



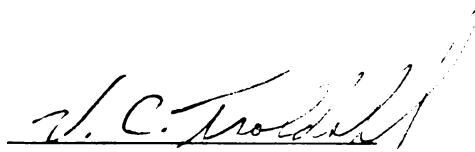
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**EXPERT INFORMATION SOURCES  
AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT  
AS FACILITATORS OF MOTHER-ROLE CHANGE**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

### EXPERT INFORMATION SOURCES AND OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AS FACILITATORS OF MOTHER-ROLE CHANGE

by Mason E. Miller

This was a study of the efficacy of certain adjustment mechanisms for women who experience mother-role imbalance when their children leave home.

Women may adjust to role imbalance in a number of ways. Two were investigated in this study--information seeking and adoption of an alternate role.

Information seeking was studied in terms of the amount of "expertise" of the sources women most frequently sought for advice and information on child-care problems.

The alternate role studied was that of employee outside of the home.

When children leave home, the once-large family unit shrinks back to the primary husband-wife couple who started it all. This is a time when American women are likely to find that the mother role no longer offers them the satisfactions and rewards it once did. Changes in the family system require role changes and thus may induce perceived-imbalance in the role until role changes are made.

The balance-imbalance process was cast in the framework of Parsons and Bales (1955), which involves a social system in balance being disturbed by some influence, this influence then being coped

with in some way, and the social system then returning to some state of balance.

One hundred ninety-six Michigan mothers from four counties were studied. Each had a youngest child born in 1944. For 61, their children had all left home. These were considered the post-imbalance mothers. They were postulated as having recently undergone role imbalance resulting from a change in their family social system stage. One hundred thirty-five mothers still had at least one child at home--the pre-imbalance mothers. They presumably were not yet experiencing the mother-role imbalance the other group had.

The pre-imbalance group was used as a control group to estimate the degree of balance the post-imbalance mothers had had before their children had left home. Since the two imbalance groups were similar on a number of characteristics, it was felt that this assumption was justified.

The major hypotheses stated that, in this imbalance situation, use of either of the two adjustment mechanisms would lead to a more satisfactory return to balance. At the time of the study, the post-imbalance mothers presumably had had time to use these adjustment mechanisms after their children had left home. Four return-to-balance indices were used to determine the degree to which the post-imbalance mothers had satisfactorily solved this imbalance problem. They were: general satisfaction with life, perception of mother-role competence, number of psychosomatic symptoms expressed, and mother role emphasis in statements about the self.

Use of either expert information sources or outside employment led to a higher general satisfaction with life for mothers who had

entered the imbalance period.

Mothers' ratings of their role competence were not significantly improved by seeking information from expert sources. The effect of outside employment was not checked against perceived role competence because the kind of effect hypothesized for that adjustment mechanism was to lower the salience of the mother role for the woman, rather than to help her solve the imbalance in the mother role itself.

Employment as an adjustment mechanism did significantly help lower the number of psychosomatic symptoms of the women in imbalance; expert source-seeking did not.

Neither adjustment mechanism influenced role-emphasis.

Thus, the hypotheses that post-imbalance mothers who used these adjustment mechanisms would exhibit greater role balance than mothers who did not use these mechanisms were confirmed in three cases, were in the predicted directions but not significant in three cases, and were in the opposite direction to that hypothesized in one case.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Chapter I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Socialization--a Continuing Process and Significant Social Problem

Every person must learn to cope with the society in which he lives. How a person is socialized into his society varies from culture to culture, as does what he becomes socialized to. But the general process appears to be the same.

How does man learn to cope with his society--whatever its nature? Sociologists say it is through learning roles. In a primitive society, the roles to be learned by a young child are few. A boy prepares to be a man, a hunter, a husband, and a father. And these are relatively simple and stable roles. Formally or informally, he is taught the expected behaviors for each role by interaction with other members of the society.

Older members of the society know what these behaviors are. They know what the youngster must learn to become a part of his society, and they know quite accurately what that society is going to be like for the lifetime of the youngster. So once the youngster has learned the proper roles, all the society members do is reinforce the proper behavior in these roles as they are performed.

In modern-day America, however, childhood socialization alone is no longer adequate to prepare an individual for a lifetime of satisfactory performance as a member of his society.

One of the major problems for American society--and for more and more of the world--is the speed with which things are changing. New jobs come into being and old ones go out of existence. Relation-

ships among groups and between individuals shift. New knowledge makes old ways obsolete. Transportation, communication, marketing, and education have changed and are changing--and their changes have meant great changes in other aspects of our lives. By the time an individual learns a particular role, it may no longer exist--or may have changed drastically from what it was when he was undergoing training for it.

Rose (1962), Parsons (1951), Martindale (1960), and Goode (1960) all point out the need for this socialization process to go on throughout life--learning to abandon old roles, to acquire new ones, and to adjust present ones. No longer do the adults of today know what the adult world is going to be like for their children. Many old ways of doing things simply have gone out of existence. The older generation often can offer little insight on how to cope with current problems.

All these changes mean that man today faces a continuing problem of coping with his society. The member of a complex modern industrial society never "completes" his socialization into his society because that society itself is continually changing--shifting the ground rules under which the game of life is to be played. He continually is faced with one or another role in transition.

As pointed out earlier, socialization involves the learning of roles. The concept of role involves also the concept of a social system within which the role and other roles are defined and performed. Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1957) point out that roles are made up of sets of expectations of how the occupant of one role will behave in relation to other roles in the same social system. They call the role being studied the "focal position;" other roles that are relevant to that role in the social system are called "counter positions." If the

expectations and behaviors across these interrelated roles are consistent, the social system they are a part of can be considered "in balance." If they are not, then the system is out of balance.

At least two classes of events can take place that tend to throw a social system out of balance through their effects on, or consequences for, the role behaviors and/or expectations in that system. One of these is innovation. The other is where a social subsystem enters another stage.

Both classes of events--and the ways individuals and social systems adjust to them--need to be studied. The present study deals with only one--imbalance in the family social system, particularly in the mother role, introduced by that system entering a new stage. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the findings of this study will add knowledge as to how, in general, persons adjust adequately to role imbalance.

#### Mother Role Change Due to Innovations

There is no doubt of the effect of innovation on the life of the American wife and mother. Modern technology has spawned a myriad of innovations which have meant new ways of doing things, new processes to learn, and different concerns, problems, and rewards.

First, there has been the industrialization of this nation. People have shifted from the farm to the city. This in itself has taken a lot of the physical work off the back of the American woman. At the same time, she no longer is so much of a partner in the family's common work. The husband leaves home to earn the living and she has no part in his workday activities. Her whole life is more bound up in the home and its problems. Consequently, changes in the family and home

may affect her traditional roles more sharply than before.

Many modern conveniences have helped to lighten the traditional responsibilities and work of the woman. Today's supermarkets feature a myriad of foods with "built-in maid service"--instant foods of various kinds that can be prepared in a very short time with quality comparable to that of foods prepared by the homemaker in a more tedious manner.

No longer does the woman have to make all the clothing for her family. Ready-made clothing is easily available and cheap enough so that it can be bought by most families. Increasingly, commercial laundry services and dry cleaning facilities are available at reasonable cost to the homemaker, and more and more women are taking advantage of them. A whole host of household appliances and conveniences have also helped the woman in America perform her home duties more easily and in less time. All of these things have meant a lighter physical work load and a very considerable change in what women in the home consider to be important.

...A glance at any woman's magazine testifies to the enormous importance of making today's home a place of beauty, culture, and spotless cleanliness; on keeping husbands contented and happy; and on insuring the sound emotional development of children. Clothing and linens that in 1890 might have been used for a week before laundering may now be used no more than a day. Interior decorating, gardening, preparation of varied and attractive menus, personal beauty care, and chauffeuring, entertaining, supervising, and otherwise catering to children--all take far more time than they used to. The focus of women's tasks at home has shifted. Less occupied with meeting the physical needs of her husband and children, the wife is now expected to help them pursue the elusive goal of happiness. (Smuts, 1959)

Changes in ideas about child care also keep her learning what the latest "theory" or advice is (Williams, 1961, p. 70). Also, she



no longer can feed her children and send them off to let the school deal with them for a good share of the day. Instead, she must worry about whether or not they'll get into college--and even if they'll get into the "right" one!

At the same time, there is a constant stream of new items--fabrics, foods, equipment, gadgets--to learn about, evaluate, and use. Often these are items with which most of her peers or parents will have had little or no more experience than she has. In turn, these new items may be outdated in a few months and replaced by others with different characteristics--to start the whole process over again!

Thus, among other things, innovations of various kinds have meant that the role of mother has changed considerably from what it was, say, 20 years ago. Most mothers now have a somewhat different set of responsibilities than mothers did then. Their time is allocated differently. The kinds of work they do are somewhat different. The concerns they have for their families have taken on new dimensions. "Child care" means something different now than it did earlier.

These changes continue to take place--usually not in the form of a spectacular, over-night innovation, but rather as the cumulative result of many small innovations over time. In total, they mean that today's mother has the time and energy to be concerned about phases of motherhood and family life that she didn't have before. Her expectations for herself in the mother role have changed. The expectations of the counter positions of husband and child have changed as well. These system imbalances have called for periodic adjustments to integrate at least some aspects of the innovations into the family social system and the roles that make it up.

System imbalance in this case is reflected in role imbalance perceived by the role occupant as being primarily dissatisfaction with his own performance in that role. The incongruity is among how the individual believes he should perform, how he thinks others believe he should perform, and how he thinks he actually is performing in the role.

In the family social system, for example, the outside innovation might in the first place affect the role of mother. As it affects this particular role, it may change the behavior or expectations of the occupant of that focal position in relation to the behaviors or expectations she has for those occupying counter positions.

At this point, the behaviors or expectations of those in counter positions don't "fit" with those of the person in the focal position. Behaviors and/or expectations that have been successful in the past don't work anymore. This can be true for both the focal-position occupant and those in counter positions. The affected parts of the family system must now strive for a new kind of balance where once again inter-related behaviors and expectations among the system members are consistent.

Where the mother is involved, her problems become: How can I anticipate some of these innovations and so maybe adjust more smoothly to them? How can I decide which innovations are important and which not? How can I learn to cope adequately with them?

As has been pointed out, the rapid rate of innovation in many areas of life has meant that a mother entering a given family life-cycle stage at Time 1 faces a somewhat different set of innovations--and so of expectations and behaviors to be learned and coped with--than a mother entering that same stage at Time 2.

Innovations are continuing to make possible--and sometimes mandatory--further imbalance and change in the mother role. This has meant that to perform her mother role successfully, the American mother has had to keep learning, to keep seeking information.

#### Mother Role Change Due to Entering a New Social System Stage

The second event that can create imbalance in a social system is change among the internal constituents of the system because the system itself is moving through a progression of stages. Such stages have been identified for the family social system.

Literature in the marriage and family-living area contains numerous references to the family life cycle. The cycle is made up of stages through which the family social system moves over time. Each stage brings about certain important changes in any given family system, and therefore among the focal- and counter-position behaviors and expectations. Each family social system is exposed to imbalance upon entering each stage.

Duvall (1958) identifies eight stages in this cycle:

1. Beginning families (no children).
2. Child-bearing families (oldest child birth to thirty months).
3. Families with pre-school children (oldest child 2½ to 6 years).
4. Families with school children (oldest child 6-13 years).
5. Families with teenagers (oldest child 13-19 years).
6. Families as launching centers (first child gone to last child's leaving home).
7. Families in middle years (empty nest to retirement).
8. Aging families (retirement to death of one or both spouses).

The concerns, satisfactions, behaviors, and relationships among family members--and certainly for the mother--differ at each of these stages. No family settles, for all time, problems such as how best to get and spend money, how to maintain a mutually satisfying sex relationship, or how best to rear children. "Each new stage in its development brings on a new constellation and new dimensions of tasks for the family as a whole as well as for each of its members." (Duvall, 1958)

As Parsons and Bales (1955, p. 124) point out, the initial process that the family goes through with the new child is to socialize him or her into the family. Then, in late adolescence, the child is of necessity socialized "out of" his family of origin into a different concrete family,

a family of procreation, in which he is to play the dual role, not of child, but of spouse and parent. For this to be accomplished his own parents, though still among the socializing agents, must play quite different roles from their previous ones; they are in a sense in representative roles vis-a-vis the "community," and their roles must be shared with other agents, other parents, teachers, and "influential" people in the community.

This can be a period of continuing and increasing strain for the mother. There is no doubt that the means by which she derived many of her satisfactions and obtained recognition and rewards have been taken away from her as her children move out of the home.

In some ways, the host of modern conveniences only accentuates the changes that occur at this stage. For example, household conveniences have helped lighten the work load and shorten the time spent in that kind of activity in the home. They allow her time for some other activities and interests. Yet once her children have left home, the modern mother may find that she doesn't have enough to keep her

really occupied in a fruitful and satisfying fashion.

In addition, with fairly early marriage and a lengthening life expectancy, married women find themselves with a considerable number of years on their hands where the roles of mother and housekeeper in particular are of decreasing importance. What to do with their time can become quite a problem.

...According to one estimate, the average mother now has the last of her two or three children when she is still in her mid-twenties. When she is a little past 30, she finds herself, healthy, vigorous, and active, with no children to look after for most of the day. Because of this as well as improvements in health and life expectations she still has more than forty years ahead of her--about 15 years more than the average mother at the same stage of family life in 1890. (Smuts, 1959)

One of the outcomes of these changes, according to Smuts, has been an increasing proportion of married women working outside the home--today nearly a third of them. In 1950, it was about a fourth, in 1940 about 15%, and in 1890 probably 5%.

Certainly as women grow older, they may find themselves cut off more and more from the sources of satisfaction formerly experienced. Weiss and Samelson (1958, p. 364) cite the difficulties posed by the American culture for the older person and particularly the older woman:

Her children have moved away, in consonance with our ideal of "every family in a home of its own," and she now lives in a childless home. She has no "better future" to work for, and because we see life in terms of building for the future, her daily tasks have lost much of their meaning. She cannot even serve as advisor to the younger generation. For one thing, such advisors are distrusted. For another, her children are apt to be living a different life from the one she knew in a different part of the country.

Thus the suggestion here is that imbalance in the family system due to entering a new stage affects the roles in that system.

Dissatisfaction with the rewards a role offers in a new stage comes about through a perceived incongruity between the individual's expectations of what a role should provide him in rewards and satisfactions, and his perceptions of the rewards and satisfactions actually provided by that role at that stage.

Several studies suggest that parents may have adjustment problems during the stage immediately after their children leave home. These studies indicate a dip in over-all adjustment among adults in the 50-55 year-old range. According to Duvall (1962, p. 391) this appears to be only a temporary period of poor adjustment in the lives of many otherwise normal men and women. Bossard and Boll (1955) call this the "crisis" period for married men and women, as far as marital happiness is concerned.

