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**THE QUALITY OF URBAN LIFE FOR
AFRICAN-AMERICAN LOW-INCOME WORKING SINGLE WOMEN WITH
YOUNG CHILDREN LIVING IN TWO NEW YORK CITY NEIGHBORHOODS.**

BY

IRENE FANOS

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

1997

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Abstract**The Quality of Urban Life for African-American Low-Income Working Single Women with Young Children Living in Two New York City Neighborhoods**

by

Irene Fanos**Advisor: David Chapin**

The purpose of this study was to identify the conflicts women experience when they attempt to achieve time to do as they wish independent of children. Twenty-three African-American low-income single working women with children under the age of six participated in in-depth interviews. This exploratory study was based on the tradition of grounded theory to discover the socio-physical qualities parents face as they attempt to meet the needs of their family and themselves. The concept of the built environment was defined by the women's interaction with child care services, employment, transportation, and neighborhood services.

The intention of the study was to present the lives of these women within the context of the urban environment. The concept of free time was not limited to the hours at home but was to be understood within the dynamic of their many roles: person, mother, employee and family member.

The study focused on two New York City neighborhoods with similar characteristics. One neighborhood had more city-sponsored child care spaces available than the other. The women selected in each neighborhood were divided into two groups: those that used City-sponsored child care; and those that used other forms of child care.

For single mothers, who were the sole financial source for their families, the notion of free-time was often difficult to achieve and often not recognized as essential. It has been documented that the lack of free time is detrimental to a person's health.

Another purpose of the study was to develop suggestions for directions for future research to eliminate or ameliorate the conflicts identified. For future research, the findings suggest a wide range of topics and questions to explore. For example, how do we increase the number, location and variety of child care services?; can high-wage employment opportunities be provided more evenly distributed in New York City rather than isolated in Manhattan business districts?; how can entertainment or learning facilities for children of all ages (young children to teenagers) be accessible to or integrated into the community, and admittances made reasonably priced?

This lifetime achievement is dedicated to all the single mothers of the world, especially to those who participated in this study. Thank you for sharing your experiences with me and for giving of your time.

Acknowledgments

Since my freshman year at college when I read the book The Death and Life of Great American Cities, I wanted to study cities as a career. In that book Jane Jacobs discusses how to make cities livable. As a feminist I have always wanted to make the world a better place for women. So as I have continued my schooling I have focused on combining my two interests: livable cities, and improving women's lives. I hope that this dissertation can take the world closer to being a better place for all persons, especially single mothers.

I want to thank so many people for standing by me. First, I want to thank my mother, Virginia Fanos who as a single mother has provided me with insights, and direction on the needs and experiences of single parents. I am very fortunate to have a supportive family. I would like to thank them for caring: Peter Fanos, Karen Fanos, Renee Fanos, George Fanos, Peter Angeles, Mariann Zacharellis, Tina Dietche and Kaliope Calagias and the many others. Next, I want to thank my friends who always listened: FG, Karen Lewis, Peter Valiente, Luana Almares, Kathi Philip, Karen Johnson who helped with last minute edits, and Kate Brower who saw that I was always entertained with laughter. There are several colleagues who provided support, at the Graduate Center: Maxine Wolfe who stood by me from the very beginning and guided me through this process, Ruth Rae who shared many late night phone calls during the last few months, Kim Blakely, Jude Kubran, Lee Rivlin, David Chapin, and Nina Gottlieb; and at Hunter College: Eugenie Birch, and the late Donald Sullivan who introduced me to the CUNY Environmental Psychology Program. Kristen Richards was sent by the Goddesses and helped at the very end when I needed to get through the last stage, editing.

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Maya Angelou, The Heart of a Woman, 1981, p. 37

PART I
THE RESEARCH QUESTION
CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

... let us explain briefly the boundaries that we, as environmental psychologists, place on any analysis of the question of the psychological determinants of the quality of an urban life. To begin with, the primary and essential focus of our concern is the physical setting and, more particularly, the built environment and all of its spaces, places and the human activities that relate to these spaces and places. ... like all other psychologists, our primary level of analysis is the individual and, more precisely, the experience and behavior of that individual in relation to the properties of those spaces and places that constitute the urban setting.

Proshansky and Fabian, 1986, p. 20

Introduction

As stated by Proshansky and Fabian quoted above, the basis of this dissertation is to understand the quality of urban life through "... the experience and behavior of that individual in ... the urban setting." To achieve this end, this study examines the experience and behavior of African-American working, single mothers living in two New York City neighborhoods. One purpose of this study was to investigate certain planning variables, including employment, transportation, neighborhood-based child care services and neighborhood services, to identify the social, physical and economic aspects of these variables that create impediments, and those that provide women with the opportunity to control their own time to have time to themselves.

The control of one's own time is defined in this study as an important element of quality of life. Quality of life researchers (House, 1986; Wish, 1986) confirm the need to

examine situations from both an environmental and psychological perspective. This analysis merges the two fields of Environmental Psychology and Urban Planning to show how environmental psychology has methods and asks questions that could be used to enlighten particular urban planning analyses and policies.

The impetus for this dissertation was kindled by the lack of literature in planning and environmental psychology documenting the female experience of the urban environment, especially for African-American, working, single mothers with young children.

The setting was New York City, an older northeastern city, with land use and transportation patterns developed well before the widespread entry of mothers into the labor force. This study placed the needs of employed, African-American, single mothers with young children in context, and to understand existing environmental factors that impede movement, create conflicts, and thus affect their quality of life.

Background of the Research Issues

Quality of Life

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept that takes on different meanings depending on who is using the term. As a result, the concept of quality of life must always be defined within a context; each population for which the term is used must be understood. The confusion surrounding this concept can be attributed to an absence of theory, disciplinary definitions and political feasibility (Gornitsky, 1982). Despite its lack of clear definition “quality of life” is used by politicians and others to evaluate urban settings.

The importance of quality of life as a variable to be examined is most eloquently stated by Proshansky and Fabian (1986, p. 20):

To put the matter simply, quality of urban life is always concerned with whether people live well or poorly. Is life easy or hard? Are people satisfied or dissatisfied? Does the city help them realize their purposes and desires, or does it thwart them?

An examination of a woman's quality of life can document the factors that influence working women's lives, positively and negatively.

In this study, a basic element in the quality of life for single African-American working mothers with small children was the ability to control one's time and achieve some free time outside of work and without child care responsibilities. It is the ability to control one's time that allows one to achieve independence. This is significant in achieving self-esteem. Bodin and Mitelman (1983), using the terms "legitimacy and autonomy," recognized that preserving one's independence is fundamental:

There are psychological issues which pervade every aspect of working Mothers' lives, and these issues affect their sense of self. They're reflected in concrete and abstract ways, in their behavior and in their attitudes. The issues are fundamental. They are: legitimacy and autonomy. Legitimacy allows the working mother to feel that her behavior falls within the established standards of her society. Autonomy permits her to be self-governing and capable of making decisions that affect her life. Without them, she cannot function as an independent, self-confident adult. These two issues are manifested concretely in the conflicts women face as they confront their economic and emotional responsibilities, and they're also manifested in the trade-offs that result from resolving these conflicts. (Bodin & Mitelman, 1983, p.12)

It was also an assumption of this research that the ability of single working mothers living in urban environments to be independent will be influenced by four factors: (1) urban environmental barriers and supports; (2) individual needs; (3) neighborhood experience; and (4) the City's policies.

Urban Environmental Barriers and Supports

There is evidence that environmental conflicts involve complex interrelationships among several variables. These conflicts create stress and place perceived and real demands on a person's ability to meet their personal responsibilities which can include tending to family and working. As a result, environmental conflicts can serve as a source of stress, tension and pressure if not mitigated.

Since at least the 1980s, the medical profession has recognized that environmental stressors can exacerbate diseases. Elliott and Eisdorfer (1982, p. 8) have indicated that stress and a person's physical and mental health are related: "Taken together, the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that stress can affect physical and mental processes in ways that might alter an individual's susceptibility to disease." However, they also state that with the influence of social supports, stress on the body can be mitigated:

Investigators also have demonstrated the importance of psychosocial factors as mediators of responses to stressors and are developing better methods for measuring such effects. Factors such as the interpretation of an event or the availability of adequate social supports may influence greatly how an individual responds to a disruptive life event (Elliott & Eisdorfer, p. 8).

Environmental constraints are manifested negatively as stress, tension, pressure, depression, and oppression. Evans and Cohen (1987, p.573) recognize that stress is a person-based concept, which is often found nested in our physical environments: "Stress is inevitably a person-based concept. Nevertheless, many stress researchers have overlooked properties of physical situations most likely to place greater adaptive demands on human coping resources."

Individual Needs

Physical, social, and economic environments can help or hinder a woman's achievement of personal time and self-respect. The concept of controlling one's time is significant in achieving self-esteem (Bodin & Mitelman, 1983; Maslow, 1962; Sanford & Donovan, 1984). Do policy makers have a responsibility to recognize people's need for controlling their time, or the drain on time that is incurred from environmental factors? If one does not have the time to experience life outside of the prescribed parameters of work and motherhood, then what are the consequences? Are women expected to develop self-esteem and self-respect from their own inner strength, and only from a sense of achievement within their role as mothers? Conquering the obstacles to free time is essential to maintain a healthy self-esteem. As expressed by Maslow (1962):

...It is increasingly clear that these experiences have something to do with a sense of achievement and ego strength and therefore with the sense of healthy self-esteem and self-confidence. The person who hasn't conquered, withstood and overcome continues to feel doubtful that he *could*. [His italics] (p.326)

Repeating what Maslow states, "...experiences have something to do with a sense of achievement..." If a single parent woman's experience of life is limited to a prescribed time line of activities, then when does she have time to perform tasks that fulfil her desires? If the time and space "experiences" resulting from using the urban environment inhibit the ability to achieve a "sense of healthy self-esteem." Then, how can anyone expect to achieve a "sense of healthy self-esteem," if the person has no free-time to think and pursue her dreams?

According to the studies documenting men and women's use of time (Haw, 1982; Hochschild, 1989; Oakley, 1974), women have a short supply of free time because of their

many responsibilities, including attending to their family, maintaining the household chores, fulfilling employers' requests, and addressing personal desires. Therefore, what are the important factors that support a woman's ability to have personal time?

Women are responsible for keeping a household running successfully. Hochschild (1989) reports that compared to men:

Over a year, they [women] worked an *extra month of twenty-four-hour days a year.* ... Just as there is a wage gap between men and women in the work place, there is a "leisure gap" between them at home. (p. 3)

Single mothers usually do not have anyone to help with cleaning or other household tasks. In Hochschild's The Second Shift (1989), the author documents the split or lack of split of household work between spouses. Hochschild's book, along with most of the studies of the division of household tasks (Haw, 1982; Hochschild; Oakley, 1974), show that the majority of men do not participate significantly in family responsibilities, and the tasks they do participate in tend not to be time-sensitive. For example, Hochschild cites:

A child needs to be tended daily while the repair of household appliances can often wait "until I have time." Men thus have more control over *when* they make their contributions than women do. They may be very busy with family chores but, like the executive who tells his secretary to "hold my calls," the man has more control over his time. The job of the working mother, like that of the secretary, is usually to "take the calls." (p. 8)

Furthermore, Michelson (1985) found minimal differences between working married and working single women, especially with respect to activities such as personal care, sleep, shopping and travel. As women gain increasing occupational mobility, the burdens of housework and child care do not shift to another person, but continue to fall more heavily on them (Haw, 1982).

Women who are most affected by this stressful double bind of being both breadwinner and homemaker are single mothers. They face unique economic and social problems for they have the full responsibility for financially supporting their family as well as taking care of the home and children (Nakamura, McCarthy, Rothstein-Fisch, & Winge, 1981; Rothblatt, Garr, & Sprague, 1979). A single parent has an immediate need for child care for she/he must work to support the family, and although the housework can be put aside, caring for the children cannot. Consequently, parenthood is more demanding for single parents, and especially for single mothers. Single fathers often have higher incomes than single mothers (United States Census, 1990), thus they can afford to buy services rather than perform certain tasks themselves. Hochschild's (1989) description of a two-parent family shows the responsibilities women assume:

More women kept track of doctors' appointments and arranged for playmates to come over. More mothers than fathers worried about the tail on a child's Halloween costume or a birthday present for a school friend. They are more likely to think about their children while at work and to check in by phone with the baby-sitter. ...women felt torn between one sense of urgency and another, between the need to soothe a child's fear of being left at day care, and the need to show the boss she's "serious" at work. (p. 7)

In a one parent family, the single parent handles the responsibilities exclusively. Rarely does the current literature on job stress and men concern the overlap between work and family, and the ability to meet those demands (Haw, 1982).

Neighborhood Experience

Myers (1987) has approached the concept of quality of life as a tool for urban planners in his article, "Building Knowledge about Quality of Life for Urban Planning." He presents that the assessment of a community's quality of life includes residents subjective evaluations.

Observing that residents' subjective evaluations can be used to gather insights into the quality of life at the community level and assist in determining planning goals. He defines quality of life as follows:

In recent usage, quality of life has come to mean "livability." Although rarely stated explicitly, the following definition is implicit: A community's quality of life is constructed of the shared characteristics residents experience in places (for example, air and water quality, traffic, or recreational opportunities), and the subjective evaluations residents make of those conditions [Italics his]. (p 108)

By examining residents' experiences of their neighborhoods, policies can be framed that result in environments that enhance their daily lives. A community's conceptualization of quality of life would give policy-makers insights as to the environmental conflicts the population experiences. In measuring the subjective factors within a community, the researcher must be concerned to identify the differences as well as the similarities among residents' needs (Environmental Protection Agency, 1973). Quality of life can be used to reveal perceptions of and reactions to community issues and public policies (Gornitsky, 1982).

Defining neighborhood

Two neighborhoods were used in this study. The definition of a neighborhood, according to Warren (1977), contains three distinct theoretical dimensions: 1) spatial or geographical boundaries; 2) a social-psychological construct; and 3) interrelationship between the physical and social properties. A neighborhood can be defined by its spatial or geographical boundaries and the location of institutional and community facilities which support social activities. The geographical unit has physical properties that either support activities (e.g., shopping facilities), or hinder daily transactions because of the absence of services (e.g., inadequate public transportation). The neighborhood social-psychological

construct is the subjective experience of transactions within the phenomenological world. From this perspective, the neighborhood is a place of residence where intimate social relationships transpire within boundaries of customs, community beliefs, and values (Appleton, 1975; Appleyard & Lintell, 1978; Blakely, 1993; Fisher, 1976). A fourth dimension of the concept of a neighborhood proposed by Riger and Gordon (1981) considers public institutions that regulate public behavior.

Neighborhood Services

As stated above, social support services can help to mitigate environmental stressors (Elliott & Eisdorfer, 1982). Several researchers have documented that access to services can be difficult. Palm and Pred (1974) studied women's activity patterns. Using Hagerstand's model of human beings interacting in a space-time "web" (Carlstein, 1982), they inquired, "how activities ought to be organized spatially and temporally so as to equitably provide accessibility to job, leisure-time activities, and private- and public-sector services." They found that unmarried women with pre-school age children often had a limited selection of jobs because of the constraints of the location and operating hours of available child care facilities.

Similarly, Kamerman (1980) explored working women's needs. She found that women use a variety of "packages" defined as a variety of child care services and "linkages," or the travel arrangements that include children. Often these "packages and linkages" can create problems for women with children if they are difficult to access. She recognized what Palm and Pred documented: the hours of the child care service made their commute complex and tense. Kamerman (1980) concluded that the availability and hours of neighborhood-based support services played a major role in a mother's life. Neighborhood services may help

ameliorate some inconveniences single-parent women experience in everyday life if located near other daily stops.

Although formal definitions of social supports and neighborhood services do not exist, these are generally conceived as family, neighbors, schools, churches, and social organizations. They are relied on to help provide child care, information, aid, and appraisal (Griffith, 1985; House, 1986; Wish, 1986). Relatives (i.e., informal support networks) were found to be the most important source of social support (House; Jackson, Chatters, & Neighbors, 1986; Stack, 1974). Griffith (1985) also found that formal social institutions in the neighborhood, such as schools and churches, were important support providers.

City Policies

Policy makers have started to use “quality of life” criteria to identify problem areas in cities. The City of New York has a Quality of Life Task Force which in 1994 proposed a list of priority quality of life issues in each community district. Quality of Life is defined in this report as indicators of clean streets, and crime statistics. The use of this method to address community issues by assessing the effect of urban policy on individual members of the community could be expanded to identify and ameliorate the environmental conflicts working mothers experience. In conflict with this approach, Myers (1988) states that personal well-being is beyond government control:

A final comment may summarize the distinction between personal well-being and other approaches addressing community quality of life. Individuals hold opinions about community quality of life that are distinct from their opinions of their *personal* [italics his] well-being. While the two opinions are likely to be consistent with each other, the content is very different. One stresses community factors that are beyond individual control while the other stresses private, personal matters that are largely beyond governmental control.

One purpose of this dissertation was to demonstrate that gathering personal insights into the lives of low-income working single-parent mothers can be used to uncover conflicts, that can be eliminated or ameliorated by changes in government policies. As Gornitsky (1982) states:

The link between social policy and QOL [Quality of Life] is a complex one. ...Other authors, such as Hudson, Wachs and Schofer (1974) emphasize the need for “personal knowledge” in decision making and planning at the local level... (p. 161)

...Let us digress to consider what planners do so we can understand why they might want to use data on QOL. One of their functions is the formulation of alternative futures. Another is the development of middle- and/or long-range plans and to help judge the effectiveness of these schemes. Information collected before, during and after a plan is implemented acts to monitor the impacts of the program. Comparisons made between the actual and predicted changes suggest necessary alterations to the schema. (p. 161)

The understanding to be gained from this dissertation is that the “subjective,” an individual’s ability to control their own time, becomes “objective” with the understanding that each experience is not an isolated case. Single mothers, as a group, are facing conflicts in their quality of life that, in many cases, can be resolved by policy changes. These changes would benefit men as well. Therefore, it is possible to generalize that resolving the conflicts of single, working mothers living in specific communities would be beneficial to the society as a whole.

As MacRae (1985) states:

A continuing awareness, on the part of citizens and policymakers, of the contrasting directions in which the quests for subjective and objective well-being can highlight important possible conflicts in our value systems. It may lead us back to an objective, material standard of judgment because of the difficulties in seeking subjective well-being. It may remind us of the price that must be paid for maintenance of a fully free society and lead us to seek limits on freedom of communication that will not impair political dissent and change. It may also lead us to inquire just how the boundaries of privacy should be drawn. Thus a closer relationship between the study of subjective

well-being and related policy choices can focus our attention on major long-run issues of choice, including the possible clarification of our collective values.

Quality of life can be used in the social sciences as a tool to understand human experience and behavior. It cautions researchers to ask, "Whose quality of life are we talking about?" A community's conceptualization of quality of life needs to be examined with equal representation of all household types in the community.

Summary

This study examines what social supports in the urban physical environment are available for working single mothers, and the influence these have on their quality of life and the ability to control their time. There is great need to identify environmental problems and how they can be ameliorated or removed. A key question is: What supports can help women to mitigate daily stress and obtain free time?

Planning Variables

The following section begins with a general land use discussion to provide the context for evaluating the current conflicts that the women in this study faced. Land use influences the placement of employment, transportation, and child care services. A discussion of these topics follows the land use section.

The feminist planning literature that influenced the initial idea for this study has primarily documented the misfit of the built environment as women entered full-time employment. This cultural lag in the redesign of the built environment is reflected in current

land use laws that determine daily travel patterns (Haggood, 1984; Kamerman 1980; Michelson, 1984; Wekerle, et. al., 1980).

Land Use

In New York City, the location of all uses is controlled by the New York City Zoning Resolution. It describes the types and areas of the City for the various uses and regulates the size and bulk of buildings. While the Zoning Resolution has no specific category for child care facilities, or a specific term for them (Rosenthal, 1994), it considers day care centers, schools, and community facilities to be “accessory” uses. Daycare centers are permitted as-of-right in residential zones, but not manufacturing zones. There are problems with this operative definition when locating daycare centers in other areas of the City.

As with all land uses, the zoning law permits variances for siting day care centers but receiving a variance is a long and expensive process at the Bureau of Standards and Appeals (a.k.a., BSA). Instead, liberalizing the siting of daycare centers could be achieved by changing the Zoning Resolution, which defines the applicable land use controls.

In the United States, zoning is the most commonly used development control at the local level. The primary aim of zoning is to maintain property values by avoiding negative effects of development decisions made by individual property owners. However, in order to prevent unacceptable outcomes of specific land uses the needs of the larger community beyond property values must be considered. This includes assessing the daily travel patterns of the affected population and creating land use patterns that fit the needs of this population. For example, zoning regulations often limit the location of child care facilities and often force families to travel far out of their neighborhoods (Wekerle, 1980). If the needs of a community

are considered in land use policy then the Zoning Resolution would be amended to liberize the siting of day care facilities.

Previous research (Fanos, 1990) demonstrates that the rules guiding land use should incorporate the demographic changes in a particular community's population. One of the most studied groups is the worker and his or her commute to work. In many research projects the populations studied are primarily Euro-American, middle-class men and women who work full-time, including those with and without spouses and/or children. While these studies can provide insight into many of the questions that need to be asked about commuting patterns, policy makers should use a study sample that is representative of the population's diversity. Without a representative sample the planner's analysis would not adequately reflect the population's needs.

Employment

Employment location can impact a worker negatively. Lack of mobility can result in depressed wage rates because a female worker with dependent children is unable to migrate to locations of higher-paying employment, and thus is forced to accept a lower-paying, accessible job (Kaniss & Robins, 1974).

The effect of commuting distances has ramifications for women not only affecting their wages, but also occupation types. Johnston (1988) discovered that female-dominated occupations such as clerical and service positions, which tend to be lower paying than male-dominated white collar occupations, are not disproportionately represented among workers with pre-school children. However, a woman in a female-dominated occupation is more likely to have children, especially school-age children than a woman in a male-dominated occupation. This is because employment opportunities for women are often limited as a result

of the need to minimize the distance between work and home: a working mother is more likely to select a job close to home, and male dominated occupations generally involve longer commutes than female-dominated occupations. Johnston also discovered that child status indicators have no influence on male workers' occupation types (Hanson & Hanson, 1978; Johnston). Clearly the location of employment and the presence of children influences where and the type of occupations women can work (Hanson & Johnston, 1985; Villeneuve & Rose, 1988).

Working women with children constitute one of the largest labor force participation groups, and the largest household type, in New York City and the nation. According to the 1990 United States census, 54% of all children under the age of six and 66 percent of all children between the ages of 6 and 18 had a working mother. According to the 1990 United States Census, in total, 62% of all American children under 18 years old had a working mother. In addition, according to the 1990 United States census, single mothers with children under 6 years old were in the labor force at a participation rate of 59.7% (see Appendix A-1).

In the 1970s, a subtle revolution began as Euro-American women with children began to enter the paid workforce in a larger number than previously recorded (Adams & Winston 1980). Since that time nearly one-half of all American families require two workers to maintain a median standard of living (Rothblatt et al., 1979). For African-American women, the numbers entering the workforce in the same period were not dramatic because working-class African-American women were already in the workforce in significant numbers. Historically, the incomes for African-American households have been lower than Euro-American incomes, and therefore, the dual-income family has been a standard in this community nationally.

The traditional planning model which assumes that only men work or should work is not appropriate for the 1990s. Today, the average family has two wage earners; both parents have to work to financially support a family. As a result of their one-wage income, single parents, especially single mothers, are economically challenged to cover the daily expenses required in maintaining a household. Ladner (1971) states that:

Black families are more often measured against the white ideal than the white reality. They should be measured against neither, of course, but against their own reality that is created out of their own history. One must recognize the blatant contradiction within a society which sanctions the monogamous unit as the only legitimate one, while simultaneously institutionally and systematically organizing for the destruction of this unit... (p. 37).

It was first in the 1980s that more than 50 percent of all mothers, regardless of race, with children under the age of six were working outside the home. Studies of this subtle revolution (Smith, 1980) found that the changes in the economy forced women of all races and ethnicities to enter the paid workforce because their salaries are needed for the family budget (Nakamura et al.; Rothblatt et al.; Shreve, 1982; Werner 1980). In fact, the female labor force occupies substantially different kinds of jobs at lower pay than working men (Adams & Winston 1980). According to the 1990 United States census, in New York City, females 16 years of age and older were over 30 percent of all clerical workers, verses approximately 12 percent of all males of the same age (Department of City Planning, 1995). Women's experiences in the labor force are significantly different from men's. In fact, women earn approximately 30 percent less than her male counterparts, yet, their cost of living is the same (USA Today, 1997).

Economically, African-American women struggle because their incomes are lower than those of their Euro-American counterparts. A study by Ihlanfeldt and Sjoquist (1991), using the 1980 Census files for nine cities and 20,000 workers, discovered that African-Americans were over-represented in low-wage occupations and under-represented in high-wage occupations in comparison to Euro-American workers for both genders. In contrast with media stereotypes of “welfare mothers,” and legislators’ and politicians’ representation of single African-American mothers, a study done by Peters and de Ford (1986) found that 65 percent of these mothers require no welfare support.

Female employment and transportation patterns are often restricted by the design of communities which are unreflective of all residents’ needs. The discovery that female-dominated jobs are more uniformly distributed over the region whereas male dominated jobs are clustered in certain districts partly explains the lack of assistance by men in family responsibilities, and the ghettoization of women in the certain sectors of the labor market (Hanson & Pratt, 1990, 1991).

Transportation

For women, job choice relates to travel mobility because access to young children influences their selection of employment location. Wages, housing affordability and job location determine the length of women’s journeys to work. However, for working women with young children, household responsibilities also influence the length of the daily commute. The need to escort their children to child care services, to do the grocery shopping, and to perform other domestic tasks, limits a mother’s commuting radius (Javeau, 1973). It has been noted that women with young children (especially under age six) cannot commute long

distances to work because of day care schedules and other household chores, thereby limiting their employment options.

Women tend to work in female-dominated occupations and industries, such as clerical or service positions (Madden, 1981), which are more widely distributed over the landscape than male-dominated occupations. According to a study done by Ericksen (1977), the relationship between the age of the youngest child and the length of the journey to work differs when African-Americans are compared to Euro-Americans. African-Americans with children of all ages have a longer commute to work because of residence location and their use of public transportation. A study on spatial constraints and women's employment in Toronto by Rutherford and Wekerle (1988), found on average, employed women use public transportation more often than men, making women captive to transit systems and subject to 415 hours of travel a year, contrasted to the 180 hours per year for a car user.

According to McLafferty and Preston (1991), in the New York metropolitan area, African-American and Hispanic women commute as far as African-American and Hispanic men, and their commuting times far exceed those of Euro-American males and females. In fact, they discovered that African-Americans average almost 8 minutes more per trip than Euro-Americans. On average, Euro-American employees commute 20 minutes each way and African-American and Hispanic employees commute 30 minutes, regardless of gender. Often, research based on a Euro-American population documents a dramatic difference in male and female commuting distances. Research on travel distances across the races cannot be generalized because significant variables as race, ethnicity, income, occupational category or housing affordability are not considered.

Several employment/transportation variables have been studied, and the results revealed the impact on women: (1) if a family has one car, men usually have first choice of using it for commuting (Pickup, 1985); (2) distance to a job makes a difference for women because the viable commuting radius for meeting household responsibilities inhibits their employment mobility (Hanson & Pratt, 1988a, 1988b, 1990); (3) a woman usually selects her employment from the current established residential location, unlike men who tend to first choose employment, and then decide where to live (Hanson & Pratt 1988b; Madden, 1981); and (4) women make more non-work trips than men (Gordon & Kumar, 1989). Having to take a child into consideration in a woman's travels complicates the trips - whether to work, to the child care center, to school or shopping (Hanson & Pratt, 1990).

The differences in the male/female commuting distances are larger within occupational categories than between occupations for each sex (Villeneuve & Rose, 1988). This may be due, in part, to a more spatially-constrained job search among women even when they have roughly the same skills as men. In fact, Johnston-Anumonwo (1988) found that workers in female-dominated occupations spend the shortest time on the work trip. In addition, Rosenbloom (1989) compared families in two locations: Austin, Texas and Rotterdam, Netherlands. She performed a comparative analysis of child care responsibilities and travel behavior in two-parent families. She found in married couples that 54 percent of the men who reported participating in picking up their younger children (under six). Of these men, 75 percent of them limited their participation to less than once a week. More than 90 percent of the women with young children reported such chauffeuring and escort duties, most once a week or more, and 16 percent did so more than three times per week. These trips influenced

a family's travel schedule, and were based on who was available at the times required by the services used. In addition, Rosenbloom's study of travel patterns found that not one mother in the two-parent families interviewed reported a father as back-up for picking up the children. That is, if the father was not available as the primary option, he was totally unavailable as a back-up.

