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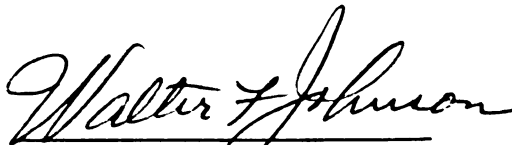
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Decision-Making at Mid-Life:
Graduate School as an Alternative
for Effecting Change in the Lives
of Men and Women, Ages 35 and Older
presented by

Barbara Gould Pelowski

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Education


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DECISION-MAKING AT MID-LIFE: GRADUATE SCHOOL
AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR EFFECTING CHANGE
IN THE LIVES OF MEN AND WOMEN,
AGES 35 AND OLDER

By

Barbara Gould Pelowski

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Administration and
Higher Education

1981

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ABSTRACT

DECISION-MAKING AT MID-LIFE: GRADUATE SCHOOL AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR EFFECTING CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF MEN AND WOMEN, AGES 35 AND OLDER

By

Barbara Gould Pelowski

Concerned with the multiple changes affecting the development of women and men in middle adulthood, a study was designed to explore how adults at mid-life make decisions. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to investigate the process by which women and men, ages 35 and older, chose to enter graduate school at Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80.

The study sought to identify the differential effects of educational and employment history upon women and men in the decision to enter graduate school; to identify the human resources used by the women and men; to determine with what conditions or "trade-offs" the decision was made; to identify the consequences, anticipated or unanticipated; and to determine what life events or major changes were perceived by the women and men as having precipitated the decision to enter graduate school.

A review of the literature included a brief history of graduate education, and an overview of research and writing on

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adult life-cycle development and decision-making, with particular emphasis upon gender differences and life transitions.

The total population of mid-life, entering first-time graduate students (N=198) comprised the research population. A survey instrument was mailed to 198 students (87 women and 111 men), 147 of whom were registered in master's degree programs, 51 in doctoral programs. A sub-sample of the questionnaire respondents (N=20) were interviewed in-depth about the decision-making process.

Analysis of information from 120 completed questionnaires (69 women and 51 men) indicated that although the mid-life graduate students ranged in age from 35 to 59, more than one-half were between 35 and 39. Women were somewhat older than the men, were more likely to be separated or divorced, and were more apt to be single-parents. The respondents were predominantly white, U.S. citizens, although approximately 10 percent were international students.

There was a significant difference in the employment status of the respondents, with more men than women employed full-time. Most of the respondents had continued their education since completing their undergraduate degrees, with more men than women enrolled full-time. The respondents were enrolled in eleven colleges, predominantly: Education, Business, Lifelong Education, and Social Science. More men than women were enrolled in doctoral programs.

Among the human resources activated in the decision-making process, spouses were consulted most often, followed by educational personnel, friends, employment resources, children and/or relatives,

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and professional resource persons. Women consulted more persons than men, felt more encouraged and discouraged by others, and thought of more human resources they might have used.

Women more than men expected to make adjustments in order to enter graduate school, felt more people were affected by their decision, and associated their decision with changes in their lives.

For most of the graduate students, changes in work and relationships had taken place and graduate school had been chosen as a means of effecting a transition. Graduate school itself represented continuity for some, and change for others. In either case, the decision-making process by which graduate school was chosen was clearly different for mid-life women and men.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Having grown up with the principle that propinquity is fifty percent of the impetus to form a relationship, I celebrate the evolution of this Ph.D. dissertation with several people whose life paths have crossed mine at timely moments.

In a moment forty years ago when Elizabeth Bulkley Loomis and Seabury Smith Gould IV decided that their existence warranted duplication, my life path was begun. For many years my parents' paths paralleled and criss-crossed my own, leaving me with my mother's loving, faithful, adventuresome attitude toward living, and my father's appreciation for achievement and independence. While neither of them is living to share the Ph.D. experience with me in a visible manner, I acknowledge their spiritual presence which continues to contribute in an immeasurable way to the quality and direction of my life.

The path which led to the achievement of my doctoral degree periodically has been "under construction." Twelve years ago, Dr. Laurine E. Fitzgerald, Dr. Walter F. Johnson, Dr. Ruth Hill Useem, and Dr. Richard L. Featherstone comprised the doctoral committee which guided my preliminary course of work. I am grateful to Dr. Fitzgerald, as my initial advisor, for challenging my professional commitment in a way which resulted in my decision to "bank"

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enough dissertation credits that I couldn't ignore the long-range goal in spite of interruptions.

A professional opportunity at Lake Erie College signaled a seven-year detour on the path to the Ph.D. Like most detours, the experience as Dean of Students and the relationships which were cultivated during that time enhanced my background while altering my time framework and changing the focus of my studies.

Resuming a journey after a long diversion can be difficult. I am grateful to the three continuing members of my doctoral committee for their faithful encouragement, and to Dr. Howard Hickey for joining the entourage after Dr. Fitzgerald's move to the University of Wisconsin.

Aware of the changes which have taken place in my development between the initiation of my doctoral program and the evolution of my dissertation, I am especially thankful that the life paths of three faculty members crossed mine. Much of the credit for my continued enrollment belongs to Walter Johnson who supported my changing program, directed the dissertation process, and always greeted this transient, mid-life graduate student with respect and affection.

Secondly, the person who listened, inspired, and guided me along the circuitous course toward my dissertation topic was Beatrice Paolucci. As a result of our relationship and the stimulation of Dr. Paolucci's teaching, I discovered both a subject and a process which has contributed immensely to my personal and professional growth.

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Finally, it is because of Ruth Hill Useem that my dissertation not only uncovered what I was seeking but developed with the highest expectations and satisfaction. I treasure our relationship in which I have been the grateful recipient of many lessons in research methodology and a great deal of patience and caring.

My traveling companion of the past fifteen years has been James F. Pelowski. Together, Jim and I have mapped our route, shouldered the baggage, struggled with decisions when confronted with an unexpected barrier, and shared a great deal of love and laughter. Together we returned to Michigan State University in 1978-79 when Jim completed his Ph.D.

On the journey for the past eleven years has been our daughter, Elizabeth Clarke Pelowski, who now could write her own dissertation on "When Mom and Dad Go Back to School." Along with other members of our family whose paths have crossed our lives, Elizabeth has been one of my most enthusiastic cheerleaders.

When the path seemed long or there was progress to be celebrated, there were special friends who gave generously of their resources. For two years, the shuttle from home to East Lansing has operated as necessary, and there has always been shelter and affection to be found in the home of Karl and Jean Thompson. On many other occasions calling for either solace or joy, my life path was crossed in an opportune moment by Alice or Roger Sherman and their family, or by Nancy or David Bowman and their family, or by my siblings, Carolyn, Nancy, Seabury, and especially, Linda.

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A journey is seldom completed without the assistance of resource people who provide access to information, furnish supplies for the trip, and are willing to step in when the need arises. For their support roles I thank Phyllis Wilkie at Michigan State University for facilitating the identification of the research population; John Day at Lake Erie College, and George Charles Newman at Findlay College for facilitating the use of library resources; Ann Joy Gould (Mrs. Seabury Smith Gould) for providing both moral and material support; Alice M. Pelowski who shared our home for two months while typing the draft of my dissertation and sharing with Jim Pelowski the role of "comprehensive parent" and household manager; and Seabury Smith Gould IV, my father, who, in spite of his premature death, made the completion of my academic goal financially feasible.

While the dissertation journey is coming to an end, the rest of my life continues to evolve, marked with the imprint of all who have passed my way. I know that many more experiences and relationships are still to be discovered, and the wonder of it is that at any time or in any place the opportunity may be near.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

A decision is essentially a choice among competing images of the future.

(Boulding 1978:132)

Introduction

Social Change

Twenty-five years ago, young adults contemplating the future may have perceived an image radically different from the reality with which they are faced today. Although part of the perceived discrepancy between expectation and reality may be attributed to a perspective influenced by internal changes, another part may be explained as a consequence of rapid social change. For the men and women who were initiating adult commitments in their work and personal relationships in the 1950s and early 1960s, the past twelve to twenty-five years have contained challenges which few of the young adults may have anticipated in such complexity.

Now at a point in their development which may be called mid-life, the young adults of the mid-fifties are approaching fifty years of age. For them, and for the men and women who followed them into adulthood during a period of approximately fifteen years, the present faced at mid-life was the future conceived in their youth.

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As young adults in their early twenties, they had made certain decisions about their occupation and personal relationships, based on their past experiences and what they perceived the present and future to be. As mid-life adults, approximately between the ages of thirty-five and fifty, they now may be confronted with a reality which challenges established roles and expectations.

Just at a point in their lives when mid-life adults need to feel the satisfaction of contributing to a field of work, they may feel threatened by the demand for employees in tune with advanced knowledge and technology. Changing professional expectations and employment policies may require that men and women become geographically mobile just at a time in their development when permanence in relationships takes on its greatest significance. Longer lives and earlier retirement have implications for men and women who are at a stage in their development in which commitment to work is critical (Fiske 1980).

Other social changes may further challenge the decision-making confidence of adults currently in mid-life. A quarter-century ago, it was more common for death to be experienced across the life-span. With a decrease in infant-mortality rates and an increase in control of major epidemics, experience with the death of family members may now be concentrated in middle adulthood (Giele 1980). As a consequence, while older generations may have experienced death throughout their life-span, mid-life adults in recent times may be acutely aware of, even preoccupied by, the

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issues surrounding death and their own mortality (Levinson 1978; Sheehy 1976; Jaques 1977).

Changes in family life also have contributed to the identification of "the middle years" as being uniquely problematic. Delay or abstention from parenting and the long "empty nest" period have created a need to make decisions not easily managed in traditional roles and settings (Giele 1980). An increasing number of women, particularly mothers employed in work outside their home, has blurred the division of tasks associated with traditional sex roles (Giele 1980). Divorce and remarriage have obscured traditional images of lifelong relationships (Smelser 1980).

On a global scale, decision-making has become more difficult for adults with the growing awareness of the scarcity of natural resources; of the means to communicate world-wide; of the technical power to obliterate the world and to explore the universe; of the scientific capacity to sustain life and to clone cells. Compounding the problem, there are few role models, few guides, for the men and women who have emerged into adulthood within the last twenty-five years. Older generations even within the same culture have not experienced the same world as their children (Mead 1970).

Just as the early Americans had to teach themselves not to daydream of the past but concentrate on the present, . . . so today's elders have to treat their own past as incommunicable, and teach their children, even in the midst of lamenting that it is so, not to ask, because they can never understand (Mead 1970:61).

To accept the fact that even among generations in the same family shared meaning of experience is limited, is to begin to understand

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Biological and Psychological Change

While social changes stimulate a need for persons to adapt, it is not only the external factors which influence decision-making. Internal factors play an equally important role. Biological and psychological development require adaptation in the individual throughout the life-cycle. And with changing physiology and personality comes a greater capacity to control one's life.

Thus, it is possible to view the individual life as a biological, psychological, sociological being in interaction with the environment. The focus of the present study is on the person between the ages of 35 and 50 or 60 who, in the context of the total life-cycle, has made a decision to enter graduate school in middle adulthood.

Considering the plethora of social changes affecting work and interpersonal relationships, and the complex internal changes of the individual, it becomes increasingly important for adults to heighten their awareness of the decision-making process in themselves and in others. Understanding varying perceptions and the values, commitments and behavior influenced by these views, men and women may enhance their ability to make wise decisions, thereby assuming greater responsibility for helping to shape the future. The alternative is to be swept along in the wake of circumstance,

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exercising little or no control over one's own life or the course of society, and suffering from a chronic case of "future shock."

The present study is an outgrowth of the concerns stimulated by social, biological, and psychological changes. The general problem is to explore how adults deal with changes in their lives. Given the complexity of change in the past twenty-five years, as described in the above introduction, what alternatives will adults choose in order to effect change?

Theory

With an overview of human beings as developing persons confronted continually with internal and external changes in interaction with the environment, the present study is designed to look at the decision-making process of adults at mid-life. For this purpose, decision-making is defined as the process of arriving at a conscious, goal-directed choice among competing alternatives (Paolucci 1979).

The particular choice of the men and women in this study is to enter graduate school at age 35 or older. How each individual arrives at that decision is the subject of the research project. It is assumed that the goals, alternatives and choices perceived by the adults at mid-life will reflect the developmental concerns of men and women as described in current adult life-cycle literature.

From a theoretical standpoint, decision-making and adult development are being viewed as two interdependent, sequential

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processes which occur across time. In much the same way as one decision becomes history for the next question, human development proceeds from the history of a person in a particular culture.

Occurring across time as an ongoing process, decision-making, like human development, arises out of a perceived need to change. The individual senses that what exists is not what ought to be. Consciously, the person recognizes that there are choices, limited or enhanced by specific goals, values, experiences, and available resources. Perception, then, is the ultimate limitation in a person's ability to decide (Hoyt 1969:14). For without seeing a need to change what exists, there can be no motivation to seek another reality. To be satisfied with the status quo is to perceive that the present encompasses those conditions both necessary and sufficient for achieving one's goals.

Once having recognized the need for making a decision, the person is, in a developmental sense, in transition. The past has already begun to change, the equilibrium of the human system has been disrupted, and it remains for the person to decide how to adapt.

As the decision-making process evolves, information from the environment is filtered through the values of the decision-maker. In the tension between opposing forces, information is sorted and alternatives identified. At this point the person may choose to minimize disruption by making a routine change with few alterations in the established meaning of life. Or, maintaining some continuity, the person may seek alternatives for a growth change in which familiar expectations are incorporated into a broader understanding.

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As a third possibility, the person may risk a "crisis of discontinuity" by considering alternatives with loss being a possible consequence (Marris 1980).

As the alternatives are organized according to importance, relevance, and usefulness, the feelings, ideas and experiences of the individual come into play. Thus, every decision is basically a choice evolving from the subjective environment of the person. How the individual feels about the self-in-world will determine which resources are perceived as most useful. Without the recognition of a resource as useful, no alternative can become effective as a means of change (Elbing 1970).

Once a particular resource is perceived as useful, it may be limited by the person's means to secure. Time, money, and energy may be scarce; or age, sex, or social class may pose barriers.