Deutscher (1962, p. 522), on the other hand, found postparental spouses had in a sense been prepared for their adolescents' leaving by a variety of "conditioning situations."

These situations provide an opportunity to anticipate postparental roles, not by taking the role of the other in the usual sense, but by experiencing analogous situations which are quasi-postparental and which enable the parents to play-at anticipated roles.

Young people leave home for service in the armed forces, go away to high school, take trips, spend vacation periods away from home, and do many other things that get both the parents and the children "used to" the idea of the children not being around the home. Thus the older mother has a chance to learn some of these role behaviors before the new role-stage is thrust upon her.

Whether or not the "cause" of poor adjustment is the children's departure from home, it certainly could play a major role. As Sussman

(1955) points out, "During its life cycle, the family alternately grows and contracts in size. With increasing size, interaction and activity patterns become more complex and varied. With decreasing size, these patterns have to be modified if the family is to persist as a unit."

After their children have left home, the "parents are now forced to rely upon each other for activity participation, emotional support, and affectional response," according to Sussman. He found that women in this postparental period more frequently than their husbands said they felt the need for new activities to substitute for their former child-rearing chores.

This is the stage in the family life cycle selected for this study--the sixth stage, when families are serving as launching centers, from the time the children first start to leave home to the time the last one has gone.

The purpose of the study is to look at women before and after the imbalance occurring at this family life cycle stage and to seek evidence as to the efficacy of certain adjustment mechanisms in coping with that imbalance.

#### A Theoretical Interpretation of the Problem

Earlier, it was observed that modern-day woman is participating in a world the nature of which includes continuing, accelerating change. This has meant the possibility of frequent and drastic change in her role patterns as a mother. Change from one major stage in her life to another has also often become a period beset with problems and adjustments for which she largely is unprepared.

How does she cope with such adjustments? To understand this, it

is necessary to look at the process of social-system change and role change.

### The Parsons-Bales Theoretical Framework

Parsons and Bales (1955) provide a framework that may be adapted for examining role change and its consequences. They distinguish a basic pattern of change in a social system:

1. A relatively stable state is disturbed in some way.
2. The disturbance then is "coped with" in the sense that its radically disorganizing consequences are forestalled. The disturbance is "used creatively" to facilitate a learning process.
3. This process leads to the relatively stable "new" plateau where the "gains" are consolidated.

They see this not as a continuous process but as one which starts and stops and has phases with varying intensities and durations. The interim between balance disturbances may be brief or long. But in any case, some return to a stable state is postulated.

This is the same general idea that the balance theorists propound. Parsons and Bales see a strain for homeostasis in the family social system. Osgood (1957) looks for a state of homeostasis or balance in word and concept meanings. Heider (1958) looks at balance and imbalance in a triangular system among two individuals and another individual or concept or idea. In all of these cases, when a system is thrown out of balance in some manner, efforts by the constituents of the system to bring it back into balance are assumed. People seek interaction, look for further information, and in general try to find some way of restoring balance.

### Application of Parsons-Bales Framework to Role Change

Role can be looked on as a system of expectations and behaviors of persons in particular societally-defined positions. These roles are interlocked with other roles into the more general system of the individual's personality. Both roles and personalities are, in turn, interlocked into the family social system.

A role--particularly one that stretches over much of a person's lifetime, as the role of mother usually does--is not a static thing. Its elements must change and shift and adjust as the family system within which it exists changes, shifts, and adjusts. There are certain times when such imbalance situations tend to occur with more frequency than others. These are stages when major shifts tend to occur in the system that bring major shifts in the roles making up that system. A given role may still carry the same name, but the expectations and behaviors may have changed radically. These shifts tend to occur in the family system at the junctures between stages in the family life cycle. These are also the times when at least some resocialization of the individuals concerned must take place if the family social system is to remain in balance.

A woman is called "mother" from the time her first child is born. But the role of mother--the expectations and behaviors--are different for any one "mother" at Stage 1, Stage 2, Stage 3, etc. The mother must adjust to these differences--learn what they are and how to cope with them--if she is to successfully perform her mother role in the family social system. If this is so, how does a role occupant become aware of imbalance?

### Onset of Imbalance in a Social System

If a social system is thrown into imbalance by something like a change in the life-stage of the system, the system will not usually move toward a new balanced state unless there is some change in someone's cognition of the situation. A person in one of the roles of the system must perceive the situation now to be different from what it was before. He must perceive some of the elements as being incongruent. These may be elements new to the situation or old elements that are now "rearranged" by a third element now in the picture.

What is important here is not so much the empirical source of balance disturbance, but rather the meaning each member of the family system attaches to these empirical events. As Parsons and Bales (1955, p. 203) say, "It is the meaning which events acquire for a specific action system which defines the inputs into that system for which they will be responsible." It is the meaning, also that determines whether dissatisfaction is aroused by a given set of events.

Parsons and Bales (1955, p. 203) believe that empirically, the disturbance or imbalance connected with the mother-child roles, for example, may come from a variety of sources in the complex family system.

Most broadly, we may say that it comes from a combination of two factors: first the bio-social maturation of the child himself whereby he becomes capable of higher levels of performance and in respects relatively independent of the main structure of his personality, learns new skills, etc.; second, the expectations of his family of how a child who is "getting so big" should behave.

These events, then, lead to perceptions of dissatisfaction with the current set of role behaviors and expectations. The pressure for

change--and for recognition of the need for change--goes both ways. The child and the family both may move for change in the mother-child relationship. The child is subject to both mother and family pressure to change. And so the entire system is involved to varying degrees in the recognition of the need for change and the establishment of new sets of expectations and obligations for the new balance state.

In addition, at certain stages change is mandatory--particularly when the child matures and moves into school age and then into adulthood. For the present study, the latter case deserves further consideration. As Sarbin (1954, p. 495) points out, the total role system of the individual is unique and over-demanding. He cannot satisfy fully all demands from that system. He must move through a continuous sequence of role decisions and bargains.

Because this is the situation, he structures what Toby (1952) calls an "hierarchy of role obligations." The relative positions of his perceived obligations are determined by the perceived strength of the claims made upon him by the various institutions, groups, and individuals who compete for his loyalty. And thus, as the Gullahorns (1963) point out, his commitment to one role or to one set of competing expectations is greater than his commitment to another.

But the concept of role is a reciprocal one. Not only does the focal-position occupant have an hierarchy of obligations, but so do the counter-position occupants. These hierarchies must "mesh" properly for the family system to function adequately.

When a family reaches the stage where all the children have left home, the essential change in the interlocking family role system is the withdrawal of one or more Alters for the mother--and along with them

part if not all of their reciprocal sets of expectations and obligations. The primary family social system has shrunk in size and in responsibilities.

The hierarchy of obligations of the child clearly shift at this stage. He takes on control of and responsibility for his own actions. He may marry and so have a wife and children and all the attendant obligations. From his view, his "child" role relations and obligations with his own mother definitely have changed.

The mother may not perceive these changes. This is the source of much of the mother-in-law trouble joked about so often in American humor. She has not restructured her hierarchy of obligations to take into account the new family life stage. She continues to try to perform as she had before--sometimes quite successfully, to the detriment of the matured child and his own family; and sometimes unsuccessfully where the new family breaks completely with the old.

If she perceives these changes, she will adjust her own hierarchy of obligations to meet them. She no longer will expect to look after every aspect of her child's welfare. She will turn elsewhere for her rewards and satisfactions. She may reassess her relations with her husband--the remaining original member of the family social system--and look for ways to bring fresh aspects to this relationship. Or she may seek other challenges and relationships. In any case, the child leaving home has started a long chain of possible actions and reactions.

Thus changes in any part of the larger system may affect individual components. If these changes are perceived as unsatisfying, not desirable, or disturbing, the individuals involved will seek ways of coping with the changes.

In reformulating Parsons and Bales in terms of role change, we would say:

Given a balanced role state...

When situational elements disturb that balanced role state, the person involved will use some adjustment mechanism in an effort to once more reach and maintain a balanced role state.

### The Adjustment Mechanisms

As a result of these balance disturbances, and a person's cognition of imbalance, the individual involved seeks ways of returning to a state of balance. In doing so, he may or may not use particular adjustment mechanisms. The use or lack of use of these adjustment mechanisms will influence how closely the individual will again approach a satisfying balance state and what the role relationships will be in that state.

In the case of imbalance resulting from perceived inadequacy in role performance, one mechanism might be to seek information as to what the "proper" performance is and then to perfect the behaviors needed to perform that way. In the case of imbalance resulting from perceived lack of rewards and satisfactions coming from a current role that once was satisfying, a person might adjust by seeking another role that would provide rewards and satisfactions that will replace or supplement those obtained in the original role.

Information seeking.--One possible adjustment mechanism for coping with balance disturbances induced by entering a new role stage would be to seek information and advice on how to meet the expectations of the new role stage, how to adjust to the disturbance of the status quo. As she enters a new stage in family life, a mother who experienced

the attendant changes as imbalance might well seek information to help her adapt.

American mothers apparently do this regularly in the area of child care. Williams (1961, p. 70) identifies a general tendency of American mothers to seek information on rearing their young. He reports a relatively great stress on "rational" methods of child-rearing.

Furthermore, American parents seem avidly to seek scientific information and the advice of experts or pseudo experts; they very often are preoccupied with "problems" of child rearing; they often show definite signs of uncertainty and insecurity as to how to bring up their offspring. There are a multitude of magazines, bulletins, pamphlets, newspaper articles, "columns", and so forth, dealing with how to treat the child, and there is considerable instability in the popularity of accepted recommendations in these matters.

Sources turned to for information and advice might be: (1) persons in face-to-face contact or (2) mediated sources, those involving no face-to-face contact between the seeker and the giver of information and/or advice.

For example, one might seek advice from relatives, if they are available for counsel. Or friends or neighbors might be approached. A third possibility would be to turn to "experts" such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, nutritionists, and the like.

The mass media are examples of mediated sources. Newspapers, magazines, radio, and television tend to cover a wide variety of topics in order to appeal to the widest possible audience and so not to be continuously involved with the concerns of a specific segment of our society. At the same time, certain media are concerned primarily with such special audiences and concerns--Brides magazine and Parents magazine, for example. These specialized media are probably more "expert"

in their area of specialization than similar content in general-appeal media.

Thus there would be both personal and mediated sources that could be turned to for advice and/or information. Both of these classes of sources can be ranged on a rough continuum of "expertness," as outlined above.

As Osgood (1960) points out, dissonance theory leads to the prediction that people will avoid exposure to balance-disturbing information and seek exposure to balance-restoring information. In seeking information from a particular source, people soon learn whether the information supplied is likely to be balance-restoring or not. When information is sought, assuming it is relevant to restoring balance, the more expert the information source used in trying to solve a role-balance disturbance, the more satisfactory the solution is likely to be for the individual--and the higher the probability of a return to balance.

Thus a young mother can turn to her relatives or friends for information on how to care for her new infant. Her infant may or may not flourish under the application of such advice. But if the young mother goes to a doctor for the latest information on infant care, and then follows that advice, the probabilities of the infant flourishing should be much higher.

Likewise, a mother seeking advice on how to adjust to her children's growing up and leaving home may or may not get helpful information from the general mass media. She should have a higher probability of getting such information from specialized publications such as a magazine designed specifically for parents.

Entering an alternate role.--Another possible mechanism for adjusting to role imbalance would be to enter a new role.

Kelly (1955, pp. 134-5) reports some success in the use of an alternate role in psychotherapy. This he calls "fixed-role therapy." It is undertaken in psychotherapy to provide the individual under treatment with an alternate role or a different construction of an existing role that he can now "try on" and develop for a time to see how it "fits" him.

In the cases Kelly reports, a group of therapists wrote out a description of what the behaviors and attitudes were for a new role for a given individual. The individual then role-played this description for some time and in varying situations until he began to elaborate on it and internalize it. The therapeutic intent is to "help the person formulate new and rather basic constructs with respect to which his conception of role may be reoriented."

Here a conscious effort is made to create a new role for the patient to begin to move toward, feel out, play at, in order to see new ways of looking at himself, and new and more satisfactory ways of coping with the world around him.

For "normal" people, adoption of another role also may open new rewards and satisfactions and ways of coping with the perceptual world. Employment outside the home may be one such alternate role for a mother. As Nye points out, employed mothers establish "new sets of social relationships with business associates and clients" that can provide social control, status, and security for the wife just as it can for her husband (Nye and Hoffman, 1963, p. 367).

At the same time, getting a job doesn't "correct" the perceived

deficiencies in the mother role. Were a woman to quit her job after having held it for a time, she more than likely would find her mother role still to be deficient and this "cause" of imbalance still to be operative.

Rather than "correcting" the mother role, employment instead allows her to re-order her "hierarchy of obligations." She lowers the "salience" of the mother role obligations and puts higher on the scale her "employee" role obligations. As this new balance is worked out, her life once more can be satisfying and rewarding--but in a different way than before.

Although at one time women of status looked down upon the working woman, Dornbusch and Heer (1957) report that women are changing their evaluation of work from negative to positive. Empey (1958) found that high school senior girls and college girls tend to see their role as dual--to prepare for marriage but also to prepare for a productive career. In fact, the girls he found to be more advanced in their occupational planning than were the boys of the same ages. Slocum and Empey (1956) observed that most college girls believe they can successfully combine marriage and an outside occupational career. Most of them thought of work as a pleasant activity, and most of them preferred positions in which they would be working with people.

Weiss and Samelson (1958), reporting on a national sample, found that employment provided a basis for feelings of worth in 56% of all employed women. Those least likely to find feelings of worth in their jobs were the unmarried women who were less educated or older. About 40% of the employed married women considered housework tasks as a basis for feelings of worth. Married women reported that they were not

generally motivated to seek careers because of dissatisfaction with housework roles. Also, the more highly skilled the job the woman had, the more that job was likely to be a source of feelings of worth if the home no longer was.

Thus we would expect employment to be a possible adjustment mechanism and also to be a rather rewarding one for many women.

#### Indicators of Return to Balance

To this point, we have identified two major elements:

##### Some social system situational elements involved in role balance disturbance

1. Innovation affecting a system and its roles.
2. Entering a new social system stage that affects the roles involved.

##### Some adjustment mechanisms used to cope with role balance disturbance

1. Information-seeking.
2. Introduction of alternate role.

Parsons and Bales bring in a third element--the return to a balance state of some kind, given that the adjustment or coping process has been successful.

In terms of roles, it is most difficult to get direct evidence that such a state has been reached. If it is achieved, however, certain "indicators" should tend to show up in the individual. These indicators would be assumed to co-vary with the stability of a role. Some possible indicators might be:

1. Upward changes in a person's general satisfaction level over time.
2. A person's generally high self-rating of competence in his role activities.
3. The lack of psychosomatic symptoms.
4. The relatively greater emphasis given to the new

role or new role stage as compared with other roles the individual plays.