In general, the journey-to-work studies show that women have shorter work commutes than men. This difference is due primarily to a woman's responsibilities to her children, the travel needs of children, her responsibilities to attend to sick children, and the need to respond to emergencies (Madden, 1981; Rosenbloom; Villeneuve & Rose, 1988). Fagnani (1989) found in France that the average travel time to work decreases as the number of children increases. As a result of women's role as mothers, they have to consider their journeys as part of their home role in a way that men do not, and they are therefore under great pressure to reduce the distance of their commute. As long as women are confined to smaller geographic areas than men in their employment, they cannot successfully compete with men in the job market.

Child Care

Child care is essential for single mothers since they must work to support their children financially. The history of child care is tied to the political notion of what services women are entitled to receive. Until very recently, except in times of "national emergency" when women's labor was considered essential, many people considered child care centers radical and destructive to the family. Conservative political reaction against institutional child care has historically been strong because such views are closely linked to the idea of the traditional family (Coser, 1982). In 1971, the belief that child care programs would undermine

the power of the American family led President Richard Nixon to veto a child care bill. He stated that, " ... such support would commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing against the family-centered approach" (Adams & Winston, 1980; Coser). Government involvement has generally provided child care either as a poverty program to bring children into the mainstream, or as a response to a national emergency (Adams & Winston; Nakamura et al.). Unlike women temporarily entering the labor force during World War II, the economic necessity of families to have two incomes which began in the 1960s has created a large demand for child care services that is permanent and systemic rather than tied to specific crises. Today, the Federal Government provides limited funding for child care services to states and localities which is primarily for low-income populations.

Shreve (1982) estimates that nationwide there are twice as many children whose parents are seeking daycare as there are slots available. Women will not be able to participate equally in the labor force until they have support services; the most obvious is public support for child care (Adams & Winston, 1980). This is especially crucial for single parents who do not have the option of a partner who may be willing to help take care of the children.

In a major study done by Ward and Porter (1989), it was revealed that the number of child care spaces in New York City does not meet the need for servicing the children in the pre-school age group. They discovered that approximately 151,100 children under the age of six were eligible for publicly funded child care, and at least 50 percent of children three to five years old are eligible and in need of publicly funded services. However, the City supported licensed child care and early childhood and school-age programs for only 54,000

spaces, all funded by the City's Agency for Child Development (ACD). During this period, there were 35,200 spaces were available in private, independent daycare and nursery school programs. Of all the spaces both public and private, approximately 87 percent were reserved for ACD clients (Ward, Porter & Kolbin, 1990). This demonstrates a shortage of available full-daycare to serve children under six who are eligible for publicly funded child care.

In New York City, a little over half of all the pre-schoolers between the ages of three and five need full-day, publicly-funded daycare services. Infants and toddlers ages two and under experience the most severe shortage of child care services in the City. The number of available spaces in licensed programs for infants and toddlers is less than 5,000 for an estimated population of almost 76,000 children. As a result, only 6 percent of children in this age group are served in licensed programs (Ward and Porter, 1989).

Daycare is recognized as an acceptable form of child care in many developed countries. In France, of all children between ages 3 to 5 years old, 98 percent are in child care centers (Richardson & Marx, 1989). In the United States, of all children in this age group, only 31 percent are in child care centers. Thirty percent of infants and toddlers in France, and 21 percent of those in the United States, are cared for outside the home (Richardson & Marx).

Summary

Land use is controlled by zoning which regulates the location of housing, employment and child care facilities. As a result of the increase in the number of women with children under the age of six entering the workforce, the environmental needs of families have changed. The current land use patterns satisfy persons with no responsibilities to children, and

families where one parent stays home with the children. Today, with over 50 percent of women with children under 6 in the workforce, current land use patterns are detrimental to the earning potential of women. All jobs need to be uniformly distributed rather than the present condition where male-dominated, high-wage jobs are clustered in a few locations and female-dominated, lower wage professions are closer to residential areas. The transportation systems designed to reach these locations are slow and do not satisfy the conditions working mothers face.

The Population

African-American Single Parent Women

Women are responsible for raising the majority of children in the United States, and single mothers are representative of what many mothers experience in the urban environment, both the social and physical supports and conflicts.

This study focused on employed African-American single mothers with children under six years of age the environmental barriers that these families experience are similar to those experienced by many families. One difference is that this population is more concentrated in central cities (Mulroy, 1988; Peters & de Ford, 1986). The primary reasons for the urban concentration of African-American single mothers is the availability of affordable rental housing, and the desire to live close to family and friends. Given their needs in the built environment, the triple-role of these women as person, mother, and worker has not been examined. It is interesting to note the number of single mothers found in urban areas is larger than in suburbia, although the number of suburban single mothers is increasing at a faster rate

than in urban areas (Mulroy, 1988). In New York City today, almost 11.4 percent of all children under 18 years of age are in families headed by women (1990 Census) (see Appendix A-2). Garfinkel (1989) states:

... Furthermore, demographers project that of the children born since the late 1970s, one of two will live with a single mother before reaching adulthood. In other words, one half of the next generation will spend part of their childhood living in a family headed by a single mother.

On average, these children will spend six years in female-headed families -- or about one third of their childhood. Thus living in a family headed by a single mother will not only be a common experience for the next generation, it will also characterize a significant part of the childhood of those who experience it. (p. 1)

Often this family type has been portrayed in a manner that diminished its role and importance. This is a household type large enough to merit investigation of its use and needs of the environment. In the 1960s, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan stigmatized the concept of matriarchy as out of line with the rest of American society (Moynihan, 1965). He valued patriarchy as the norm, and skewed demographics to defend his analysis (Wallace, 1978).

Hochschild's (1989) assessment of the Moynihan report states:

Black women were cautioned against being so "matriarchal." These women pointed out that they "took charge" of their families not because they wanted to "dominate," but because if they didn't pay the rent, buy the food, cook it, and look after the children, no one else would. Black women would have been delighted to share the work and the decision-making with a man (p. 24).

In 1981 Murray and Harrison encouraged future research on how African-American women adapt to often harsh economic conditions and unequal geographic accessibility to work. Such research would challenge the social scientists' and demographers' definitions of single-parent households as a pathological condition and instead would demonstrate

matriarchy, not as deviant in society, but as valuable mode of social organization (Peters & de Ford, 1986).

This dissertation supports the point of view that single working mothers are stable and face harsh environmental burdens. It is in this household type where over 50 percent of all American children under 18 will spend at least 6 years of their lives, that is growing faster than any other household type therefore, the needs of these families must be understood by urban policy makers (Garfinkel, 1989).

Despite the large and growing number of female-headed households, women's roles are still largely defined within the institution of the nuclear family, which embodies a set of collective social practices resistant to change, and poses barriers to the concept of external child care (Keller, 1980). The increasing number of single mothers is not a phenomenon isolated to the United States. The New York Times published several articles on how this family type is increasing internationally (Stanley, 1995). A 1996 article titled, "Stigma Curtails Single Motherhood in Japan", described the increase of single mothers in Japan where society stigmatizes these women (WuDunn, 1996). As a result, these single mothers have a very difficult time finding housing and securing assistance from their own families. In My Children, My Gold: A Journey to the World of Seven Single Mothers, Taylor (1996) documented women's experiences as single mothers in seven countries. She found the increase in single-motherhood to be a world-wide phenomenon. Ms. Taylor spent one week with women in seven countries: China, India, Australia, Uganda, Egypt, Brazil, and Scotland.

Conclusion

This dissertation assumes that an essential element to a decent quality of life is the freedom to control your own time which provides the opportunity to achieve time to do with

what one wishes while assuming many roles, such as parent, employee, and person. The power to improve one's quality of life is contingent on the freedom to choose what to do with one's time. Once a person has the opportunity to use time as one wishes that person has options in life. Otherwise the opportunities to achieve complete fulfillment in life or to attain opportunities, such as an education, are limited.

Examining specific properties of the urban environment, e.g., employment, transportation, neighborhood-based child care services, and neighborhood-based services, this study seeks to identify the obstacles that a group of working mothers encountered and coping strategies they developed. These obstacles and strategies will be analyzed in terms of how they encourage or inhibit the ability to control one's own time. The following elements were investigated:

- 1) The dual requirements of making a living and child rearing;
- 2) The quality of life effects stemming from:
 - a. Type of employment and its location;
 - b. Accessibility to and/or availability of public or private transportation;
 - c. Availability and accessibility of neighborhood-based child care;
 - d. Availability of neighborhood services;
- 3) The activities and interests conducive to a satisfying life:
 - a. Employment satisfaction;
 - b. Nature of social and family ties;
 - c. Ability to achieve free-time to pursue desires and interests not directly related to children or the workplace.

In developing a detailed understanding of the quality of life of single working mothers, as they perceive it and the factors affecting it, one can begin to understand their experiences. In order to gain such an understanding of the quality of life for a particular household type, this investigation documents the experiences of individual African-American working single

woman with children under the age of six looking for common problems and coping strategies.

PART II
CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

It is my belief that we are responsible for the development and use of the new skills, policies, and methodologies necessary for designing socially suitable, livable urban neighborhoods, and that these responsibilities must be consistent with the values and goals of a more humane society, emphasizing a life of quality rather than quantity with local communities.

Hester, 1975, p. 24

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study was to generate data to reveal how women's movement in New York City either encourages or discourages their ability to achieve free time. Ultimately, developing more livable urban neighborhoods that are sensitive to the quality factors for both women and men, especially working, single parents, who are predominantly women, is the goal. This qualitative research examined the social, physical, and temporal experiences of women's lives by examining the context of their "quality of life" within their urban neighborhoods.

Methodological Approach

The qualitative methodology used allowed for an in-depth analysis of women's conceptions of the environmental aspects of their quality of life. This approach was selected to document the details that have escaped quantitative research, studies often done with large samples of census data. A typical example is Fagnani (1989) who used a national sample of 3,935 women with children under sixteen, to study daily commuting time for working mothers in France. Such studies do not identify the details needed to understand the environmental

conflicts defined within the context of a woman's daily responsibilities which contribute to commuting time. And, without such details it becomes impossible to suggest environmental or policy changes which might ameliorate or remove such conflicts. In order to uncover the details missed by studies using large survey data bases, this research used an intensive approach designed to reveal, in qualitative detail, the nature of the problems faced by single working mothers.

Focus Group

The first phase of the research identified the conceptions of quality of life held by parents from various household types residing in economically diverse areas of New York City. In the absence of research literature on these specific issues, a pilot investigation helped to construct the research questions for the subsequent phases of the study.

The focus group assisted in developing a guide for the individual interviews. Additionally, the focus group explored the meanings ascribed by individuals to social events, behaviors, institutions, and the geographical context in which they lived.

Three African-American women participated; two were single parents and all lived in New York City. These women worked at least 30 hours per week and had at least one child under the age of six. They discussed and identified issues and concerns relating to the quality of their lives, in terms of their control over their time to do things for themselves. The discussion aided in defining the variables, including availability and accessibility of neighborhood-based child care, accessibility to transportation (public or private), employment location, and other quality of life issues. Additional variables mentioned were leisure activities and accessibility to neighborhood supports. These were incorporated into the interview guide.

The focus group allowed for concepts, categories, and themes to emerge that were not anticipated.

The focus group and the qualitative interview style were conducted in the tradition of Spradley (1979). This approach was designed to allow the language and concepts relevant to the topic spontaneously emerge from the individual's experience. In addition, the interviewer's perspective considered the respondent as expert on the topic under discussion.

Grounded theory is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 24) as, "The research findings constitute a theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation, rather than consisting of a set of numbers, or a group of loosely related themes." This approach was used to develop the research issues and questions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This method allowed the participants to frame the questions and reduce the danger of making a priori assumptions about individual social/psychological or environmental experiences. This consideration was important if the data were to reflect the conceptions of the respondents.

The session was recorded and transcribed. Members of the dissertation committee reviewed the transcript to assess whether they concurred with the issues identified. The focus group provided the opportunity to document the respondents' conceptualizations and interpretations of the issues, and enabled a dialogue between researcher and female, single parents.

Based on the focus group's responses, an interview guide was developed and piloted. One important theme that emerged in both the focus group and pilot was the women's insistence on focusing the discussion on their children rather than their own interests.

The Interview Guide

The interview guide allowed the women to discuss topics in a unstructured format (see Appendix B-1). This format encouraged the women to develop their own definitions of the factors that affect the quality of their lives in terms of how they achieve time for themselves. In addition to responses to the interview guide, each respondent supplied quantitative demographic data including age, income, length of residence, employment status, present child care arrangements, and work commutation.

The interviews explored the social and physical factors affecting each woman's quality of life, and reflected the variables in the interview guide. The interviews were administered in-person either in the women's homes or at another mutually agreed-upon, convenient location. The tape-recorded interviews which (had the respondents' approval) lasted approximately one hour.

Selecting the Neighborhoods

The neighborhoods, located in two New York City boroughs, will be referred to as Community District 1 (CD1) and Community District 2 (CD2) (for the purpose of this study, a neighborhood is defined as a New York City Community District¹). The two neighborhoods selected had similar percentages of female-headed households with young children. These neighborhoods were similar in other major geographic and socio-economic characteristics (i.e., the distance to Manhattan and the median family income, are virtually the same for both CDs) but they differed in the number of available City-sponsored child care spaces.

¹ New York City is composed of 59 Community Districts, they range in population from 100,000 to 210,000.

Table 2-1, Population characteristics, includes the following categories for both CDs: the total population; the percentage of households with females heading households with children; the percent of the population under five years of age; and race. As can be seen in columns (B) and (C) the CDs are similar in their percentages of female householders with related children and percent of population under the age of five. Column (D) shows that CD2 had a larger African-American population than CD1, 77 percent versus 60 percent, and both CDs have minority populations greater than 80 percent. The total population differs proportionally to the size of the Districts.

Table 2-1

Population Characteristics

CD	TOTAL POPULATION (A)	%TOTAL POPULATION FEMALE HOUSEHOLDER WITH RELATED CHILDREN (B)	% TOTAL POPULATION UNDER 5 (C)	RACE (D)		
				AFRICAN- AMERICAN	WHITE	OTHER
CD1	129,620	14.9	6.8	60.1	18.8	21.1
CD2	201,270	16.3	7.5	77.0	4.4	18.6

Note. Source: (Columns A, and D) 1990 CENSUS Standard Tabular File (STF) 3; and (columns B, and C) the Department of City Planning Community District Needs Statement 1996.

The median family income and the labor force participation variables for both CDs, as seen in Table 2-2, are virtually the same. Both CDs have approximately 80 percent of the female population 16 years of age and older with children under the age of six in the labor force.

Table 2-2

Income and Labor Force Participation

CD	MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME	IN THE LABOR FORCE			
		% MALES 16+	% FEMALES 16+	% FEMALES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 16	% FEMALES WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6
CD1	\$37,522	71.7	60.1	72.2	80.6
CD2	\$37,222	70.6	60.3	73.8	79.9

SOURCE: 1990 CENSUS STF3 and the Department of City Planning Community District Needs Statement 1996

The U. S. Census documents commutation variables from residence to employment.

The means of traveling to the job is very similar between the CDs, with almost 60% using public transportation (see Table 2-3).

Table 2-3

Commuting Variables

CD	MEAN TRAVEL TIME (MINUTES)	MEANS OF COMMUTATION				
		CAR %	TRAIN %	BUS %	WALK %	OTHER %
CD1	41.0	41.4	33.6	16.1	3.9	5
CD2	43.1	43.5	28.5	19.7	4.0	4

Note. Source: 1990 CENSUS STF3.

From Table 2-4, we can see that CD2 is larger in land area than CD1 and had more one- and two-family homes. As a result, the percentage of owner-occupied dwellings in CD2 was slightly higher than CD1.

Table 2-4

Land Area, Land Use and Tenure

CD	TOTAL LAND AREA (SQUARE MILES)	RESIDENTIAL LAND USE		TENURE	
		1-2 FAMILY %	WALKUPS %	OWNER %	RENTER %
CD1	5.6	71.4	14.4	37.0	63.0
CD2	9.8	84.8	2.2	46.2	47.2

Note. Source: Department of City Planning Community District Needs Statement 1996

Although the Community Districts were selected based on the similarity in the population's demographics, the number of child care spaces available in their neighborhoods differed because of demographic criteria used in the 1960s to allocate child care funding. During the War on Poverty Program in the 1960s child care funding was allocated to community districts based on demographic criteria such as number of low income children under six years of age. As a result of this criterion, CD2 received more funding to develop child care centers than CD1.

The opportunity to uncover different experiences related to the availability of neighborhood-based child care was possible by utilizing these two neighborhoods. However, this study did not assume that the mothers would perceive child care availability as a factor in their quality of life.

Data in Table 2-5, show that two variables in poverty status differ between the two CDs: the percentage of families experiencing poverty in CD2 is larger than CD1; yet, CD1 has more female householders experiencing poverty than CD2, therefore demonstrating a larger need for City-sponsored child care spaces.

Table 2-5 also shows the different number of Human Resources Administration (HRA) daycare and Headstart spaces for the two CDS. According to the U.S. Census, in 1990 CD1 had 8,864 and CD2 had 15,051 children under the age of five. The number of spaces provided by HRA serve 7.8 percent of the children in CD1 and 18.2 percent of those in CD2.

Table 2- 5

Poverty and Child Care Spaces.

CD	FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY (B)		HRA DAYCARE AND HEADSTART SPACES (C)	
	TOTAL FAMILIES	FAMILIES WITH FEMALE HOUSE- HOLDERS	DAYCARE	HEADSTART SPACES
CD1	60.1	18.8	692	0
CD2	77.0	4.4	1787	951

Note. Source: Department of City Planning Community District Needs Statement 1996

Sampling Procedures

There were 23 women in the study. The mothers who used City-sponsored day-care centers were identified by the center directors or solicited at the end of the day as they picked up their children. The mothers using other types of child care arrangements were contacted through the women who participated in the study, through the employees at the child care centers, through private daycare centers, or through friends. This small sample size allowed for a detailed analysis of the issues outlined.

Data Analysis

The recorded interviews were reviewed to uncover major concerns of the participants. The interviews were qualitatively content-analyzed as described by Holsti (1968). This

approach involves the systematic breakdown, comparison, categorization, and conceptualization of the data from the early stages of research through to its final phase. One independent judge assisted the investigator in the task of inter-judge reliability. The categories were tested and resulted in an agreement level of 92 percent.

The analysis of the quality-of-life issues included an assessment of the participants' quality of life in terms of their ability to achieve time for themselves in relation to the availability of child care, the accessibility of transportation, employment satisfaction, neighborhood services, and other needs or activities unrelated to work or parenting responsibilities. Following the model used by Strauss and Corbin (1990), themes developed within each of these variables were identified through the use of conceptual memos (written records of analysis) to document hunches, hypotheses, and explanations.

The interview facilitated a discussion about the quality of life in terms of the ability to control one's own time to do with as one wishes for each individual, and was not limited to the factors listed above. The analysis also considered other aspects of personal life which arose spontaneously in conversations (e.g. school or other interests).

The Participants

The people interviewed were low-income, African-American, single parent women who were working full-time (at least 30 hours per week), and who had at least one child under the age of six. The income used to define low-income was developed from criteria defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Section 8 Program Income Limits. For New York City in 1994-95 HUD defined these categories as follows: very low income for a family of four equals \$23,850; and \$19,100 for a family of two; and low income for a family of four equals \$38,150; and \$30,550 for a family of two.

In this research study, the primary reasons for selecting this group of individuals was to include their insights and issues, into the study, along with problems in research and policy dialogue. Additional reasons for incorporating these participants into the research topic were:

- (1) to include African-American women who are often overlooked in social science research, especially environmental psychology research;
- (2) to involve the needs of single-parents, who are the fastest growing household type in America today, in the environmental research discussions;
- (3) to understand how low-income women or the working poor balance personal needs with familial and employment responsibilities;
- (4) to incorporate the urban environment experiences of these women in research on urban settings;
- (5) to gain insights from these mothers concerning situations that all parents confront at one time or another; and
- (6) to understand the social, psychological, environmental/physical, and temporal issues these individuals confront.

Summary of Participant Characteristics

Twenty-three women were interviewed from two New York City community districts. The women ranged from 21 to 52 years of age, and the average was 31. Their ages by decade were as follows: 12 women in their 20s, six in their 30s, four in their 40s and one in her 50s, who was raising her grandchild.

Thirteen of the women had one child, six of the women had two children, two of the women had three children, one woman had four children, and one woman had five children (see Table 2-6, Age of mothers and children). All had at least one child under the age of six,

and 12 had children under the age of three. In addition, Table 2-6, Age of mothers and children, below provides the fictional names and code numbers created for each woman which will be used to indicate who is being quoted. For complete details on each participant, refer to the Appendix, B-2, titled, The Contacts 1-23. This appendix contains all the variables described in this dissertation, including: contact name and identification number; age of mother; age of children and type of child care service; occupation; income; travel time to work in minutes; mode to work; mode to child care services; drop off and pick up; support network, including variables: A. Distance to Support Person, including: In the Same Building, In the Same Neighborhood, and Outside the Neighborhood; B. Frequency of Support, including: Daily, Weekly, Monthly Support, Infrequently or In Cases of Emergency, and Never; and C. Amount of Time Support is Available, including: Unlimited, Limited Weekend Visits, A Few Hours, and Infrequently and In Case of Emergency; and years in the neighborhood.

In the interviews the women revealed four key elements as critical for achieving more free time, and fewer conflicts and pressures: employment satisfaction, the ease of arranging for child care services, the nature of social and family ties, and the ability to pursue desires and interests not directly related to children or the workplace.

Table 2-6

Age of Mothers and Children

CONTACTS	AGE OF MOTHER	AGE OF CHILDREN
CD1 - DAYCARE		
1 "Mary"	43	2, 5
2 "Alice"	45	21, 20, 17, 16, 5
3 "Jane"	32	12, 11, 8, 3
4 "Nancy"	27	6, 5, 3
5 "Ann"	29	5
6 "Joann"	26	3
CD1 - OTHER CARE		
7 "Karen"	36	11, 5
8 "Ruth"	52	5
9 "Jody"	40	3
10 "Sally"	23	6, 3
11 "Jenny"	30	6, 1

CONTACTS	AGE OF MOTHER	AGE OF CHILDREN
CD2 - DAYCARE		
12 "Kathy"	23	4
13 "Stephanie"	27	4
14 "Kim"	25	5
15 "Joan"	24	5
16 "Frieda"	40	11, 5
CD2 - OTHER CARE		
17 "Donna"	35	16, 3
18 "Vicky"	38	2
19 "Helen"	29	2
20 "Gwen"	29	10, 5, 4
21 "Fran"	30	4
22 "Jean"	22	2
23 "Virginia"	21	3

PART III

FINDINGS

CHAPTER THREE

THE SUPPORT NETWORK

The quality of urban life depends heavily on the quality of social relations in neighborhoods. Not that both are identical: there is a quality of the physical environment that may be discussed in its own right. But for the people living in the city, their evaluation of urban life seems to be affected more by their social relations than by the physical environment.

Rainer Mackensen, 1986, p.55

Introduction

A support network was the key element in a working mother's ability to control her own time. This support network served two purposes: 1) allowed women to achieve time alone, and 2) for some women, allowed them time to be able to go to work. This personal support network consisted of family members and friends provided, almost exclusively, any of the time women had away from their children to achieve a few hours of private time. One might assume there would be a public support network of community services available to assist women. However, the participating women in this study did not use organized neighborhood activities, and often these services did not exist for children, especially for young children. (Chapter Seven, Child Care Services, will describe the network of neighborhood-based child care services and the family and friends who provide assistance to mothers during the hours she works.)

The personal support network allowed a woman time away from the daily demands of her children, giving her the opportunity to renew herself. In fact, many women reported

that concerned relatives offered to watch the children so that they could take a break away from child care responsibilities.

The extent of support received by different women varied widely, ranging from daily sharing of domestic tasks to limited support from someone available only in case of emergencies. In fact, several of the women had not taken a vacation since the birth of their children for many reasons including the cost of a trip, the logistics of arranging care, and fear of overburdening their support person. The optimal situation was accessible support whenever needed for as long as necessary, and free of guilt. A few women shared in caring for other children, and others shared in helping them. This barter situation was a relief, especially since it did not cost money.

The most popular support person was a woman's mother (7). The primary support people mentioned were: sisters (6); the children's father (or ex-husband) (3); the woman's brother (3); the woman's father (2); the children's godmother (1); and a grandmother (1). Many women had more than one support person, some of the back-up to the primary support people were: friends (10); and a great-grandmother (1).

Dimensions of Support Network

Three factors determined the ability of the mothers in the study to use her support network and achieve time to herself: (a) the distance to a support person; (b) the frequency of support; and (c) the amount of time support was available. All of these dimensions were equally important in assessing a woman's ability to have relief from the demands of motherhood. In addition, the extent of her network affect the quality and scope of a mother's ability to achieve time alone. Table 3-1, Support Network, displays these three dimensions.

Table 3-1
Support Network for Achieving Time Alone

	A. Distance to Support Person														
	Same Building (6)					Same Neighborhood (8)					Outside Neighborhood (9)				
	C. Amount of Time the Support Person was Available														
B. Frequency of Support	Unlimited (6)	Limited to Week-ends (0)	A Few Hours (0)	Infre- quently/ Emer- gencies (0)	Never (0)	Unlim- ited (4)	Limited to Week-ends (2)	A Few Hours (0)	Infre- quently/ Emer- gencies (1)	Never (0)	Unlimited (1)	Limited to Week-ends (5)	A Few Hours (2)	Infre- quently/ Emer- gencies (1)	Never (0)
Daily (9)	1,4,7,14,21,23					2,5,15									
Weekly (6)						11	8, 12				19	20,22			
Monthly (4)								6				13,18	10		
Infrequently/ Emergencies (4)									9			17	3	16	
Never (0)															

Note. The numbers in parentheses are the totals for the row or column. The numbers in the cells of the body of the table are the contact number, and correspond, as follows:

CD1 Contact Number - Name. #of Children 12 years old and younger

- 1 = "Mary" 2
- 2 = "Alice" 1
- 3 = "Jane" 4
- 4 = "Nancy" 3
- 5 = "Ann" 1
- 6 = "Joann" 1
- 7 = "Karen" 1
- 8 = "Ruth" 1
- 9 = "Judy" 1
- 10 = "Sally" 2
- 11 = "Jenny" 2

CD2 Contact Number - Name. #of Children 12 years old and younger

- 12 = "Kathy" 1
- 13 = "Stephanie" 1
- 14 = "Kim" 1
- 15 = "Joan" 1
- 16 = "Frieda" 2
- 17 = "Donna" 1
- 18 = "Vicky" 1
- 19 = "Helen" 1
- 20 = "Gwen" 3
- 21 = "Fran" 1
- 22 = "Jean" 1
- 23 = "Virginia" 1

A. Distance to Support Person

The first dimension, distance to a support person, had three principal variants: in the same building; in the same neighborhood; and outside the neighborhood. All but two of the women who lived in CD1, either lived with a relative or had a relative in the neighborhood. Six of the 12 women who lived in CD2 did not have a relative or a support person in their neighborhood. Six women lived with a relative (three from CD1 and three from CD2). In the sample studied, six women lived in the same building as their support person, eight lived in the same neighborhood, and nine sought assistance from someone outside the neighborhood.

In the Same Building

The closest proximity to a support person, living with a relative, did not guarantee that child care assistance would be available on an as-needed basis. At first glance, it appeared that the most advantageous situation was living in the same household. Living in the same household with a support person who provided daily assistance lacked the benefits of having community assistance because the support person often also needed time away from the children. Nevertheless, it was more likely that support was available in such instances than if a mother lived alone. Six women in the study lived with a relative: two in the same building as their mothers or stepmothers, but not the same apartment; one in the same apartment with her grandmother; two with their sisters; and one in the same house with both her parents, although her father assumed more of the child care responsibilities than her mother. Although these women lived under the same roof with relatives, only one woman shared the parenting responsibilities completely with a relative (her sister).

In the Same Neighborhood

Eight women had at least one relative within walking distance, and some had several relatives within walking distance. These support persons were mentioned earlier. Many women visited their relatives every day.

Outside the Neighborhood

Some women stated that relatives called at least once a month inviting children to visit. Relatives usually made this offer knowing that raising children alone was very taxing, and they realized that the women needed a break from their parental demands. However, not all the women had relatives who assisted their extended families. In fact, nine women in the study had no relatives or friends in the same borough. For a women without relatives in the same borough the chances of receiving an offer of assistance was not as great. Only one woman relied on her mother outside the borough to give her a break from her child at least once a week.

B. Frequency of Support

The second dimension, frequency of support, describes how often the women were able to have time completely away from their children. The women's use of support can be defined in five categories: daily; weekly; monthly; infrequently and in case of emergencies only; and never.

Daily Support

A relative's daily support was often the most comprehensive type of support provided. It allowed these women some flexibility in their schedules. Nine women relied daily on a relative in some support capacity including: watching the younger of two children while the mother went to work; picking up children from school; cooking; or caring for children for a few hours in the evening while the mother attended school or went to a health club. Although

each woman had different offers available, not all took advantage of all the offers because they expressed feeling guilty about asking too much of others.

