STRAIN AND DUAL ROLE OCCUPATION AMONG WOMEN

by

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Abstract

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There has been an increasing participation in the labor force by married women with children. This has been accompanied by demographic changes in patterns of marriage, childbearing, and to some extent, attitudes toward domestic roles.

It was hypothesized that one concomitant of employment for married women with children would be higher strain.

A measure of strain was developed that was differentiated from anxiety and other measures of well-being. Strain was characterized as a reation to an accumulation of role demands. Limitations of the measure were discussed.

The general hypothesis was confirmed: employed women, especially those with preschool children have higher strain than housewives. Additionally, men with working wives have less strain than those without

employed wives.

Strain was not seen as an entirely negative experience. The longer range effects of strain on health, longevity and children could not be ascertained. Its high correlation with low marital adjustment among working wives, suggested a complex interplay between marital values and broader economic conditions.

Suggestions for improving the measure of strain and areas for further research based on these initial findings are offered.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Research Problem

Over the last 10 tc 15 years the changing role of women with its concomitant strains has been the focus of innumerable social scientific articles, debates and books. Important writings addressed specifically to this issue began prior to this period with such works as Komarovsky's "Cultural Contradictions and Sex Roles" (AJS, 1946) and Hacker's "Women As A Minority Group" (Social Forces, 1951); however, sociological interest in sex roles prior to the sixties was largely confined to the sociology of the family. The research focused on the distribution of a variety of functions among family members, and with socialization styles and their affects on the maintenance of the family unit (Blood and Hamblin, 1958; March, 1953; Herbst, 1952; Henry, 1956; Brim, 1958; Goode, 1959; Herr, 1958).

Issues such as women's aspirations and their roles in the broader community were often treated as temporary departures from a preferred and more enduring commitment to marriage (Wallin, 1950), or as actions to be defended (Maccoby, 1958), or as deviations contributing to the dysfunction of a basically functional division of labor in which women supply the emotional, supportive under-

pinnings necessary for family integration (Parsons & Bales, 1953).

With the consistent rise in rates and the shift in pattern of female employment over the last thirty-five years (Huber, 1973), the sociological study of the role of women has been cast in a broader framework. Taking into account the changes brought about by shifts in the economic position of women,* recent research has documented movement away from traditional female role definitions within the family (Mason et al., 1976; Ross and Sawhill, 1975).

It has been suggested that in contrast to men, women who work divide their time not only between their market work and leisure but among market work, leisure and work in the home (Lloyd, 1975). An inherently pressured situation results. As greater numbers of women with families continue to enter the market place, the pressures and constraints of choosing to divide their time among increasing role demands will be felt by more and more women.

There have been studies on the subjective effects of dual role occupation on women. Because of methodological

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* In 1976 alone, there were three articles in the ASR on this topic.

inconsistencies in definitions and sampling the results are equivocal. Furthermore, much of the research on women's psychological well-being has focused upon anxiety and depressive states. In order to arrive at an understanding of the subjective effects of employment and motherhood measures that can differentiate among a variety of subjective states must be devised. The primary methodological problem is to determine which states are pervasive and relatively persistent and which can be attributed to precipitating stress.

This dissertation will address the problem of developing a measure sensitive to the subjective effects of environmental pressure: one dimension of psychological well-being, strain, a reaction to environmental pressure (stress) will be explored.

Objectives

A measure of strain will be developed and its distribution among men and women will be examined to establish differences relative to various levels of education, income, and occupation.

Hypotheses will be tested to clarify inconsistencies in reported findings in the literature on dual role occupation among women.

Data will be provided from a recent national study completed by the Institute for Social Research, University

of Michigan on the "Quality of Life" (Campbell et. al., 1971).

Rationale

Subjective states vary with positions occupied in society (Dohrenwend, 1975). The position of women in the family and in the economy has been undergoing a shift since World War II, accelerating over the last ten years. The trend does not appear to be changing (Glick, 1977). The proposed research will specify one of the subjective concomitants of dual role occupation, strain. An exploration of its distribution among women who are married, employed, and mothers could significantly add to our present knowledge about this situation.

Theoretical Background: Changing Roles of Women

Women today constitute more than a third of the labor force. The increase in employment of women has been dramatic between the beginning of World War II and the present time. In 1940 the percentage of women in the labor force was about 26. By 1960 it was 34, reaching a level over 43 percent in 1970. The increase has been most pronounced for married women especially for those with children. In 1940 only about 14 percent of married women with a husband present were in the labor force. By 1960 it was 31 percent and in 1970, 41 percent (U. S. Department

of Labor, 1974). In the same time period, the number of families with two workers or more increased from 36 percent to 49 percent, just about half of the 46,000,000 husband-wife families. In 1975 more than half of married women with school age children were working, 72 percent at full time jobs (U.S. Department of Labor, 1976).

The pattern of participation has changed as well. In 1940 the 25-29 year-olds had the highest rates, in 1960 the 45-54 year-olds, and recently the largest increase in labor force activity has been for mothers of pre-school age children.

The factors which facilitate working have been multiple; for those with young children, past labor force activity and earning power have been found to be strongest (Waite, 1976). But, perhaps the largest factor in the increased employment of women is an expansion of job opportunities in predominantly female occupations (Oppenheimer, 1974). These opportunities in turn have increased the "cost" of children, thereby also effecting decisions about family size. A consequence of this, although other factors may also be present, is that the fertility rate has dropped from 3.6 children in 1961 to 2.0 children in 1971.

In fact, decisions about family size are effected by a woman's decision to participate in the labor force even when her husband's income and his attitude toward

her employment are taken into account (Waite and Stolzenberg, 1976). This means that women have increasing control over the size of families they want. This potentially has many consequences for the attitudes and arrangements within marriage.

In an examination of the social structural basis of women's sex role attitudes and of the relationships among their attitudes to different aspects of sex roles Mason et al. (1976) found that women's attitudes about their rights in the labor market are becoming more strongly related to their attitudes about their roles in the home and that educational attainment and employment are among the most important individual level predictors of attitudes at any given point in time. They found little evidence for the unique influence of the women's movement on change in women's attitudes, inferring that it was more a consequence than a cause; nor, did the husband's income or age relative to wife's have a consistent relationship to the wife's attitudes. The increased egalitarian role definitions in home and work were predictable from educational attainment and employment alone.*

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* Factors influencing employment curves are usually classified under two or three major categories as follows: motivation or precipitating conditions (economic); personality factors; constraints or facilitators (education, number and ages of children). All discussions include very similar lists of variables (Sweet, 1973); however, only education is related to employment in a linear manner for both those with and without children.

Another often cited consequence of women having an increasing number of economic opportunities outside of the traditional family arrangements, is the rising divorce rate (Ross and Sawhill, 1975). Over the last decade female headed families with children have grown almost twice as fast as two parent families* (Ross and Sawhill, 1973). While contributions to this trend are complex, including the decrease in low skill jobs for men there has been a long-standing relationship between mens' earning power and likelihood of divorce: husbands who earn less money are more likely to get divorced (Goode, 1956; Bernard, 1966; Cutwright, 1971; Glick & Norton, 1971). Similarly, availability of economic alternatives open to wives are as important in determining separation as the level of the husband's income (Cherlin, 1976). In this sample, Cherlin found that the greater the ratio of the wives to husband's actual or expected wage in 1967 the greater the probability of separation in 1971.

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* These female breadwinners now are at the head of about 7.2 million American families, or one in eight of all U. S. families. This is a 45 percent increase from the figures just one decade ago, when the proportion of families headed by women was one in ten; however, it should be noted that the financial picture of families headed by women is far from a salutary one. Where women are heads, median family income is calculated at $6,400, compared to $13,800 for male-headed families (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1976).

There are further consequences for family arrangements apart from shifts in attitudes away from traditional role definitions and greater economic independence for women, and one is the greater dependence of families on a wife's working. In spite of the fact that the female participation rates are negatively corrolated with husband's income and that women earn only about 60% of what men do; if a wife worked full time in 1974, she contributed 38 percent of the median family income of $17,500. If the wife worked 27 to 49 weeks that year, she still provided 29 percent of a $14,400 median family income. In 1974 the median income in younger families with a working wife was $15,000 compared to $12,000 where there was only one earner (U. S. Department of Labor, 1976).

By and large, this means that families in which only the husband works cannot keep up with the average income of multiworker families. It may be that many more families are discovering that their economic welfare is tied up as much with the ratio of earners to non-earners in the households with wage levels (Ross and Sawhill, 1975).

In summation, one source of the family's stability as an institution has been its economic function. Over the past 35 years, particularly the last 10, there has been a shift in the economics of the family: far more women are financially independent than ever before because of

their increased labor force experience; younger women are planning smaller families; the fertility rate has dropped and there is a noted movement away from traditional sex role attitudes for women of all educational levels. However, parallel to these trends there exists the dominant conjugal pattern. According to John Scanzoni's cross-national and historical analysis of divorce rates (1972), more Americans are spending more years in the marital situation than ever before in our history. For a woman, on the average, 62 percent of her entire life was spent as a married woman with husband present in 1964 as compared with 50 percent in 1940 (Carter & Glick, 1970).

While research suggests that the greater the economic independence of women, the greater the likelihood that they will be unmarried (Havens, 1973) for the majority of females the dominant pattern is still one of early marriage (Bogue, 1969), with work increasingly becoming a continuing part of their lives.

In addition, presently, the preponderance of evidence indicates that when women do work they do so largely in addition to performing their other traditional tasks (Haavio-Mannila, 1967; Duncan, 1973; Campbell, XII, 1975).

Dual-Role Occupation

There has been some work on the dual role of women in the family and the economy, the cultural contradictions between these roles and how they appear to be resolved (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971; Feldman, 1973; Turner, 1963; Nye and Hoffman, 1963). Most observers stress the lack of importance women assign to the occupational role, but differ on the aspects of the work role which they don't value. Turner, examining a highly educated group, emphasizes women's lack of interest in the extrinsic (or material and prestige aspects) of work; others stress the reverse. Nye, for example, claims that for low income groups the "provider" aspect of work is very important to how they evaluate their lives. Epstein (1970) emphasizes that a successful resolution is unusual.

One consequence of dual role occupation is that a shift in time allocation to tasks has taken place. In a review of time use studies including a further analysis of a 1967-68 time budget study in New York, Leibowitz (1975) concluded educated women spend more time in child care, even though their children also receive more time from their father and hired workers. As a consequence, these women lower their standards for housework. She concludes that as women's increasing schooling draws them into the labor force, they can be expected to spend

less time in home production, but the increase in schooling will also mean that they will spend more time with their children. The sample was divided into high and low education groups and did not take into account employment of mother.

A preliminary analysis of time budget data of 1966, from the University of Michigan, reported by Sweet, compares employed to non-employed women. This indicated that they spend considerably less time on food preparation, house cleaning and laundry, about the same on personal care, and a little less on child care and leisure. These comparisons, however, were crude and some questions were left unanswered, such as the important issues of the availability of purchased services, and the extent to which differences in time allocation were a result of selectivity into the labor force of women more efficient in performance of household tasks or women whose standards of performance are lower (Sweet, 1973).

While it is true that an increase in the amount of market work done by women may be accompanied by some reduction in the amount and quality of homemaking (as compared to housewives) working wives continue to perform most of their own household work. In one study, the total workload of working wives rose by an average of 13 hours per week while their husbands' dropped an average of 1.5

(Kreps and Leaper, 1976). Whether more efficient than housewives or not, one thing is clear: women are not gaining greater leisure from the higher family incomes they bring in as a result of working; if anything, there appears to be a reduction in their free time. One can speculate that mothers of several or of young children who are employed would most likely feel that they have little time not spent in the fulfillment of role requirements and that this would effect their feelings of well-being. Yet, there appears to be little data tying the effect of employment status of the wife and hours spent in housework and child care to their levels of strain.

Subjective Effects of Dual-Role Occupation

The concept of role conflict has been central to the study of employed mothers, since the wife-mother position and employee position are assumed to be governed by incompatible expectations. Role conflict is assumed to be tension producing, as discernible in greater guilt or anxiety in women's performance of responsibilities (Goode, 1960).

In a review of several studies about the effects of employment on the health of mothers, Nye (1974) finds that the mental health of employed mothers does not appear to be worse than that of housewives. The overall findings indicate that working mothers report fewer symptoms of ill

health and physical anxiety than do housewives. In the active childrearing years, employed mothers are more satisfied with their lives than are housewives. During the period when children are out of the home, the relationships are reversed. The higher the educational level of the wife, the more likely that differences in well-being favor the employed woman.

Several of these studies appear to have inconsistent findings. Sharp (1963),* in a study of 1,982 mothers in three small cities, found that a larger proportion of employed mothers felt inadequate as parents; the relationship was strongest among high school and college graduates. However, Birnbaum (1963) in her study of talented college graduates found that full time housewives were more anxious and overconcerned about their children than were a comparable group of talented women who combined a professional career with motherhood. White,** in a study of 1,092 mothers in a small city, found that anxiety was more prevalent among women who left their children with mother substitutes to go to work than among mothers who left them

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* Reported in Nye article

** Also reported in Nye article

to engage in non-work activities. Anxiety was lower where a good mother substitute was available (in higher income families).

Some investigations by Walter Gove (1973) attempt systematically to connect the higher rates of mental illness in women to the strains produced by their roles in modern industrial society. Gove analyzed the rates of mental illness for men and women following World War II by examining community surveys, first admissions to general hospitals, psychiatric outpatient clinics, private outpatient psychiatric care and the practices of general physicians. These data uniformly indicate that adult married women have higher rates of mental illness than adult married men. In comparisons of various categories of unmarried persons, (divorced, single, widow), other studies found men to have higher rates of mental illness than women in these categories.

Gove's explanation for these rates focuses primarily on the roles of married men and women. The reasons Gove gives to explain why women's roles are more likely to create emotional problems are as follows:

1. Men have alternative sources of satisfaction outside the familial role whereas if a woman finds her role unsatisfactory she has no other source of gratification being restricted to a single major role: housewife.

2. The occupancy of the low status and technically undemanding position of housewife

is not consonant with the intellectual attainment of a large number of women causing them to be unhappy with the role.

3. The housewife's role is relatively unstructured and invisible thus permitting her opportunity to brood over her troubles and permitting her distress to escalate.

4. Even if a married woman works she is typically in a less satisfactory position than the married man; in addition to her job, she typically performs household chores which means that she works more hours per day than her husband.

5. Some observers have indicated that expectations confronting women are diffuse and often contradictory placing them in a double bind. It is likely that many women find the uncertainty and lack of control over their futures frustrating.

Addressing each of these reasons, the following points must be made:

1. The first assertion is highly speculative; it supposes that the housewife role is unidimensional; some have pointed out the multiplicity of functions that the designation entails, including volunteer, entertainer (sometimes tied to husband's career advancement, Rose, 1951). The studies cited focused upon college educated groups; shrinkage of role outlets may be assumed to occur in less educated groups where the increase of mental illness is higher; however, additional mediating factors must then be considered.

2. Gove himself admits that one cannot find any systematic evaluation of the low prestige accorded the position of housewife.

3. That women's positions permit them to brood over their distress and worries he also admits is speculative. In their survey of 2,460 "normal" Americans, Gurin, Veroff and Feld (1960) found that for women the home was the greatest source of distress, more

than for men. They were unhappier with their marriages and in their role as parents. Women's greater reported distress was speculatively attributed to their greater tendency toward introspection and sensitivity in interpersonal relationships; however, there was no explanation as to how unhappiness can lead to strain, particularly strain associated with mental disorder.

4. This reason is inconsistent with reasons (1) and (3). He suggests that women experience greater strain because of the considerably more hours that they have to work. Stress and anxiety cannot result from both a great many environmental demands (4) and very few (2) and (3). It seems that women can't win; if they work they are under strain because they work at two jobs (which would presumably eliminate strain (1); if they don't then they are either bored and frustrated and have time to brood because they have little to do. Such contradictory speculations cannot explain the same phenomenon effectively. One must first determine whether strain, anxiety and unhappiness are the same; if not then their origins and distribution in the population may differ and account for seeming contradiction in his reasoning.

