly more likely to be married ($\chi^2=14.13499$ (6) $p<.05$), their husbands were more likely to be white-collar or professional workers ($\chi^2=13.00998$ (6) $p<.05$), and their personal goals and plans for the future were more apt to point toward a career rather than a job. The non-students and the ex-students seemed essentially similar in marital status, husband's level of education, and personal plans for the future. They

did differ significantly, however, in terms of husband's occupation; fewer non-students than ex-students had husbands who work in white-collar or professional capacities. In fact, in occupational areas, the husbands of the ex-students are much more like the husbands of the students. It might thus be inferred that the ex-students had initially received sufficient support and encouragement from their husbands to enroll as students and to earn a certain number of credits before discontinuing. Examination of the reasons given by the non-students and the ex-students for not enrolling indicated that financial and personal or family problems were most frequently cited.

The study suggested that separated or divorced women, those who might be said to need education and training the most, are perhaps the least likely to return to school. Financial problems, single parent responsibilities, and the absence of a husband's support would appear to be contributing factors. Similarly, women whose husbands are blue-collar workers may suffer from financial problems as well as from their husbands' lack of enthusiasm for education.

WOMEN'S GOALS, CHOICES, AND DECISIONS

Since this study is concerned with the decisions of re-entry women to return or not to return to school, it seems important to examine the antecedents to this stage in their lives. What goals and options were available, what decisions were made, what kind of planning took place.

In a study of four groups, high school seniors, young newlyweds, middle-aged parents, and older people about to retire, Lowenthal et al (1977) reported that all the girls in the high school senior group saw marriage and family as primary factors in their future lives, but they differed in just when they expected those roles to emerge. The differences were directly related to their educational objectives. If high school graduation was seen as the end of their education, they were ready to marry as soon as they had found the right man. If college was contemplated, finding a mate and marrying was not felt to be so imminent.

Most young women expect to work when they finish school. However, "even where it is routinely expected that a young girl will take a job when first out of high school or college, she usually is not expected to carve out a career or rise to a position of wealth and power." (Epstein, 1970, p.75).

Women, according to Nichols (1974), have been socialized to be passive and to perceive themselves not as individuals but in terms of their relationships with others. Schlossberg (1976), echoing this thought, believes that women "define their identities not through their own activities and accomplishments but through those of the dominant people around them: at first their fathers, then their husbands, still later their children." (p. 33). This has been described by Rossi (1969) as "the broad sweep of many an American woman's life span is caught by the transitions from Bill's daughter to John's wife to Johnny's mother and Billy's grandmother" (p. 182).

Laws (1978), studying the ways women expect to spend their adult years, divided the possible life styles into categories of marriage only, career only, and combinations of both. The author stated that "the evidence indicates that marriage is part of almost all young women's life planning. In many instances it appears that the occupational options young women consider are contingent upon their assessment of the presumed demands of the invisible option, marriage." (p. 296-297).

In a survey of 232 married female college graduates, 46 to 61 years old, Black and Hill (1984) reported that all their respondents felt that they had done little or no career planning in their late teens or

early 20's, that marriage and motherhood had been their main focus. Similarly, in a study of 301 widows, 50 and older, (Lopata & Steinhart, 1971) found that these women had not planned or prepared themselves for careers in their early years and were not planning for the future at the present time.

Since the women in the above studies were all older, it would be appropriate to see if younger women view their future differently. As described by Douvan and Adelson (1966), girls have been taught to want marriage and also to strive for excellence in the educational situation. At adolescence they must begin to set priorities and arrange alternatives. "Although they focus on work or school very few of them are strongly invested in work or school per se." (p. 38). "The girl is less likely to say of the future, 'This is what I think I will be,' than she is to say, 'I hope my life will be like this.'" (p. 342).

According to Huston-Stein and Higgings-Trenk (1978), most women still plan to marry, some will remain childless, and increasing numbers expect to be employed either continuously or with some interruptions while their children are young. Although marriage and motherhood are still important factors in their life expectations, women have not been socialized to plan for a long life beyond the motherhood years and may then find themselves with more time and energy than they know

how to use. (Lopata, 1971).

As described by Rubin (1979), midlife is "neither way station nor crisis, but a stage in the life cycle like any other--a time of life with its own dilemmas, its own tasks, its own pleasures, its own pains." (p. 7). Women at that stage have a number of options: they may return to school, return to work, develop their artistic abilities, or stay at home and keep house. Each of these options has its advantages and its drawbacks. In fact, as stated by Schlossberg (1984), education may not always contribute positively to the lives of midlife women. "To some women, midlife is a period of greater freedom and opportunity; to others, it is a period of greater constraint and responsibility. To the former group, education may be a vehicle for growth and renewal; to the latter, it might simply constitute an added burden." (p. 336).

Bernard (1975) further divides the women who continue to be full-time homemakers into three groups: those who feel conflicted about not returning to school or work, those who are satisfied with their status, and those who pursue surrogate careers in the form of community work or volunteerism. A study conducted by O'Connell (1977) compared 52 middle-class wives and mothers who had attended college prior to marriage but had not graduated. Thirty-one (25 to 60 years old) were enrolled in college and 21 (25 to 40 years old) were

full-time housewives and intended to remain so. Although both groups had tentative life plans, the college students' plans involved society, self, and family while the majority of the housewives' plans were solely children-oriented. Both groups, however felt in control of their destinies.

After this brief survey of the choices available to women at the various stages from adolescence to midlife, it is time to address the subject of decision making.

Brim et al (1962) describe the decision process as six phases customarily linked into a sequence: 1. identification of the problem, 2. obtaining necessary information, 3. production of possible solutions, 4. evaluation of such solutions, 5. selection of strategy for performance, and 6. actual performance of an action or actions and subsequent learning and revision. The early experiences of individuals during socialization, acting in conjunction with genetic influences, have a significant and apparently lasting effect on their personality and consequently on their style of decision making. These authors viewed gender and social class as important variables in this process.

According to Atchley (1975), turning points or crises in people's lives present demands for making decisions and taking action. The stress of this type of situation may be somewhat modified if the individual

has, by anticipatory socialization, been able to prepare for the event. Individuals' capacities to imagine their own future become an important factor in this process. Group support can also be effective in helping people deal with age-linked turning points. "For example, educational decisions, career decisions, mate selection, child rearing, the empty nest, retirement, and widowhood are all age-linked phenomena that most people encounter, not alone, but in the company of age peers who are trying to cope with similar situations. Some of the potential for stress and self-doubt is reduced by the support peers give one another in these contexts." (p. 276).

Group support is also a relevant factor during adolescence (Douvan & Adelson, 1966) when peers and peer activities become especially important. According to Huston-Stein and Higgins-Trenk (1978), many of the antecedents of young women's decisions about career and family occur in childhood, but early adulthood is a particularly critical period. Decisions about marriage, education, work, and childbearing which are often made at that time, are not easily reversible, and may strongly influence the subsequent development and course of a woman's life. The amount of education and the amount of early job experience have an effect on whether a woman will continue her career during the child-rearing years or whether she will re-enter employment at

a later time.

In viewing women's occupational behavior, Perun and Bielby (1981) point out that the complex interactions of biological, social, historical, and psychological processes must all be taken into account. Social structure and social changes as well as a combination of age and gender roles have had a profound effect on women's occupational decisions and work experience. In discussing the lifestyle of re-entry women in new or resumed careers, Whiting (1982) declares, "The psychological needs for stimulation, and for a sense of competence and personal worth, combine with economic motives to influence this decision." (p. 270).

Epstein (1970) believes that women's occupational decision making is not clear-cut and straightforward but is affected by ambivalence and ambiguity. These factors tend to appear when the socialization view of the traditional female roles and the normative expectations of attitudes, values, and beliefs are challenged by women's career aspirations. These conditions operate not only in the choices made during adolescence and early adulthood but also during the later stages of family life.

In their sample which ranged in age from high school seniors to retirees, Lowenthal et al (1966) found that, at all the stages, planning for the future was

minimal and almost non-existent among the women. "Since few of them felt in control it was clear that they were leaving eventualities to fate or to a muddling-through process." (p. 234-235).

As reported by Lerner (1982), women may appear passive by not taking action to solve their own problems, by not clearly stating their own opinions or preferences, by turning away from the challenges of the outside world, and by avoiding successful and autonomous functioning. "Underlying the passive-dependent stance of many women is the unconscious motivation to bolster and protect another person as well as the unconscious conviction that one must remain in a position of relative weakness for one's most important relationships to survive." (p. 700).

Similarly, Parsons and Goff (1980) theorize that the career choices of women depend upon their orientation toward communion or toward agency. Communion is characterized by openness, cooperation, and the sense of being at one with others, while agency is characterized by isolation, self-protection, self-assertion, self-expansion, and the need for power. They (Parsons & Goff, 1980), report that women who chose a career out of a desire to benefit others displayed stronger communion and weaker agency orientation; those who chose a career out of a desire to earn a high salary showed stronger agency and weaker communion orientation.

"Women who have strong agency orientation are more willing to pursue a career even at the cost of family and interpersonal relations. Communion oriented women, on the other hand, are not as willing to give up their family plans for a career." (p. 17).

Gilligan (1982) studied women's moral development by exploring their decision making in both real and hypothetical situations. A common thread appeared in the subjects' wish to make the "good" or "right" choice without causing pain and to resolve conflicts with injuries to no one. Because of their deep involvement with others, "Women not only define themselves in a context of human relationships but also judge themselves in terms of their ability to care" (p. 17). Difficulties arise, therefore, when women are faced with the necessity of making a choice which may satisfy their own needs at the expense of hurting others or may satisfy the needs of others at the expense of self-sacrifice. Gilligan concluded that women, working out solutions to moral dilemmas, do so within the interaction of personal needs and feelings of responsibility for the needs of others.

Pursuing the idea of women feeling caught between their own and their family's needs may provide further insight into the problems of re-entry women who venture out of their homes to school, to work, or to other activities. The ambivalence and uneasiness experienced

by re-entry women students (Astin, 1976; Brandenburg, 1974; Chitayat & Hymer, 1976; Emerson, 1977; Lance, Lourie, & Mayo, 1979; Tittle & Denker, 1980) is generally described by the women in terms of guilt and concern about family relationships and responsibilities. Folland, Pickett, and Hoeflin (1977), in fact, reported that many of the mature women students in their survey believed that ultimately they might be forced to choose between school and their personal lives.

In a similar way, working-class women who become politically active feel anxious and guilty about the possible ill effects their activities may have on their husbands and children (McCourt, 1977). The same internal conflict between their desire to do something for themselves and their feelings of familial obligations has been reported by women entering or re-entering the work force (Epstein, 1970; Atchley & Corbett, 1977). According to Mogul (1979), women who resume outside work after an interval as homemakers "have to struggle simultaneously with the realities of the work, friction at home, and their own inner conflicts. The more a woman's sense of herself was grounded in her identity as wife and mother, the greater the readjustment in her sense of self when she reenters the occupational world." (p. 1140).

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND DECISION MAKING

According to Rotter (1966, 1972), locus of control refers to the degree to which one perceives events or reinforcements as contingent upon one's own behavior. If the event, either negative or positive, is perceived as the result of one's own behavior or one's own relatively permanent characteristics, the control is considered to be internal. If, however, the negative or positive event is perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, the power of others, or simply the complexity of surrounding forces, the control is considered to be external.

Lefcourt (1976) describes internally controlled individuals as more trusting of their own judgment than externally controlled individuals who place more confidence in the consensual judgments of others. Internal individuals resist being made pawns in a situation and display discrimination in terms of what influences they will accept. They also seek more information and use it better than external individuals.

People who are high in internal locus of control demonstrate better decision making, less susceptibility to influence from others, and greater ability to influence those around them (Phares, 1972). In addition, Harrison et al (1981) found that internal individuals engage in more instrumental goal-directed

activities, while externals display more emotional non-goal-directed responses.

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study will examine returning women in an effort to discriminate among them in terms of their status as students, ex-students, or non-students ("students" are currently enrolled, "ex-students" have discontinued their enrollment, and "non-students" have never enrolled). Differences will be looked for in family background, marital status, motherhood stage, husband's and children's attitude toward subject's student status, and subject's own plans for the future. Attention will also be directed to the decision making process, the reasons behind the decision for or against the resumption of an interrupted education, and the person or persons who may have influenced that decision.

Although the decisions reported by Gilligan (1982) were made in response to moral dilemmas, it seemed appropriate to adapt her work to the choices made by re-entry women. In deciding whether or not to return to school, the issue is not necessarily a moral one, and the decision is not necessarily "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong". However, if what a woman wants for herself (i.e. to complete her education) conflicts with what she considers her obligations to her family (i.e. her

time and attention), her decision-making may be complicated by the interaction of the two forces. To investigate this factor, therefore, the decisions made by the subjects of this study will be examined within the framework of a dichotomy of concern: concern for self and concern for others. Concern for self will encompass the desire for increased self-esteem, personal growth, and self-fulfillment. Concern for others will include feelings of responsibility for the needs of husband, children, or other close relationships. Furthermore, if concern for self is seen as an internal demand and concern for others as an external demand, the decisions a woman makes may reflect her degree of internal or external orientation as measured by the Rotter (1966, 1972) Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC) Scale.