Of the 9 women in the sample who received daily support, 6 lived in the same building with a relative who was available to them for a few hours after getting home from work (refer to table 3-1, titled Support Network for Achieving Time Alone). Three of these women received daily support while they worked, but did not rely on the person they lived with for daily assistance after work. Two of these mothers arranged for assistance after work and on weekends, if necessary, from other relatives who did not live with them, or from friends.

Three women in the sample who lived within walking distance of a relative saw this relative daily, if needed.

Weekly Support

In total, six women in the sample received weekly child care assistance. Although most of the women who lived with a relative relied on that person for daily support, one did not. Kathy lived with her grandmother but shared child custody with her ex-husband, who cared for the child the second and the fourth weekend of the month and part of the third weekend. This allowed her to spend time with friends, go to the movies, or visit family out of town.

Jenny who lived in the same neighborhood as her support person had a casual relationship with her relatives, seeing them most weekends, and was able to seek their assistance in child care any time for as long as necessary. Ruth shared caretaking with her ex-husband, and relied on him to care for the child every weekend.

Helen, Jean and Gwen established weekly child care rotations with relatives who lived outside the neighborhood. For Gwen, this help was more of a barter system, where one week a relative assumed responsibility for the children, both her's and their's, while the following week such responsibility belonged to Gwen.

Monthly Support

Joann, Stephanie, Vicky, and Sally could only arrange free time on a monthly basis. For these women arranging help was more complicated and not guaranteed. Three mothers with support people outside the borough relied on relatives once a month at most. This was not pre-scheduled, and accessibility was difficult. Sally lived in a basement apartment in her parents' home. Although her stepmother watched her youngest child while Sally worked, the stepmother was not available at other times. Sally relied on friend for some time away maybe once a month for a few hours.

Infrequently or In Cases of Emergency

Three mothers who had a support person outside their borough relied on her/his assistance about once a year. One woman with four children rarely relied on anyone to help. She felt this approach important for achieving stable, well-adjusted, disciplined children. She said she would never rely on friends, but arranged to go out about once a year with the help of her mother or sister. One woman's husband lived in the basement of her home could only be counted on to pick up the child from daycare. For private time, she occasionally relied on her sister who lived in another borough.

In one instance, although the woman lived close to relatives, she considered asking for their assistance only in emergencies. When she did so, she called on her father. She

regretted asking him because he complained. She did not consider him a reliable support person but he was all she had.

Never

In this study, all the women developed at least a minimal relationship with someone to help in case of an emergency. No matter how much they tried to do it alone and not to burden others, it was impossible to never rely on another person for assistance with a child.

C. Amount of Time Support Person was Available

The third dimension, the amount of time that support was available, refers to the number of hours away from her children that a woman was provided when she sought support. This time was negotiated and not an unlimited source of help for over fifty percent of the women. The five categories were defined by the women: unlimited; limited to weekends; a few hours; infrequently or only for emergencies; and never. No one stated that they never relied on another individual for assistance.

Unlimited

Nine women in the study had daily assistance available to them whenever and for as long as they need it. Six women who live in the same building with relative had unlimited support if wanted. An additional two women had unlimited support from a support person who was available once a week for as many hours as desired. Availability and the amount of time support was available was a major concern even for women who shared households with relative. For a relative living in the same dwelling unit with a relative often also needed privacy and time alone, therefore, a mother would limit her requests for additional help.

One woman who had a very stressful job relied on her mother, who lived outside the neighborhood, to pick-up her child because the child care service was on her mother's way home from work. This assistance was provided without time limits, so the child often spent the night, if needed, with the grandmother who was willing to provide support at least a few times a week.

Limited Weekend Visits

Seven women arranged for the children to visit the support person for weekends. Two women shared custody with their exhusbands and five women arranged for a relative to pick up the child for the weekend.

A Few Hours

Three women arranged support for a few hours, either monthly or infrequently.

Infrequently and In Case of Emergency

Two mothers were uncomfortable with leaving their children with others. These women had never left their children with another person overnight. However, both women relied occasionally on help for emergencies, occasional doctor's visit, or a social event.

Network Attitude

Many women were grateful that their relatives took such an active part in their lives. In fact, one woman was deeply indebted to her great-grandmother, grandmother, and mother. Virginia felt her life could never have been as successful as it was without the dedication of her support network:

'Cause I had my daughter when I was 17, and if it wasn't for my grandparents and my mother I wouldn't be where I am today. I was pregnant when I was in 11th grade and I had her when I was in 12th grade. And when she was three weeks old my grandmother knew how I really wanted to help myself, so she took care of my daughter, and ever since she's been baby sitting her. So... Well, my mother, she pitches in and helps me. She's working and stuff. Basically, it's my grandmother, my great-grandmother. My grandmother passed away last year. They really help me a lot. Every day. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be here today finishing school and working. (#23)

Nancy developed a strong support network in her building and with other relatives. She stated that she believed "it takes a village to raise a child," and reached out to her extended nuclear family for support. Additional support from an uncle and aunt with a car allowed her children to attend church activities, which enriched their lives.

My aunt is really, like one of those really church-going women, and she says, "Oh don't worry Henry will take them." So, it works out fine. Just a couple of times when we go down there we had to take the train or take the bus, but not often.

Like, my daughters were involved just this year in the American Co-ed Pageant. And that was really nice. That was an experience, an expensive experience, but it was an experience, ok. They had a chance to do talent. What it does, it builds a lot of self esteem. Its not a pageant for beauty or you know, it's more on academics. And it was really nice. So they had a chance to do that. (#4)

Nancy's "village" also extended to her mother-in-law who participated in her support network:

My mother-in-law lives all the way in Manhattan. She's a little distant, but it's ok. All she has to do is just say, "I want the kids for the weekend," and I'm gone.

Yes, yes, my husband and I, our divorce was really nasty, and she's been an angel throughout the whole entire thing. It was like, she's just a sweetheart throughout the whole thing. I told her it doesn't matter, you don't have to like me, and you could come in and say, "Hello bitch gimme' the kids, and I'll see you to the door." But she really turned out, she's real good. I'll put it to you this way. She does what he doesn't do, because he does not support them, he doesn't take care of them. He doesn't do anything for them, so I guess she feels a need because she's his mother and it should be done, and she does.

She spends a lot of time with them, she's really interested in them, and currently I have to go see her because she sold all the candy for the candy sale, so you know, she's really good, so like anything, I know I can call on her if I really need her. (#4)

Strength of Support

Those lacking a strong support network encountered difficulties doing anything alone.

Sally lived in the same building with her father and stepmother. Her stepmother watched the youngest while she worked, but she did not rely on her parents for additional support. She described her wish for assistance:

Raising them alone, and try to discipline them alone. I try my best with them. I have trouble with them sometimes, but they do miss their father. So, raising them alone is not easy. And I find it the hardest to raise two kids on your own.

It's not just the discipline, it's just, at times, you just need that second person. That second person to say okay, you relax, I'll take care of it for once. It's not like I go home and I can just throw myself in the shower and go lay down. I go home and I've gotta' wash them, feed them, get them ready for bed, get their things ready for bed, make sure the house is decent, you know.

Other than that, you know, it's always good to have that second person, cause maybe one day, you just don't want to go home and do it. You know, you say, you do it for tonight I'm gonna' lay down and go to sleep or something. That's how I feel, that it's always good to have that second person.

Especially with two young boys. 'Cause I find, they say it's easy with boys, but in a way it's not, 'cause they always have their little fighting area, oh I want to beat up 'cause you did this to me, or something. And people say, oh it's the girls, you gotta make sure they do this, and make sure they take a bath, and make sure they don't go there with this boy or go there with that boy. I think it's just, equally, both of them are just hard to take care of. Other than that, it's always good to have that second person. (#10)

Summary

A support network allowed a working single mother to achieve some time to herself. While not all the mothers had an unlimited amount of time alone available to them, each woman arranged at least the minimum support, a person available in case of emergencies.

The findings show that the difficulty in securing assistance increases as the distance to the support person increases. Therefore, the women who lived close to their support person received greater access to free time. Although help was available for special occasions and emergencies, the women do not impose their children on the support person for more than a few hours.

CHAPTER FOUR

QUALITY OF LIFE

We need to understand that there is no formula for how women should lead their lives. That is why we must respect the choices that each woman makes for herself and her family. Every woman deserves the chance to realize her God-given potential.

Hillary Rodham Clinton, It Takes a Village, 1996, p. 210

Introduction

The women in the study were asked to define the quality of their life in relation to what they did for themselves when they arranged free time. This research documents the difficulties single mothers face to control their own time and arrange time for themselves. As a result, some of the women responded, "I have no life."

The ability to create time for one's self has not been investigated previously because women with children have been viewed narrowly within the stereotypical traditional role of mothers, rather than as people who are entitled to a multi-dimensional life, including time for leisure, or to pursue personal interests. Also, free time as an aspect of life has been often overlooked as essential. However, in this study many women recognized a need for time away from children, other than time at work. The women who had stressful jobs had the greatest need for assistance in getting time away from the child. Many of the women looked forward to going to work simply to escape demanding children, while others recognized their own basic needs and arranged for support to give them time for themselves, as seen in the previous chapter.

This qualitative analysis revealed that in the interviews, the women generally focused on four topics: Mother and Child; Time with Oneself; Socializing; and Conflicts. Most of the women felt comfortable beginning the conversation with a discussion about the time shared between mother and child. After acknowledging the importance of this relationship, they were more comfortable with discussing the quality of their lives during times without children. The discussion continued with how they realized time alone, or do what they wanted to do with this time, including the ability to socialize with friends and relatives. The conflicts the women faced evolved from the responsibilities of family and work in a society that is unresponsive to their need for free time. The women described personal sacrifices, and most had developed ways to handle stress and depression.

The following is an analysis of each of the four main topics covered in the one-on-one interviews.

Mother and Child

Many of the women considered the time they spent with their children and the time they needed for themselves to be synonymous. It was time away from work and, although adult activities and conversation were absent, it was fun and relaxing.

Joan, the mother of one child, lives alone and has family members in the neighborhood. She dedicated her time to her child and feels comfortable focusing on her child's needs more often than her own needs.

I always put my daughter first. My needs come last. I do it for her. Yeah.
I back away from my needs. (#15)

A common theme among the women was that children came first. The women were dedicated to making their children's lives as happy and secure as possible. In fact, many women were very comfortable with subordinating their own lives to their children's. Jody did not feel the sacrifice of her own time as significant:

It feels automatic what I'm doing now. It just feels natural. (#9)

Jody stated that she loved the time she spent with her child. For her, being a mother represented an important role in life. She remembered her mother who was a "full time mom," and she wanted to do just as much as her mother did for her. Although she worked full-time she wanted to make sacrifices to replicate her own experiences. For most women, the child was their first priority, and being with the child was a source of personal satisfaction. Jean stated:

I work during the week. On weekends I try to make that time back. So I don't really mind it. A lot of people might want time to be by themselves. I'm not that kind of person. I really love being with him, because he becomes a priority, and being with him is like being alone. (#22)

Jean's statement, "being with him is like being alone" illustrates how women do not separate their needs from their responsibilities to their children.

This can be seen in the discussions on what they did for themselves, the women's responses often focused instead on what they did with their children. Kim, similar to other mothers, wanted her child to have a rich childhood filled with memories of happy and fun moments:

Every week I try to take her on a little trip so that she can tell her friends when she gets older, "Well, my mom used to take me places." I have fun with her every week. That's about it. (#14)

Thirteen women in the study had only one child, and they spent time fostering their children's socializing skills. Again, Kim was concerned that her child nurtured friendships, and was not lonely as an only child:

She also has a lot of cousins on her father's side that are around her age, so I include them in as well. And since I have a car I am able to, you know, take us all out on outings and things like that, so she's not that lonely being an only child. (#14)

The women did not want their children to get bored, so they took the time to entertain them. Karen considers this time for self as well as for her child, as stated:

I start taking my daughter skating, the oldest one. So, she goes skating and I'm learning to skate. Actually, since I'm with her I learned to skate, so, that's what I'm doing for me. (#7)

On weekends, Fran organized activities for her child and other children:

My daughter has complete control of my life. You know, my whole life is built around this kid. I try to do little things with her. I really have. Basically, these last few years my life is being strictly lived for her. I have little sleep-overs and do things with them like make little crafts. (#21)

The sacrifices women often made for their children were a result of accepting that spending the time to entertain the child was cheaper than hiring someone, and easier than having a bored child. The justification was that this was an investment in bonding and quality time. However, they often did not set limits to time with children, or establish time needed for themselves.

In addition, they wanted to see that their children succeeded in school. For example, a few mothers purchased the educational learning package, Hooked on Phonics, and set aside at least one hour each day to work with their children on reading skills. Ruth, who took time during the week to work with her child, described her motivation:

During the week I try to teach him schoolwork. I buy the pre-kindergarten, pre-school books, you know, to help him be hopefully a bit more advanced in classes, you know. 'Cause you can't leave everything up to the teachers. You gotta' help out, because it starts at home, it's not something that you wait for the teachers to do, which is hard. It isn't easy trying to teach children.(#8)

Nevertheless, there were times when the women needed to think of themselves apart from their children. As Sally related, even the children recognized that their parents needed a break:

Yeah, exactly, if you're not happy, they feel it. And my son does feel it, cause when I'm upset, he goes, "You're upset." I go, "Yeah." He goes, "I don't like that." He says, "I like to see you happy." He goes, "Now I'm mad." So, he prefers to see me happy than sad. He's always saying, "Mommy cheer up, cheer up." He goes, "I know it's hard." But he's very smart. He's a very bright child and I'm grateful for that, so it's a lot. (#10)

Many women who finally decided to go out without their children expressed the difficulty of parting from their children, especially the first time. The first time Fran left her child with her parents was slightly traumatic for her:

The older she gets the easier it gets because I can remember the first time I went away to some union conference and she was a year and a half. And I cried the whole weekend. Everybody was miserable. My friends said, "She's in good hands. If you didn't feel comfortable leaving her you know you wouldn't have left her."

The next time I went I felt a little bit better. And each time I go and leave her I feel a little bit better, but I guess it has to do with the fact that she's older and I know that I don't have to worry about that if someone does something to her she can tell me about it, or she can let the person know that she doesn't like it. The older she gets the more comfortable I get. I guess eventually I will have a life, eventually. (#21)

Mothers acknowledged that they needed an occasional break from their children. Sally had two children under the age of six and lived in the same building as her parents. Although her parents watched the youngest while she worked, only rarely would she consider relying on them for help after work. In fact, her support person was outside of the neighborhood.

Therefore, in moments of complete exhaustion she called upon a friend to watch her children for a few hours. She had never been away from her children longer than for a few hours:

I try my best to go out other places and do things for myself. I always try to take time out for myself. They say if you don't, you might go a little crazy. (#10)

The women knew when they needed a break. Jenny recognized she had to create time for herself because "I'll lose my mind." She said:

When I just, when I just feel myself yelling all the time. I catch myself yelling all the time. It's like, okay, you know, because you just feel the tension and the pressure. It's like, okay. I gotta get away. (#11)

Time with Oneself

After addressing the issue of attending to their children, the women were freer to speak about what they did for themselves. Women created time for themselves, both with the children around and through their support networks.

Time Alone with Children Present

The most common time mentioned away from children required no support network: it was after the children went to bed. At that point the mothers took a few hours to relax, meditate, read a book, listen to music, rent a movie, drink a beer, crochet, talk to friends on the phone with no interruptions, or take a bath. They did these things after they completed the bills, housework, and tasks for the next day. If the woman was not completely exhausted, this time was rewarding because there were no strings attached, no reciprocation or guilt to support people, or children.

A lot of times, too, I can also catch my peace of mind when I send them to bed. If I need a chance to unwind I can put my headphones on, turn on the stereo, and I can relax before it's time for me to go to bed. (#4)

Several women also mentioned "quiet time." This was the time created during the day when the child did not require the mother's constant attention. Ann described how she structured "quiet time:"

Basically, what I do, I get home, I usually assign my daughter something to do. I call it quiet time. It's not quiet time for her, it's quiet time for myself. And she either colors, plays with her toys, or just sits and looks at a book. That's usually for about 15 minutes, and then she gets also quiet time in the tub for another 15 minutes. So, basically, I get a half hour before I get into the daily routine of food, bath and everything. So, that helps relax me, and also relax her. That's basically what I do. And then she goes to bed about 8:30 or by 9:00. And I have the rest of the night to complete whatever needs to be done, like paying the bills, watching TV, relaxing, reading a book 'til about 12:00, and then I'll go to bed. (#5)

Stephanie's support network lived outside the neighborhood. As a result, she found it cumbersome to arrange for child care assistance on more than a monthly basis. She tried to maintain her sanity by squeezing some time for herself every day at work to read and relax:

I try to take every little break I can during lunch and sort of relax, take out my book because I love to read, go through a couple chapters. Break time is the same thing. I spend time with myself just doing little things that I like, sit down and relax, read.(#13)

Donna could only arrange a break about once a year because it was difficult to arrange assistance, especially since her support network was outside her neighborhood and over an hour by public transit. She created her own meditative space at home, which allowed her to maintain her sense of self and peace of mind:

I have a window in my house, my kitchen window. I call it my sanctuary. And all I do is just look out it. I don't say nothing to nobody. I may get up at four o'clock in the morning just to look out the window for hours until that boy gets up. And I call it my sanctuary. I just sit there and just look out the window, and watch the sky, and watch the trees blow. Just quiet. I don't have to say nothing to nobody. I make me a cup of coffee and I just sit there for hours. Boy, that is the best time of the day for me. Right? Right there. And my friends think I'm crazy. They say, "Why do you call it your sanctuary?" I say, " 'Cause girl, I ain't got to say nothing to nobody." I call

that my sanctuary right in my kitchen at my home. I have a nice kitchen window and I pick the window all the way up and I just let the air hit my face and have my coffee and I just be drinkin', and I just look out the window. And every now and then one of my neighbors may come by, and I say, "Hi." I'll wave, and I just keep right looking out the window. That's my quality time right there. You know, my peace and my joy. (#17)

Time without Children

When a woman needed more than a few hours at night when the child was asleep, or even in the morning before the child awoke, she had to reach out to her support network. This differed widely depending on her type of support network. For a woman who lived in the same building as a support person, a break was more easily available than one whose support person was out of the neighborhood and available infrequently.

Karen lived with her parents and asked her mother to watch the child so that she could relax, read, and socialize:

I'll take my bath, like, my parents, she would take the baby if I say I want to be by myself. She'll take the baby in her room, and I'll stay in my room maybe. And I just read a book or sometimes talk on the phone. 'Cause I have books that I love to read, and I'll lie down on my bed and read or talk on the phone. (#7)

Another woman who lived with her mother was fortunate to have alternative support persons in her neighborhood in addition to her mother. This very strong community support network offered Kim relief from her child whenever she desired:

Yes, if not my mother I can always have her dad come pick her up and spend a day with her so I can have that time to myself. He doesn't live too far. He's about 15 minutes away by car, so he will come by or pick her up. Also her aunts, they would watch her, they are the aunts with the kids. So, it's always someone that can watch her. (#14)

When women were able to arrange for at least a few hours break from child care duties, there were various activities which they enjoyed, as summarized by Stephanie:

I shop at the Body Shop, give myself a little nice cheap manicure, pedicure. A couple of times I just went to Brooklyn to the Botanical Gardens, walk around, sit down and relax, take out my book. I might also stay home and read, go to the movies, treat myself to a matinee every now and then, you know, when she's away. I shop, like I said, you know. Take a nice long, hot, bubble bath. Treat myself to all the luxuries, you know, pretend I'm a fabulous person and am doing things that fabulous people like to do. (#13)

Frieda worked a night shift, and therefore arranged her day to fit in 45 minutes of shopping without children, which she found relaxing:

I used to like to go to movies, but I find that I fall asleep in the movies now, so I don't go to the movies. I don't have that much time to myself, so shopping gives me that maybe 45 minutes of fantasy. That's what I call it, a fantasy world. (#16)

Ann had a very strong support network in her neighborhood which she relied on in a spontaneous, unplanned way when she needed to escape from her routine:

Because there's a time when you do get stressed from the work, from the house, everything, you get stressed, and it was last Friday to be exact. I was stressed, so I took my daughter to my sister-in-law, had her stay there. It was only for the night. She enjoyed it. And at the same time, at first she didn't want to go, because she wanted to stay with me. But I said you have your cousins there. You're gonna' get to sit, you'll watch cartoons, you'll color, you'll, you know, you'll get to do the things you don't get to do here because she's an only child. So she went and she came back the following morning. She was like, "Oh mommy, I only got to spend one night." She wanted more time by herself. (#5)

Socializing

When did the women in the study have a chance to socialize? Not very often, if ever.

To socialize outside of the home required pre-planned arrangements, which were not simple, especially for the women whose support networks were not easily accessible or available. In addition, those with more than one child usually faced more complex logistics, since they did not want to overburden the people upon whom they relied. As Jenny described:

I try not to leave both of them on one person, because you know, it's a lot. I do have one go to her godmother and my son could go to my sister. (#11)

Virginia lived with her great-grandmother who was very supportive. As a result, the great-grandmother watched the children so Virginia could get away:

I go out every other weekend, me and my friends. Just lady things. We go about the city, we go different places, clubs, movies. Sometimes in the summer we go to an amusement park when we can we try and get a car, you know. That's about it. (#23)

But several women in the study expressed concern about their safety when going out.

In fact, Karen described her husband being shot at a party:

My husband was killed. That's when I used to go to a lot of parties, and he got shot in the party. Since then I haven't had the urge. I would still go out to somebody's house, but like to parties, to clubs, I would never.

My friends, they come visit me. Maybe twice a month I'll have different friends, but it's gonna be weekends, because everybody works, everybody's busy, so it's basically weekends, or holidays. My friends come over, and we just talk and have different conversations, some political, some educational. And I enjoy that. (#7)

Safety concerns intensified the women's tendency to socialize at home. Nancy said:

Things are getting too bad now anyway. You don't really want to go anywhere. If you want to go someplace, you want to go to the club and have a really great time, you can't. Somebody might step on your shoes and then they want to start a fight. So a lot of times you just say, "Hey, forget it, I've got a radio. I'll stay home and listen to it." Or invite some friends over, and say, "Let's have a few drinks and stay home." (#4)

Family was an integral part of every woman's life. Most socialized with their relatives, at the very least on major holidays, birthdays, and other celebrations. It was cheaper, more comfortable, fun, and easier to visit relatives or have them visit than to engage in other forms of entertainment. Jenny, the mother of two, ages 6 and 1, stated:

Weekends, that's usually when I'm at my sister's. I go over there, 'cause she has three boys so, you know, it gives my son a chance to interact with them and then, you know, and basically, that's it, unless, every now and then I might maybe take 'em to the movies or something like that. But I really don't. I find going to the movies, like,

a unnecessary expense. When you have cable and it's gonna be on, you know, in the next couple of months. (#11)

Typical out-of-town trips for women in the sample were limited in their duration: Atlantic City for the day; an amusement park; or a church event. As for vacations, most of the women "haven't been on a vacation in at least three years." Karen went to school and only had the summer months to have time to herself. In addition, the cost of taking a vacation, as mentioned by Karen, was also a concern for other women:

Well, right now I don't have that much time to myself because I'm back in school and I'm working nine to five. I go to school in the evening, and when I'm not in school, then I'm doing things around the house, and on the weekend I'm in the library. So this is gonna be a very busy year for me. The only times now, August is summer vacation. Um, I haven't really planned anything, you know, since I'm not taking a trip. I haven't really taken a real vacation and, you know, just really tryin' to make ends meet right now, so I really can't afford to go away for a vacation.

So, but when I do take time for myself I would, you know, find a baby sitter and I'll just go out with friends to a movie, or I don't really go to parties that much so. You know, basically a movie or a play or something in that range. In September, I'm really back in school, which is why I got back in school because there's really not that much to do. So, that's basically it. (#14)

Jenny found herself choosing to avoid dating:

That part definitely had to be eliminated. You know, I had to let them know, you know, I had to set morals for my kids, and they know who their father is so, you know, it makes for a very awkward situation. (#11)

Conflicts

The women faced social, economic, and physical conflicts as a result of their need to balance all their responsibilities to family, work, and self. The women accepted their personal sacrifices, and most developed techniques for dealing with the tension, pressure, stress, and depression encountered. They realized the help they received from family and friends was

invaluable. Their hope was that the future would bring more time and fewer worries for themselves.

The women expressed a preference to share parenting with another adult, a spouse.

This would help alleviate some of the stress they experienced daily. As Gwen commented:

Sometimes I wish there was somebody else here to think about certain things. I wish somebody else were here to think about the kids instead of just me alone and them saying, "Mommy, Mommy, Mommy." (#20)

Having someone around would have made life a little easier by easing the pressure to have to be all things at all times. As Helen, a mother with one 2 year old child, stated:

If you had someone else with you, where you could maybe go in a room and lock the door and forget about the child, but if it's just you and your child, you can't do that. He's gonna bang on the door. So, little things like that, not big things, you know. 'Cause I was so much the type of person that would go off by myself, maybe read a book for hours, you know, things like that. And I have a feeling it's gonna get more so as they get older. I'm gonna have to keep him, too. I can't forget that he has to eat. I still love the little rat. (#19)

Most women agreed that being a single mother was difficult. As Sally, a mother of two children, ages 6 and 3, described:

It's hard, it's hard. I'm trying to do everything for me, and also trying to do it for them. The best of my life, I'm grateful to have this job, and I'm taking care of them, and I'm happy with them, you know. I'm glad that I'm with them, you know. At first I didn't want kids, but then, like I said, they're here, and they're healthy. So, in a way it was great. But I wouldn't say it's the best thing that's ever happened in my life. (#10)

Single motherhood was not always a chosen lifestyle. In fact, many of the women commented on the fact that they were not expecting to be single mothers:

I wanted these kids a long time ago. This is something I was looking for back then a couple of years ago, but, at the same time, I wanted a father to be there for them, not when he feels like. (#1)

Another woman found herself completely surprised that "this guy disappeared:"

Certainly, I did not imagine myself being left with a child that has my name because I would have imagined myself being married to someone equally responsible as myself. I mean, to me this was a big blow. You know, if people wanna' analyze it psychologically, they would say that maybe I'm, you know, I've been hurt. But I can't. I don't have the time to think about it. That this guy just like disappeared. A martian came down and completely absorbed him, he's gone. I would never imagine this for myself, so it was a blow. But I've tried to find him, because, you know, it is kind of like tight. We live very tight financially. (#9)

The relationship the women had with their children was very important. However, they also recognized the loss of identity that went along with having full responsibility for another person. As Nancy, the mother of three children, ages 6, 5, and 3, commented:

You don't see yourself as a you anymore, as an individual. Once you have kids, there's not no more you. If you don't feel like eating, you have to cook dinner because they have to eat. Sometimes you come in here and you go forget it I'm not hungry, but you have to cook because of them.

You just keep going.....

You could feel miserable, and the minute you say, "Oh I feel horrible, I don't feel like doing anything." There's many days that I just get up in the morning and say, "Oh god, I can't wait 'til they can walk themselves." Because you're just tired. There's just a point you get to where you sit there, you sit on the bed and you think about it. You go, "Oh should I call in today?" But then it doesn't make a difference because they have to go to school. And then you still have to go out and get them, and so you say, "Oh, I might as well go on to work," because you still gotta get up. You still gotta go, so you might as well go do what you have to do and come back anyway. So, you lose a lot of yourself, you really do. (#4)

The women rationalized the rewards of today for rewards in the future. They expressed no regrets, but they reflected on what they had given up and looked forward to the freedom provided as their children grow up. As Stephanie, the mother of a four-year-old, mentioned:

And it's just a lot of things I wouldn't say that I regret not being able to do, because then I'm saying I regret having her, so I can't do that. But I miss being able to do a lot of things. I just had to put a lot of things on hold.

Oh, I thought about so many things. Right now, had she not been born, and again I'm not saying I regret her being born, I would be a lawyer. I would have finished school. I would have gone onto law school like I should have instead, considering I took my LSATs and I passed, and I was just at the point of applying to different law schools. So by now I would have graduated and I'd have a job somewhere, whether it'd be as a prosecutor or in a private firm, corporate litigation or something. Oh, I'd just have the world unfolding right now. I really would. (#13)

Another aspect of a woman's life as a single mother was accepting help from family members. This assistance was often necessary because it provided her with the only moments she had away from her child. In that time, although not often, she could do what she wanted in a semi-unscheduled manner. Nonetheless, this assistance did not come without guilt or reciprocation. As Fran, who lived in the same building as her mother, described she was grateful, as were all the mothers, for assistance provided. However, it did not come without emotional conflicts which she had learned to control. In fact, she was working on adopting a new spiritual perspective on life that would help her go beyond the focus of her own problems:

I do need to learn how to control my nervousness about a lot of things and how things appear, especially to my mother. You know because my mother has this way of making you feel like, you know, it's a lot to try to fill her shoes. She did a real good job as a mother and, like, she's always trying to help. But I take it as you always want to show me just where I fail as the world's greatest mom and, you know, maybe she doesn't mean it, but I'm starting to come around to a lot of things. I don't know whether 31 is a time of spiritually speaking, where a lot of things are starting to awake in me.