Having determined possible alternatives and available resources, the person must consider the probable consequences of each option. To some extent, outlook on life will determine the nature of the perceived consequences. An optimistic person who tends to view available resources as generally sufficient in meeting needs, and has developed confidence in judging alternatives, may perceive few deterrents in the decision-making process. A pessimistic person may expect to encounter problems in considering a change, and may experience great disappointment if the consequences are disruptive.

Consequences must also be examined on the basis of the perceived risks and benefits of each alternative. Since all the

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possible consequences cannot be known before a decision is made, making a choice involves deciding under varying degrees of uncertainty. How much uncertainty a person is willing to risk in making a particular choice will partly depend upon the degree of stability in the person's environment at the time. It may also be influenced by how much the person values what is being risked in relation to what may be gained. Or, time may be the primary criteria, risk becoming unimportant in relation to the desire to make a quick decision. Finally, the desired benefits may be so minimal that the degree of uncertainty is directly associated with achieving minimum satisfaction.

The extent to which perceived consequences may be realistic will depend in part upon the degree of shared meaning which exists between the person and the environment. If a decision is made with negative consequences, it may mean that the information resources were ignored, misinterpreted, incomplete, or filtered through needs and values of the individual which differed from the expectations of the environment.

Thus, both human development and decision-making may be viewed as a series of sequential and interconnected experiences in the life of a person. As the growing person continually reshapes reality, decisions are made according to the person's needs and aspirations, perception of the environment, relationships with other people in both immediate and remote settings, and the capacity to discover, sustain, or alter the environment (Bronfenbrenner 1979).

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Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore how men and women in middle adulthood make decisions in the course of managing change in their lives.

1. What effect does past experience have upon adults in the perception of choice?
2. What resources are perceived by men and women as useful in exploring alternatives?
3. What are the anticipated and unanticipated consequences experienced in the decision-making process?
4. What effect do life events have upon the decision-making process?

More specifically, the purpose is to explore the process by which graduate school is chosen by men and women, ages 35 and older, as a means of effecting change in their lives. The setting is one university: Michigan State University.

The study addresses the following questions:

1. What effect does educational and employment history have in the decision-making process of the adult graduate students?
2. What human resources are perceived as useful in the decision-making process?
3. On what conditions or with what "trade-offs" is the decision made to enter graduate school?
4. Who is perceived as affected by the decision, and with what consequences?

5. What life events or major changes are perceived as having precipitated the decision to enter graduate school at this point in time?

Need for the Study

1. By addressing the above broad questions, it is hoped that knowledge can be provided regarding the decision-making process of adult students entering graduate school at age 35 and older in a period of transition.
2. It is the purpose of the study to discuss the implications specifically for Michigan State University and for other institutions of higher education with similar educational resources at the graduate level.
3. As a result of this broad study, it is hoped that specific areas of further inquiry may be identified regarding the decision-making process of adults in periods of change.

Design of the Study

Population

The population of the study consists of all men and women graduate students who entered master's or doctoral programs at Michigan State University for the first time, in the fall or winter term of 1979-1980, at age 35 or older.

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Methodology

All subjects were mailed a questionnaire along with an explanation of the purposes of the study. Sub-samples of the respondents were selected, after which interviews were scheduled and conducted.

Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed to obtain basic descriptive information of men and women and the decision-making process. Responses were compared according to such variables as gender, marital status, parental status, and age.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to collect data related to:

1. age, marital and parental status;
2. educational and employment history;
3. human resources perceived as useful;
4. consequences, anticipated and unanticipated; and
5. life events perceived as catalysts in the decision-making process.

Interview Sub-Sample

In addition to the questionnaire, a sub-sample of the questionnaire respondents were selected for the purpose of interviewing in depth about the decision-making process.

Definition of Terms

In order to maximize shared meaning of terms, the following definitions of key words are given as they are used in the study:

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Decision-making: The process of arriving at a conscious, goal-directed choice among competing alternatives (Paolucci 1979).

Mid-life: The period in the human life-cycle occurring between early adulthood and late adulthood; sometimes called middle adulthood; usually associated with the chronological period between age 35 and approximately ages 50-60.

Graduate school: That segment of the educational program of a university including post-baccalaureate study at the master's or doctoral level. In the study, the term excludes "professional school."

Life-event: An occurrence evolving usually from ordinary, but sometimes extraordinary, social and interpersonal transactions, and pertaining to major areas of dynamic significance, including family constellations, marriage, occupation, economics, residence, group and peer relationships, education, religion, recreation and health (Holmes 1973:162-164).

Decision-making pattern: Represents the design of human resources used by an adult graduate student in the decision-making process; used as one criteria for selection of the interview sub-sample.

Scope and Limitations

1. The population of the study is limited to graduate students, ages 35 and older, who have entered master's or doctoral

degree programs at Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80.

2. The study is limited to the extent that the selected population is similar to other adult graduate students at institutions like Michigan State University.

3. The study is limited to the accuracy, or inaccuracy, of self-reported data, part of which is based on recall.

4. The study is limited by the reliability of the survey instrument and the interview method.

5. The study is limited in the degree to which the significant issues raised in the literature on the subject have been, or have not been, identified and examined in the research.

Overview of the Study

After presenting the subject in the introduction to Chapter I, the general problem and the purpose of the study are stated. The need for the study follows the statement of the specific problem which includes a list of the broad research questions. A brief description of the design of the study is then provided. To clarify the meaning of key words, definitions of terms are provided, followed by a statement of the scope and limitations of the study. Chapter I closes with an overview of the study.

In Chapter II, appropriate literature and research are reviewed, with emphasis in the area of adult life-cycle development. A discussion of previous research is followed by a summary of the chapter.

The design of the study is described in Chapter III, providing information about the sample, the survey instrument, the interview format, as well as the collection and analysis of the data.

In Chapter IV, an analysis of the data is presented, beginning with a report of the survey instrument responses and a description of the respondents. Interview data from the selected sub-sample is used to elaborate on the responses collected from the questionnaires. A summary of the analysis closes Chapter IV.

A summary of the study is given in Chapter V, followed by the conclusions. A discussion of the findings points out the similarities and differences of the study in contrast to other research. Finally, implications for further study are suggested.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Brief History of Graduate Education

Intended as a background for the study, the following review of the development of graduate education in the United States is necessarily brief. In a historical context, graduate education is described as a resource used by a changing population in different ways over the course of its development.

Founding of Johns Hopkins University, 1876

To decide to change is to perceive that what is, is not what ought to be. In 1876, Johns Hopkins University was founded as an innovative institution with an emphasis on graduate study because Daniel C. Gilman believed that American higher education was not all he imagined would be possible. With historical roots in both British and German educational tradition, colleges and universities in the United States had been developed with two fundamental objectives: to preserve and enrich the culture by preparing students for college teaching, and to advance scholarship by conducting scientific research.

Johns Hopkins University was envisioned as an academic institution which would combine teaching and research in specialized

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fields, while placing "the effect of higher studies on the student over their contribution to the advancement of knowledge" (Brubacher 1976:179). The founders saw a need for higher education to apply research to problems of daily living with the hope that university reform would

make for less misery among the poor, less ignorance in the schools, less bigotry in the temple, less suffering in the hospital, less fraud in business, less folly in politics (Daniel Gilman quoted in Brubacher 1976:180).

According to Gilman, students were to be prepared "to advance the sciences they profess," and in doing so, serve the needs of American society (Gilman in Brubacher 1976:180).

Changes in the System, 1900-1960

At several subsequent points in the history of graduate education, academic policy-makers executed changes in the system. In 1900, the Association of American Universities redefined minimum standards for the awarding of the Ph.D. degree. In 1920, Harvard University introduced the Ed.D. as a new type of graduate degree for educators.

By 1957, a perceived need for change in the graduate school system prompted the Carnegie Corporation to finance a major study of graduate education in the United States. Bernard Berelson completed the study in 1960. Expressing concern for a shortage of college teachers and professionals, Berelson advocated changes which would make graduate training more efficient. For example, he suggested more direction by the faculty, shorter dissertations,

elimination of the final oral examination, and more financial support from industry (Berelson 1960:239-245). Supporting the spirit of Daniel Gilman's charge to graduate education eighty-five years earlier, Berelson stated that the greatest need was for graduate training to recognize itself "as a leader of American education, even of American life, and the acceptance of the responsibility that position implies" (Berelson 1960:260).

Perceived Problems,
1960-1965

The need for more college teachers and more researchers for government, business, and industry was expressed frequently (Berelson 1960; Carmichael 1961; Grigg 1965; Walters 1965). Some educators expressed dismay that only a small percentage of college graduates were enrolling in graduate schools immediately upon graduation; that Ph.D.'s were being awarded to part-time "gradualist" students; that many bright students were postponing their graduate work; and that there was insufficient financial aid for single and married men, and single women (Beach 1960:135). Older, married, employed women students would have been the least desirable students!

Some deans feel that marriage and a family have a big and undesirable effect on graduate work in distracting the students' attention from what should be intensive devotion to a subject (Berelson 1960:135).

. . . Only about 15% of women graduate students prefer a full-time professional career for the first five years after completing their work. When . . . combined with the reluctance of academic employers, not to mention the rules against joint husband-wife employment, (this fact does) not leave much room . . . for reliance on (solving the college teacher shortage with women Ph.D.'s) (Berelson 1960:135).

Outside employment is a serious obstacle to the completion of a degree; full-time outside workers suffer serious attrition, as do middle-aged or older students, regardless of ability ratings (Beach 1965:125).

Economic Developments,
1965-1970

While the characteristics of the students being admitted to graduate school were not changing in the mid-sixties, the financial resources available to students were changing dramatically. Both federal and state loan programs increased, while local banks began to liberalize their loan practices (Beach 1965:121-122). Grants to graduate students by the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health and under the National Defense Education Act totaled "hundreds of millions" annually (Brubacher 1976:233).

Social Changes,
1965-1970

While the increased availability of financial aid certainly had an impact on graduate school enrollment, so did several societal developments. Avoidance of the military draft and postponement of employment had become two motivating factors for some students deciding to enter graduate school, "with no particular presumptions of a positive relationship between (graduate study) and subsequent vocational work" (Mayhew 1974:96). Blacks and other ethnic minorities began demanding that a proportionate number of students be admitted to graduate schools (Mayhew 1974:9). Technological developments began calling for more extensive professional services and

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an ever increasing number of highly trained work specialists (Mayhew 1974:12).

Enrollment, 1969-1980

By 1969, the annual doctoral production was cited by Mayhew as numbering 26,100 (Mayhew 1974:107), compared with the 9,000 doctorates being awarded annually ten years earlier (Brubacher 1976: 193). Mayhew had estimated that by 1980 the annual number of doctorates awarded would reach between 60,000 and 70,000 (Mayhew 1974: 107). By 1977, statistics published by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare indicated that the number of Ph.D.'s awarded had already reached 33,232 (U.S. HEW 1979:112).

Age Characteristics, 1970-1979

If economic and social developments seemed to be contributing to an increase in the total number of graduate students in the 1970s, such forces were also stimulating changes in the age and gender characteristics of students. According to reports published by the Bureau of the Census, between October, 1972 and October, 1976, the age distribution of college students shifted dramatically (U.S. HEW 1979:97). Not only was the number of students under the age of twenty-five decreasing, but the number of students enrolled from older age groups was increasing significantly (U.S. HEW 1979: 97). It may be significant to note that enrollment statistics for colleges and universities are reported by the U.S. Department of

Health, Education and Welfare only for students between the ages of 18 and 34.

Gender Characteristics,
1963-1986

Concurrent with a change in the age distribution of students was a change in the proportion of men and women enrolled in graduate school. In 1963, 31 percent of the graduate student population were women (U.S. HEW 1978:12). By 1971, the percentage of women graduate students had increased to 41 percent, rising to 49 percent in 1977 (U.S. HEW 1979:91). The Department of Health, Education and Welfare was projecting that with a large increase in graduate student enrollment, the percentage of women graduate students could reach 51 percent by 1986 (U.S. HEW 1978:12).

Change in Focus of
Graduate Education

As the number of graduate students increased, and the student population diversified in age and gender, concerns were articulated regarding a need to broaden the focus of the purposes of graduate education. In addition to the development of interdisciplinary programs designed to improve the preparation of college teachers, and the integration of practical experiences to facilitate the socialization of graduate students, there grew concern for the developmental needs of students (Mayhew 1974:217). In answer to such concern, there appeared a number of institutional responses, such as the provision of alternate tracks for students oriented toward research, teaching or applied study (Mayhew 1974:

237-238). Lewis Mayhew outlined Joseph Katz's thinking regarding necessary areas of teaching and learning, suggesting that graduate education might be improved by incorporating attention to the emotional, social and physical needs of students (Mayhew 1974:217-218). Such changes in the focus of graduate education and in the characteristics of graduate students have paralleled shifts in American society, as described earlier in Chapter I.

Confronted with a growing number and variety of new opportunities and alternatives, adults are facing increasingly complex questions regarding family, work, and leisure. Decision-making is becoming more difficult, and the need for the resources of higher education to respond to the continuing learning needs of persons is becoming more and more compelling.

What is suggested by the present study is that for some adults at mid-life, graduate education may be perceived as one alternative for effecting change and facilitating their continuing development. What is hoped is that graduate education may be perceived by the policy-makers who will shape its development as an appropriate and effective resource for the personal and professional growth of a broader spectrum of students than generally has been considered desirable.

Historical Antecedents of Adult Development Theory

Across time, age has been an important factor in determining social roles and their commensurate rights, responsibilities and challenges. "Certain biological and social events come to be

regarded as significant punctuation marks in the life line and to signify the transition points from one age status to the next" (Neugarten 1968:5).

As early as 100-300 A.D., Hindu texts translated from Sanskrit, depicted four stages in the life of an upper-class male, each stage recognized by a series of rituals or transitions (Hopkins 1971). The first stage began at age eight when the boy left childhood and was initiated into the role of student. After twelve years of study he would enter the role of householder which included marriage, parenthood and service to society. As he became a grandparent he would be eligible to enter the third stage of hermit, characterized by celibacy and restraint. For those with "the highest standards of purity and dedication," there existed a fourth stage called sannyasin, meaning abandonment, in which the initiate would renounce all relationships and material possessions and live out the remainder of his life as a silent meditator (Hopkins 1971: 74-84).