At various times in their lives, women are called upon to make choices in the areas of education, career, marriage, and childbearing. All these decisions are important, and some are virtually irreversible. A woman's internal-external locus of control plus the extent to which she feels conflicted by the demands of her need for self-fulfillment and her feelings of responsibility for close relationships may be expected to play a major part in all her life-affecting choices. Although the scope of this study is limited to the decisions of re-entry women in terms of education, the

relevance to women's occupational decisions seems obvious. With these issues in mind, hypotheses can now be generated.

HYPOTHESES

In the following hypotheses, a subject's status as "student", "ex-student", or "non-student" will be designated as her "student status".

1. According to the pilot study described above, the non-students were significantly less likely to be married and more likely to be separated/divorced than the students or the ex-students. On the basis of these results, it is therefore hypothesized that:

A subject's student status will be related to her marital status.

2. The pilot study tabulated the level of education and occupation of the subjects' husbands and concluded, for the sample tested, that a re-entry woman's education is related to some extent to her husband's level of education and what he does to earn a living. In a further investigation of these factors, it is hypothesized that:

If married, a subject is more likely to be a student if:

a. Her husband has more than a high school education

b. Her husband is employed in a white-collar or professional occupation

c. Her husband encourages her educational pursuit

3. By definition, re-entry women students have returned to the classroom to resume the education which had been interrupted usually for reasons of marriage and the raising of children. It seems reasonable to expect that some of the factors present in conventional-age women students will also be found in re-entry women students. According to The Yearbook of Higher Education (1983-84), 86% of first-time female college students graduated from high school with a college preparatory diploma, 71% had fathers whose education included at least a high school degree, and 79% had mothers who had at least a high school diploma. It can therefore be hypothesized that:

A subject is more likely to be a student if:

a. She graduated from high school with an academic diploma

b. She went on to college after high school graduation

c. Her mother had at least a high school education

d. Her father had at least a high school education

4. As described in the discussion of locus of control, individuals who take responsibility for their own behavior tend to evidence a more internal than external locus of control (Rotter, 1966, 1972). In essence, locus of control measures the degree of control people feel they have over events in their life. If they wait passively for something to happen, they are externally oriented, but if they strive actively to produce an outcome, they are internally oriented. As viewed by Harrison et al (1981), people who are internals engage in more instrumental goal-directed activities while external people display more emotional non-goal-directed behavior. If these factors are considered in combination with the dichotomy of concern for self and concern for others in women's decision making, it can be hypothesized that:

a. If a subject feels her decision (to return to school, to stop going to school, or not to go to school at all) had been made under her control and directed toward her own goals (defined as concern for self), her locus of control could be expected to be internally oriented.

b. If a subject feels her decision (to return to school, to stop going to school, or not to go to school at all), had been influenced by others and by her feelings of family responsibility (defined as concern for others), her locus of control could be expected to be externally oriented.

5. Although Rotter (1966,1972) contended that the I-E Scale is unidimensional and can predict behavior in a variety of situations, Mirels (1970) factor analyzed the I-E Scale and identified two factors: a belief concerning felt mastery over the course of one's life and a belief concerning the extent to which an individual is deemed capable of exerting an influence on political institutions. Similarly, Gurin et al (1978) presented evidence to support their theory that internal control is not a unitary dimension but is divided into personal control and control ideology. Another study (Strickland & Haley, 1980) identified similar factors but found gender differences in responses: aspects of the personal control factor for men are related to influencing others, while for women this factor relates to self-direction and planning ahead. It therefore seems reasonable to submit the locus of control data in this study to factor analysis and to hypothesize that:

Factors will be generated which will be identifiable in terms of concern for self or concern for others.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

SUBJECTS

The subjects of this study are women whose names appear in the files of the ARC (Adults Returning to the Classroom) Program at The College of Staten Island, City University of New York. They may currently be students, they may no longer be students, or they may never have enrolled in the college. The subjects were contacted in person at an orientation seminar for new or prospective students presented by the ARC Program, at a meeting and registration of students enrolled in ARC sponsored courses, or by mail.

Twenty-three women who had not yet become students completed the questionnaire and the Rotter (1966, 1972) Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC) Scale at the orientation seminar. Similarly, data were collected from 66 women attending a meeting called by the ARC Program to discuss the possibility of financial benefits for re-entry women. Sixty of these women were currently registered, while six had been students but were no longer enrolled. These two occasions accounted for 89

of the subjects.

The remainder were reached by mailing a packet containing the questionnaire, the LOC Scale, a covering letter (see Appendix), and a stamped self-addressed return envelope to 370 names from the roster of women who had attended an ARC Orientation Seminar within the past five years and who may or may not have become students. One hundred eleven completed questionnaires and LOC Scales were received, 24 were returned by the post office as undeliverable. This constituted a return rate of 32%. Of the 111 replies, 50 were students, 39 were no longer students, and 22 had never registered. Four of the respondents (three students and one who had not enrolled) were eliminated because of excessive missing items on their LOC Scales. In addition, one student and four who were no longer registered did not qualify for this study because they had already earned bachelor degrees.

The final total of 191 subjects consisted of 106 women who are current students, 41 who are no longer students, and 44 who have never registered. The students were then divided into those who had less than 30 credits and those who had 30 or more. It was reasoned that if subjects had completed at least a full year of credits, they might be more deeply committed to their education than subjects who had fewer credits and who might, subsequent to the collection of the data,

have discontinued their enrollment. The subjects were thus assigned to the following categories:

Group I (N=55): Currently enrolled students who have completed less than 30 credits, to be called "new students".

Group II (N=51): Currently enrolled students who have completed 30 or more credits, to be called "advanced students".

Group III (N=41): Subjects who have been students and have not earned a degree but are no longer students, to be called "ex-students".

Group IV (N=44): Subjects who have never enrolled, to be called "non-students".

Group I, the new students, makes up 29% of the sample, Group II, the advanced students, 27% of the sample, Group III, the ex-students, 21%, and Group IV, the non-students, the remaining 23%.

It is important to recognize that these subjects represent a relatively homogeneous group of women all residing on Staten Island. The people of Staten Island are predominately white, middle-class, homeowners, and many families have lived in the same area for several generations. They are politically conservative and traditional in style of living. Many of the men are policemen, firefighters, sanitation and transit workers,

they are the husbands or fathers of the women who made up the sample of this study. It should also be noted that the subjects, whose participation was voluntary, were not randomly chosen from the student body as a whole but were contacted because of their association with the ARC Program. Despite these limitations, this study addresses a relevant topic and can be expected to increase the information now available regarding a particular group of re-entry women and their decisions to resume or not to resume their interrupted education.

Subjects were given the option of completing the questionnaire anonymously or including their name, address, and telephone number if they were willing to participate in a one-to-one interview. Thirty-two women, eight in each of the four groups, were randomly chosen from among the 74 women who had volunteered to be interviewed.

INSTRUMENTS

I. Rotter (1966, 1972) Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC) Scale

The LOC Scale used in this study is the standard edition containing 29 pairs of forced-choice items, six of which are fillers. The LOC Scale is scored in the external direction, the higher the score the more

external the individual's orientation.

II. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into the following areas:

1. Demographic information pertaining to respondent's age, marital status, number and ages of children, parents' and husbands' occupation and level of education, ethnic background, and student status.
2. Respondent's education and work experience since high school.
3. Respondent's decision to return or not to return to school and who was involved in that decision.
4. If respondent is a student or an ex-student, her school experience and goals.
5. How respondent's husband and children feel about her going to school.
6. Respondent's plans for the future.

III. INTERVIEW

The one-to-one taped interview was designed to be semi-structured and to fulfill the following functions: to enrich the questionnaire material and to address areas not covered by the questionnaire. The major topics were:

1. High school experience: interests, grades, guidance available, peers' activities and interests.
2. Family background: mother's and father's education and occupation, parents' attitude toward education.
3. Goals and plans for the future during high school years: subject's expectations for herself and visualization of her future, perceived choices and opportunities.
4. Experience following high school: college, work, marriage.
5. Re-entry experience: first thoughts of returning to school, who was involved in decision to return or not to return. For students, their reasons for returning and effect of school on their lives. For ex-students, their reasons for discontinuing and the effect of that action on their lives. For non-students,

their reasons for not enrolling and the effect on their lives.

6. Goals and plans for the future at this time: expectations, perceived choices and opportunities, goals for children, advice to girls about to graduate from high school.

DATA ANALYSIS

I. Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC)

The Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC) Scale is scored by adding the number of responses according to the standard scale for the test. An individual's raw score can range from one to 23, and since the test is scored in the external direction, the higher the score the more external the orientation. It was decided to disqualify any subject who had omitted more than six items (25% of the total), and four subjects were therefore eliminated. For the entire sample, 171 LOC Scales had no missing items, ten had one missing, seven had two missing, two had three missing, and one had four missing. The scores of the incomplete tests were computed using the following formula:

$$\begin{aligned} & 23 \text{ (total number of items) divided by} \\ & \text{(23 minus the number of missing items)} \\ & \text{multiplied by the raw score} \end{aligned}$$

LOC Scores for the entire sample were two-factor analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Two factors were generated by selecting those items which loaded above .50 on the varimax rotated factor matrix.

II. Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) procedures. Frequency distributions were run for the entire sample and for the four groups of subjects. Chi square, analysis of variance, t-tests, and Pearson product-moment correlation were used where appropriate to compare the groups. Variables were coded as follows:

Mothers', fathers', husbands' education:

1. Less than high school
2. High school graduate
3. Some college
4. College degree
5. Graduate degree

Mothers', fathers', husbands' occupations:

1. Blue collar
2. White collar
3. Professional

Degree of encouragement:

1. Very encouraging
2. Somewhat encouraging
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat discouraging
5. Very discouraging

Degree of influence:

1. Very much
2. Somewhat
3. A little
4. Not much
5. Not at all

III. Interview Data

The one-hour interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview material was organized under the headings:

1. High School Decision
2. Effects of High School Decision
3. Re-entry Decision
4. Effects of Re-entry Decision
5. Plans for the Future

As stated above, the interviews were designed to enrich the questionnaire material and to address areas not covered by the questionnaire. The interviews, unlike the questionnaires, made it possible to delve into the subjects' decision-making and to provide data which could be qualitatively analyzed within the perspective of women's dichotomy of concern for self and concern for others. Two periods in the subjects' lives, high school and re-entry, were scrutinized for factors which might distinguish between those who had become

students and those who had not. Particular attention was paid to the interviewees' perceived options and goals at those two life stages and to their present evaluation of the choices they had made.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS PHASE 1

This study was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1. Administration of the questionnaire and the Rotter (1966, 1972) Internal-External Locus of Control Scale

Phase 2. One-to-one taped interviews.

PHASE 1.DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND COMPARISON OF THE GROUPSAGE

The age of the subjects ranges from 24 to 62 with an average age of 40.7. Broken down into groups, the average age of Group I, the new students, is 39.4, of Group IV, the non-students is 40.0, of Group II, the advanced students, is 40.3, and of Group III, the ex-students is 43.7. When these data were subjected to a one way analysis of variance, the ex-students were found to be significantly older than the other three groups ($F=3.932;df=3;p<.05$).

MARITAL STATUS

In the sample as a whole, 152 subjects (80%) are married, 27 (14%) are separated/divorced, 8 (4%) are single, and 4 (2%) are widowed. When the marital status of the four groups is compared (see Table 1), the non-students can be seen to have the smallest percentage of married subjects and the largest percentage of separated/divorced subjects. Chi square analysis indicates the difference among the four groups only approaches significance ($\chi^2=16.355$ (9) $p=.0598$). However, when the current students, both new and advanced, are combined into one group (see Table 2), the differences between that group and the other two groups, the ex-students and the non-students, are significant ($\chi^2=13.35853$ (6) $p<.05$). Hypothesis 1 which suggested that a subject's student status will be related to her marital status is therefore supported.

Table 1 MARITAL STATUS

GROUPS	single	married	sep/div	widowed	TOTALS
I	1 1.8	48 87.3	6 10.9		55 28.8
II	1 2.0	43 84.3	5 9.8	2 9.9	51 26.7
III	1 2.4	34 82.9	5 12.2	1 2.4	41 21.5
IV	5 11.4	27 61.4	11 25.0	1 2.3	44 23.0
TOTAL	8 4.2	152 79.6	27 14.1	4 2.1	191 100.0
		CHI-SQUARE 16.35500	D.F. 9	SIGNIFICANCE 0.0598	

Table 2 MARITAL STATUS
(New and Advanced Students Combined)

GROUPS	single	married	sep/div	widowed	TOTALS
I & II	2 1.9	91 85.8	11 10.4	2 1.9	106 55.5
III	1 2.4	34 82.9	5 12.2	1 2.4	41 21.7
IV	5 11.4	27 61.4	11 25.0	1 2.3	44 23.0
TOTAL	8 4.2	152 79.6	27 14.1	4 2.1	191 100.0
		CHI-SQUARE 13.35853	D.F. 6	SIGNIFICANCE 0.0259	

CHILDREN

Eighteen (9%) of the subjects have no children, while the remaining 173 (91%) have at least one child with an average of 2.36 children apiece; the average age of their youngest child is 11.11. As a group, the ex-students have the most children, 2.73, and their youngest child has an average age of 13.71. The data were analyzed using a one way analysis of variance, and the results indicated that the average age of ex-students' youngest child is significantly older than that of the other three groups ($F=3.932;df=3;p<.01$).

HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

The occupations of the subjects' husbands, mothers, and fathers were classified as blue-collar, white-collar, or professional, and their respective levels of education were coded as less than high school, high school graduate, some college, college degree, graduate degree. For the married subjects in the sample as a whole (see Table 3), 50% of their husbands are blue-collar workers, 38% are in white-collar jobs, and 12% are professionals. When the sample is broken down into the four groups and the occupations of the subjects' husbands are compared, no significant differences are found. Hypothesis 2.b., which states that a subject is more likely to be a student if her husband is employed in a white-collar or professional

occupation, is not supported. However, the statistical results, although not significant, do indicate that the women who never became students are somewhat more likely to be married to men who are employed in blue-collar jobs than are the women who are current students or ex-students.

Table 3 HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION

GROUPS	blue collar	white collar	profess- ional	TOTALS
I	25 52.1	21 43.8	2 4.2	48 32.2
II	19 44.2	18 41.9	6 14.0	43 28.5
III	15 45.5	11 33.3	7 21.2	33 21.9
IV	17 63.0	7 25.9	3 11.1	27 17.9
TOTAL	76 50.3	57 37.7	18 11.9	151 100.0
	CHI-SQUARE 8.15941	D.F. 6	n.s.	

Turning to husbands' level of education, Table 4 reveals that more than half the husbands (62%) have some education beyond high school. When compared in groups, chi square analysis finds the differences to be significant ($\chi^2=23.53269$ (12) $p<.05$). Hypothesis 2.a., which states that a subject is more likely to be a student if her husband has more than a high school

education is therefore supported.

Table 4 HUSBAND'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

GROUPS	less than h.s	h.s. grad.	some college	college degree	graduate degree
I	4 8.3	14 29.2	16 33.3	13 27.1	1 2.1
II		11 26.2	19 45.2	6 14.3	5 14.3
III	2 6.1	11 33.3	6 18.2	9 27.3	5 15.2
IV		15 55.6	7 25.9	3 11.1	2 7.4
TOTAL	6 4.0	51 34.0	48 32.0	31 20.7	14 9.3
		CHI-SQUARE 23.53269	D.F. 12	SIGNIFICANCE 0.0235	

MOTHERS' AND FATHERS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Despite considerable amounts of missing data, perusal of Table 5 and Table 6 indicates that the overwhelming majority of the subjects' mothers and fathers had no education beyond high school, and in fact, almost half the parents did not earn a high school diploma. When broken down into groups, no significant differences were found in parents' level of education, and Hypotheses 3.c. and 3.d., which state that a subject is more likely to be a student if her mother or father had at least a high school education, were not

supported.

Table 5 MOTHER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

GROUPS	less than h.s	h.s. grad.	some college	college degree	TOTAL
I	21 45.7	23 50.0	1 2.2	1 2.2	46 30.3
II	15 40.5	22 59.5			37 24.3
III	18 54.5	13 39.4		2 6.1	33 21.7
IV	17 47.2	16 44.4	1 2.8	2 5.6	36 23.7
TOTAL	71 46.7	74 48.7	2 1.3	5 3.3	152 100.0

CHI-SQUARE
6.95178

D.F.
9 n.s.

Table 6 FATHER'S LEVEL OF EDUCATION

GROUPS	less than h.s	h.s. grad.	some college	college degree	graduate degree
I	19 40.4	22 46.8	1 2.1	4 8.5	1 2.1
II	14 37.8	19 51.4	3 8.1		1 2.7
III	15 53.6	10 35.7	1 3.6	2 7.1	
IV	17 56.7	8 26.7	2 6.7	3 10.0	
TOTAL	65 45.8	59 41.5	7 4.9	9 6.3	2 1.4

CHI-SQUARE D.F.
11.53276 12 n.s.

SUBJECTS' EDUCATION

Responses to the item concerning high school course of study (see Table 7) reveal that almost half the subjects had graduated with an academic diploma. Group II, the advanced students, have the largest percentage in this category, and Group IV, the non- students, have the smallest percentage. When subjected to chi square analysis, the differences among the four groups were found to be significant ($\chi^2=18.37761$ (9) $p<.05$). Hypothesis 3.a., which states that a subject is more likely to be a student if she graduated from high school with an academic diploma, is therefore supported.

Table 7 HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

GROUPS	academic	general	commer- cial	GED	TOTAL
I	21 40.4	10 19.2	18 34.6	3 5.8	52 28.4
II	32 66.7	8 16.7	8 16.7		48 26.2
III	22 56.4	5 12.8	8 20.5	4 10.3	39 21.3
IV	15 34.1	13 29.5	14 31.8	2 4.5	44 24.0
TOTAL	90 49.2	36 19.7	48 26.2	9 4.9	183 100.0
	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIGNIFICANCE		
	18.37761	9	0.0310		

Hypothesis 3.b. had suggested that a subject was more likely to become a student if she had gone directly to college following high school graduation. Only 56 subjects, 29% of the sample, followed this path, and only one-quarter of that number continued for more than one year. When subjected to chi square analysis, no significant differences were found among the groups, and the hypothesis was therefore not supported.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Almost 90% of the sample worked full time after they finished high school. After marriage, 62% worked full time and 20% worked part time. After the birth of their children, 24% worked full time and 43% worked part time. Thirty-four percent are now employed full time and 29% part time. The occupations reported by the entire sample at each of the life phases fall overwhelmingly into the traditional female categories of secretarial, clerical, sales, and other white-collar situations.

ETHNICITY

In reply to the question concerning ethnic background, 10% of the sample did not respond, 24% classified themselves as Italian, 18% as American, 18% as Irish, 17% WASP, 7% Jewish, 3% Hispanic, 3% Black, 1% Catholic, 1% Dutch.

THE DECISION TO RETURN OR NOT TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

The questionnaire contains six openended items concerning the subjects' school-related decisions.

These items are:

16. When you first thought about returning to school:

(c) Were things happening in your life at that time that made you think about returning to school?

If yes: what were they?

17. When you did return to school:

(c) What do you feel were the major reasons for your return to school?

(d) Have you been continuously enrolled since making the decision to return?

If no: (6) What were your reasons?

(9) What problems might interfere with your resuming your studies?

18. If you have never registered for courses:

(b) What were your major reasons for not enrolling?

(g) What problems might interfere with your enrolling now?

Analysis of the responses to these questions considered only the first response and viewed it in the perspective of the interaction between concern for self

and concern for others in women's decision making. If the first response mentioned the subject's feelings of inadequacy, her desire for self-fulfillment, for more education, a need to do something for herself, it was considered concern for self. If the first response mentioned another person such as child or husband, it was labeled responsibility for others. A decision had to be made about job-related responses, to which category should they be assigned? If a woman wrote that she was thinking about going back to school because she might then get a better job, would this signify concern for her own needs or for the needs of her family? It might then be asked, why is the woman working or planning to work? Is it to please herself, to satisfy an inner need, or is it to earn money to satisfy the needs of her family? Since the answers to these questions are not readily available, it was decided that job-related responses would be classified as concern for self. Although arguments could be presented in either direction, the idea that better jobs are generally more satisfying seemed to outweigh the possibility that the monetary rewards for work might be solely for the benefit of the woman's family.

Responding to the item concerning education after high school, 56 subjects had gone directly to college after finishing high school. When asked why they had stopped (see Table 8), 40% gave reasons such as

insufficient interest or getting jobs which fall into the category of concern for self, and 60% gave reasons such as family problems or having babies which fall into the category of concern for others. Subjected to chi square analysis, the differences in responses were significant among the four groups ($\chi^2=8.75916$ (3) $p<.05$). The new students and the non-students were more likely to have dropped out of college for reasons of concern for self and the advanced students and the ex-students were more likely to have dropped out because of concern for others.

TABLE 8 REASONS FOR LEAVING COLLEGE

GROUPS	I	SELF	I	OTHERS	I	TOTAL
	I	-----I	I	-----I	I	-----I
I	I	6	I	4	I	10
	I	60.0	I	40.0	I	25.0
	-I	-----I	I	-----I	I	-----I
II	I	4	I	9	I	13
	I	30.8	I	69.2	I	32.5
	-I	-----I	I	-----I	I	-----I
III	I	1	I	9	I	10
	I	10.0	I	90.0	I	25.0
	-I	-----I	I	-----I	I	-----I
IV	I	5	I	2	I	7
	I	71.4	I	28.6	I	17.5
	-I	-----I	I	-----I	I	-----I
		16		24		40
TOTAL		40.0		60.0		100.0
	CHI SQUARE		D.F.		SIGNIFICANCE	
	8.75916		3		0.0327	

Asked to specify with whom they first discussed the possibility of returning to school (see Table 9), married subjects were significantly more likely to have talked with their husband than with anyone else ($\chi^2=31.09267$ (18) $p<.05$). When the degree of encouragement received by the married subjects who discussed their possible return with their husbands is analyzed by groups (see Table 10), chi square finds no significant differences. Hypothesis 2.c., which states that a subject is more likely to be a student if her husband encourages her educational pursuit has not been supported. Perusal of the data, however, indicates that the women who became students were somewhat more likely than non-students to have received the highest degree of encouragement from their husband.

TABLE 9 FIRST DISCUSSED RETURN WITH WHOM

GROUPS	HUSBAND	FAMILY	FRIEND	THERAPIS	SUPER-	NO
	I	I	I	T-DOCTOR	VISOR	ONE
I	I 29 I	I 8 I	I 4 I	I 1 I	I 1 I	I 3 I
	I 61.7 I	I 17.0 I	I 8.5 I	I 2.1 I	I 2.1 I	I 6.4 I
II	I 21 I	I 6 I	I 6 I	I 1 I	I 1 I	I 7 I
	I 50.0 I	I 14.3 I	I 14.3 I	I 2.4 I	I 2.4 I	I 16.7 I
III	I 16 I	I 1 I	I 1 I	I 0 I	I 4 I	I 12 I
	I 47.1 I	I 2.9 I	I 2.9 I	I 0.0 I	I 11.8 I	I 35.3 I
IV	I 12 I	I 4 I	I 7 I	I 0 I	I 1 I	I 3 I
	I 44.4 I	I 14.8 I	I 25.9 I	I 0.0 I	I 3.7 I	I 11.1 I
	78	19	18	2	7	25
	52.0	12.7	12.0	1.3	4.7	16.7
	CHI SQUARE		D.F.		SIGNIFICANCE	
	31.09267		18		0.0281	

TABLE 10 HUSBANDS' ENCOURAGEMENT

GROUPS	VERY ENC OURAGING	SOMEWHAT NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT DISCOUR	VERY DIS
I	I 15 I	I 6 I	I 5 I	I 1 I
	I 53.6 I	I 21.4 I	I 17.9 I	I 3.6 I
II	I 13 I	I 4 I	I 1 I	I 3 I
	I 61.9 I	I 19.0 I	I 4.8 I	I 14.3 I
III	I 9 I	I 2 I	I 2 I	I 2 I
	I 56.3 I	I 12.5 I	I 12.5 I	I 12.5 I
IV	I 5 I	I 2 I	I 5 I	I 0 I
	I 41.7 I	I 16.7 I	I 41.7 I	I 0.0 I
	42	14	13	6
	54.5	18.2	16.9	7.8
	CHI SQUARE		D.F.	
	12.39599		12	n.s.

LIFE EVENT

In an openended question, subjects were asked to describe what was happening in their life at the time they first considered going back to school. Responses included: children in school or growing up, job needs, boredom, marital problems, desire for education, financial problems, and fear of the future. When these responses were analyzed in terms of a dichotomy of concern, 52% fell into the category of concern for self and 48% into concern for others. Chi square analysis by group (see Table 11) found the differences to be significant ($\chi^2=10.16294;df=3;p<.05$). The advanced students and the ex-students were more likely to cite a life event designating concern for self, the new students were more likely to list a life event which denoted concern for others, and the non-students were apt to name an event in either of the two categories.

TABLE 11 LIFE EVENT

GROUPS	I	SELF	I	OTHERS	I
I	I	17	I	32	I 49
	I	34.7	I	65.3	I 34.0
II	I	26	I	15	I 41
	I	63.4	I	36.6	I 28.5
III	I	17	I	9	I 26
	I	65.4	I	34.6	I 18.1
IV	I	16	I	12	I 28
	I	57.1	I	42.9	I 19.4
TOTAL		76		68	144
		52.8		47.2	100.0

CHI SQUARE D.F. SIGNIFICANCE
 10.16295 3 0.0172

All subjects were then asked who had actually been involved in the decision to return or not to return to school. Only 44% felt that anyone other than themselves had been involved, and more than half of that number reported not having been at all influenced by those individuals. These percentages were almost identical for both the married and unmarried women in the sample.

REASONS FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL

Tabulating the 132 first responses to the question "What were your major reasons for returning to school?", 26% were seeking self-fulfillment, 24% mentioned job needs, 20% wanted an education or a degree, 11% cited enjoyment or stimulation, 8% had always wanted to do it, 8% were looking forward to a career, and 2% wanted financial independence. When examined by group and subjected to chi square analysis, there were no significant differences. It is interesting that a larger percentage of new students gave job-related reasons for their return than advanced or ex-students, and a larger percentage of ex-students wanted a degree than either group of currently enrolled students. However, it should also be noted that all the subjects who returned to school did so for reasons of personal satisfaction.

REASONS FOR NOT RETURNING TO SCHOOL

When asked to give reasons for discontinuing their education, 38 ex-students responded. Nine women had stopped school because they were working, eight cited family responsibilities, seven each had financial or

health problems, six had time difficulties, and one had no goals. Analyzed according to the dichotomy of concern, 46% of the responses cited concern for self and 54% listed concern for the needs of others. When asked if there were problems which might prevent a return to school, one-third of the respondents mentioned factors involving personal needs and two-thirds cited factors involving responsibility for others.