It's like the childish thing, like wanting to hold grudges and getting to be not so judgmental about who people are. People are who they are, and I just hope ten years from now I hope that I can be even stronger in those feelings. Just being aware of everything around me. What I would like in the next ten years is to become more aware of my earth's surroundings, save a tree, clean a pond, that kinda' of stuff. I see myself going more towards that. That's about it for ten years from now and forward to the changes I make in my life. To get more in tune with nature. (#21)

Most women accepted the sacrifices that came with motherhood. However, as single mothers these women had difficulties identifying the personal sacrifices they made, such as the freedom to date and privacy. As Kim, the mother of a five-year-old, stated:

Well, I guess if I was the kind of person who just can't stay home. As far as social gatherings and things like that, I know some people like that. Because I'm not like that I can't say that I've given up anything. I'm basically quiet, and a don't mind staying home kind of person. You know, if I go anywhere it would be visiting friends or, or things like that. But I don't think I'm giving up anything. What, my freedom to do what? Well, okay, I can't say nothing. Dating. I don't social date as often as if I were a ... A lot of times if I go out it's no not this time, you know. I don't want to burden anybody with watching my daughter, or if I should have a guest come over and she's running about and running all over. Maybe that's it. You give up privacy. (#14)

There were other examples when women had to give up their privacy in little things such as taking a shower. As Donna, the mother of two children, ages 16 and 5, described:

And I don't have too much time to myself, you know, to really say, like, to take bubble baths and those kind of things. I don't know what they are, those are luxuries. I take quick showers, he's bangin' on the door, he wanna come in. (#17)

It was not easy to assume all the responsibilities for raising a child alone. This was reflected in these women's responses to balancing the exhaustion from their work schedules with the house-related responsibilities and keeping their children entertained. As Ruth, the mother of a five-year-old, conveyed:

Sometimes I think I'm heading for a nervous breakdown. I really feel like I, you know, you get so intense, I get a headache. I have one now, but I just, going, going, going, going you know, you know, just going so much that I guess it's like a stress or tension headache. 'Cause there's only so many hours in a day, and you get up at 4:00, and I don't go to sleep until about 12:00. And it's because I have so much on my mind that I have to do. I'm on my way to sleep I'm thinking, which I guess most people do, "What do I have to do?"

I have to start early because I have to get up early, and with children, and the noise I can't function as clearly. In other words, like, when I pick him up, if I haven't done all I have to do, then I find I can't think clearly when he's around because I'm too busy trying to pay attention to what his needs are. So I try to divide my time in two, and

try to maybe do some paperwork that I have to do, like writing out bills and everything. Then, oh God, I forgot to make the phone call, and I look at the clock and see if I have enough time before it's 5:00. I'm taking time to talk on the phone and write this down and pay attention to him, and it's mass confusion, you know. But, like anything else, you have to push yourself and you have to deal with it. (#8)

One of the hardest tasks these women faced was keeping up their spirits. Many women expressed feelings of depression, loneliness and guilt. As Mary, the mother of two children, ages 5 and 2, described:

No, sometimes I just feel depressed, lonely. Although, I have the children, something just once in awhile that feeling comes. Maybe from stress, maybe I get tired out. I don't know. No, sometimes, to be truthful, sometimes I think when the kids and father behave the way he behaves, then it starts to sort of affect my feelings, and then I feel, you know, like, this isn't what I wanted. We're not living together. He's not really the father I wanted for my kids. So, sometimes when I feel like that, it's because of something either I just said or, you know, maybe something like that. (#1)

Most women developed techniques for relief from the pressures of life. When a woman could not leave the child with a support person, the most common technique mentioned was talking to friends:

Like, I call up friends and talk on the telephone. Sometimes I'm depressed and stuff like that. I call up somebody and we talk, and I feel better. It helps me better than sitting down and thinking about it. I call up somebody on the phone and I talk, we talk. (#2)

Having a child took some adjusting to. As Helen described, it took her by surprise the first time she attended a family party:

And just thinking about him all the time, making sure he is ok, and just the responsibility of having a kid, just the thought of it is incredible. You know that it's not just you, and you can't do anything without thinking about the child.

It's funny, when I first had him, he was 3 months old, I went to a birthday party. And I was packing up, and I was ready to leave out the door. And I kept saying, "I think I'm leaving something?" and he's sitting there. Like, "Where's Timmy?" and Timmy was in the bedroom lying down, nice and cozy sleeping. I had completely forgot that I had the baby with me.

Oh gosh, this is it, life is over. But you know, I'll never forget that night. It's so funny. 'Cause when that happened you were used to walking into a room and walk out by yourself. Now you have to pick up this bundle and take the bundle with you. I couldn't believe I did that. Actually, I could believe I did that. That kind of thing you know. I got used to remembering that he's around since then. I remember that I brought somebody else with me. I'm sure it happened to somebody else. (#19)

As Nancy stated, strength came from a combination of will power, self determination, ignoring what others said, and going with the flow of her child's demands. In addition, she stated that relying on a spouse to be there to help was sometimes a false ideal. Instead, she felt that every women should realize her own strengths, and accept that life with a man may not always work out:

It just seemed like you have more drive, 'cause you go, "Well, I have to do this and I wanna do that, and I wanna do this, and I need the money for that." So you drive yourself. I feel that I've really driven myself a great deal. I think that a lot of times people put negative stuff on it.

I mean, it's nice, like, if you're married and you really have that wonderful relationship. You have a husband that's willing to help you, and that wonderful security. But if it doesn't work out that way, I mean, women have to be strong enough to realize that they can go on. 'Cause a lot of women that I talk to they go oh that's just too much. I can't make it, I don't see how you do it." I have a girlfriend. She has one son and she's goin' crazy. She goes, "I don't see how you do it, you're always gone, I call your house, you're never home." I say yes, because I, they drive me. They'll come in here and they'll go, "Mommy, Mommy can we go here? I wanna go here."(#4)

Summary

One of the purposes of this study was to understand whether women are able to create the time that allows them to stay centered and pursue their own interests. It was originally conceptualized as an hypothesis that neighborhood supports, among other variables, would be the mechanism available to allow women to have this time.

This study revealed that it was not neighborhood supports that provided the women with time to do as they wished, but support networks. Friends and family were the ones who the women relied upon to help them.

Before considering time for themselves, the women arranged time with their children which was not part of a daily routine, such as ice skating, or trips to an amusement park.

There were times when a woman had to get away from her children for both her sake and the sake of the children. Most of the women recognized that taking time for themselves was essential for their mental health. However, knowing that the children were safe was a primary concern that determined whether or not they could take this needed time.

There were several ways the women set aside time for themselves. The first was after the children went to sleep, when a woman had a few hours to relax. Another strategy was creating "quiet time" with the children, when the child was occupied while the mother relaxed. Women could get away when they had a support network that allowed them the time to do things without their children. They reached out and requested the time from relatives, friends, and the fathers of their children.

With the support of family, the women could socialize with friends, go shopping, take in a movie, or even go on a date. The likelihood that a woman could arrange this time away and the frequency of this time away from her children depended on the depth of her support network. There was a greater possibility that the women who lived in the same building or the same neighborhood as family members or friends had support available on a more frequent basis than those who lived farther away from their support network.

Even with the help of a support network the women experienced several conflicts with creating personal time. The first major hurdle was accepting single-parenthood. These women were widows, divorcees, separated and abandoned. Many did not expect to raise their children alone, but had no regrets other than it was harder and more exhausting than expected. They realized that assistance was needed to have any privacy or time alone. They sought friends to get through the loneliness, depression, stress, and relied on their own will power and self-determination to build a better tomorrow for themselves and their children.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE JOB

We need to put people's dreams within their reach.

Ronald H. Brown, 1941-1996

What is called the agricultural revolution was preceded, very possibly, by a sexual revolution: a change that gave predominance, not to the hunting male, agile, swift of foot, ready to kill, ruthless by vocational necessity, but to the more passive female, attached to her children, slowed down in movement to a child's pace,

Lewis Mumford, History of the City, 1961, p. 8

Introduction

Mumford wrote about a prehistoric “sexual revolution” that changed the way women paced their lives. More recently, Smith (1980) wrote of a “subtle revolution” in his book of the same name, which refers to the unanticipated dramatic entrance of women, regardless of race, into the workforce in the 1970s. Both revolutions involved a change in women’s lives to balance new dimensions: family sustenance and economic security. In the more recent transformation, women have an increased participation in the workforce, more responsibilities at work, and more financial responsibilities at home.

The mothers in this study bore the full financial responsibility for their children. As one mother put it, “We don't have money, we have bills. And when your bills are not paid, this kind of upsets a person (#13).” The cost of daycare was the most mentioned financial concern. All of the women had forsaken personal items, including clothing and shoes, in order to meet their children's needs.

Almost none of the women had taken a vacation out of the City of New York in more than three years, primarily due to the cost. Another reason for not vacationing was to save vacation days for the children's school holidays and unexpected situations, both of which forced the women to take time off from work.

Many of the women wished for another source of income or higher wages to help pay for the daily expenses. They mentioned the increasing cost of sneakers and the fact that children grow fast and need new clothes, "sometimes on a weekly basis." In addition, the women were frustrated by their inability to afford afterschool programs, camp, and the like for their children, which they felt would be enriching experiences.

The Decision to Work

According to this study, the decision to leave a child in child care and go to work was not an easy one. It provoked women to question their motherhood, and to ask themselves if they were making the right decision for their children and themselves. Jody, who had one child, was very fortunate to work for a company that allowed maternity leave. Because she remembered her mother staying home to care for her, returning to work was difficult. However, knowing that her child would be safe and happy made the decision to return easier:

I feel putting her in the daycare, it helps me and it helps her because ..., I don't feel that I'm the type of person that wants to be home or, when I was home on maternity leave, you know, at the end of it, I knew that I'd have to work. I have to. It's good for my head. When I'm here [at work], I don't preoccupy my thoughts with what's going on at the daycare with her because I just feel that she is in somewhat of a safe environment. So I don't preoccupy myself with what's going on there. I just know she loves it. The first thing we talk about, when I pick her up in the evening, "What did you have for lunch today?" and "Did you nap?" and you know, there's that conversation on the way home. (#9)

Most of the mothers were thankful for the child care services they had secured. Joan, a 24 year-old cashier who lived within walking distance from her mother, on whom she relied for help typified this view:

Without daycare I wouldn't be able to do things that I'm doing now. I mean, if I didn't have daycare I would have to stay home with my son everyday. Mom can help but so much. Daycare is a big thing, a big thing in my life because it helps me a great deal if I have to be to work at eight o'clock and daycare opens at seven-thirty. So daycare is a big help. (#15)

Hours and Type of Work

All of the women in the study, except one who was recently unemployed, worked (see Table 5-1: Age, Occupation and Income). And all were in female-dominated professions, such as secretaries, health care workers, teachers, cashiers, and customer service employees. Most, but not all, worked from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Mary, Frieda, and Gwen worked the night shift and Joann had to work on Saturday. Gwen stopped working two months before this study when her child care arrangement collapsed. She had three children, two under the age of six. When working, she was on a night shift relying on her father for child care. When her father died, a friend stepped in to help. The friend watched the children at the children's home. Unfortunately, it became impossible for her friend to continue to offer this support, and Gwen could not afford to pay someone else. Gwen's support network was outside of her neighborhood, leaving her with no convenient child care replacement.

Table 5 -1
Age, Occupation, and Income

Contacts	Age	Occupation	Income
CDI - DAYCARE			
1 "Mary"	43	Family Health Worker	2
2 "Alice"	45	Family Health Worker	1
3 "Jane"	32	Secretary	2
4 "Nancy"	27	Family Health Worker	1
5 "Ann"	29	Real Estate Agent	1
6 "Joann"	26	Customer Service Representative	1
CDI - OTHER CARE			
7 "Karen"	36	Daycare Director	3
8 "Ruth"	52	Nurses' Aide	2
9 "Jody"	40	Secretary	3
10 "Sally"	23	Teacher's Aide	1
11 "Jenny"	30	Teacher's Aide	1

Note. Income categories are as follows: 1= \$0 - \$19,999; 2=\$20,000 - \$29,999; 3= \$30,000 - \$39,999; 4= >\$40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is \$23,850; and \$19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is \$38,150; and \$30,550 for a family of two.

Contacts	Age	Occupation	Income
CD2 - DAYCARE:			
12 "Kathy"	23	Office Manager	1
13 "Stephanie"	27	Legal Secretary	2
14 "Kim"	25	Secretary	2
15 "Joan"	24	Cashier	1
16 "Frieda"	40	Teller	3
CD2 - OTHER CARE:			
17 "Donna"	35	Secretary	2
18 "Vicky"	38	Clerical	2
19 "Helen"	29	Customer Service Representative	1
20 "Gwen"	29	Nurse's Aide (unemployed for the last 2 months)	1
21 "Fran"	30	Secretary	2
22 "Jean"	22	Clerk	1
23 "Virginia"	21	Clerk	1

Job Satisfaction

In terms of job satisfaction, 11 of the women liked their jobs; 7 felt "it's okay;" and 5 wanted new jobs. Some employers provided benefits which included paid time-off to attend classes and others paid for the classes. Although one woman liked her job and it had good benefits, she felt the stress level was too high and the employer was not very sensitive to childrearing responsibilities.

Of the 7 who felt their job was "okay," 2 felt that their employers were not supportive of child care responsibilities. Some expressed the view that the addition of benefits, such as medical care, would make the job better. Some of the women who did not have medical benefits mentioned that they were interested in finding new jobs with benefits, even though they were otherwise pleased with their jobs. Another felt that the employer was supportive of child care responsibilities but short on benefits provided. Of the women who disliked their jobs, almost all stated that their employers were inflexible when child care obligations, such as emergencies, overlapped with employment obligations.

Adaptable Employers

A supportive work atmosphere, in which the employer provided the flexibility that the mothers occasionally needed, made a big difference in job satisfaction to the women in this study. Jody, who was a secretary at a large corporation, felt lucky to work for an exceptional employer. She expressed positive comments for very good reasons. She was offered many benefits, including flextime, which allowed her to balance her roles as employee and mother:

Yeah, I am on what they call flextime. I had it during my pregnancy. You come in early and leave early. Early means if you're here at 7:30, you can leave at 3:00, you know. That's how they have the flex time constructed. So, I did it during my pregnancy, and I found out that I really like it. Especially in summertime, you're home at three, there's still bright sunlight. So, now I'm back on the flex time, but not as early as before. So, now I have to be at work at 8:30, and I get out at 4:15. (#9)

In addition to flextime, Jody's employer was planning to offer emergency daycare backup services:

Like, days like the Martin Luther King holiday when, you know, she's [the daughter] out and I have to work or Easter break when I have to work, then she will use that and I don't have to pay for anything because it's part of the money that's granted to use. The company grants us \$700 annually for fitness. You know, if you go to a gym they will pay for it, \$700 of the cost. You can use the fitness plan or you can use it for daycare or the daycare emergency or school. (#9)

Vicky, who had one child and held a clerical position, had a considerate and understanding employer. Her son had allergies and, as a result, she had to take him to the doctor often:

I was running back and forth to the doctor because he has an allergy problem. You know, his [runny] nose, and I decided to work temporary. In case something happens, I don't have to be relied on, cause sometimes jobs, they don't understand that. So, when I first got hired, when they asked me, "Would you like to stay?" I told them, "Well my problem is I have a child." They both looked at each other, like, "We don't have children either?" So, I said, "No, I just want to explain, the reason I really didn't want to take a permanent job right now is because since I have my son he's starting to grow up, and running back and forth to the doctor, you know, he gets sick." They're like, "That's no problem," I shouldn't even have to worry about that, which is shocking, you know, but no problem, so far. (#18)

As Vicky expressed, it was a shock to women to have an understanding employer:

Yeah, at first, I was like, this must be a trap. Maybe they're saying this, and once I get hired everything'll probably be different. But so far, I told them, I don't want you to think that, oh, I come to this job, and every time you turn around I'm out. They said, that's how it is with children. And one of the bosses is a man, and his son also has allergies and asthma a lot. (#18)

In fact, Vicky was very skeptical of her employer at first:

I was scared, like I didn't know if I should take this job. And I said, "Well maybe I'll take it to be stabilized for right now, and then I can always look for something else better," or whatever. And, like I said, one of the bosses was explaining, it's another lady she has the same problem also with her son. Her daughter rather, has allergy problems and every time she turns around she's out a lot also. So, she said, "we don't worry about that, as long as you come in." So, I was like, oh, I don't know. So, I

took it anyway, and so far, like, two or three times, I've called them up and I tell them, my son, this morning is not feeling well. Ok, no problem. (#18)

To Vicky's surprise, her employer's concern about her child was genuine:

And then, next day, they come in, and, "How's your son? Does he feel ok, Are you sure you shoulda' come in today?" And, I'm like, "yeah, he's ok." I say good morning and I'm busy talkin' about something [work related], before we get into anything [I'm interrupted], "How's your son?" And, I'm like, "He's ok, he's a little better and you know." I'm explainin' to them that he has allergies and what he's allergic to, and they tell me, "Well welcome to motherhood, this is what it's all about." And I'm like, oh, ok, you know, so, so far, it's been no problem, you know. (#18)

Ruth, a grandmother, actually adopted her daughter's youngest child. Her daughter was drug-addicted and had two other children. Ruth's fellow employees planned a shower and she was able to take maternity leave to adjust to the baby:

They threw me a baby shower. I thought it was the sweetest little thing. And then I was home for about 2 weeks to get used to him and get the set-up and everything. You know, the mother thing you know. And then that made him five weeks old, and I brought him to daycare, and he was only 5 pounds, 4 ounces. And being that I worked on the premises right there, we had a daycare on the premises which was good. We had a daycare on the premises, which a lot of places don't. (#8)

The majority of the women expressed satisfaction with their employers' attitude about children. However, cases in which an employer was unsupportive in this respect made the mothers uncomfortable and often stressed.

Inflexible Employers

All women in the study who expressed experiencing a work environment inflexible about child-related responsibilities wanted to find another job. There were situations when some mothers had to resolve an emergency and the employers were not understanding. As a result of these stressful experiences, the women were uncomfortable in anticipation of future conflicts concerning emergencies their children may incur.

Jean, a 22 year old working as a clerk in a bank, had to face a stressful, unsupportive work atmosphere until she was assigned a new supervisor:

Oh, God. Sometimes that can be the worst thing [when the child is sick] ... At one time my boss asked me what was more important: my child or my job. And, I mean, of course your child is more important, but he didn't understand because his wife works a part-time job and she stays home with the kids. So he doesn't have to experience running to the hospital, or if they have an ear infection you have to go back. It's just so hard because they really don't understand that when you have to take a child to emergency or if they're sick, you have to go back for a follow-up checkup. All they care about is, "Well, we need somebody here to do work, and you have to be here to do work, and you've been absent such and such times," or "When can you make up your time?" or "We'll need you full time so you have to do this and you have to do that."

But if you have a supervisor like my supervisor now, she's got kids and she understands a lot more. I mean it's a difference. If your supervisor has kids they can relate to you a lot more maybe leavin' a job because an emergency happened, or you call in at the last minute in the morning because you can't come to work. If they don't have kids, I mean, it is so hard to work with them. I mean very hard. All they want is work work work work work. "Well, we need somebody who can be there." And it's sort of like they kinda' threaten you, they threaten you, it's hard! (#22)

Jean described an experience when she had a scheduled doctor's appointment for her child, and how having a flexible employer made a big difference:

If he has a doctor's appointment, they come, "Can you try to get it in the afternoon?" And try to like ... I can't give him his appointments you know? The doctor set it for a certain time and I have to be there. So, but, I would have to like take him, I say, "Okay I'll take him early in the morning to the doctor," and say, "Okay, I'll try to be in by twelve-thirty." That means I have to take him to the doctor, wait for the baby sitter or whoever's going to keep him and stay after work and work later hours to make up the hours. All they care about is you're taking up their time. It is so hard, it really is. It's so hard but I don't know.

My supervisor now, she's a lot more flexible. She's a lot more flexible 'cause we can arrange it while, ok, I'll take him and I'll come in, and if I need three more hours made up from a whole day I'll stretch it out through the week like maybe an hour and a half one day, and like that, but it's hard. If they don't have any kids they sort of can't relate to you. I mean I know a lot of people who experience the same thing, who really experience the same thing. It's just so hard. (#22)

Another example of limited job flexibility was experienced by Helen, who worked as a customer service representative:

They try to be understanding, but they can only do so much. I mean, if it happens, like he was sick quite a bit and they kept calling me at the job to come get him, then it went against my record. So, it was past their understanding point I guess. So what can you do or say? You can't do anything. You can't find someone else to cover for you. You have to leave, but that doesn't mean it's not gonna go on your record. So, that has happened. So, I'm not too crazy about being there too much longer. So I'm looking for something. (#19)

She accepted these limitations and realized it was time to find another job. Helen felt the stress level of the job interfered with her ability to care for her baby:

I do customer service. I've been doing it too long, seven years now. It's stressful, real stressful. I don't want to get too stressed out by the time I get home to be with the baby, And then, you know, he wants attention and I've had enough for the day, giving everybody else attention. So I want to get out of that work and try something else less stressful. (#19)

Although Frieda started working nights because it fit better with her maternal responsibilities and provided more money, the job was stressful:

I just started working out here in the last year, and I had to be because of the fact that I needed to be closer to my kid as far as daycare and schooling. So it works out for me good. I went on nights because I can get more money and get the night differential and all of that. I don't work physically hard. Mentally hard. Yeah, mentally hard because you get ... the customers are very abusive ... (#16)

Frieda, who worked the night shift as a cashier, was usually forced to accept a reduction in wages if she had to take time off for her sick child, which she accepted. However, there are no special rules for parents, forcing her to lose sick days or wages:

The job tells you when they hire you to find proper daycare. "We can only guarantee you eight hours but during those eight hours. You will not be paid any time that you are not on that job."

But they are not compassionate. You can call up and ask them like, "I got a sick child," or "Can I get a day off?" But you have to realize that if you don't have time

in the bank you will not get paid. That's the bottom line, and they have the right to not, you know, give you your request. So then you're stuck.

Now I find it's a decision. Like, do I go to work, be miserable, or stay home and not get paid and know I'm not gonna' get paid? And the idea is that, you know, can I afford this at this particular time? And there have been times, yes, when I had to make that decision, so I have to take my choices. I have to call up sick and, you know, deal with that. But I need to deal with my child at this particular time. Then you're still docked that time, and you're written up. So you have to make your decision. (#16)

Unfortunately, Frieda found that securing child care at non-traditional hours was very difficult, therefore she was not promoted when given the opportunity:

I'd like to move up in my job, but I can't because I can't find adequate daycare. The Transit works 24 [hours] 7 [days a week] and daycare's only A.M. We work all different tours, all different hours and if I could find somebody to work with me with the hours, I could move up. But I can't, and that's that. It's the part that kind of holds me back because I know I passed the test three times for supervision, and each time I've had to turn it down because I cannot find adequate daycare. Like I said, they promise you eight hours. They can't tell you what tour you're going to be working. They can only tell you you're gonna have two days off. That's it. (#16)

Other Concerns

Another consequence of working that was expressed by Gwen (#20), a mother of three, and Mary (#1), a mother of two, who both worked at night, was the feeling of guilt for not being there when it was time to put a child to bed:

You know, once you have somebody you can rely on, and she was pretty good with my kids, so I was more relaxed at goin' to work. It was wonderful gettin' out, goin to work, doin' something. It was a night job too. So, you know, there again I feel guilty because I used to read to them at night before they go to bed, and sometimes I call home and they'd be crying, "Mommy when are you coming home?" I ain't comin' home until they go to bed. It was good, and then one part wasn't. But you know, you had to get help in order to do something good for them, too. (#20)

Summary

Working was essential for these single mothers because they are the sole financial support for their children. Most of the women could not work if child care was not available. The majority of the women liked their jobs for many reasons: the medical benefits; maternity leave; flextime; and paid-time to attend classes and/or paid tuition. The most frequently mentioned reasons for dissatisfaction with an employer were: an employer inflexible about child care obligations; employment-related stress; and no health benefits. In all cases where the women mentioned that her employer did not understand her child caring responsibilities, the mother wanted to change jobs.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSPORTATION

We need a new vision that helps women and their communities to adjust to the overwhelming changes in the patterns of labor and living that have overtaken us in the past few decades.

Donna Shalala, 1980, p.S3

Introduction

Shalala's statement made 17 years ago is still very appropriate. There remains a need to identify a new vision for the design of cities and neighborhoods to accommodate women's complex travel experiences. Single mother's patterns of movement are very different from those individuals without parental responsibilities. This chapter reveals some of the ways the women's travel was complex, time consuming, stressful, and difficult.

Transportation is a universal issue that almost every working person must handle almost every day, and working mothers are certainly no exception. The commutes for most of the women in this study involved travel patterns for at least two people. Their daily destinations involved at least three settings: home, the child care arrangement, and work. Although transportation issues were not the number one concern for these women, the four women who relied on mass transit to get to a child care service discussed the conflicts they faced practically daily, such as the crowded conditions on mass transit, the unreliable transit schedule, and the expense.

The working mothers in this study who used child care services outside the home had to travel with children to get to the service. This required a morning and evening commuting pattern which they followed daily. For many reasons, they often rushed back to the services

in the evening to pick up the children. One factor was the distance of the child care center from work and another factor particular to the women who used public transit was the occasional unreliability of the public transit system. This had repercussions on a woman's schedule and in some cases influenced a woman's decision where to work and whether to purchase a car.

In addition, problems incurred as a result of the conflicts with the opening and closing hours of the child care service and unexpected circumstances. These situations often forced women to rely on their support network for assistance.

The Morning Commute: Traveling to the Child Care Service from Home

Traveling to the child care service was not a major concern for 16 of the women who used out-of-home services: the 7 women who drove; and the 9 women who walked. However, four women in CD1 relied on public transit when traveling between home and the child care arrangement and had to face transportation delays and other conditions.

Those women who walked or drove to a neighborhood center did not feel as much time pressure and did not seem to discuss rushing in the morning as much as the women who used public transit. The women who walked or drove arrived at the daycare center within minutes of leaving their homes.

Walking to Child Care

Nine of the women in this study walked their children to the child care service, which was cheaper than using public transit and a more pleasant experience. Since in most cases, the walk was only a few blocks, the weather was not mentioned as a problem. Although crime was a concern that the women discussed in detail (see Chapter 8: Neighborhood Quality and

Services) they did not mention crime as an issue when walking their children to the child care arrangement. Instead, the walk provided an opportunity for them and their children to be free of the unruly mass transit crowds, the hassle of rushing, and irregular mass transit service. The women who drove were satisfied with the ease of their commute except when the car became unavailable. Under this circumstance, their lives became chaotic until they could devise a new commuting strategy.

The Neighborhoods, Travel and Child Care

Table 6-1, titled Transportation Variables, Mode and Responsible Individual for Drop Off at the Child Care Services, presents two transportation and child care variables: (a) mode of transportation to child care services; and (b) who dropped-off the child. As indicated in Chapter Two, Methodology, there were more Human Resources Administration (HRA) child care slots available in CD2 than in CD1. The availability of more child care spaces appeared to increase the likelihood that a woman in CD2 could walk her child to the day care provider. The women in this study enjoyed the walk from home to the child care arrangement, if it was a few blocks, and found it to be a more pleasant experience than using mass transit. The women who had the shortest commuting times to the child care arrangements were those living in CD2: 7 women in CD2 walked to the child care center while only 2 women in CD1 walked.

Table 6 - 1

Transportation VariablesMode and Responsible Individual for Drop Off at the Child Care Services

Contacts	Mode to Child Care Services (a)	Drop off (b)
CD1 - DAYCARE		
1 "Mary"	Walk	Sister drops off child
2 "Alice"	Car	D
3 "Jane"	Bus	D
4 "Nancy"	Taxi or, Bus & Walk	D
5 "Ann"	Walk	D
6 "Joann"	2 Buses	D
CD1 - OTHER CARE		
7 "Karen"	Home	Home
8 "Ruth"	Car	D
9 "Jody"	Car	D
10 "Sally"	Bus & Train	D
11 "Jenny"	Home	Home

Contacts	Mode to Child Care Services (a)	Drop off (b)
CD2 - DAYCARE		
12 "Kathy"	Car	D
13 "Stephanie"	Walk	D
14 "Kim"	Car	D
15 "Joan"	Car	D
16 "Frieda"	Car	Husband drops off child
CD2 - OTHER CARE		
17 "Donna"	Walk	D
18 "Vicky"	Walk	D
19 "Helen"	Walk	D
20 "Gwen"	Home	Home
21 "Fran"	Walk	D
22 "Jean"	Walk	D
23 "Virginia"	Walk	D

Note. D = drop-off was performed by the contact unless otherwise indicated.