Fourteen hundred years later, William Shakespeare in As You Like It described the life-cycle as seven ages separated by exits and entrances (Shakespeare 1623). Leaving infancy, a person became a student, paralleling the Hindu pattern if not the attitude. Similar to the period of the Hindu householder were Shakespeare's three ages of lover, soldier and justice. The "lean and slippered pantaloon with spectacles on nose" described the sixth age, comparable to the Brahman hermit. Like the sannyasin, the last age

is "second childishness, and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything" (Shakespeare 1623: 11. 139-166).

As societies developed throughout ensuing centuries, so **did** life expectancy increase, thus altering the bio-social patterns **shaping** the lives of men and women. In medieval Europe, for **example**, the average life expectancy was 30 years. By 1850 in the **United States**, the expected life span had increased ten years, and **by** 1900, men and women were expected to live for an average of 47.3 **years** (Encyclopedia Americana 1978:426).

As a consequence of living longer and extending the process **of** pursuing life's goals over a wider life span, persons became **increasingly** interested in understanding human development. It **was** at the beginning of the twentieth century, when men and women **were** expected to live almost fifty years, that Sigmund Freud created **a** theory of personality development in childhood.

Early Literature in Adult Development, 1900-1950

Freud's views focused on the instincts of sexuality and **aggression** as the two forces within the unconscious which motivate **human** behavior. Both drives, Freud suggested, are

limitless in fantasy, yet must be curtailed in reality so that "reclaimed from the unconscious and from an unrealistic sense of guilt, the strengthened and mature adult can most effectively maximize real satisfactions, discharge social responsibilities, and achieve reasonable pleasure in work and in love (Smelser and Erikson 1980:31).

While Freud showed how personality development in childhood significantly influences the nature of adulthood, he assumed that the

developmental process ended with adolescence, and that any continuing conflicts were re-enactments of unresolved childhood issues (Levinson 1978:4).

Accepting Freud's basic concept of the influence of instinctual impulses, Carl G. Jung felt that Freud was too narrowly focused on childhood development and its influence on adult problems (Levinson 1978:4). In the 1920s, Jung characterized personality development as a lifelong process involving both internal psychological forces and external cultural influences. He observed that adults are confronted with an opportunity for fundamental change at about age 40, "the noon of life," and may persist in developing throughout the last half of the life-cycle (Levinson 1978:4-5). "Mid-life individuation," as Jung called the process, occurs as values are reassessed, physical vigor is replaced by psychic energy and wisdom, and ultimately "the individual is transformed into spiritual man" (Knox 1977:329).

By the 1930s, with life expectancy in the United States approaching sixty years of age, two biographers appeared to describe human development across the increasing life span (Bühler 1933; Frenkel-Brunswick 1936). Charlotte Bühler took exception to the then widely accepted homeostatis theory. Through the study of biographies, she concluded that the ultimate goal in a human being's life was not equilibrium or an absence of tension, but "fulfillment," which would be attained by achieving certain goals, both internally and in the external environment (Bühler 1977). Achieving the

ultimate goal required a changing emphasis throughout the life-cycle of desirable goal patterns:

In the age period, 18-25, the need for adaptive self-limitation would be sought in the tentative commitment to an adult occupational goal;

In the age period, 25-45, the need for creative expansion would find satisfaction in occupation, marriage, and family development;

In the age period, 45-65, the need for the establishment of inner order would be sought in critical self-assessment;

And in the period beginning about age 65, through rest and retirement, an adult would seek self-fulfillment (Chickering 1981).

While Bühler was concentrating on changes in goals in human development, Else Frenkel-Brunswick was studying successive phases in the life span (Frenkel-Brunswick 1936). Examining the biographies of 400 men and women, Frenkel-Brunswick concluded that every person passes through five periods in the life-cycle. In the first period, from infancy to age 6, the child lives at home. In the second (ages 17-28), the youth leaves his family and builds new activities. In the third period (ages 29-49), called "the culmination of life," vocation and home are established. In the fourth (ages 50-64), activities decrease, losses take on greater importance, and a change in the type of work is noted, especially where sport or physical labor is concerned. The fifth and final period, age 64 until death, is often introduced by complete retirement from one's profession.

Hobbies increase, retrospection is common, and ties to life plans are "loosened."

These turning points usher in, in very short time, parallel and permanent changes in many fields of life, all of which allow us to imply that a basic transposition takes place (Kuhlen 1963:167).

By 1950, life expectancy in the United States was approaching seventy years, an increase in the life span of more than twenty years since the publication of Freud's theory of personality. In that half century, the study of human development had produced a sizeable body of knowledge, primarily concerning childhood and adolescence: (1) G. Stanley Hall's theory of evolutionary growth, 1904; (2) Leta Stetter Hollingsworth's theory of the continuity of growth, 1928; (3) Margaret Mead's study of the cultural influence on adolescence, 1928; (4) Ruth Benedict's focus on stress as a characteristic of adolescence, 1935; (5) Kurt Lewin's focus on the person in his environment, 1935; (6) Gordon Allport's theory of personality, 1937; (7) Kurt Goldstein's interest in the human goal of "self-actualization," 1938; (8) Arnold Gesell's research of childhood behavior, 1941, 1943; and (9) Jean Piaget's study of intelligence in children, 1941, 1948.

With these historical antecedents in mind, there follows a review of the literature from 1950 to 1959.

Literature in Adult Development, 1950-1959

With the increasing complexities posed by a modern, industrial society and the longer lives of men and women, Erik Erikson

emerged as an explorer of adult development. Using a biographical method and a combined historical-sociological-psychological mode of analysis (Levinson 1978), Erikson published Childhood and Society as "the study of the ego's roots in social organization" (Erikson 1950: 15). He viewed a human being as a biological organism capable of managing pain; as a psychological being with an ego to integrate experience; and as a social entity to reflect the concerns of society. According to Erikson, it was the function of the ego "to master the various areas of life, and especially those in which the individual finds his self, his body, and his social role wanting and trailing" (Erikson 1950:211-212).

Whether an individual found his ego strong enough to integrate his biological and social needs at a given point in the life-cycle was dependent upon the progress being made in one of eight developmental stages extending from infancy to old age. Each successive stage was initiated by a crisis or critical step, "characteristic of turning points, of moments of decision between progress and regression, integration and retardation" (Erikson 1950:270-271). The progression from one stage to another allowed for individual variations in tempo and intensity, as well as for the need to renegotiate earlier issues.

The qualities confronted in Erikson's "eight ages of man" are expressed in the following list of chronological periods and ascribed polarities:

1. Infancy: Basic Trust vs. Mistrust
2. Early Childhood: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

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3. Play Age: Initiative vs. Guilt
4. School Age: Industry vs. Inferiority
5. Adolescence: Identity vs. Role Confusion
6. Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs. Isolation
7. Adulthood: Generativity vs. Stagnation
8. Senescence: Ego Integrity vs. Despair

(N.B. A chart describing the conflicts and resolutions proposed by Erikson for each stage is provided in Appendix B; reprinted with permission, McCoy 1980:6.)

By providing a historical and intellectual link between Freud and Jung, Erikson contributed to a scholarly tradition from which current thinking about adult development has grown (Levinson 1978:5).

With the publication of Erikson's thinking in 1950, there seemed to be sufficient evidence to support a view of the life-cycle as a process following an underlying pattern of change. What affected the nature and timing of various changes during the life span was subject to debate. Some theorists conceived change as motivated by a need for self-actualization or self-fulfillment (Bühler 1933; Allport 1937; Goldstein 1939). Others attributed change to the inherent needs of successive stages in the life span, each focused on a crisis or developmental challenge (Frenkel-Brunswick 1936; Erikson 1950). Most researchers had focused upon "the first two but not on the last five sevenths of life," with the notable exception of Erikson (1950) and the early contributions of Jung (1933) and Bühler (1933) (Neugarten 1966).

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What emerged in the early 1950s was the concept that growth necessitated the learning of tasks which arise at or about a certain period in a person's life, and which must be mastered in order to succeed with later tasks and further growth (Havighurst 1974:2). One of the first authorities to carry the developmental task beyond the stages of childhood and adolescence was Robert Havighurst. Building on Erikson's assumptions of sequence throughout the life-cycle, Havighurst believed that developmental tasks arise from a combination of factors, including the individual's physical maturation, cultural pressure, personal values and aspirations (Havighurst 1974:5-6). The point at which these factors merge to initiate change *is* what Havighurst called "the teachable moment," or the critical *period* when a person may be ready to achieve a certain task (Havighurst 1974:6-7).

Some critics of the stage theories of Erikson and Havighurst *caution* that the concept may make it appear as though all people *meet* the same problems or challenges at the same time in their lives (Troll 1975). Nor does a strict application of stage theory account *for* the influence of major life events and major role transitions (Neugarten 1979).

An application of stage theory in a modified form was made *in* 1955 by Robert Peck in his study of the "second half of life" as *stages* within two periods, Middle Age and Old Age (Neugarten 1968). *Peck* cautioned against a chronological definition of "stage" in *light* of the variability in the chronological age at which a crisis *or* *critical* experience may occur. He suggested that the stage a

person is "working on" may have more to do with role or "stage in life" than age (Neugarten 1968).

Changing role patterns was the theme of a number of publications emerging from the 1950s. Aware of the social and economic changes affecting men and women at different ages, some researchers focused on age-sex roles. Studying changing role perceptions in the family, Neugarten and Gutman (1958) noted personality changes in the years from forty to seventy (Neugarten 1968). They observed that "women, as they age, seem to become more tolerant of their own aggressive, egocentric impulses; whereas men (become more tolerant) of their own nurturant and affiliative responses" (Neugarten 1968:71).

Changing age-sex roles was also the subject of a survey by Martel (1963) of American magazine fiction from 1890 to 1955 (Neugarten 1968). Seven shifts in the areas of family, marriage, work and community were found to be associated with changing role-patterns: (1) a shift away from close involvement with the family; (2) the loss of parental authority with adolescents and adult children; (3) a decline in extended family attachment; (4) increasing emphasis on the peer group; (5) a shift from partnership in marriage to romance and parenthood; (6) an increased value on wealth and achievement in work; and (7) the focus on youth as "the prime of life" (Neugarten 1968).

In such a complex and rapidly changing society, several studies emerged, raising questions about age-related abilities and relationships. Interested specifically in the relationship between age and achievement, Harvey C. Lehman studied the ages at which

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creative work was produced by prominent people in various fields. The results indicated that creativity or intellectual productivity was more likely to occur in the twenties and thirties rather than later in life (Lehman 1953).

In the area of intellectual development, research by Glanzer and Glaser (1959) indicated that learning ability remains stable between twenty and fifty years of age (Knox 1977:415-416). Other research indicated an increasing wide range of individual differences, at least through the fifties, with intellectually able people sustaining their learning ability longer (Knox 1977: 417). And other investigations suggested that with a decrease in the ability to perceive complex relations and engage in abstract reasoning, older adults tend "to engage in formal reasoning and abstraction based on a familiarity with knowledge of the intellectual and cultural heritage of society" (Knox 1977:420-421).

Studying personality, Tuddenham (1959) found activity level to be one of the characteristics remaining most stable over the life span. The most stable characteristics, according to Kelly (1955), seemed to be values (aesthetic, religious, economic, social, political, and theoretical) and vocational interests (Troll 1975:47). Life goals, as motivators of adult behavior, develop in an expanding and contracting pattern, suggested Kuhlen (1952), who found differences among school teachers based on age, sex and marital status (Troll 1975:52). Beginning adulthood with expansion-seeking motives, the needs and goals of married women turn inward at about age 35; single women at age 45; married men after 50 (Troll 1975:52-54).

As research continued in areas concerning physical, intellectual, personality and social development, there emerged a growing interest in the changes and continuities of occupational careers. Fifty years earlier, Freud had suggested that the definition of maturity was the capacity to love and to work (Smelser 1980). Erik Erikson, in describing generativity as a functional goal of adulthood, had advocated use of one's skills and ideas in a commitment to the growth of future generations, including work-identification (Erikson 1950). And Robert Havighurst had cited occupational satisfaction as a task of middle age (Havighurst 1953).

In an approach developed by Howard S. Becker and Anselm L. Strauss (1956), career was conceived as "movement through structures" and applied to the recurring patterns and problems within occupational institutions (Neugarten 1968). Focusing on career in work organizations, the authors examined the institutional and personal needs affecting the socialization and personality development of adults. They suggested that changes in a person's career (occupational or otherwise) imply changes in social position, and as such, affect identity.

At the same time attention was being given to the changing meaning of work, thought was being given to the nature of leisure. Havighurst and Feigenbaum (1959) citing David Riesman (1957) and Margaret Mead (1957), stated that suburban life-styles were promoting values and leisure activities that were home-and-family-centered (Neugarten 1965). In studying the differences between home-centered and community-centered people, Havighurst and

Feigenbaum concluded that personality, more than the situation, determines leisure style. Satisfaction with leisure role was high for both men and women whose life styles incorporated time for chosen activities and recognition for involvement (Neugarten 1968).

Synchronizing the processes of work and love is the purpose of play, suggested Erikson (1950). Leisure, or play, then becomes an important function of the developing adult ego in which lies the responsibility to integrate the biological and social aspects of the self (Erikson 1950:211).

A review of the literature of the fifties began with reference to Erikson's Childhood and Society (1950). A review of the period ends with another Erikson publication, Identity and the Life Cycle (1959). Erikson uses a biographical approach to describe the growth of a healthy personality which, having survived both internal and external conflicts, emerges in adulthood with "an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgement, and an increase in the capacity to do well, according to the standards of those who are significant to him" (Erikson 1959:52).

Literature in Adult Development, 1960-1969

Within the review of the literature contained in the present study, two facts are apparent: (1) there was an increase in the 1960s in the volume of publications related to adult development and (2) there was an emerging focus on aging. In one publication, alone, there are 58 articles emphasizing the social and psychological

processes of persons moving from middle age to old age (Neugarten 1968a).

In Middle Age and Aging, Neugarten and Moore (1968) describe the social changes of the 1960s as accompanying underlying biological, social and economic developments in a changing society (Neugarten 1968a). They point to the growth and redistribution of the population, producing a high proportion of very young and very old; to an increasing life expectancy, creating "a new rhythm of life-timing and aging"; and to the changes in the systems of family, economics and politics (Neugarten 1968a:5-6).