5. The last point is supported by evidence the nature of which is either highly speculative (Goode, 1960; Parsons, 1953; Angrist, 1969; Rose, 1951), dated (Cottrell, 1942) or based on a specialized sample (Epstein, 1971). Do women more than men experience a lack of control over their futures? If so does this contribute to strain? What are the varying conditions under which these experiences occur? While women have higher rates of mental illness than men, the married of both sexes have lower rates than the unmarrieds (Gove, 1972). One could argue that marriage provides less protection for women than for men against mental illness; however, the equivocal nature of rates for unmarried women could undermine the basic empirical underpinnings of his argument. As Gove claims, we need to know a lot more about how women's role produces

> high rates of mental illness, suggesting without more research we can only speculate.

Moreover, in a review of epidemiological studies of "true" prevalence of mental disorder (not relying on rates of hospital admissions) Dohrenwend (1975) found that instead of women having consistently higher rates there are sex differences in mental disorder. These are: consistently higher rates of neuroses and manic depressive psychoses for females (common demoninator being depressive symptomatology) and consistently higher rates of personality disorder for males (underlying feature being irresponsible and anti-social behavior).

What the review points out is that men and women show differential patterns in mental disorder and when overall rates are reported (Gove) these differences are masked. It also serves to raise some important questions on measurement of disorder which will be discussed in the next section.

In summation, with the population trends discussed relative to the increase in prevalence of dual role occupation, knowledge of the subjective concomitants would be of important theoretical and factual significance. Do women who work and have children experience more strain than those who don't? Does strain vary over the life cycle, by education, income level, and proportion of income earned relative to husband's earnings? How is

strain related to other measures of subjective well-being such as anxiety, happiness and satisfaction? Results reported are inconsistent and equivocal: To a large extent this is due to issues involving measurement of subjective states.

Measuring Well-Being

The attempts to develop measures of the well-being of a general population has been characterized as falling into three categories (Campbell 1975).

The first was by Hadley Cantril in the 1960's. He utilized a "self-anchoring scale" to study the aspirations and satisfactions of people in 13 different countries. He conceptualized well-being as a cognitive experience in which an individual compares his perception of his present situation to an expected position.

The second approach emphasizes the affective aspects of experience. Bradburn's work on the subjective feeling states that people experience in their daily lives represents this emphasis. Bradburn and Caplovitz (1965) identified two measures of affect, positive and negative and posited that these were independent of each other and that the net balance between them accounted for the individual's experience of happiness with his life (Affect Balance Scale).

Some of the measurement difficulties in dealing with feeling states are exemplified in some of the criticism of the Bradburn model. One criticism for example suggests that the association of the Affect Balance Scale with general self-reports of happiness and life satisfaction is hardly satisfactory evidence for the usefulness of a balance model since the association may be due to the "sum" of the effects of positive and negative scores rather than being due to an underlying balance* (Cherlin and Reeder, 1976). In fact in their partial replication of Bradburn's study in two independent surveys, Cherlin and Reeder found that the two scales when taken separately yielded more information than did the Balance Scale.

Furthermore, although most studies of self-reports of feeling states have found many dimensions of emotion, there is a consistency among them in the appearance of two factors which represent poles of the pleasantness - unpleasantness construct and two representing the extremes of the activation construct. Bradburn's model of positive and negative affect refers exclusively to the first construct; but his items have emotional referents to other types of feelings not specified by his model. Since his positive affect scale reflects both pleasantness and

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* The ABS is a "difference score" which presents difficulties in interpretation.

activation some of his findings become tautological. More dimensions may be necessary to adequately account for the multiplicity of emotions involved in psychological well-being (Cherlin and Reeder, 1976).

The third attempt utilizes measures derived from psychiatric concepts. Studies of the frequency of mental illness actually began in the 17th century with census type studies of hospital admissions and discharges for administrative purposes (Schwab and Schwab, 1973). When interest turned to the use of such statistics for epidemiologic studies their weaknesses became apparent, i.e., the number of hospital cases did not necessarily correspond to the total number of cases in the community (Myers, 1975). Attempts turned to divising and standardizing psychological screening tests to study the relationship between social factors and the development of psychiatric symptoms. The symptom review method began with the development of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and the Cornell Medical Index, and was refined further in the Army's Neuro-psychiatric Screening Adjunct utilized during World War II (Srole, 1975:351-352). Since these measures are very often time consuming to administer, brief objectively scored screening measures of psychopathology were developed and have been increasingly employed. Among those commonly used are a 22-item

screening instrument developed by Langer in the Midtown Study (Langer, 1962), Macmillan's Health Opinion Survey (Macmillan, 1957) and the Gurin Mental Status Index (Gurin et al., 1960:175-205). These consist of relatively small batteries of symptom questions that are scored on an actuarial basis to discriminate clinically evaluated cases from non-cases. Thus far, they have not been constructed to be diagnostically specific and are intended to supply only gross estimates of overall rates rather than rates for particular types of disorder (Dohrenwend, 1975).

The first national study conducted utilizing this technique was by Gurin, Veroff and Feld in 1957. This was concerned with psychological and emotional stress and included questions regarding symptoms, experiences and general feelings. The major goal was to determine the relation between various dimensions of psychological "mental health" and social structure. The questions tapped global measurements of impairment relying on items dealing with psychological *and* physiological expressions of anxiety.

In a review of twelve epidemiological studies utilizing the symptom screening devices Dohrenwend (1975) found a reported range of functional psychiatric disorder per community from one percent to 50 percent or more,

the differences being partly a function of the thoroughness of data collection procedures, and more of inconsistent conceptions on how to define a "case." Furthermore all these global procedures assume that psychiatric disorder is unidimensional (see discussion on Gove earlier) while the current evidence points in another direction. Research on psychiatric disorder from genetic studies and from drug trials, for example (Klerman and Barrett, 1973), suggest that psychiatric disorders are differentially related to demographic variables (some are sex related, others not, etc.), respond differently to therapy, contrast in the magnitude of their genetic components and differ in prognosis (Dohrenwend, 1975). In short, they are multidimensional.

An example of the pitfalls of assuming unidimensionality is provided by a study of psychiatric disorders in children (Gerston et al., 1973). The most commonly accepted relationship is that between mental disturbance and social class. These investigators found that ethnic background and SES make independent contributions to impairment and that the general impression that class is a more important contributor to mental disorder is in part a function of the measures used (citing Langner and Gurin, 1960). These measures rely heavily on anxiety and depression items where class is a major contributor in accounting for

differential rates. The impairment measures found which were related to ethnicity were poor memory, slow development, speech problems.

Although these contrasts in concepts and methods in the study of well-being make any attempts to make substantive comparisons of absolute rates of various types of mental states or disorder difficult, there are certain broad consistencies in findings across some of these studies. For example, findings from all these studies indicate that satisfaction and happiness behave in different ways. Happiness, for example, is highest among young people and declines with age whereas satisfaction is lowest among young people and increases with age. Happiness with marriage increases with level of education but feelings of inadequacy as a marriage partner also increase with education. Depression decreases with education.

Source of Data for Further Analysis

In 1971 Campbell, Converse and Rodgers carried out an investigation of the perceived quality of life on a cross section of the adult population of the United States. This study is part of what Dudley Duncan described as the "social indicators movement," the monitoring of change in areas of public life such as education, health, employment, crime, victimization, political participation,

population growth and population movement, for purposes of cross-national comparisons and social policy decisions (Campbell, 1975).

Indicators are broadly divided into two kinds, objective (events, behaviors of individuals, descriptions of environment, etc.) and subjective (reports of direct experiences). Campbell et al. set out to demonstrate the degree and kinds of relationships between these two types of measures i.e., the characteristics of the external world and the qualities of one's sense of well-being. Some observers have suggested that subjective indicators suffer from methodological weaknesses associated with their validity, interpretability, completeness and utility. Andrews has addressed each of these in detail (1974) concluding that none is sufficient to invalidate the development and use of social indicators for research purposes. For example he cites that on the basis of answers to a national survey (N = 5,000), 99 percent of the respondents had thought about these issues, 80 percent were consistent in their responses; social desirability biases accounted for less than 5 percent of the variance, and finally although the range of concerns of people is quite large (800 cited) only twelve of them taken together and appropriately combined can explain 50-60 percent of the variance in an index of life quality, that is, any

twelve items if well distributed will explain a large proportion of the variation in perceived quality of life.

The Campbell, Converse and Rodgers study was conducted on a probability sample of all persons 18 years old and older living in private households in 48 contiguous states. 2,164 individuals were interviewed. The measures developed drew upon the three types discussed above and consisted of the following indices: an index of satisfaction composed of scores of 10 individual domain items, an index of positive affect (paired adjectives in the semantic differential format, factor analytically derived), and an index of stress.

Some of the preliminary findings shed some light on the questions raised in the previous section on dual-role occupation. When 10 life situation variables (age, race, income, occupation, education, religion, sex, life cycle, urbanicity, working) were used to explain the variance in each of the three well-being measures, the 10 variables did not account for more than 17 percent of the variance, sex accounting for the least in 2 of the measures. This would indicate that overall differences in scores of well-being are hardly determined by sex in itself (this does not mean that sex cannot mediate scores). Furthermore, the overall pattern of scores is similar for both sexes (Campbell, mimeo, 1975).

Further findings indicate that housewives and employed wives resemble each other in regard to their feelings; in specific areas of their lives and in general affect they are more consistently positive than single employed women. In addition, there are no differences between the way married women and single women assess their work (Campbell, XII, 1975).

Some of the discrepant findings in the studies cited (Nye, et al.) of role strain accompanying occupation of dual roles may derive from the investigators not having sufficiently spearated out the elements of well-being that come into play when women describe their life situations. If well-being encompasses at least three dimensions and if these are not sufficiently differentiated results mask the effects each contributes to the resultant responses.

When scores for separate indexes are plotted across the sample into stages of the life cycle we find that there is also a fairly high consistency among all three scores, with some exceptions. Divorced women, for example, show extreme negativity in all measures whereas divorced men who are negative in satisfaction and affect, report less stress; this is in direct contrast to Gove's assumptions which should lead to opposite results; Jessie Bernard, as well, in a review of research on marriage concludes that the psychic costs of marriage are greater for wives than for

husbands (1972); the views of both authors would lead one to expect negative scores for men who are divorced. (It must be remembered that remarriage rates for the two sexes are different thus a selective factor might be operating which could affect the differential scores). Finally, married respondents express higher satisfaction with their lives than other respondents (Rodgers and Converse, 1975).

Looked at simply in global terms, for successive periods of married life, there is no difference in the way married men and women assess their well-being. It appears that the experience of marriage differs more according to stages of the life cycle than by sex; however, differences in satisfaction scores do appear when education is controlled. We see that housewives who have graduated from college drop below those of lower levels of education on both the general measures of affect and satisfaction and that they are less positive than employed women who have graduated from college (Campbell, XII, 1975). Stress scores were not reported for these groups. Andrews and Withey (1974) report similar findings; the marriages of the highly educated unemployed housewife are more likely to be characterized by lack of understanding and companionship, doubts and dissatisfactions.

How these feelings relate to strain is another question not explored in the University of Michigan study.

We have seen that women who work for pay typically do not relinquish their domestic roles. The possibility of conflict between these roles has not been addressed as fully as it could have utilizing the data available in this national study. For example, it is possible to experience both satisfaction and happiness and a high amount of "stress." This is precisely the case for women with pre-school age children (Campbell, 1975). Discrepancies among the three measures appear at other junctures of the life cycle and for specific statuses (divorced men, as noted above). It is likely that a finer breakdown of respondents by education, income and other factors will show that differences for experienced strain do exist for various categories of women irrespective of avowed satisfaction or happiness. Hence these data appear to provide an opportunity to explore some of the issues raised relative to women's dual-role occupation and strain.

What makes these data worth using are the following:

1. Reliability of the measures: A random subset of original respondents were reinterviewed in 1972 to test the stability of the central well-being and domain satisfaction measurements over time. The reliability of the Index of General Affect was about .89, the estimated reliability of the Satisfaction Index was from .80 - .83.

2. A wide variety of experiences are tapped and a comprehensive notion of well-being is utilized.

3. Previous research in the field is drawn upon and encompassed.

4. The data are fairly recent, and have relevance to current issues.

5. The sample is a national one.

"Stress" and "Strain"

One limitation of the data is in its utilization of the concept of stress. There are many conceptual and methodological problems surrounding the concept of stress; there are for example great gaps in the evidence that links variations in sociocultural factors to variations in the nature and amount of stress. There are even ambiguities in the usage of the term. The word stress is often used to describe both the emotions experienced and the forces producing them (Levine and Scotch, 1970).

Biological Stress

According to Hans Selye (1956) who is largely responsible for the evolution of the concept of stress in medical thinking, stress is a phylogenetically determined adaptation pattern primarily preparing the organism for phsyical activity, fight or flight. It is suspected of leading to disease. Stress is not nervous tension, stress

is not an emergency discharge of hormones,* stress is not the nonspecific result of damage nor is it any deviation from homeostasis of the body. It shows itself as a specific syndrome, yet it is nonspecifically induced, and has meaning only when applied to a precisely defined biologic system. It is essentially "the wear and tear caused by life."

Selye was interested in the question of what disease was in general and whether there was some nonspecific defense system in out body to fight any disease. He found that there was a triphasic "general adaptation syndrome" which is biologic stress.

Mechanical Stress

The biological concept of stress differs from the mechanical concept used in physics which refers to an applied force or system of forces that tends to strain or deform a body (Levi and Anderson, 1975).

A mechanical model of stress is implied in a large number of studies that have isolated specific physiological

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* One aspect of the endocrine system usually associated with emotional reactions to severe stress is the pituitary adrenocortical system. In studies of the physiological aspects of anxiety the presence of adrenocortical hormones are measured (Martin, 1971).

changes (strain) produced by (stress) stimuli.* The physical illnesses usually cited include changes in cardiac functioning and cardiovascular disorders, ulcerative colitis, dermatitis and glaucoma (Alexander, 1950; Dunbar, 1943; Grinker, 1953). In this "psychosomatic" model the specification of the connection between the stimulus and the pathological consequence is a problematical one.

In a review of research on psychosomatic disorders, Lachman finds that there are very large problems in attempting to determine the relationships between emotion-provoking stimulus situations and the specific physiological reactions that occur. He finds that:

> In a particular individual similar physiological reactions occur in response to different stimuli.
>
> The same individual may display different reactions to similar stimuli.
>
> There are widespread differences in physiological reactions to varieties of situations and from time to time (Lachman, 1972:182).

Emotional arousal can cause physiological changes but how these develop into pathological conditions is an open question.

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* These are usually negative emotions.

Another mechanical model of stress applied to emotional impairment (rather than physical as above) is Langner's (1963).

A strain (impairment in functioning) results from environmental forces (stress) pressing on the individual. The environmental forces are demographic which Langner admits are not always unidirectional. According to Langner, a person's personality organization is crucial to the resistance of stress; he uses the clinical notion of ego strength to describe such inner strength. The factors which mediate between stress and strain according to his formulations are:

1. endowment: constitutional factors, and
2. positive experiences up to the time of the particular stress.

These factors, however, cannot be isolated that easily; how events are experienced is affected by learning and conditioning, so that a positive experience for one person may not be similarly associated with positive affect for another. Similarly, a constant assault by negative stimuli may make a person unable to differentiate among varieties of stimuli that could potentially elicit positive or negative results; for example, there is physiological evidence that the correlates of some states of emotional arousal (centered in the pituitary adrenocortical system) are higher among groups of

"clinically" disturbed persons in pre-stress periods. That is, their state of arousal is constantly high regardless of the external conditions and the incremental changes during stress periods are very small compared to normals. While physiological changes are not specifically related to objective symptomatology nor to subjective feelings this evidence does suggest some of the problems with a model which assumes a simple causal mechanism. The following questions are not considered by Langner sufficiently:

> Some experiences change how one will react to other experiences in the future; which? for how long? on what level?
>
> What is the role of the symbolic process in the etiology of emotional states? How do imagination, anticipation, thinking effect strain?