Non-students were asked why they had not enrolled in college, and of the 23 who responded, seven cited financial difficulties, six felt uncertain, five had not enough time, and one had a health problem. In terms of a dichotomy of concern, 30% of the responses mentioned concern for self, and 70% cited concern for others. When asked what might prevent their enrolling now, only 10% of the responses were related to personal needs, the remaining 90% referred to responsibility for others.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Responding to the questionnaire item concerning field of study, 17 subjects listed business, 16 liberal arts, 11 education, 10 psychology, 8 nursing, 5 sociology, 3 English, 2 each speech pathology, economics, and computer, and 16 were undecided. It is interesting to note that 30% of the new students were

undecided about their field of study, while only 10% of the advanced students were uncertain. The completion of additional courses may have been helpful in clarifying the advanced students' interests and ambitions.

One hundred seventy-three subjects responded to the openended item asking what they wanted to do and where they wanted to be in five years. Of this number, 34% wanted a career, 17% wanted a job, 9% wanted to go to school, 6% hoped to earn a degree, 6% wanted no change in their life, 4% wanted to be independent, 3% wanted to enjoy life, 2% wanted to educate their children, and a total of 18% were undecided. When broken down into groups, there were no significant differences, but the advanced students expressed the most positive job or career expectations, while somewhat surprisingly, the ex-students indicated the least amount of indecision.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

The overall LOC scores ranged from 2 to 21 with a mean of 9.71. When the groups are compared, the mean of the advance students' scores is 8.926, the ex-students' is 9.142, the non-students' is 10.203, and the new students' is 10.467. The LOC of the advanced students is therefore the most internal, while that of the new students is the most external. When the group means are

subjected to a one-way analysis of variance, no significant differences are revealed.

In the section THE DECISION TO RETURN OR NOT TO RETURN TO SCHOOL, advanced students and ex-students were more likely to cite a life event denoting concern for self, new students to cite a life event denoting responsibility, and non-students might name either one. Comparison of the LOC scores of the four groups indicated that the advanced and the ex-students have the lowest or most internally oriented scores, while the new students and the non-students have the highest or most externally oriented scores. Since the advanced students and the ex-students had the highest percentages of life event responses in the concern for self category and the lowest LOC scores, while the new students had both the highest percentage of responses in the concern for others category and the highest LOC scores, a relationship seemed to exist. When submitted to analysis by group using Pearson product-moment correlation, however, no significant relationships were found between LOC scores and concern for self or concern for others. Hypotheses 4.a. and 4.b. were therefore not supported.

Responses by the four groups of subjects to the 23 items on the LOC Scale were subjected to analysis by t-tests, and the following differences were found to be significant:

Item 3	Group I/Group III	(t=3.90;df=89;p<.01)
	Group I/Group IV	(t=2.12;df=92;p<.05)
	Group I/Group II	(t=2.87;df=101;p<.01)
Item 28	Group IV/Group I	(t=-2.66;df=94;p<.01)
	Group IV/Group III	(t=-2.60;df=83;p<.01)
	Group IV/Group II	(t=2.74;df=95;p<.01)

Item 3 contains these two statements:

a. One of the major reasons we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.

b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

The data indicate that the new students were significantly more likely than any of the other groups of subjects to choose statement "b", the external choice.

Item 28 contains these two statements:

a. What happens to me is my own doing.

b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

The data indicate that the non-students were significantly more likely than any of the other groups

of subjects to choose statement "b", the external choice.

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF LOC SCORES

A test of the reliability of the LOC Scale using the alpha model produced a reliability rating of .73916. LOC scores for the entire sample were factor analyzed, and two factors were generated from those scale items which loaded above .50. Factor One was comprised of three items: 11, 23, and 16, and resulted from the subjects' agreement with the the following statements: "Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time", "Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give", and "Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first". Factor Two comprised items 29, 3, and 9 and was produced by the subjects' agreement with the statements: "Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do", "There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them", and "I have always found that what is going to happen will happen".

Factor One seems to be related to the subjects' feelings about achievement or success and the role that luck or fate may play in the attainment of worthwhile goals. Factor Two seems to be involved with the subjects' perception of their ability or inability to influence politics and world events. Factor One, portraying an interest in personal accomplishment, might be associated with the dimension of concern for self while Factor Two, an involvement in politics, might be equated with the dimension of concern for others. This would support Hypothesis 5. which suggests that LOC (Rotter 1966, 1972) factors will be generated that may be identifiable with the two elements, concern for self and concern for others.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION PHASE ONE

The 191 women who make up the sample of this study are typical of re-entry women students as described in the literature. They are older than conventional age college students, their average age, 40.7, is far beyond the 18 to 22 year range. Eighty percent of them are married, 91% have at least one child, and the average age of their youngest child is 11. They either graduated from high school or earned an equivalency diploma, and they have all been out of the classroom for a number of years while working or raising a family.

In the sample as a whole, the ex-students are significantly older than the other three groups. This is not particularly surprising since the women who are no longer students may have had their "back-to-school experience" when their age was similar to that of the two younger groups. Also, not unexpectedly, the average age of the ex-students' youngest child is considerably older than that of the other groups.

Hypothesis 1, which suggested that a subject's student status would be related to her marital status has been partially supported by the data. When marital

status was examined by group, the differences only approached significance, but significant differences did appear when the sample was separated into women who are currently students and those who are not now, or who have never been students. Since the purpose of the study is to examine factors which may distinguish women who have become and remained students from those who are no longer or have never been students, it seemed quite appropriate to test the hypothesis in that manner. The results thus obtained indicated that divorced women, in this sample, are less likely to return to the classroom than women who have husbands. It seems logical to infer that women with husbands are in a better position financially than women who are divorced and are therefore more capable of handling college expenses. Divorced women may also, as in this sample, be the heads of single-parent households carrying the major burden of responsibility for young children. Ironically enough, these women, for whom education and training may be the most essential, may in fact be the least likely to return to school. It may also be a fact, however, that divorced women perceive themselves as needing a job rather than needing an education, and working may be the more satisfying role for them.

It was also hypothesized that a subject's student status would be related to her husband's level of education and occupation. The first part of this

hypothesis was supported when analysis of the data revealed that the students and the ex-students are significantly more likely than non-students to be married to men who have gone to college or to graduate school. It seems reasonable to infer that men who are college educated are less likely to feel threatened by their wives' return to school than men who have never gone beyond high school. It also seems reasonable to infer that women whose husbands are college educated are living in an atmosphere which is more likely to foster an interest or enthusiasm for intellectual pursuits. These women may, in fact, feel envious of their husbands' education and may return to school to reduce the inequality.

Although the second part of the hypothesis which suggested that a subject's student status would be related to her husband's occupation was not statistically significant, the data do indicate that students and ex-students are somewhat more likely than non-students to be married to white-collar or professional workers. The economic factor is apparent: a white-collar or professional occupation might be expected to provide a higher income and the financial ability not only to cover college expenses but also to live adequately without the money a woman might have contributed to the household if she were not in school. Non-students, if divorced, might lack not only the

necessary financial backing of the husband's earning power but also his possible sharing of responsibility for care of the children. Non-students, if married, might have husbands who are blue-collar workers whose income might not be sufficient to pay tuition and/or to support the family without the wife's salary. It appears, at least for the subjects of this study, that having a husband, especially one who has some education beyond high school and who is employed in a white-collar or professional capacity, may be a factor in her decision to return or not to return to school. It should not be overlooked, however, that she has that particular husband because she chose to marry him, and this may be the most relevant factor of all.

The third part of this hypothesis, suggesting that a subject is more likely to be a student if her husband encourages her educational pursuit, was not statistically supported. Married subjects were significantly more likely to have discussed their possible return to school with their husband than with anyone else. When broken down into groups, however, the differences in degree of encouragement pointed in the right direction but were not statistically significant; a greater percentage of students and ex-students had indeed received the highest degree of encouragement from their husbands than had the non-students. In spite of the lack of statistical significance, this topic seems

worth pursuing. Just how important is a husband's encouragement in a woman's decision making? Women, according to Rossi (1969), have learned, as girls, to accept authority in their intense relationship with their father and have carried this quality, as adults, into their relationship with their husband. If the father's approval and encouragement had been sought in girlhood, it seems reasonable to expect that a husband's approval and encouragement would also have meaning for a wife about to take a decisive step. Logically then, we can conclude that if a woman wants to go back to school, it would be helpful if she is married to a college educated man in a white-collar or professional occupation who has some enthusiasm for her decision.

Hypothesis 3, suggesting that subjects are more likely to be students if their parents had at least a high school education, was not supported by the data. A problem in the wording of questions concerning the education of respondents' parents became apparent when the data were analyzed. Sizable numbers of the women had not replied or had responded "deceased" possibly because the questionnaire items did not request answers whether or not the parents were still living. What, if any, differences might have appeared had the data been more complete can only be inferred. There is a general assumption that people who have had the benefits of higher education will expect their children to equal or

exceed their level. In the home they may establish a "climate for education", so that children growing up in that atmosphere will automatically plan to continue their education after high school graduation. Since only 4% of the mothers and 12% of the fathers of the subjects who responded had any education at all beyond high school, and since almost half of all parents did not have a high school diploma, it is obvious that only a small percentage of these women grew up in a home environment which viewed higher education as commonplace. It might then be inferred that few of the subjects lived in a household where education was stressed. However, people who feel educationally deprived may, in fact, emphasize to their children the need for education and the benefits to be derived from a college degree. Parents' attitudes toward their children's education, therefore, may be related both to the value they place on education as well as to the level of education they have actually attained.

The subjects' own education was also considered as a factor in her possible return to school as an adult. It was hypothesized that women were more likely to become re-entry students if they had graduated from high school with an academic rather than a general or a commercial diploma. It seemed logical to suppose that high school students taking college preparatory courses would have some thoughts of continuing their education

beyond high school, and even if they did not enroll in college immediately after graduation, the unfulfilled expectation might at some later time result in a return to the classroom. Analysis of the data did, in fact, support this hypothesis. Not only were the women who had become re-entry students more likely than those who had not become students to have graduated from high school with an academic diploma, but the advanced students were significantly more likely than either the new students or the non-students to have gone through high school taking an academic program.

It had also been suggested that women were more likely to become re- entry students if they had gone directly from high school to college but had not earned a degree. In the sample as a whole, only 29% had gone to college after high school graduation, and compared by groups, the numbers are small and not statistically significant. It would be interesting to test this hypothesis further with larger groups of re-entry women students to see how many started college immediately following high school graduation, discontinued before completing their degree, and have now resumed an interrupted education, and how many did not proceed from high school to college and are now making a first attempt at a college education. Could a feeling of "unfinished business" be one of the many factors involved in sending a woman back into the classroom?

Might there also be a relationship to the circumstances of her dropping out of college? If she had left to get married, she may have done so with the expectation of finishing at a later date, but if she had left because of academic disinterest, disillusionment, or failure, the intention of finishing might be in conflict with uncomfortable memories and the fear of another failure. In that case, a woman who had never started college at all might perhaps be a more likely candidate to become a re-entry student.

Subjects' responses to the item asking what was happening in their lives when they first thought about returning to school were studied within the context of the dichotomy of concern for self and concern for others in women's decision making. The subjects' decisions, resulting in their now being new students, advanced students, ex-students, or non-students, have been considered, for the purposes of this study, to be grounded to some extent in what was happening in their lives when they first thought about returning to school. As described previously, responses which mentioned the subject's feelings of inadequacy, her need for self-fulfillment, for job promotion, or wanting something for herself were coded as concern for self, while responses which mentioned another person such as a child or husband were coded as concern for others.

Analysis of the data found significant differences among the four groups: advanced students and ex-students were more likely to cite a concern for self life event, new students were more likely to describe a concern for others situation, and non-students might list either type. Since only the first response was counted, this is a topic which will be explored more fully in the interview material. Briefly however, it might be pointed out that the advanced students and the ex-students, being older and having older children than the other groups, may be less involved in parent-child relationships and more engrossed in their own activities at the present time. At any event the fact remains that women do make responses which reveal the presence of either, or both of these factors at a time when they are confronted with the possibility of change and the need to take some course of action.

Hypothesis 4 suggests that if a subject feels her school decision had been made under her control and directed toward her own goals (defined as concern for self), her locus of control as measured by the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control (LOC) Scale (1966, 1972) could be expected to be internally oriented, but if she feels her decision had been influenced by others and by her feelings of concern for others, her locus of control could be expected to be externally oriented. Less than half the sample (44%) felt that anyone other

than themselves had been involved in their school decision, and more than half of that number (56%) reported not having been at all influenced by those other individuals. It would thus seem that fully 80% of the subjects believe the decisions they had made, to enroll, to drop out, or not to enroll at all, had been their own choice and had not been influenced by others.