As Neugarten and Moore point out, within the family, age at marriage was continuing to drop, children were being born earlier in the marriage, parenthood was growing longer, and grandparenthood arriving sooner. Within the economic system, earlier marriages and prolonged education were perpetuating economic dependence of young adults upon their parents. Changing roles of women (and the changing sex-role patterns with regard to family support) prompted an increase in the number of young married women in the labor force (Neugarten 1968a:6-8).

Within the political system, age and subcultures were evident in the voting behavior of the old and the young, suggesting that "a social movement is being created in which consciousness of age is the dominant feature" (Neugarten 1968a:16). One result of these biological, social and economic changes, conclude the authors, is that new relationships between age groups will be necessary,

which in turn will change the age status system in society (Neugarten 1968a:21).

Recognizing the broad implications of such changes, several researchers undertook studies to provide information about age-related issues. One such issue was the relationship between age and achievement. Lehman, having earlier studied creative productivity of prominent persons in various fields (Lehman 1953), researched the production rate of scientists. The results, published in 1962, indicated that both past and present generation scientists produced more than their proportionate share of high-quality research not later than ages 30 to 39 (Neugarten 1968a).

In 1965, Elliott Jaques studied the developmental transition of artists in their middle and late 30s and found the creative capacity ending in some cases, beginning in others, or changing in quality and content. The differences in creative capacity Jaques attributed to developmental variations in the artists' means of coping with "the mid-life crisis" (Allman and Jaffe 1977).

Studying age changes in the productivity of scientists, artists and scholars, Wayne Dennis published his research in 1966. Results indicated that total productivity in the 20s was only half as great, or less, than output in the 30s. Middle age (ages 40-49) was the most productive period for all three research populations, although scholars maintained a high rate of productivity through the 70s. Dennis concluded that the differences could be attributed to (1) the length of time needed to complete a unit of work;

- (2) the length of time required in preparation (educational); and
- (3) the degree of collaboration appropriate in the field (Neugarten 1968a).

The relationship of age and activity level as an issue in adulthood prompted a publication by Havighurst, Neugarten and Tobin in 1963 (Neugarten 1968a). The authors took issue with two theories pertaining to the decreased social interaction and expressed life satisfaction observed in older adults. One approach, the disengagement theory, had suggested that social withdrawal is a voluntary function of age related to the accompanying preoccupation with self as well as decreasing emotional investment in persons and objects in the environment (Neugarten 1968a).

The other approach, known as activity theory, suggested that older people have the same psychological and social needs as younger people, and society prohibits social interaction by older adults. The authors conclude that neither theory is sufficient; that personality pattern determines whether disengagement or activity will result in expressed life satisfaction (Neugarten 1968a).

Personality was also viewed as the pivotal dimension in describing patterns of aging in research completed by Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin in 1965. In their study of men and women, ages 50 to 80, they conclude that there is no sharp discontinuity of personality with age, but instead an increasing consistency of both personality and values (Neugarten 1968a).

With a continuing interest in the issue of age and motivation in adulthood, Raymond C. Kuhlen in 1964 published a paper concerning the factors influencing developmental changes in adult motivation (Neugarten 1968a). In this discussion, Kuhlen cites level of expectation, satisfaction or frustration of needs, and social and physical losses as variables affecting changes in motivation. In exploring growth expansion motives, Kuhlen suggests that such expansion needs as achievement, power, creativity and self-actualization dominate behavior in the years up to middle age. With changes in motivation, prompted by a sense of increasing threat and anxiety, older adults satisfy their continuing need for expansion by more vicarious means. Individual differences in motivational patterns are found with respect to sex, socio-economic class and outlook toward life (Neugarten 1968a).

In addition to issues directly related to age, adult life is influenced by a social structure which promotes both change and stability (Neugarten 1968a). In a paper by Howard S. Becker (1964), two processes were examined as explanations of change or consistency in adult behavior and values. One process, situational adjustment, deals with the factors in a situation which require a person to behave in a certain way or to hold certain beliefs. Commitment, as the second process, provides stability in adult behavior by requiring a person to act in the same way in varied situations. Consequently, the conditions for both change and stability may be said to be created by the social structure (Neugarten 1968a).

Social norms are created by society in relation to the social structure. Through a system of perceived opportunities and constraints, human beings guide their own behavior and provide support or criticism for the actions of others. Neugarten, Moore and Lowe (1965), in a study of middle-class men and women ages forty to seventy, determined that across the adult life span there is an increase in the importance ascribed to age norms (Neugarten 1968a). Among middle-aged and the old, age seems to be an increasingly reasonable criterion by which to evaluate behavior; i.e., to judge the timeliness and, therefore, appropriateness of an event or action (Neugarten 1968a).

Time, both biological and social, influences human behavior, suggested Bernice Neugarten (1968), but "the major punctuation marks in the adult life line tend . . . to be more often social than biological" (Neugarten 1968c:146). "There is a prescriptive timetable for the ordering of life events: a time when men and women are expected to marry, a time to raise children, a time to retire" (Neugarten 1968a:22). While actual occurrences may vary, behavior is closely correlated with age norms.

As men and women grow older, their perception of time changes from time-since-birth to time-left-to-live (Neugarten 1968a). To some people, such an awareness serves as a brake; to others, it acts as a stimulus to maximize the use of time. As Neugarten observed, with a change in time perspective in middle age comes the development of "the executive processes of personality: self awareness, selectivity, manipulation and control of

the environment, mastery, competence, the wide array of cognitive strategies" (Neugarten 1968b:98).

In a study of 100 "well-placed" men and women between the ages of forty and sixty, Neugarten (1968) examined the salient characteristics of middle adulthood. She observed that middle age is a period of heightened sensitivity to: (1) the emotional, social and cultural distance between middle age and youth; (2) the responsibility for "the creation of social as well as biological heirs"; (3) affinity with the old; and (4) their positions within different "life contexts" such as body, career, and family, rather than "clocking" themselves by virtue of chronological age (Neugarten 1968b:93-95).

Noting differences between men and women, Neugarten pointed out that women tend to define their age status in terms of timing within the family cycle; men, within the work setting. The most dramatic age cues for men focus on personal health, body efficiency and death of peers. Women, on the other hand, are more concerned about their husbands' health than their own, a phenomenon Neugarten calls "rehearsal for widowhood" (Neugarten 1968b:96).

In addition to a research interest in the general characteristics of men and women at mid-life, Neugarten was concerned with personality changes as individuals move throughout middle adulthood to old age. In each period of development, adults evaluate their perception of themselves in the environment, with the decade of the fifties representing an important turning point (Neugarten 1968c: 140). Forty-year-olds perceive the environment as one that rewards

boldness and risk-taking, and see themselves as possessing the energy to equal the opportunities. Having re-evaluated their perspective in their fifties, sixty-year-olds perceive the environment as complex and dangerous, and see themselves as conforming and accommodating (Neugarten 1968c:140).

Other changes vary according to gender. Men become more sensitive to affiliative and nurturant impulses in middle age; women more responsive to aggressive and egocentric impulses. As they age, men cope with the environment in increasingly affective and expressive terms. Both men and women move toward more egocentric positions and attend to the control and satisfaction of personal needs (Neugarten 1968c:140).

Men and women as husbands and wives was the subject of a study of 909 urban and farm families (Blood and Wolfe 1960). Exploring the husband-wife relationship, the researchers examined the effects of varying interaction on such issues as: decision-making Power, division of labor, economic functions, children, companionship, emotional health, love, and stresses and strengths in the marriage. Results indicate changes across the life-cycle of the family, including greatest satisfaction with love and understanding during the early years, loss of valued companionship in leisure during the childrearing years, wife-dominance in decision-making at middle age, and a tendency for husbands and wives to utilize resources outside the marriage to satisfy their needs at mid-life. Satisfaction with marriage in later years seems to stem from the sustained habit of meeting each other's needs (Blood and Wolfe 1960).

Applying role theory to the changing positions in a family, Reuben Hill (1965) developed a system in which he designated nine stages of the family life-cycle. Hill suggests that an understanding of stages in the family life-cycle will open the way for anticipating the nature of family interaction and point out contrasts in needs as the family grows and changes (Neugarten 1968a:288).

In a study of decision-making across the life span, Hill used 312 families with three generations intact. Results indicate changes across the life-cycle in regard to the capacity to give and receive help as needs change.

In Stages I through IV, the newly married through school age family demonstrates its greatest willingness to accept help. The young family is living with rapidly expanding needs and modest resources. In Stages V through VI, the families with adolescents and young adults, still heavily pressed with needs, show some equilibrium in giving and receiving. In Stage VII, as children are launched into jobs and marriage, many wife-mothers will return to the labor force. Although the family has contracted, patterns for helping newly married children must be established (Neugarten 1968a).

In Stage VIII, the post-parental family may have disposable income for the first time. Decision-making may increase in an effort to help both married children and aging parents. In Stage IX, with both spouses retired, the aging family will receive more help than it gives (Neugarten 1968a).

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While the family may be studied in stages, so may each role within the family. In a study of the transition to parenthood, Alice Rossi (1967) defined four stages of a role cycle: (1) anticipatory stage, (2) honeymoon stage, (3) plateau stage, and (4) disengagement-termination stage. Each stage in the cycle has its unique tasks and problems of adjustment which are affected by cultural norms, the personalities of the individuals involved and the critical life experiences of the persons (Allman and Jaffe 1977).

"The stress generated within a person when he either cannot comply or has difficulty complying with the expectations of a role or a set of roles" was the phenomenon identified by William Goode (1960:483) as role strain. The concept may be used to understand decision-making behavior since the distress experienced by a person may initiate one or more of the following responses: (1) to compartmentalize the behavior as acceptable in one setting but not in another; (2) to delegate one role to another person; (3) to eliminate the conflicting role; (4) to expand role relations in order to avoid fulfilling certain obligations; and (5) to set up barriers to protect oneself from unwanted role demands.

Several factors affecting the individual's ability to manage changing roles and relationships have been discussed in the context of both biological and social developments. It also may be useful to consider the impact of change in one's accustomed pattern of life resulting from various life change events, defined by Thomas Holmes as:

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. . . occurrences evolving usually from ordinary, but sometimes from extraordinary, social and inter-personal transactions. These events pertain to major areas of dynamic significance in the social structure, including family, marriage, occupation, economics, residence, group and peer relationships, education, religion, recreation and health (Holmes and Masuda 1973:162-164).

Deriving from psychophysics the concept that human beings are able to make subjective magnitude estimations about certain experiences, Holmes and Rahe developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (1967). Each of 43 life events was selected on the basis that it "usually evoked, or was associated with, some adaptive or coping behavior on the part of the involved individual" (Holmes and Masuda 1973:164). Each item indicates a change in the ongoing life pattern of the individual, whether the change is perceived as desirable or not. As defined, social readjustment measures the intensity and length of time necessary to accommodate a life event, with high scores indicating an intense and protracted readjustment.

Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed the measurement tool for the purpose of examining the association of life changes and illness. Results indicate that the magnitude of life change is significantly related to time of disease onset and seriousness of the illness. While Holmes and Rahe were specifically interested in the adaptive response to life-change events in relation to health, other researchers later applied the theory to the behavior of elementary student teachers (Hoskins 1972); high school teacher performance (Carranza 1972); and academic performance among college freshmen (Harris 1972). In each case, high life change is associated with less desirable accommodation; i.e., poor teacher performance or

low grades. The value of life change as a concept is that it can be used to help individuals accommodate change in more positive ways (Petrich and Holmes 1977).

Changes will occur throughout a lifetime, and the consequences will vary with the age, sex, life style, personality, attitudes and health of the individual, as well as the individual's relationship to the environment. Such factors will influence the person's ability to adapt, whether the change takes place in the occupational realm, or with personal relationships or any other transaction. Writing about changes in careers in middle age and the ability to adapt, Belbin and Belbin (1966) comment:

irrespective of the grade of skill or education, real security of employment must rest on the ability to move from one job to another (with a new attitude) towards acceptance of learning throughout life in a flexible pattern of work and study (Neugarten 1968a:346).

Accommodating physical, emotional, intellectual or social **change** may be done more effectively with an understanding of the **multiple** factors affecting the development of persons throughout **the** life-cycle. Three specific areas of human development came **into** focus in the late 1960s: (1) the intellectual and ethical **development** of late adolescence and youth (Perry 1968); (2) the **developmental** tasks of the same age group (Chickering 1969); and **(3)** the moral development of persons across the life span (Kohlberg 1969).

Perry (1968), studying the relationship between intellect **and** morality among Harvard undergraduates, determined that there **is** a progression along a series of intellectual and ethical

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positions. Freshman students demonstrate simple, dualistic thinking, viewing behavior in terms of "we-right-good" and "other-wrong-bad." Through a progression of changing views and opinions, students develop a contextual and relativistic perspective, assuming responsibility for thoughts and actions on the basis of personal commitment (Chickering 1981:56).

Chickering (1969), also focusing on the developmental tasks of adolescents and young adults in college, proposes two principles of human development: "(1) Development occurs through cycles of differentiation and integration, and (2) the impact of an experience depends upon the characteristics of the person who encounters it" (Chickering 1969:316).

As adolescents and young adults experience the challenges of change, suggests Chickering, seven "vectors of development" are confronted in a spiral or step pattern:

1. Achieving competence (intellectual, physical and social);
2. Managing emotions;
3. Becoming autonomous (developing emotional independence, the ability to leave one place and get to another, and finding a sense of interdependence);
4. Establishing identity;
5. Freeing interpersonal relationships;
6. Clarifying purposes;
7. Developing integrity (or values).

While Chickering specifically was exploring the developmental **Process** of young adults in the college setting, he points out that

"the basic dynamic remains about the same" when applied to human development in other domains (Chickering 1969:298).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1969), concluding that the highest levels of moral development occur during adulthood (Knox 1977:380), suggests that human beings proceed from a sense of morality oriented toward punishment and obedience (Stage 1); to moral judgment oriented toward the self and reciprocity (Stage 2); to a morality of mutual trust (Stage 3); to moral judgment aimed at maintenance of the social order through rules and roles (Stage 4); to a morality reflected in an emphasis on conscience (Stage 5); to moral judgment oriented toward abstract ethical principles, emphasizing justice for all (Knox 1977:377-380). Through the process of moral development, individuals identify with increasing awareness their relationship with society and its rules (Chickering 1981).