Traveling by Public Transit

As can be seen Table 6-1, only in CD1 were some women dependent on mass transit when traveling between home and the child care facility. As stated earlier, there were more HRA child care slots available in CD2 than in CD1. Not one mother living in CD2 traveled with their children by mass transit to the child care service from home. In CD1 four mothers were required to use public transit to reach the child care service. These mothers did not find using public transportation unacceptable, even though it added tension to their lives, because it was a small inconvenience for what they perceived to be better quality care for their child than local babysitters. For example, Joann, who had one three-year-old child and lived in CD1, selected a child care center that required taking two buses. She chose this daycare center for the exposure to educational curriculum provided by the center. Her daily commute to work involved taking two buses to the daycare center, and then a train to her workplace. Although she wished there were a daycare center closer to her home, she was willing to make the sacrifice in travel time and expense to see her child playing with other children in a school-like setting:

The babysitter was much closer than the daycare center, definitely. Again, you know, I used to walk [to the sitter]. The daycare center, I have to take a bus there, it costs me an average of \$5 a day to do that which I don't mind. [Then I take a bus to get to work.] It tends to run the same as the babysitter, but at least he's learning. My babysitter was my girlfriend's grandmother. (#6)

The four women who traveled on mass transit to get to the daycare center found that the distance between the child care service and their home was a problem if there was a public transit delay. Of those who used public transit, one mother used two modes, bus and train;

another mother usually took a taxi to one center and walked to the sitter with her other child. However, if money was tight, this mother used the bus to get to the center rather than a taxi.

In order to compensate for unpredictable situations, the women tried to leave home a little earlier than usual. Sally could use the bus instead of the train, but said her son preferred the train. She was a teaching assistant at a daycare center, and had one three year old at home with a relative while her six year old child was a student at her school. So the mother and child used a train, or a train and a bus to get there. Sally related her experience:

I take the train. He likes it. He prefers the train than the bus. He says the bus is too long and too crowded. And I prefer the train.

Sometimes it's not good. It's hard sometimes for me to get to work 'cause maybe I don't have the cash, and I'm low in cash and I have to stretch it out. Now, at first I found it hard because I used to take two buses coming, two buses going. So now, I just take one bus, and, um, I take a train and a bus. I still take the same amount of traveling, though but this one's just a little bit longer now. I take forty-five minutes. (#10)

Nancy, who lived in CD1, resorted to a taxi, when she was late, because of the distance and travel time involved using public transit. She had three children under six. Her trip in the morning began with a taxi ride to the daycare center where she dropped off two of her children. Then she walked six blocks to drop off the third child with a sitter. Finally, she walked up a hill to take a bus to work. The entire trip she reported took 30 minutes. Nancy justified the hectic morning pace by looking to the future when her children will be in school:

It's convenient for my two daughters. Now, my son is still with a sitter because he's young. Now, they are not all situated in one place. He's walking distance from them. I do a lot of walking. You think I would be a size 10, all the walkin' that I do, you really would think so, but it's a lot of walking in the morning. Because, like, well he's down the hill. When I come back up the hill, the bus stop is right there, so it's not anything major. Yeah, but then, I just figure it's just for the year 'cause after June he'll be in regular school. They'll both be together. (#4)

In fact, she felt the sacrifice was worthwhile because of the quality of the people providing the care. In her mind, that was the highest priority:

It's really hard to find a good sitter. Because, you just don't want to leave your child with anybody. 'Cause, I was looking for somebody that would really take care of them and really care for them, because it was hard at first. But now it's getting much, much easier. (#4)

Traveling by Car

For the eight women (three women in CD1 and four women in CD2) who used a car to travel from destination to destination, life was easier. They felt the expense of a car was worth the convenience it added to their lives. However, when the car broke down, difficulties arose. Kathy had to face such a situation when her car was in the repair shop, and she had to take the bus and prearranged for her daughter to be dropped-off at school.

It was the worst, 'cause I had to be at work by 9:00, and from my house, I have to leave by 7:00 or 7:30 in order to make it to work by 9:00, if I'm takin' the bus. And my daughter's school doesn't open 'til 7:50, 8:00, so I had to find somebody every morning to pick her up, or I would drop her off at my sister-in-law's, and her husband would take her. And then, her sister-in-law would pick her up, or visa versa. So, if I didn't have a car I think it would be really hard, and I know I'm lucky to have a car. I'm still paying for it, but I'm lucky that we have it, cause it does help a lot. (#12)

Similarly, Jane described the stress of having her car out of commission, forcing her to allow her child to ride the bus alone for the first time. She reported:

.....[s]omeone hit my car so I'm not driving now. But that's a struggle, getting on the bus, dropping them off. My oldest one basically goes to school on her own. One thing I found out with the children is that you try to, at a young age you try to build a growing trusting relationship where I trust her to take the bus. It's a scary thing, but then you could see that you can trust her or him, the child. That became a separate issue now, a responsible person for that situation. Then I have to take the bus to drop that one [the youngest] off, take the bus and drop her off and take the bus and go to work. It will take me an hour. (#3)

The Evening Commute: Traveling to the Child Care Service from the Job

The type of transportation the women used to get to and from work depended, in part, on the location of the job and the length of travel-time between the job and the child care service. Some jobs were accessible by public transit, yet this could be very time-consuming. So the decision concerning the mode of travel depended on many factors.

Table 6-2 describes the average length of travel time for the following categories: all women; CD1; CD2; daycare users; other child care users; women who work in Manhattan; women who work within their home borough; women who work outside of their home borough but not in Manhattan; women who use a car; women who use public transit.

On average, the women commuted 45 minutes from work to a child care service, regardless of mode of transportation. The journey-to-work was an issue if they traveled on mass transit with children, or if they worked farther than 30 minutes from the child care arrangement and did not have a support person in the neighborhood. The average commuting time for those who used public transit (59 minutes) was higher than for those who used a car (22 minutes) which, in part explains why the women preferred to travel by car. The psychological benefits of having a car seemed to outweigh its financial costs.

The women who worked in Manhattan had the longest commute with 72 minutes from work to their child care service. The women who lived and worked in the same borough averaged 30 minutes for their commute, and the women who worked outside their borough but not in Manhattan traveled approximately 39 minutes each way.

Table 6-2

Average Travel Times to Work

Average Travel Times to Work	
Characteristic (mode, destination, type of child care arrangement, place of residence)	Average (minutes)
By car	22
Within borough	30
Daycare users	31
CD1	36
Outside borough, not Manhattan	39
All women	45
CD2	53
Other care users	56
By public transit	59
To Manhattan	72

In the following table 6-3, titled Transportation Variables, Travel Time and Mode to and from Work and the Responsible Individual for Pick up, describes the differences in time traveled by mode of transportation and the responsible for person for picking up the children. As can be seen, only two mothers rely on another individual to pick up their children, and three mothers have home-based assistance. Eighteen mothers were responsible for picking up their children on a daily basis. They depended on their hours at work not to change with the whim of an employer and their transportation mode to be reliable because the children and the caretakers trusted that they would be on time.

Table 6-3

Transportation VariablesTravel Time and Mode to and from Work
and the Responsible Individual for Pick up

Contacts	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Mode to Work	Pick up
CD1 - DAYCARE			
1 "Mary"	60	Train	P
2 "Alice"	5	Car	P
3 "Jane"	90	2 Buses	P
4 "Nancy"	30	Bus	P
5 "Ann"	20	Bus	P
6 "Joann"	30	Train	P
CD1 - OTHER CARE			
7 "Karen"	15	Car	Home
8 "Ruth"	45	Car	P
9 "Jody"	60	Train	P
10 "Sally"	45	Bus, Train	P
11 "Jenny"	20	Bus	Home

Contacts	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Mode to Work	Pick up
CD2 - DAYCARE			
12 "Kathy"	20	Car	P
13 "Stephanie"	60	Bus, Train	P
14 "Kim"	15	Car	P
15 "Joan"	30	Car	P
16 "Frieda"	15	Car	P
CD2 - OTHER CARE			
17 "Donna"	75	Train	Older daughter
18 "Vicky"	70	2 Buses	P
19 "Helen"	30	Car	P
20 "Gwen"	60	Train	Home
21 "Fran"	75	Bus, Train	Grand-mother
22 "Jean"	90	Train	P
23 "Virginia"	90	Bus	P

Note. Travel Time to Work is defined as the number of minutes to travel from home to work including dropping off her child at the child care service.

P = pick up was performed by the contact unless otherwise indicated.

Travel to Work

Eleven women lived and worked in the same borough; 8 of the women commuted to Manhattan and lived in another borough; and 4 worked outside their home borough but did not work in Manhattan. Manhattan was the borough of choice for employment for many reasons: better employment opportunities, higher wages, and more benefits. If women could arrange it they worked in Manhattan despite some negative consequences. As Donna, who worked in Manhattan, stated:

Ok, I really don't like my job. I don't. I really don't like it, but I need a job. ...As far as location of the job, it's too long. It takes me an hour and fifteen minutes to get there, and it's too long. I dread the trip lots of mornings. I'm like, "Oh God, I hate this long trip." And cause I'm too far away from my kids, and they're in a whole different borough than me. And if anything breaks out, it takes me too long to get home. (#17)

An overlapping issue concerned the job location and availability of transportation to provided quick access when necessary. Children expect their mothers to arrive on time in the evening. This is an established pattern that provides a sense of security between a mother and her child. When arriving late a mother may experience stress but the child experiences anxiety and concern about their mother who is often their only caretaker. Women understand this and want to spare their children these negative feelings. As a result, women will sacrifice their savings or other things including personal items and buy a car or work at a lower paying job that is located closer to the child care arrangement.

One woman's feelings towards mass transit clearly displayed the frustration the women faced when having no choice but to accept mass transit as a means of travel:

Well, the difference is that you can jump in your car and go. If you have to wait for a bus or train, you have to wait until it comes. You know, it's a big difference. It's

crowded. People are nasty and rude. You know, when you're in a car you don't have to deal with that. You go about your business. It's a big difference. But as far as my destination there's no problem. If the bus is on time then I'm all right. (#15)

Although owning a car was costly, Alice made the sacrifice and purchased a car. She felt that she saved money and time by having a car, which partly explained why eight of the women own cars:

Before I had a car, then I would have to, you know, take the public transportation. I pay more money for fares. When I have the car I put in the gas for the week. It takes me wherever I want to go, one-two-three. You know, like taking my daughter. If I had to take her to the daycare, and I didn't have a car, then I would have pay a fare from here, take her to the daycare, and then take 2 buses to work. You know, I have the car, it's one, two, three, and I'm at work one, two, three. So, it's like right there. I save too. You know, I get around much more easier. (#2)

Women in the study who used more than one mode of transportation to travel to their jobs mentioned the expense of traveling. The women who owned cars accepted the expense of a car as a tradeoff for convenience and accessibility to their child, which they equated with security. The sacrifice was usually a matter of spending less for themselves on clothing, shoes, and other personal items. Those without cars thought having one would make life easier.

Travel Time To the Child Care When the Unexpected Occurs

Most of the women in the study expressed the need to have quick access to their children in case of emergency. This was an especially difficult issue for those whose travel time from work to the child care arrangement was greater than 30 minutes. Regardless of the type of transportation the mothers used, their sense of security increased with a shorter and easier commute to where their children were located. For the 8 car owners, the return trip to a child care service seemed easier. For the 15 women who relied on mass transit to get to work, responding to an emergency was a concern because it would be difficult to arrive

quickly to be with their child. These women were dependent on mass transit to get from work to a child care service, they used: the train (5 women), a bus (4 women), a bus and train (4 women), and two buses (2 women) (see Table 6-3, Transportation Variables, Travel Time and Mode to Work).

The women who had relatives or friends in the neighborhood felt relieved that help was available. For example, three of these women lived with a relative who could quickly reach the children in case of an emergency. For others, the actual travel time from work was short. For example, two women who took over an hour to get to child care from work could, in case of an emergency, arrive there in 20 minutes by taxi. Unfortunately, two women worked over an hour away and did not have a support network in their neighborhood. For these women the length of time became a real conflict. Donna described a child-related emergency where several conflicts arose, including the distance and the time it took to arrive at the child care service from work. In addition, her employer was not very considerate, and her support network was weak. As a result, her experience was filled with stress created by the tension and pressure to get there quickly:

And there have been occasions when my daughter has called me. I've gotten calls from school, and they have said to me, "She's sick. We need you to come and get her." I can't. "Why can't you?" I'm in Manhattan, it's gonna' take me an hour and twenty minutes before I get to you. "Oh well, what do you want us to do?"

Ok, now I gotta think, what neighbors are available to me, who's home, ok, and most of the time I call they're unavailable to even go get her. And then I'm like, oh, I'm in trouble, you know. I told the lady, "I'll call you back." So, I try to think of all my neighbors. Some of my neighbors don't have phones. And I'm like, I can't call them. They don't have a phone, or their phone is cut off. So, I'm like, "oh my God, I'm really stuck." And I have a tendency, I've called my sister, cause my sister works in [the same borough] over there. I called her, I said, look, I need you to go get my

child. She may say yes. She may say, "I can't, I got a real emergency at the police station, I can't." And I'm like, ok, ok, bye. It's one of those.

So, for that reason, I don't like the location of where I work. I would like to be closer to home, closer to my kids, where if an emergency breaks out, I can go get my child if something happens.

There have been times my daughter had the ringworm. Was it the ringworm? I think she had the ringworm. They wanted her out immediately, cause it's contagious. And I was like, "I can't get there." "Well, we're gettin' her outta here." "Wait, it's gonna take me an hour." "No, she has got to leave now." So, now I'm thinkin', what am I gonna do? Where am I gonna go? And then usually the people that I call, they got kids, so they don't want their kids around my child. So, that means I gotta leave. And, you know, of course, if I'm doin' something at work, and I'm tellin' 'em I got to go. They're lookin' at me like, well, why. "My daughter has ringworm, I gotta go get her. There's nobody to go get her. I gotta go."

So, it's those situations, you know, that you'd be like, I wanna be in the same borough right now, you know, you want to work in the same borough. I don't want to be in Manhattan because those kind of situations come up with kids. I know, those things happen. (#17)

Summary

The number one factor that influences women's travel patterns was having convenient access to their children. However, conflicts arose for all mothers who relied on mass transit to get back to the child in case of an emergency. The women mentioned three ways the situation was frustrating and stressful: when the commute to the child was over 30 minutes; if the employer was not understanding; and when no support person lived in the neighborhood. Mothers who walked their children to a child care service in the morning appeared to have a more positive experience.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHILD CARE SERVICES AND THE WORKING MOTHER

My conclusion is that the average legislator is a man, and the average man simply cannot bear to think that there was ever a time when his mother did not want to be with him twenty-four hours a day.

Elinor Guggenheimer, 1967

Introduction

In 1997, Elinor Guggenheimer, founder of the Child Care Action Campaign, is still working to convince public and private decision-makers, predominantly men, that child care is an essential service that is under-funded and not adequately available for working families. The women in this study, similar to many women in New York City, accepted the responsibility of satisfying their children's basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. They also consciously sought to create a nurturing home environment, transmit knowledge, and meet a child's need for attention, compassion, and physical and emotional security. They were the sole economic support of their families and all, except one, worked outside their homes.

The women interviewed underlined the fact that their ability to support their families monetarily depended entirely on the availability of child care services. The services took many forms from organized daycare centers to improvised or informal arrangements such as relatives, friends, or neighbors. The quality of their and the children's lives was dependent on securing adequate child care.

Type of Child Care Secured

The size and age composition of the family affected the women's options for child care. Table 7-1, titled *Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service*, provides the age of the children and the type of child care service used. If they had only one child, as thirteen of the sample did, then they were more likely to rely solely on one type of child care arrangement. The six who had more than one child relied on multiple arrangements, or if the children were under three, the mothers tended to either use an in-home sitter or take the children to a sitter's house (see Table 7 -1). Although some women had older children, this study primarily focused on the complexities involved in making arrangements to care for the younger children.

The first task women faced was identifying and choosing their child care arrangement, whether it was home-based, with a sitter, or in a daycare center. In fact, only one woman decided to stay home after her child care arrangements collapsed for the second time. This occurred after the death of her father, who was her primary child care provider. She had three children, two under the age of six.

The women used a variety of child care arrangements, including: public; church-based and private daycare centers; home-based care; sitters; friends; and relatives. Ten of the women could not rely on only one type of child care service. Arranging different services varied depending on the children's ages. For example, one mother had one child under six and three other children younger than 12. She arranged for the older children to participate in afterschool programs, while the youngest was in daycare until 6:00 p.m. Another had three

children under the age of six. She had two in daycare and another at a sitter. All these arrangements required coordination and attention to the quality of care for each child.

Women arranged care for children ages 12 and younger. Four women had children between the ages of 8 and 12. When these children got home from school, they were received by a relative, a babysitter or, in one case, the mother who works a night shift. One mother had three of her school-age children registered in afterschool programs. Arrangements for children 16 and older were usually not discussed. (Two women had children 16 years of age and older.)

The types of services that the women used included: city daycare center; private/church daycare center; at the sitter's home; at the child's home with a relative, friend, or sitter; and afterschool programs. In summary, of the 29 children under the age of six, twelve children were in city-sponsored daycare centers, five children were in private or church-sponsored daycare centers, five children were cared for in a sitter's home, and seven children were cared for in their own homes. Of the children cared for in their own homes, three were cared for by a relative and four were cared for by friends who also cared for their own children.

Table 7-1

Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service¹

Contact	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service
CDI - Daycare	
1 "Mary"	5- daycare Center 2 - sister at child's home
2 "Alice"	21,20,17,16 5 - daycare center
3 "Jane"	12,11,8 - all in afterschool programs 3 - daycare center
4 "Nancy"	6, 5 - both in daycare center 3 - sitter outside the home
5 "Ann"	5 - daycare center
6 "Joann"	3 - daycare center
CDI - Other Care	
7 "Karen"	11 - afterschool with father at home 5 months - with father at home
8 "Ruth"	5 - private daycare center
9 "Jody"	3 - private daycare center
10 "Sally"	6 - private daycare center 3 - stepmother at child's home
11 "Jenny"	6, 1 - friend at child's home

Contact	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service
CD2 - Daycare	
12 "Kathy"	4 - daycare center
13 "Stephanie"	4 - daycare center
14 "Kim"	5 - daycare center
15 "Joan"	5 - daycare center
16 "Frieda"	11 - afterschool with "Frieda" 5 - daycare center
CD2 - Other Care	
17 "Donna"	16 3 - church daycare center
18 "Vicky"	2 - Sitter outside the home
19 "Helen"	2 - sitter outside the home
20 "Gwen"	10 - afterschool with friend or "Gwen" 5, 4 - at child's home (with friend until 2 months ago - now "Gwen" stays home.)
21 "Fran"	4 - church daycare center
22 "Jean"	2 - sitter outside the home
23 "Virginia"	3- sitter outside the home

Note. All relatives listed as types of child care service are relatives of the contact, e.g. contact number 1, Mary's sister, stays home with Mary's children.

Quality of Service

Almost all the women were satisfied with the child care arrangements they had obtained. The church-based center used by one mother closed in the summer. This forced her to secure another arrangement for two-and-a-half months. For the last two years, she had paid her sixteen-year-old daughter to care for her younger son.

Women searched for a caring setting for their children. Some of the women had switched from previous arrangements that were not to their satisfaction. Women who had used sitters in the past subsequently found daycare centers preferable because they felt having their children with other children was a more stimulating environment. Almost all the children under the age of three were cared for in a home setting, in part because many daycare centers did not take children under three because the children must be potty-trained. Traditionally, children are expected to be potty-trained by age three. Day care services often do not have the extra resources to handle children in diapers. Most women were very pleased with their current child care arrangements, especially those who had had negative experiences previous child care providers. For example, Fran, who worked in Manhattan, described a mother's nightmare when she was betrayed by the sitter who had her child in an abusive situation:

I had her in this other place and there was no learning going on. This girlfriend of mine and I both had them in the same place and we switch them to this new place. She got home a little earlier than me. That's when she found the kids tied up and she said "my child and your child, the two youngest, they were the two tied." (#21)

Fortunately, Fran had a strong support network in her neighborhood. Although she worked in Manhattan, which was more than a 60 minute commute from her neighborhood-based child care, she had both friends and her parents to check up on her child. After a variety of child

care arrangements with sitters, Fran had selected a private church-based center, and she was very satisfied with her new arrangement:

This place is decent and you know she [the director] really loves the kids. She's not trying to make a profit. She's really concerned with the children. So it's a whole different thing, this woman's base is religious and [my daughter is] learning all different kinds of things. She's learning how to pray and sing songs and all different bible stuff. And this is about the best that I have seen (#21).

As reported by the mothers, the quality of care involved evaluating many aspects of the care provided, including the cost, distance, safety of the child, and exposing the child to a stimulating educational experience.

Hours of Service

The respondents often mentioned the limited hours of child care which are primarily 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. In a few cases, the hours of the child care service afforded women a few minutes of freedom or solitude after work. If a mother lived within walking distance of the center, she could accomplish some errands, or spend a few minutes at home doing chores or relaxing before arriving at the center by 6:00 p.m. Helen described such a situation:

Well, I only use it during the week, and I can pretty much. They open at 8:00, so that fits right into my schedule, and I have to be to work no later. And then I leave him there if I have to do errands after work. I can leave him there until 6:00 pm so that works out pretty good. (#19)

Having to be at the child care center for a pick-up at 6:00 pm provoked anxiety for some, created by having to rush to arrive before the center closed. In some cases, if the mother was late for the pick up, a child could be sent to the police station. Parents rushed to prevent their child from having to go to the police station since it seems to be a standard policy that children whose parents' cannot arrive on time are taken to the local police

precinct. This usually happens when the parent was more than approximately 20 to 30 minutes late. Parents make extraordinary efforts to have someone there to pick-up the child if they can not be there themselves because they do not want their children to end up at the precinct. In addition, the limited hours of the child care services prevented mothers from participating in after-work activities, such as returning to school, or working overtime, and from working in Manhattan where the wages were higher.

School, for example, would require extended hours in the evening at least one night per week. Kathy wanted to return to school. She was attending college when she became pregnant and gave up her education. As a single mother she realized that she would need some kind of assistance with her child in order to finish school:

I think that they should maybe even have daycare longer if they have like, proof that the workin' parent, the parents, are going to school, even if they say, okay, we can't stay open later than 8:00 pm. 'Cause that gives you time to at least have one class, you know, at night.

If they kept the daycare centers open longer. I think that even when the teachers are there with the kids all day, even if they had it like a community center, and children, 15 and over, could basically stay with the kids until the parents got home. That would be something for those kids to do, along with someplace for your children to go. I think that would be a good idea. (#12)

The lack of flexible hours in child care services was especially stressful for those women who did not have relatives living in the neighborhood who could help them by picking up the children from the child care. Vicky wanted to work in Manhattan, which she did before she had her child. But since the child care service closed at 6:00 p.m. she could not reliably be on time for the pick-up. As she explained:

Once in awhile I've done overtime and I asked the lady, I've gotten stuck. See, that's another problem I have right now also, is tryin' to find someone else to pick him up

besides me. See that's my problem that I have right now, since I have all my family away from me. (#18)

While working overtime would allow the women to make more money, few could take advantage of this possibility because of limited child care hours.

In addition, even though Vicky's babysitter had offered to extend the hours of care, she was not willing to take a better paying job in Manhattan. She was aware that such a job would provide more opportunities but she anticipated that future child care arrangements might not be as flexible or understanding. Although her child's current caretaker was generous in her offer to keep the child later in the evening, Vicky considered that in a year he would be old enough for a daycare center and then nursery school where the hours would not be flexible. Therefore, she preferred to work close to her child. As a result of the sitter's understanding attitude concerning her hours, Vicky was able to work overtime at unexpected times without the frustration of worrying about her child:

Ok, the hours [of the sitter] are from 8:00 to 6:00. It depends on the child care person. She told me if I had to go back and work in Manhattan, she'd make flexible hours, but basically the hours are from 8:00 to 6:00. That's why I prefer right now workin' [in this borough]. After I get myself situated, whatever, maybe I'll go back workin' in Manhattan. If I had to work in Manhattan, it might be a hassle with the time, cause that's the reason why I ended up leavin' that job, and tryin' to find another one [in this borough]. See, the hours [in Manhattan] 8:30 to 4:30, would be no problem [in the evening], it's just getting there [in the morning] would be the problem. If the daycare opens up at 8:00, it doesn't take a half hour to get to Manhattan, even though she said she would, if I wanted to. But this was after [I found this job], you know, I didn't know she would've taken him earlier, if I have to work [in Manhattan], you know, cause she says she understands. That, some of them, they won't, you know, they would just say, look, we strictly from 8:00 to 6:00 and that's it.

And, that's what I've noticed at, when he goes regularly into the nursery school they are strictly from 8:00 to 6:00 and that's it. And to me, I feel, I don't know. It would be helpful if they could expand the hours, like maybe 7:00 in the morning, you know

7:00 to 7:00. I understand maybe people are tired, longer hours with the children or whatever. (#18)

Another reason for having additional hours for child care would be to give a mother more time to herself. Stephanie, who also did not have a neighborhood-based support structure, commented on the lack of flexible hours and the lack of additional hours for herself:

Time that she's in there I'm at work, you know, so that really doesn't work out for me. It helps her, but I don't see where it really gives me more time for myself because I have to rush from there to here to work and rush from work to there. So, there's no extra time in between at all. (#13)

The Expense of Child Care

Almost all of the women identified the expense of child care as an issue. Their responses were divided between the women who were participating at a City-sponsored daycare center subject to a sliding tuition scale, and those using private care where fees were fixed. The City-sponsored centers were more affordable than private child care centers or sitters. For the women using City-sponsored daycare, the financial burden was mitigated because these centers enforced a sliding scale fee policy which is reasonable and acceptable to them. Several women noted that this was a relief from the economic pressures of family expenses. Kathy indicated this sentiment:

It's, like I said, if it wasn't for this [City-sponsored daycare], I really wouldn't know what I would do as far as a babysitter, cause I pay, like \$30 a week. And, before, I had her in private [care], and I was paying more, and I fell behind. And so, if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't know, like, who would be babysitting her, and stuff like that. (#12)

For those mothers who had more than one child under the age of six, the child care expense was a large percentage of their income. Gwen related her story concerning the increase in child care costs and the expense of having three children:

With one child you can get around, doesn't cost that much. You could take her to daycare, pay \$35/week, that wasn't too much. She could sleep, stay in daycare from 7 to 6. After all day working, do what I have to do. And weekends I don't mind taking her with me, because that's only one. Yeah, you know, to buy anything, I only buy for one. Then when these two come around, it got more difficult. Instead of one, now you gotta, instead of buying a pair of shoes you gotta buy three pair of shoes. Now it's school time again, I gotta buy three for three. So, what I do, I do it little by little, by the time schools are open, I'm there, I'm ready. Six years ago, it was much better. Today things go up and up and up. My daughter's daycare was like \$35, \$40 a week, now it's \$70 and up. (#20)

The issue of expense was not considered in isolation. As Jane stated, the lesser fees made a difference, but the quality of care was more important:

Another way [city-sponsored daycare] helps is income-wise, because it's based on my income, whereas the babysitter fee, that was killing me, it was soaking me, really. But it didn't hurt me to the point where I wouldn't do it because I needed to do it. And another thing is, I would not just have anyone take care of my child. So I had to find someone that I really, which I did find, people that were really good, 'cause not everyone is, like I found out. (#3)

Alice did not use a City-sponsored daycare center. Although she realized she paid a lot for child care, her concern was that her child be exposed to ideas she felt were important. This justified the cost:

Individual private care is something that I really wanted for him. And really, and this is the truth, what really got to me was when I stepped in here, I seen it was Black-owned. Not that. I'm not a racist, but there're not enough schools that are run by Blacks that's number one. And most schools that are run are run by Caucasians, and unfortunately, only until lately that they're teaching about Black history. And I'm very, very, how would do you say, um, into that, that's the only word I can think of, into having my child learn Black history besides regular history. He needs to know of his own people, what we have done to mankind as well. Not all Caucasians did everything, we did some too. And that, that one thing basically is what got my interest. I said here he will learn about all people, you know, Martin Luther King. Well, who doesn't teach that. But a lot of Black children don't know that it was a Black man invented the light bulb, and it was a Black man that did the first open-heart surgery. It was a Black man that constructed the White House, you know. (#8)

Some of the women were aware of the difference in cost of child care because they secured assistance from friends and relatives before they could get into a City-sponsored center. These women were thankful that they had their children registered in the City-sponsored center.

Summary

The first priority for the women in the study was that child care be available between hours 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. to provide enough time to work. However, one woman suggested that the daycare center should stay open late if a woman can prove that she is in school. This would allow a woman to go back to school and know that her child was being well taken care of while she studied to better herself and therefore, the lives of her children.

Another issue raised concerning the hours of institutional child care was the strict closing times. The hours did not allow for overtime, personal time, or anything else other than work, and was a nightmare when mass transit was late.

Child care was just one dimension in these women's very complex lives. The factors in selecting a child care service were important, for it was this essential service that allowed them to work. Not only did they believe that formal child care allowed them to go to work, but that it also offered their child an opportunity to interact with other children. Child care provided the essential coverage during work hours, but not time needed for time alone.