The next logical step is to consider how the dichotomy of concern for self/concern for others and Rotter's (1966, 1972) theory of internal-external locus of control may be related. Eighty percent of the sample say they made up their minds themselves, but what do they say was happening to them at that time, what might have been some of the factors underlying the choices they made? As reported above, advanced students and ex-students were the ones most likely to cite a concern for self factor when they first thought about resuming their education; they were also the ones whose LOC scores were most apt to be in the lower range indicating a more internal orientation. The new students were more likely to have listed a concern for others factor, and their LOC scores were more likely to be in the higher range, indicating a more external point of view. It would seem the women who made the concern for self responses and had the lower (more internal) LOC scores were thinking about their own needs and, in acting to satisfy these needs, were trying to exert more personal

control over their lives. The women who made the concern for others responses and had the higher (more external) LOC scores were feeling responsible for the needs of others and were perhaps experiencing difficulty in exerting control over their personal lives. Although no significant correlations between LOC and concern for self/concern for others were found in the data analysis, this is a topic of considerable importance and worthy of further investigation.

It is particularly interesting to examine the first responses to the item asking subjects to list their major reasons for returning to school. The data indicated that new students had given more work-oriented reasons, while advanced students had given more education-oriented replies. However, all the reasons given by both groups fall into the concern for self category; in one way or another, each of these women returned to school to fulfill a personal need. But what had become of the subjects in these two groups who cited a concern for others factor in describing what was happening in their lives when they first thought about resuming their education? Is it possible they were qualifying their response to the earlier item and saying that, although they felt their responsibility for their family, they actually enrolled for themselves? And since these are the subjects with the more external locus of control, are they in fact indicating that their

ability to exert internal control over their actions is limited by their concern for their close relationships?

Continuing this discussion, it is relevant to move on to a consideration of the reasons offered by the ex-students for having dropped out of college and by the non-students for not having enrolled at all. More than half the ex-students' reasons for not continuing their education and more than two-thirds the non-students' reasons for not resuming their education fall into the concern for others category. Is it possible that in providing reasons for not doing something they would like to do or feel is important to do, namely completing their education, they are listing factors which might be thought of as forces outside themselves? Are they perhaps refusing to take responsibility for their own actions by citing their need to be responsible for the well-being of the people close to them, their husbands, their children?

When the subjects' plans for the future were examined, it was hardly surprising to find that the advanced students are the most likely of all the subjects to have definite career goals; after all, they are the most involved with, and committed to their further education. It was also not particularly surprising to find that the non-students as a group have the largest percentage of subjects who have no concrete plans for their future; they are the ones who took the

initial step toward a resumption of their education but never followed through by registering. The big surprise was discovering that only 6% of the ex-students felt uncertain about their future plans. Why were the ex-students less uncertain even than the advanced students? Could it be that by having returned to school and then choosing not to continue, they had done just what they wanted to do? After all, the ex-students as a group have an average LOC score only slightly higher than the advanced students who have the lowest (most internal) average score. Since a college education may not be the best course of action for everyone, is it possible that the ex-students, having given it a try and found it not to their liking, are now more satisfied with their lives and feel more in control of their present and their future?

An unanswered question raised by this study concerns the Rotter (1966, 1972) LOC Scale. The advanced and ex-student groups were, on the average, the oldest women, and they had the lowest or most internal LOC scores. Is a woman's degree of internality/externality somehow related to her age or perhaps to her stage of motherhood? Longitudinal data not being available, it is tempting to infer that young mothers, immersed in the repetitious daily world of home and children, perceive their options as few and limited by their environment, an external orientation. Older

women, whose children are in school or grown, have fewer home obligations and may perceive their options as greater in number and less limited by their environment, an internal orientation. Another factor to be considered, however, is the possible relationship of the subjects' LOC to their level of education. Since the advanced students have at least 30 college credits while the new students have less than 30 credits, is it possible that the advanced students' more internal LOC is somehow related to the impact of additional education?

Furthermore, examining the responses of the subjects to the individual items on the LOC Scale, the question might be asked: why are the new students significantly more likely than any of the other groups to believe that, "There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them"? The new students have the highest LOC, they are thus the most externally oriented. Do they therefore feel the most resigned to the control of powerful others, the least able to rebel against the forces around them? The new students are also the youngest group. Could age be a factor in their feeling helpless to effect change in national or world events? Or are they reflecting a feeling of being constrained by the limits of their home environment?

It is also interesting to note that the non-students are significantly more likely than any of the other groups to agree with the statement, "Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking." As noted above, the non-student group has the largest percentage, almost one-third, of subjects who are uncertain about their plans for the future. In their response to this item on the LOC Scale, they seem to be acknowledging, in a rather poignant manner, a perceived lack of control over the direction of their lives and their future.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE 2 INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with 32 subjects, eight in each of the four groups. All the interviewees are white, middle-class women living on Staten Island. See Tables 12, 13, 14, 15 for a description of the interviewees. Group I are the new students, Group II are the advanced students, Group III are the ex-students, and Group IV are the non-students. Additional information may be found in the Appendix.

TABLE 12 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES

GROUP	AGE	NO.CHIL DREN	YOUNGEST CHILD	MAR.	DIV.	LOC
I	40.13	2.88	8.38	7	1	10.75
II	47.00	3.25	15.38	8	0	6.88
III	45.13	3.00	16.13	7	1	8.52
IV	41.25	2.63	9.63	5	3	9.50

TABLE 13 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES (CONTINUED)

GROUP	H.S. DIPLOMA				COLLEGE AFTER H.S.	
	ACAD.	GEN.	COM.	GED	YES	NO
I	5	0	2	1	1	7
II	5	3	0	0	1	7
III	2	3	1	2	0	8
IV	2	4	2	0	1	7

TABLE 14 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES (CONTINUED)

GROUP	HUSBAND'S EDUCATION				
	L/T H.S.	H.S. GRAD	SOME COLL.	COLL. DEG.	GRAD. DEG.
I	1	3	2	2	0
II	0	1	2	2	3
III	1	1	2	3	0
IV	0	5	1	0	0

TABLE 15 DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES (CONTINUED)

GROUP	HUSBAND'S OCCUPATION		
	BLUE COLLAR	WHITE COLLAR	PROFESS.
I	4	3	1
II	3	3	2
III	4	1	1
IV	5	1	0

This study was planned to explore the factors involved in re-entry women's decisions to return or not to return to school. The questionnaire approached the issues but was limited in scope. The interviews were designed not only to enrich the questionnaire data but more importantly, to focus on areas which were beyond the reach of the printed forms. The interviews addressed the decisions made by the subjects as high school students and as re-entry women and examined their options and goals at both those life stages. The choices made and the paths followed were readily discernible, but how the decisions had been made and the

lasting effects of the decisions were more difficult to uncover.

Analysis of the decision sections of the questionnaire data had utilized, where possible, the concept of a dichotomy of concern for self/concern for others. As the typescripts of the interviews were examined, however, it became increasingly clear that this idea was not merely relevant but was actually interwoven into the subjects' own words and phrases. By the end of the analysis, the concept of a dichotomy of concern had assumed an essential role in the discussion of the data. Within this framework, therefore, the report of the interview material will begin with the subjects' high school days and will move to the present time considering the factors involved in their decisions and the relationship of these factors to concern for self and/or concern for others. It is important to recognize, however, that the interviewees do not necessarily represent the sample as a whole. By volunteering, they have demonstrated a desire or willingness to talk to the interviewer and a need, perhaps, to validate their thoughts and actions.

HIGH SCHOOL DECISION

The interviewer began by asking the subject about her high school experience, what kind of student she had been, what courses she had taken, what plans she had for her future, and what choices she felt were available to her at that time. Some interviewees had been good students, some had been uninterested in school, some had taken college preparatory courses, others had followed a commercial program, and some had dropped out of high school before earning a diploma. Although a number of subjects had followed an academic program in high school, there was little motivation toward college. The majority of the interviewees came from families where any education beyond high school was a rarity, and their friends and peers were not heading for college.

A common theme became apparent when questions were asked regarding subjects' options and goals while still in high school. An advanced student stated it clearly, "When I was in high school, I didn't have a goal for anything. I just wanted to get married and have a family and stay home and take care of my babies." It is interesting that she claimed she "didn't have a goal for anything", and yet she went on to describe a goal of marriage and motherhood. According to Lowenthal et al (1977) high school girls saw marriage and family as primary factors in their future lives, but their expectation of when these events would occur depended on

whether or not high school graduation was viewed as the end of their education. Black and Hill (1984), however, surveyed married female college graduates who all felt they had done little or no career planning in their late teens or early 20's because marriage and motherhood had been their main focus. In other words, if the interviewees of this study had planned to go to college they would still have looked forward to marriage and motherhood but not so soon after high school. Since more education had not been a goal, they felt no other choices had been available to them. They had expected to work, to save some money, to find a suitable man to marry, and to stay home to raise a family. They had been well socialized to look forward to a life similar to the one lived by their mother and probably their grandmother. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir (1952, 1974),

"Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society. It is still true that most women are married, or have been, or plan to be, or suffer from not being." (p. 475).

Although it has been called, for the purposes of this study, the high school decision, it might almost be thought of as a decision made by default. The interviewees felt they had decided on their own not to go further in education but to go to work until they became wives and mothers. But they also felt there had

been no other options, so had they really made a decision? Were there alternatives they might have chosen, or did they just slide into a ready-made situation? A new student voiced her uncertainty,

"I probably did (have other options), but I didn't look into them. There was nobody there saying there are other things to look into. But I'm not going to blame other people, I blame myself. I should have been more aggressive."

An advanced student said, "I didn't give myself options when I was in school. As soon as I got into the seventh grade, before that I was terrific, but after that I got interested in boys, and it went right down the tube."

It sounds as though there might indeed have been other choices, but only from the perspective of years later were those possibilities visible. These women had no long range expectations that did not include marriage and motherhood and no thought for their lives beyond that point.

At that stage in their lives, the interviewees appeared to have been solely concerned with their own wants and needs. There was a certain amount of concern for the feelings of their parents and desire for their approval. There was perhaps even more need for the acceptance and approval of their friends and peers. But

the primary emphasis was on satisfying the subjects' own inner need for self- fulfillment. It is interesting to note that to effect this satisfaction required the development of close relationships, i.e. marriage and motherhood. However, side by side with the acquisition of husband and children would come feelings of responsibility for the well-being of the relationships and the people involved in them. And thus begins the dichotomy described above and verbalized again and again by the women in their interviews.

So, the decisions having been made, the subjects left their high school years behind and moved into adulthood. A non-student spoke for herself and her friends,

"The same as me, they were all going to get jobs and make some money and then get married and settle down and have kids. That's all anybody talked about, just getting out of school and saving up some money to get married."

With the exception of three interviewees who spent a brief period as full time college students, all the subjects immediately went to work in traditional female areas: clerical, secretarial, and sales. Exactly as reported by Epstein (1970), they had no visions of a long term career or of any particular achievement in the business world. They saw their jobs as temporary, a

useful occupation to fill the time between school and marriage and to provide monetary benefits to themselves and their parents. They expected to work only until their children were born, when they would retire and stay home to raise their family. It is interesting that they had no plans for their lives beyond the child-raising years, it was as though they could not, or would not try to visualize a more distant future. They literally had no expectations for themselves other than perhaps the vicarious experiencing of their husbands' and children's successes and failures. Looking back from the present, a non-student said, "I would have loved to go to college and find a career for myself, find something for me instead of for everybody else."

When asked how they now, as re-entry women, feel about the decisions they had made in those high school years, an overwhelming majority of the women expressed regret for not having gone to college or not having acquired some special expertise. An ex-student who is divorced deplores her lack of education, "I regret every minute of it...I think somebody in my position who has no college doesn't really stand a chance at all." A new student, although happily married, declared, "Now, in retrospect, looking back on my life, I would rather have had a career. Knowing the world today, for women, I don't feel there's any security for anybody at any time." And from another new student, "I just wish I

would have thought this way years ago. That's my only regret that I'm this age. I wish I was younger, I'd go to law school and become an attorney."

Regrets for those early choices were voiced even more strongly when interviewees were asked what advice they would give to girls about to graduate from high school. Over and over again they stressed the need to postpone the momentous decision of marriage or of any serious relationship until the young women will have had the opportunity to complete their education, to establish a career, to achieve independence, to travel, to see what life is like as an adult without the burden of responsibility for others. In the words of an ex-student, "Enroll in college immediately while you still have the momentum, before you have responsibilities in your life, while you're still free." An advanced student's advice, "It boils right down to having a purpose in life, a goal, that is the most important thing. I don't know if people coming out of high school really understand what education means and how important it is, because without it, without those options, you really have nothing." And from a non-student, "I would tell them to have a career for a while, whatever they choose to do. Go to school and set your mind on something and go for it. Work hard to get to your goal...Maybe it's all the things I didn't do."

This message, loud and clear, is not difficult to interpret. These re-entry women deeply regret having had no goals other than marriage and motherhood. They thought their only options had been the old established ones, and they feel they have missed out on something, they have been cheated. Nobody had told them in those early days to look further ahead into their lives, to plan more dynamically for their future. They had certainly observed their mothers' lives, but perhaps they had seen only as much as they wanted to see, and perhaps they thought it would be different for them. Perhaps they were demonstrating what Erikson (1968) had described as a young woman's need to form an intimate relationship in order to establish her identity. Now, however, these women are rejecting that concept of adolescence and are urging their daughters to set other goals and make other plans for themselves. Whether their daughters are listening and whether they will take their mothers' advice, remains to be seen. The mothers, in the meantime, want more for themselves than they have already had, and when scrutinized from the viewpoint of concern for self versus responsibility for others, they sound as though they would like to move away from that present ambivalence back to the adolescents' single-minded gratification of personal needs. This will become even more apparent in the next section dealing with the decisions made by the interviewees as re-entry women.