As the 1960s came to an end, the focus on adult development was being influenced by several factors. Life expectancy, exceeding an estimated average of seventy years, was affecting the concerns of an aging population whose life experience had not prepared them to be guides for the young (Mead 1970). The discrepancy between "the promise of life" and "the threat to that promise," a perception demonstrated by the Viet Nam War protests and campus disturbances, had heightened the "consciousness" of youth (Reich 1970). A mobile generation of do-it-yourselfers had frustrated the human need for community, engagement with social and interpersonal problems, and shared responsibility (Slater 1970). The "premature arrival of the

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future" had left both individuals and society in a state of "future shock" while trying to adapt to change (Toffler 1970).

The literature in adult development published in the 1970s would reflect these societal influences.

Literature in Adult Development,
1970-1979

The increase in the publication of research and theory of adult development which was apparent in the 1960s continued at an even greater rate of productivity in the 1970s. In fact, more than one-half of the literature from the 1970s reviewed in the current study was published in the three years between 1978 and the end of 1980.

The reasons for the increasing interest in the social-psychology of adulthood, suggests Neil Smelser (1980), are related to social changes and the fact that the adult years are "almost the only phase left to investigate" in the life-cycle (Smelser and Erikson 1980). Improved health, a concentrated experience with death at mid-life, a decrease in physical activity related to work, and changing sex roles within the family have affected the focus on adulthood, suggests Janet Giele (Smelser and Erikson 1980). An expansion of professional, semi-professional, and related service roles has resulted in career sequences expected to peak in "the middle years between forty and fifty-five years of age" (Smelser and Erikson 1980). Scholars, trained in the 1950s and 1960s are now themselves experiencing the challenges of mid-life, and are

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using the academic setting to explore both personal and professional issues (Smelser and Erikson 1980).

Along with changing social circumstances in the 1970s came a change in the focus of research dealing with adult life. Through the 1960s, attention had centered on the changes and continuities of aging, primarily moving from mid-life to old age. Specific dimensions of personality development had interested some researchers, social roles had gained the attention of others.

What is unique about the literature of the most recent ten years is the concentration on the process of change throughout the entire life-cycle, with special attention to the adult years. Increasingly, researchers have concerned themselves with how adults adapt in the course of change; how men and women differ from one another as changes occur; and the dynamics of the change process itself as people leave a stable state and make a transition to another reality.

Although the semantics of writers and researchers have varied in the discussion of stability and change in adulthood, the perspective shared by most has been a life-cycle view, based on several assumptions:

1. Life unfolds in sequence and in stages.
2. Each stage is marked by a transition, a crucial period of both vulnerability and potentiality.
3. Either progress or regression may occur in transitions, but the future which follows transition is always markedly different from the past which preceded it.

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4. Just as each life stage assigns specific developmental tasks to the individual, so do transitions.
5. Both common and special developmental tasks trigger "teachable moments of peak learning readiness."
6. Every life is unique in its content because of unique heredity, special environment, and personal interaction with the environment (McCoy et al. 1980:1-2).

While there is general consensus regarding the sequential nature of the life-cycle and the stages which give meaning and direction to development, there is little agreement regarding specific age divisions. For example, from a biological perspective, stage and sequence are often measured by reproductive maturity; from a sociological perspective, measured by sequence of roles; from a psychological point of view, measured by the individual's growing sense of the self and the world. Many of the writers and researchers mentioned earlier in Chapter II provided the groundwork for dividing the life-cycle into stages (see Figure 2.1, page 50) (Jung 1923; Bühler 1933; Frenkel-Brunswick 1936; Erikson 1950-1968).

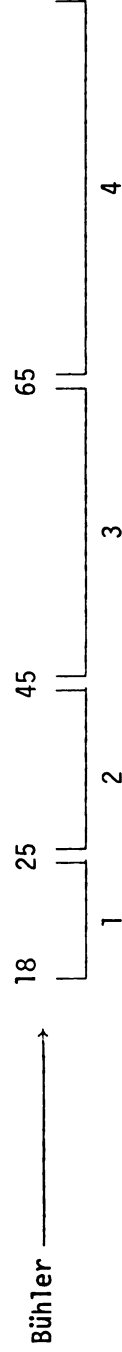
Other writers mentioned earlier looked at life stages from the perspective of the development of social roles (Havighurst 1952; Neugarten 1968) or from the standpoint of the family life-cycle (Hill 1965); or with a focus on intellectual and ethical development (Perry 1968) or moral development (Kohlberg 1970). The contributors to the life stage theory which were to follow in the 1970s would add their own time framework and special interests to the existing principle that human development is sequential and one stage follows another.

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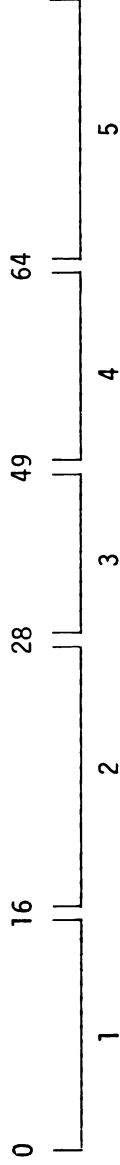
Middle Adulthood

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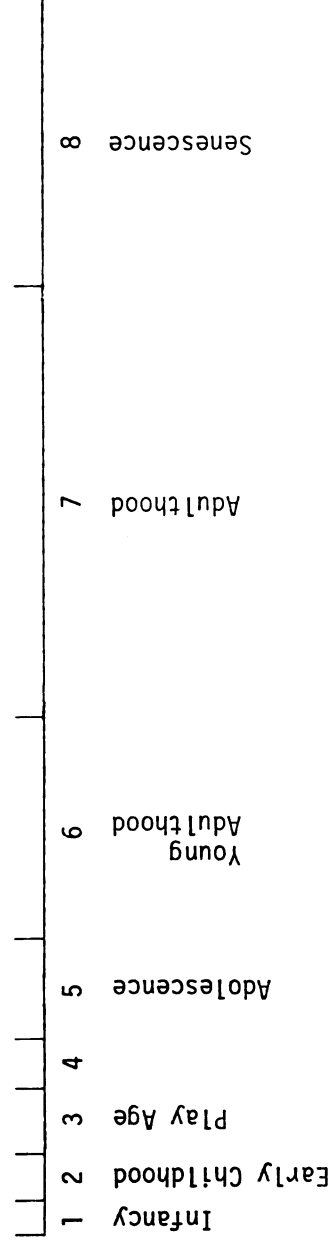


Figure 2.1.--Early Life-Cycle Framework.

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Rita Weathersby, in her own writing about ego development, calls Jane Loevinger's scheme "the most inclusive of all developmental stage theories applicable to adolescents and adults" (Chickering 1981:52). Loevinger, in her work published in 1970, linked a number of insights from various branches of psychology, and created a model which includes eight stages representing broad patterns of change in ego development:

1. Impulsive stage: fear of retaliation; dependent.
2. Self-protection stage: fear of being caught; wary.
3. Conformist stage: conformity to rules; concern with belonging.
4. Conscientious-conformist stage: aware of self in relation to group.
5. Conscientious stage: self-evaluated standards; responsible.
6. Individualistic stage: respect for individuality.
7. Autonomous stage: coping with conflicting inner needs.
8. Integrated stage: reconciling of inner conflicts (Chickering 1981:53-55).

While Loevinger views the progression of ego development in **successive** stages, her focus is on the dynamics of transition from **one** stage to the next (Chickering 1981:52). Each stage is marked **by** a succession of turning points called milestone sequences in **which** a personality trait develops, peaks in importance, and then **reappears** in a new context (Chickering 1981:52-53).

The sequential changes of adulthood were described in two **s t u d i e s** reported by Roger L. Gould in 1972. An observational study

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of psychiatric out-patients and a questionnaire study of non-patients resulted in the identification of seven developmental stages between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Gould concluded that the sequence of changes are time-dominated, but not necessarily age specific for any one individual (Gould 1972:531).

Throughout adulthood the following developmental stages are interrelated:

Leaving parents: breaking out	Ages 16 - 18
Leaving parents: staying out	Ages 18 - 22
Becoming adult: marriage	Ages 22 - 28
Questioning life's meanings	Ages 29 - 34
Continued questioning of values; time is finite; responsibility for parents as well as children	Ages 35 - 43
Occupational "die is cast"; interest in friends; reliance on spouse	Ages 43 - 50
Mellowing and warming up; spouse increasingly important; review of contributions; concern with health (Gould 1972).	The 50s

A year later, elaborating on their earlier research in human development, Robert Sears and Shirley Feldman published an updated edition of The Seven Ages of Man (1973). Although the framework of their writing divides each "age" into separate sections on physical changes, personality development, and changes in ability, the authors point out that human life is continuous from one phase to the next and each aspect of development dependent upon every other. In their scheme, the life-cycle is divided as follows:

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Infancy:	0 to 5 years
Childhood:	6 to 12 years
Adolescence:	12 to 18 years
Young Adult	18 to 30 years
Prime of Life:	30 to 42 years
Middle Age	42 to 60 years
Old Age:	Beyond 60 years.

Three years later (1976), Daniel J. Levinson and his associates published the preliminary findings of a study of forty men, ages 18-47. Building on earlier research about life stages and developmental tasks, the authors conclude that men develop by periods in which they must master certain tasks in order to take on later tasks without disadvantage. Levinson distinguishes three developmental periods:

Early adulthood, roughly ages 20-40

Middle adulthood, ages 40-60

Late adulthood, age 60 and older.

These age-linked divisions are comprised of developmental periods and transitions which Levinson identifies as:

Leaving the Family (starting at age 16-18 and ending at 20-24);

Getting into the Adult World (starts in early 20s and extends until 27-29);

Age-30 Transition (ages 28-32);

Settling Down (begins in early 30s and extends until late 30s or early 40s);

Becoming One's Own Man, or BOOM (occurs in the middle to late 30s);

The Mid-Life Transition (starts about age 38 and extends until the middle 40s);

Restabilization (3-4 year period around age 45)
(Levinson 1976).

In the same year, Gail Sheehy published the popular book, Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life (1976), incorporating many of the research findings of Gould and Levinson with her own study of the adult lives of 115 men and women. Comparing the developmental patterns of men and women between the ages of 18 and 55, Sheehy identifies six "passages" or stages in the adult life cycle:

Pulling Up Roots	(ages 18 - 22)
The Trying Twenties	(ages 22 - 28)
Catch-30 Transition	(ages 28 - 32)
Rooting and Extending	(ages 32 - 35)
Deadline Decade	(ages 35 - 45)
Renewal	(after 45).

Together, Gould, Levinson, and Sheehy describe a general pattern in the adult life-cycle. Beginning with a transition from adolescence to young adulthood, men and women in their mid-twenties enter a period of "provisional adulthood" in which they make initial commitments to work, marriage and family. These commitments are re-examined during the transition period which occurs around age 30. Entering the settling down period of the 30s with changed or renewed commitments, men and women enter a time for achievement, for becoming one's own person.

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As the 40s approach, and one's time perspective begins to change, the likely limits of anticipated success are apparent. As the midlife transition takes off with the questioning of values and the meaning of one's life, commitments to work and marriage are re-examined. By the late forties or early fifties a restabilization occurs during which friends, family and spouse become increasingly important and attention to work begins to decrease.

Other researchers suggest variations of terms or age-periods to describe the adult life-cycle process. One such writer is Virginia Lester (1978) who produced the following framework from her study of more than 2,700 adult students at Empire State College:

Pulling Up Roots	(21 and under)
Getting into Adult World	(22 - 28)
Putting Down Roots	(29 - 36)
Mid-Life Transition	(37 - 43)
Middle Adulthood	(44 - 50)
Late Adulthood	(51 - 60)
Early Retirement	(61 and over).

Nevertheless, by whatever terms or chronological periods, life-cycle theory is characterized not only by the concept of sequential stages, but by the idea that each stage is initiated by a life transition. The current use of the term "transition" might be traced to the term "rite of passage," initiated nearly eighty years ago to describe the rituals used to ease people into birth, Puberty, marriage and death (Fried and Fried 1980). Erikson (1950) used the term "crisis" to describe the periods of potentiality and

vulnerability between life stages. Gould (1972) talked about "time zone boundaries" or "transitional periods." Sheehy, rejecting "crisis" as a confusing label, "replaced that . . . with a less loaded word for the critical transitions between stages, and called them passages" (1976:16). Levinson defined a developmental transition as "a turning point or boundary region between two periods of greater stability" (1976:24).

"Transition is a process which forms a link between two points (modes or activities)," stated Levinson in a recent address on life transitions. "A transition connects and overlaps two points, but is different from each point. . . . Some transitions involve a crisis, some do not" (Levinson 1980b).

Levinson's use of the term "transition" is best understood in the context of the concept of "life structure." A life structure, as defined by Levinson, is

the pattern design of a person's life, a meshing of self-in-world. Its primary components are one's relationships: with self, other persons, groups, and institutions, with all aspects of the external world that has significance in one's life (Levinson 1980a:8).

The life structure forms a boundary between personality and social structure; is comprised of one or two central components (usually occupation and marriage-family); and evolves through a relatively orderly sequence of periods during the adult years. The sequence follows a pattern of a structure-building period of six to ten years, followed by a structure-changing period of five years, moving toward commitment to choices that form a basis for a new life structure (Levinson 1980b).

"The purpose of a transition is to terminate a life structure that has become inadequate and to initiate a new life structure," points out Rita Weathersby (1978) who was particularly interested in how adults use an educational experience differently in periods of transition than they do in periods of stability. From her study of Goddard College adult students, Weathersby concluded that in times of transition adults seek redirection through the educational experience; in periods of stability, the same opportunities are sought for working and building (Weathersby 1978:21).

"Almost half our adult years are spent in building new life structures," Levinson notes (Levinson 1980b). In the evolving process of creating a new life structure, a person is making certain key choices, forming a life design around them, and pursuing appropriate values and goals. Such a task, suggests Levinson, may involve changes which result in temporary stability, only to be challenged in the subsequent transitional period.

Levinson points out that before a structure-building period ends, a transition process has already begun. It starts with what Levinson calls the "termination task" in which the significant relationships in a person's life begin to change. Relative to the importance of the "other" person or organization, a sense of loss is experienced and the process of internalizing the "other" takes place. New "others" are found, and the person is ready for the second developmental task of a transition, "individuation" (Levinson 1980b).