Most people do not become disabled when confronted with stress and those who do usually regain their normal functioning within short periods of time or in a "normal" course, for example, grief reaction. The question is why do some individuals react with neurotic symptoms and some not given the same stressful experiences? This is the question Langner raises and does not successfully answer.

Life Events as Stress

Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1974) use the term stress synonymously with "life events." These are experiences to which everyone is exposed and share the following characteristics: they require a change in one's ongoing life pattern or a role transformation; they involve the imposition of pain, danger, a change of health or fulfillment or disappointment. These changes can be either positive or negative; it is the element of change that is important in their model. All these experiences require a change in individual adjustment.

There are some difficulties in ordering life events since they represent different orders of experience. For example, some are of long duration and some are immediate; some are social events, others are physical events, biological events and emotional events. Combining such disparate events into a single index is very likely to confound relationships between life events and emotional disorders. The inclusiveness of events creates a problem of circularity in the definition i.e., stress results from anything which causes it.

Further criticisms offered of the "life events" model of strain are that more work is needed in scaling procedures to assess the relative magnitude of various

events as well as the cultural differences that might exist in magnitude and the role of factors which may mediate the impact of life events such as social bonds, capacity to anticipate, even diet (Scott and Howard, 1970).

Dohrenwend himself has acknowledged the methodological problems in this research (1975) while pointing out that recent research has provided correlations that are promising in their implications. For example, Paykel (1974), Hudgens (1974), Brown and Birley (1968) have provided evidence that various types of psychiatric disorder may follow life events, specifically, acute episodes of schizophrenia, depression, suicide attempts, and neurosis. In Paykel's study, neurotic patients who showed a mixture of anxiety, depression and other symptoms showed a linear relationship between amount of stress and the severity of the symptoms. However, types of events were not related to specific symptom patterns. The relationship between symptom intensity and preceding stress did not hold for those with more severely impairing illnesses, suggesting that stress plays a minor etiological role among people who can be characterized as mentally ill.

Strong associations have also been reported between life events and symptom scales that measure various types of psychological distress rather than outright disorder. Markush and Favero (1974), for example, found that

relatively mild symptoms of depression as well as a symptom scale of less specific psychological distress were related to measures of life events. Myers et al. (1974) have shown with still another measure of symptomatic distress that scores will fluctuate over time with fluctuations in the nature and number of life events experienced. Furthermore, they found that the relationship between life events and psychiatric symptoms is an independent phenomenon and not a reflection of underlying social class differences. The symptoms are a reflection of the social class differences in the distribution of life events measured by a scale of Desirability-Change. Lower class people experience more unpleasant events which have a high readjustment impact than people in higher groups. They conclude that events requiring some form of behavioral adaptation or coping affect an individual's well-being.

Another study by Myers is somewhat contradictory to this, however (Myers, et al., 1975). In a longitudinal study of life events and symptomatology, they found that some persons did not fit the pattern: those who displayed significant symptoms but reported fewer life events and those who had many life events and fewer symptoms. The first group were found to be less well integrated in the larger stratification system, the family and the

instrumental role system. The other group were married, had higher income, liked their job or housework and had not been treated for a physical illness the previous year. It would appear then that the life events model has applicability, only to the middle range of SES groups and middle range of events. It appears that the lower SES individuals have more symptomatology irrespective of life events: those with severe events and those without still have more symptoms.

This suggests that the life events model needs further refinement to specify which events are external to the individual and which are constitutive of personality (those who experience them are prone to). They have not sufficiently separated predisposing aspects of personality from strain producing effects. Dohrenwend claims that attention is being given to some of these methodological questions such as the question of which events to investigate and how to combine the events reported by an individual into a measure of their stressfulness that is independent of the subject's psychiatric condition (Dohrenwend, 1974).

In summation, for some observers stress is a response people have to situations, an internal reaction. For some, it is a quality of a situation independent of reaction.

In this report, the term stress will be used to signify external events and strain the reaction to them. An attempt will be made to separate strain from other types of "disorders" or discomforting subjective experiences.

Strain and Anxiety

An issue of theoretical importance associated with the notion of strain is its relation to anxiety. Is anxiety an aspect of strain? Is it antecedent to strain? Or are strain and anxiety actually the same phenomenon?

Anxiety reaction is usually characterized as having the following symptoms: physiological symptoms of rapid heartbeat, irregular breathing, and dizziness; feelings of apprehension (impending disaster, losing control); experiences of insomnia, restlessness, nightmares, difficulty in concentration, forgetfulness, fatigue, inefficiency in work, irritability, depression and vulnerability (Martin, 1971).

Anxiety reactions are often considered to underlie most other disorders (phobic, obsessive compulsive, hysteric, depressive reaction). The major distinction made between anxiety reaction and other kinds of neurotic reactions is that anxiety response is usually pervasive and not limited to a particular class of stimuli or specific situations (the distinction is a

relative one).

The presence of anxiety is inferred from three sources: self reports of subjective experience, motoric behavior and physiological responses. But as an emotional reaction anxiety shares the definitional problems of all emotions. Emotions can not be packaged in precisely defined terms. A label may apply to a loose class of reactions that in our present state of knowledge have different functions and expressions. On the physiological level, distinctive and separate physiological systems have not been associated with specific emotions. Nor, if we utilize self reports (Nowlis and Green, 1957; Borgatta, 1961) has any consistency in number and content been found in emotions.

Although an anxiety provoking situation may indeed be identical to a strain provoking situation, from their treatment in the literature anxiety is associated with a sustained state that is not clearly related to anything (it is difficult to specify the stimuli that elicit an anxiety reaction). Anxiety appears to be considered a constitutive aspect of personality, whereas strain is a more generalized concept and refers to a reactive condition to external stimuli. Both concepts, however, are multi-dimensional and even when consistently applied involve much variation in behavioral and physiological expression.

It appears therefore, that we are likely to communicate most accurately about emotional phenomena if we specify the actual procedures and measures from which we infer the presence of the particular emotion. This will be done relative to strain and anxiety in Chapter II on Procedures and Measurement for our exploration of dual-role occupation and its subjective concomitants.

Summary of Hypotheses

Selected findings from the literature concerning the various parameters of interest in this dissertation have been presented. Subsequent chapters will discuss development of a measure of strain and the testing of a number of hypotheses relative to some of the research questions raised in this chapter. Below is a summary of the hypotheses to be tested.

1. Employed wives will have more strain than housewives.

2. Employed wives with children will have more strain than housewives with children.

3. Strain for working women will be greater for those with a greater number of children than for those with fewer children.

4. Strain for working women will be greater for those with a child under six, than for those with older children.

5. Having one pre-school child will contribute to more strain among working women than having two older children; this will not be true for housewives. This should hold for all education and income levels.

6. Women in families where the wife works and contributes a low percentage of the total income will experience less strain than women who contribute a high percentage of the total income.

7. For women with high strain, the areas of dissatisfaction in their lives will vary with education; higher educated women will show dissatisfaction in areas of martial adjustment and family life; whereas low education women will experience dissatisfaction in domains of their lives related to friendships, leisure activities and health.

8. It is expected that differences in strain scores are mediated by relations with friends and family of origin; whatever the work status or age of the women, those who experience closeness and dependability in their friendships and/or relations with parents and siblings, will experience lower strain than those whose relationships are not thus characterized. The directionality of this relationship may not be certain, but a relationship between these two variables is hypothesized.

9. Although happiness and satisfaction scores are lower among college educated housewives than among those of lower education, we would not expect strain scores to be higher; in fact we would not expect education to effect strain scores for housewives; for working wives we would expect education to be related to strain since women of higher education do spend more time with their children, hence creating an intensification of dual-role pressure.

10. Holding education constant, women in professional occupations will have more strain than those in other occupations.

11. Young men whose wives are employed will experience more strain than men whose wives are housewives while older men will experience less strain. This is because the younger men will presumably have been more affected by changing role definitions over the last decade (Mason et al., 1976) and will have increased household responsibilities. Older men will be governed by traditional expectations and thereby will have the double benefit of a housekeeper and wage contributor and hence less strain.

CHAPTER II

MEASURING STRAIN:

RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

Description of Original Sample

The Quality of American Life Survey was conducted in July and August 1971 by Campbell, Converse and Rogers of the Survey Research Center, the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. The data were collected from a nationwide probability sample of 2,164 persons 18 years of age and older. The overall response rate was about 80 percent.

The survey was designed to measure respondents' perceptions of their socio-psychological condition, their needs and expectations from life, and the degree to which these needs are being satisfied. Data were obtained through personal interviews.

Sample Relative to National Pattern: Women, Marital Status and Employment

Sixty percent of the women in the sample are married. Forty-three percent of all the women are employed, of the married women 39 percent are employed. About 30 percent of the married women have children under 6, 30 percent have children between 6 and 18, 30 percent over 18, and about 10 percent have no children. Employment is greatest

among young wives with no children and wives whose youngest child is between 6 and 18 years old: 25 percent of those with a youngest child under 6 work and 47 percent of those with children between 6 and 18 work.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' figure for working women with a preschool age child for 1970 was 33 percent. The figure for the sample represents an average for all married women with at least one child under 6. For those with only one preschool child the rate of employment is 39 percent; it drops to 20 percent for those with two or more children when the youngest is under 6. The other figures are consistent with the national rates for 1970.

Employed women are likely to have fewer children. Sixty percent have more than one child, compared to 74 percent of the housewives; in addition because of differential working rates for different age groupings, the age distribution of housewives and wives who work for pay are not exactly comparable.

Of divorced and separated women, 71 percent are employed, almost twice the proportion of married women; the percentage with children over 18 years old among the divorced is slightly higher (45 percent) than among married women. Of the roughly 1,600 families with children present, 9 percent are single parent.

Education and Income

Employed wives on the average have been in school longer than housewives and their mean family incomes are about 15 percent higher than housewives'.* About half earn between $1,000 and $3,000 a year.** The percentage of women who work goes up with each education level (56 percent for those with BA's, although these are only 10 percent of all employed married women). At the highest income fewer wives work regardless of wife's education; in fact at $17,000 a year and above there is a drop in rate of employment for wives at each education level (although college educated still have the highest rate). About 80 percent of the divorced women are evenly distributed at the lowest income levels of $0 - $6,999. The education distribution for divorced women, however, is the same as for marrieds.

Index Formation: Source of Data

Campbell, Converse and Rogers developed three measures of well-being as follows:

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* Mean income for families with working wives is $12,248 and for families where wife is a housewife, $10,653.

** Median income for female head of households in the U.S. was $6,400 in 1974 (U.S. Labor Dept.).

1. Index of Domain Satisfactions. The respondents were asked how satisfied they were with each of a whole variety of "domains" of their lives, and to describe their satisfaction with their lives as a whole. All respondents were placed on a 7-point scale on which the two extreme points were labelled "completely satisfied" and "completely dissatisfied." (Only 7 percent of the sample chose ratings that lay below the midpoint, within the dissatisfied side of the scale.)

An index was composed of the satisfaction scores of 10 of the individual domains. This index, which correlates at nearly .70 with the single question but has a higher test-retest reliability, is Campbell et al.'s Index of Domain Satisfactions.

2. Index of General Affect: Happiness. The primary distinction that is drawn between satisfaction and happiness is that while the term "happiness" carries an affective connotation, the term "satisfaction" implies a cognitive process.

Using a modification of the semantic differential* technique developed by Osgood and his colleagues (Osgood,

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* The original semantic differential was used to measure facets of meaning of various concepts.

Suci, and Tannenbaum, 1957), respondents were asked to describe their "present life" in terms of 10 7-point bipolar adjective pairs. The specific adjective pairs are as follows:

Boring	-	Interesting
Miserable	-	Enjoyable
Hard	-	Easy
Useless	-	Worthwhile
Lonely	-	Friendly
Empty	-	Full
Discouraging	-	Hopeful
Tied down	-	Free
Disappointing	-	Rewarding
Doesn't give me much chance	-	Brings out the best in me

A global question ("How happy are you?") was also asked. (Only 5 percent of the respondents responded at the negative end of the question.) A factor analysis of the adjective pairs showed eight carrying a substantial loading on the first factor and they became Campbell et al.'s Index of General Affect.

3. Index of Perceived Stress. Two of the 10 adjective pairs did not appear to fit the structure of the 8 used in the Index of Positive Affect, but shared substantial loadings on the second factor. These two items,

"easy/hard" and "free/tied down" were combined with several questions concerned with a sense of being rushed, worries about money and worries of a broader nature to form a scale called the Index of Perceived Stress. Campbell et al. noted that these items did not interrelate consistently and seemed to be more subject to variation over time than the other two measures; however, they retained "Perceived Stress" as an index because it moved their data in interesting ways and appeared to be tapping a different dimension of experience than happiness or satisfaction.

Index Formation: Strain* Index

Campbell et al.'s measure of stress appeared to combine at least two dimensions or sources of meaning: items from the affect scale and items which are usually used to tap anxiety; hence, the meaning of their measure was not clear.

Additional items were sought from the original protocol which could enhance the development of a measure

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* An index of strain was constructed in the context of a study of "perceived well-being." All questions in the study were concerned with subjective reactions to or assessments of life in general or specific domains of life. Hence, the term strain, is distinguished from somatic strain which is manifested in a disordered physiological or physical function (of which the organism may or may not be aware). Strain, here, implies "felt" or "perceived" strain.

of strain. These were items which appeared to tap feelings of internal distress. The additional items included feelings of loss of control of one's life, feelings of unfairness of life, and feelings of disappointment.

A factor analysis was carried out. Three poorly defined factors were inferred (Table 1).

Table 1

Factor Analysis I: "Quality of Life" Stress Index and Additional Variables

Variables	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
easy/hard	.63	.04	.02
free/tied down	.48	-.01	.05
rushed	-.24	-.01	.08
free time	-.10	.16	-.02
worried/money	-.46	.12	-.12
frightened	-.35	.21	.00
no control	.20	-.36	.15
nervous breakdown	-.19	.55	-.06
satisfied ambitions	.33	-.14	.43
disappointed	.25	-.12	.48

Factor Analysis I

Although two of the factors have only two items,* what is most interesting, in the results of the analysis is that four items from the six item stress index load on factor I and two loaded on factor II. This verifies the observation that two distinct contents have been merged in one measure. The first factor was tentatively labelled "strain" and the other ("fear of nervous breakdown" and "fear of loss of control") was labelled "anxiety," reflecting the unitary content thought to underlie each. It is certainly clear that people are responding differently to the two contents: to questions dealing with feelings of pressure or constraint (strain) and to questions evoking feelings of loss of control or loss of ability to purposefully manage one's life; the latter appears more in keeping with conceptions of anxiety reaction. To merge the two meanings into one measure confounds the results.

Factor Analysis II

As a theoretical exercise, a list was compiled of terms which semantically connoted the meanings sought by a measure of strain, excluding the anxiety dimension. It was thought

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* One of these, the third factor, was an artifact.

that items should emphasize reactions to pressure. Strain appeared to imply a reaction to an accumulation of demands on one's time, strain being a feeling that results when the latitude has been constricted in one's opportunity to exercise choices. Terms conveying this meaning were: pushed, pulled, pressed, under pressure, under demand, burdened, loaded down, life full of disruptions, full of responsibilities, full of disturbances. The only questions in the protocol that related to these notions at all were those ten items in the semantic differential format which were used to construct the Campbell Index of General Affect. These items plus the criterion question of "How happy are you," and the seven items utilized in the previous analysis were factor analyzed. A quartimax rotation revealed the following structures (Table 2).