RE-ENTRY DECISION

Women at the time of re-entry are the focus of this study. Re-entry, by definition, signifies a return or a second entrance, and that is quite literally what the subjects are doing. The first entrance had occurred when they left high school and their years of youthful dependence behind and moved into the adult world of work and responsibility. They worked for some time, married and usually continued to work until the birth of their children. At that point they gave up active participation in the business arena and retired into the home to raise their family. After a number of years, and that number may vary greatly, they have begun to emerge from the home into the world of work or school.

To examine the dynamics of this act of re-entry, subjects were asked what was happening in their lives when they first thought about returning to school. A sampling of their replies describes the situation:

A new student said, "I didn't want to be a boring housewife, I wanted to do something else. I was afraid when the little one went to school, I would have nothing to do but what my other girlfriends are doing, going bowling on Tuesday and the beauty parlor on Friday, and I didn't want to be part of that scene."

An advanced student told about her life, "I guess it was during the time I was sitting home after I stopped working, just me and the children and Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers, and I thought there has got to be something, I have got to find something to do besides this."

And from another new student, "My kids were growing up and I was feeling that empty nest syndrome. I was lonely, and I just wanted to feel like a person again. I wasn't feeling good about myself. I love my kids, but I felt they were drifting away, and I also felt that my husband had his life. I can't really put my finger on it, but there was something missing. I wanted to feel important, I wanted to do something for me."

And so we have the second common theme of the interviews. The first theme was the overwhelming desire of the young high school and post-high school women to find and marry a husband, to establish a home, to bear children, and to settle into the roles of wife, homemaker, and mother. These were their main objectives, marriage and motherhood, not career nor profession. Wisely or unwisely, this was what they had wanted for themselves, and these were the needs they had set out to satisfy. In the course of attaining those goals they had assumed the responsibilities which accrue to the relationships they had sought. Now these women realize their children are growing up, they are bored,

tired of the everyday routine, uncertain about their own self-worth, and desperately wanting something for themselves. They have put in their years of concentrating on familial responsibilities, the time has come to think about their own needs. It sounds like an awakening, a stirring of feelings that have been "on hold" for a long time.

The basis of the second common theme, therefore, is the desire again to satisfy an inner need, but now the satisfaction of that need cannot be centered, as was the earlier decision, on the development of close relationships. Instead, the gratification of this new desire must focus on the growth and development of the women themselves. The problem, however, is that women cannot move toward satisfying this inner need with the same single-minded purpose of their younger days. At the time of re-entry, they come face to face with the dichotomy of concern for self versus concern for the well-being of their close relationships. The interviewees repeat such statements as, "My first responsibility is to my children" and "I can't neglect my children". They are concerned about their husbands, too, but in a different way. That concern seems to reflect the degree of approval or disapproval expressed by the husband, and the extent to which the women are willing to risk jeopardizing their relationship. But at the same time they are saying, "I want something just

for myself" or "I need something to make me feel good about myself." The ambivalence was clearly articulated and certainly represented a factor in the interviewees' choices. This area will be explored more fully in the next section dealing with the effects of re-entry decisions on the subjects and on their families.

EFFECTS OF THE RE-ENTRY DECISIONS

The decisions these re-entry women have made within the context of those two feelings, concern for their own needs and concern for the needs of others, have separated them into the four groups of subjects in this study. The new students and the advanced students had made the decision to return to school, the non-students had decided against a resumption of their education, and the ex-students had made two decisions, first to go to school and then to stop going to school. To gain further insight into the situation in which the subjects now find themselves, the interviewer asked how they feel about their re-entry decisions, and what the effects have been on themselves and their families. Two women who are now in school responded:

"I'm not giving it up. I won't give it up. I've come too far and I need school. It's made me feel good about myself which I wasn't feeling for a lot of years."

"It really sparks me. It gives me a really good feeling about myself, and I'm enjoying that. It's selfish, and I love it."

There is a certain note of defiance in their remarks, as though these sentiments did not come easily but are the result of a struggle to move beyond their feelings of responsibility for the people close to them and beyond their feelings of guilt at wanting something just for themselves. They also sound like people who, with some effort, have taken control of their lives, people who, according to Rotter (1966, 1972), are more internally than externally oriented. (In fact, both women quoted above have LOC Scores below average for their groups.) It is interesting to speculate how important this quality of taking charge of their lives, of satisfying their own needs rather than their family's needs, may be in the attitudes expressed by their husbands. When asked how their husbands feel about their being in school, two students responded:

"My husband was definitely against it, I almost got divorced over it. In the beginning I hid my books in the closet, and when they would all be asleep, I would take the books out and take them down in the basement and study until two or three in the morning. He didn't want it to interfere with our life, he was very annoyed about it. Now we just don't talk about it, we don't discuss it at all. But when we do have an argument,

he'll say it's because you're too busy with your school work, and if it's my argument, I say someday I'm going to graduate with every honor possible, and you'll be sitting in the audience."

"My husband is supportive financially, and he's very happy when I get an A, but he definitely feels that I am not doing the job I did before, and that's the truth. If a paper is due, they might get franks and beans for dinner one night, and the wash might not get done, and the house isn't always so perfectly clean. That bothers him a little, he feels I'm neglecting my job, quote unquote. But I tell him I have it coming. I put in 20 years, and if I had a job outside, I'd get a gold watch and retirement. Now I'm getting put through school."

An ex-student explains why she is no longer in school, "I did get to feel sort of pressured sometimes, especially when I had papers due and the kids had something going on at the same time. It was hard to be in so many places at the same time, and I began to feel guilty if I had to say no to them about something they wanted me to do with them. But I guess the main reason I stopped going to school was because of the expense. I have four children, and I really didn't feel right spending all that money for tuition for me when pretty soon it'll be time for the oldest to begin thinking about college, and then there are three after her."

These subjects' words illustrate how difficult it was for them to satisfy their need for self-fulfillment at the expense of their feelings of responsibility for the needs of others. It seems obvious that when a woman adds the student role to her wife, mother, and homemaker roles, changes will have to occur in her home life. These women had, until their return to school, devoted most of their time and energy to the routine of maintaining the home and attending to the needs of husband and children. The shift of emphasis was bound to create problems. Do some women have particular strengths that make it possible for them to persevere in the face of husbands' opposition and children's requests for attention? Was school more important to the students than to the ex-student, and how relevant was the fact that the two students were not employed but the ex-student had a part time job? Other ex-students, citing reasons for having dropped out of college, mentioned financial problems, needing their income to educate children, lack of time, and not enough incentive to continue. Perhaps they have less of the physical and emotional stamina demonstrated by the women who are currently students, or perhaps, for some, there is no conflict at all, and they are in fact doing what they really want to do.

Since the non-students are the only subjects who had never returned to school, their reasons for not enrolling seem particularly important. Two interviewees answered this question,

"I think the thing that is restricting me right now is the time because I still find that my children need me. If you want to do something for yourself, either go to college or work full time for something that will give you pleasure, then something has to be neglected. I like to give 100% to one thing, and my children and my home right now are the priorities."

"I think my going to college really threatened him. My husband is a very macho type of a male in the true sense of the word, I'm a man, I'm head of the house and all that. It was very hard for him to understand how exciting it might be for me and how good it might make me feel."

Other non-students, identifying their reasons for not registering, mentioned lack of time, lack of money, lack of goals, direction, or motivation. The reasons are similar to those cited by the ex-students for discontinuing their enrollment, but the ex-students had actually returned to school at least for a time. Why did the non-students stop at the threshold of the classroom? Or did they even get to the threshold? According to Tittle and Denker (1980), women at the time

of re-entry are suffering from the fears, anxiety, and confusion involved in making decisions which will affect the rest of their lives. Perhaps, for the non-students, these factors were too pronounced, or perhaps the time was not yet right for them. Perhaps they differ from the women who became students in courage, initiative, curiosity, a spirit of adventure. Perhaps they feel too much anxiety about their scholastic ability and too little certainty about their educational goals. Perhaps the element of responsibility for others is stronger than the element of concern for one's own needs.

It should also be noted that the subjects in the non-student group are more apt to be divorced than the subjects in the other three groups. How important is marriage and the presence of a husband in the total picture of the re-entry woman student? How important is a husband's approval or disapproval? From a purely economic point of view, it may be very important, but from a psychological point of view, it may be equally important. Tittle and Denker (1980) believe that two of the ingredients necessary for a woman's successful return to school are money, from one source or another, and the support, at least verbally, of her husband. Listen to the words of an advanced student:

"Whenever I took 18 credits, I got all A's. I was overkilling all the way, everybody in my household had to pay the price for it. My husband learned very rapidly how to cook, and he did cooperate as much as he could. But I felt I was getting indebted to everyone. My children, I had to say wait, tomorrow, I can't do it this weekend, I have to study. There were times when we didn't go out or go any place or do anything and that was for a year and a half, and there were financial problems with me going to school, it was really tough. And then he said I think you should take a term off, we really can't afford for you to go to school this term. I don't know if he was concerned about money or about me needing time off, or if he was threatened by the fact that I was moving very rapidly and maybe it was too much on him too quickly, too much responsibility in the house, too much responsibility with the children."

This re-entry student has graphically described the pressures experienced by her and by her whole family. It is no simple matter for a married woman with children at home to venture back into the academic world. In a 1975 study, Ladan and Crooks found that husbands and children were very supportive of first-year returning students, but husbands' attitudes turned negative in the women's second year, perhaps as a result of the wives' increasingly liberalized perception of their roles along with a decrease in their traditional services due to

time conflicts. These findings were supported, in this study, by several students and ex-students who reported that when they first returned to school, their husbands and children were somewhat encouraging, but later on in their school career the encouragement declined or disappeared altogether. It seems obvious that as the students became more deeply involved in their schoolwork, their concern for self-fulfillment increased and their feelings of responsibility for the needs of others decreased.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In a study done 20 years ago, Lowenthal et al (1966) found that women, from the age of high school seniors to retirees, engaged in minimal planning for the future and, instead, seemed to leave things to fate or to a process of coping with events as they might occur. Lopata and Steinhart (1971) studied widows and found that they had not planned or prepared themselves for careers in their early years and were still not engaged in planning for their future. In the present study, the data have shown that the 32 interviewees had, with the exception of the subject who wanted to be a nun, made no plans for themselves that did not include marriage and motherhood, and nothing beyond that. In the years since high school, they have all worked, they have all experienced marriage, and all but one have had children.

What are their goals now, what do they see ahead for themselves? Will they still resemble the sample in the Lowenthal study, or are they looking to the future in a more dynamic and less passive manner?

When questioned about their plans for the future, all the advanced students and a majority of the new students anticipate earning a college degree. Some of them have chosen a field of study and are working in that direction, but a greater number of them are plagued by doubt and uncertainty. They have enjoyed specific courses such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, or English, but they are confused about how to put their college experience to practical purposes. Being aware of their age and afraid that they have waited too long to get started, they are very concerned about the decision they now must make. Listen to the interviewees' own words:

"When I first started, I thought about clinical psychology, and then I thought by the time I get out of college, I'll be 51, and then after that there are so many years to the master's and the doctorate. I'll be too old to practice, and I thought I should look for a more viable direction. So I wasn't thinking doctor anymore, but I'm unhappy about that. I guess I need encouragement to get back to that original dream."

"I wish a lightning bolt would come and tell me what to do. I have this terrible feeling that I'm going to be this frail old lady 95 years of age on my deathbed, and I'm going to figure it all out just before my last breath, and I'll go, oh now I understand it, and I'll die, and I just don't want that to happen to me. I want to do something."

A subject, 38 years old with only one semester's credits, feels too old to realize her ambition to be an attorney and has no alternate plans. Another is acquiring college credits to become a school secretary, but feels trapped in a deadend situation and regrets her passivity in making the choice. These women and others like them have succeeded in returning to school, but they are having difficulty setting realistic goals for themselves. When they were in high school, their personal goals focused on a husband and children. Now their personal goals are focused on themselves, and the territory is uncomfortable and unfamiliar. Women, according to Rossi (1969), Nichols (1974), and Schlossberg (1976), have been socialized to define themselves through the activities and accomplishments of the people with whom they have close relationships, i.e. father, husband, children. They were not taught to identify themselves as separate individuals, and they were not expected, as girls, to consider their options, to choose a career, and to work toward it. Now they

represent the product of their early socialization and their years of living as wives and mothers. Returning to school, as we have seen, required subjects to move away from concern for the well-being of close relationships and toward concern for self-fulfillment. Planning their future requires even more movement in that direction. Is it any wonder they find it so difficult?

Turning from the interviewees who are students to the women in the other two groups, there are ex-students who feel no regrets for having left college. They tried it, it gave them a certain amount of satisfaction while doing it, but they are not discontented with their lives as they are. There are others who still yearn for the college degree and hope that someday they will attain it. There is an ex-student, divorced, who described her return to school as another failure. She is frustrated by her lack of education and inability to earn an adequate living. She holds two jobs, maintains a single-parent home for her two children, and cannot find the time, the energy, or the money to give school another try. She would like to make a better future for herself, but her present situation leaves her few options.

"I feel a tremendous amount of responsibility toward the kids, but I don't want to put the blame on them. Sometimes I ask myself, am I using them as a scapegoat, am I really being honest with myself, am I using them as an excuse for not going to college, for not bettering myself? I have to fight with myself because I'm a romantic, and every once in awhile I think maybe some prince will come along and take care of me, and then I won't have to do it."