In the individuation task, "there exists both an opportunity and a need to arrive at a new balance in the dialectical forces which make up "the human soul." The primary forces which form the elements of individuation, according to Levinson, are: young vs. old, destruction vs. creation, masculine vs. feminine, attachment vs. separateness (Levinson 1980b). Sophie Freud Loewenstein adds another polarity to the task of achieving balance in a transition period: love vs. being loved, or wooing vs. being wooed (Loewenstein 1980).

A transition period, Levinson suggests (1980b), comes to an end with the third task, "initiation," in which choices are made and commitments defined. At the same time a five-year transition period is ending, a new era or structure-building period has begun. In such a pattern, the life-cycle continues.

Levinson's scheme for describing the evolving life structure in adulthood is comprised of three age-linked eras, each composed of developmental periods and connected by transition periods. The era of Pre-Adulthood is linked with Early Adulthood by the Early Adult Transition (ages 17 - 22); the Mid-Life Transition (ages 40 - 45) forms the link with the era of Middle Adulthood; and the Age - 50 Transition (ages 50 - 55) creates the link to the era of Late Adulthood. Levinson speculates that a subsequent transition and era may follow into late-late adulthood (Levinson 1980a:11).

Life transitions as periods of change (progress or regression) "basically involve a letting go of the past and a taking hold

of the future" (McCoy 1980:16). Since the basic need to feel secure is threatened by change, letting go is usually a difficult experience, as evidenced by the attention given to the process of loss and change in the literature of recent years.

In 1965, Franklin C. Shontz published "Phases of Reaction to Crisis," in which he suggests that a major disruption in a person's life will result in a five-phase response. After experiencing shock, the person reaches a phase of realization, then a defensive retreat, followed by acknowledgment, and finally, adaptation and a new sense of personal worth (McCoy et al. 1980:25).

In her 1969 publication, On Death and Dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross proposes a similar pattern of response in five stages of grief. Denial is followed by anger, then bargaining, then depression, and finally, acceptance. What Shontz and Kübler-Ross have in common is the idea that a highly significant life-changing event, such as a death, stimulates the need to incorporate the new information into one's perception of life. The need is satisfied in a process of increasing self-awareness and commitment to a new identity.

How difficult the adaptation process becomes will depend upon how fundamental the change appears to be, suggests Peter Marris in his 1974 publication, Loss and Change. A routine change maintains continuity and requires little reorganization. A growth change also maintains continuity while incorporating familiar expectations within a broader range of interests. A loss, however, is "a crisis of discontinuity" in which familiar assumptions are

disrupted in a way for which the person is not fully prepared. Despair and innovation arise in order to deal with the impulse to restore the past (McCoy et al. 1980).

Adaptation to change will also be influenced by the assumptions carried by the individual about the future. In their book, Shifting Gears (1974), Nena and George O'Neil discuss the five basic promises of "the maturity myth," the assumptions often carried about adulthood. Collectively, it is sometimes assumed that once a person "grows up and settles down," life will be organized around an established set of external goals; stability and emotional security will set in; sex life will be safe; and the future manageable (O'Neil and O'Neil 1974). ". . . The impulse to defend the predictability of life is a fundamental and universal principle of human psychology," states Marris (Smelser and Erikson 1980:259). However, as Marjorie Fiske points out, the potential for growth may be stunted in middle and late life if change is not recognized and anticipated. "The ambiguities within ourselves and the worlds in which we live" must be confronted in order to be tolerated or synthesized (Smelser and Erikson 1980: 261).

Confrontation, then, is the first step in the process of managing change. Once a person comes face-to-face with information which suggests a conflict, an adaptive response is stimulated. The person tries to find a compromise which will both preserve identity and permit change. Robert White (1975) studied the adaptation process in three adults, the results of which were published in Lives in Progress. He concluded that the course of human

development "consists of a long series of transactions between a growing individual and his environment" (White 1975:297). Passing from basic needs and satisfactions in childhood, the adult strives for competence, integration of experience, development of internal controls and values, and a sense of self.

Another longitudinal study of adaptative behavior was conducted by George Vaillant (1977) and published as Adaptation to Life. Taking 94 men who had been studied in 1937 as college students (age 19) and followed for a period of 37 years, Vaillant examined the subjects' responses to change in their lives. From the results of his research, Vaillant developed a hierarchy of ego defenses:

Level I (psychotic defenses)--Common in children before the age of 5 and in the fantasy life of adults, appear as denial or distortion of external reality;

Level II (immature defenses)--Seen in children, adolescents and adults suffering from depression, addiction and "character disorders," appear as fantasy, projection, hypochondria, passive-aggressive behavior and acting out;

Level III (neurotic defenses)--Common in normal individuals from childhood to senility, are adaptations to interpersonal conflict, and appear as "hang-ups";

Level IV (mature defenses)--Common among "healthy" individuals from adolescence to old age, integrate conscience, reality, interpersonal relations and instincts. Appropriately used, mature

defenses enable a person to successfully handle work and love (Vaillant 1977).

Vaillant notes that in the course of the adult life-cycle, certain patterns of change occur. In sequence, identity formation emerges in adolescence; intimacy in the twenties; career consolidation in the thirties; generativity in the forties; "keeping the meaning" in the fifties. In the observable patterns of change and adaptation, the best adjusted men in the Vaillant study at age 54 reported being happiest at mid-life (from age 35 to 49) and the most unhappy from age 21 to 35 (Vaillant 1977:226).

Mid-life is the period in which "we know and can accept who we are," suggests Roger Gould (1978), in the report of his study of men and women between the ages of 16 and 50. The "mid-life decade" (ages 35-45) is a period of "transformation" in which adult consciousness develops by letting go of childhood illusions and renewing a definition of oneself. Gould defines the transformations in mid-life as:

1. Loss of the intact family which challenges the illusion of safety;
2. Illness or death of a parent which challenges the illusion of immortality;
3. Striking a new balance with the meaning of work which challenges in men the illusion of magical powers;
4. Generating a sense of personal power which challenges in women the illusion of needing to live with a protector;
5. Renegotiating personal power, sex, and roles in marriage which challenges the illusion of "no life beyond this family";

6. Confronting feelings of greed, hate, jealousy and competition which challenges the illusion of there being nothing evil in the world.

As an adult completes "the act of transformation" at mid-life, having abandoned the childhood desire for absolute safety, a new understanding of the meaning of life becomes possible. No longer is there a "need for magical solutions or protective devices" (Gould 1978:218).

"An expanding self-awareness," is what Mwalimu Imara (1975) identifies as the beginning of growth. With a commitment to one's own identity, suggests Imara, creative communication with others becomes possible, and a coherent direction in life incorporates both good and bad. What Gould and Imara share in describing the process of change and growth in adults is the idea that whether developing in mid-life or in dying, a person must die "to old ways of life for an unknown new life of meaning and relationships" (Imara 1975).

As an adult lets go of old patterns, it is likely that there will exist a need to adapt to new roles. Use of time may change, a sense of belonging may be threatened, the meaning of status and satisfaction may be altered (Knox 1978). In early adulthood, role changes are likely to be gains; in middle age, changes; and in late adulthood, losses. Regardless of the form of adaptation, however, the person will experience a struggle to incorporate the change into a new organization. Knox (1978) describes a five-period process of adaptation, including (1) a period of relative stability; (2) a period of anticipation; (3) an actual change event; (4) a period

of disorganization; and (5) a period of relative stability that reflects reorganization.

Interested in the changing roles of adults, Ellen Goodman (1979) looked at the "turning points" in the lives of five men and women. She describes the dynamics of change as a process of conserving meaning in life through crisis and commitment. A perceived need to change creates ambivalence in the face of choice. Depending on the degree of change anticipated (little, some, much), a sense of loss is experienced, and a crisis is felt. Goodman describes the experience as "the Shuttle Zone," or "transitional corridor" in which there is a conflict between the past and the future (Goodman 1979:65).

The direction a person chooses in the process of change is influenced in part by patterns of reasoning and coherence, perceptions of authority, capacity for empathy, and level of moral development. Synthesizing developmental theories in regard to these structural characteristics, Jim Fowler (1978) has identified six stages of faith development. Based on a triangular image of faith as a process of being bound to other persons and to an "ultimate environment," Fowler describes six stages of faith development:

- Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective (ages 4-7 or 8);
- Stage 2: Mythical-Literal (ages 7-11 or 12);
- Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional (ages 11-17);
- Stage 4: Individuating-Reflexive (ages 17-20s or 30s);
- Stage 5: Paradoxical-Consolidative (age 30-mid-life);
- Stage 6: Universalizing (late adulthood).

As a central aspect of a person's life orientation, faith is viewed as playing a major role in shaping the responses a person will make throughout the life-cycle (Fowler 1978:25). With increasing age and maturity, faith contributes to the growing capacity to know oneself with a profound regard for others and a loyalty which transcends external reality.

Any perceptual tool, such as faith, which reduces the threat of a life strain or problem will also minimize its stressful impact, suggests Leonard Pearlin (Smelser and Erikson 1980). This type of adaptation controls and shapes the meaning that the life strain has for the individual, and as a consequence, influences both the degree of vulnerability felt and the coping resources used.

Studying social influence on the emotional development of 100 adults, Pearlin (1980) focused on the daily problems faced in occupational and family life. Results indicate that in the area of work, the greatest distress comes with having to give up work because of poor physical health; with increasingly less distress being experienced with being demoted, fired, retired, change in place of employment and promotion (Smelser and Erikson 1980:183). Evidence of the stressful impact of desired events, such as promotion, serves to support the life change theory described earlier (Holmes and Rahe 1967).

Further results in the Pearlin study indicate that the day-to-day life strains experienced in the area of marriage and parenthood are more stressful than either scheduled or nonscheduled events. Finally, the strains experienced by young adults are both

more numerous and less enduring than the strains confronted by older adults.

Changes experienced in either the area of work or interpersonal relations will likely precipitate a shift in an individual's hierarchy of commitments, suggests Marjorie Fiske (Smelser and Erikson 1980). In her study of 216 men and women, Fiske identified four clusters of commitments in the adult life course. Interpersonal commitments, altruistic commitments (includes ethical and religious loyalties), mastery commitments (or competence in work), and self-preservation commitments (includes physical and economic well-being) form the framework of meanings and satisfactions that adults attach to activities in their lives (Smelser and Erikson 1980:245-249).

. . . when someone experiences a deterioration in one of these lines of commitment, that person is likely to adapt in a self-protective way by giving greater importance to another line of commitment (Smelser and Erikson 1980:5).

Recognizing and understanding the behavior which accompanies stress and change makes it possible to use effective adaptive responses, suggested George Vaillant in a recent workshop on life transitions (Vaillant 1980b). Change may come from someone loved, from new demands on instincts or on the conscience, or a reality change. As Vaillant points out, any sudden change requires adaptation, either conscious such as finding someone to hold, or unconscious in the use of internal defenses.

Successful adaptation to change increases the capacity to integrate increasingly complex relationships, Vaillant observed in a discussion of transitions and rituals (Vaillant 1980a). As an

adult develops in a spiral pattern of successive stages connected by transitions, periods of instability and change are linked to periods of consolidation and growth. Using Erikson's model, Vaillant adds two stages to the adult period of development: "Keeping the Meaning" and "Rigidity." These periods serve as a time for adults to perpetuate the culture, integrating the stage of mid-life with the more complex stage of old age (Vaillant 1980a).

"The processes of adaptation and change in the life situation over the span of the adult years," is what comprises the study of adulthood, stated Neil Smelser in the introduction to his description of "life contours" (Smelser and Erikson 1980). An ideal life contour is a pattern of culturally limited expectations in a person's life-cycle. Taken together, the different life contours indicate the relative degree of freedom or choice left to an individual in the processes of adapting and changing.

These patterns of socially defined constraints, states Smelser, are affected by individual differences in the ways people come to terms with the inevitable nature of the life course. Such individual expectations are based on a person's assumptions about (1) orderliness and chaos, (2) social and psychological determinants of adult life processes, and (3) patterns of growth and change (Smelser and Erikson 1980:12-22).

Finally, Smelser suggests that any formulation of a theory of the adult life course must include four ingredients:

1. A statement about the continuous and repeated challenges, both anticipated and unanticipated, created by physical, psychological and social changes;
2. A statement regarding resources for facing challenges;
3. A statement regarding adaptive responses; and
4. A statement regarding the historical accumulation of a person's responses and perspectives (Smelser and Erikson 1980:23).

Gender Differences

There are at least three reasons for focusing on gender differences in the context of a review of the literature for the present study. As Marjorie Fiske has stated, ". . . gender differences in most dimensions of life far exceed age or stage differences found within either sex group alone (Smelser and Erikson 1980:242). Furthermore, differences between men and women are most pronounced at mid-life (Sheehy 1976; Gould 1980). And, finally, it has become increasingly evident in recent research on adult development that the life-cycle theories shaped by studies of men cannot be applied indiscriminately to women (McCoy et al. 1980).

Bernice Neugarten (1968) had drawn attention to gender differences at mid-life more than a decade before she described adult development as "predictable sequences of developmental tasks and preoccupations that become salient as people grow up, grow old and die" (McCoy et al. 1980:32).

Studying both men and women as people growing up, Roger Gould (1972) contributed to a limited body of research regarding

adult development in the life-cycle. His focus at that time was on experience relative to age, however, not to gender. A few years later, writing about mid-life development, Gould (1980) points out that men and women "frequently are traveling in different directions" in the mid-life period (Smelser and Erikson 1980:235). Gould describes the differences as "a transformation process about sensations in men and powerfulness in women." Men in mid-life are

. . . becoming more in touch with beauty, . . . requiring more affection, no longer being able to shut out home problems and go off to work because the pain sticks, wanting more intense relationships, being ready to cry, loving and tending their children with greater depth, seeking more sensuality in love, being more ready to make love than war, and intensely reacting to the unavailability of any of these sensations with . . . frustration . . . (Gould in Smelser and Erikson 1980: 235).

Women at mid-life are also experiencing new sensations, Gould points out, but in the opposite direction of men. Trying to break away from the felt need to service other people's needs, wants, demands and anxieties, a woman develops a new attitude toward sensations, "a temporary blocking off." A husband's demands for feelings and intimacy are felt by a woman as demands for regression and surrender. Gould concludes, "Hence there is a painful love gap created that is both real and not real, necessary and unnecessary" (Smelser and Erikson 1980:236).