Change in satisfaction level.--A number of studies relate employment of the mother to adjustment or satisfaction. However, no study was found that directly checked whether outside employment of mothers whose children had recently left home led to higher general satisfaction with life.

All of the studies were concerned with mothers in general or with mothers who had children at home. If there are still children at home, outside employment would be sought by mothers for reasons other than "return-to-balance." Whatever these reasons, the studies generally indicate a negative relationship between outside employment and general satisfaction. Employed mothers tend to be less satisfied with their life than are unemployed mothers. A few of the findings will be related here.

Powell (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963) reports significantly lower marital adjustment among employed mothers with adolescents at home than among non-employed mothers of this age group. She found no significant differences in this regard with mothers of preschool or elementary school children. She also found relatively few mothers in the three groups in her sample who perceived themselves as being poorly adjusted in marriage.

Locke and Mackeprang (1949), studying a sample from a general population in Indiana, found no relationship between women's employment and marital satisfaction. Havemann and West (1952), in their study of college graduates, concluded that employed women have a higher divorce rate than non-employed women. It should be pointed out that not all

the employed wives in these two studies had children. Also, the women represented many stages in the family life cycle rather than just one.

Nye (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963, p. 269) asked mothers, "Everything considered, how happy has your marriage been for you?" The findings did not support his hypothesis that employed women were happier in their marriages.

The one study which bears most closely on the present problem had inconclusive findings. Nye (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963, p. 321) asked women to respond as to their level of satisfaction in seven areas. With 265 mothers who had a child who had married within the past two years, he anticipated that these mothers would require other significant roles from which to obtain social status and a sense of personal worth. However, the non-employed were significantly better satisfied with their recreation and family income. Non-significant differences in satisfaction with the relationship to husband, with house and furniture, with daily work, and with children, all favored the non-employed mother. (p. 328)

Nye's study--although it turned up two significant differences where non-employed women were more satisfied than employed women were--still did not settle the question, since most of his differences were non-significant. Also, the fact that a child was married recently does not necessarily mean that these families were left without children at home. Thus he probably was not dealing with a "true" imbalance situation in our terms. This would lead us to believe that his results do not negate the possibility of support for our hypotheses in this area.

Feld (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963, p. 347) studied 438 mothers. Her results indicated that working is associated with reports of marital

unhappiness, but not with general life unhappiness.

The picture painted by these research findings is not very clear. Apparently for women generally, the relationship between employment and level of satisfaction (as variously defined) isn't strong and is dependent on a number of other factors. One of these factors might be amount of role imbalance. However, none of these researchers looked at his data in terms of comparing women before with women during or right after a role stage change. Data of this type will be presented in the present study.

As outlined in the section on adjustment mechanisms, mothers who are employed after their children leave should find employment rewarding and filling a partial void, and thus be more satisfied than those who are not employed. Also, mothers who use expert sources should on the whole be more satisfied than those who do not. No research evidence on this last hypothesis was found in the literature.

Self-rating of role competence.--No literature was found bearing directly on the relationship between this index of return-to-balance and each of the two adjustment mechanisms that were studied.

Also, if the use of expert sources tends to lead to a higher probability of successful experience in dealing with imbalance, then one would expect mothers who use expert sources in dealing with imbalance to show more of a return to balance than would those who do not. Such success in role behaviors should lead one to perceive one's own competence in that role. Thus one would expect that, among post-imbalance mothers, those who had used expert sources would also rate themselves higher in mother-role competence than would mothers who did not use expert sources.

At the same time, employment as an alternate role to the mother role at this particular imbalance point may have no relevance for how a woman rates herself as a mother. By seeking a job, she is not coping with the mother role changes themselves but is taking on a new role to provide new rewards and satisfactions. Therefore, when an alternate role is used to adjust to imbalance, a person's self-rating of mother-role competence would not seem to be a good index of over-all return-to-balance. Changes in amount of role imbalance would not change ratings in mother-role competence. Instead, they would be likely to change ratings on the "salience" of the mother role.

Psychosomatic symptoms.--Sharpe and Nye (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963) found little more than speculation about relationships between mothers' employment and mental health when they reviewed the literature. They found three contradictory ideas advanced: (1) that an employed mother is faced with irreconcilably contradictory roles; (2) that she doesn't find the employee role essentially different from those of wife and mother and so can successfully integrate them with no significant changes in mental health; and (3) that satisfaction gained from the new role leads to real gains in personality fulfillment and mental health.

They employed 10 psychosomatic-symptom items as indicators of anxiety. Their data gave them little reason to believe that employed mothers differed from non-employed in anxiety level. The small, non-significant differences they did find tended to favor the mothers employed full-time. If educational level has an effect on anxiety, it was offset by other variables associated with education in their study.

Employed mothers in their general sample showed slightly fewer

psychosomatic symptoms. Employed mothers with preschool children showed more symptoms. The researchers point out that the differences they found were nonsignificant and may be due to sampling error. However, they were consistent with the attitudes of the public and with statements made by mothers themselves.

When they looked at mothers with no children younger than the tenth year in school, a considerably larger proportion of employed than non-employed women were in the lowest category of psychosomatic symptoms. "Although this would not necessarily have been anticipated, it may be rationalized that these women need an additional significant role. Their children are becoming more independent, and they can foresee both the termination of any important function as mother as well as the loss of physical attractiveness. Since the differences are not statistically significant, however, they are only suggestive." (p. 314)

Axelsson's (1960) data challenge the assumed correlation between mental disorders and the postparental period. Instead, this seems to be as satisfying a period of life as the earlier periods.

Again, the evidence is not conclusive. However, mothers of adolescents showed fewer psychosomatic symptoms than did preschool or elementary school mothers. And among mothers with adolescents, employed women evidenced significantly fewer psychosomatic symptoms. These results are seen to support the present hypothesis that at the particular family life cycle stage under study, employed women will tend to show fewer psychosomatic symptoms.

In addition, women who tend to turn to expert sources should also show a better adjustment to the imbalances of the family life cycle--and so also show fewer psychosomatic symptoms.

Mother role emphasis.--Here, again no literature was found directly relating to this variable and the adjustment mechanisms considered in this study. However, the nature of this return-to-balance index would seem to lead to two hypotheses.

The assumption is that use of expert sources leads to better adjustment, thus a return to balance. The use of less expert sources is less likely to lead to adequate adjustment and balance. Persons who cope with role-imbalance situations successfully will tend to think of themselves in terms of the role involved and to be getting rewards from such a role. In turn, they should be more prone to make statements about themselves that include or refer to that role. Persons who do not overcome the role-imbalance successfully are likely to de-emphasize the role in describing themselves generally.

Thus, post-imbalance mothers who use expert sources should reflect more successful adjustment to the role imbalance by making more mother-role statements about themselves than post-imbalance mothers who use less expert sources.

On the other hand, using employment as an adjustment mechanism should lower the saliency of the mother role. Therefore, those women who have used employment as an adjustment mechanism should reflect this by making fewer statements about themselves in a mother role than would women who have not used this mechanism for adjustment.

#### General Rationale and Hypotheses

This, then, is our general rationale, following Parsons and Bales: When an individual faces innovation in a role behavior or enters a new role stage, he will experience varying degrees of imbalance and

disturbance of the status quo. Such imbalances or disturbances will lead to efforts to recapture a satisfying balance through some form of adjustment mechanism. The success of these efforts can be determined through the study of certain indicators which will co-vary with the degree of balance re-achieved.

Balance disturbance should result in a lowering of a person's general satisfaction level for a period. As the disturbance is successfully coped with, via adjustment mechanisms, the general satisfaction level should rise. If the use of expert advice sources enhances the probability that balance will be restored, then expert source use should be correlated with general satisfaction level.

Hypothesis 1: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more satisfied they will be with their general state of life.

Learning how to cope with a new role behavior or new role stage is important to the self-conception an individual has in that role. If the adjustment is successful, he should have a higher conception of himself as a performer in that role than if he is unsuccessful or less than completely successful. Knowledge of how to perform successfully may be gained from various sources. Again, the more expert these sources, the more successful the adjustment should tend to be.

Hypothesis 2: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more competent will persons perceive themselves in performing behaviors relating to that role.

Since successful adjustment to role imbalance is important to the general adjustment of the individual, the better adjusted a person is, the fewer symptoms of psychological troubles and problems he should

show. Conversely, the less successful the adjustment, the greater the number of such symptoms should show up. If use of expert sources is correlated with more successful adjustment, then it also should be negatively correlated with presence of psychosomatic symptoms of various kinds.

**Hypothesis 3:** Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the fewer psychosomatic symptoms those persons will ascribe to themselves.

The less successful a person has been in coping with a given role behavior or role stage, the more likely he will seek to deny or downgrade that role by not talking about it, by not acknowledging it, and by emphasizing the salience of other roles. Since expert advice should aid in the adjustment to a new role behavior or role stage, then we would expect use of such advice to be correlated with success in the role--and thus with tendencies on the part of the individual to recognize this role as important and to talk of himself in terms of this role.

**Hypothesis 4:** Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more salient that role will be in relation to the several roles persons perceive themselves in.

As indicated earlier, another of the possible adjustment mechanisms is to take on a new role when a current role no longer is so satisfying. The effect should be to afford the individual with new sources of rewards, stimulation, and feelings of worth that the older role or role stage no longer offers.

For example, it was mentioned earlier that a mother might adjust to imbalance induced by a change in her mother role by seeking employment

outside the home. This adjustment mechanism would seem to be least likely to be chosen by mothers with small children, and only somewhat more by women with adolescents at home. If these women take an outside job, they are more likely to be concerned with financial difficulties and to be taking a job primarily to supplement family income. On the other hand, among mothers whose children are old enough to leave home, outside employment is likely to be selected as a means of adjusting to the imbalance brought on by this new stage in the family life cycle and the mother role.

Restricting predictions to mothers who have children leaving the family of procreation, then, the following hypotheses should be valid:

Hypothesis 5: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report more satisfaction with their "general state of life" than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Hypothesis 6: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report fewer psychosomatic symptoms than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Hypothesis 7: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report less emphasis on the role which induced the imbalance than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

It does not seem that the fourth dependent variable--self-rating of competence in the role which induced the imbalance--would index a return to a balanced role state when employment is used as the adjustment mechanism. It would be a weak index in that a person reduces his feeling of imbalance by avoiding any concern over his performance of the role which changed rather than by learning how to competently perform it in its changed form.

## Chapter II

### RESEARCH DESIGN

Data relevant to the hypotheses already stated were available in a study of Michigan Homemakers conducted in April-May, 1963. The study was conducted by the Institute for Extension Personnel Development of the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service at Michigan State University.

#### General Study Design

Data pertinent to the present study were collected in 201 personal interviews with homemakers in four Michigan counties. Thus, an experimental situation in which experimental variables could be manipulated was not set up. Consequently, a correlational approach is used to test the hypotheses, based on measuring instruments derived from the responses obtained in the interview schedules.

The respondents selected from the main Michigan Homemakers study to test the present hypotheses were 201 mothers whose youngest child was about 19 years old. These mothers were entering the stage of the family life cycle when the children were leaving the family of procreation. Almost all of these mothers are assumed to have fairly recently gone through a state of role imbalance because they were moving into a new role stage.

It was possible to determine the recency and amount of role imbalance experienced by this sample of mothers because data were available on whether or not their children were still at home. From the available data, four levels of imbalance were derived. The "imbalance" index was operationalized in the following form:



- 3 - Has one child; child has moved away. (Abrupt role change.)
- 2 - Has more than one child; children have all moved away.  
(Gradual role change.)
- 1 - Has more than one child; some of the children have moved away. (Entering role change stage, but not yet forced to complete the adjustment.)
- 0 - Has one child, who is still at home; or, has more than one child, all of whom are still at home.  
(No role change yet.)

For purposes of this study, respondents who fit into categories "3" and "2" were categorized as "post-imbalance," those in "1" and "0" as "pre-imbalance."

The hypothesis testing procedure was conceptualized in the following way. Among respondents who have already experienced "role imbalance" lately, respondents who have made more use of a given adjustment mechanism should exhibit a greater "return to balance" than respondents who have made little use of the adjustment mechanism. In other words, there should be a correlation between the use of an adjustment mechanism and the index of "return to balance."

The "pre-role imbalance" group represents a type of "control group." It is possible that, in some cases, there is some correlation between a particular adjustment mechanism and the index of "return to balance" used, even when role imbalance has not yet been encountered. For example, employment and general satisfaction could be negatively correlated among mothers with children still at home. Therefore, the most appropriate test of the hypotheses would be to assert that the degree of the correlation between adjustment mechanism and "return to balance" index in the "post-imbalance" group should be different from the degree of relationship found in the "pre-imbalance" group. The

direction of the difference expected depends upon the types of indices used.

One additional control will be added to the analysis. The "imbalance" index was based partially on the number of children people have. Therefore, persons in the several "imbalance" groups are not likely to be comparable on other extraneous variables. For example, persons with more education tend to have fewer children. Also, education is likely to be correlated with the "adjustment mechanism" and "return-to-balance" variables. Thus it would seem that education level would be the most important extraneous variable to control. Therefore, the education level of the respondent was held constant statistically through the use of partial correlation coefficients instead of zero-order correlation coefficients. Education control levels were:

- 7 - more than 4 years of college.
- 6 - 4 years of college.
- 5 - 1 to 3 years of college.
- 4 - high school diploma.
- 3 - 9 to 11 years of school.
- 2 - 8 years of school completed.
- 1 - 1 to 7 years of school completed.

#### Sampling Procedure

It was not possible to cover the entire state in a sample. Therefore, mothers in four Michigan counties were interviewed. The counties, and the number of mothers selected into the sample, were:

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| Antrim     | 40        |
| Lapeer     | 50        |
| Livingston | 50        |
| Oakland    |           |
| (urban )   | 50        |
| (suburban) | <u>50</u> |
| Total      | 240       |

Listings of mothers whose youngest child was born in 1944 were obtained from the county school census records. These lists were alphabetized; then a sample was drawn. The reason only 40 mothers were selected in Antrim county was that there were only 40 women in the entire county whose oldest child was born in 1960. Since in the larger study, younger mothers were being compared with older mothers, the sample of older mothers also was cut to 40. Two areas of Oakland county were sampled--the urban area in Pontiac and the suburban area surrounding Pontiac--to give representation to women living in both types of residential areas.

Antrim county is in the northwest part of the lower peninsula of Michigan. It is predominantly rural. Lapeer and Livingston counties, in the eastern part of the lower peninsula, have extensive farming areas but also some good-sized towns. Oakland county also is in the eastern part of the lower peninsula. Pontiac, its chief city, has over 80,000 population. The total county population is around 700,000--making it a highly urban and suburban county.

Thus, the areas in the four counties studied varied from very rural, to combination rural and urban, to suburban and metropolitan.