Factor Analysis II: Stress Index, Happiness Index, and Additional Variables

Variables	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
interesting/boring	.75	-.02	-.03	.00
enjoyable/miserable	.73	.13	-.08	.03
easy/hard	.31	.54	-.06	.11
worthwhile/useless	.65	-.10	.03	-.05
friendly/lonely	.62	.05	-.06	.01
full/empty	.75	-.11	-.04	.04
hopeful/discouraging	.71	.05	-.08	-.05
free/tied down	.43	.41	-.02	.01
rewarding/disappointing	.80	.02	-.02	.05
brings out the best/no chance	.70	.09	.03	.12
feels rushed	.00	-.48	.08	-.00
worried about income	-.23	-.30	.23	-.24
frightened/worried	-.21	-.20	.33	-.10
can run own life	.23	-.02	-.34	.16
nervous breakdown	-.18	-.11	.53	-.05
satisfied ambitions	.27	.06	-.13	.58
fair opportunity	.22	.05	-.04	.37
how happy	.51	.02	-.18	.24

Factor I had high loadings for eight items which comprised the Index of General Affect (happiness); the other two, "easy-hard" and "free-tied down," loaded on factor II along with "feeling rushed" which was the item defining the factor. Factor III included the anxiety couplet plus feelings of being "frightened," hence, this factor once again emerged indicating what strain and happiness were not.

Although "worries that income won't meet needs" loaded higher on factor II (strain) than on any other, it shared sufficient variance with the others to dilute the meaning of the strain measure and was therefore excluded. The result was a three item measure of strain with the following items: life is easy-hard; feel free-tied down and feeling rushed. (Reliability as measured by Chronbach alpha = .58.)

Limitations of the Measure

Clearly, in utilizing this index we will be attempting to explain strain on the basis of very few items. However, these three variables appear to be tapping a dimension of psychic discomfort that is relatively distinct from the content usually tapped by most studies of women's subjective states, anxiety and depression. Relying on subjective states which are relatively persistent has made it difficult

to study the effect of precipitating pressures, and specifically how dual roles effect women. The three item measure appears to be a first step in differentiating those feelings which are reactions to external demands, from other feelings.

In establishing a measure, one should ideally sample from a reasonable domain of items to average out the specificity of the items and to increase the reliability of the index. All possible items available in the data that could bolster the meaning of the index were utilized. One item, "worry that income will not meet needs" loaded on the strain factor (.30) and adding this to the index would have increased its reliability by 2 percent; however, since its variance was spread over the other factors it would have added additional content and diluted the meaning of strain, so it was not included. A further limitation of the index should be noted. Two items ("easy/hard" and "free/tied down"), share variance with the happiness scale. This is not entirely surprising since they were presented in the same format.* By utilizing these items there is a

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* An analysis of the factoral structure of the happiness measure suggested a method bias. The general measure of happiness which is the general criterion and did load on this factor was expected to have the highest loading and did not; this suggested a method bias binding the semantic differential scores.

built in dependency with factor I (happiness). These items also are assessments rather than reports of situational response which "feeling rushed" is. Clearly if items such as being pressured, or constrained (content discussed earlier) were available a purer and more reliable measure might have resulted. Based on the sampling of items available and the most reasonable interpretation of their factoral structure, the three item scale is the only viable measure of strain, unless, of course, one was willing to use the single item, "feeling rushed."

To see if "feeling rushed" by itself could serve as a measure of strain, all tables were run in parallel for "feeling rushed" and strain.* Similarly, to partial out the happiness content, happiness was also run in parallel to strain for all tables. An example from the distributions of these measures for some stages of the life cycle illustrates the points at which these measures diverged and the utility of strain as a measure (Table 3).

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* An alternative strain measure was constructed which was also run in parallel to the others, Strain II. Strain II consisted of all three items with "feeling rushed" weighted twice to capitalize on the purity of the item relative to the assumed content of the factor. Since strain was more directly interpretable than Strain II it alone was retained for all further analyses.

Table 3

Differentiation Among Indices: Happiness, Strain and Feeling Rushed for Some Stages of the Life Cycle

Life Cycle Stage	% Highest Strain	% Least Happy	% Always Rushed	
Married Child under 6	38	23	26	(436)
Married Youngest Child 6-18	28	16	29	(408)
Nev Mar Under 30	23	35	15	(167)
Nev Mar 30+	19	31	17	(91)
Div/Sep 18+	18	40	16	(63)
Div/Sep No Child	12	38	21	(34)
Wid Child 18+	11	36	10	(190)
Wid No Child	9	47	9	(32)

Examining strain and happiness for various stages of the life cycle it was noted that, as expected, for some stages of the life cycle people were both unhappy and strained at the same time. What was most important relative to the validity of the Strain Index was that for other stages the distributions were reversed, that is, people experience both happiness and strain at the same time. We see in examining Table 3 for people never married both under and over 30, widowed with a child over 18 and with no children, and divorced/separated with a child over 18, and with no children, scores indicate that although a high percentage of them are not happy a relatively small percent report much strain. Similarly for married people with youngest child under 6 and with a youngest child between 6 and 18 a moderate to low percentage report low happiness but a high to moderate percentage report highest strain. This indicates that the Index of General Affect (happiness) and the Strain Index are clearly tapping different kinds of experiences and the results coincide with our expectations from previous research. For those who are married with

children under 18 one would not expect happiness scores to be low, but Strain as conceptualized here, a felt response to accumulated pressure should be high and it is.*

"Feeling rushed" by itself does not show the same distinctive pattern as Strain throughout the analyses, nor does it move the data in as meaningful a way as the factor analytically derived set of three items (nor is it as reliable). While happiness and Strain are correlated ($r = .33$), the points at which they diverge over the life cycle indicates that Strain is tapping a separate facet of experience corresponding to our expectations and useful to the exploration of the subjective effects of dual-role occupation.

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* Rossi (1968) for example claims that, particularly at its early stages, parenthood is more demanding than either marriage or work.

CHAPTER III

STRAIN AND SOCIAL POSITION

Structural Conditions

The major hypotheses in this report revolve around the conditions of work and parenthood; however, before discussing these, it is appropriate to see how strain is operating in relationship to the major variables which are associated with the social characteristics of individuals.

The underlying assumption of this analysis is that structurally and situationally different conditions create different amounts of strain and that these have consequences in the life patterns of people. Since the meaning of strain is that external requirements in accumulation create a feeling of pressure we might expect that strain would vary with those social conditions that are most intrusive and inescapable in their constraints and demands.

Race

We would not expect that strain would vary with race since the variation of strain inducing conditions within race groupings would probably exceed the variation between them. The relationship between race and strain can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4

Distribution of Strain by Race, Entire Sample

	Race			
Strain	White	Black	Spanish	Total
Lowest	27	31	9	
Low	28	27	31	
High	20	17	34	
Highest	25	25	26	
	100%	100%	100%	
N	1858	219	35	2119

As can be seen from Table 4, as expected there is no relationship between race and strain. This coincides with other findings relative to other well-being measures. For example, Bradburn (1968) found that black, white differences in happiness were simply a reflection of underlying correlations with income and education which were more powerful predictors of this subjective state than race.

Religion

Similarly we would not expect that strain would vary with religion either since religious groupings encompass a large range of conditions relative to work and parenthood. Furthermore, previous research has not found significant variation among religious groupings in subjective measures of well-being. Gurin (1960), for example, found minimal Catholic-Protestant differences in symptom incidence or pattern.

The relationship between religion and strain can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5

Distribution of Strain by Religion, Entire Sample

	Religion				
Strain	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	Total
Lowest	27	22	27	25	
Low	27	32	27	23	
High	22	19	17	18	
Highest	24	27	29	34	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	1366	456	63	251	2129

We can see that there is no relationship between religion (major groupings) and strain, as predicted.

Sex

With regard to sex, we would not predict any differences between men and women in general. Bradburn found no significant sex differences in avowed happiness. While Gurin did find consistently greater reports of distress among women, his measure taps primarily anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms; strain is clearly differentiated from this complex of emotions. Gurin also suggests that women might score higher on these measures because of their greater willingness in our culture to admit to difficulties and suffering. There appears to be no gender linked cultural prescription against admission of feeling of being pressured; thus, as far as cultural norms governing disclosure of feelings come into play one would not expect any sex differences in response. This was indeed the case: the distribution of responses to feelings of strain are identical. (Table 6)

Table 6

Distribution of Strain by Sex, Entire Sample

	Sex		
Strain	Male	Female	Total
Lowest	24	28	
Low	29	28	
High	21	19	
Highest	26	25	
	100%	100%	
N	893	1243	2136

Age

On the other hand, age bears a fairly stable relationship with some aspects of well-being such as happiness which declines with age (Campbell, 1975). We also saw in Chapter II, that happiness and strain did not covary for all stages of the life cycle; we would, therefore, expect that strain would show considerable variation with age. Our expectation was borne out. Age correlates with strain ($r = -.27$) indicating a modest inverse relationship but higher than any other demographic variable.

Although the product moment correlation gives us a sense of the general strength of association between age and strain it is also helpful to break age down categorically to see the pattern for various age groupings (Table 7).

Table 7

Distribution of Strain by Age, Entire Sample

	Age						
Strain	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	65+	total
Lowest	18	14	15	27	38	57	
Low	33	30	29	27	26	23	
High	22	21	22	22	19	11	
Highest	28	35	34	24	17	9	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	372	441	351	369	286	317	2136

We see that the largest increase in strain occurs in the 26-35 age bracket and maintains that level with a large decrease after 45. This age range also corresponds to the period of family formation and work involvement when pressures from both sources are at their highest; hence, there is a consistency here with out expectations regarding roles and strain.

Education, Income and Occupation

Most of the hypotheses we are testing are fairly specific to situational differences involving a multiplicity of status and roles; therefore, we would not expect much variation in strain by global structural conditions; however, since education, occupation and income are so consistently related to many well-being measures (Bradburn, 1969), we would expect strain to vary directly with these global indicators of social position (specifically, we would expect strain to be higher as education, income and occupational prestige go up). Education, in particular, has been linked to greater awareness and higher aspiration level which brings with it increased consciousness of problems, greater demands on the self and greater possibility of unmet standards of performance (Gurin, 1960). If this is the case we would expect a greater accumulation of pressures

both objectively and subjectively on those with higher education, hence greater strain. Whether this is true can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Distribution of Strain by Education, Entire Sample

	Education					
Strain	0-8	9-12	H.S.	Some Coll.	Coll.	Total
Lowest	41	30	22	22	19	
Low	16	22	31	32	32	
High	23	20	22	17	20	
Highest	20	28	25	29	29	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	440	391	712	343	239	2125

We see in examining Table 8 that while the percentage of those reporting highest amounts of strain does not vary much with education, the higher the education level the smaller the percent who have lowest strain. Almost half (41%) of those with an eighth grade education or less report the lowest amount of strain while only one-fifth of college graduates report the least strain.

Education may not be indicative of highest strain; however it is certainly linked to an absence of freedom from strain.

This is consistent with Gurin's speculations about the kinds of pressures higher education brings.

Since income correlates so highly with education, ($r = .42$), we would expect roughly the same general relationship to hold for income and strain as for education and strain (Table 9).

Table 9

Distribution of Strain by Income, Entire Sample

	Income							
Strain	0-1,999	2-4,999	5-6,999	7-9,999	10-11,999	12-16,999	17,000+	Total
Lowest	42	32	25	24	21	19	20	
Low	27	28	26	26	28	35	30	
High	15	18	20	18	21	24	25	
Highest	16	22	28	32	31	22	25	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	284	284	268	364	268	321	263	2054

Examining the distribution of strain by income we see that it roughly parallels that for education: as income goes up, the percent who have the lowest strain goes down. This pattern is the reverse of that for happiness which increases as education and income goes up (Campbell, 1975; Bradburn, 1960). Obviously, we see once again that people can experience both strain and happiness at the same time.

The fact that happiness and strain are both positively related to income and education (more income and education: more happiness and more strain) is seemingly inconsistent on the surface, but not when examined more carefully.

The linkage of education and happiness, and income and happiness reported by Bradburn was associated with a higher positive Affect Scale score. This he ascribed to greater levels of social participation and activity on the part of those with higher socio-economic status. If strain is a reflection in part of role demands one could expect that the increasing social participation and engagement associated with happiness would also bring with it higher strain. Hence the seeming surface contradiction between the findings on happiness and strain disappears if these feeling states are seen as functions of role involvements.

We would expect strain to vary with occupation because of varying demands associated with each. The relationship between strain and occupation can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Distribution of Strain by Occupation, Entire Sample

	Occupation*								
Strain	Profes.	Manager	Proprietor	Clerical	Crafts	Operative	Svce.	Farm	Total
Lowest	17	32	12	24	28	27	32	28	
Low	37	25	25	31	27	25	25	14	
High	20	18	22	22	21	18	21	28	
Highest	26	24	42	23	25	30	22	20	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	271	103	69	512	209	311	316	143	1834

* Census Classification

For occupation, there is very little variation in reports of strain except that proprietors have roughly one and a half times as much strain as any other occupational group. This is also the group that takes the largest financial risks, has the most open-ended schedule, and the fewest institutional underpinnings; in short it is the occupational category most vulnerable to market and client demands and pressures; while the relatively high rate of strain among this occupational grouping (42%) may be a surprising finding, it serves as a partial validator for the measure of strain: a vulnerability to pressures and demands in the fulfillment of a role.

Marital Status

We would expect some variation in strain by marital status; however, since we hypothesized that rates of strain would vary with role-sets, specifically with sex and employment differences within a marital grouping, we would not expect that, in general, married people would have more strain than formerly marrieds, although we would expect them to have more strain than never marrieds. This was indeed the case (Table 11).

Table 11

Distribution of Strain by Marital Status, Entire Sample

	Marital Status					
Strain	Married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Unmarried	Total
Lowest	22	54	24	22	26	
Low	28	22	27	24	34	
High	22	11	20	18	18	
Highest	28	13	28	35	22	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	1447	249	113	69	258	3136

When strain relative to marital status is examined we see that the highest percentage of strain is among the separated. Marrieds and divorced are identical in distribution of strain. Widows have the lowest (this may be partly a result of age since most widowed are over 45, the age when we see a dimunition of strain for both sexes) and of a diminution of role obligations.

Employment

Given our concept of strain we would generally expect employed individuals to have more strain than those not in the work force such as housewives and retired people (who are also older) and they do (Table 12).

Table 12

Distribution of Strain by Employment, Entire Sample

	Employment Status					
Strain	Employed	Housewife	Unemployed	Retired	Student	Total
Lowest	17	37	23	62	24	
Low	29	27	34	20	26	
High	24	14	21	11	17	
Highest	30	22	23	7	33	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	1227	602	53	180	54	2116

Examining Table 12, what is somewhat puzzling is the relatively low amount of highest strain among the unemployed. While they do not directly experience the time and performance pressures associated with the requirements of work, external demands are still being placed upon them. This finding may serve to make even clearer the meaning of strain and its differentiation from other concepts of internal discomfort. Strain appears to be associated with objective demands on personal effort and time, that is, one may feel uneasiness and despair over being unemployed; there may even be a psychosomatic reaction,* however, one does not experience strain when unemployed because strain is associated with personal effort and activation.

Male/Female Differences in Strain Relative to Structural Conditions

We saw that there were no differences between men and women relative to strain but that there are some differences in strain by age, marital status and employment status. We would expect some differences for these

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* See Chapter I for references.