The considerations in securing child care were: availability; convenience; accessibility; length of time and distance to the children in case of emergency; the hours; and the expense

of the service. Before any of these were seriously evaluated, the women articulated an overriding concern for their children's safety and happiness.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY AND SERVICES

It is sufficient, at this point, to say that if we are to maintain a city society that can diagnose and keep abreast of deeper social problems, the starting point must be, in any case, to strengthen whatever workable forces for maintaining safety and civilization do exist -- in the cities we do have. To build city districts that are custom made for easy crime is idiotic. Yet that is what we do.

The first thing to understand is that the public peace -- the sidewalk and street peace -- of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.

Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, 1961, p. 31

Introduction

What Jane Jacobs wrote about over 30 years ago was a lesson yet to be adopted and mastered in cities today. Although recent reports state that the war on drugs and crime have had an impact on neighborhood quality, a study titled, "Kids Count Data Book" by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, stated that one out of every four African-American children lives in a severely distressed neighborhood (New York Times, 1994).

One question of this dissertation was to inquire about the quality of the neighborhood and whether the presence of neighborhood services increased women's perception of support, and improved the quality of their lives. The neighborhood services, other than neighborhood-based child care, were considered factors in assisting single mothers to achieve free time and pursue interests conducive to a satisfying life.

Of the 23 women in this study, 8 had lived in their communities for over ten years; 5 between five and nine years; and 10 women had lived there for less than four years. In other words, more than half had lived in their neighborhoods more than 5 years. On average, the

women in CD2 lived in their neighborhoods longer than the women in CD1; nine years compared to approximately six years respectively. Three women lived in or close to large apartment complexes that organized activities for their residents. However, none of these women took advantage of these activities, which were primarily for older children.

Table 8 - 1

Number of Years in the Neighborhood

Contact	Years in Neighborhood
CD1 - Daycare	
1 "Mary"	8
2 "Alice"	4
3 "Jane"	2 Weeks
4 "Nancy"	14
5 "Ann"	3
6 "Joann"	14
CD1 - Other Care	
7 "Karen"	3
8 "Ruth"	8
9 "Jody"	10+
10 "Sally"	2 Weeks
11 "Jenny"	4 Months

Contact	Years in Neighborhood
CD2 - Daycare	
12 "Kathy"	10+
13 "Stephanie"	3
14 "Kim"	25+
15 "Joan"	1 Month
16 "Frieda"	11
CD2 - Other Care	
17 "Donna"	10
18 "Vicky"	6
19 "Helen"	5
20 "Gwen"	5
21 "Fran"	30
22 "Jean"	7 Months
23 "Virginia"	3

Parks and Playgrounds

The mothers in this study believed that certain services would enrich the neighborhood and their children's experience. They were especially conscious of the importance of safe parks and playgrounds identified as primary neighborhood support services. The women with smaller children used the playground equipment. Those with both young and slightly older children mentioned parks as a place for softball games and picnics. Parks provided space for recreational activity for the women and their children, where a child could play, release accumulated energy, and be a child, and the mother had time to read a book and/or relax.

Ann relied on a park across the street from her building for relief from her child's demands and boundless energy. She explained the importance of outdoor space for her and her child to provide even a two hour break that felt like a vacation for both:

It's not that she was being annoying. But being around her everyday, it's just like if you're around somebody everyday who annoys you, appears to be annoying you, constantly wants your attention. You become like, you're no longer here for you. I'm only here to serve the child. When the child has cried 3 times or what, you know, you say, "Why are you crying?" You take the child and you shake it. You say oh I'm just shaking it, but you're hurting the child.

So if you have somewhere to go to take the child, even if it's 3 hours out of the day, take it, because at 2 years old they become fidgety. Because I lived across the street from the park, she had an hour outside just to run back and forth, you know, just to burn off that energy, and when she came in it was nap time, lunch or whatever. But she had a schedule where I had time where I didn't hear, "Mommy can I? Don't do that. Stop that. Leave that alone." You know, because it will gray your hair and it will make you abuse a child.

And I have found that to be in a lot of situations, where that's what caused abuse, because the parents are constantly with them. You don't get a break. Just like if you're working at a job and you don't get vacations, you no longer enjoy your job. If you go away on vacation and come back, you know, you miss just exactly what a

child needs and what you need from that child, a break. Even if it's two hours, do it. (#5)

Many of the mothers interviewed mentioned the deteriorated conditions of the parks and playgrounds. Joann, who lived in her neighborhood most of her life, was upset at the way people treated the equipment. This resource was an essential part of her life, and the frustration of seeing others abuse and destroy the play equipment was aggravating. She was especially upset to see that other parents did not try to stop the destruction of apparatus which would most likely not be replaced. In addition, she questioned the changing attitude of the residents, wondering how parents could limit the opportunity for all by not disciplining their children.

The park you know, the swings are broken. I think personally, and I realize things are going down and they're not doing nothing to fix it, and people just don't come together and complain, but sometimes I go to the park because, I go to the park with my son and I realize that it has a lot to do with the home that you come from.

I would see the kids, like jumping on the swing. They twist it around, you know what I'm talking about, when they sit in there and they twist it and twist it and they let go. And they get away, like that, and it's like a merry-go-around, and if you do that, it's gonna break. So, why do it? And their parents just sit there and watch them. And I would get annoyed by watching them, especially watching the parents sit there and watch them do it. Because I'm saying, if you break it you know it's not gonna be fixed, so why you gonna break it? Because for some reason they don't fix them, I don't know why. (#6)

Another common children's play space was the sidewalk in front of their residence. Since all the mothers had young children, the children did not go out unaccompanied. However, fear of crime inhibited some women from allowing their children to play, not just on the sidewalks but even in their own backyards. Kathy did not allow her child to play alone in her own backyard:

It doesn't, like, upset me because my daughter, if she goes outside, I'm outside with her. She plays in the yard. (#12)

Other Services

Fran identified a support service that provided relief for stressed parents. She noticed this in an advertisement on the subway. She was happy to see that there were services provided for women when they have run out of patience with their children. The mothers recognized that outlets were as important for the mother as well as for the child. Fran was disappointed that the service was located in Manhattan where she felt most activities for children are concentrated.

I see now that they have different hospitals now. They're in Manhattan too. That offer, you know, that if you feel like you're under stress or whatever, bring your kid, your kid can stay here. I don't know if you saw this on the train. New York Foundling Hospital. And someone else has a program that says that "If you just need or if you feel like if you are under too much stress, bring us your children and we will take care of them up for up to 3 days."

I don't know about you, but I suffer from PMS, and I can be very harsh because I'm short, and I'm tempered and I'm headachy, and I'm weepy and I'm bloated. And sometimes I take it out on my daughter, and I have to apologize to her, "You know, mommy is really not feeling well." But you know, if I had someplace to send her, you know, then I wouldn't have to put her through mental abuse because my body is going through these hormonal changes.

I was really glad that they have something before you get stressed. Not that I could see myself hitting her because, on the norm, I'm not a spanking mother. But it could just get to that point because sometimes words are harsher than blows. But it's nice to see that they do have that. (#21)

Other than parks and playgrounds, there were only a few other outlets available for the mothers who sought relief from, and/or worthwhile activities for their children. Among those mentioned were a summer camp sponsored by the Police Athletic League, church activities, and dance lessons. Ann and a few other mothers were aware of organized activities

for children in their neighborhoods. On Saturday mornings Ann took her child to "Mindbuilders", a private neighborhood center for children:

She is in a dance course with her own age group, so she has something to do for herself on the weekend, because she's very, she likes clinging to me. I know she's only five, but she also has to learn that she has to be around kids her own age besides school. You know, in their own circle where they can do the same thing basically we adults do when we get together, be ourselves with our peer group. So, she's learning to do that. She enjoys it. (#5)

Services Desired

The mothers in the study listed various activities that they would like to see in their neighborhoods as an enhancement to their children's lives. These included indoor play spaces, a Boys Club or a Girls Club, dance lessons, tutors, arts and crafts, longer hours for daycare, after school programs, a YM/YWCA, a pool, and karate lessons. Saturday morning children's activities were particularly in demand since they allowed the women a few hours to do shopping, housework, and personal activities. In addition, several mothers wanted constructive activities for older children to keep them occupied and away from negative influences. Examples were dances, concerts, softball, volleyball, and other recreational activities.

Fran wished she lived in Manhattan, where she felt activities for children were more available. However, her attachment to and reliance on her support network kept her from seriously considering moving:

Basically I feel a little cheated living here because in Manhattan, I have a couple girlfriends that live in Manhattan, one lives uptown and one lives in the Lower East Side. They have the boys club. The boys club/girls club is like miles away from me. I would have to take two or three buses to get there. These people have their children in different programs on the weekend. In my neighborhood we don't have stuff, like community based, like art stuff.

When they do have them, the age they have is five and my daughter is three. My needs are not being met but I know that my girlfriend's needs are through karate, Boy Scouts, the Y, swimming, and dancing. We don't have stuff like that in my area. Not in my immediate area. I'm thinking seriously about looking for an apartment in some of the rehabs they're doing in the Lower East Side.

I mean, because I can see some of the activities goin' on all in Manhattan, even in Brooklyn, like in downtown areas of Brooklyn. That they really have things. I buy the City Sun and the Amsterdam News, and if I open to the Calendar Bulletin Board they have so many things: story telling and puppet shows in the park and stuff like that. And they're in Manhattan, but we don't get stuff like that here.

All's they have to do is roll out of their bed and they're there. You know, Manhattan is very convenient. But that would be taking away from my whole, taking me away from everybody and everything that I know, you know my whole family is in.... what's of my family in New York is here. There's no Henry's [not her real name] running around Manhattan or Brooklyn. That's kind of scary that I wouldn't have... say my daughter got sick you know I wouldn't have anybody to... right now I live upstairs from my mother. So if she gets sick my mother's home. I don't have to miss work because my daughter's sick. (#21)

Jane had four children, ages 12, 11, 8, and 3. She did not have a backyard and wanted to see activities offered that would take children off the street.

You would have to think how you can make the kids busy and not be on the streets, because not everyone has a house to be in the backyard. So how will you keep them off the street so that the environment don't look as if the kids are just hangin' in the street? And then you'll see how you create the environment for the kids. That's how I look at it. That's why I keep them busy, because if they don't have somewhere to go, then they're gonna feel they have to hang out in the street, which is logical. You know, just like yourself, if we grown-ups, if we don't have somewhere to go, we're gonna hang out in the street, or even hang out in your house or whatever. But for children, they want to play outside, so you have to give them something outside to do. (#3)

Ann believed that children deserved a safe place to go be themselves:

So, I think the kids need somewhere, because the school is only open until about what, 6:00. So they need somewhere to go. If I had the money, I would open up a place myself, an arcade place. I would open something with an arcade, because kids need to relax also, games, for little kids and all the way up. And a place to help them

to do their homework, and just a place where they can sit down and just be themselves. (#5)

Need for Activities Independent of Parenting

Most of the women in this study use child care arrangements from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. five days a week. Additional child care services on Saturday mornings would allow women to shop, which was a very difficult task to accomplish with children. As Sally, the mother of two ages six and three, stated:

If I do shop, I try to find a babysitter. If I can't, I usually bring them with me, and it's hard for me to try something on, because they're there, and I gotta' make sure one's not running around, so it's like, if I do, if I can't try it on, I usually take it home with me and return it if it don't fit. But, I usually try my best to find a babysitter cause it's hard shopping with them, especially in the areas that its crowded, you got a hold one two of them one by, you know, so I try usually my best to find a babysitter when I go shopping. (#10)

Fran expressed the view that having Saturday activities would be a relief for her and provide peace of mind to accomplish errands without worrying about the care of her child:

If I had something like dance school or little miniature junior Brownies and to know that I could leave her for, even if it is for 2 or 3 hours that I could have a secure time that I don't have to worry about where she is that there's this somebody taking care of her that I could do a lot more and peace of mind means more than anything in the world to be able to say she's there she's doing something constructive. She's learning something, she's being social and here I am taking care of business quickly.

Because with her it takes me 3 hours to do something that it could take me an hour to do. You know I have interruptions you know I wouldn't have to worry about that stuff. And that would make a big difference you know time wise. You know time is important and we have so little of it. (#21)

Thoughts on the Changed Neighborhood Quality

Nancy, who lived with her sister in the same building with her mother and other relatives for over ten years, expressed the sentiment on changing attitudes about neighborhood quality. She depicted a crumbling trust and a deteriorating sense of community:

Like I said, that's another thing. When I first moved into the neighborhood, all of us and a bunch of kids, summertime you could tell, because everybody in the building was outside with their children. It was a ritual. You come in from work, you put your stuff down, and you go outside. You go outside and hang out.

It was like a family thing. It was like, we bring our punch, our coolers and we all walk to the park, have dinner in the park. That's what we used to do.

And we used to get a bunch of kids together and say we'll strike up a softball game. We were good for that, we get all the kids, whether we knew them or not, we'd say "We're gonna' play softball, you wanna' go? Yeah." And we'd go together.

And when we were younger, "Mom, I'm goin' to the park with my sister." And all the kids in the neighborhood, we'd all go to the park. It was really nice that way.

When they had that snow storm and the day after that blizzard, all of us came outside. Then we made a little igloo in the back. They had their little house and stuff, went slidin' down, made their own sleds and stuff. We slide down and all that stuff. But now, you know, people now, the people that are moving in now very rarely, [do you see] their children, which you could understand now. And it's not like a cohesiveness like it was before. It's not like, you know, people used to watch out for each other's kids and stuff. Now, you got people, they come in and they upstairs and that's it. You won't see them no more until they have to go out like to work or school.

When asked why she thought the neighborhood had changed, she responded:

Because a lot of people's attitudes has changed. A lot of people now is becoming mistrustful of people. There're too many things that is goin' on, you know. Kids bein' missin' and snatched and stuff. So it's a lot of mistrust goin' on, and I guess a lot of people don't feel, even when it comes down to our building tenants' association, a lot of people don't have the, at least don't want to make the time to get to know people in the neighborhood anymore.

Like before. See, before it was just genuine that you would come in, and that's how you could tell who lived in the building the longest. You could pretty much talk to them. Like the lady next door. She's been here for a long time. We've been here for a long time. So, you have a rapport with them, they know us. And the people that live next door, well everybody on this floor we know, 'cause there's no one new that has moved. Well, the people in the corner, we don't particularly know them.

But, other than that, like if they hear a bump and they know you're out of the house at a certain time and they hear something, then they know. Well wait a second. She goes to work at this time. Let me call the police. Now, you can't say that, you know,

because you might have somebody new and they might be upstairs and you don't know, so you can't say. "Oh well, let me be suspicious, 'cause she told me she was going out of town and there's no one in her house so I should call the police." You don't have that togetherness like we used to have before, and it was really great. (#4)

Another respondent, Ann, noticed changes in her neighborhood that made her very cautious:

The kids are not what they used to be. Ten years ago, teenagers were teenagers. Teenagers now, they carry everything. I mean, you can't walk past them and brush too hard, or else they'll tell you what you couldn't tell nobody, you know. (#5)

Fran, who lived in her neighborhood all of her life, reflected on the past when she, as a teenager, would help her relatives with child care:

Teenagers aren't like they use to be. To say that teenagers could babysit a group of kids. Like the young folks have their own thing. I can remember times with my older cousins, you know, are grown, married with kids, and I was still like 14 and, you know, they would come and pick me up and I'd sit there and babysit. And they would have a chance to go out and be with each other as a couple and I would babysit.

But you know, kids now, their parents are buying them gas. They don't want to hustle for anything, and they are really providing everything. In my days my mother was like, "Hey, if you really want those name brand things you have to show me that you want to help yourself a little bit. So I'll give you half and you come up with half." So I hustled. I babysat. You know, I did whatever. I walked kids home from school, you know, stuff like that. (#21)

Fran's frustration with services and people's attitudes about helping, sharing, and giving of their time was echoed by other women in the study.

Safety

Many of the women in the study who lived in their neighborhoods for more than ten years recognized the changes in their neighborhoods as predominantly negative. In the last few years they noticed an increase in crime, especially an increase in the presence of drug dealers, junkies, and even prostitutes.

Joann, who worked and lived in the community most of her life, was distressed at being unable to do anything about the community changes:

I grew up around here, and to see the neighborhood going down like that and you can't do nothing to help because if you should inform you worry about your life and stuff like that. So you don't want to do it. You're more scared. It's like everybody's scared, so nobody's gonna come together. (#6)

Some women were worried about allowing their children to play outside, even in their own backyards. They adapted to the situation by rationalizing that safety could be controlled by providing protection through their presence. Kathy wanted her daughter to be able to do child-like activities and play out of doors. As a result of prevailing danger and heightened concern for their children's safety the women felt limited in their ability to use their community effectively.

She relied on her car for her safety when traveling through the neighborhood:

I drive to go back and forth where I go, so it's not as much of an effect on me. But, it also lets me know that I don't want to raise my daughter in this community, 'cause it's just not where I want her to be. (#12)

Women with cars traveled outside their neighborhoods to find safe parks in which their children could play. Crime inhibited the women who would normally, in a safer neighborhood, allow older children to take younger children to the park.

Crime prevented women from feeling comfortable in their neighborhoods. It was an major source of stress, compelling women to be constantly aware of their children's whereabouts, and making them mistrustful of alternative caretakers.

Donna was conscious of the increase in crime and wanted to protect her son and daughter:

Every black boy that is in the neighborhood is selling drugs or taking drugs. There is nothing for them to look forward to. The only thing they have to look forward to is the drug dealer on the corner with the shiny car, the sneakers, and the gold chain around his neck. And they think that that's livin'.

I don't want my son to think that that's livin'. That's not livin', that's existing. And there's more to life than havin' a gold chain around your neck, a pair of sneakers on your feet that cost \$75 or \$100, and a shiny car. That's not what it's about, and I don't want that for my son.

I don't even want that for my daughter. I don't want my daughter to have a drug dealer for a boyfriend, or an unwanted pregnancy at 16, 17. Most of my daughter's friends are having babies now, and she's going to school. These are the people she talks to everyday. Most of her friends, they're having babies. Instead of me sayin' "How's school?" to her friends, I'm sayin, "When is the baby due?" I don't want that for my daughter. I want to get them out of here.

The project's not the problem. I'm not sayin' that the projects are, 'cause the projects are not the problem. There's other issues that face these kids all over. But in the projects, it's like, everybody's thrown in there together, and these kids are looking at this. It's like they're set off apart from everything else, and they're just in this rat trap development, you know. And everybody knows what's goin on in 4F and 7D. Everybody's in there together, lumped in there together. (#17)

The perception of crime also influenced the women's behavior. Fran, along with other women, expressed that she no longer enjoyed shopping because she feared for her child's safety:

Because it's very hard to shop with her. I have this really bad phobia about somebody snatching her. Maybe I watch too many movies about someone snatching my child, you know, in a department store. That's another thing. I don't even enjoy shopping anymore because if I take her with me she throws clothes and I'm trying to try on something and I get really frustrated. Or I get really scared if I turn around and she's not there. That kind of stuff. (#21)

Moving to Escape Crime

To provide a better environment for their children and escape crime, many of the women interviewed considered moving out of New York City. Kathy did move for a few

years to Atlanta, hoping she would evade crime. However, she said Atlanta was no better.

She returned to be closer to her sister and grandmother:

My father, he's an attorney down there, and we went. I mean we liked it down there, and I was tryin' to think of some place to take my daughter that she would be away from as much crime, and I wouldn't have to worry about when she went to school. But when I went to Atlanta, it wasn't as much crime, but it was crime.

I was more worried about her going to school out there than I was up here. Because I figured she has to take the bus, and the roads are dark down there. And I think that the incidence of kids getting pregnant young probably may be bigger, higher than up here, because my sister is, I think she's in like the 8th grade now, and she came home tellin' me that the kids in her class was pregnant. I was like, well, it seems like it's not exactly what I was lookin' for, especially to live so far away from the rest of my family. I just decided it was better for me to come back. (#12)

Donna and other women expressed interest in moving out of New York City for their children's sake:

I would love to leave New York, love to take my kids, especially my son. I feel that the boys have it hard, and I really would like to get my son out of New York, especially out of the projects, because the influence there is not good. (#17)

Jean moved from one borough to another to escape a bad neighborhood. Her husband died when she was six and a half months pregnant. She lived in her current neighborhood for six months, which she described:

Oh, I love it. I love it, it's a big change because in Brooklyn, I'm not trying to stereotype it, but to get away from so much of everything goin' on like people crackin', sittin' on the stoop and just runnin' around bein' disrespectful ... They're playin' but it's too rough. It's peace and quiet here. That's the way I like it. I can make noise if I want to but, you know, it's not a bad neighborhood. It's quiet from what I've seen so far. You don't hear police sirens and all of that, you know, running constantly down the block ... a change of pace.

There may be parts of this borough that's a faster pace like there, but I'm not in that class so I like it over here because I'm away from it, you know? Peace of mind and I don't have to worry about him bein' outside. I want him to go outside, and the gate to the door is locked. I can just let him go out, leave the door open, don't worry about somebody comin' in, and it's just a whole big difference. I like it because it's

better for him and raisin' a child, a boy, it's hard and if they don't see so much goin' on then they won't wanna get interested in it, you know. I do everything I can to protect him. Sometimes I may be over-protective because his father passed away and I don't want the same thing to happen to him....his father died. (#22)

Strategies and Actions

The women developed strategies to handle real and perceived safety issues. They realized that for their own peace of mind they had to understand how to handle their environment.

Ann, who had a very strong family support network in the neighborhood, was careful about making friends and allowing her daughter to make friends in the building. She had developed her own process of evaluating a neighbor before she would allow her five year old child to spend time with the neighbor's children:

I always took her with me because at the time when I first moved there, I didn't know anyone. Now, I will leave her with my friend upstairs, because I know she's a caring person. But, anybody else, no, because I believe you have to not only look at the person, but look at their kids. Because, I mean, I've watched her daughter and I said "Oh that's a nice little girl." Like all kids they don't do what you tell them to do. And, I watched her, and then we became friends.

There's other kids in the building. She can talk to them, but I will not allow her. I think last week was the first time, we've lived here about 2-1/2 years, and last Thursday was the first time she went outside and played with them in the hallways of my apartment. The door was open, she was playing, she could come back and forth. And it's an experience for her, because she's never done that. She never went outside and played without mommy. (#5)

Donna, who did not have a strong support structure, related what it was like to live in a neighborhood that had a prevalence of drugs. She had a complete picture of the families in her building, which was essential. She understood who could be trusted if a backup was needed in case of emergency:

If you are a single mother, you have to have a backup system. It's very important. You cannot, like I always say, I can't raise my kids alone. You do need other people. And, in the community where I am now, I've been there 10 years, and there's not a lot of people really that I can rely on, due to the fact that there are a lot of drugs in my area. I'm not leavin' my kids with them, and I'm not gonna endanger my child, my children, with people that I know that are doin' drugs.

So, I have a very select group to choose from to say, ok, the woman in 5C, I'll see if I can talk to her, you know. You have to have all these other supports. But, I feel like there's other services in the community that would help, maybe a community center that stays open to seven, or something like that, where I could take my kids. (#17)

Another anti-crime strategy that the women adopted was to not go out after dark. In fact, many of them expressed a fear of going out at night and did not do so. They arranged to stay overnight when visiting a friend or relative, if they did not expect to be home by 9:30 p.m. Some had been victimized or knew others who had been victims of crime. For example, Ann was robbed and felt very vulnerable in her neighborhood:

So, I feel if I stay off the street, and I try to do that after 8:00, if I'm at my mother's I'll stay there the night. Because I live alone and I don't have a male in the house people will therefore take advantage. So, to prevent that, if I'm out of the house and it's like 9:30, if I'm not getting a ride by a family member, I will stay the night there. It's dangerous. I've been robbed twice. (#5)

Community Participation

Nancy lived in her neighborhood for 14 years and was active trying to get the local hospital to offer community services, i.e. daycare. She participated in organizing the community to stop the hospital from establishing a Methadone Center:

All the buildings that the hospital owns you would think they would make something free for the people in the neighborhood. And the majority of the people in the neighborhood use their services, but they don't [make something free for the people]. They don't. We recently had to fight. Our community had to fight them. They had wanted to open a methadone clinic down there on the corner. And we had to fight them from doing that. And we were suggesting to them, trying to get them to either

open up a daycare or a community center for the kids 'cause there's nothing around here for the kids to go into. And the neighborhood is not as nice as it was about like four years ago.

Yeah, it's not as nice as it was before. So, you know, the kids around here, the older ones, they need something to do instead of playin' in the middle of the street football or the baseball or the marbles and stuff. But, there's nothin' here for them to do.

And it's so hard tryin' to get people together because, like I said, on the committee that I'm on it's a money thing. The city won't grant you unless you have a building, but the building, the people who own the building spaces are not gonna give you unless you have the money. So, you know it's hard trying to even get that together. They really need to open up more daycare centers. There are a lot of workin' people in this area. And, I'm told there's only 100 slots for kids for daycare in this area. And the slots fill up quickly. And being that you got a lot of immigrants and a lot of other people comin' in from different parts of the country and stuff, it's so hard.

I would like to see a lot of the businesses, and especially the hospitals, be more community-oriented. Because we here, we support the neighborhood. The people around here support the neighborhood real well. You know, you got a lot of hard-workin' people in here that really need some of the services and have the kids. And it's frustrating and it's hard when you can't find someplace to place your kids. You know, somewhere for a few hours while you're workin' that you feel that they are safe there for a little while. And, it's so frustrating when you have, you know, you have a lot of space here. There's a lot of buildings around here that is for rent sign and stuff, and nothing being done with it. Nothing, and it's just so frustrating. (#4)

Jean suggested that a block party might be a start at rebuilding a sense of community among her neighbors:

If people would try to get together, you know, get to know one another more. Well, be friendly more, you know. I don't know, 'cause, um, I don't know. Some blocks, my aunt's block, every year they have a block party. Everybody know each other. I asked one person, do we have any block parties, and she said "No." I guess everybody don't wanna participate or don't wanna join. I thought of even having a group meeting, that would be good, you know. So we were talking about a group meeting and stuff like that. People could gather, and we could start a group on the block. She said a lot of people don't wanna participate, nobody gonna participate. You'll be there by yourself. (#15)

Summary

The most mentioned time period desired for children's activities was Saturday mornings. This would provide women with time and the freedom to attend to required household responsibilities such as shopping without worrying about entertaining their children. However, as one mother asserted, "It's frustrating and it's hard when you can't find someplace to place your kids..... for a few hours.... (#4)." It also would allow them to be independent of their relatives' support and know their children were safe.

Repeating what was stated in this chapter by Nancy, having alternatives available for parents to entertain their children outside the home is important to prevent abuse.

...that's what causes abuse, because the parents are constantly with them. You don't get a break. Just like if you're working at a job and you don't get vacations, you no longer enjoy your job. If you go away on vacation and come back, you know, you miss just exactly what a child needs and what you need from that child, a break. Even if it's two hours, do it. (#5)

Without services that are neighborhood-based women are left to arrangement time for their children and often do so without spending money. Money was an issue for entertaining children, therefore, the support network was an essential outlet for these women and their children. More often the women with strong support networks had more opportunities to entertain children outside the home.

For the long-time residents (women who lived in their neighborhoods for over ten years), neighbors who were strangers was new phenomenon. They remembered times when everyone knew one another, and shared in child care and other activities. Because people did not socialize and interact with one another as in the past, these women were suspicious of

their neighbors and lost the ability to rely on help other than their families to watch their children.

The women felt that if more activities were provided, the crime in the neighborhood would decrease because teenagers would be involved in constructive activities.

Although women were familiar with their neighborhoods, their recent personal experience with crime made them justifiably cautious in using the neighborhood as a place to relax with their children. One woman was robbed twice; two women were widows because their husbands had been shot; and other women expressed fear of traveling after sunset. As a way of escaping the crime, the solutions mentioned were to leave the City and to become active in their neighborhoods to address these issues. Raising awareness to make the necessary changes would be difficult for as one woman stated, "...people just don't come together and complain..."(#6)

Life was not simple or easy-going for these women, they developed strategies for understanding their neighborhoods by getting to know who their neighbors were. As one mother stated, "If you are a single mother you have to have a backup system (#17)." Therefore, they had to identify who in the neighborhood could be trusted with their child. In order to get to know their neighbors women in this study mentioned that they did not rush into a friendship, but observed their neighbors carefully, often judging them by their children's behavior. If a mother found that the behavior of the neighbor and the neighbor's children was acceptable, then they befriended them.

CHAPTER NINE

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

At the end of the interviews, all of the women were asked one or several of the following closing questions:

(1)"Where would you hope your life will be in 10 years?"

(2)"Are there any changes you would like to make in your life that you feel would improve the quality of your life?"

(3)"There are a couple fictional questions: One is, if you had all the money in the world, what would your life look like?; or If you were to create the ideal world that could improve the quality of your life, what would that world look like?"

Envisioning The Future

Answers to the first question about life in 10 years varied. Many of the women said they wanted to leave New York City or move to another neighborhood, own their own home, or not share a home if they were doing so. Some women spoke of wanting to own their own business and to purchase a car. In addition, they would send their children to good schools, or private schools, if they could afford to do so.