### Operationalization of Variables

#### Information-seeking

The mothers interviewed were asked if they "have any concerns about your children." When they named a concern, they were asked which sources of information and advice they looked to on the subject of child problems.

The information sources they named can be classified at least

two ways. One is personal vs. mediated, on the basis of whether or not face-to-face contact is involved. Thus the specialized and mass media fall into the mediated category and all direct contacts fall into the personal category. Although these classifications are often used in talking about information sources, evidence in the research literature is not consistent enough to warrant differential predictions for these two types of sources. Therefore, for this study, this classification was disregarded.

A second way of classifying information sources is on the basis of their degree of "expertness." This was the classification used in this study. The mothers were asked to name their "most frequently used source" of information and advice about concerns for their children. Later, three judges rated these named sources on a seven-point scale of "how expert each source is on child problems."

All three judges were mothers between 35 and 40 years of age. Two had teen-age children and one had children in elementary school. None of their children had as yet left home.

The scale they used was:

No apparent  
expertise on  
child problems

|  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
|  | 0 |  | 1 |  | 2 |  | 3 |  | 4 |  | 5 |  | 6 |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|

Very expert  
source on  
child problems

Responses of "nowhere" were automatically placed in the zero--or no apparent expertise--category. On the others, each judge made her own decisions as to where to rate each source response. The complete instructions given judges are presented in Appendix A.

### Introduction of Alternate Role

The variable was indexed by whether or not a woman took employment outside of the home--and whether she was employed full-time or part-time. This variable was classified into: not employed, employed part-time, and employed full-time (40 hours or more a week).

### General Satisfaction with Present State of Life

Kilpatrick and Cantril (1960) have developed a ten-step self-anchoring scale as a means of measuring the perceptions of their world on the part of individuals and groups. The respondent is asked "to describe, in terms of his own perceptions, goals and values, the top and bottom, or anchoring points, of the dimension on which scale measurement is desired, and then to employ this self-defined continuum as a measuring device." The rationale for the scale is as follows: Each person lives in a perceptual world that is unique in at least some of its aspects. Each person behaves in terms of how he perceives his own "reality world." If this is so, then the key to an understanding of human behavior is to take into account the unique reality world of the individual. The way to take this into account is from a first-person point of view--as is done in the use of a self-anchoring scale. This scale is a "self-defined continuum anchored at either end in terms of personal perception."

These researchers (Cantril, 1963) used the scale to elicit responses concerning people's perceptions of the past, present, and future in terms of their personal aspirations and worries, and their hopes and fears for their nations.

In the present study, respondents were handed a card which

contained a representation of a ten-step ladder. An interviewer said to the respondent, "Looking at the ladder, suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you. Where on the ladder do you feel you stand at present?" A numerical rating was obtained, from "1" representing the worst possible life to "10" the best possible life.

#### Self-Rating of Role Performance Competence

Each woman was given a card carrying five response alternatives. She was then asked, "In comparison with other women you know, how would you rate yourself in caring for children." The response alternatives were: (1) very much below other women, (2) somewhat below other women, (3) about the same as most other women, (4) somewhat better than other women, and (5) very much better than other women.

#### Psychosomatic Symptoms

After the rest of the questionnaire schedule had been covered, each woman was asked to respond to six items that in the mental health research have correlated highly with mental disorder (Gurin et al., 1960; Zigler and Phillips, 1960). These were:

1. Do you ever have any trouble getting to sleep?
2. Do you ever feel depressed?
3. How often do you feel sick at your stomach?
4. Do you ever feel nervous or restless?
5. How frequently do you have headaches?
6. Do you ever feel you are going to "crack up?"

Each question was followed by a four-point scale ranging from "often" to "fairly often" to "seldom" to "never." Scores for the six

items were summed to attain a total psychosomatic-symptoms score.

### Mother-Role Emphasis

At the beginning of each interview, the respondent was asked to personally fill out a page that asked her to make a series of 10 statements about herself, each beginning with "I". This written instruction was followed by ten numbered blank lines across the width of the page, each beginning with "I".

Symbolic interactionists (Couch, 1958, 1960; Kuhn, 1960) have used a similar technique--the Twenty Statements Test--to study the salience of a person's roles for that person. In this study, the responses to the 10 "I" statements were examined for statements concerning the mother role--either direct statements such as "I am a mother," or statements about children such as "I have three lovely children." Mother role emphasis was operationalized as the number of statements that referred to the mother role. Three judges independently recorded the number of such statements for each respondent. The average of the judge ratings, rounded to the nearest whole number, was taken as the number of mother role statements for each respondent. Instructions to the judges are presented in Appendix B.

### Data Collection

Twenty-two women who lived in the four counties studied were used as interviewers. They were selected with the help of the local county extension agent in home economics or the local school superintendent's office to interview in their own counties. Some had previous interviewing experience and some had not.

All interviewers were given a one-day training session before

As already mentioned, a correlational approach was used in testing the hypotheses. The predicted outcome of the product-moment correlation between the adjustment mechanism and the index of return-to-balance should be:

Each of these correlations is a partial correlation, with education level of respondents held constant.

Adjustment Mechanism: Source Expertise (variable 1)  
Return-to-balance index: General Satisfaction (variable 3)  
Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

H1: Post-Imb R greater than Pre-Imb R  
13.7 13.7

**H2:** Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more competent will persons perceive themselves in performing the behaviors relating to that role.

**Adjustment Mechanism: Source Expertise (variable 1)**  
**Return-to-balance index: Role Self-Rating (variable 4)**  
**Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)**

H1: Post-Imb R greater than Pre-Imb R  
14.7 14.7

**H3:** Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the fewer psychosomatic symptoms those persons will ascribe to themselves.

Adjustment Mechanism: Source Expertise (variable 1)  
Return-to-balance index: Psychosomatic Symptoms (variable 5)  
Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| H1: Post-Imb R | less than Pre-Imb R |
| 15.7           | 15.7                |

H4: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more salient that role will be in relation to the several roles persons perceive themselves in.

Adjustment Mechanism: Source Expertise (variable 1)  
Return-to-balance index: Role Emphasis (variable 6)  
Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

H1: Post-Imb R greater than Pre-Imb R  
16.7 16.7

H5: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report more satisfaction with their "general state of life" than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Adjustment Mechanism: Alternate Role (variable 2)  
Return-to-balance index: General Satisfaction (variable 3)  
Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| H1: Post-Imb R | greater than Pre-Imb R |
| 23.7           | 23.7                   |



H6: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report fewer psychosomatic symptoms than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Adjustment Mechanism: Alternate Role (variable 2)  
 Return-to-balance index: Psychosomatic Symptoms (variable 5)  
 Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| H1: Post-Imb R | less than Pre-Imb R |
| 25.7           | 25.7                |

H7: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report less emphasis on the role which induced the imbalance than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Adjustment Mechanism: Alternate Role (variable 2)  
 Return-to-balance index: Role Emphasis (variable 6)  
 Control Variable: Educational Attainment (variable 7)

|                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| H1: Post-Imb R | less than Pre-Imb R |
| 26.7           | 26.7                |

Before the partial correlation coefficients were calculated, the zero-order correlations were checked to determine whether the assumption of linearity was reasonable. To test the significance of the hypotheses, the partial correlations were transformed to Fisher's Z scores. Then, the statistical test used to test whether two zero-order correlation co-efficients differ significantly from each other was used, subtracting an extra degree of freedom from each variance estimate (Walker and Lev, 1963, p. 343).

## Chapter III

### FINDINGS

#### Description of Sample

##### Response Rate

As previously stated, the original sample consisted of names and addresses of 240 women in four counties. Each interviewer also had a list of alternate names and addresses to use if she could not, for any reason, complete interviews with all the women on her original list. Interviewers were told to call back three times at the original respondent before choosing an alternate list name. The response rate was about the same for the four counties. The interviewers were able to complete 201 interviews with mothers in the sample before field work halted late in May, 1963.

No attempt was made to get a representative sample of Michigan women. The objective of the study was not to obtain estimates of what the whole population of Michigan women is like. Rather, it was to come up with samples of different types of women so that they could be compared on the basis of subgroupings such as the pre- and post-imbalance groupings used in the present study.

For the present analysis, five of these 201 subjects were dropped because they were rearing grandchildren in the home. It was felt that their family life-cycle stage was not comparable to that for the other women being studied. Therefore, the analyses which follow are based on a total of 196 subjects.

## Social and Physical Characteristics

Table 1 presents a description of the sample of mothers on several attributes, by pre- and post-imbalance groups.

Table 1. Description of sample on several social and demographic attributes, by post- and pre-imbalance groups.

| Personal Characteristic                | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance | Total<br>Sample |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Residence:</b>                      |                   |                    |                 |
| Rural                                  | 30%               | 31%                | 31%             |
| Village (under 2,500)                  | 13                | 28                 | 17              |
| Town (2,500-50,000)                    | 12                | 8                  | 11              |
| Suburb                                 | 26                | 18                 | 23              |
| City (over 50,000 )                    | 19                | 15                 | 18              |
|                                        | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>        | <u>100%</u>     |
|                                        | N=135             | N=61               | N=196           |
| <b>Total Annual Income for Family:</b> |                   |                    |                 |
| \$2,000 or less                        | 3%                | 5%                 | 4%              |
| \$2,001-\$3,000                        | 1                 | 7                  | 3               |
| \$3,001-\$4,000                        | 7                 | 5                  | 6               |
| \$4,001-\$5,000                        | 13                | 11                 | 13              |
| \$5,001-\$6,000                        | 12                | 7                  | 10              |
| \$6,001-\$7,000                        | 8                 | 15                 | 10              |
| \$7,001-\$9,000                        | 18                | 11                 | 16              |
| Over \$9,000                           | 20                | 29                 | 23              |
| No response                            | 18                | 10                 | 15              |
|                                        | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>        | <u>100%</u>     |
| Median Income <sup>a/</sup> \$6,651.   |                   |                    |                 |
| <b>Age:</b>                            |                   |                    |                 |
| 35 years or under                      | 1%                | -%                 | 1%              |
| 36-40 years                            | 5                 | 8                  | 6               |
| 41-45 years                            | 20                | 13                 | 18              |
| 46-50 years                            | 32                | 31                 | 32              |
| 51-55 years                            | 24                | 20                 | 22              |
| Over 55 years                          | 17                | 28                 | 20              |
| Blank                                  | 1                 | -                  | 1               |
|                                        | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>        | <u>100%</u>     |

Median Age 50 years

(Continued)



Table 1. (Continued)

| Personal Characteristic                     | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance | Total<br>Sample |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Number of Children:</b>                  |                   |                    |                 |
| 1                                           | 22%               | 22%                | 22%             |
| 2                                           | 30                | 31                 | 30              |
| 3                                           | 23                | 13                 | 20              |
| 4                                           | 13                | 16                 | 14              |
| 5                                           | 7                 | 13                 | 9               |
| 6 or more                                   | 5                 | 5                  | 5               |
|                                             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%            |
| <b>Husband's Occupation <sup>b/</sup> :</b> |                   |                    |                 |
| Professional, supervisors Type 1            | 11%               | 10%                | 10%             |
| Supervisors Type 2                          | 11                | 21                 | 14              |
| White collar workers                        | 7                 | 10                 | 8               |
| Farm owners                                 | 9                 | 13                 | 10              |
| Skilled workers                             | 12                | 16                 | 13              |
| Service Type 1 and factory employees        | 23                | 15                 | 20              |
| Tenant and part-time farmers                | 2                 | -                  | 2               |
| Service Type 2 and unskilled                | 16                | 13                 | 15              |
| Unemployed                                  | 1                 | 2                  | 2               |
| Blank                                       | 8                 | -                  | 6               |
|                                             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%            |

a/ Based on persons responding to income question.

b/ Supervisors, Type 1: Store owner, manager of a store, manager of plant, funeral director, military officer, engineer, public relations director.

Supervisors, Type 2: Contractor; manager-owner of service station, lumber yard, hardware store, barber shop; foreman; postmaster.

Service, Type 1: Policeman, mailman, railway conductor, fireman, truck driver, mechanic, postman, milkman.

Service, Type 2: Janitors, watchmen, barbers.

The sample was quite heterogeneous as to the kind of residential area in which respondents lived--ranging from rural to metropolitan-area homes. The least-represented group, 11 percent of the sample, lived in towns between 2,500 and 50,000 population. Rural residents made up the



largest segment of the sample (30 percent) with suburban residents second (23 percent).

As for the pre- and post-imbalance groupings, there was some tendency for mothers living in suburban and city residential areas to be overrepresented in the pre-imbalance group, and village mothers to be overrepresented in the post-imbalance group. However, these differences between imbalance groups were not statistically significant.<sup>1</sup>

Half of the respondents reported an annual family income of at least \$6,651 (based on the 85 percent who reported their income). About 15 percent made \$4,000 or less, while a fourth made \$9,000 or more. Income differences between the pre- and post-imbalance groups were non-significant.<sup>2</sup>

By design, the women in the sample were fairly similar in age. Each of them had a youngest child born in 1944. The mothers averaged 50 years of age. Only 7 percent were 40 or below, and a fifth were over 55 years old. Age differences between the two imbalance groups were non-significant.<sup>3</sup>

Half of the mothers had one or two children. Five percent reported families of six or more children. Again, differences between imbalance groups were not significant.<sup>4</sup>

None of the nine husband's-occupation categories contained more than a fourth of the respondents. Thus there was a fair amount of

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<sup>1</sup>  
 $\chi^2=5.67$ , d.f.=4,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>2</sup>  
 $\chi^2=8.13$ , d.f.=5,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>3</sup>  
 $\chi^2=4.06$ , d.f.=4,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>4</sup>  
 $\chi^2=3.60$ , d.f.=4,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

variation on this characteristic. Service Type 1 and factory employees were the largest group - 20 percent. Again there was no statistically significant difference between the two imbalance groupings.<sup>5</sup>

Supervisors, Type 1, were generally top management or owners of businesses of some size. Included were store owners and managers, plant managers, military officers, and engineers. Supervisors, Type 2, were generally owners of smaller businesses such as barber shops, and middle management people such as foremen.

Service, Type 1, occupations included public servants such as policemen, mailmen, firemen, and postmen, and such occupations as milkman, mechanic, and truck driver. Service, Type 2, included service occupations requiring less skill and with less responsibility, such as janitors, watchmen, and barbers.

In conclusion, the post-imbalance group was not significantly different from the pre-imbalance group on any of these attributes. Therefore, the differences between imbalance groups can be reasonably attributed merely to sampling error. In this study, the pre-imbalance group is used as a control group for the post-imbalance group. Therefore, it is fortunate that the two imbalance groups are found to be quite similar on a variety of attributes.

#### Theoretical Variables

In this section, the sample of mothers is described in terms of the theoretical variables studied. The theoretical variables are the two adjustment mechanisms, the four return-to-balance indices, and the educational level of the mothers.