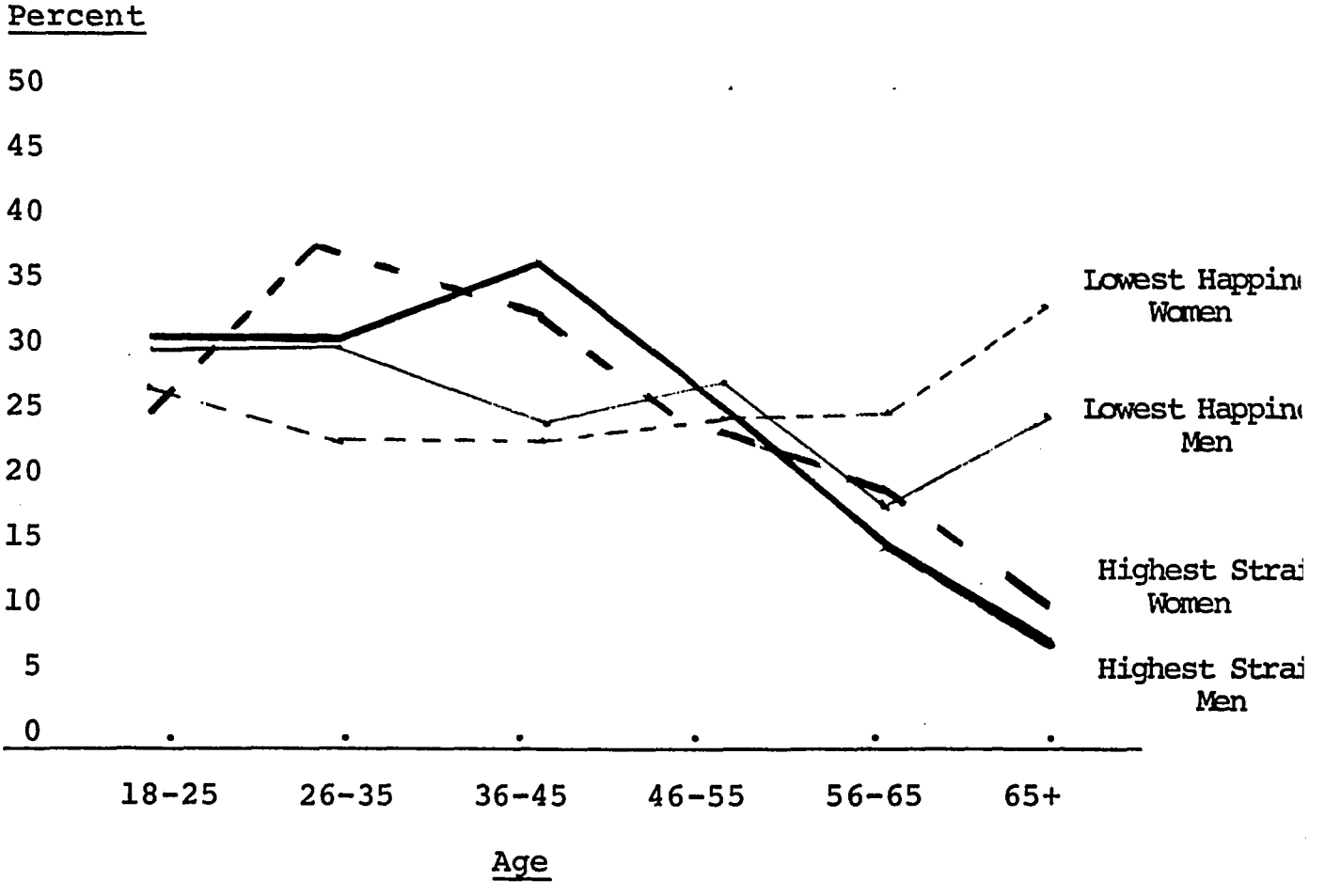
categories by sex.

Male/Female Differences in Strain and Happiness by Age

The distribution of age was the same for men and women in our sample with a little over a third of the sample in the 18-25 year old age bracket. We also saw that strain and age were negatively correlated ($r = -.27$). Interestingly, relative to the meaning of our measure this is the reverse of the relation of strain and happiness: people become unhappier as they grow older but less strained. Women are also relatively less happy at old age than men: 24% for men, 35% for women (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Comparison of Low Happiness with Highest Strain Reported by Men and by Women at Different Ages



We would not predict any general differences between men and women for most age groupings except for the older age levels where women, because of their continued household responsibilities and men's fewer work responsibilities, would be expected to have more strain (Table 13).

Table 13

Distribution of Strain by Age for Men and Women

Age	% Highest Strain	
	Men	Women
18-25	31	25
	(172)	(200)
26-35	31	37
	(187)	(254)
36-45	36	33
	(157)	(194)
56-65	14	21
	(125)	(161)
65+	7	10
	(110)	(207)
Total	893	1243

Examining strain by age for men and women, there are no differences between the two amounts of strain at any age level and the oldest group for both sexes report the least amount of highest strain. What is worth noting, is that the pattern for each sex is different: there is a decrease in highest strain for men after 45 with a gradual tapering off; the period of highest strain (38%) is at the 36-45 age range. For women the group reporting the highest frequency of highest strain is at 26-35 (37%), then it tapers off as for men. For both men and women the largest decrease in strain occurs after 45.

This actually coincides with what Wilensky (1963) has called the end of the "life squeeze." The life squeeze occurs when family income is below the pressure line, that is when the family's resources are inadequate to meet the needs engendered by the number and ages of children. This usually occurs when men are in their early forties and would certainly be a plausible ad hoc explanation for the peaking of strain for men at the 36-45 year old age range. Why women show highest rates at 26-35 is not clear. This age group does coincide with the period of family expansion and also (recalling Chapter I) the 26-35 age group has been the most rapidly expanding one relative to employment since the 1960's; thus we may be seeing the results of a female "life squeeze," women caught

in the pressures of work and family commitments. This is all very speculative and a more detailed examination of effects of dual role occupation among women with various aged children is necessary before any more definite conclusions can be drawn. This will be done in the following chapter.

Male/Female Differences in Strain by Education

We would not expect differences for men and women by education since the global education categories contain variation within them relative to the dimensions that would be predictive of strain (e.g., female employment, marital status, presence of children) (Table 14).

Table 14

Distribution of Strain by Education for Men and Women

	% Highest Strain	
Education	Men	Women
0-8	17	22
	(201)	(239)
9-12	28	28
	(148)	(243)
High School	28	23
	(254)	(458)
Some College	28	29
	(151)	(192)
College	31	26
	(137)	(102)
Total	891	1234

Comparing men and women according to education we see that there is no difference between the sexes relative to strain by education.

Examining the pattern of relationship within each sex grouping we see that for men, there is virtually no difference between those with at least a 9th grade education (28%) and those with a college education (31%) in reports of high strain; education might explain as much about strain if treated as a dichotomous variable with the cutting point at less than a ninth grade education. For women there appears to be no discernable pattern. Women have slightly less strain than men at the high school graduate level and at the college graduate level, but slightly more at the lowest education level. These results are consistent with our expectations that education and sex are too global for any differences in strain to be expected.

Male/Female Differences in Strain by Occupation

Again we would expect no sex differences when comparing men and women by occupational category (Table 15).

Table 15

Distribution of Highest Strain* by Occupation

for Men and for Women

	Occupation								
Sex	Profess.	Manager	Proprietor	Clerical	Crafts	Operative	Svce.	Farm	Total
Men	23	21	43	24	24	29	17	--	
	(136)	(71)	(44)	(92)	(189)	(155)	(101)	(42)	788
Women	30	31	40	23	30	31	24	--	
	(135)	(32)	(85)	(420)	(20)	(156)	(215)	(1)	1063

* Only highest strain is indicated for ease of reading table; i.e., strain is being treated as a dichotomous score with the cutting point at highest strain.

We see that there are no differences except that women have 7% more highest strain than men in the professional group and in the service workers group; these differences are not significant.*

Male/Female Differences in Strain by Income

There are no differences between men and women by income (Table 16).

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* All statistical significance tests in this report are at the .05 level by the appropriate test.

Table 16

Distribution of Strain by Income for Men and Women

	% Highest Strain	
Income	Men	Women
0-1,999	18	15
	(90)	(194)
2-4,999	19	24
	(100)	(184)
5-6,999	28	29
	(117)	(151)
7-9,999	31	33
	(172)	(192)
10-11,999	33	28
	(120)	(148)
12-16,000	24	20
	(152)	(169)
17,000 +	23	26
	(119)	(144)
Total	870	1182

CHAPTER IV

STRAIN AND DUAL ROLE OCCUPATION

While reports of strain were found to vary within some of the parameters considered in the previous sections, namely with age, education, employment status, marital status, and occupation, in none were significant differences found between men and women.

Life Cycle

The patterns in the findings suggested, however, that strain bore some relationship to the demands of role obligation. The major role obligations we are interested in are employment and motherhood for married women. Since these roles occur within the life cycle, we should examine the distribution of strain for the various stages of the life cycle (Table 17).

Table 17

Distribution of Strain by Life Cycle

Life Cycle	Strain					
	Lowest	Low	High	Highest	Total	N
Nev Mar under 30	20	36	20	23	100%	(167)
Nev Mar 30 +	36	31	14	19	100%	(91)
Wid Child -18	24	16	28	32	100%	(25)
Wid Child 18+	58	23	8	11	100%	(190)
Wid No Child	50	25	16	9	100%	(32)
Div/Sep Child -18	5	24	22	49	100%	(83)
Div/Sep Child 18+	38	29	16	18	100%	(63)
Div/Sep No Child	35	29	24	12	100%	(34)
Mar Child -6	12	27	23	38	100%	(436)
Mar Child 6-18	18	29	26	28	100%	(408)
Mar Child 18+	37	25	20	18	100%	(397)
Mar No Child	26	36	15	23	100%	(199)

We see that there are definite differences in strain according to life cycle status. Divorced/separated with a child under 18 clearly have the highest percentage reporting highest strain. Married people with a child under 6 are the group with the next highest percentage reporting highest amounts of strain, and widowed with a child under 18 next. What these three stages all have in common is the presence of a child under 18. The groups reporting least strain are divorced/separated no child and widowed no child.

We would expect some differences between men and women be life cycle category. Women with children between 6 and 18 should have more strain than men, reflecting the greater work force participation for women in that category. We would also expect strain scores for divorced/separated women with children under 18 to be higher than for men because of the well documented stresses of single parenthood (Ross and Sawhill, 1975). We would not expect this difference for widowed with children under 18 since widowed men are in the same position as women. Table 18 shows the distribution of strain for men and women according to life cycle.

Table 18

Distribution of Strain by Life Cycle

for Men and for Women

Life Cycle	Highest Strain			
	Men		Women	
Nev Mar under 30	21	(85)	26	(82)
Nev Mar over 30	15	(39)	21	(52)
Wid Child -18	*	(4)	52	(21)
Wid Child 18+	4	(23)	12	(167)
Wid No Child	*	(7)	8	(25)
Div/Sep Child -18	*	(3)	50	(80)
Div/Sep Child 18+	14	(35)	21	(28)
Div/Sep No Child	*	(14)	15	(20)
Mar Child -6	38	(208)	39	(228)
Mar Child 6-18	30	(186)	26	(222)
Mar Child 18+	18	(181)	18	(216)
Mar No Child	29	(105)	17	(94)
Total		890		1235

* percentage omitted where base is less than 20

The first expectation was not borne out. There are no differences between men and women in strain for those with children between 6 and 18, nor are there any differences between married men and women with children, any age, although both men and women with a child under 6 have the highest reports of highest strain.

Too many of the cell sizes are too small for reliable comparisons to be made, particularly for the comparison between divorced men and women, but although there are too few men in the category of divorced to compare with women, clearly divorced/ separated women with a child under 18 show the highest percentage of highest strain relative to any other category.

How much of the lower strain among the widowed, divorced, and married with children over 18 is due to their age or the ages of their children is not clear. Unfortunately when strain by ages of children was correlated controlling for ages of respondents, there were not enough respondents in the extreme categories (36-45 with children under 6, or 18-25 with children over 18) to make this possible. (This question relative to married people, our specific research interest, will be explored in detail in the next section.)

The only life cycle category where there is a difference between men and women is for marrieds with no child where men are higher in strain then women.*

Strain and Age of Children

The life cycle stage we are interested in is that of married individuals with children under 6 and between 6 and 18. We have established that there are no general differences between men and women in strain: it diminishes for both when children are older. We will see however, whether there is a relative difference between men and women from stage to stage of family formation (Table 19).

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* Although the difference only approached significance, the direction of association is suggestive of differences between the sexes for this particular stage of the life cycle; for example, when scores for marrieds with no children (the majority of whom are under 35) are compared to those never married (particularly under 30) we get a rough sense of the differential impact of marriage on men and on women. For men there is a slight increase in strain while for women there is a diminution (This cannot be because they give up work because of those who work (58%) only 12% report highest strain). Clearly this stage is worth further exploration in a later study with a larger sample and broader scope.

Table 19

Strain by Age of Child for Married Men and Women

Age of Youngest Child	% Highest Strain	
	Men	Women
Under 6	38	40
	(205)	(220)
Between 6 and 18	30	26
	(186)	(222)
Total	391	442

Comparing those with a youngest child under 6 with those with a youngest child between 6 and 18, there is a 10% difference favoring those with older children for both men and women. Comparing men and women, however, we see that strain diminishes only 8% for men when their children are older but 14% for women; in fact the relationship for men between strain and age of children could have occurred by chance, but for women the difference is statistically significant.

The diminution for women as opposed to men may partly be accounted for by age of respondent. For men, about half with children in the 6-18 category are 36-45 years old and half with the younger children are 26-35; when strain was examined relative to age we saw that there is an increase in strain from the 26-35 to the 36-45 for men; however, for women there is a diminution from 26-35 to 36-45. Hence age of respondent may be partially cancelling the effect of having an older child for men and be enhancing it for women. We must partial out the effect of having a child on the relationship between age and strain for men and women; if strain increases for all men at 36-45 regardless of the presence of a child than the fact that strain hardly diminishes for fathers 36-45 may be due to their age. If strain goes down for others and not for

fathers, then we may infer that it is (in part) the presence of children which accounts for the relatively higher amount of strain for fathers (Table 20).

Table 20

Comparison of Highest Strain by Age

for Men Without Children* and With Children

	Percent Highest Strain		
	Age of Respondent		
Life Cycle Status	18-25	26-35	36-45
Married with child(ren)	36	37	37
N	(58)	(131)	(123)
Without child(ren)	27	17	37
N	(112)	(52)	(27)

* This includes marrieds, never marrieds, divorced, separated and widowed.

We see that for men in the 36-45 range (although the N is so small) there is no difference in a % highest strain for those without children and for those with children; however, those between 26 and 35 without children report 20 percentage points less strain indicating that in the lower age group it appears to be the presence of children (primarily under 6), not age of respondent which accounts for or enhances the strain. In the older category it appears to be age of respondents which effects strain. The 36-45 period appears to be the highest strain period for all men regardless of the presence of children.

Table 21 shows the relationship of strain to age for women with and without children.

Table 21

Strain by Age for Women Without Children and With Children

Life Cycle Status	Percent Highest Strain Age of Respondent 18-25	26-35	36-45
Married with child(ren)	30	36	31
N	(78)	(174)	(136)
Without child(ren)	19	35	22
N	(112)	(34)	(32)

The N is small in the 26-35 and the 36-45 ranges which makes interpretation hazardous, however we see that in the 36-45 age category for women without children there is a diminution in strain (13 percentage points); for those with children, the diminution hardly takes place at all, indicating that the presence of children is operative in the higher percentafe of reports of strain for this group.

In summation, men with older children (who are primarily 36-45) have less of a diminution in strain than women; this appears to be a result of their being of an age that is the peak age of strain for all men. Women, in general, show a diminution in strain at 36-45 (age of having primarily older children) but if they have children, strain hardly diminishes at all. If would appear (speculatively) that women are more strongly and directly affected by presence of children than are men relative to strain.

Strain and Number of Children

We saw that there were no global differences between men and women in strain when they are compared cross-sectionally according to the ages of their children, but there are differences between them in the pattern of strain, in that for men there is virtually no diminution

with older children whereas for women there is, but that the difference is possibly due to the different ages at which strain peaks for each sex. When women with children at older ages are compared to those without children, a higher proportion report more strain.

What is quite clear is that having a child under 6 is equally strain producing for both men and women.