Although, they were not asked about educational attainment on the confidential questionnaire (see Appendix 2-2), or probed for this issue, the women discussed this topic at length. Returning to school was a priority, and the most mentioned change they would like to see in the future. Seventeen of the twenty-three women wanted to return to school themselves to finish high school or college. Some of them left school when they had children.

Kathy who lived with her grandmother, and was going through a divorce and child-support battle with her husband. She did not finish college after her child was born, but instead supported her husband while he finished school. Her philosophy was that schools should be structured to allow families to attend:

That's funny, 'cause I was tellin' a lady that I work with that if I could, if I had a chance, I think that I would want to provide schools for everyone, because if you don't educate people, they don't realize what they're missing.

If I could change the world, I would provide ways. Men always have a chance to do something with their lives, whether they have kids or not. [I'm] not sayin' that there's not men that's strugglin'. There are men that's strugglin, and I would provide things for men too. But I just feel like there are so many women. Like myself, like, I stopped school, and I let my husband go to school just because, you know, because we had a daughter. I would provide, like, schools for parents to take their kids with them, or mothers, you know, to take their kids with them, if families want to go together to school. (#12)

Kathy intended to return to school, as soon as possible:

If I had a chance to go full time, I would be in there. If I had a chance, this way I can do it and get it over with. But now, I'm lookin' at goin' part time, 'cause I know I definitely need to work. (#12)

However, she realized that she would need child care, and articulated ideas for providing such services:

I would need, I probably would need somebody to pick up my daughter on the nights that I do go, 'cause I don't know if I'd be able to make it to my job and home in time. And then I would need somebody to mind her the hours when I'm in school, and that's about it. Right now, I don't know exactly what my options are, but I know me and my sister was talking about goin' together. So, I'm hoping that maybe if she gets somebody to mind her kids, that maybe she can mind them both, hopefully. If not, then, maybe some nights I can work it out with her father that he could mind her. I just have to see. (#12)

Kathy's self esteem was high, which kept her focused on accomplishing her goals:

While I was pregnant with her, I was in college, so, I always felt like I would be doin' somethin'. I think that's the type of person I am, I couldn't sit back and wait for things to happen. I'm talkin' about a lot of things that I want to do, and I may not do 'em as much as I should. But I didn't think I would have a daughter now, not exactly. I thought that maybe I would be goin' to college, I thought that I might be at home. I don't know, but I definitely thought that I would be a successful person. I don't feel like I'm not successful now, but I do feel like I still have a chance and I'm not old where I can't make things happen for myself. So, that's about it.

In ten years, I would hope to have my master's degree. I would hope to be able to provide my daughter and myself with the things that we need, and I know that because the person I am, if I became successful, I would hope to make a change and help somebody else out. Because I know how hard it can be. (#12)

Other women expressed similar aspirations. For example, Virginia also mentioned wanting to return to college to start eventually her own business:

I want to go back to college. That's one thing I have to start thinkin' about, what I would like to do. And, that's like I said, I always wanted to get into dealin' with children, like I said daycare or, well, I wanted to work in a hospital pediatric area or something dealin' with children. Mostly something dealin' with children, 'cause I like children. My goals are, hopefully, to have a better life than this. I mean, it's rough out there, it's kind of hard. (#23)

Jane attempted to go to school at night, but found it to be too much for her children:

I tried going to school, and it was hard. It was hard for my children, so I would not probably be trying it again. You know, I would call them. "I'm on my way, everything's fine and I'm on my way." And I've always had family around them, but like I said, they were like my environment, so I would call them and let them know that I'm ok, I'm coming by. So, you know I did try, but it was more pressure for them. Because it affected their school. It affected their school, ... it was more pressure for them. They were helpful though, they were helpful, but it still was pressure-able on them. (#3)

Jody described her decision to leave school, and hoped to return someday:

I was doing liberal arts, because I went to Hunter College for two years. I never stayed. I dropped out and decided to enter the workforce because I wanted my own apartment. I mean I just couldn't wait, so I dropped out, and I was doing really well. And I discovered I was pregnant and so I stopped.

When my daughter is of age I plan to resume that. I'm gonna be at the company for, you know, another until I don't know, but right now this is my source. I have to keep working because I have a child, and, you know, it's a very important part of my life right now to have a steady job where I have, you know, how should I say, this is a guarantee keeping my job. My child will be able to go to school and have the things that she needs until maybe I, you know, I meet someone who has an income like me and we can unite, and be key partners. But as far as I can see, I have to keep steadily working.

I really would like to go back to school and really focus on studying and getting results and really getting interested in, it'd be nice. ...it's some time away, but I really would, I feel like I really would like to, you know, go back to school and just study something, maybe teach who knows, be a counselor.

But this can't happen until my daughter is old enough to be home by herself because it will be evening classes for me. (#9)

The Ideal

In reference to the second question, "Are there any changes you would like to make to your life that you feel would improve the quality of your life?," several of the mothers had a very grounded perspective about the future and hoped that it would be less stressful, as reflected in Jean's comments:

You need to make things to be what you want it to be. My quality of life is fine right now. I don't know. Makin' it the best way you can, I really, you know, I don't ... like if something aggravating happens I don't like stressin' out or just constantly keep lingering on it and depressing myself. I just kinda, like not lay back and say, "Well, whatever happens happens." I try to ... you just ... make it the way you want it to be. You can't just sit around. I pick myself up with everything. With everything. I never ... maybe because I just budget or I time ... I don't know. I work at my own pace. I'm not gonna go too fast where I know I can't do it. I'm not gonna pursue somethin' that I know is really really out of my league. You know how they say your eye is bigger than your stomach? I don't try to go overboard. I go at my own pace, the way I can handle it. That makes my quality of life fine because what I have is what I can afford. You know, I don't do it to please everybody else. I do it to please me. (#22)

Fictional Questions

The fictional questions were phrased to have the women project themselves out of the role of mother. However, consistent with the conversations on other topics, the first thing that came to mind was their children. As Gwen, a mother of three children, ages 10, 5, and 4, stated:

I guess, I don't know, I want to say give my kids everything they wanted. But then again, that's not always good, but, you know, give them whatever makes them happy. (#20)

After acknowledging their concern about their children's future, the women tended to address two topics: less violence in the world and helping other people. Jody described an idyllic world:

It would look like a garden. It would look like a garden with mountains and peace and, you know, children and animals just running through. Just a total peaceful world, not having to worry about anything, you know, as far as people. And everyone is just good-natured and no violence, no hunger, no nothin'. Just wake up everyday and look outside and it's just beautiful. Everyday a happy, sunny day. (#9)

Kim was concerned about educational and community opportunities, less violence, and less crime. Accomplishing many of the objectives mentioned would free all the women from the anxiety they currently experienced:

Education when I want it, where I would want it to be, nice neighborhood, nice friends, good schools, little community organizations that would keep the kids busy, you know, recreation. Just that whole nicey nice state. Something like that where everyone's friendly. You can leave your child without having to worry about her standing there for fear of someone snatching her, no crime. Probably where everything keeps cool and is running smoothly. That is a fantasy because, as they say, it's a jungle out there. (#14)

Although not a direct improvement to their lives, if they had the money, these women considered offering large contributions to organizations that help the needy. Several of the

women proposed solutions to help the homeless and other people in need, especially young women. Donna had a balanced approach to achieving wealth. She would also buy a house and a car, and address her community's needs:

Oh boy, I sure would have me a house. Oh, I'd buy me a nice car. I would contribute a lot of it to my church, 'cause we need a church building bad. We do need a church building. I would give some to my church, help people that I know that's in need.

I would definitely get a center to help mothers, single moms, 'cause they need help. They need help with their kids. Even like a place that's a 24-hour thing, like a center where they could come. Ok, like, I know they got a hot line you can go take the kids if the mother gets stressed out. But like, say, the mother's like, "I just had to get away." Maybe we could send them to, like, a resort thing, like upstate somewhere. The center was, like, all paid expenses. You just go for the weekend, and have yourself a good time, go ahead, just pack your stuff and go. I would like to have a center like that to help young mothers or single mothers. Mothers, just mothers. Or if you got some men, you want to get away from the kids, go ahead, have something like that. (#17)

Summary

What would women like to see in their future? It would include opportunities for their children and for them to return to complete their education. They would like to never deny their children things they need or want, and they would like to be able to make a contribution to the world.

These women are aware of the inconsistencies between their lives and the lives of others, as Kathy has state:

...But I just feel like there are so many women. Like myself, like, I stopped school, and I let my husband go to school just because, you know, because we had a daughter. (#12)

The women take their situations and make the best life they can for their children, as Jean stated earlier, "...My quality of life is fine right now. I don't know. Makin' it the best way

you can...” Yet if they could change things they would like a neighborhood, as Kim has stated, “... you can leave your child without having to worry about her standing there for fear of someone snatching her...”

The women are not asking for changes that are unreasonable, yet without the assistance of policy-makers these quality of life solutions are difficult to accomplish.

Part IV**THE CONCLUSION****CHAPTER TEN****RESULTS: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

Wolves and women are relational by nature, inquiring, possessed of great endurance and strength. They are deeply intuitive, intensely concerned with their young, their mate and their pack. They are experienced in adapting to constantly changing circumstances; they are fiercely stalwart and very brave.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Women Who Run With the Wolves, 1992, p. 4

Introduction

The Estes quotation describes one view of a woman's qualities and how she uses these qualities to assume her family obligations. The women in this study work full-time facing obstacles in achieving good-paying jobs and free-time. The daily conflicts faced by single mothers need to be identified and removed, or at least ameliorated, in order for them to achieve a satisfying quality of life.

A necessary part of achieving a satisfying quality of life is the ability to control one's time and create time for oneself. This study was based on the assumption that quality of life is an environment-based concept, and involved examining the ability of working single parent women to achieve free time. Four planning variables, (employment, transportation, child care services, and neighborhood services) were examined from an environmental psychological perspective because they were considered influential in the design of the built environment and in social and economic factors that had repercussions for single African-American

working mothers' ability to control their own time and achieve some free time outside of work or without child care responsibilities.

The notion of a healthy person is partly contingent upon a person's ability to achieve time to do with as she wishes, especially to be independent of children or alone. If a person has no time to be alone, it is highly likely she will incur stress that could lead to physical or psychological illness (Elliott & Eisdorfer, 1982). Free time is part of a very complex set of personal needs that must be satisfied in order to achieve personal well-being. Most women are extremely strong and survive the demands of motherhood, but not without its unforgettable moments, good and bad. Most people survive parenthood without satisfying all their wants, and the conflicts in their lives must be addressed. Identifying conflicts involves creating a basic understanding of how, when, and why conditions that result in conflicts occur. Resolving the conflicts involves developing plans to eliminate or ameliorate these conditions.

The quality-of-life variable, defined in this study as the ability to achieve free time, needs to be understood in the context of an individual's life and, as in this study, the single working mother's life. This study examined the needs of parents, especially single working mothers, to see if policies can be developed to reduce or eliminate the environmental conflicts that absorb their time needlessly.

The focus on quality of life in this study was to identify the influence of the four planning variables in assisting single mothers to achieve free time, and to identify the conflicts these women attributed to these variables: What barriers to achieving free time were associated with these variables? Did these planning variables contribute to single mothers'

lives in a positive or negative way? In most cases, the effects of the planning variables were not predetermined, but changed from day to day.

It is clear from the findings of this thesis that for single mothers, the ability to achieve free time is a very difficult accomplishment. A working mother is one the most restricted members within any family type. As mothers, the women in this study expressed a need for at least a few hours a week, without children in tow, to do with as they wished. Unfortunately, what was evident from this study was how difficult it is for women to carve out such time. Satisfying their personal needs was third priority after children and employment. Personal needs were difficult for some women to identify. A mother's description of daily life often emphasized stress provoking circumstances, including her use of public transit, her concern for the safety of her children and her own safety, and her responsibilities as a full-time employee.

Support Network

The most important variable for allowing the women in the study to achieve free time is the support network which is not a traditional planning variable. A support network enhanced a woman's life by providing the assistance needed to get away from children for a few hours. The availability of this key factor varied for each woman. For single mothers who had no relatives in the neighborhood, arranging any type of assistance to care for her children was difficult. The support network which was primarily based on relatives was the one community-based unofficial social support service that helped a mother achieve time for herself, independent of her children.

The women in this study often involved many people in their support networks and made complicated arrangements to use the support. The analysis of the findings revealed that a support network had three dimensions: (1) the distance to the support person; (2) the frequency that the person offered support; and (3) the amount of time the support person was available (see Table 3-1, Support Network for Achieving Time Alone). The degree to which the women in this study were able to achieve time alone depended on one or more of these factors.

The most successful arrangement for achieving time alone was when a family member was located in the same neighborhood, although a short distance to a support person did not always guarantee that a woman would receive unlimited assistance. However, it was more likely that she received desired support if she lived close to a relative. In fact, the only two women in the study attending school lived with their mothers. These women realized that in order to work in higher paying jobs they needed the time to complete their education. However, many women recognized that child care would have to be available in the evening if they were to return to school.

Achieving free time was more difficult for women with weak support networks. If the support person lived outside the neighborhood, arranging free-time did not happen often because of the expense and burden of traveling. These women relied on their time at work for relief from children, or used time from lunch hours or during the train ride to and from work for time alone. While it was important for both mother and child to have a break from each other, these mothers did not have time to pursue their own interests. Clearly, alternatives to

the family support network are needed when the family is not available to provide women with assistance.

The support network found in this study was a kinship network, as documented in other studies on African-American communities (Malson, Mudimbe-Boyi, O'Barr & Wyer, 1988; Stack, 1974). Raymond, Rhoads, and Raymond (1980) observed that African-Americans had more relatives in the community, more contact with nuclear and extended family members, and were more likely than Euro-Americans to migrate to areas where kin were already present than Whites. Griffith (1985) noted that this support is an important buffer from the stress of balancing so many demands:

A growing body of evidence strongly suggests that an individual's social support network buffers stress and provides instrumental support, lessening the need for professional mental health care. ... There are two general interpretations as to how social supports operate. First, the *buffering effect* of social supports is conceived as an interactive process whereby social supports are more beneficial for persons who experience higher stress levels than for those who experience lower stress levels. The second interpretation is that social supports make a *direct contribution* to one's positive mental well-being, irrespective of the amount of stressors that the individual experiences. [Italics his.]

Developing social supports to assist working single mothers to achieve time alone can help relieve some of the tension, pressure, and stress they currently experience.

Griffith (1985) made many interesting discoveries regarding the support network. He found that most people relied: (1) on women more than on men; (2) on persons of similar age and racial background; and (3) on persons they had known for six years or more. He also discovered that spouses were important support persons. This finding is significant for single-parents who do not have such a built-in support. It justifies the need for policies to create

support networks that can be implemented by encouraging outreach programs through social service agencies, especially for single parents.

In urban environments, Griffith (1985) recognizes that networks are more of a challenge to maintain:

...the nature of social support and its relationship to psychological well-being is moderated by community characteristics such as differences in urbanization. Population mobility, physical layout, availability of community resources, community-specific stressors, and so on. Oxley, Barrera, Sadalla (1981) observed evidence to support this notion; larger communities were found to have less social support and less social interaction which, in turn, limited social anticipation and network size.

Creating contacts with neighbors has become difficult as the result of the increase in crime. The women in this study who had lived in their neighborhoods for more than five years were concerned that crime inhibited the residents' "social interaction." Many women did not feel comfortable in befriending their neighbors. Thus these women relied on family and friends. The importance and purpose of support networks is articulated by Bodin and Mitelman (1983):

Our research emphasized the fact that the most successful families, in terms of lessened stress and heightened satisfaction, were those in which each member of the family unit is cooperating and sharing in the goals and values of the family. ...The strength of the family comes from the fact that members learn interdependency, actual respect, love and working together for common goals.

The lessons from the women's support networks identify a need to develop policies that can teach neighbors "interdependency, actual respect, love and working together for common goals." Developing a communal atmosphere or the "village" through policies that fund supportive services would assist women and children, and provide a reason to have a vested interest in the neighborhood.

Literature such as Palm and Pred (1974), Chapin (1969), which includes time as a significant variable in the experience of the urban environment, recognizes that "time" is an urban environmental issue. The significance of time is that the character and rhythm of activities is directly related to the design of the environment which influences the way people travel, move and use their environment (Perloff, 1968). Two books that use time budgets to reveal how fluid or frantic a parent's day may be are Parenting in an Unresponsive Society, by Kamerman (1980), and From Sun to Sun, by Michelson (1985). According to these books, the lack of free-time for parents is evident, and solutions are proposed such as developing of more child care services and other community services which could provide additional support for families.

According to Evans and Cohen (1987), many stress researchers have overlooked the physical environment as a source of stressful situations likely to place greater adaptive demands on human coping resources. The medical profession has focused on the severe effects of stress on the human anatomy and how we can begin to address this epidemic:

... scientists are measuring with increasing sensitivity the effects that severe stressors can have on hormonal responses, on brain function, and on the cardiovascular, immune, and endocrine systems. Investigators also have demonstrated the importance of psychosocial factors such as the interpretation of an event or the availability of adequate social supports may influence greatly how an individual responds to a disruptive life event. Taken together, the evidence strongly supports the conclusion that stress can affect physical and mental processes in ways that might alter an individual's susceptibility to disease (Elliott & Eisdorfer, 1982).

These physicians, Elliot and Eisdorfer, related on-going stress to decreased resistance to disease. Although the current research did not address this relationship, it is clear from the women interviewed for this dissertation that stress was a significant aspect of their lives.

Building social supports for households that do not have extended families is an important social service. This need is recognized by some public agencies which provide child care, counseling and other services. One example mentioned by a woman in this dissertation is the Foundling Hospital, which provides relief for stressed parents. It offers a place to leave the children for a few hours giving a parent time to center herself. More programs of this type, but locally based, is a clear recommendation from this research.

Quality of Life

As Proshansky and Fabian (1986) state:

The concept of quality of life is multidimensional and must necessarily be defined by researchers, designers, architects, or government officials according to the “slice of urban life” that each defines as being essential.

Urban Planners can benefit by using a qualitative research approach often used by Environmental Psychologists to identify, measure and document people/environmental conflicts in a community’s “slice of urban life.” Haw (1982) says it is essential to understand the factors that contribute to a population’s “well-being,” and to accept that it is “essential that perceived stress be included as a focus of future research.”

Yet, a Journal of the American Planning Association article by Myers (1987) questions the value of using quality-of-life as a person-based concept that focuses on a person’s well-being. As can be seen in Myers comments:

Communities commonly apply the personal well-being approach when they want to “get really scientific” about quality of life, because a large scientific literature and substantial statistical methodology is built around that approach. Combined with common-sense reflection, studies that focus on personal well-being have compelling face value. However, such studies often fail to meet community purposes, because defining quality of life in personal terms has important limitations.

...

Research on personal well-being diverts emphasis from community level factors to personal factors. The resulting measurements - while accurate - provide a less useful guide for community level decisions. Planners must understand that approach so that they can better guide discussions toward community level relevance.

Focusing on the individual does not have to divert emphasis from community level factors.

In fact, community-based policies could benefit by interviewing single mothers, especially where this household type is a large percent of the population. As noted in the Chapter Two, Methodology, over 10 percent of all households in the neighborhoods in this study were female headed-households. Incorporating their needs into policies can only occur by understanding their experiences which are often ignored.

The field of urban planning must be aware of other perspectives on this subject, because a person-based analysis within an environment-based framework can be useful in the design of communities. Urban planners need to be trained to focus on the individual as a key element of the bigger framework, the urban environment. This focus, the individual's experience in the urban setting, is an integral part of the Environmental Psychology tradition which requires one to frame questions, interpret and analyze data, and translate findings that describe the many dimensions of a population's quality of life. An analysis would be inadequate without extending the discussion to include the individual in an environmental context or setting.

It should be noted that in using the concept of quality-of-life in developing a research method, the questions should be asked confidentially allowing for people to answer honestly. A woman's perspective should be sought when defining which questions regarding quality of life are appropriate to ask; a male perspective of the issues should not dominate the

discussions. In the past, a male perspective has dominated the questions asked and the studies performed which define quality of life issues. This has left a mismatch between the needs of women and the environmental solutions.

In a second article Myers (1988) does concede, with caution, that personal well-being can provide some information:

Personal well-being research yields evidence that is valuable for some purposes. Local decision makers, for example, might benefit from knowing the importance recreation plays in residents' personal quality of life. And it certainly would be valuable to learn what aspects of recreation individuals find most important. But we must be careful not to misuse knowledge about personal quality of life. Some would inject that knowledge into debates over desired community futures, seeking to substitute the personal well-being formulation for a community well-being formulation that can be negotiated only politically.

Does Myers try to devalue personal well-being by stating, "seeking to substitute the personal well-being formulation for a community well-being formulation that can be negotiated only politically?" All decisions that lead to public policies are political. In fact, personal well-being has been recognized as valid when it involves concepts traditionally defined by men, such as transportation, employment location and journey-to-work. Identifying the meaning of personal-well being for people from different household types could eliminate some of the confusion attributed to the conflicts between personal- and community-well-being.

The personal issues that parents, especially single working mothers, are facing are primarily community-based issues that if identified could improve a community's well-being. However, these issues generally not recognized as the basis of planning decisions. These factors and the research methodologies used to identify needs have not entered the common

research practice. This dissertation has identified some of the issues which have been ignored and can be addressed in future policy discussions.

Perhaps the experiences of women with children seem to be eluding policy-makers, who are predominately male, because these methodologies are not standard practice. Any new research method needs to be tested. Therefore, it is essential that future information on quality of life seek to address this missing information through a greater understanding of working single female parents' personal environmental experiences. Understanding the limitations on women's free-time and employment opportunities requires a commitment that this information will be used to improve the design of urban environments.

It is interesting to note that even Garreau (1991), has addressed the issue of time as integral to understanding the development of the edge city which typically can have moderately high densities. He notes that:

And, of course, there is one more thing to keep in mind about the two laws of physical space that created this new world: it is not that Americans won't walk more than six hundred feet because they are lazy. After all, they will drive a quarter of a mile from their office to a health club for the opportunity to run ten miles. What these laws really do once again is translate distance into our most treasured commodity - time. (Garreau, p. 124).

In fact he states that, "The farthest distance an American will willingly walk before getting into a car" is six hundred feet (Garreau, p. 464). Developers of shopping centers understand very precisely the distance to parking. Therefore, to gain an understanding of the single African-American working mothers' ability to control their own time and achieve some free time outside of work or without child care responsibilities seems a reasonable request.

Environmental conflicts are the outcome of a complex interrelationship of several planning variables. The environmental misfit of these planning variables in working mothers' lives forces them to struggle, which results in conflicts that create stress in their ability to meet personal needs and tend to their family and work. Nonetheless, women are working through the built-in conflicts, doing well in some cases, struggling in others. The urban properties principally affecting a woman's quality of life vary from case to case, as addressed in the following sections.

Four Planning Variables

The following analysis focuses on the role of four environmental elements in a woman's quality of life: (1) employment; (2) transportation; (3) neighborhood-based child care; and (4) neighborhood quality and services.

Employment

Single-parent women, similar to most women, enter the labor force to maintain their families financially, but single mothers generally have no other assistance. The conflict between the expectation of what motherhood should be and the need to work makes many women feel guilty. However, women who are the sole financial support of their families must work. Although mothers may experience guilt concerning the time away from their children, not all women are interested in staying home with children every day. Work offers a potential source of gratification, and often is the only source of social contact and relationships in what is frequently a lonely and isolated life (Kamerman, 1980; Weinraub & Wolf, 1983). As some women in this study said, they preferred to balance both roles, as mother and worker. It allowed them to maintain their identity and provided relief from demanding children.

The location of jobs is controlled by zoning regulations in most cities and influenced by academic location theories which do not account for the required responsibilities of parenthood which create time-consuming commuting patterns. The concentration of higher-paying jobs in places that are inaccessible to mothers draws attention to the need to alter locational theories to reflect the lives of all workers. As Madden (1981) states:

... to the extent that women's shorter work trips are indicative of lower job mobility, the labor market status of women will be relatively more sensitive to spatial distributions of employers and, therefore, to local, state, and federal government sponsored subsidies designed to alter firm location patterns.

It is necessary to recognize that the public policy ideology continues to accept and perpetuate traditional stereotypes that are reflected in the design of communities.

Mothers know that emergencies happen and thus quick access to one's children is important. When work is separated from child care services by a distance of more than 30 minutes, problems arise, especially if the commute is complicated (Hanson & Johnston, 1985; Villeneuve & Rose, 1988). It is therefore to the women's advantage to consider employment opportunities with easy access to their young children but this generally means lower pay. An analysis that emphasizes the efficient movement of workers to and from work and home has as its basis a single person, or a male worker with a spouse who cares for children and does not work. This view lacks the understanding of a single parent's more complex patterns, such as the added travel patterns for picking up and dropping off children. These added factors enter into women's calculations of journey-to-work, but have evaded the formulas that are used to determine efficient travel patterns of workers. The need to incorporate how women's

lives differ requires the recognition of her combined duties as a worker and a parent and as head of household (Rosenbloom, 1989).

Studies have shown that women sacrifice higher wages when they decide to have children, because family obligations limit a mother's mobility and access to a larger employment base (Hanson & Pratt, 1990; Pickup, 1985). The influence traditional employment location theory has on women's travel time is reflected in women's lower incomes. The employment opportunities available within easy access to children often have minimal skills, little chance for advancement, and few benefits. With limited employment choices, women are subject to lower paying jobs. If higher-paying employment were more equitably distributed in the landscape, then perhaps women would not need to work as many hours, and could have more time to gain peace of mind (Hanson & Johnston, 1985; Villeneuve & Rose, 1988). Unfortunately, the concentration of higher-paying jobs in central cities or other locations that are difficult for women with children to access leaves these women with fewer employment choices because of their need to reach their children quickly.

Often the employers or supervisors who had children of their own understood the demands placed on a mother. In this study, if the employer was flexible the women expressed a willingness to work overtime and enjoyed working. The comfort of knowing that a child's emergency was not going to cause an insurmountable conflict at the job was a relief for mothers. In contrast a strict employer can add stress in a woman's life. As some women discussed, stress, associated with attending a child's doctor's appointment or caring for a sick child, was increased when fears of losing the job or wages were heightened by a complaining employer.

The pressures placed on an employee at work varied from job to job. Those women working in a high-stress job, such as a customer service representative, reported that the stress of handling angry people all day left them exhausted by the time they got home. Consequently, the mother's interaction with her child was often affected by the type of day she had on the job. Having no spouse or partner to handle the children, the mothers turned to their support networks, if available. If no support network was obtainable, difficulties arose with handling the child. The introduction of multi-purpose community centers as a neighborhood service could provide assistance in relieving an exhausted parent of her duties for a few hours, and give her the opportunity to center herself.

A study by Bodin and Mitelman (1983) found that support systems in a person's work environment can aid in eliminating stress that can carry over into personal life and, conversely, a support system in personal life can result in less stress in the work environment. They state that:

...working mothers are largely on their own. Although formal, organized support systems would help alleviate the stress that working mothers feel, they don't exist on any wide scale (Bodin & Mitelman, 1983, p.60).

If employers are not offering support services or are not supportive of familial obligations, then women develop complex or complicated support systems on their own. Therefore, initiatives that promote the development of community-based support networks as a social service would help working mothers who have weak or no neighborhood-based networks.

Perhaps we have forgotten the ideals of the planned community, emulated by Radburn, N.J. One of the original American planned communities, Radburn presented objectives that involved bringing together the functional parts of a community:

The ultimate goals are clearly social although plans themselves are related to physical things and physical places...First would be the arrangement of functional parts of the city— residence, commerce and industry, etc. — so each part can perform its functions with minimum costs and conflict... Second would be linking of all the parts of the city to each other and to the outside world by an efficient system of circulation. ... Fifth, the provision of recreation and schools and other community services of a high standard of size, location and quality (Birch, 1983, p.141).

Although there are parts of the Radburn concept that do not apply to preexisting developed older urban cities, the concepts listed in the quotation are applicable to inner city communities. These concepts have been developed in contemporary local land use regulations as separate concepts and not integrated as a whole. Therefore, we are faced with fragmented solutions to problems that are integrated and related. As a result, residents are faced with developing strategies to fill the gaps when problems overlap because the support systems to address these issues do not exist. Psychological consequences, such as feelings of guilt and conflict, are not going to be eliminated by resolving the physical and temporal barriers, but these changes will alleviate some of the tension, pressures, and stress that weigh heavily on women.

Transportation

The most important issue regarding transit was quick access to one's child. Two travel scenarios that most concerned working mothers were: (1) getting the children to the child care service in the morning; and (2) returning to pick up the children in evening. The time needed to perform these two tasks can influence a woman's free time and her decision where to work (Fagnani, 1989; Hanson & Pratt 1990). Fagnani (1989) found that mothers who had a full-time job; and who spent more than 25 minutes traveling to work claimed less free time than those with shorter travel times. The average commuting time for the women in this study was 45 minutes.