The "love gap" as Gould calls it, threatens one source of a man's need for recognition, affection and sense of value, states Orville Brim (1976) in his explanation of "the male mid-life crisis." As a mid-life female personality changes in an outward

direction, away from dependency on the husband, away from providing nurturance and support to him, a male personality changes in an inward direction. If during the same period the man discards his dreams for occupational success, or a parent dies, or his sexual vigor wanes, Brim suggests that the changing relationship with a mid-life wife may compound the developmental challenge.

Gould (1980) explains the vulnerable nature of the male/female relationship at mid-life as a response to the transformational process by which the self is defined. In the twenties, a person establishes a sense of adulthood, maleness, femaleness, and competence by using the confirming presence of someone of the opposite sex. In the thirties, the marital relationship becomes more uncertain and complex, idealization diminishes, defenses are suspended, all in an effort to develop an alternative, more creative use of self.

By mid-life, explains Gould, the sense of urgency about time left to live increases the need to define more fully a sense of self. Early choices of adulthood are re-examined in the process of discarding old labels. To the extent that a partner inhibits the re-examination process, he or she is cut-off and the "love gap" grows (Smelser and Erikson 1980).

The capacity for intimacy is identified historically as a critical developmental task by a number of writers (Sullivan, 1953; Erikson, 1953 and 1963; Gould, 1962), a theory supported by a major study of life transitions published in 1975 (Lowenthal, Thurnher, Chiriboga and Associates, 1975). The researchers chose four groups

facing what they perceived as major life transitions: (1) high school seniors (ages 16-18); (2) young newlyweds (ages 20-38); (3) middle-aged parents, youngest child a high school senior (average age 50); and (4) older people about to retire (average age 60). The study was designed to assess the differences between men and women over time as they anticipated, experienced, and looked back on the normal transitions of their lives and any other important changes.

Results indicate large gender differences in coping styles among couples at the same life phase. In general, self-assertion and achievement seemed to be valued less by women than by men. At mid-life in particular, a woman whose children have left home feels discontented, at a time when her spouse is most job-focused. A man in turn may have reached a plateau regarding job advancement and feels both strained and bored (Chickering 1981). Building on the study of adults in transition, Lowenthal (1976) concluded that

. . . in the absence of overwhelming external challenge, most "average" men and women find the energy and motivation to live autonomous, self-generating and satisfying lives only through one or more mutually supportive and intimate dyadic relationships (Lowenthal and Weiss 1976: 11).

In a recent address, Sophie Freud Loewenstein (1980) talked about intimacy at mid-life, observing that "women are brought up to self-disclose and share feelings in both friendship and sexual relations while men are socialized to do things with friends, and to restrict emotional sharing to sexual relationships."

Reflecting on the interdependence of men and women for emotional survival, Loewenstein suggests that cross-gender friendships in mid-life might prevent adults from overloading their marital relationships. "Perhaps our society needs to make provisions to meet these mid-life needs (to be attached and to be separate) without having to sever valued, long-term human bonds" (Loewenstein 1980).

Men are socialized to an incapacity for interpersonal intimacy, by modeling an impersonal style of exchange, suggests Elizabeth Douvan (1980). Achievement and competition are valued along with self-control and independence. Warmth and closeness are identified with sex (Chickering 1981:203-204).

Women, on the other hand, are socialized to the interpersonal and the social. Feelings of dependency and vulnerability are acceptable; self-expression is encouraged. Comfort, sharing and love are lived out at various levels of intimacy with or without sexualization (Chickering 1981:204).

The struggle for men and women to arrive at an intimacy balance in mid-life may become easier with a growing appreciation for the dual capacity to be autonomous and interdependent, suggests Janet Giele (Smelser and Erikson 1980:168). Independence and intimacy are not mutually exclusive. Giele explores the implications of the gradual erosion of age and sex-role norms, arguing that a blending or "crossover" would minimize change, clarify life goals, and increase the capacity of both men and women for caring.

An integration of concern for intimacy and achievement is necessary for a balanced view of the lives of men and women, states

Carol Gilligan (1979). As an example, moral development theory describes the highest stage of judgment as a "morality of rights," emphasizing separation, the individual and being objectively fair. Based on studies by Freud, Piaget and Kohlberg, the characteristics of moral development are appropriate for the male subjects from whom they were derived.

In recent studies of the moral judgment of women, however, emphasis is on attachment, relationships, a recognition of the limitations of any particular solution, and a respect for the conflicts that remain (Gilligan 1977, 1979). Such a "morality of responsibility" may appear inconclusive from a male perspective, as a "morality of rights" may seem indifferent from a female point of view, admits Gilligan. But that difference in perception only increases the necessity of integrating the experiences of both men and women (Gilligan 1979).

Differences in perception are also reported by adult men and women in a study (Astin 1976) of the effects of continuing education upon women. Results indicate that self-perceptions differ extensively from the perceptions of others. Specifically, husbands rate their wives higher than the women rate themselves on physical appearance, popularity, mathematical competence, success as a wife and mother, and self-confidence. The women student wives (median age 36.5) rate themselves higher than their husbands rate them on drive to achieve, stamina, independence, mental and emotional well-being, and athletics (Astin 1976:58).

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Self-concept data was the basis of a 1978 study of 2,700 adult students at Empire State College, reported by Timothy Lehmann (1980a). Ranging in age from eighteen to sixty, the men and women evaluated themselves in areas reflecting the individual's (1) success orientation, (2) personal commitments, (3) academic competence, and (4) personal style. Gender differences are evident in all four areas.

Men and women's perceptions of their success orientation are measured with four traits: (1) drive to achieve, (2) leadership ability, (3) ability to handle stress, and (4) independence. On all four traits, men start out either slightly higher or at the same point as women during the Pulling Up Roots Stage. By mid-life, men still exceed women but with less difference. By late adulthood women exceed men on three of the four traits, perceived leadership ability being the exception.

In the Empire State College study, perceptions of personal commitments are measured with three traits: (1) personal organization, (2) persistence, and (3) resourcefulness. Women see themselves as personally more organized across all age groupings, and tend to be more persistent than men, rating themselves higher in six out of seven stages. On resourcefulness, men rate themselves higher than women during the first three stages but then drop below women at mid-life.

Five different traits are grouped under the category of academic competence: (1) academic ability, (2) writing ability, (3) reading ability, (4) artistic ability, and (5) intellectual

self-confidence. Lehmann reports that men see themselves as more intellectually self-confident across almost all developmental periods than women, although men experience a sharp drop in all five traits at mid-life. Women see themselves declining on all five traits through the Getting Into Adult World Stage (age 28), then gain on academic competencies during the mid-life transition, and continue to gain intellectual self-confidence during the next three stages.

Men and women's perceptions of their outlook on life and personal style are examined in the Empire State College Study under three traits: (1) idealism, (2) cheerfulness, and (3) originality. "For all three traits, men tend to perceive their personal style with higher ratings than women up to the mid-life transition stage when the pattern reverses itself with women providing higher ratings thereafter" (Lehmann 1980a:45).

Research on adult men and women has continued at Empire State College. At a recent conference, Timothy Lehmann (1980b) reported results of a study of 4,500 adult students, data being examined on the basis of developmental phase, sex, marital status, and occupation. Students' perceptions were studied on six traits: (1) leadership ability, (2) ability to handle stress, (3) drive to achieve, (4) academic ability, (5) writing ability, and (6) reading ability.

Graphs indicating the research findings (Office of Research and Evaluation, Empire State College, 1980) were distributed by Lehmann to participants of the life transitions conference.

Comparing the 1980 data from Empire State College with the 1978 research results, several changes in perception seem to be apparent. In the more recent study, women see themselves starting out lower than men do on leadership ability, and then following a parallel pattern of shrinking differences. Women in the 1980 sample do not demonstrate a drop during the Getting Into Adult World Stage, as the women in the 1978 sample did.

On the trait, ability to handle stress, men see themselves higher than they did two years ago during three developmental stages: Pulling Up Roots, Mid-Life Transition, and Late Adulthood. Women demonstrate the same upward pattern that they followed in 1978 with the exception of Early Retirement.

While not as great a difference as the change observed during the Getting Into Adult World phase for leadership ability, the drive to achieve among women in the 1980 sample does not show the drop during the twenties that was evident in the 1978 sample. Men show a slight decrease in the drive to achieve during the Pulling Up Roots stage which was not apparent in 1978. An increase then begins for men in the twenties and continues into the phase of Middle Adulthood, a change from the pattern of decrease beginning with the Mid-Life Transition which had been shown in 1978. In Early Retirement, women show a decrease while men show an increase from two years before, thus shrinking the gap between men and women in the drive to achieve.

Men in the 1980 sample start out slightly higher than women in their perception of their academic ability, whereas the

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reverse was true in 1978. Women's perceptions exceed those of men at the same point as in 1978 (at the end of the twenties) and continue at a higher level than men. The greatest divergence remains at mid-life, but an additional separation is evident in Late Adulthood.

Perceptions of reading ability of men and women have also changed during the past two years. Women now see themselves exceeding men during all phases, with men having dropped in their perceived ability to read during all of the last five phases.

Writing ability is perceived differently by men and women at the beginning and end of the developmental continuum. Women perceive their writing ability at a lower level than they did in 1978, with the result that men now exceed women in the Pulling Up Roots phase. A sharp decrease in the next phase is perceived by men, with the consequence that women's perceptions exceed men's earlier than they did. The difference perceived two years ago in writing ability in Late Adulthood is minimized as a result of an increase in the perceptions of women and a decrease in those of men.

In the 1978 Empire State College study reported by Lehmann, results support the Levinson-Gould argument that developmental stages can be reflected in self-concept data revealing significant differences between men and women (McCoy et al. 1980:39). While the 1980 research results may not have been published to date, a comparison of the 1978 and 1980 graphs indicates consistent differences over the two year period between men and women at midlife;

a few relative changes at the Pulling Up Roots stage; and several large changes in perceptions of adults in Early Retirement.

Results of the Empire State College studies support the criticism articulated by Rosalind Barnett and Grace Baruch (1978) that some research has projected a fallacious image of women at mid-life as distressed persons suffering from a poor self-concept, and depressed with the departure of children and the prospect of menopause. On the contrary, women at mid-life see themselves with strong commitments to achieve, establish independence and seek new personal goals (McCoy et al. 1980:39). In fact, women perceive themselves more positively than men see themselves on eleven out of fifteen traits studied in 1978, and four out of six traits reported in 1980.

Lehmann concluded his presentation of the Empire State College studies by pointing out that in terms of academic persistence, at mid-life both men and women exceed the basic rate of graduating students (48 percent). Women at mid-life surpass men, with 64 percent graduating; 52 percent of the men at mid-life graduate (Lehmann 1980b).

Being aware that "men and women may not be working through similar developmental tasks in a specific period or even experiencing the same transitions at similar ages" is critical to the thinking which could have "an impact on educational and supportive strategies for assisting men and women at midlife" (McCoy et al. 1980:32-33).

Decision-Making at Mid-Life

No attempt has been made to integrate a broad review of the literature in adult development with an overview of research and writing as it pertains to decision-making in mid-life transitions. The following section focuses on four areas: (1) transitions and change events, (2) career transitions, (3) family transitions, and (4) education as a resource at mid-life.

Transitions and Change Events

Throughout adulthood, the life structures of men and women are evolving through a complex sequence of changes in personality, roles, and major life events (Levinson 1980a). The periods of change, commonly called "transitions," require an examination of the existing life structure and create the possibility for a new one. Confronted with new alternatives, adults must make decisions about the future, choosing to renegotiate old issues, confront unfamiliar possibilities, and/or defend the status quo.

In the literature on adult life transitions it is generally agreed that a transition may be precipitated by a crisis or a life event which calls for some kind of adaptive response. Anticipated life events are understood to precipitate less disruptive transitions than unexpected occurrences which frequently create a sense of loss. Whether a major life event is biological, psychological, or social, it signals the beginning or end of a life stage and heralds the potential for growth.

Adulthood is a time of change, a period in the life-cycle filled with transitions, current literature indicates. A recent publication from the College Entrance Examination Board states: "All adults--the 126 million who are 25 years of age and older--are in transition continually throughout their lives" (Aslanian and Brickell 1980:34).

Wanting to know more about the life transitions of adults in relation to their learning needs, the College Board recently undertook a study of 2,000 men and women. Eighty-three percent of the adults interviewed said that they were learning in order to cope with a life change.

The College Board study indicated that the transitions precipitated by the life events varied, but career transitions outnumbered all others combined as reasons for learning. Fifty-six percent of the adults indicated that they were in transition because their occupational career was requiring (1) a move to a new job, (2) a change in an existing job, or (3) an advancement in a career. Twice as many men as women reported being in career transition.

Aslanian and Brickell report that family transitions ranked second to career transitions as reasons for learning. Sixteen percent of the adults said that they were in transition because of a change in family living requiring (1) different food, as a result of reduced income or a health concern; (2) different shelter, as a result of moving; (3) different clothing, as a result of more or less income; (4) better management of shifting family income and expenses; or (5) the care of other family members when changes

occur, such as new babies, troubled teenagers, an ill spouse, or an unstable marriage. Twice as many women as men reported learning because of family changes.

Leisure transitions ranked third in the College Board study, with 13 percent of the adults identifying changes in their leisure life as reasons for learning. Leisure, family, and career transitions combined comprise about 80 percent of the life transitions precipitating learning by adults. No other life area (art, health, religion, or citizenship) accounted for more than 5 percent of the transitions requiring learning.

If life changes often initiate a transition, what specific events precipitate, or "trigger," a decision to act? A life event which marks a transition may be called a "marker event" (Levinson 1978) or a "stressor" (Lowenthal 1975). By whatever name, it influences self-concept, morale and aspiration (Knox 1978) as it "punctuates and dramatizes an underlying process of change" (Levinson 1980:7).

In the College Board study (1980), "all the adults who named transitions in their lives as motivating them to learn could also point to specific events triggering their decisions to learn currently rather than sooner or later" (Aslanian and Brickell 1980:55). The kinds of events which served most frequently as "triggers" or "marker events" were career or family life events. Ninety percent of the life events precipitating learning were in these two areas (56 percent were career events; 36 percent were family events).