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<sup>5</sup>  $\chi^2=8.55$ , d.f.=6,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

### Role Imbalance

In testing the hypotheses, it was decided to control for the probable level of imbalance in studying the relationships between the adjustment mechanisms and the various return-to-balance indices. Using the four "imbalance" levels previously outlined to classify the mothers, the distribution was:

|                                                                 | <u>f</u>  | <u>%</u>  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 3. One child, who has left home<br>(abrupt change)              | 13        | 7%        |
| 2. More than one child, all not home<br>(gradual change)        | 48        | 25        |
| 1. More than one child, some not home<br>(entering role change) | 93        | 47        |
| 0. All children still at home<br>(no role change)               | <u>42</u> | <u>21</u> |
|                                                                 | N=196     | 100%      |

By combining the two upper levels and the two lower levels, 61 women were placed in the post-imbalance group and 135 in the pre-imbalance group. If a child in the family was away for college, he was counted as having left home.

### Adjustment Mechanisms

Information-seeking.--What was studied here was the nature of information-seeking the mothers said they did. This variable was operationalized as the "expertise" of the person or mediated source from which each mother most frequently got advice or information to help her with child-related problems. The information sources named by the mothers were rated as to their "expertness" in this area by judges.

Three judges--all mothers--were used to place the reported sources along a seven-place scale from "no apparent expertise on child problems" to "very expert source on child problems." The source named

by each of the 196 subjects was placed on a 3 x 5 card. Each judge was given the set of instructions (see Appendix A) to read. Then she was given a set of blue cards numbered to represent the scale positions from 0 through 6. She took the deck of white 3 x 5 cards with the sources on them and distributed them by hand along the blue-card scale.

When she was through, her ranking for each subject's response was recorded. The process was repeated for the other two judges.

The ratings given by the three judges were averaged for each subject. This average was then taken as the ranking for that particular subject's response. Interjudge reliability was checked by correlating each judge's rankings with those by each of the other two judges. Then an average correlation coefficient was computed, using Fisher's z-transformation. This correlation was .71. While this reliability is lower than usually desired, it seems high enough to consider the measuring instrument a "fair" index of source expertise.

All three judges agreed on items at the extremes of the scale. They all placed such responses as "I don't (seek information)," "just my ideas," and "myself" at the least-expert end of the scale. They were also unanimous in placing the response "doctor" at the top of the scale as "very expert source."

On many information sources, the three judges agreed unanimously as to their "expertness" rating. On many others, two of the three judges gave identical ratings. From these, representative source statements for each scale value are:

- 0--nowhere, myself
- 1--just use my head, look around, general mass media
- 2--Extension programs, talk with people, work with children
- 3--read and discuss with husband
- 4--textbook, studying books about children
- 5--college work in my own profession, child psychology group
- 6--school counsellor, principal, minister, and college

The judges' ratings fell on a rough continuum from reliance strictly on the self and the immediate family, to specialized media, to outside professional sources. "Husband" seems to rate about at the top of the non-professional personal sources and about the same as the specialized media such as textbooks. Both the least and most expert sources are people with whom the mother can interact.

The judges' average rating was used as the "expertness of information source" in testing the hypotheses of this study.

Table 2. Variability on adjustment-mechanism indices, by pre- and post-imbalance groups.

| Adjustment Mechanism      | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance | Total<br>Sample |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Source Expertise:         |                   |                    |                 |
| 6 (very expert)           | 10%               | 3%                 | 8%              |
| 5                         | 10                | 11                 | 10              |
| 4                         | 13                | 20                 | 15              |
| 3                         | 19                | 21                 | 20              |
| 2                         | 12                | 13                 | 12              |
| 1                         | -                 | 2                  | 1               |
| 0 (no apparent expertise) | 36                | 30                 | 34              |
|                           | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>        | <u>100%</u>     |
| Average (mean) Rating     | 2.44              | 2.47               | 2.46            |
| Alternate Role:           |                   |                    |                 |
| Employed full-time        | 35%               | 36%                | 35%             |
| part-time                 | 10                | 13                 | 11              |
| Not employed              | 55                | 51                 | 54              |
|                           | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>        | <u>100%</u>     |
|                           | N=135             | N=61               | N=196           |

Table 2 shows the "expertness" ratings of sources named by women in the pre- and post-imbalance groups. About a third of the responses were placed in the "no apparent expertise" category. Few were classed as "very expert." The rest were ranged fairly evenly among the other five scale places.

The average (mean) source expertise ratings for the two imbalance groups were virtually identical. Therefore, no check for the significance of the difference between the two imbalance groups was made.

Employment as an alternate role.--Table 2 shows the outside-employment status of the mothers, by pre- and post-imbalance groups. Almost half of the women in the sample had either full- or part-time employment. Half were not employed. One-third of them had full-time jobs.

Again by observation there was no correlation between this adjustment mechanism--employment--and the imbalance levels.

#### Return-to-balance Indices

Table 3 presents the distribution of the four return-to-balance indices for the pre- and post-imbalance groups, and for the total sample.

General satisfaction.--None of the women rated herself in the bottom four satisfaction level categories. This reduced the variability on this index. Over a fourth rated themselves in the top category. Mothers in the pre-imbalance group seemed more likely to rate themselves in the top or low categories than did mothers in the post-imbalance group, but the differences were not statistically significant.<sup>6</sup>

Mother role competence.--Most women felt they did as well as, or

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<sup>6</sup>  
 $\chi^2=6.62$ , d.f.=5,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

better than, women they knew in caring for their children. Therefore there was not the variability on this measurement index that had been hoped for. Over half rated themselves "about the same as other women." The rest usually rated themselves better than other women.

There was some tendency for post-imbalance mothers to rate themselves high in competence more often than pre-imbalance mothers did. However, the difference was not statistically significant.<sup>7</sup>

Psychosomatic symptoms.--For this index, the women were normally distributed over the eight-point scale. The average (mean) fell a little below the center of the scale. There was no significant relationship between psychosomatic-symptom level and imbalance group.<sup>8</sup>

Mother role emphasis.--The distributions of role-emphasis scores are based on a total sample size of 190. Six cases were dropped for this particular index because the respondents had not written "I" statements.

A procedure similar to that used for setting up the "source expertise" scale was used to place subjects along the mother role-emphasis scale. First, the same three judges read the set of instructions for coding, as given in Appendix B. Then they took the original interview questionnaires and read the statements written by the respondents in answer to the request to "make 10 statements about yourself, each beginning with I."

Most, but not all, respondents made 10 statements. Whatever number were made, each judge examined the statements, identified those

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<sup>7</sup> $\chi^2=3.64$ , d.f.=2,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

<sup>8</sup> $\chi^2=3.73$ , d.f.=5,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.



Table 3. Return-to-balance indices, by pre- and post-imbalance groups.

| Return-to-balance<br>Index        | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post<br>Imbalance | Total<br>Sample |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| <b>General Satisfaction:</b>      |                   |                   |                 |
| 9 (high)                          | 30%               | 25%               | 29%             |
| 8                                 | 10                | 10                | 10              |
| 7                                 | 21                | 21                | 21              |
| 6                                 | 13                | 25                | 16              |
| 5                                 | 11                | 13                | 12              |
| 4                                 | 15                | 7                 | 12              |
| 3                                 | -                 | -                 | -               |
| 2                                 | -                 | -                 | -               |
| 1                                 | -                 | -                 | -               |
| 0 (low)                           | -                 | -                 | -               |
|                                   | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>     |
|                                   | N=135             | N=61              | N=196           |
| <b>Competence in Mother Role:</b> |                   |                   |                 |
| Much better than other women      | 11%               | 21%               | 14%             |
| Somewhat better than other women  | 27                | 23                | 26              |
| About the same as other women     | 59                | 52                | 57              |
| Somewhat below other women        | 1                 | 2                 | 1               |
| Much below other women            | 2                 | 2                 | 2               |
|                                   | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>     |
|                                   | N=135             | N=61              | N=196           |
| <b>Psychosomatic Symptoms:</b>    |                   |                   |                 |
| 7 (most symptoms)                 | 3%                | -%                | 2%              |
| 6                                 | 5                 | 10                | 7               |
| 5                                 | 10                | 5                 | 8               |
| 4                                 | 13                | 20                | 15              |
| 3                                 | 24                | 30                | 26              |
| 2                                 | 24                | 21                | 23              |
| 1                                 | 16                | 11                | 15              |
| 0 (fewest symptoms)               | 5                 | 3                 | 4               |
|                                   | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>     |
|                                   | N=135             | N=61              | N=196           |
| <b>Emphasis on Mother Role:</b>   |                   |                   |                 |
| 4 Mother-role statements          | 1%                | 2%                | 1%              |
| 3 " " "                           | 12                | 7                 | 10              |
| 2 " " "                           | 22                | 17                | 20              |
| 1 " " "                           | 44                | 49                | 46              |
| 0 " " "                           | 21                | 25                | 23              |
|                                   | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>       | <u>100%</u>     |
|                                   | N=131             | N=59              | N=190           |

she counted as "mother-role" statements, and recorded that figure for each subject. Again correlations were run among the three judges' scores. The final average correlation coefficient was .84, an acceptable level of reliability.

About a fourth of the mothers made no mother-role references. Almost half gave one such statement. The post-imbalance group gave somewhat less emphasis to the mother-role in terms of number of mother-role statements made. However, the difference was not statistically significant.<sup>9</sup>

#### Education

Educational level was held constant in the various analyses in this study. Table 4 gives the breakdowns on educational level for the two imbalance groups.

Table 4. Education level, by pre- and post-imbalance groups.

| Formal Education            | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance | Total<br>Sample |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Post-graduate work          | 3%                | 2%                 | 3%              |
| College graduate            | 3                 | 10                 | 5               |
| 1-3 years college completed | 20                | 15                 | 18              |
| High school graduate        | 29                | 36                 | 31              |
| 9-11 years completed        | 29                | 24                 | 28              |
| 8 years completed           | 10                | 10                 | 10              |
| 1-7 years completed         | 6                 | 3                  | 5               |
|                             | 100%              | 100%               | 100%            |
|                             | N=135             | N=61               | N=196           |

<sup>9</sup>  $\chi^2=1.52$ , d.f.=3,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

Over half the respondents had at least graduated from high school. A quarter had had at least some college. About four in ten had less than 12 years of schooling.

The post-imbalance group tended to have a larger percentage who had graduated from high school and college, and the pre-imbalance group tended to have more women who had had some college but had not graduated. Otherwise the two groups were quite similar in distribution. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.<sup>10</sup>

### Tests of Hypotheses

Of the seven hypotheses under study, three were confirmed, two did not quite reach the necessary significance level, and two received no support from the data used. The findings are presented in two sections: (1) hypotheses concerning the "information-seeking" adjustment mechanism, and (2) hypotheses concerning the "alternate role" adjustment mechanism.

The general process being postulated in this study is illustrated in Figure 1, using just one of the return-to-balance indices--general satisfaction with life. In a state of balance (Time 1), general satisfaction level should be fairly high. When the last child leaves home, it is postulated that the mother will experience role imbalance. With the onset of imbalance, her level of "general satisfaction with life" should drop (Time 2). Then, if an effective adjustment mechanism is used (Time 3), balance should once more be restored (Time 4).

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<sup>10</sup>  
 $\chi^2=3.50$ , d.f.=4,  $p > .05$ , 2-tailed test.

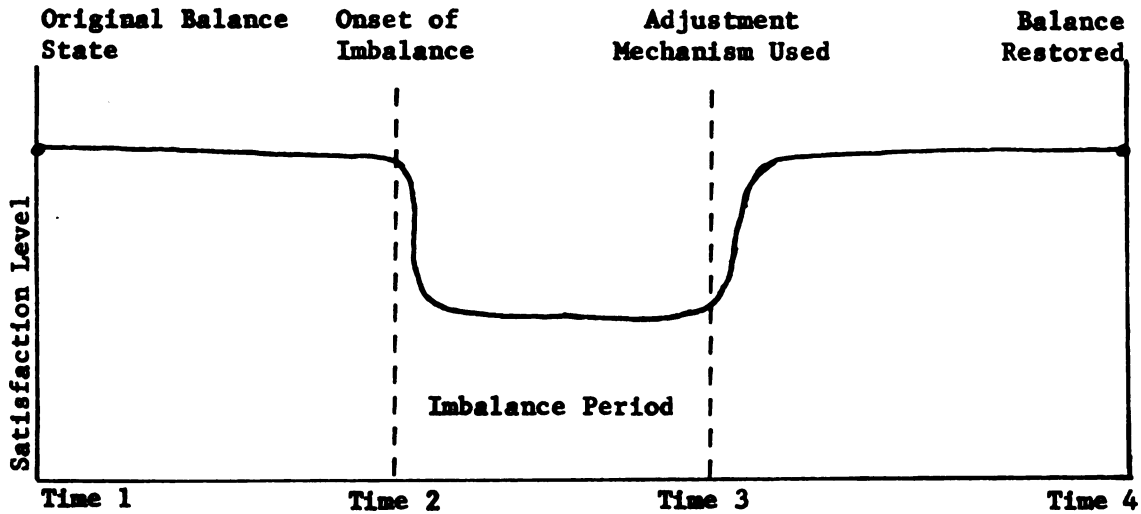


Figure 1. The process of role imbalance, using satisfaction level as an index of role balance.

This is the basic process that these mothers experience as they go through the imbalance state. For all of them, the first two phases--the original balanced state and the onset of imbalance--should be quite similar. Beyond there, however, differences are postulated, depending upon the type of adjustment mechanism used. For example, if a mother uses a highly expert information source, she should "return to balance." If she uses a non-expert information source, she may not. Likewise, a mother who selects an alternate role, such as full-time outside employment, should return to a balanced state. If she doesn't seek an alternate role, she may not overcome imbalance.

In this study, the sample of "pre-imbalance" mothers is used to estimate what a population of mothers is like prior to the time that imbalance sets in. A sample of "post-imbalance" mothers is used to estimate what that same population of mothers is like long enough after the onset of imbalance for them to have had time to utilize an

adjustment mechanism.

The above model holds for all positive indices of a return-to-balance. Where a negative index is used--such as psychosomatic symptoms--the trend line would of course be inverted.

### Information Seeking

Four hypotheses were concerned with the effectiveness of seeking out relatively expert sources of information as a means of adjusting to role imbalance. The first hypothesis was:

H1: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more satisfied they will be with their general state of life.

Data pertinent to this hypothesis are presented in Table 5. The mean "general satisfaction with life" scores for each group are presented merely for descriptive purposes. The correlation coefficients needed to test the hypothesis are reported in the bottom row of the table.

If the hypothesis is supported, the relationship between "expertise of information source sought" and "general satisfaction with life" should be positive for mothers who have recently entered a new role stage--the mothers in the post-imbalance group.

Because it seemed relevant to hold the educational level of mothers constant, the influence of educational level on the "general satisfaction with life" scores was "partialled out." This partial-correlation coefficient for the post-imbalance mothers was +.26, in the direction supporting the hypothesis.