For the morning and evening commutes, women mentioned four conditions which made the commute frustrating and stressful: (1) if the employer was not understanding when arriving a few minutes late in the morning as a result of transit delays or fussy children; (2) when it took longer than 30 minutes to get to the child in an unexpected situation; (3) when the child care service was not understanding after arriving late in the evening because of transit delays; and (4) when no support person lived in the neighborhood and the delay to pick up the child was more than 20 minutes.

Morning Commute

In examining the location of the child care service, the women who had child care located within easy walking distance from home did not experience undue pressure in the mornings. More women in CD2 walked to the child care service than in CD1. CD2 had a greater number of public-sponsored child care spaces than CD1. In addition, women in CD1 traveled farther to reach child care services.

The women who traveled more than a few blocks to the child care service were more dependent on mass transit. Travel issues included: traveling in crowded conditions; rushing children to meet the unpredictable transit schedules; facing the rude public; added costs to a strained budget; added stress; anxiety-provoking environment; exhaustion; absorption of time that is already scarce; and problems with returning to the child if an emergency occurred. If a woman had to travel with more than one child, coordinating the scheduled stops was cumbersome, and using more than one mode of travel was a monumental task.

Evening Commute

Traveling to get the children at the end of the day was one, if not the most, stressful time of the day for the mothers. Kamerman (1980) calls, this problem, “linkage” which involved, for example, getting from work to the pre-school program when the program ended at 6:00 p.m. and the mother’s job ended at the same time. This was a problem, especially since traffic, public transit, and work assignments were sometimes unpredictable.

Child care hours were usually inflexible. The parent knew that to arrive on time was important for the children’s sense of security, for respecting the caretaker’s policies on closing time and for making sure their child was not delivered to the local police precinct. Universally, the women who relied on public transportation in the evening to get to the child care service reported experiencing more tension than those who used their cars.

Car Owners

Car owners expressed how happy they were not having to use mass transit. In fact, many women felt that although the purchase was a financial sacrifice, the ease of movement gave them peace of mind, and made it easier to meet everyone’s prescribed schedules. For example, the task of returning to the child care center before closing time was never mentioned as a stressful experience for the women who drove. However, when the car broke down, a woman’s world was thrown into chaos: the daily schedule needed to be quickly changed, and often there were no funds to correct the problem on a timely basis.

Support and Travel Time

The selection of the child care arrangement and the job was often assessed based on the travel time between the two. This study’s findings show that if a woman had a relative in

the neighborhood who could care for her child in emergencies, then choosing a place of employment was less dependent on distance and transit mode. The unexpected was easier to handle knowing that a neighborhood-based support person was available. Also the neighborhood support person allowed a woman not to be restricted by the length of the commute when selecting her employment. Women who did not have a neighborhood support person had no choice but to rely on the transit system and to accept jobs closer to the child care service.

Strategies

One example of a strategy to provide child care includes using the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) funds to create transit-oriented child care centers (Lang Ho, 1996). Transportation planners are encouraging “multi-nodalism,” or “intermodalism”— the convergence of a broad range of transit and other activities at a single location. Multinodalism is also aimed at building strong communities, optimizing the potential of transit nodes to inspire and centralize social interaction. Attaching child care to commuting not only helps support the working mother, it also encourages fathers to assume the task of shuttling their children.

The need to have policy-makers aware of women’s movement is extremely important. According to Rosenbloom’s study (1989) although 54 percent of men report picking up their young children (under six), 75 percent of those do so less than once a week. This number seems high and perhaps could be over reported, although earnest. Thus, women are overwhelmingly the people who are required to combine their commutes with this responsibility. The transportation experiences of women with children has eluded policy

makers, either by choice or circumstance. Nonetheless, women's labor force participation reflects limitations that can be attributed to the conflicts they experience as a result of their parenting responsibilities.

Neighborhood-based Child Care.

Finding child care is one of the first tasks that a working woman must arrange soon after her child is born. Identifying and scheduling child care arrangements for more than one child depended on the children's ages and the composition of the family. Having a diversity of child care arrangements available is required for young children because they go through many stages of development during the first six years of life. In their first six years, children in this study experienced three setting changes: (1) age two and younger they were in a home setting, at their own home or with a sitter, a friend, or a family member; (2) age three they were either in a home-setting or in a center, depending on their developmental progress; and (3) over age three, when all were placed in a center-setting. In this study, the only children over the age of three who were not in a center-setting had other siblings at home. Paying one person in the home to care for more than one child was economically more practical than more than one type of child care arrangement.

In addition, women with school-age children had to arrange after-school activities that were often very hard to find. If they had more than one child under the age of 12, as eight women did, they needed to rely on multiple child care arrangements. The women in this study arranged for someone to be there when their children got home from school; either a relative, a babysitter or, in one case, the mother who worked the night shift. One mother had three school-age children registered in afterschool programs in the same school. The combination of all these child care services can be costly.

The cost of raising children is estimated to be as high as 50 percent of a family's annual income including two-parent families (American Planning Association, 1996). In a one-wage-earner family this amount of money significantly impacts the rest of the family's budget. The women using City-sponsored child care were allowed a sliding fee rule which helped to relieve the cost burden slightly.

Not everyone in this study had an easy time finding adequate, affordable child care. Some women had to search the neighborhood, and one woman had to beg a minister to watch her child. One mother had the unfortunate experience of selecting two abusive child care givers before finding an acceptable service. It was with the assistance of friends and family that she discovered the mistreatment. Most of the women in this study relied on the assistance of their neighborhood-based support network for help to access the child care service when difficulties arose. However, not all women had family and friends in their neighborhoods. This created conflicts for those women who worked far, either in distance or in transit-time, from their children.

Hours of the Service

Conflicts with the hours of the services and the hours of employment were inevitable for women who traveled outside the borough for employment (Fanos, 1990). In this study Manhattan was identified as the coveted location for employment because of the higher wages, better benefits, greater variety in employment opportunities, and more opportunities for advancement or promotions. However, the distance became an issue when returning to the children because of the long commute and the conflict with the hours of the daycare centers and work. The women who worked in Manhattan and did not have a neighborhood-based support network changed jobs to have easier access to their children because frequent

train delays forced them to be late for work or to pick up a child. As a result of the very structured and almost overlapping hours of employment and child care services, it was sometimes impossible to arrive on time at either location. This situation traumatized the children, annoyed the child care provider, annoyed the women's employer, which added tension and pressure to an already stressful life. Therefore, the extra income for extra hours of work was not worth the extra conflicts.

The Unexpected – Emergencies

The biggest factor in a woman's life that causes tremendous stress is the unpredictable: e.g., an emergency. All these women, especially those who had no neighborhood support network, feared the unpredictable. The blessing of the boss and the assistance of someone, preferably a close relative who knew the child, was a tremendous help, but this was not the scenario many women enjoyed. For those women who encountered an inflexible employer; an unreliable transit system; and neighbors, friends, and relatives who were working; having prompt access to a child was essential if and when the unexpected occurs. Creating land-use and social policies that are sensitive to a mother's concerns for her children's security and for her own peace of mind would especially help those women who have weak support networks.

Desired Changes

A policy change desired by many of the women was that child care hours be extended into the evening at least one night a week. Primarily, this request came from women wishing to take a class, but were concerned about burdening a family member or friend. A child care

service with extended hours would eliminate the need to find and arrange yet another schedule for yet another person.

Other scenarios where extra hours for child care are needed included being able to work overtime, or travel farther to obtain better employment. Some women felt that extended hours should be from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Additional child care hours would also afford women more time to themselves. As a result of poor social services and virtually no organized activities in the neighborhood, women are rarely offered opportunities for free-time on a regular, dependable schedule. Women who do not have friends and relatives to help are especially burdened. Expanding the existing child care hours would assist them in obtaining free-time.

Strategies

The availability of child care spaces was the number one issue for the working mothers in this study. Funding and locating these facilities were among the toughest barriers to overcome. Many organizations have been working to alleviate these problems by increasing awareness of these issues. A Position Paper done by the American Planning Association's Metro Chapter's Planning and Women Committee (American Planning Association, 1992) focused on identifying how to overcome issues facing the development of child care spaces in New York City. Flame, Director of the Child Care Law Project, Lawyers Alliance in New York City (American Planning Association, 1996), advocated for the City of New York to perform child care needs assessments:

....to provide annual census-based, city-wide child care needs assessments, to be included in the Community District Needs Report. In order to coordinate and implement neighborhood child care planning efforts, the Mayor should designate an

existing agency or office (such as the Borough Presidents, Borough Boards, the Human Resources Administration, the Department of City Planning or the Department of Social Services) to perform the following tasks: assess child care supply and demand in all neighborhoods using the community districts as an initial boundary, but also considering geographic boundaries and transportation routes; assess supply and demand at prototypical work sites, evaluate the city-wide demand for work site child care and conduct a cost/benefit analysis of employer-subsidized child care in various industries and locations; use public funds (e.g., Urban Development Corporation money) to improve and create more child care spaces as part of economic development programs such as Business Improvement Districts; research available space in community districts for conversion into child care centers and make this information available to potential and established child care providers; and work with the MTA to improve public transportation (e.g., a designated subway car or bus) for parents traveling with young children to child care providers, and explore the possibility of siting child care centers at transportation nodes (American Planning Association, 1996, p. 22).

An analysis of community districts, as outlined by Flame, would provide the statistics for advocates to motivate the private and/or non-profit sector to fill this gap and to develop solutions for providing child care spaces including creating tax credits, abatements or exemptions which could help to stimulate development.

Neighborhood Quality and Services

This planning variable, neighborhood quality and services, was investigated to see what influence it had on a woman's quality of life. Surprisingly, very few services were available for younger children. The number one neighborhood-based children's service was child care. As described earlier, this service was limited to working hours and not available at other times. Second, playgrounds and parks were used by the parents almost exclusively in the summer. Some women used church-related activities, Police Athletic League summer activities, and dance lessons at a privately-owned center.

Perhaps if neighborhood activities were available, a mother's responsibilities would not have to extend to include all social aspects of her children's lives. These women were solely responsible not only for the financial and emotional foundation of their families, but also for actively supervising children at all times. Entertaining or arranging entertainment for children 365 days a year was a very difficult assignment to do alone. Some women turned to their families for help, and sometimes found the assistance they needed. Not always, however. Not all women could find relief coinciding with their needs or their children's needs. Since few community-based supports exist a woman had no option but to rely on her support network to achieve "peace of mind" from a demanding child, even when a few hours were needed.

Many women described desired neighborhood services including more child care spaces and longer child care hours at existing services. This would free them to pursue other activities after work. Many women mentioned the need for a few hours free from a child on Saturday mornings to accomplish errands. Other services suggested included indoor play spaces, boys club, girls club, arts and crafts, karate, swimming and dance lessons, Girl Scouts, Brownies, YM/YWCA and others. The women felt that an increase in activities for children, especially teenagers, would help reduce the crime in the neighborhood, because children would be otherwise occupied.

Safety

Neighborhood safety was an issue that was not mentioned in the focus group or the pilot interviews. Nonetheless, during the interviews the mothers discussed this topic at length, in fact, the women experienced crime personally (two widow's husbands were shot and others

had experienced robberies and fear of assault). The biggest neighborhood quality issue was a safe play space. One dimension of the safety issues which concerned the mothers was the effect of crime on the children. The neighborhoods in this study left the mothers feeling more concerned with their children's welfare than wanting to achieve time for their own sense of freedom. Crime changes the way a person can use her neighborhood. For these women crime was a daily hindrance that influenced their travel patterns and influenced their behavior, in terms of their attention to details, such as others behavior and limiting neighborhood use to prescribed times. In this study, mothers mentioned not allowing their children to play alone in their own backyards for fear something unsafe could happen. Also, women were concerned about exposing their children to the negative influences of certain people in their neighborhoods.

Since many of the women had lived in the neighborhood for over 5 years, they remembered when the neighborhoods were safe, when a child could walk to the park with friends. These women wanted safe communities available to their children. With the recent population changes, they did not know their neighbors, and did not let their children walk to the park or play in the park alone.

The level of crime in these neighborhoods directly limited a woman's ability to use her community effectively, especially the parks and playgrounds. To find safe parks women in this study had to travel out of their neighborhoods. For the women who did not own cars, traveling to parks was difficult, often expensive, and time consuming. Because, neighborhood parks were not safe, parents were forced to play a larger role in supervising their children when they played outside, essentially to be assured of their children's safety. A mother's participation in every minute of her children's lives was incredibly demanding.

The women who had lived the longest in their neighborhoods were most familiar with the increase in crime. They knew who was responsible for it, and had watched their neighborhoods change from a nice residential area to an area characterized by the presence of drug dealers, junkies, and even prostitutes (a.k.a., sex workers), which was distressing. As a result of their familiarity with the community, they restricted their movement, and did not feel safe going out at night.

Strategies for Eliminating Crime

Crime is one of the most inhibiting factors in a single mother's use of her neighborhood. Wekerle and Whitzman, in their book Safe Cities: Guidelines for Planning, Design, and Management (1995), propose guidelines to help reduce crime in built environments:

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is one approach to the design and management of urban space to reduce the incidence and fear of crime. It involves detailed situational crime analysis to identify localized patterns and the microenvironmental conditions that might be creating opportunities for crime to occur. This entails close observation of urban space as it is used and attention to the social and cultural definition of how it should be used. (p.12)

We need to incorporate design safety standards into public spaces, including streetscapes. Crime limits a woman's ability to use her community effectively, especially the parks and playgrounds.

Creating community-based support systems that offer children activities ranging from sports to theater would provide greater employment opportunities for teenagers in the community and occupy the children in constructive activities. Such a system could be instituted at all public schools on Saturdays and afterschool until 7:00 p.m.

Community-based support systems assist women with the daily responsibilities of the family, if they existed after-school activities would provide tremendous help. As Kamerman (1980) suggests:

Community agencies interested in responding to the needs of single mothers would do well to experiment with a range of different types of programs, including innovative approaches to providing brief supplementary child care, occasional home-help or other concrete services, information and advice services, and the development of self-networks. (p.133)

Griffith (1985) notes that social supports make a *direct contribution* [his italics] to one's positive mental well-being, regardless of the amount of stress the individual experiences.

Egar and Sarkissan (1985) offer a process-oriented approach, based on self-help initiatives by local women, called the Family Support Scheme (FSS). FSS is an innovative, federally-funded neighborhood development program. Although it is a suburban proposal to combat social isolation for women in suburbia, the principles apply to urban working women:

1. Women need each others support to create changes that would transform their families, homes and neighborhoods
2. Because of transportation difficulties social action had to be created within walking distance of the women's homes (Egar and Sarkissan, 1985).

Lastly, Weinraub and Wolf (1983) documented the effective telephone networks and informal social activities enabling single women to share parenting experiences with others, and affording them social situations which could meet more of their needs.

Conclusion

Whether discussing efficient transportation or additional land for recreational activities, urban policy is negotiated in the political arena. Determining that political context

is important for some issues and not for others begs the question: To whom is this topic important? Janet Abu-Lughod (1974), the only woman attending a conference on the “City of the Future”, was frightened by the discussion which focused on:

... complete separation of work from residence! ‘A man could go into the city to work, spend three nights there, and then return to his family out in the country for the other four nights.’ The vision of the future city ... maximized the interests of a very small class ...the upper-middle and upper class...

Everything is political in defining a community’s needs. Free time is essential to parents with young children, but it can only be achieved if employers are satisfied and children have caregivers. For single working parents who have low wage jobs, long commutes to work and day care arrangements these conditions are especially difficult to satisfy. Understanding the environmental conflicts surrounding the ability to have free time provides insights into the design of an environment that satisfies the concerns of employed African-American single-parent women with young children.

In terms of transportation, eliminating stress, pressure, and tension caused by transit delays is unrealistic. However, it is possible to create higher-wage jobs scattered across the landscape and close to affordable housing. This would provide women with more employment options closer to home and would eliminate the need for long commutes. It must be understood that creating more free-time for employed African-American single-parent women includes creating environments that are efficient for all women, and all men.

Addressing issues such as transportation, job location and child care from a new perspective, and developing new policies is important in creating environments that meet the needs of all individuals. Ironically, these issues are the most important to a sector of society

whose needs have not been fully explored or understood by urban planners and policy makers: low-income, single, working mothers. Healthy urban environments combine the provision of opportunities and the elimination of conflicts. Fox (1983) suggested several options to resolve the conflicts faced by low-income, single, working mothers.

One option would be greater integration of work places and residence; this would offer more proximity to employment. ... another option, work place and residence locations would continue to be dispersed but there would be improved integration of residences with shopping and services. This would mean more decentralization of public and private sector facilities, more subcenters of facilities within communities... A third option would continue separation of residences from services, but with shopping and services located within or adjacent to work sites. This would serve to break up some of the segregation between work and home roles. (P. 165)

Urban policy makers face the heroic task of matching innovative concepts with economic realities to face the fundamental issues of relating income and equity in the workplace, home, and urban environment (Birch, 1985). Social values must change in order to accept that social networks, that are not usually viewed as a social service, are a needed service which have a tremendous impact on people's lives. Therefore we must "include the social support of services appropriate to the life-cycle stage and income groups who will live there" (Simmons, Lamberg & Field, 1985).

Women's behavior and environmental experiences must influence the development of social, economic and urban policies. Women must advocate for the need to propose and promote land use policies that ameliorate the environmental conflicts they currently experience. Hopefully, this thesis can contribute to that end.

APPENDIX A-1**1990 Labor Force Participation**
United States and New York City

	1990 United States		1990 New York City	
	#	%	#	%
Females 16 years and over	99,803,358	100.0	3,154,475	100.0
In the labor force	56,672,949	56.8	1,695,217	53.7
Female 16+				
with own children				
under 18 years	31,724,004		845,787	
In the labor force	21,452,228	67.6	477,218	56.4
Females 16+				
with own children				
under 6 years	15,233,818		419,576	
In the labor force	9,094,589	59.7	198,746	47.4
Females 16+				
with own children				
6 to 17 years only	16,490,186		426,211	
In the labor force	12,367,639	75.0	278,472	65.3

Note: Source, U.S. Census Bureau 1990.

APPENDIX A-2

Household TypesUnited States, New York City, Community District 1 and Community District 2

1990	U.S	NYC	CD1	CD2
Total households	100%			
Family households	70.14	61.5	69.9	74.3
Married-couple family				
With related children	26.7	18.0	19.5	22.6
No related children	28.44	20.9	20.6	19.0
Other Family				
Male householder				
With related children	1.72	1.8	5.7	3.3
No related children	1.69	2.7	2.5	3.5
Female householder				
With related children	7.57	11.4	14.9	16.3
No related children	4.02	6.6	9.2	9.6
Nonfamily households	29.81	38.5	30.1	25.7

Note. Source: U.S. Census Bureau

APPENDIX B-1The Interview Guide

Introduction

My name is Irene Fanos. I am a graduate student at the City University of New York, Graduate Center. As part of the requirement for my doctorate in Environmental Psychology, I am conducting research on what women face while trying to raise a family, work and enjoy themselves. Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas and feelings.

There are no right or wrong answers. I am here to learn from your experiences. I want to hear your experiences to understand your life. There is always something unique in each person's own background. All the information is confidential, your name will not be used. Whatever you say during the interview will not be revealed, except as part of a group statement or anonymous quotes.

The interview will be tape-recorded. You should feel free to tell me only what you feel comfortable talking about, we can stop whenever you want. However, I expect this interview to take at least an hour. If I have any questions after the interview, I would like to call you to answer those questions.

I would like you to talk generally about your feelings about the quality of your life. By quality of life I mean what you do for yourself, when do you arrange time for you and what do you do when you do have some time to yourself.

(After the interview each woman was asked to fill out the confidential contact sheet, see below.)

This guide was used during the interview to probe into areas that were raised by the women. The order that they were addressed depended on the order the issue was raised by the women. These probes mirror the aims of the research outlined in my proposal and in the introduction of the dissertation.

Probes

Quality of life:

I would like you to talk generally about your feelings about the quality of your life. By quality of life I mean what you do for yourself, when do you arrange time for you and what do you do when you do have some time to yourself. Who, What and where do you turn to for help (even if not in the neighborhood) when you need or want assistance? What kinds of things do you do to make your life flow smoothly?

Child care:

Do you have and use neighborhood-based child care services? How does having a neighborhood based child care center effect the quality of your life? Does having a neighborhood based child care help you, in what way? Does it help in taking your child to the child care center? Does it give you free time? Does neighborhood based child care services help or hinder your ability to do things for yourself? Who do you turn to (other than the child care center) when you need help with your child?

Transportation:

How does transportation effect the quality of your life? Does it make it harder or easier to get around? How could it be easier?

Employment/Location:

Do you like your job? Is the location convenient for you? Can you get to work on time with the hours of the child care? Are they understanding on your job? If you have to work late do you have someone who can help out with your child?

Neighborhood support services:

Who do you turn to for (formal/informal) support in your neighborhood? What (if any) community supports exist that help or could help? What could be offered in your neighborhood to help you improve the quality of your life or to have a more fulfilled life? Can you describe any aspects or parts of the neighborhood which are helpful/supportive in improving your quality of life, or are there aspects that create tension for you? What changes to the neighborhood would you recommend that would help improve your life?

Social Structure/ Social Ties (friends, family, others):

When do you see friends, family and others? Can you describe your support structure? How often do you use your support structure (friends, family, others)?

Other Issues:

Are there other issues related to an improved quality of life for single women workers with young children that I have not asked? Do you feel you have had to eliminate things in your life? Do you think there are services that could be offered in your neighborhood that could help you to improve the quality of your life?

Future:

Where would you hope your life will be in 10 years? Are there any changes you would like to make to your life that you feel would improve the quality of our life?

If you had all the money in the world what would your life look like? If you were to create the ideal world that could improve the quality of your life, what would that world look like?

CONFIDENTIAL FORM

NAME:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

AGE:

MARITAL STATUS:

NUMBER OF CHILDREN:

AGES OF CHILDREN:

TYPE OF CHILD CARE:

AMOUNT OF TIME IT TAKES TO GET TO WORK:

TYPE(S) OF TRANSPORTATION USED TO GET TO WORK:

OCCUPATION:

INCOME:

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 1 - 6

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	Income	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop Off/ Pick-up	Support Network (A)Support person, (B) distance to a support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D) amount of time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CDI -Day care										
1 "Mary"	43	5-Daycare Center 2 - Sister at child's home	Family Health Worker	2	60	Train	Walk	Sister drops off child/P	Sister; same building; daily; unlimited	8
2 "Alice"	45	21,20,17,16 5 -Daycare Center	Family Health Worker	1	5	Car	Car	D/P	Brother; same neighborhood; daily; unlimited.	4
3 "Jane"	32	12,11,8 - all in afterschool programs 3 - Daycare Center	Secretary	2	90	2 Buses	Bus	D/P	Mother; outside neighborhood; infrequent; few hours	2 weeks
4 "Nancy"	27	6, 5 - Daycare Center 3 - sitter outside the home	Family Health Worker	1	30	Bus	Taxi or, Bus, and Walk	D/P	Sister; same building; daily; unlimited	14
5 "Ann"	29	5 - Daycare Center	Real Estate Agent	1	20	Bus	Walk	D/P	Brother; same neighborhood; daily; unlimited	3
6 "Joann"	26	3 - Daycare Center	Customer Service Representative	1	30	Train	2 Buses	D/P	Sister; same neighborhood; monthly; a few hours	14

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1=\$ 0 - \$19,999; 2=\$20,000 - \$29,999; 3= \$30,000 - \$39,999; 4=>\$40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is \$23,850; and \$19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is \$38,150; and \$30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a woman to travel from home to work after dropping off her children at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 7 - 11

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	Income	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop off? Pick up	SUPPORT NETWORK (A)Support person, (B) distance to a support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D)amount of time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CDI - Other Care										
7 "Karen"	36	11 - afterschool with father at home 5 months - with father at home	Daycare Director	3	15	Car	Home	Home	Father; same building; daily; unlimited	3
8 "Ruth"	52	5 - private Daycare Center	Nurses' Aide	2	45	Car	Car	D/P	Husband; same neighborhood; weekly; weekend visits	8
9 "Jody"	40	3 - private Daycare Center	Secretary	3	60	Train	Car	D/P	Father; same neighborhood; emergencies only; never	10+
10 "Sally"	23	6 - private Daycare Center 3 - stepmother at child's home	Teachers' Aide	1	45	Bus, Train	Bus, and Train	D/P	Girlfriend; outside neighborhood; monthly; a few hours	2 weeks
11 "Jenny"	30	6, 1 - friend at child's home	Teachers' Aide	1	20	Bus	Home	Home	Sister; same neighborhood; weekly; unlimited	4 months

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1= \$0 - \$19,999; 2=\$20,000 - \$29,999; 3= \$30,000 - \$39,999; 4= >\$40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is \$23,850; and \$19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is \$38,150; and \$30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a woman to travel from home to work after dropping off her child at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 12 - 16

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	In-come	Travel Time to Work (minutes)	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop off/ Pick up	SUPPORT NETWORK (A)Support person, (B) distance to support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D) amount of time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CD2 - Daycare										
12 "Kathy"	23	4 - Daycare center	Office Manager	1	20	Car	Car	D/P	Husband; same neighborhood; weekly; limited to weekends	10+
13 "Stephanie"	27	4 - daycare center	Legal Secretary	2	60	Bus, Train	Walk	D/P	Mother; outside neighborhood; monthly; limited to weekends	3
14 "Kim"	25	5 - daycare center	Secretary	2	15	Car	Car	D/P	Mother; same building; daily; unlimited	25+
15 "Joan"	24	5 - daycare center	Cashier	1	30	Car	Car	D/P	Mother; same neighborhood; daily; unlimited	1 month
16 "Frieda"	40	11 - afterschool with "Frieda" 5 - daycare center	Teller	3	15	Car	Car	Husband drops off child/P	Sister; outside neighborhood; infrequently; infrequently	11

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister, stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1= 0 - 19,999; 2=20,000 - 29,999; 3= 30,000 - 39,999; 4= >40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is 23,850; and 19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is 38,150; and 30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a women to travel from home to work after dropping off her child at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 17 - 19

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	Income	Travel Time to Work	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop off/ Pick up	SUPPORT NETWORK (A) Support person, (B) distance to support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D) amount to time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CID2 - Other Care										
17 "Donna"	35	16; 3 -Church daycare center	Secretary	2	75	Train	Walk	D/older daughter	Child's godmother; outside neighborhood; infrequently; limited to weekends	10
18 "Vicky"	38	2 - Sitter outside the home	Clerical	2	70	2 Buses	Walk	D/P	Sister; outside neighborhood; monthly; limited to weekends	6
19 "Helen"	29	2 - sitter outside the home	Customer Service Representative	1	30	Car	Walk	D/P	Mother; outside neighborhood; weekly; unlimited	5

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister, stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1= 0 - 19,999; 2=20,000 - 29,999; 3= 30,000 - 39,999; 4= >40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is 23,850; and 19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is 38,150; and 30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a women to travel from home to work after dropping off her child at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 20 - 23

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	Income	Travel Time to Work	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop off/ Pick up	SUPPORT NETWORK (A)Support person, (B) distance to support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D) amount to time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CID2 - Other Care										
20 "Gwen"	29	10 - afterschool with friend or "Gwen"; 5, 4 - at child's home (with friend until 2 months ago - now "Gwen" stays home.)	Nurse's Aide (unemployed for the last 2 months)	1	60	Train	Home	Home	Brother; outside neighborhood; weekly; limited to weekends	5
21 "Fran"	30	4 - church daycare center	Secretary	2	75	Bus / Train	Walk	D/ grandm other	Mother; same building; daily; unlimited	30

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister, stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1= 0 - 19,999; 2=20,000 - 29,999; 3= 30,000 - 39,999; 4= >40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is 23,850; and 19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is 38,150; and 30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a women to travel from home to work after dropping off her child at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

APPENDIX B-2 CONTACTS # 22 - 23

Contact	Age of Mother	Age of Children and Type of Child Care Service	Occupation	Income	Travel Time to Work	Mode to Work	Mode to Child Care Services	Drop off/ Pick up	SUPPORT NETWORK (A)Support person, (B) distance to support person, (C) frequency of support, and (D) amount to time support person was available.	Years in Neighborhood
CD2 - Other Care										
22 "Jean"	22	2 - sitter outside the home	Clerk	1	90	Train	Walk	D/P	Sister; outside neighborhood; weekly; limited to weekends	7 months
23 "Virginia"	21	3- sitter outside the home	Clerk	1	90	Bus	Walk	D/P	Grandmother; same building; daily; unlimited	3

Notes. All relatives listed are relatives of the contact, i.e., contact number 1 "Mary," Mary's sister, stays home with Mary's child.

Income categories are as follows: 1= 0 - 19,999; 2=20,000 - 29,999; 3= 30,000 - 39,999; 4= >40,000 According to HUD the New York City 1994-95 definition of a very low income family of four is 23,850; and 19,100 for a family of two; and a low income family of four is 38,150; and 30,550 for a family of two.

Travel time to work is defined as the number of minutes it takes a woman to travel from home to work after dropping off her child at the child care service.

Drop-off and Pick-up are performed by the contact, unless otherwise indicated.

PART VI

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