When the non-students were asked about their plans for the future, the most frequent responses were expressions of anxiety and confusion. One of them said,

"I see it all around me, my mother-in-law and my mother, they're all home, they're just deteriorating. They never did anything with their lives after the children were grown up. They just stayed home, and now they're just so bored with life. Oh no, I don't want to be like that at all. I would have loved to go to college and find a career for myself, something for me instead of for everybody else. But somehow the day goes by. I don't feel fulfilled, but I feel like I'm doing my job, I'm always there for my children."

Another non-student would like to broaden her horizons, to own her own business, she wants "the moon, the stars, and the earth", but her ambitions are vague and her capabilities are very limited. Still another

non-student wants "a great job, independence, lots of money", but she lacks the basic qualifications. These women have dreams of better lives, dreams with a certain fairy-tale quality, but the practical ingredients are missing. What is not missing, unfortunately, is the lifelong habit of simply letting things happen rather than trying to make them happen. All the interviewees who are mothers, however, mention their ambitions for their children. They are bringing them up, especially their daughters, to think about the future and to be more dynamic in planning their lives.

CONCLUSIONS

For the author, the most satisfying aspect of this study resulted from the concept of the dichotomy, in women's decision making, between concern for self and concern for others. Initially, it had seemed an interesting framework within which to view the choices made by the subjects. However, as the study progressed, the concept seemed more and more relevant and soon developed into a rubric under which the data settled comfortably into place. Listening to the interview tapes and hearing the women, unsolicited and in their own words, describe their conflict between wanting something for themselves and feeling responsible for the needs of their family members constantly reinforced the validity of the idea.

From this material, there emerged the three life patterns described at the end of the interview section:

(1) The first (see Figure 1) occurred when the subjects as high school girls converged in visualizing their future in terms of marriage and motherhood and nothing beyond that. Having rejected further education, they went to work, in due time married, bore children, and stayed home for a number of years to raise them. Up to that point, their lives had followed a comparable path. As re-entry women, however, they separated into students, ex-students, and non-students. From that first similarity of goals, they had progressed through the years to the divergent points of view of the four groups of subjects. The re-convergence appeared in the women's advice to high school girls to postpone marriage or any serious relationship until they had prepared themselves for a career or profession. They were expressing regret for the fact that marriage and motherhood had dominated their high school thinking to the exclusion of setting higher educational goals for themselves.

(2) The second pattern (see Figure 2) emerged when the subjects as high school students made their decisions in response to their need for self-fulfillment with little or no concern for the needs of others. Having assumed the responsible roles of wife and mother, they could no longer make decisions considering only

their own needs; they had moved into the dichotomy of concern for self versus concern for others. During their years as full time homemakers, concern for the needs of husband and children greatly overshadowed concern for their own inner needs. At the time of re-entry, however, the emphasis had shifted as their concern for self needs began to increase and their concern for family needs began to decrease. This pattern seems essentially similar to the model suggested by Wapner et al (1973) in which individuals may relate either passively or actively to the environment in order to satisfy their ends or values. "A more developmentally advanced relationship to environments is not the permanent adoption of one or the other of the polar stances but is rather the capacity to shift from one to the other voluntarily" (p. 278).

FIGURE 1. LIFE STAGE DEVELOPMENT

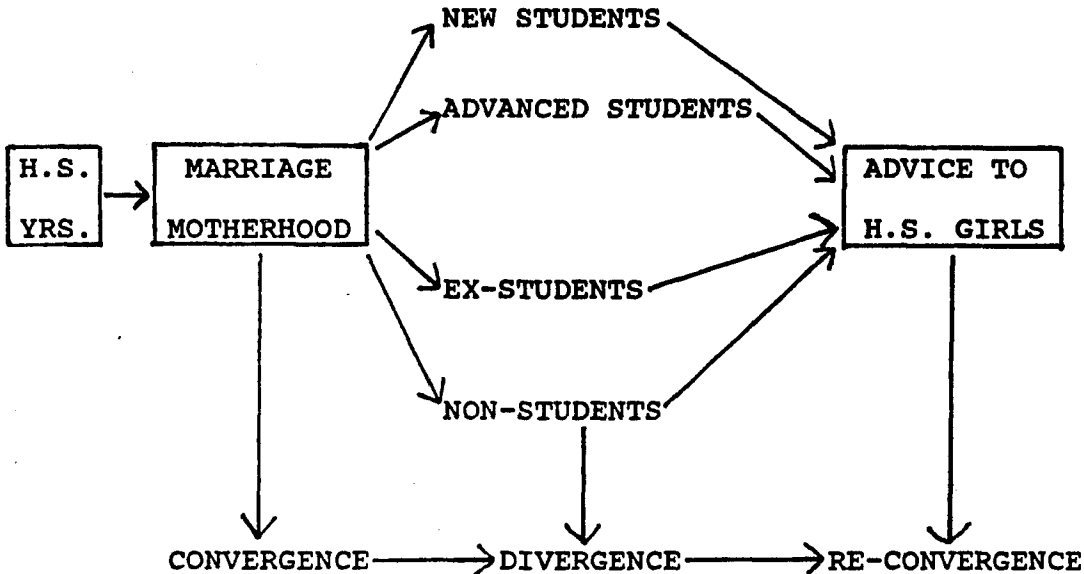
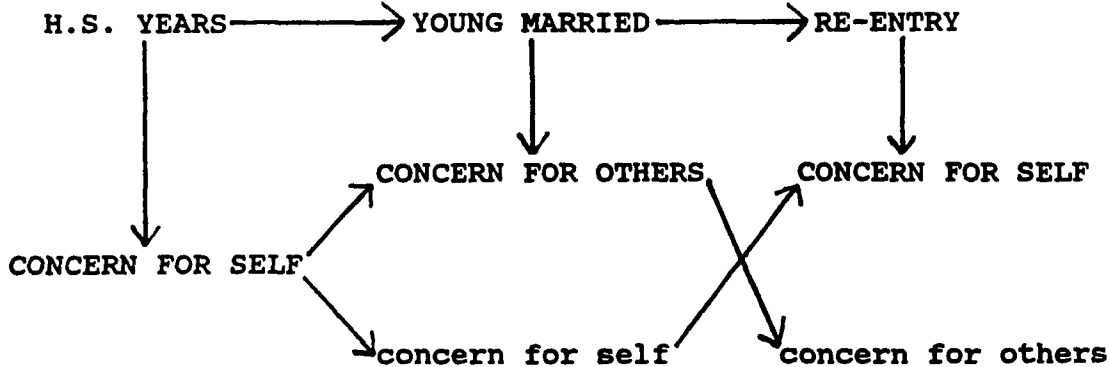


FIGURE 2. DICHOTOMY OF CONCERN



(3) The third pattern became apparent when subjects responded to questions about their plans for the future as high school students and as re-entry women. In high school, their hopes and expectations for the future were not for themselves alone but for themselves in relationship to others. In high school, their hopes and expectations for the future did not extend to the education and training necessary for a career or profession. They had been well socialized to visualize themselves as the wives and mothers of successful husbands and children but not as successes themselves in the business or professional world. They had not considered their work as serious or permanent but merely as a stopgap between high school and motherhood. As re-entry women, they are searching for worthwhile goals, but making plans for themselves that do not involve relationships is a new and uncomfortable experience for them.

The findings of this study, although limited in scope, have raised questions which seem worthy of broader research. The topic of re-entry women, whether in school or in the workforce, is relevant and timely and will continue to be so as long as there are women who stay home for any number of years to raise their children. The issues involved in women's decision making and women's life planning are multidimensional and have only been touched upon here. These comments,

however, may suggest a direction for further exploration and may, in themselves, prove useful for colleges, employers, counselors, and re-entry women as well.

As a result of this study, certain recommendations can be made to colleges and universities whose student body includes re-entry women in sizable numbers. These women have made great efforts to resume their education. They bring energy and enthusiasm into the classroom, they work hard, set high standards for themselves, and contribute in many ways to the school community. In return, academia owes them a certain debt: financial aid should be more readily available to them, and it is absolutely essential that they receive the benefits of effective career guidance and counseling.

This study has also uncovered areas in which further research would seem to be both necessary and fruitful. More work should be done to explore the relationship between locus of control and age, between locus of control and women's stage of motherhood, between locus of control and women's dichotomy of concern for self/ concern for others. It should be noted that throughout this study concern for self versus concern for others has been described as a dichotomy when in fact it might be more accurate to consider it as two separate scales. Additional research would be needed to clarify this point. And finally, what steps can be taken to help women, within the framework of

their desire for husband, home, and children, to plan for their own future as individuals not simply as members of close relationships?

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QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the research for my doctoral dissertation in Social Psychology at City University. My field of interest is women who return to school and the factors involved in that decision. Please answer as many questions as you can. If necessary, you may write on the back. If you would be available to spend an hour with me in a one-to-one interview, please write your name, address, and telephone number at the bottom of the questionnaire, and I will contact you to make an appointment. Thank you. Shirley Atlas

1. Are you currently:
Single__ Married__ Separated/Divorced __ Widowed __
2. Age__
3. (a)No. of children__ (b)Ages of children_____
4. (a)Husband's occupation_____ (b)Level of education__
5. (a)Father's occupation_____ (b)Level of education__
6. (a)Mother's occupation_____ (b)Level of education__
7. (a)Siblings' occupation_____ (b)Level of education__
(Write "F" for female, _____
"M" for male) _____
8. Ethnic background_____
9. Are you: An enrolled student__
A no-longer enrolled student__
A not-yet enrolled student__
10. (a)When did you graduate from high school_____
(b)What kind of diploma_____
11. Did you start college immediately after high school
Yes__ No__
IF YES: (a)How far did you go_____
(b)When did you stop_____
(c)Why did you stop_____
12. Did you work after finishing high school
Yes__ No__ Part time__ Full time__
IF YES: (a)Occupation(s)_____
13. Did you work outside the home after marriage
Yes__ No__ Part time__ Full time__

- IF YES: (a) Occupation(s) _____
14. Did you work outside the home after children
Yes__ No__ Part time__ Full time__
- IF YES: (a) Occupation(s) _____
15. Are you working now Yes__ No__ Part time__ Full time__
- IF YES: (a) Occupation _____
16. When you first thought about returning to school:
- (a) Did you discuss it with anybody Yes__ No__
- IF YES: Who _____
- (b) Was that person(s):
Very encouraging _____
Somewhat encouraging _____
Neutral _____
Somewhat discouraging _____
Very discouraging _____
- (c) Were things happening in your life at that time that made you think about returning to school Yes__ No__
- IF YES: What were they _____

17. When you did return to school:
- (a) Was there a person(s) other than yourself involved in the decision Yes__ No__
- IF YES: (1) Who _____
(2) How much did that person(s) influence your decision:
- Very much _____
Somewhat _____
A little _____
Not much _____
Not at all _____
- (b) Did you ever attend an ARC Seminar Yes__ No__ When _____
- IF YES: How much did that seminar influence your decision:
- Very much _____
Somewhat _____
A little _____
Not much _____
Not at all _____

(c) What do you feel were the major reasons for your return to school _____

(d) Have you been continuously enrolled since making the decision to return Yes__ No__

IF YES: (1) How many credits do you now have _____
(2) What degree do you expect to earn _____
(3) In what field _____

IF NO: (4) How many credits do you now have _____
(5) When did you stop _____
(6) What were your reasons _____

(7) Are you thinking of resuming your studies
Yes__ No__

(8) Are there problems which might interfere
Yes__ No__

(9) What are they _____

18. If you have never registered for courses:

(a) Did you ever attend an ARC Seminar Yes__ No__ When__

(b) What were your major reasons for not enrolling for courses _____

(c) Did you discuss it with anybody Yes__ No__

IF YES: Who _____

(d) How much did that person(s) influence your decision:

Very much _____

Somewhat _____

A little _____

Not much _____

Not at all _____

(e) Are you now thinking of enrolling Yes__ No__

(f) Are there problems which might interfere Yes__ No__

(g) What are they _____

19. How does your husband feel about your going to school:

Very encouraging _____

Somewhat encouraging _____

Neutral _____

Somewhat discouraging _____

Very discouraging _____

20. How do your children feel about your going to school:

Very encouraging _____

Somewhat encouraging _____

Neutral _____

Somewhat discouraging _____

Very discouraging _____

21. What do you want to do and where do you want to be five years from now _____

22. Any additional comments _____

Print your name, address, and telephone number if you are available for an interview

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. EDUCATION:

A. High school

1. What kind of high school diploma did you earn?
2. Were you a good student? Did you like school?
3. What did you expect to do after graduation?
4. Did you ever think about a career or a profession?
5. What did your mother and your father want you to do?
6. How important was their opinion to you?
7. What kind of plans did you have for your future?
8. Tell me about your siblings' education.
9. What were your friends doing? What were their plans?
10. How important was their opinion to you?
11. Did you have any guidance in high school?
12. What choices did you have at that time?
13. What did you do after high school graduation?
14. Did you discuss that decision with anybody?

B. If subject went to college after high school:

1. What were you studying?
2. Were you a good student?
3. What were your goals?
4. How far did you go?
5. Why did you stop?
6. What choices did you have?
7. Did you ever regret it?

C. If subject did not go to college after high school:

1. Did you ever think about going to college?
2. Did you ever apply?
3. What happened?
4. Did you ever regret not going?
5. How do you think that decision affected your life after high school?
6. How do you now feel about that decision?