It is possible, of course, that the relationship between these two variables was already positive before these mothers experienced

imbalance, i.e., before their children all left home. Therefore, the hypothesis should not be considered supported unless the correlation after imbalance and information seeking is more positive than the correlation was before imbalance.

The difficulty is how to estimate what this correlation was prior to imbalance setting in. In this study, the pre-imbalance correlation was estimated by determining the correlation between these variables for a fairly comparable sample of mothers who had not yet experienced imbalance, i.e., their last child had not yet left home.

This estimate, shown in Table 5, is the partial-correlation coefficient for the pre-imbalance group. It was  $-.15$ , suggesting that, in a non-imbalance situation, mothers who seek highly expert information sources have a slightly lower "general satisfaction with life" level than mothers who seek information from less expert sources.

The relationship between expertise of source and satisfaction with life was 41 points more positive for the post-imbalance mothers than it was for the pre-imbalance mothers ( $+.26$  vs.  $-.15$ ). The difference between these two partial-correlation coefficients is greater than would be expected from sampling error. Therefore, the first hypothesis can be considered confirmed by the evidence gathered in this study.

The process predicted by the hypothesis and illustrated in Figure 1 can be illustrated by observing the mean scores in Table 5. The pre-imbalance mothers are being used to estimate the pre-imbalance level of post-imbalance mothers. Thus mothers who seek very expert sources to help with their imbalance are presumed to have had a "general satisfaction with life" index of 6.6 before imbalance set in.

Table 5. Test of Hypothesis 1--relationship between expertise of information source used and general satisfaction with life, by imbalance levels.

| Expertise of<br>Information<br>Source Sought              | Mean Level of General<br>Satisfaction with Life |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                           | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group                          | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Very expert (4-5-6)                                       | 6.6                                             | 7.2                     | 45                | 21                 |
| Medium expert (1-2-3)                                     | 6.9                                             | 6.9                     | 42                | 22                 |
| No apparent<br>expertise (0)                              | 7.2                                             | 6.4                     | 48                | 18                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Expertise and<br>Satisfaction) | - .12                                           | + .20                   | N=135             | 61                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)   | - .15                                           | + .26                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlation for pre- and post-imbalance groups was significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=2.66$ ;  $p < .01$ . Significance test used is discussed in Walker and Lev (1953, pp. 343-344).

When their last child left home, role imbalance presumably set in. This probably reduced the general satisfaction index below this level. After these mothers had had time to seek their highly expert information sources, however, their general satisfaction level went up to 7.2--the mean for post-imbalance mothers who used highly expert sources. This is an even higher level than was maintained before the imbalance period.

The means for mothers who used sources with medium expertise presented a somewhat different picture. It appears that these mothers reached the same level of general satisfaction after seeking information (6.9) that they were at before imbalance.

Mothers who used non-expert information sources, or no sources,

had a lower satisfaction level after imbalance (6.4) than before (7.2). This suggests that they have not yet overcome the role imbalance felt when their last child left home.

The zero-order correlation coefficients in Table 5 are indices of the amount of relationship suggested by the means. However, the means are only an approximation of what was found with the partial-correlation coefficients, because the small sample size per cell prevented the holding of educational level constant in computing the means. As the differences between the zero-order and the partial correlations suggest, the differences among means would have been even greater if education could have been held constant.

The second hypothesis was concerned with imbalance, source expertise, and the return-to-balance index of role competency:

H2: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more competent will persons perceive themselves in performing the behaviors relating to that role.

As Table 6 shows, the partial-correlation coefficients for the pre- and post-imbalance groups, holding education constant, were not significantly different at the .05 level. The probability is 6 in 100 that the correlation for the post-imbalance group (+.16) could be 26 points more positive than the correlation for the pre-imbalance group (-.10) merely because of sampling error. In other words, the findings were in the predicted direction, but did not quite reach the prior-set significance level. Thus, the hypothesis was not confirmed. It should be noted, however, that the pattern of means was the same as was found in the data pertaining to the first hypothesis.



Table 6. Test of Hypothesis 2--relationship between expertise of information source used and role competence, by imbalance levels.

| Expertise of<br>Information<br>Source Sought                 | Mean Level of Role<br>Competence Self-rating |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                              | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group                       | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Very expert (4-5-6)                                          | 3.3                                          | 3.6                     | 45                | 21                 |
| Medium expert (1-2-3)                                        | 3.6                                          | 3.7                     | 42                | 22                 |
| No apparent<br>expertise (0)                                 | 3.5                                          | 3.4                     | 48                | 18                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Expertise and<br>Role Competence) | - .10                                        | + .16                   | N=135             | 61                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)      | - .11                                        | + .15                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups was not significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=1.59$ ;  $.10 > p > .05$ .

The third hypothesis concerning the use of expert sources as an adjustment mechanism used "number of psychosomatic symptoms" as the return-to-balance index:

H3: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the fewer psychosomatic symptoms those persons will ascribe to themselves.

The difference between the partial correlations for the two imbalance groups was not significant at the .05 level (Table 7). Again the difference was in the predicted direction (post-imbalance group -.22; pre-imbalance group -.05), but it was within the expected range of sampling error.



Table 7. Test of Hypothesis 3--relationship between expertise of information source and psychosomatic symptoms, by imbalance levels.

| Expertise of<br>Information<br>Source Sought               | Mean Level of<br>Psychosomatic Symptoms |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                            | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group                  | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Very expert (4-5-6)                                        | 2.9                                     | 2.8                     | 45                | 21                 |
| Medium expert (1-2-3)                                      | 2.7                                     | 2.8                     | 42                | 22                 |
| No apparent<br>expertise (0)                               | 3.1                                     | 3.6                     | 48                | 18                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Expertise and<br>Psychosomatic) | - .05                                   | - .22                   | N=135             | 61                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)    | - .02                                   | - .20                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups was not significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=1.10$ ;  $.15 > p > .10$ .

The pattern of differences described before for the different levels of source expertise is again evident. Users of highly expert sources had about the same psychosomatic symptom level (2.8) after imbalance (i.e., the post-imbalance group) that they had before imbalance (2.9 for the pre-imbalance group). Medium-expertise source users had about the same level before (2.7) and after (2.8) imbalance. And users of non-expert sources ascribed fewer psychosomatic symptoms to themselves before (3.1) than after (3.6) imbalance had set in, indicating that the post-imbalance group had not yet adjusted to imbalance. Though the pattern of responses is consistent with the hypothesis, the hypothesis cannot be considered confirmed because the findings were not statistically significant.



The final hypothesis dealing with the source expertise adjustment mechanism was:

H4: Among persons who have entered a new role or role stage, the more people use "expert" sources of information, the more salient that role will be in relation to the several roles persons perceive themselves in.

The partial correlations given in Table 8 are in the wrong direction to support the hypothesis above and so will not be analyzed further here.

Table 8. Test of Hypothesis 4--relationship between expertise of information source used and role emphasis, by imbalance levels.

| Expertise of<br>Information<br>Source Sought               | Mean Level of Role Emphasis |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                            | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group      | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Very expert (4-5-6)                                        | 1.4                         | 1.0                     | 44                | 21                 |
| Medium expert (1-2-3)                                      | 1.2                         | 1.1                     | 42                | 22                 |
| No apparent<br>expertise (0)                               | 1.2                         | 1.1                     | 45                | 16                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Expertise and<br>Role Emphasis) | + .15                       | + .03                   | N=131             | 59                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)    | + .16                       | + .04                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups not significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=0.58$ ;  $.30 > p > .25$ .

#### Alternate Role

The second type of adjustment mechanism studied was the adoption of an alternate role. The particular alternate role studied was the



mothers' employment outside of the home. The effectiveness of this alternate role in restoring role balance was tested by using three of the four return-to-balance indices. The first hypothesis again involved general satisfaction level:

H5: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report more satisfaction with their "general state of life" than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Table 9 shows the difference between the partial-correlation coefficients for pre- and post-imbalance groups. The difference (-.40 and -.01) was significant at the .01 level and in the predicted direction. Holding education constant strengthened the relationship.

The employed mothers who had not yet experienced imbalance had a mean satisfaction level of 6.3; the mean for post-imbalance mothers was 6.8. The unemployed mothers changed from 7.4 (pre-imbalance) to 6.9 (post-imbalance). These differences were similar to those observed for the different source-expertise adjustment mechanism levels. Hypothesis 5 was confirmed.

Table 9. Test of Hypothesis 5--relationship between employment as an alternate role and general satisfaction with life, by imbalance levels.

| Employment<br>as an<br>Alternate Role                                  | Mean Level of General<br>Satisfaction with Life |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                        | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group                          | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Employed                                                               | 6.3                                             | 6.8                     | 61                | 30                 |
| Not employed                                                           | 7.4                                             | 6.9                     | 74                | 31                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Alternate Role and<br>General Satisfaction) | - .36                                           | - .05                   | N=135             | 61                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)                | - .40                                           | + .01                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=2.82$ ;  $p < .01$ .

The number of psychosomatic symptoms was the second return-to-balance index used to test the effectiveness of outside employment as an adjustment mechanism. The hypothesis involving this index was:

H6: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report fewer psychosomatic symptoms than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

This hypothesis, too, was confirmed. The difference between the partial correlations for the two imbalance groups (+.04 and -.35) was statistically significant. (Table 10) Women in the post-imbalance group who were employed tended to report fewer psychosomatic symptoms than did employed women in the pre-imbalance group. Unemployed women in the post-imbalance group reported a somewhat higher number of psychosomatic symptoms than did unemployed women in the pre-imbalance group.

Table 10. Test of Hypothesis 6--relationship between employment as an alternate role and psychosomatic symptoms, by imbalance levels.

| Employment<br>as an<br>Alternate Role                           | Mean Level of<br>Psychosomatic Symptoms |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                 | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group                  | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Employed                                                        | 2.8                                     | 2.5                     | 61                | 30                 |
| Not employed                                                    | 3.0                                     | 3.6                     | 74                | 31                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Alternate Role and<br>Psychosomatic) | + .01                                   | - .38                   | N=135             | 61                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)         | + .04                                   | - .35                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=2.09$ ;  $p < .02$ .

The final hypothesis tested in the study, and the final one concerning employment as an alternate role, involved the return-to-balance index of role emphasis:

H7: Among persons who enter role imbalance, those who seek out a new role will report less emphasis on the role which induced the imbalance than will persons who don't seek out a new role.

Contrary to when it was paired with source expertise, the prediction here was that the correlation between employment and role emphasis would be lower in the post-imbalance group than in the pre-imbalance one. The partial-correlation coefficients were in the predicted direction, but not significant at the .05 level (Table 11). These differences could reasonably be attributed to sampling error.

Table 11. Test of Hypothesis 7--relationship between employment as an alternate role and role emphasis, by imbalance levels.

| Employment<br>as an<br>Alternate Role                           | Mean Level of Role Emphasis |                         | Sample Size       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                 | Pre-Imbalance<br>Group      | Post-Imbalance<br>Group | Pre-<br>Imbalance | Post-<br>Imbalance |
| Employed                                                        | 1.2                         | 1.0                     | 59                | 28                 |
| Not employed                                                    | 1.3                         | 1.2                     | 72                | 31                 |
| Zero-order correlation<br>(Alternate Role and<br>Role Emphasis) | - .02                       | - .12                   | N=131             | 59                 |
| Partial correlation*<br>(holding education<br>constant)         | - .02                       | - .11                   |                   |                    |

\* Difference between partial correlations for pre- and post-imbalance groups not significant at .05 level, one-tailed test.  $z=0.58$ ;  $.30 > p > .25$ .

Table 12 summarizes the findings. With both adjustment mechanisms, the findings for general satisfaction level were significant.



Psychosomatic symptom level was associated with both mechanisms, but significantly only with alternate role. Self-rating role competence--used as an indicator only with the source-expertise mechanism--was in the predicted direction, but the relationship was not significant.

Role emphasis, when used as a return-to-balance indicator, was not significantly correlated with either adjustment mechanism. Its association with the alternate role mechanism was in the predicted direction, but with source expertise, it was not.

Table 12. Results of the hypothesis-testing.

| Adjustment Mechanism | Return-to-balance Indicator | Significance    |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Source Expertise     | General Satisfaction        | $p < .01$       |
|                      | Role Competence Self-rating | $.10 > p > .05$ |
|                      | Psychosomatic Symptoms      | $.15 > p > .10$ |
|                      | Role Emphasis               | wrong direction |
| Alternate Role       | General Satisfaction        | $p < .01$       |
|                      | Psychosomatic Symptoms      | $p < .02$       |
|                      | Role Emphasis               | $.30 > p > .25$ |

## Chapter IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

This was a study of the efficacy of certain adjustment mechanisms for women who experience mother-role imbalance when their children leave home.

Women may adjust to role imbalance in a number of ways. Two were investigated in this study--information seeking and adoption of an alternate role.

Information seeking was studied in terms of the amount of "expertise" of the sources women most frequently sought for advice and information on child-care problems.

The alternate role studied was that of employee outside of the home.

When children leave home, the once-large family unit shrinks back to the primary husband-wife couple who started it all. This is a time when American women are likely to find that the mother role no longer offers them the satisfactions and rewards it once did. Changes in the family system require role changes and thus may induce perceived-imbalance in the role until role changes are made.

The balance-imbalance process was cast in the framework of Parsons and Bales (1955), which involves a social system in balance being disturbed by some influence, this influence then being coped with in some way, and the social system then returning to some state of balance.

One hundred ninety-six Michigan mothers from four counties were

studied. Each had a youngest child born in 1944. For 61, their children had all left home. These were considered the post-imbalance mothers. They were postulated as having recently undergone role imbalance resulting from a change in their family social system stage. One hundred thirty-five mothers still had at least one child at home--the pre-imbalance mothers. They presumably were not yet experiencing the mother-role imbalance the other group had.

The pre-imbalance group was used as a control group to estimate the degree of balance the post-imbalance mothers had had before their children had left home. Since the two imbalance groups were similar on a number of characteristics, it was felt that this assumption was justified.

The major hypotheses stated that, in this imbalance situation, use of either of the two adjustment mechanisms would lead to a more satisfactory return to balance. At the time of the study, the post-imbalance mothers presumably had had time to use these adjustment mechanisms after their children had left home. Four return-to-balance indices were used to determine the degree to which the post-imbalance mothers had satisfactorily solved this imbalance problem. They were: general satisfaction with life, perception of mother-role competence, number of psychosomatic symptoms expressed, and mother role emphasis in statements about the self.

Use of either expert information sources or outside employment led to a higher general satisfaction with life for mothers who had entered the imbalance period.

Mothers' ratings of their role competence were not significantly improved by seeking information from expert sources. The effect of

outside employment was not checked against perceived role competence because the kind of effect hypothesized for that adjustment mechanism was to lower the salience of the mother role for the woman, rather than to help her solve the imbalance in the mother role itself.