We hypothesized that number of children would be related to strain. The relationship between strain and number of children can be seen in Table 22 for the entire sample.

Table 22

Strain by Number of Children

	Number of Children					
Strain	zero	one	two	three	four+	total
lowest	37	19	13	11	12	
low	29	24	30	26	26	
high	16	27	23	25	20	
highest	18	30	34	39	41	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
N	1147	327	304	195	163	2136

We see that as the number of children increases, especially from zero to one child, strain increases. Number of children is positively related to strain. Does number effect men and women differentially?

When we compare men to women in our subsample, as the number of children increases, the percent reporting highest strain increases for both with the largest difference occuring at 4 or more children where 7% more men report highest strain. Essentially number of children effects both sexes the same way (Table 23).

Table 23

Strain by Number of Children

by Men and Women

Subsample

Children	% Highest Men	Women
one	29	27
	(133)	(138)
two	33	27
	(123)	(141)
three	38	36
	(72)	(91)
four +	44	37
	(63)	(73)
Total	391	443

What was interesting is that the strength of association between number of children and strain is different for men and for women. For men, r = .13 for strain and number of children, whereas for women r = .08. This could perhaps be related to the ages of the children. Those with more than one child may have various age combinations, that is, both of two children (or more) may be preschoolers whereas those with one child may have a child who is older than 6. Therefore, age of children may interact with number differently for men and women. Holding age of children constant and examining the relationship between strain and number of children, we see that for men regardless of age of children the strangth of association remains the same; for those with a child under 6, r = .12; for those with a child between 6 and 18, r = .13. For women, however, the relationship between strain and number of children holds only for those with at least one child under 6 where r = .11. For those with older children the correlation is zero (see Appendix for complete table of correlations).

Looking at the tabular figures for highest strain for these categories makes the point even clearer (Table 24).

Table 24

Strain by Number of Children for Men and Women Controlling for Age of Youngest Child*

	% Highest Strain				
	Men		Women		
	Age of Child		Age of Child		
Number	Under 6	6-18	Under 6	6-18	
one	34	24	24	28	
	(70)	(63)	(58)	(82)	
two	36	29	41	25	
	(62)	(63)	(73)	(71)	
three	36	39	42	29	
	(44)	(28)	(50)	(42)	
four +	52	38	49	19	
	(31)	(32)	(47)	(27)	
Total	207	393	228	222	450

* from the coding, it is not clear how many are under 6, but it is clear that if at least the youngest is, strain tends to be higher.

Women with school age children (6-18) are not effected by the number, in fact those who have four or more children between 6 and 18 have the least strain compared to any other group. The N is rather small, so one must be cautious about inferring much from this figure.

One can, however, safely conclude that as the number of children increases (as long as they are of school age), it does not effect strain for women, while it does for men. Over 60% of these women are housewives; if a woman is employed one would expect the results to look different. In the following section we will examine the effects of female employment considering ages and number of children and how it effects strain.

Strain and Employment

The relationship between employment status for women in general and strain is statistically significant. This global relationship serves to point out that in general, employed women experience more strain than do housewives (Table 25).

Table 25

Strain by Employment Status of Women, Entire Sample

Strain	Employed*	Housewife	Total
lowest	16	37	
low	28	27	
high	25	14	
highest	31	22	
	100%	100%	
N	523	602	1125

* 56% of employed women are married and 31% are married and have children under 18. Employed women, in general, do include the divorced and separated for whom strain is highest in the entire sample as well as those without children and those with grown children, for whom it is lowest.

When we examine effect of dual role occupation on women we must also reciprocally examine it for men, because presumably men whose wives work must also take on more housework responsibilities, hence their strain would increase and they would have more strain than men whose wives are housewives. This was hypothesized for men under 25. Wives who work, however, relieve men of sole financial responsibility, hence one could expect that men whose wives work would have less strain than men whose wives are housewives. This relationship was hypothesized for men above 25. Table 26 presents the distribution of strain for men according to age and employment of spouse.

Table 26

Distribution of Strain for Men by Age and Employment of Spouse

	% Highest Strain	
	Age of Husband	
	18-25	26-35
Wife Works	35	36
	(37)	(47)
Wife Housewife	41	36
	(44)	(88)
Total	99	154

The hypotheses were not confirmed for youngest men; actually a higher percentage of those whose wives are housewives report more strain than those whose wives work. This is the reverse of what was predicted, suggesting that whether they take on some of the household tasks or not (which we cannot ascertain), for younger men, having a working wife and perhaps the financial benefits derived from such is an advantage relative to strain. Nor was the hypothesis confirmed for older men; there were no differences between the two groups in strain.

Strain and Dual Role Occupation

We saw that employed women had more strain than non-employed. We also predicted that employed wives with children will have more strain than housewives with children (hypothesis 2) (Table 27).

Table 27

Strain by Female Employment

For Women and For Men With Children Under 18

	% Highest Strain		
	Employed	Housewife	Total
Women	39	28	
	(163)	(280)	443
Men (whose wife)	31	38	
	(129)	(222)	351
N			794

Again we see that when housewives and employed women are compared the difference in strain is in the direction of favoring housewives. Housewives also report the lowest amount of strain of any category. Employed women with children do have more strain than housewives but when men are brought into the picture, it is more accurate to say housewives have less.

For men, the difference between those whose wives work and those whose wives don't, is not significant but we note that the percentages move in the direction of favoring men whose wives are employed. This general direction of less strain for men with employed wives holds when they are compared to employed women: 8% report less highest strain but the differences are not statistically significant.

Hence while working wives appear to have more strain than men whose wives work, the differences could be attributable to chance. The fact that the direction of the relationship coincides with expectations given the nature of dual role occupation leads me to infer that a more sensitive and reliable measure might indeed register essential differences between women (in dual roles) and men (married to women in dual roles) if they are indeed there as hinted by the movement of the data.

Housewives, however, not only have significantly less strain than working wives but they also have significantly less strain than men whose wives are housewives; they clearly are the favored group relative to strain.

We predicted (hypothesis 4) that strain will be greater for those with a child under 6 than for those with older children (Table 28).

Table 28

Strain for Employed Married Women

by Age of Child

Strain	Age of Child: Youngest child under 6	Youngest child 6-18
low	8	11
lowest	19	25
high	26	29
highest	47	35
Total %	100%	100%
N	58	105

Our hypothesis was not confirmed; although the percentages move in the hypothesized direction, the difference was not significant.

When we examine the distribution of highest strain among men and women by employment of wife, the position of employed women relative to strain becomes clearer (Table 29).

Table 29

Strain for Married Men and for Married Women by Age of Children and Employment Status of Female Spouse

	Percent Highest Strain	
	Age Youngest Child	
Sex	Under Six	Six to Eighteen
Men		
Wife works	39	26
	(49)	(80)
Wife Housewife	39	36
	(132)	(89)
Women		
Works	47	35
	(58)	(105)
Housewife	36	18
	(166)	(114)
Total		793

Looking at the percentages in Table 29 we see that almost half of working mothers with preschool children have highest strain; this is the highest figure for any group.

In fact, in comparison to housewives with a preschool child, there is an 11 percentage point difference in employed women reporting highest strain,* indirectly confirming the hypothesis that age of child coupled with working contributes to relatively higher strain for married women. When we look at strain for those with older children, we see that the reduction in strain is not as great for working mothers as for housewives.

Men experience consistently similar scores for strain (about 39%) regardless of employment status of wife or age of child; the one exception is a reduction in strain for men with older children whose wives are employed.

We saw earlier that there is only an 8 percentage point diminution in strain for men when their children are older, (Table 18), but if their wives are also

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* The difference approaches significance at the .05 level which suggests the possibility of a difference due to the operation of the major independent variable, employment status; this should be tested on a larger scale.

employed there is a 13 percentage point difference between men whose children are under 6 and over 6. Although the age at which men have children between 6 and 18 is associated with strain, having a working wife is associated with a considerable reduction in strain. Similarly, within the same category (children 6 to 18) when men with employed wives are compared to men whose wives are housewives, only 26% compared to 36% report highest strain. Having an employed wife is favorable to men with older children.

Strain and Number of Children by Female Employment

We hypothesized that strain for working women would be greater for those with a greater number of children than for those with fewer children. The difference between employed and housewives in number of children is significant. 40% of employed have one child compared with 26% of housewives. When women work they elect to have fewer children (Waite and Stalzenberg, 1976). Our hypothesis, however was not borne out. For housewives, strain and number of children correlate at .14, while for employed women, number of children and strain do not correlate.

We also hypothesized that having one preschool age

child will contribute to more strain among working women than having two older children. Table 30 shows the distribution of strain for working women and housewives by number of children.

Table 30

Distribution of Strain by Female Employment by Number of Children and Ages of Children

% Highest Strain

No. of children	Employed: Child under 6	Employed: 6-18	Housewives: Child under 6	Housewives: 6-18
one	35	37	17	19
	(23)	(43)	(35)	(37)
two	47	36	39	15
	(15)	(36)	(56)	(34)
three	*	37	40	23
	(9)	(16)	(40)	(26)
four +	*	*	43	18
	(11)	(10)	(35)	(17)
Total	58	105	166	114

The hypothesis was confirmed. There was no percentage difference in reports of strain between working women with one child under 6 and those with two or more over 6; however, neither is there a difference between those with one child under 6 and those with only one over 6. It appears that not less than about 35% have the highest levels of strain. If they have school age children the percentage reporting highest strain remains fairly steady regardless of the number of children, but if at least one is under 6 years old the percentage reporting highest strain increases above 35%. In fact, there is an 18 percentage point difference in strain for working mothers with one child between 6 and 18 compared with housewives with children of the same ages. Therefore, while working mothers who have more than one child are relatively better off in terms of strain than those with preschoolers they compare less favorably in strain to housewives.

In summation, the general hypothesis that there is a difference in amount of strain experienced by housewives and by women who work was confirmed; however, the difference in general does not consist of employed wives with children having more strain but of housewives having less except that the highest percentage of strain

is reported by working women with a child under 6. Controlling for ages of children did not alter this relationship. While employed wives have as much strain as men whose wives are housewives they show a pattern of having more strain than men whose wives are employed. Housewives, particularly those with children over 6 years old had less strain than men in both categories.

Strain and Female Employment: Effect of Education, Occupation and Income

As we saw earlier (chapter II) that the more education a woman has the more likely she is to be working and that employed women are better educated than women who do not work. The data in our sample and subsample correspond to these national probabilities. In our subsample, the percent who work goes up from 20% at the lowest education level to 56% at the highest, and working women are on the average high school graduates whereas housewives average slightly less education. The figures also indicate that working women are more homogenous relative to education than are housewives.

Education did have (a weak) but direct relationship to strain. Although the distribution of education level is about the same for both employed and housewives,

housewives have a slightly larger percentage (7% more) in the lower education categories where strain is lowest, and working women (4% more) at the higher education end where strain is slightly higher; while this can hardly account for the differences in strain scores between employed women and housewives, education should be controlled to account for its effects. Furthermore, since some observers (Feld, 1963) contend that education level shows a much higher correlation with distress variables than with employment status, perhaps we will find that differences are reduced between the housewives and employed women when education is held constant (Table 31).

Table 31

Strain for Married Women by Employment Status, Controlling for Education

Percent Highest Strain

Women: Status	Education 0-12*	High School Grad	Some Coll. & Coll.	Total
Employed	46	29	53	
	(37)	(85)	(40)	162
Housewife	28	29	29	
	(88)	(130)	(58)	276
	125	215	98	438

* N sizes were so small that 0-8 and 9-12 were combined and some college and college.

It appears that except for high school graduates where employment makes no difference, employed women have more strain than housewives. These findings tend not to support the contention that education level shows a much higher correlation with distress variables than employment status (Feld, 1963), however, we must remember the special meaning of our strain measure which is a reaction to external pressure, not a measure of anxiety neurosis. Except for those with a high school diploma, employed women with children have more strain than housewives.

Examining each group separately, it appears that among housewives, education level makes no difference at all relative to strain: all are at 29%*

Among working women the results are more ambiguous; the figure for those with less than a high school education

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* This is somewhat consistent with other findings on "well-being," where the scores of housewives are flat across successive education levels; the one departure from this pattern is for those with a college education where both happiness and satisfaction drop below those of women of lower levels of education and below employed college educated wives (Campbell, XII, 1975). The N's were so small that those with college and some college were combined but looking at the figures separately with their unreliability in mind, we see that a parallel increase in strain does not take place: some college 32% (N=38) have highest strain, college 25% (N=20) have highest strain; clearly being a housewife with college education does not mean having increased strain.

is too small for reliable comparisons although a curvilinear relationship between education and strain for employed women is suggested. An examination of occupational groupings on the supposition that high school graduates are in low strain occupations did not provide an answer to this puzzling result. A resolution could perhaps be provided by another sample in a further study (if the results are due only to a peculiarity in sampling), but at this point while the relationship between strain and education for employed women with children is not clear it cannot be explained solely in terms of their occupations (Appendix).

Strain and Income

We saw earlier (chapter II) that women earn in the range of 50% less than men, but the mean income for families where a wife works is $11,770 while for those where the wife does not is $10,390. There is a correlation between a husband's income and the likelihood that his wife will be employed. Taking this into account we can assume that at each category of family income level the husbands of working wives will be making less than husbands of housewives. The range is on the average 13% less, however, the variation in categories is more than that, it is 30%; hence, holding the grouped

family income categories constant in order to compare strain among employed women and housewives is not satisfactory; if we hold husbands' earnings constant this is confounded by the variation in wife's income.

Ratio of Wife's Earnings to Family Income

We have seen that a husband's income enters into the calculus of wife's decision to work along with her earning power and the presence of young children (chapter II). Therefore, a theoretically more fruitful way to explore relations of income to strain would be to look at the ratio of wife's earnings to her husband's. The ratio eliminates the necessity of controlling for magnitude of income and the confounding elements involved.

It was hypothesized that a wife's earnings relative to her husband's would effect strain, the higher the ratio, the higher the strain (Table 32).

Table 32

Strain by Ratio of Wife's Income to Total

	Ratio			
	Low	Medium	High	
Strain	(0-.22)	(.23-.43)	(.44-1)	
Lowest	13	12	6	
Low	24	26	18	
High	30	22	31	
Highest	33	40	45	
Total %	100%	100%	100%	
N	54	58	51	163

We see the pattern moves in the predicted direction in linear fashion: strain goes up as the ratio of wife's earnings go up and thus the hypothesis is confirmed.

Although the ratio of wife's income to husband's is directly related to strain, one would assume that magnitude of income would still have an effect on strain, since findings do suggest that "financial" motivation to woek depends on actual family income (Finegan, 1975). To overcome some of the problems associated with categorical breakdown of income, the population was divided into those whose incomes were above the mean and those whose family income was below the mean (Table 33).

Table 33

Strain by Female Employment Controlling for Those With Family Incomes Above the Mean and Those Below the Mean

	Percent Highest Strain		
Sex	Below mean $0-9,999	Above mean $10-17,999	Total
Men			
Wife works	37	28	
	(38)	(88)	
Wife housewife	42	35	
	(106)	(112)	
Women			
Works	49	35	
	(50)	(101)	
Housewife	31	26	
	(126)	(141)	
			758

This table takes some careful consideration: first, comparing those above the mean to those below the mean we see that those below the mean consistently have higher strain than those above the mean for each category. Secondly, for women, comparing employed women below the mean to those above (reading across) the differences aren't significant, neither are they for housewives; but when housewives and employed women are compared (reading down), employed women have significantly more strain than housewives at both levels of income.

In summation, housewives whose family incomes are above the mean report the least strain and working women whose family incomes are below the mean report the most, but in general a larger proportion of working women at all income levels have more strain than housewives. Thirdly, for men, comparing those whose wives work and don't at each level, the differences aren't significant (reading across), nor within each level are they significant even though the general direction is consistent with previous findings in that men whose wives work tend to have less strain then men whose wives don't. Finally, comparing men and women, at each income level, men whose wives are housewives have more strain than housewives, again indicating that regardless of

income level housewives have less strain than those who are employed be it men or women.* Low income or high income makes no difference in this fairly stable pattern of lower strain for housewives.