II. FAMILY:

1. When did you get married?
2. Have you been married more than once?
3. What is your husband's occupation?
4. How many children do you have?
5. What are their ages?

III. WORK EXPERIENCE:

1. What was your first job after high school?
2. Did you like it?
3. Did you work after you were married? Kind of job?
4. Did you work after birth of children? Kind of job?

5. Are you working now? Kind of job? Like it?

IV. DECISION:

1. When did you first think about returning to school?
2. What was happening in your life at that time?
3. With whom did you discuss it? What did they say?
4. How important was their opinion to you?
5. What were your friends doing at that time? What are they doing now?
6. What choices did you have at that time?
7. What were your goals?
8. Did you enroll at that time?

A. If yes and still enrolled:

1. With whom did you discuss it?
2. What did they say?
3. How important was their opinion to you?
4. What changes have occurred in your family lifestyle since then?
5. How do you think that decision has affected your life?

B. If yes but no longer enrolled:

1. How long did you continue?
2. Why did you stop?
3. With whom did you discuss it?
4. What did they say?
5. How important was their opinion to you?
6. What choices did you have at that time?
7. How do you think that decision has affected your life since then?

C. If no:

1. Why not?
2. With whom did you discuss it?
3. What did they say?
4. How important was their opinion to you?
5. What choices did you have at that time?
6. How do you think that decision has affected your life since then?

D. Reasons for return

1. What were the main reasons for your return to school?
2. How much of that decision was your own?
3. How much was someone else involved in that decision?
4. If married, how does your husband feel about your return to school?
5. How do your children feel about your return to school?
6. What were your goals at that time:
7. How do you now feel about that decision?

V. FUTURE PLANS:

1. (If subject now a student) What do you expect to do when you have finished school?
2. What choices do you have?
3. (If subject not a student) What are your plans for the future?
4. What goals do you have for your children?
5. What advice would you give girls about to graduate from high school?

ROTTER INTERNAL-EXTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

Please indicate your answers to the items on this questionnaire by circling the letter--a or b-- next to the statement which you believe is more true. This is a measure of personal belief; therefore there are no right or wrong answers. Try to respond to each item independently when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

1.a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.

b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2.a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.

b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3.a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.

b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4.a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.

b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he/she tries.

5.a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.

b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6.a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.

b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7.a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.

b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

8.a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.

b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9.a. I have always found that what is going to happen will happen.

b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me

as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

10.a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.

b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.

11.a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.

b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12.a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.

b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13.a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.

b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

14.a. There are certain people who are just no good.

b. There is some good in everybody.

15.a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.

b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16.a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.

b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.

17.a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand nor control.

b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18.a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

b. There really is no such thing as "luck".

19.a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.

b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.

20.a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.

b. How many friends you have depends on how nice a person you are.

21.a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.

b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness or all three.

22.a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.

b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23.a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.

b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.

24.a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.

b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25.a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26.a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.

b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

27.a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.

b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28.a. What happens to me is my own doing.

b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29.a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave they way they do.

b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

Scoring The external responses according to the standard test are: 1. filler, 2.a, 3.b, 4.b, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a, 8. filler, 9.a, 10.b, 11.b, 12.b, 13.b, 14. filler, 15.b, 16.a, 17.a, 18.a, 19. filler, 20.a, 21.a, 22.b, 23.a, 24. filler, 25.a, 26.b, 27. filler, 28.b, 29.a. The test is scored in the external direction, and the raw score is the total number of external responses.

Letter to prospective subjects

Dear Colleague:

At the present time I am finishing the requirements for a doctoral degree in Social Psychology at The City University of New York. My research concerns women who are students, women who have been students, and women who have thought about becoming students but have not yet done so. I am particularly interested in the factors involved in the decision to return or not to return to school.

If you would complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it as soon as possible in the stamped self-addressed envelope, I would be extremely grateful. The data from your responses will not only help me in my work but will also increase the academic community's understanding of the situation of women like us.

Please take a few minutes right now to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back to me. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Shirley Atlas

INTERVIEW DATA

GROUP I, THE NEW STUDENTS

In Group I, the new students, the average age is 40.13, seven are married, one is divorced, and their average LOC score is 10.75.

Five of these subjects graduated from high school with an academic diploma, two with a commercial diploma, and one, having dropped out of high school, earned her G.E.D. a year ago at age 49. While still in high school, three of the five who were taking academic courses said they were planning to enter college: one wanted to be an artist, one a dress designer, and the third wanted to major in French with no particular career in mind. Four subjects expected to become secretaries: three of them took business courses in high school the fourth, whose high school did not offer those classes, went to secretarial school after graduation. The subject who had dropped out of high school in her first year described herself as a "throwaway child", the last of six children, born when her mother was over 40, and virtually on her own from the age of seven; when she left high school at 14, she had no plans for her future.

In this group, the parents of one subject were college graduates; they had been born and educated in Europe, moved to this country when the subject was 16, and experienced great difficulty earning a living and adjusting to the unfamiliar environment. None of the other new students had parents whose education extended beyond high school. When asked what their parents had wanted them to do after high school graduation, one subject remembered her mother saying, "If you don't go to college, some day you'll regret it." Another said her parents were divorced, and she was raised by her grandmother who had constantly urged her to go to college, but she was an unhappy youngster who disliked school. Two other new students said their parents would probably have wanted them to go to college, but no particular effort was made in that direction. The remainder of the women in this group had received no encouragement toward higher education.

Only one woman in this group actually registered for college immediately after graduation, but she dropped out in the second semester. Another, whose parents had expected her to go to college, failed to enroll because of a disagreement over her field of study; they wanted her to become a teacher, she wanted to be a designer. One subject went to secretarial school before starting work, but the others moved directly from high school into the work force. All these women took

clerical or secretarial type jobs, but only two liked their work, the others found the work uninteresting, routine, and boring. One subject began going to college at night but discontinued after one semester. She said she lacked self-discipline. The subject whose parents had been educated in Europe said that college was totally out of the question for financial reasons. She went to work and studied hairdressing at night.

The eight women in this group all worked until they married. The subject who left high school in her freshman year was married when she was 18. Two women married two years after high school graduation; the others waited from four to ten years before marrying. Two subjects have been divorced, but only one them has remarried. Another subject reported having had marital problems severe enough to cause separation, but she and her husband are now together in a rather shaky relationship. The other five are married to their original husbands. Only one woman is married to a man who has less than a high school diploma, three are high school graduates, two have some college, and two have college degrees. Four of these men work in blue-collar occupations, three are white-collar workers, and one is a professional.

All these women have at least two children, one has eight, and the average age of their youngest child is 8.38. None of them worked full time after their children were born, but only one has not gone back to work at all. The others stayed home until their children were in school, or in one case until her youngest child was 14, before returning to work at least part time. One is now working full time, three part time, and four are not presently employed.

GROUP II, THE ADVANCED STUDENTS

The average age of Group II, the advanced students, is 47, they are all married, and the mean of their LOC scores is 6.875.

Five of these subjects graduated from high school with an academic diploma and three with a general diploma. While still in high school, three of the women, who were following an academic program, fully expected to go on to college, one would have liked to continue her education but was financially unable, and one had no interest in college. Two of the three women who were taking a general course had no thought of college, while the third wanted to go on with her education but was a poor student and lacked direction. Two of the subjects who planned to go to college wanted to be teachers, and one wanted to be a school secretary. None of the other

subjects had a particular career as a goal, but all expected to work until they married and had a family.

The fathers of three subjects in this group had less than a high school education, three had completed high school, and two had some college experience. Three mothers had less than high school, five had graduated from high school, and none had gone to college. Two subjects, only one of whom was interested in college, described both their parents as having a positive attitude toward their going to college, while another woman said her mother but not her father was in favor of her continuing her education. The other five subjects had received no parental encouragement for college although one father was strongly in favor of secretarial school. The attitudes of these parents ranged from a general feeling that college was unnecessary for girls to one father's statement that girls in college were just taking up space.

Only one of those subjects who had been planning to go to college after high school actually enrolled as a full time student. It had been her intention to earn an associate degree in order to become a school secretary, and she completed the two-year program but never took the job. Another subject took a summer job after graduation and liked it so much she did not enroll in September. Three subjects went to college at night but found it too difficult while working full time, and none

of them continued for more than two semesters. One subject went to secretarial school but not the one whose father had recommended it.

Five of these women were married two to four years after high school, two waited ten years, one waited 13 years before marrying, and all are still married to their original husbands. One husband is a high school graduate, two have some college, two have college degrees, and three have graduate degrees. Three of these men have blue-collar jobs, three are white-collar workers, and two are professionals.

All the women in this group have at least one child, and the average age of their youngest child is 15.38. Seven subjects stopped working before the birth of their first child; the eighth worked until her second child was born. Four of these women went back to work on a part time or full time basis when all their children were in school; the other four have never returned to work. At the present time, four are working part time, and four are not working.

All the subjects in this group expect to earn a college degree, either an AA or a BA, and three hope to go on to graduate school. One woman wants to write, one wants to teach, one to be a social worker, one to be a psychologist, the others are less clear about their future plans but will continue in school until their

goals clarify or, in the case of the older women, for the sheer pleasure of learning. Without exception, these women have brought their children up to see college as a must, a college degree as a routine follow-up to high school graduation for both daughters and sons.

GROUP III, THE EX-STUDENTS

The subjects in Group III, the ex-students, have an average age of 45.13, seven are married, one is divorced, and their average LOC score is 8.523.

Two women graduated from high school with an academic diploma, three with a general diploma, one with a commercial, and two with a G.E.D. While in high school, one subject wanted to go to college and study acting, one wanted to become a psychologist, one briefly wanted to be a physician but was a poor student, two thought about college but knew it was financially impossible, one entered high school wanting college but turned into a rebel and hated school, one wanted to be a secretary, and one wanted only to get married.

Four of the fathers and five of the mothers of these subjects had not completed high school, and none of the parents had gone beyond a high school diploma. The father of one had said he would send her to college, and according to her account he could have done so, but he was an alcoholic and did not keep his promises. The

mother of one subject would have liked to see her go to college, but she became pregnant and dropped out of high school. Another subject reported that her mother would have been pleased if she had gone to college, but there was no money. One mother wanted her daughter to learn a trade, one set of parents simply wanted their daughter to graduate from high school, and the other women described their parents as uninterested in education.

Two subjects left high school to have babies, one went to business school, and the others went to work immediately after graduation. Two of the women, with full time jobs, enrolled in college at night; one of them dropped out after one semester, the other continued taking courses for two and a half years but never bothered to matriculate.

The two subjects who had dropped out of high school were married and were mothers before they were 18. Two other members of this group were married a year after high school graduation, one was married two years after high school, two were married four years after high school, and one waited 11 years before marrying. Two subjects have been divorced, one has remarried, the other six women are still married to their original husbands. One husband has less than a high school education, one is a high school graduate, two have some college, and three have college degrees. Four of the men are in blue-collar occupations, one is a white-collar

worker, one is a professional, and one is disabled.

Each woman in this group has at least two children, and the average age of their youngest child is 16.13. Two of the eight women continued to work either full or part time after their children were born, while the others stayed home for a number of years until their youngest child was somewhere between two and 14 years of age. Five subjects are now working part time, two are working full time, and one is not employed outside the home.

Four subjects feel inadequate because of their lack of education and still hope to earn a degree: one of them would like to be a social worker, one simply wants the piece of paper, one needs to increase her earning power, and one must postpone her own ambition until her children have had their education. The plans of the other four women in this group are: one wants to continue to move ahead in her job which she likes very much, one expects to educate her children and find herself an interesting rewarding job, one is confused and has no particular goal or direction, and one is quite content with her life and does not regret leaving college.

GROUP IV, THE NON-STUDENTS

In Group IV, the non-students, the average age is 41.25, five are married, three are divorced, and their average LOC score is 9.50.

Two of these women graduated from high school with an academic diploma, two with a commercial diploma, and four with a general diploma. While still in high school, two of the women had some interest in becoming nurses, one wanted to be an accountant, one wanted to be a nun, one was engaged to be married, one wanted to be a secretary then get married and stay home, one wanted to get a job and earn money, and one simply wanted to graduate from high school.

Two of the women in this group were born in Europe and came to this country as young children. The other six women were born here of American born parents. The mother of one subject was a college graduate as was the father of another; one father had some college but the rest of the parents had no more than a high school education. Only two subjects reported their parents to have a positive attitude toward education: the mother of one had urged all her children to graduate from high school, and the parents of the other would have liked their daughter to go on to college. The other non-students described their parents as uninterested in their daughters' education. One of the subjects in this group registered for college following her high school graduation, but she dropped out after one semester

because of failing grades. Another enrolled a year after high school, but she quit after two weeks.

Seven women in this group were married within one to four years after high school, only one waited as long as six years. Two of them were widowed young and have remarried; three are divorced. Five of the husbands of the non-students are high school graduates, and one has some college credits. Five of these men are blue-collar workers, and one is in a white-collar occupation.

All but one of these women have at least two children, and the average age of their youngest child is 9.63. The childless subject is the only one who has worked full time since high school. Three subjects did not work while their children were growing up, and the others worked part time after their children were in school. Two non-students are now working full time, five are working part time, and one, who is divorced, is not working at all.

When asked about their future plans, three subjects expressed uncertainty, confusion, an absence of goals. The other women want success, personal and financial, for themselves and their children. They would like to be in business for themselves or working in satisfying and rewarding jobs.