Employment as an adjustment mechanism did significantly help lower the number of psychosomatic symptoms of the women in imbalance; expert source-seeking did not.

Neither adjustment mechanism influenced role-emphasis.

Thus, the hypotheses that post-imbalance mothers who used these adjustment mechanisms would exhibit greater role balance than mothers who did not use these mechanisms were confirmed in three cases, were in the predicted directions but not significant in three cases, and were in the opposite direction to that hypothesized in one case.

#### Interpretation of Findings

The evidence from this study generally supports the notion that mothers differentially adjust to the role imbalance that takes place when children leave the family. This adjustment depends on whether or not certain adjustment mechanisms are used. Also, adjustment mechanisms seem to affect various dimensions of balance, as represented in this study by four different return-to-balance indices, in somewhat different ways.

Undoubtedly "balance" is a complex thing. Because of this, four aspects of role balance were studied. They were (1) general satisfaction with life, (2) perceived role competence, (3) absence of psychosomatic symptoms, and (4) role emphasis. These can be viewed as different "dimensions" of role balance. Two adjustment mechanisms were

studied, then, to see what their effect would be on these dimensions, given that a state of imbalance made adjustment necessary.

A number of the findings confirmed the hypotheses growing out of the general Parsons-Bales theoretical framework. Some did not. In this situation, the researcher can ask whether it was the theory or his operationalization of the theory that led to non-significant results.

Because existing data were used in the present study, certainly the measuring instruments developed were somewhat less than perfect. At the same time, some findings gave support to the theory expounded. Therefore, in the present instance, it seems premature to challenge the theory. None of the hypotheses was negated by a strong correlation in the direction opposite to that predicted. Instead, the non-significant results were within the range that could be attributed to sampling error, a finding common when measuring instruments are only moderately reliable. This suggests that the theory looks promising enough to merit test in other situations, with better measures and under more ideal conditions.

General satisfaction level was the only return-to-balance index to correlate significantly with both adjustment mechanisms. Popular literature characterizes the American woman as discontented and dissatisfied. This did not seem to be the case with any of the women studied. No woman rated herself below five on a ten-point satisfaction scale. In fact, over a fourth rated themselves at the top of the scale.

Nye (in Nye and Hoffman, 1963) has found a more positive relationship between satisfaction and employment among mothers with much education than among mothers with less education. He attempts to explain this by saying that mothers with higher education are able to

command jobs that are higher status, more rewarding, and less physically demanding--and so more satisfying--than women with lower education. The results of the present study expand on his evidence. When education level was held constant, as it was not in Nye's study, an association between level of employment and level of general satisfaction was evident. The implication of this finding is that having outside employment at a time of role-stage change is a helpful adjustment mechanism--as measured by general satisfaction level--no matter what the educational level of the woman involved. This does not negate Nye's speculation, but it does point out the need for caution in generalizing his interpretation to all types of situations.

It is of interest to speculate further as to why the "very-expert source" mothers' general satisfaction level went up and the low-expert source mothers' general satisfaction level went down from pre- to post-imbalance.

The pre-imbalance means (Table 5) indicate that mothers who don't seek expert advice are more satisfied than those who do. Possibly expert sources keep the mother dissatisfied with her own performance in child-rearing, while mothers who use low-expertise sources aren't subject to such high standards in dealing with their children. Thus the low-expert source users tend to be more satisfied than the high-expert source users, while there are children at home.

When the children have left home, the situation is just reversed. Now the expert source users are more satisfied than are the non-expert source users. Also, expert source mothers were more satisfied post-imbalance than pre-imbalance and non-expert source mothers were less satisfied post-imbalance than pre-imbalance.

It may be that at this time the expert source mother is no longer subject to guilt feelings about her own performance in regard to her children. So her satisfaction level rises. With the low-expert source mother, on the other hand, the exit of her children removes one subject of concern and social contact between her and her low-expert sources. And so she may be less satisfied than before.

Another possibility is that the expert sources help the mother successfully prepare for and/or cope with the adjustment to their children leaving, whereas low-expert sources do not.

Although the present data don't help in this speculation, the occurrence of this before-after difference in satisfaction levels by level of expertness of source used is an unexpected and interesting finding of this study that should merit further investigation. How and why do the consequences of using high- or low-expert sources affect satisfaction level this way?

Role competence--studied only in relation to the use of expert information sources--was measured on a five-point scale. However, more than 97% of the women used the top three categories in responding. This cut down the expected variability on this index, thus the measuring instrument turned out to be quite gross. The difference between imbalance groups, using source expertise and role competence, came close to meeting the .05 significance level. Had a better measuring instrument been constructed, it is very possible that this hypothesis would have been confirmed. This can only be checked by further research, of course.

Employment had a significant effect on psychosomatic symptom level; use of expert sources did not. Thus these two adjustment

mechanisms may have different effects on this dimension of balance.

At the same time, it still is possible that, with a larger sample and/or a better measuring instrument, the "source-expertise influences psychosomatic symptoms" hypothesis would also have been confirmed. The data were in the predicted direction. It would seem worthwhile from the mental-health viewpoint to investigate further these and other adjustment mechanisms in relation to the balance dimension of psychosomatic symptom level.

There was no evidence in this study that the adjustment mechanisms have any influence on the role-emphasis dimension of balance at this stage. It may be that role emphasis is not affected by either of the adjustment mechanisms, or it may be that the method of measuring this dimension was inadequate.

The measure used was to ask the respondent to fill in ten blank lines with sentences beginning with "I". Role emphasis was taken to be the number of mother role statements made. The lack of correlation was not due to lack of variability, since the responses were spread over five values. It could be, however, that "number of role mentions" is a poor indicator of "role emphasis."

Initially, it was felt important to hold education constant in the analyses. The two imbalance groups were not expected to be comparable on education, and education was expected to correlate with the return-to-balance indices. Only in the case of the correlation between employment and general satisfaction did it appear to be beneficial to hold education constant. As shown earlier, the two imbalance groups were quite comparable on education. The reason holding education constant made a difference in testing the hypotheses that

involved general satisfaction was that the amount of correlation between education and general satisfaction differed in the two imbalance groups:

| <u>Zero-order Correlations</u>     | <u>Pre-<br/>Imbalance<br/>Group</u> | <u>Post-<br/>Imbalance<br/>Group</u> |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Education & General Satisfaction   | + .12                               | - .19                                |
| Education & Role Competence        | + .01                               | - .07                                |
| Education & Psychosomatic Symptoms | - .11                               | - .14                                |
| Education & Role Emphasis          | .00                                 | - .05                                |

Both adjustment mechanisms were correlated with education. The use of expert information sources and education were correlated .24 in the post-imbalance and .21 in the pre-imbalance groups. Having outside employment and education were correlated .31 for the post- and .25 for the pre-imbalance groups.

Under a pre-imbalance situation (i.e., no imbalance), the more-educated mothers tended to be most satisfied with life. After role imbalance had occurred, the more educated mothers appeared to be less satisfied with life than less educated mothers. However, it should be noted that, while the difference between these correlations is fairly large and significant<sup>1</sup>, the amount of relationship in each case is quite small.

The question arises: Does the imbalance lead to the adjustment mechanism, or is the adjustment mechanism already available and just put to use as an adjustment mechanism when imbalance occurs?

From the data available, it seems that imbalance does not lead to the seeking of outside employment:

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<sup>1</sup>  
z=1.98,  $p < .05$ , 2-tailed test

|                    | <u>Pre-Imbalance<br/>Group</u> | <u>Post-Imbalance<br/>Group</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Employed full-time | 34%                            | 36%                             |
| Employed part-time | 12                             | 13                              |
| Not employed       | <u>54</u>                      | <u>51</u>                       |
|                    | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|                    | N=135                          | N=61                            |

Therefore, persons who have outside employment as they enter the state of role imbalance have available an adjustment mechanism which seems effective in restoring at least some dimensions of balance.

The picture with expertness of information source is similar. Again, imbalance does not seem to lead to seeking of more expert sources of information:

|                       | <u>Pre-Imbalance<br/>Group</u> | <u>Post-Imbalance<br/>Group</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Highly expert sources | 33%                            | 34%                             |
| Medium expert sources | 31                             | 36                              |
| No apparent expertise | <u>36</u>                      | <u>30</u>                       |
|                       | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|                       | N=135                          | N=61                            |

Thus, in this case also, persons who use expert information sources before they enter imbalance have available to them an adjustment mechanism that seems effective in restoring some dimensions of balance.

The two adjustment mechanisms themselves seem to be quite independent of one another, for both the pre- and post-imbalance groups (zero-order correlation for the post-imbalance group, .04; for pre-imbalance group, .08). Thus it would seem that women don't have any particular pattern of using one or the other mechanism, or both.

### Implications for Further Research

The findings on imbalance in this study, and of the differential effects of two adjustment mechanisms on four dimensions of balance, seems to have a number of research implications. The measures used in the present study were relatively gross measures of the behavior under study. The fact that significant findings evolved despite possible measurement weaknesses is encouraging for further research in this area.

More direct measurement of the concepts and postulated relationships in this study would be desirable. One thing that is needed is the careful definition of the points at which a social system is in balance or imbalance. How can these points be defined, recognized? Exactly when does a mother enter each state?

Another need is for a more precise measure of the amount of imbalance present. The present study tried to index this along four dimensions. All of these could be measured more precisely, and surely other dimensions could be studied.

The information-seeking mechanism suggests some research questions. Why don't some people seek "expert" sources when they have problems? Would they follow expert advice, even if they were exposed to it? How can expert advice be gotten to such people?

The concept of employment as an alternate role also needs more careful attention. For example, what are the consequences of part-time employment? The number of cases in this category in the present study was too small to give reliable evidence. The available evidence suggested that part-time employment did not help return the mother to balance. However, a study with larger numbers of women in this category would be desirable to check this indication out.

Undoubtedly there are other adjustment mechanisms that can lead to satisfactory return-to-balance at the stage studied, as well as at other stages. These need to be identified, tested, explored. Many women turn to social and voluntary association activities after their children leave home. More and more women are going back to school at this stage. What are the consequences of these behaviors, and how do the consequences differ, if at all, from those when other mechanisms are used?

A given adjustment mechanism may have a radically different effect at one role imbalance period compared with another. For example, while employment seemed to be a helpful adjustment mechanism at the stage under study, it might have the opposite effect at another stage.

Also, various stages may induce differing amount of imbalance. At one stage, imbalance may be severe--at another, minimal. Identification of these latter stages would allow social agencies and others to concentrate their efforts on the more critical stage changes and the adjustment mechanisms that offer the greatest probability for positive effect.

If one maintains a process point of view on the life cycle, on socialization, and on roles, then what is suggested is the need to look for these imbalance points, examine ways people adjust to them, and seek out the consequences of the various adjustment mechanisms.

Undoubtedly these will vary for different roles. This study considered only one--the mother role. The same general framework should be applicable for the study of many different roles. Research is needed to say just how these factors vary for different roles. There is the possibility, too, that certain stages in other roles may

have similar consequences and problems to those of the mother role at the stage studied--the man "automated" out of a job, or a new retiree, for example.

Also, other roles in the family social system might be studied more closely with these family life-cycle stages in mind. The family is an interlocking system of roles and personalities. Therefore, more than just the mother role is likely to be affected by these stage changes. And certainly the way, and degree to which, the mother copes with her perception of the imbalance will affect her husband and children in their roles. What are the consequences for the husband of a wife restoring role balance by one adjustment mechanism vs. another?

What has been done in the present study, then, is to establish a relationship between information seeking and employment--as environmental behaviors--and the psychological situation of role balance for the mother. What has not been done is to explicate the intervening processes or elements. This could well be the next step in a continuing research program in this area.

It would be desirable to study a group of women over time as they move up to, and then through, one or more of these stages in the family life cycle. Not only should such a longitudinal study shed further light on this process and the factors involved, but it also would serve as a check on how well the present technique estimates the pre-imbalance state of these mothers. The present study had to rely on the use of the pre-imbalance mothers as an estimate of what the post-imbalance mothers were like before imbalance set in.

### Implications for Action Programs

The rationale for this study was cast in the framework of a need for continuing socialization for the American woman. It was pointed out that instead of being a traditional society with all the answers, ours is a society with all the questions but few pat answers.

The specific process discussed was the family social system going through its life cycle. The imbalances resulting from at least one stage of this process seem to have a definite effect on mothers. The way these mothers went about dealing with imbalance appears to have consequences for them in terms of how well they were able to make adjustments intended as balance restorers.

Women who are able to, and do, make use of more extended social systems--outside expert sources and employment--to help them solve problems of imbalance within the family social system, tend to adjust more readily and more satisfactorily as measured by several return-to-balance indices.

This has implications for agencies, organizations, and individuals concerned with helping women at various times in their lives--groups such as the Cooperative Extension Service, welfare agencies, etc. For one thing, much more attention should be paid to the various family life cycle stages and their effects on the individuals involved. Clearer identification of these factors should help make the work of such agencies much more effective.

Too, the adjustment mechanisms studied here have implications for such work. Certain women, for example, already are using, or are predisposed to use, the talents, information, and facilities of helping

"expert" organizations. With these women, the only problem would seem to be to make sure that helpful information is available to them at the times they are likely to need it.

A greater problem would seem to be how to reach those women not so predisposed. One possibility would be to try to have more of an effect on what the medium and non-expert sources transmit in the way of advice--for example, husbands and the general mass media. Another might be to try to open up to these women the possibility of alternate sources to approach--if this is the problem. Even though the agencies may perceive themselves as open to everyone, and wanting to serve everyone, some women may not have this perception of the given agency. In these cases, the agency concerned needs to ask why its perceived clientele don't come to it, and how the agency can go about encouraging them to work with its staff.

Above all, organizations and individuals whose mission it is to help women adjust to these life stages satisfactorily need to help women plan ahead for the shifts and changes that will probably be encountered. Women should gain a greater understanding of the life stages they and their families will be going through. Educational efforts might well be spent in this direction. Through greater knowledge, women may anticipate and so avoid some of the less desirable consequences of these imbalance stages.

For example, knowing that employment seems to help with adjustment at the stage when children leave home, women might be encouraged to get further training for employment or better jobs. This training might well come before they actually reach this stage. Women need to find out what alternatives are available for them in the way

of training and jobs.

In a way, a woman at this stage is in an enviable position. She usually does not really have to work to provide the basic necessities of life for the family. So she can shop around for a job that she likes. She can find a job that will require whatever level of commitment and involvement from her she desires. If things get too sticky, she can "retire" or find another job.

These factors certainly have implications for employers who might consider hiring women at this stage. It also has implications for those who would train women to meet the problems of this stage. Employment as an adjustment mechanism may have some real merit. But whether or not women at this stage make "good" employees from the employer's viewpoint may be another thing.