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* The gap is slightly greater between women at lower incomes, i.e., there is possibly slightly more strain for working women of lower income than for men; however the percentage of income contributed may account for this; the numbers are too small and the percentage difference between men and women too small to warrant a further breakdown at this point but this might be further explored in another study, where the N's are large enough.

CHAPTER V

CORRELATES OF STRAIN FOR EMPLOYED WIVES AND HOUSEWIVES WITH CHILDREN

While we learned something about the distribution of strain and some of the conditions under which its incidence increases, the usefulness of strain as a measure increases if certain consequences can be predicted from it.

There is evidence that the presence of internal pressure (strain) correlates with certain somatic disturbances. Although such correlations would be worth exploring with our measure of strain, the data provide information almost exclusively on subjective assessments of life situations not on the objective events in the life situations. Our hypotheses are conditioned by the nature of the data available. The content of the questions dealt almost exclusively with satisfaction in about fifteen life domains. These include satisfaction with: local services, life in the United States, community and neighborhood, housing, education, occupation, housework, leisure, organization health, finances, religion, family life, friends, and marriage. There is no information, however, on the actual time spent with family or on time spent in housework or on recent illnesses.

We will, therefore, examine the subjective effects of strain among the subsample of married women with children to

see how strain and satisfaction in a number of life domains are related. We will be primarily interested in the differences between employed women and housewives.**

For purposes of interpreting the correlations, between strain and job satisfaction and strain and housework, it may be helpful to think of these domains of life satisfaction as "pressure points." Pressure points are the areas which potentially create time or energy demands on individuals and in turn, create strain. Negative feelings develop around these areas as strain increases. This is speculative since the nature of the connection between strain and satisfaction in life domain is not clear.*

Job Satisfaction

When we look at the relationship between job satisfaction and strain for employed women one of the "pressure points" in the lives of employed women is clear. For employed women, job satisfaction and strain are correlated at .25 (the lower the satisfaction the higher the strain).

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* Table of correlations appears at the end of Chapter V.

** Domains examined are those which were assumed to have the most direct relevance to strain.

Housework

When we examine satisfaction with housework for employed women there is no relationship with strain, but for housewives the correlation at .24 is as high as that with work for employed women. While there are no differences in general among housewives and employed wives in satisfaction with housework (Chapter I) satisfaction with this domain is differentially related to strain for those who are employed and those who are not.

This might partly be a function of the greater amount of time housewives spend in housekeeping chores. Vanek (1974) found, for example, that despite the existence of new convenience appliances, nonemployed urban women on the average spend twice as many hours on housework as employed women. This difference is not due to their having more children or younger children, less help or being of a different social class than the women who are employed. Housework is generally more time consuming for housewives and this may be reflected by the higher dissatisfaction with housework among those housewives with high strain.

It is most interesting that employed mothers with high strain are not necessarily dissatisfied with housework. It is probable that they spend less time with it. But even among those with high strain, housework is not perceived as a target for dissatisfaction. Strain and negative feelings

about housework are just not related for employed mothers.

Spare Time

For both housewives and employed women strain is associated with dissatisfaction with the ways spare time is spent. For housewives r = .21, for employed women r = .13. The slight difference in strength of association between satisfaction with spare time and strain for the two groups may merely be a reflection of the greater flexibility housewives have in their time budgets. That is, if housewives choose between housework and leisure then a consequence of an imbalance in one component (more housework/more strain) means less spare time, hence more dissatisfaction in this domain.

Employed women on the other hand, choose between several areas: work in the home, work in the marketplace and leisure; hence, while we might expect a similar balancing operation to occur, the components of the "equation" might differ and deficits in spare time not loom as large.

In fact, for housewives, satisfaction with housework and satisfaction with spare time correlate at .40; for employed women, on the other hand, the correlation of satisfaction with housework and satisfaction with spare time is only .18. Speculatively, it appears that housework does not loom as large in the lives of employed women as

it does for housewives as a condition for or mediator of strain, nor as a competitor for the use of spare time.

Interestingly, when both employed women and housewives experience dissatisfaction with the amount of time available to them (strain) it is primarily the housewives who feel dissatisfaction with the use they make of their "available" time.

One can speculate on the meaning of this; perhaps, working wives that are so busy are grateful for any free time they have, or because time is so precious, they carefully plan their free time and are, therefore, more satisfied with the use they make of it. The correlations could also be an indirect indication of the value housewives place on housework: not high, in that they must look to leisure time for enrichment.

Marital Adjustment

We saw earlier (Chapter IV) that for employed women, the higher the proportion of income they contribute to total family income, the higher their strain. The larger a wife's earnings relative to her husband's, the greater the propensity toward divorce.. For these reasons, we would expect that strain and lack of marital adjustment would be correlated. This was indeed the case. Strain

and marital adjustment correlated at .30 for employed women (the higher the strain the lower the adjustment). Strain and marital adjustment correlated for housewives as well, but not as greatly (r = .21). The direction of causality is not clear: lack of marital adjustment may lead to strain but it could lead to wives' employment which also causes strain so that strain may be coming from both sources. On the other hand, strain particularly, if its source is employment, could be leading to marital nonadjustment.

Since strain and marital adjustment are not as highly related for housewives, employment appears to strengthen the relationship between these two variables. The only obvious conclusion is that strain explains more of the variance in marital adjustment for employed women than it does for housewives.

Family Life

We would expect that satisfaction with family life would be affected by strain for employed women, however, it

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* The marital adjustment scale was composed of 4 items: how well does spouse understand you; how often do R and spouse disagree on spending; how well does R understand spouse; how much companionship do R and spouse have.

was not (r = .11).

It appears that although, possibly, the quantity of time spent with one's family is affected by employment for married women (this is speculative),* the quality of one's feelings towards family life is not. What is most interesting is that even those women who experience strain do not necessarily experience dissatisfaction with their family life. This is most important since for housewives strain was definitely associated with dissatisfaction with family life (r = .22). If the direction of causality is dissatisfaction with family life leading to strain it is not clear why it would hold for one group (housewives) and not for the other (working women); it appears more plausible that it is strain which leads to dissatisfaction; the differential correlates for the two groups of women may represent different standards for assessing their lives: housewives might expect more satisfaction from their family life, i.e., place higher value on it as a source of satisfaction. It is also possible that high strain housewives may indeed have more difficult or stressful family lives.

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* We do not know if employed wives, generally and those with strain in particular, have less time to spend with their families than housewives, but those with strain do feel more "rushed" for time.

Friends

Satisfaction derived from friends was hypothesized as a mediator of strain for both groups; it was correlated with strain only for housewives.* There were no differences in number of friends between groups nor was there a relationship between number of friends and strain for either housewives or employed women. This might indicate greater salience friends have for housewives than for employed wives.

Health

We would expect strain to be associated with satisfaction with health in both groups, but higher with housewives since they are associated with a tendency to somatize. We found, however, relative to the one global question of satisfaction with health, that there were no differences between housewives and employed wives ($r = .16$, employed wives; $r = .12$, housewives). Questions about specific disorders were not asked, nor is the direction of causality clear, since poor health can cause strain or strain can lead to concern about health. The connection of feelings of strain and physical health is worthy of more detailed exploration in any further research on strain.

* The more satisfaction derived from friends, the lower the strain.

Financial Dissatisfaction

When we examine employed women relative to financial dissatisfaction we find that indeed the association with strain is quite high, compared with housewives (employed: $r = -.32$; housewives: $r = -.18$). The more strain experienced, the more dissatisfaction with one's financial situation. In fact, the correlation between strain and financial dissatisfaction is also higher among men whose wives are housewives ($r = -.30$) than among those whose wives are employed ($r = -.21$). This seems to indicate that the connection between financial dissatisfaction and strain is greater for those with relatively greater financial responsibilities.

The source of dissatisfaction is not clear. We know that women earn less than men and that they often hold jobs not commensurate with their educational backgrounds (Kreps, 1971; Gove, 1973). Perhaps the dissatisfaction stems from feelings of insufficient rewards on the job for effort expended. We saw in Chapter IV, however, that strain for women increased directly with the proportion of income they contributed to entire family income (by extension the more they earned relative to husbands' earnings). Satisfaction as measured here is a measure of social comparison primarily of self with friends and relatives (Converse, 1975).

It appears that women who assess their satisfaction with their financial situation are comparing themselves with their peers in their community of roughly the same family income. A large percentage of these families have non-working wives. If women with dual careers live at the same standard as their female peers who do not have to work, they are likely to feel greater dissatisfaction with their financial situation. It is suggested that working wives' frame of reference for financial dissatisfaction is not the income they earn but the total family income. Similarly for husbands whose wives work, there is less of an association between strain and financial dissatisfaction. By the same reasoning, if family income is their reference point, when these men compare themselves to their peers (a large percentage of whom have wives who do not work) they see that they can enjoy the same standard of living as other men while earning less; they get more income and goods for less effort.

Anxiety

Most of the studies of effects of dual role occupation have utilized measures associated with anxiety and the results are largely inconsistent (Chapter I).

Acknowledging the limited reliability of our anxiety

measure (Chronbach Alpha = .40) the differences between the two groups of women in our subsample were examined relative to anxiety and there were no differences: 72% of both working and non-working mothers have low anxiety and about 6% of both have the highest level of anxiety. We have postulated anxiety as a generally more pervasive condition than strain (i.e., although its manifestations may vary it is not dependent upon specific external events). One might expect, then, that the presence of anxiety would heighten the experience of strain for both groups of women.

This is not the case, however. Anxiety explains virtually none of the variance in strain for employed women ($r = .07$) but it explains about 6% of the variance in strain for housewives ($r = .24$).

Looked at in tabular form it becomes more graphic (Table 34):

Table 34

Strain by Anxiety for Employed and Married Housewives With Children

	% Highest Strain		
Anxiety	Employed	Housewives	Total
Low	36	24	
	(117)	(201)	318
Med-High	45	40	
	(44)	(77)	121
Total	161	278	439

We see that indeed, the difference between employed women and housewives is maintained for those with low anxiety but for those with high anxiety the difference diminishes; high anxiety housewives have about as much strain as employed women; while anxiety hardly increases strain for employed women the increase in reports of strain for housewives is 16 percentage points.*

Why this is so is not clear at this point. It could possibly be related to housewives having fewer areas of control outside the sphere of their families. A number of studies have found that wives who are employed exercise a greater degree of power in their marriages (Ross and Sawhill, 1973). Although the amount of power varies with prestige of their occupations, their commitment to work and their salaries, employed women in general have more say in financial decisions and have knowledge and contacts outside the home to draw on as resources. While factors other than income may act as resources for housewives such as special homemaking skills, where strain is high (correlatively dissatisfaction in other areas high) these other areas no longer supply resources to draw upon. This

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* The direction of causality between anxiety and strain is difficult to ascertain. If strain is treated as the independent variable the percentage differences are parallel: 16 percentage point increase in reports of anxiety for high strain housewives. What is important to note is that strain and anxiety correlate for housewives and not for employed wives.

diminishes feelings of control over life, or increases anxiety.

Unhappy At Home

An often cited notion in the literature on women's roles is that those housewives who would like to work and don't are generally more unhappy than those who enjoy staying at home (Bernard, 1973). While this may be the case relative to happiness, there should not, however, be a difference in experience of strain between the two groups because strain is a consequence of effort and time pressure. Only 22% of the housewives in our subsample (N = 62) would like to work, and as expected, they do not experience more strain than those who are "happy at home." That is, there is no correlation between strain and wanting to work ($r = -.03$).

Sixty-nine percent of those who want to work cite financial reasons which are often the cause for employment (U.S. Dept. of Labor, July 1976). It appears that financial pressures (prior to work) are not associated with strain.*

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* This is highly speculative. Although 69% cite financial reasons a breakdown by reasons and strain would settle whether there is a connection between financial reasons and strain; the N's were toosmall for such a breakdown, so I am assuming since such a large percentage of those wanting to work cited financial reasons, these reasons would be operative in the correlation between strain and wanting to work. But, the only clear conclusion to be drawn is that there is no connection between wanting to work and strain.

Financial pressures (financial dissatisfaction) becomes associated with strain when the actual work is performed and the pressures associated with work are assessed relative to rewards.

Outside Help

One question frequently raised in the literature is the role of the availability of outside help as a mediator of well-being for working wives.

It is generally assumed that outside help can considerably reduce the impact of dual-role responsibilities (Sweet, 1973). Feld (1963) found, for example, that anxiety is reduced among working mothers if suitable child care help is available.

It is true that mothers in this country could not work unless child care help were available, particularly for those with a child under 6 years old. It is interesting to note, however, that less than 30% of working mothers with youngest child under 6 utilize paid child care help; this percentage is considerably reduced for those with school age children. Mothers who work generally prefer and utilize the unpaid services of relatives or friends or have split working hours with their husbands'. The use of paid home care is predominantly a white middle class phemonenon. Nevertheless, the effects of utilization of a variety of child care arrangements and their affects on strain would

be a valuable issue to explore since the childrearing role is such an important contributor to strain; however, information on this aspect of outside help was not available. The question of outside help dealt exclusively with help in housework, which apparently is an issue of a different order. We saw earlier that for employed women, strain was not related to satisfaction with housework; this was partly explained (ad hoc) by the fact that employed women on the average spend about half as many hours on housework as housewives do and that jobs loom larger in their priority systems relative to demands on their time. It has been pointed out that since working women get little extra help from their husbands they have compensated with lower housekeeping standards, purchase more goods and services in the market or do their work more efficiently (Kreps, 1976). Only 6% of the women in our subsample utilize outside housekeeping help; it is nevertheless useful to examine its impact on strain to see if it operates to reduce it (Table 35).

Table 35

Strain for Employed Women by Availability of Outside Help

	% Highest Strain		
Employed Women	Outside Help	None	Total
Married Mothers	43	39	
	(25)	(137)	160
All others *	34	32	
	(67)	(444)	511

* Since the N was so small for married mothers with help all working women were examined in parallel. The percentage of those who utilize housekeeping help was the same; this is not entirely surprising since divorced, separated and widowed with children are included in this grouping and full-time employed single women who have greater disposable income.

Examining Table 35 we see that having outside help in no way reduces strain. This could perhaps be true for the reasons suggested earlier: those who don't use help do their work more efficiently or at reduced standards. That is, outside help is merely one alternative open to women who face the demands of dual-role obligations; when this is not available they compensate with other alternatives. It is also true that those who utilize outside help take on new role obligations, financial and managerial which could contribute to increased strain, although this admittedly may be a minor additive to the accumulation of strain from other sources such as job and children. What does seem clear is that the invocation of outside help for employed mothers (or employed women in general) as a source of reduction in strain is not appropriate according to these findings.

In summation, there are differences between housewives and employed women in correlates of strain.* Strain, for employed married women with children is associated most strongly with financial dissatisfaction, marital adjustment and job satisfaction, modestly with satisfaction with use of

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* It was hypothesized that for women with high strain the areas of dissatisfaction in their lives would vary with education. The number of respondents with high strain was so low that when broken down further by education and levels of satisfaction most cell sizes were under 20 making comparisons extremely unreliable.

spare time, and with health.

For housewives, strain has associations with satisfaction in a wider range of life domains; most strongly with housework, family life and use of spare time, but also with dissatisfaction with financial situation, friendships, and health. It is also correlated with feelings of anxiety.

While housewives do not differ from employed women in general satisfaction (Campbell, 1976), and while they have less strain than employed women, their strain appears to have consequences for their satisfaction in many more areas of their lives.

Why this should be so is not entirely clear at this point. The following chapter will discuss some of the implications of these correlations and areas of further research suggested by the findings.