Certainly more women going into the labor force could have political implications. Their competing with men who are the breadwinners for their families would be one aspect. Their effect on the current balance of power in the labor-management situation might well be important. Also, one could raise the question of what more women desiring to enter the labor force would do in light of the growing technological "unemployment" this country already is experiencing. These and many other problems will have to be considered and dealt with by anyone working with women or developing programs for them in this area.

What seems evident from this study is the need for different kinds of educational programs for women at different stages of the life cycle. There is definite need to know more about each of these stages, their consequences for the woman, and ways in which she can

satisfactorily meet and deal with the attendant changes. This kind of information from research will help action agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service know better what information is needed and when to meet what problems.

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## APPENDIX A

### INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES ON "EXPERTNESS" ON CHILD PROBLEMS SORT

You have been given a deck of white cards. Each of these cards carries a number. This is the number that identifies the subject who gave the response that is on the card--but it is irrelevant for your sorting task.

You also have been given some blue cards. These carry numbers from 0 through 6.

Get somewhere where you have plenty of room--a desk top, the livingroom floor. Lay out the seven blue cards in order with number 0 on the left to number 6 on the right.

Next take the deck of white cards and sort them in piles on top of the blue cards--so that in the end, you will wind up with all the white cards distributed on the blue ones.

Note that the No. 0 blue card says "No Source Used" or "Source Used has no apparent expertise on child problems" and No. 6 says "Very expert source on child problems." The blue cards represent a 7-place scale between these two points.

A group of women were asked, "where do you get advice or information to help you" with a particular concern that they had previously expressed for their children. The statements you see on the white cards identify the source they said they turned to for advice.

What we now want to do is to try to estimate how expert each of these sources is on child problems. From what you know about these sources, rate them according to the degree of expertness you feel each source has, by placing each white card on a blue card.

These statements came out of different problems the women had with their children. So the information sources won't be exactly comparable. Ignore this factor as much as you can and rate all sources as you feel about them.

There is no certain number of white cards that should go on any one blue card. Place them only as you feel they should be placed along this seven-point scale.

When you have finished the sort, place a rubber band around each pile including the blue card, then insert all piles of cards back in the big envelope and return to me.

Thank you for your help.

## APPENDIX B

### INSTRUCTIONS TO JUDGES ON MOTHER ROLE STATEMENTS JUDGING

This is part of the analysis of information from a study of homemakers. On page 2 of the questionnaire, each woman who was interviewed was requested, "Would you please make ten statements about yourself, each beginning with 'I'." A few made no statements. Some made a few. Many made 10.

Our concern here is examining the statements they made on this page and judging how many of these statements relate to the role of mother. You are to go through these 201 questionnaires, look at page 2, and record your judgment of how many such statements each respondent has made.

In pencil in the upper righthand corner of page 1 of each questionnaire you will find a number--somewhere from 501 through 701. This identifies for us the person whose questionnaire this is.

Take a sheet of the tablet paper provided. There are two identical pairs of columns. On the lefthand side of each pair you will see a column headed "subject number." Put the number you find on page 1 in that column.

The second column of each pair is headed "Number mother role statements." For each subject you should record a number there after examining page 2 of the questionnaire.

We want this number to include all and any statements you feel refer to the mother role--whether they are positive, negative, or neutral in tone. They would include statements about being a mother or about children. For example: "I am a poor mother," "I am a mother," "I have three children," "I love my children," and so on. (I love children)

Do not include in the mother role statements having to do with housekeeping (ironing, baking, cleaning house) or with being a wife.

It is your judgment that counts as to whether or not the statement given by each woman applies to the mother role.

Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX C

HOMEMAKER QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewer\_\_\_\_\_

Location of respondent's home: Rural (open country)\_\_\_ Suburban\_\_\_

City (over 50,000)\_\_\_ Town (2,500 to 50,000)\_\_\_ Village (under 2,500)\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

County\_\_\_\_\_

Time interview started\_\_\_\_\_

Time interview completed\_\_\_\_\_

(READ THE FOLLOWING)

As I have said, this interview is part of a study. I will be asking you several questions. But before we do that, would you please fill out this section yourself.

(FOLD OPEN QUESTIONNAIRE TO NEXT PAGE. GIVE QUESTIONNAIRE TO INTERVIEWEE. LET HER READ INSTRUCTIONS. ABSOLUTELY DO NOT GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONSES. IF INTERVIEWEE ASKS IF A GIVEN RESPONSE IS PROPER, SAY "I GUESS SO." IF SHE ASKS, "WHAT DO THEY OR YOU WANT," SAY YOU DON'T KNOW.)

(AFTER SHE HAS COMPLETED THIS SECTION, RETRIEVE THE QUESTIONNAIRE, TURN OVER THAT PAGE WITHOUT READING IT, AND PROCEED.)



Would you please make ten statements about yourself, each beginning with "I"

1. I \_\_\_\_\_
2. I \_\_\_\_\_
3. I \_\_\_\_\_
4. I \_\_\_\_\_
5. I \_\_\_\_\_
6. I \_\_\_\_\_
7. I \_\_\_\_\_
8. I \_\_\_\_\_
9. I \_\_\_\_\_
10. I \_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 1 What is your most important concern--that is, what troubles you most? (PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

---

---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information to help you or to give you understanding of this concern of yours? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS -- MOTHER, SISTER-IN-LAW, LADIES HOME JOURNAL, ANN LANDERS, ETC.)

---

---

(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MOST FREQUENTLY USED AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice or information?

very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like more information or advice on this?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional information or advice? (GET SPECIFIC SOURCE IF POSSIBLE.)

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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Ques. 7 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes        No       

(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 5; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this? (GET SPECIFIC SOURCE IF POSSIBLE.)

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 1 What is your second most important concern?  
(PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

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---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information to help you or to give  
you understanding of this concern? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)

---

---

(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MOST FREQUENTLY USED AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice or information?

very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like to have more information or  
advice on this?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional  
information or advice?

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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---

Ques. 7 Given your choice where would you prefer to get this kind of  
advice or information from?

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(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS:

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Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes        No         
(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 7; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this?

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Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

---

Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

                                 Why?                                 

---

COMMENTS:

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Now I would like to ask you whether or not you have any concerns in a few specific areas.

Ques. 1 Do you have any concerns about your children? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
What is it? (PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

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---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information about children?  
(PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)

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(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MOST FREQUENTLY USED, AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice and information?  
very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like to have more information or advice on this?  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional information or advice?

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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Ques. 7 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 9; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 1 Do you have any difficulty in getting ideas or information about planning or cooking meals?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

What is it? (PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

---

---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information about food or cooking? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)

---

(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MORE FREQUENTLY USED AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice or information?

very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like to have more information or advice on this?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional information or advice?

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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Ques. 7 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes        No       

(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 11; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 1 Do you have any difficulty buying for the home and family?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

What is it? (PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

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---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information about buying for the home and family? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)

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(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MOST FREQUENTLY USED AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice or information?

very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like to have more information or advice on this?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional information or advice?

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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Ques. 7 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why?\_\_\_\_\_

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(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes        No       

(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 13; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this?

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ques. 1 Do you have any concerns about husband-wife relationships?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

What is it? (PROBE FOR A SPECIFIC.)

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---

Ques. 2 Where do you get advice or information about husband-wife relationships? (PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)

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(IF ANSWER IS NOWHERE, GO TO QUES. 8; IF A SOURCE IS INDICATED, GO TO QUES. 3. IF MORE THAN ONE SOURCE, ASK WHICH IS MOST FREQUENTLY USED AND ENCIRCLE IT.)

Ques. 3 How useful is this advice or information?

very useful\_\_\_ of some use\_\_\_ of little use\_\_\_ of no use\_\_\_

Ques. 4 Do you ever feel you would like to have more information or advice on this?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF NO, GO TO QUES. 11; IF YES, CONTINUE WITH NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 5 Where or from whom do you think you might get additional information or advice?

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Ques. 6 What keeps you from getting additional advice or information?

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---

Ques. 7 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

Why?\_\_\_\_\_

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(IF QUES. 7 IS COMPLETED, SKIP NEXT PAGE.)

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ques. 8 Would you like to get advice or information from someone or someplace about this?

Yes        No       

(IF NO, GO TO PAGE 15; IF YES, GO TO NEXT QUESTION.)

Ques. 9 Where or from whom do you think you might get useful help on this?

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Ques. 10 What keeps you from getting this advice or information?

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Ques. 11 Given your choice, where would you prefer to get this kind of advice or information from?

                                 Why?                                 

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1. Can you give a brief definition of a home economist?

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Do you think a home economist would have any information or advice that might be of use to you in:

2. Care of children?

Yes\_\_\_ Maybe\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_

3. Planning and cooking meals?

Yes\_\_\_ Maybe\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_

4. Buying things for the home and family?

Yes\_\_\_ Maybe\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_

5. On husband-wife relations?

Yes\_\_\_ Maybe\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_

6. Can you briefly tell me what Cooperative Extension Service is?

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7. Is there a home economist with the Cooperative Extension Service?

Yes\_\_\_ Don't know\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

8. Have you ever belonged to an Extension Club?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ For how long?\_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you ever been a 4-H Leader?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

(IF YES) For how long?\_\_\_\_\_

(PRESENT THE INTERVIEWEE WITH THE CARD WITH THE LADDER ON IT. THEN READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS.)

Looking at the ladder, suppose we say that the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom represents the worst possible life for you.

1. Where on the ladder do you feel you stand at present? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where on the ladder would you say you stood before you became engaged to be married? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where on the ladder would you say you stood during the month before your marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where on the ladder would you say you stood during the first year of marriage? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Where on the ladder do you think you will be five years from now?  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(PRESENT THE INTERVIEWEE WITH THE CARD WITH FIVE RESPONSE ALTERNATIVES ON IT. GIVE BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES, THEN ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.)

In comparison with other women you know, how would you rate yourself in the following areas?

6. Caring for children \_\_\_\_\_
7. Planning and cooking meals \_\_\_\_\_
8. Buying for the home and family \_\_\_\_\_
9. Relationships between yourself and your husband \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(WRITE IN DISTANCE FOR EACH RELATIVE.)

1. Where do your parents live?

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2. Where do your husband's parents live?

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3. Where do your sons who have left home live?

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4. Where do your daughters who have left home live?

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5. Which relatives do you visit and how often?

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6. Which relatives visit you and how often?

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7. How often do you visit friends? (OBTAIN INTERVIEWEE'S VISITING PATTERN, INCLUDING VISITS MADE ALONE OR WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY.)

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8. How often do friends visit you? (INCLUDE VISITS WITH JUST THE INTERVIEWEE AND VISITS WITH THE FAMILY WHICH INVOLVE HER.)

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What clubs or organizations do you belong to? (OBTAIN A COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE COMPLETING OTHER COLUMNS.)

| Names of clubs and org. | Number of<br>times club<br>meets per<br>year | Number of<br>meetings<br>attended<br>per year | Office held,<br>if any |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____                | _____                                        | _____                                         | _____                  |
| 2. _____                | _____                                        | _____                                         | _____                  |
| 3. _____                | _____                                        | _____                                         | _____                  |
| 4. _____                | _____                                        | _____                                         | _____                  |
| 5. _____                | _____                                        | _____                                         | _____                  |

Which of these clubs or organizations is most important to you?

\_\_\_\_\_

Is this a religious\_\_\_ political\_\_\_ educational\_\_\_ social\_\_\_  
recreational\_\_\_ or service\_\_\_ group?

(CHECK ONLY ONE.)

What magazines do you read?

None \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which magazine do you like most? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC.) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which magazine do you like next best? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC.) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which magazine do you like next best? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC.) \_\_\_\_\_

Which newspapers do you read?

None \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Which newspaper do you like most? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC.) \_\_\_\_\_

Which newspaper do you like next best? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? (PROBE FOR SPECIFIC.) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you receive any pamphlets or booklets?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(IF YES) What type do you receive?

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

How many books do you read in a year?      None \_\_\_\_\_ One \_\_\_\_\_  
Two to Three \_\_\_\_\_ Four to Five \_\_\_\_\_ Six or More \_\_\_\_\_

Are you reading a book now?    Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(IF YES) What is its title? \_\_\_\_\_

Kind of book (FICTION, NON-FICTION) \_\_\_\_\_

What Television channels can you get? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your favorite television shows? (LIST AS MANY AS THE INTERVIEWEE  
GIVES FREELY)

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

What radio stations do you listen to?      None \_\_\_\_\_

On the average day, about how  
many hours do you listen to  
this station?

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

Occupation of husband \_\_\_\_\_

(IF FARMER) Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Renter \_\_\_\_\_ Size of Farm \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

(IF NON-FARMER) Self employed? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you now employed outside of the home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

(IF YES) How many hours a week \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

How much have you been employed outside of the home since marriage?

What is or was the occupation of your parents?

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

What is or was the occupation of your husband's parents?

Father-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

Mother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

What is the nationality of your parents?

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Were they born in the U. S.? Father: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

What is the nationality of your husband's parents?

Father-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

Mother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

Were they born in the U. S.? Father-in-law: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Mother-in-law: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of school did your parents complete?

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

How many years of school did your husband's parents complete?

Father-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

Mother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_

Married \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Separated \_\_\_\_\_ Widow \_\_\_\_\_

Length of marriage \_\_\_\_\_ First marriage? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Age and sex of children \_\_\_\_\_

Years of education \_\_\_\_\_ Husband's education (Years) \_\_\_\_\_

Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Husband's religion \_\_\_\_\_

Husband's age \_\_\_\_\_ Estimate yearly family income \_\_\_\_\_ What part do you earn? \_\_\_\_\_

List age and sex of all of your parents' children. (CIRCLE THE RESPONDENT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you moved since marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you moved from one community to another since marriage? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in your present home? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived in this community? \_\_\_\_\_

List of individuals living in the home \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(PARENTS AND CHILDREN, ONE PARENT AND CHILDREN, OTHER RELATIVES, ROOMERS, PARENTS AND SOME OF THE CHILDREN, ETC. BE SPECIFIC, BUT DO NOT RECORD NAMES.)

1. Do you ever have any trouble getting to sleep?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you ever feel depressed?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

3. How frequently do you feel sick at your stomach?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you ever feel nervous or restless?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

5. How frequently do you have headaches?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you ever feel you are going to "crack up"?

Often\_\_\_\_\_ Fairly often\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

THE PLANS OF THIS STUDY ARE TO CONTACT THE PEOPLE WE ARE INTERVIEWING NOW TWO TO THREE YEARS FROM NOW. COULD YOU GIVE US THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF A RELATIVE WHO WILL KNOW YOUR ADDRESS THEN IN CASE YOU MOVE?

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relation**

Street or R.R. # \_\_\_\_\_

**City and State** \_\_\_\_\_

**INTERVIEWEE**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or R.R.#

**City** \_\_\_\_\_

**GENERAL COMMENTS :**

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