Table 36

Pearson Product Moment Correlations of Strain with Various Domains of Life Satisfaction for Housewives and Employed Wives With Children

Satisfaction With:	Employed Wives	Housewives
Job	.25*	
Housework	-.02	.24*
Spare time	.13*	.21*
Marital Adjustment	.30*	.21*
Family Life	.11	.22*
Friends	.05	.15*
Health	.16*	.12*
Dissatisfied With:		
Financial State	-.32*	-.18*
Anxiety	.06	.24*
Total N	163	280

* Significant at .05 level.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Objectives and Findings

In order to achieve the research objective of relating strain to dual role occupation among women, a measure of strain had to be developed. The measure, consisting of three items: feeling rushed, life is hard, feeling tied down, was characterized as a reaction to external pressure. The Quality of American Life Survey conducted in the summer of 1971 by the Survey Research Center, of the University of Michigan, was utilized for this research.

A factor analysis revealed that strain was differentiated from items tapping anxiety and from measures of happiness and satisfaction.

The limitations of the measure were noted:
1) an insufficient number of items in the original study which could bolster the meaning of strain;
2) the small number of items in the index; and
3) intercorrelations of strain with other measures of well-being. This was, however, the only viable measure of strain within the constraints of the available data. Further, the fact that strain, a reaction to external pressure, was differentiated from anxiety suggested

that it would be particularly useful in exploring issues of women's dual roles. Previous studies relied heavily on measures of anxiety in studying the effects of work and motherhood on women. Since anxiety is a pervasive condition, not tied to any stimulus, results are sometimes difficult to interpret: it is not clear whether the anxiety results from the role pressures or whether anxious people select certain kinds of situations. The measure developed here is helpful by separating the conditions associated with anxiety from those associated with strain which is a reaction to stressful situations.

The measure also eliminates the negative connotations of neuroticism and pathology that are associated with anxiety.

It is clear that raising children and being employed are both extremely demanding in time and energy; they represent two major pressured demands. It has been noted that only with a careful allocation of time can a woman with children manage both a job and household work (Kreps, 1976).

A general hypothesis of this dissertation was that women involved in both activities, particularly when their children are young, find themselves strained.

The hypothesis was confirmed: in general, housewives (mothers who are not employed), have less strain than mothers who are employed; in fact, they have less strain than men. Employed mothers, while reporting more strain than housewives don't have more strain than men with non-working wives.

When the age of the youngest child is taken into account, the pattern changes.

The proportion of employed women reporting strain increases to almost 50%, the highest of any other group. Employed mothers with preschool-age children clearly have more strain than housewives or than men with preschool-age children.

Interestingly, strain does not increase for working mothers as the number of children increases, if their children are of school age. It appears to increase as number rises, if their children are under 6 but the N's are rather small for results to be reliable. Education appears to have a curvilinear relationship to strain for employed women: high for those below high school level and for those above, but low for high school graduates. These findings could not be explained in terms of occupational groupings. For housewives, education has no relationship with strain.

It was hypothesized that the higher the ratio of a wife's earnings to her husband's, the higher her strain. The hypothesis was confirmed. The relationship of magnitude of income to strain is more complex. The category of individuals with highest reports of strain is the working mother with family income below $10,000 (mean for subsample). Even working mothers with incomes above the mean report more strain than housewives who are either above or below the mean.

In summation, being a working mother creates strain. If children are under 6, strain is increased; if family income is below $10,000 a year, strain is increased.

As a result of exploring strain among women with dual roles, the findings about men proved interesting.

Men with working wives report less strain than men with housewives. Although these differences are not statistically significant, they are consistent, across income groups. This pattern of greater strain was particularly evident for men with older children who are in an age range associated with highest strain for men (36-45).

This is a period when, for the majority of male workers, earnings have peaked out and family costs are rising. Here, the family's resources are often

inadequate to meet the costs of a larger family or of older children. This has been characterized as the "life squeeze," and has been suggested as one structural source of pressure for wives to contribute to family income (Oppenheimer, 1974). Indeed, men with older children and working wives have much less strain than men whose wives do not work

This pattern is particularly important since it runs counter to the general speculation about the negative psychic effect on men of employment of their wives. Kamarovsky (1973) and Horner (1972), for example, claim that female competence poses a threat to husbands. While on some level working wives may be a threat to men's psychic security, these men clearly benefit in having less strain.

Implications of Findings: Strain and Well-Being

If strain has any relation to morbidity in men, this finding has other important implications. Having a working wife could reduce the risk of stress related illnesses, such as cardiovascular diseases that occur among men at this peak age. It can even have an impact, perhaps, on life expectancy. Although life expectancy is currently increasing faster for females than for males, a factor in the relative disadvantage

of men is the strain of employment. The additional income provided to a man with a working wife (who otherwise is at a competitive disadvantage to a man who can work overtime or at two jobs because his wife is home with the children) provides him with additional financial resources without the strain of additional employment. This can be particularly advantageous since men whose wives work do not undertake additional household tasks.

The relationship between strain, morbidity and employment is worthy of further exploration among women as well. For the married woman who undertakes market work her paid job is an additional occupation to housework (a "dual career"). Although working women have accomodated by reducing the total number of hours spent doing household tasks (Vanek 1974), they get very little extra help from their husbands and experience more strain. If having a working wife reduces strain and perhaps strain engendered illness for men, then working mothers may suffer an increase in somatic disorders generally associated with external pressures. They may also begin to evidence a decline in life expectancy.

If men eventually begin to undertake more of womens' household tasks, an equalization in strain

between the sexes may re-occur. However, even if men begin to undertake more household duties and their strain rises as a consequence of additional work, it will probably not reduce strain for their wives. Findings reported in Chapter V suggest that for employed women it is not the duties of housework which are the sources of strain. In fact, satisfaction with housework did not correlate with strain at all. It appears that it is not the duties of housework but the duties of childrearing which are the chief competitors for working womens' resources and time. If married women work when their children are under 6 their strain is increased.

The ability to succor and be available to the needs of young children requires both inner resources and time. This appears to be a function not readily transferable to husbands. While there is some clamor for more male investment in the "mothering" role, Rossi (Daedelus, 1977) argues rather persuasively that there may be a biologically based potential for heightened maternal investment in a young child that exceeds the potential for investment by men. She predicts that the mother will continue to be emotionally the most important parent figure because of these intense emotional ties. Nor does there seem to be any indication of a strong

desire by men or by institutions to provide men with the means to overcome the physiological and cultural advantages women have in childrearing. If this is so, mothers who work will continue to have the strain associated with the status of dual-role careers.

Another finding should be kept in mind at this point. Strain decreases as age increases for both men and women, no doubt because responsibilities decrease. One could argue that since women are increasingly postponing childbearing to later ages when they are financially and professionally in a more secure position,having children at later ages may reduce strain for women who work. Reduction in strain (and the pressures attending it) starts to occur at around 36 years, for all women regardless of presence of children. It is unlikely that childbearing will be postponed this late and therefore childrearing postponment can not be considered to have an impact on strain reduction.

While postponement of childbearing may not have an important impact on strain, another demographic change that has occurred may have such an impact in the long run. An increasingly smaller proportion of womens' lives are spent in childrearing (a function of increased longevity). While certainly less better

off than housewives relative to strain, employed women may begin to view strain as merely a relatively short lived stage in their developmental cycle, difficult but carrying compensatory rewards. We saw, for example, that while housewives generally had less strain, those that had comparable amounts to employed women, experienced dissatisfaction in many more areas of their lives. It appears, that while the joint demands of employment and motherhood create strain, it does not lead to or stem from dissatisfaction with family life, friends, or even with how spare time is spent.

There is no way of controlling for the fact that a selective factor may be operative in womens' employment: those who are more efficient and capable, work. Thus far, selective factors that have been unequivocally demonstrated are education, economic necessity and earning potential. And, these factors do not protect against strain. Strain appears to result when role demands accumulate to the point where one feels pressured and rushed. Employment and motherhood jointly create such pressures which results in strain.

Positive Aspects of Strain

It is important to note that this feeling of strain may not be entirely negative. Knowing that someone feels burdened with excessive responsibilities tells you

nothing about how an individual copes with such responsibilities or even evaluates them. It is clearly conceivable that psychic income can be derived in knowing one can perform many roles or that one is in demand in many sectors of life. If one manages these demands effectively, there can be rewards in greater material recompense, and social recognition. Even in the absence of external rewards greater activity and participation can lead to increased self-esteem. There is some evidence, for example (Cherlin and Reeder), that activation is a very important ingredient in feelings of well-being.

The interesting sociological issue theoretically, apart from the costs and benefits of strain, is what will happen to children (and the family) in a society where almost everyone is committed to activities outside the home?

Effects on Children

A review of studies on the effects of maternal employment on children (Hoffman, 1974) has generally reported a positive association with school performance, achievement motivation (particularly with daughters), and independence. It may be, that although much of this was research done in the 1950's (when it was primarily

women with older children who worked) the application to the 1970's when children are being left at younger ages may still hold.

In order to have a clearer understanding of the impact of dual-roles on children, it is important to know how strain ties in with perception of the nurturing role. Perhaps strain is greater for those mothers who devote more effort to childrearing. Children of such mothes may benefit from the greater investment in their rearing. We have to know more about the relative time and importance high strain working mothers assign to the childrearing role. We would also have to see whether there is any correlation between amount of time and relative value assigned with certain outcomes in children's competence, personality and behavior.

Effects on Marriage

One of the often heard conclusions drawn from the increasing work participation of women is that once economic necessity is no longer a basis for marital endurance, marriages that do endure will provide greater satisfaction to participants than purely economically motivated ones (Ross and Sawhill, 1973). It seems that this type of analysis misses some crucial

points. One emerged in the attempt to relate satisfaction, strain and work in the marital context. Findings on the correlates of strain for men and women by employment of female spouse suggested that the economic underpinnings of the marital bond based on the traditional expectations of the husband as bread-winner are still very much operative among employed women. The positive correlation between financial dissatisfaction and strain among working wives was linked to total family income, not the absolute amount of their own earnings. In fact, the less their husbands earned relative to them the greater their strain, the greater their financial dissatisfaction.

Granted, employment may make women less economically dependent, but how independent are their choices from economic considerations? Certainly within the current economic and social context, financial well-being, and strain of working, women are tied to their perceptions of the adequacy of their husband's earnings. This should not be entirely surprising since a major proportion of women who work have husbands earning between $5,000 and $10,000 a year, below the national median.

A major factor in the higher rates of marital instability in lower income groups stems from the

husbands' inability to do his job as a breadwinner. Low pay and job insecurity contribute to this, often forcing women into the labor market. As they take on more of the financial responsibility of the marriage, their strain increases. We saw that high strain among employed mothers was highly correlated with low marital adjustment.

Women who work full time now earn only about 60% of what men do and their earnings relative to mens' have actually decreased over the last 20 years (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1976). Also women are concentrated in work areas that draw on skills fashioned in the home where there is limited opportunity for advancement and have not made inroads into the highest paying professions. Also currently only 40% of all women work at full time jobs year round. The rest have part time work. Part time workers earn less, net fewer benefits, have less job security and less job satisfaction. If women's pay were commensurate with men's pay could one expect strain among them to decrease?

For example, if women could work fewer hours at higher rates then time pressures would be reduced or if they elected to work a greater number of hours more time saving goods and services could be purchased.

If wives begin to (or among those who do) earn at comparable pay scales to their husbands at rewarding jobs will the realtionship between proportion of income earned and strain still hold? That is, will husbands still be regarded as the rightful breadwinners? If not, this could lead to a lessening of financial dissatisfaction even among women with high strain, for high effort would presumably be met with higher rewards. This could in turn lead to a lessening of marital tension and non-adjustment. This is all highly speculative, but points to the complexity of the interplay of work roles, motherhood, marriage, satisfaction, economics, expectations and strain.

If marital non-adjustment is an outgrowth of the strain, then improving the pay for work ratio could lead to a diminution in marital non-adjustment. If non-adjustment derives from a wife's gaining more worth only in the marital relationship as a result of her earning power then improvement in her monetary and occupational status might not improve marital adjustment. In fact, it could serve to draw women into the labor force with greater commitment, thereby increasing strain. If women were to become fully competitive with men economically, mens' job security

could be further reduced as could marital adjustment.

The ramifications and facets of such institutional changes go beyond the scope of the research reported on here; however, it serves to point out that although womens' aspiration levels appear to be tied to traditional familial economic expectations, they are also a reflection of current economic and social conditions. A full understanding of strain relative to womens' roles in the marital context may be inextricably tied to shifts in occupational mobility, pay scales and earnings of women.

To summarize, one source of the family's stability as an institution has been its economic function. Over the past 35 years, particularly in the last 10, there has been a shift in the economics of the family: far more women are financially independent than ever before because of their increased labor force experience; younger women are planning smaller families; the fertility rate has dropped and there is some movement away from traditional sex role attitudes for women of all educational levels. More young and older women are living alone and heading families (a 40% increase since 1960).

Women are also spending more time in a marital situation than before. Despite the changes in

marriage and child spacing which have occurred over the last two decades, marriage appears to have continuing appeal among most adults in the country (Carter and Glick 1976: Chapter 13).

Furthermore, it is estimated that even if rising divorce rates dissolve one-third of all first marriages, two of every three couples will have intact marriages throughout their joint survival (Norton and Glick, 1976); three-quarters of the women and five-sixths of the men who divorce eventually remarry (Norton and Glick, 1976).

Although more women have fewer children, there has also been a decline in the level of childlessness (Glick, 1977).

Marriage and childbearing is still the dominant pattern for American women with work increasingly becoming part of their lives.

One concomitant of increased work force participation of women, particularly those with children under 6, is greater strain. We have seen, however, that strain need not be viewed as entirely negative in its consequences or even as a necessarily undesirable state. The relationship between strain and satisfaction in some domains of life for employed women did suggest that

certain traditional economic values in marriage were still operative. These values were seen as being reinforced by the existing economic situation of women in the labor force relative to pay and job opportunities. Finally, for a fuller understanding of the relationship between strain and dual roles to take place it was suggested that the interplay of economic conditions with the process of how women evaluate their roles would have to take place. There were several research questions that emerged directly from the findings reported. These are summarized below.

Further Research Suggested by Findings

1. Development of a reliable and valid measure of strain, through sampling of items conceptually related to reaction to an accumulation of external demands.
2. Once such a measure is developed the following questions can be explored:
   a. Is the greater strain experienced by working wives of below medium family income a function of the proportion of income they contribute to the total income, or of the net family income? To what do they attribute their strain?
   b. What are the reference groups of housewives and employed wives when they are assessing areas of

satisfaction in their lives, particularly relative to financial well-being?

c. How do high strain working women perceive the childrearing role compared with low strain working women in terms of relative importance assigned to it, degree of assistance received, time alloted to it and style or approach to it. What is the impact on children of having high strain mothers?

d. Do high school graduates who are employed have less strain than both higher and lower educated groups of married working women? If so, what accounts for this difference?

e. Are there differences in strain among working mothers by ethnic group or by educational occupational level of their parents?

f. Strain is a measure of a perception of feeling, a component of well-being analagous to happiness and satisfaction. Perceptions of strain need not have correlates in actual physical or physiological disturbance; however, it would be theoretically interesting to know if indeed strain (perceived) does correlate with morbidity either among men or women.

APPENDIX

Table A.1

Distribution of Strain by Occupation, Employed Women

Occupation	% Highest Strain	N
Professional	23	(135)
Managerial	31	(32)
Proprietor	40	(25)
Clerical	23	(420)
Crafts	30	(20)
Operatives	31	(156)
Service	24	(215)
Total		1003

TABLE A.2

Distribution of Occupation by Education

for Employed, Married Mothers

	Education			
	0-12	High School*	Some Coll & Coll	Total
Occupation				
Professional		9	36	
Managers	3	2	5	
Proprietors	3	6		
Clerical	25	58	46	
Crafts	3	4	3	
Operatives	36	8	3	
Service	30	13	7	
	100%	100%	100%	
N	39	85	39	163

* High school graduates are predominantly in clerical positions. Clerical positions are not associated with low strain.

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