It is interesting to note that while health events prompted 5 percent of the transitions; religious events, 2 percent; and citizenship events, 2 percent; leisure or art activities precipitated less than one-half of 1 percent of the decisions to learn. Aslanian and Brickell interpret this finding to the American attitude toward leisure as "leftover time."

Another major point in the College Board study is that "adults' personal characteristics do not determine whether they will learn because of life changes more often than for other reasons." Regardless of sex, age, race, marital status, ages of children, education, income, employment status, or occupation, more than 80 percent of adults learn because of life changes (Aslanian and Brickell 1980:96).

Career Transitions

Until recently, most of the literature on occupational careers has been concerned with industrial settings and with men (Troll 1975:115). The publication of research related to both men and women and to broader work settings has paralleled the social and economic changes of the past several years.

At the turn of the century, the work force in the United States was comprised mostly of men in jobs related to agriculture, business, and manufacturing (Knox 1978:194). The 20 percent of the work force who were women (Troll 1975:125) were employed in the family farm or business, and were not reported in government

labor statistics (Knox 1978:194). As Knox points out, only one in ten people lived through middle age.

By 1970, more than 43 percent of the work force were women, and by 1980 the figure was 51.4 percent. At the same time the employment of women was rising, the reverse trend was occurring for men. Between 1970 and 1980 the percentage of men in the work force dropped from 79.7 percent to 77.6 percent (U.S. Department of Labor 1980).

The number of working wives has more than tripled over the last few decades, so that by 1979 more than 50 percent of all wives were in the labor market, compared with 22 percent in 1950. The rate of wives with children under age six increased from 30 percent in the labor force in 1970 to 43 percent in 1979 (U.S. Department of Labor 1980).

With the average life expectancy having reached 83 years for women and 78 years for men (Chickering 1981:17) and with the economic needs of families, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of dual-earner families. By 1979, 57 percent of the families with children had both the wife and husband in the work force (U.S. Department of Labor 1980).

Even more dramatic has been the shift in the age of employed women. The greatest increase between 1950 and 1979 has been in the 25 to 34 age group, increasing from 34 percent to 64 percent in less than thirty years. During the same period of time, the 35 to 44 age group increased from 39 percent to 64 percent; the 45 to 54 age group, from 38 percent to 58 percent; the 55 to 64 age group, from 27 percent to 42 percent. Collectively, women at mid-life

(ages 35-54) account for a large percentage of the total growth of women in the work force.

Interested in whether there was a need for career transition services for adults in the rapidly changing labor scene, the College Board in 1978 conducted a survey of 1,000 adults, 400 of whom considered themselves to be in career transition. The data show that 36 percent of the population between the ages of 16 and 65 (more than 40 million Americans) were in a transitional status (Arbeiter et al. 1978). By definition, the men and women were either undergoing or anticipating a job or career change.

Data also show that 30 percent of the adults in career transition were between the ages of 35 and 50. Sixty percent were women; 40 percent were men. Sixty-two percent of the adults in transition planned to seek additional education to help them prepare for a job or career.

In the decision-making process, two-thirds of the adults in the College Board study stated that they were experiencing or anticipating problems, such as lack of experience or credentials (17 percent) unavailability of jobs (16 percent), and child care and family responsibilities (10 percent). When asked what had led them to a particular job or career change, 44 percent stated their previous or present employment; 27 percent, a school or training institution; 25 percent, a family member or friend; 13 percent, interests or hobbies. In order to gain credentials, 34 percent of the adults in career transition said they planned to enroll in

a professional program, most frequently, business (12 percent) (Arbeiter et al. 1978).

An extensive study of adults in career transition, enrolled in a graduate or professional school, was published in 1971 by Dale Heistand. Stemming from a study of the decision-making process of occupational choice and career development started in 1951, the objective was to broaden the view of career development to include the changes that take place in adulthood (Heistand 1971:viii).

Seventy men and women graduate students, age 35 or older, were studied by Heistand in three stages of transition: (1) their withdrawal from previous responsibilities and entry into graduate school; (2) their experience while enrolled, including the impact on other aspects of their lives; and (3) the departure from graduate school, the return to other responsibilities, and their retrospective evaluation of the educational experience.

Heistand reported that in the preparation process, half of the adults indicated that they had seriously considered entering graduate school for one year or less. Ten had thought about returning to school for one month or less. Those who returned full-time had been involved in a long period of intermittent and part-time education, however. Those who had seriously considered entering graduate school for five or more years reported that their return was precipitated by specific events, such as their last child in school, approaching retirement, or a personal achievement. Only half of the adult graduate students reported making significant

preparations for their return to school, most adjustments being made for child-care, job, or engagement in intellectual activity.

After enrolling, nearly half the adults in the Heistand study indicated having no academic problems, while nearly one-fourth acknowledged having considerable academic difficulty. Half of all respondents felt that being older meant their studies were easier by virtue of their age, experience, and maturity. The difficulties reported included: deficiencies in research skills, other demands on time, needing more time to argue and question in an effort to get the broader picture, stamina and health.

In other areas, two-thirds of the men and women reported little or no financial difficulty. One-fourth indicated having no family problems. Half or more of the graduate students denied that their return to school had any significant effect upon their children or spouses.

. . . a surprisingly large number saw their return to school as a positive factor, stimulating interest, raising ambitions, providing interesting family discussions, and otherwise helping others in the family (Heistand 1971:95).

In the third stage of transition, "the most commonly experienced or anticipated problem revolved around adjustment to a new situation," states Heistand. Response of the adult students to the experience of returning to school in middle age was generally favorable, however. Sixty-five out of seventy indicated that if they had it to do all over again they would.

. . . the evidence is quite clear from the present study that many and perhaps an increasing number of persons (at middle age) are making decisions with respect to

their style of life and with regard to whether they would benefit from substantial education and retraining in order to enter a new field (Heistand 1971:136).

Attention to life style, or quality of life, is growing with a changing attitude in American work ethics (Maccoby 1980). The career ethic of the twentieth century is being challenged by social, economic, and psychological issues, states Michael Maccoby, as he raises questions about the compatibility of a career and self-fulfillment. Noting the new demands for rights in areas of health and working with values, Maccoby refers to Hugo Rahner's concern for adding to the world of work, "eutrapelia," or "the nimbleness of mind which enables a person to play" (Rahner 1972:2).

Seeking more meaningful work and a better fit of values and work are two of the primary motivating factors for men in career transition, noted one study (Robbins 1977). The subjects were 91 men of professional or managerial level who changed careers between the ages of 33 and 54. With the distribution of age at the time of career change being relatively even, the author concludes that career change does not correlate with a mid-life "crisis" for men in the early forties. Nor is a career change associated with marital breakup (5 out of 91 were divorced during the time of career change).

Robbins observed that the decision to enter a career transition results in most men changing from a large profit-making corporation to education or the helping professions, or running a business of their own. Almost none change for more money or greater security; many reduce their income. A number of men move from urban to rural areas to escape the problems of cities and the effect they have

on their lives. Approximately 45 percent obtain additional education in order to make the change.

Anticipating a career change begins with a dream, suggests Nancy Schlossberg (1976) in her discussion of the decision-making process in career transitions. The Dream is a vital force throughout the adult life course, says Vivian Rogers McCoy (1979:8), bringing men and women in touch with themselves, and triggering a "lively rehearsal about what's possible--a Dream of themselves in the world." The Dream is a vision, says Daniel Levinson (1978:91), an imagined possibility of all that a person can be and do in the world.

Originating in childhood and adolescence, the Dream begins as a vague sense of the kind of life intended for adulthood. While the Dream may include social commitments and human relationships, Levinson found that for men the Dream usually focuses on occupation. Developing in the twenties, if the Dream becomes integrated into the adult life structure, it will increase the chances for personal fulfillment in mid-life. If the Dream is forfeited for any reason in early adulthood, Levinson observes, a lack of purpose will be felt later.

Two important facilitators of the Dream are the "mentor" and the "special woman" of the men, suggests Levinson (1978). Usually 8 to 15 years older and a person with experience in the world the young adult is entering, the mentor serves as a teacher, sponsor, host, guide and role model. The mentoring relationship usually lasts two or three years, evolves into conflict, and

terminates when the young adult is ready to let go of the mentor and internalize the admired qualities.

The "special (loved and loving) woman" may or may not be a man's wife. The relationship includes loving, romantic, tender and sexual feelings, explains Levinson, but it goes beyond this. Like the mentor, her special quality lies in her connection to the man's Dream. The special woman helps him to live out his life journey by sharing his Dream, believing in him as its hero, and accepting him as a growing person (Levinson 1978:109).

Reappraising the Dream over the adult life course is necessary as the man is faced with the discrepancies between what was wished for and what has become possible. One such period of self-evaluation, states Levinson, takes place between the ages of 40 and 45. For those men who feel they have achieved their Dream, there is the feeling that the goal has exacted a price, and it may be time to develop repressed parts of the self. It is at this point that a man may show more concern for succeeding generations and relationships, tempering his occupational ambitions.

For women, the Dream is mainly tied to relations with others rather than to career, especially if the woman plays the traditional role of wife and mother (McCoy 1979:6). Choosing marriage and family in their twenties, these women reverse gears in their thirties, activating the career aspects of the Dream. For women with early and persistent career commitment, McCoy observes that the sequence seems similar to Levinson's men.

Few mentors, except husbands, have existed for women, points out McCoy, adding that the mentoring relationship could put an exceptional strain on the marriage. For the woman with a Dream in the occupational realm, mentors are scarce, Levinson observes.

The few women who might serve as mentors are often too beset by the stresses of survival . . . (and the men who might serve as mentors frequently) regard a woman as attractive but not gifted, as a gifted woman whose sexual attractiveness interferes with work and friendship, as an intelligent but impersonal pseudo-male or as a charming little girl who cannot be taken seriously (Levinson 1978:98).

Women are further restricted, suggests Schlossberg (1976:33), in their dreaming by the "vicarious achievement ethic" by which they define their identities through the accomplishments of the dominant people around them--their fathers, their husbands, their children or their employers. The importance of the decision-making process in reaching a career decision lies in the development of self-awareness, identity, control and ideally, dreams.

Getting in touch with the self and the Dream to be sure it is still valid is a task for both men and women, suggests McCoy (1979). Through fantasy and day dreams, adults of all ages make life/career choices, concludes Eli Ginzberg in his exploration of the career development process (McCoy 1979:8). John Holland, in his research on occupation and personality, found that when fantasized career aspirations and tested interests did not agree, the expressed aspirations better predicted ultimate career outcome. At the University of Kansas, relaxation and guided imagery are used

to help people envision their life and careers in the years ahead (McCoy 1979).

Donald Spence and Thomas Lonner (1979) suggest that one way to get in touch with the self and progress through transitions is to view the life course as a set of careers. Looking at careers as developmental sub-divisions, they apply the term to the occupational, domestic and recreational spheres of a person's life.

From case histories of twenty-seven mid-life mothers, Spence and Lonner conclude that the self-perceived life objective (the Dream) may be hampered or enhanced by circumstances or choice. When two or more careers are in conflict, accepting an alternate meaning system allows the person to redefine the self-in-world.

In middle adulthood, such shifts in occupational, family or recreational careers do not precipitate a mid-life crisis, but interact with the developmental tasks of an individual (Bramson and Kohn 1977). The transition needs which result frequently motivate the decision to seek new learning in order to accommodate new roles (Moon 1978).

Family Transitions

The primary task of the family is to make decisions and guide family members as they interact with their environment (Paolucci et al. 1977). In that function, the family serves as a system to stabilize and maintain values, and to bring about change. Ideally, suggests Paolucci, the decisions which result

will create harmonious adaptations for the optimum development of each family member.

Whether the family provides the life-enhancing support needed by each member will depend, in part, upon the degree to which values and goals are shared. What the family values influences what the family says it wants to pursue. What the family seeks will influence what resources will be perceived as useful to meet the desired goals of the family system.

As a system, the family is interfaced with the political, economic, and socio-cultural institutions of the environment (Deacon and Firebaugh 1975). From these societal inputs the family identifies its resources in the form of matter-energy and information. Through choice making and managing processes, these resources are transformed into useful forms, such as food, clothing, and shelter; social, aesthetic, and educational activities (Paolucci et al. 1977). What choices the family makes help define the environment, and the environment in a feedback response enhances or limits the potential development of family members.

The interaction between the family and its environment is influenced by the family life-cycle. Stolte-Heiskanen (1974) suggests that the values, goals and perceived resources of the family will change through five periods:

- I. Establishment: newly married, no children;
- II. New Parents: one or two parents with one or more pre-school children;
- III. School Age Family;

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IV. Post-Parental Family: one or two parents after children leave;

V. Aging Family: one or two parents after retirement.

Through each development period, the changing needs of the family will be confronted in four family subsystems: biological, economic, social and spiritual. The sub-systems provide the linking mechanisms between the family and the larger social system (Stolte-Heiskanen 1974).

In its interaction with the environment, the family acts as a controlled system seeking a balance between stability and change. Such equilibrium is maintained by operating the family as a system sufficiently open to receive both positive and negative feedback (Kuhn 1975). Positive responses between the family and the social system will provide constancy; negative responses will provide variety or possibly conflict.

When the family or a family member perceives that the system is out of balance and change is necessary, three stages follow in an overlapping process: (1) a detection stage in which alternatives are unconsciously stimulated with no particular goals in mind; (2) a selection stage in which a goal is perceived, information is sought, and preferences are determined; and (3) an action or facilitation stage in which the decision is effected (Paolucci 1978). When going from the selection stage to the action stage, the family or family member must decide how much certainty or uncertainty can be managed, and what risks will be taken with what possible consequences. Once

action is taken, the family system is changed, thus changing the environment for future decisions and actions.

How open a family needs to be to change may depend upon its life-cycle, suggests Paolucci. Early stages may call for a flexible self-image, easily adapted to the arrival of children, changing residence, and new jobs. Later stages may require a less open system, protecting meaning and past experience when the goal of the family members is stability.

To view the family as a developmental system, changing its goals in relation to the changing needs of its members, is to see the family in a mutually dependent relationship with its environment. To be concerned about the total life-cycle and the variety of settings in which people spend their lives, is to be interested in how decisions are managed in both public and private endeavors (Kanter 1977).

Until recently, separation of the occupational and family sectors of society has been considered essential to the smooth running of each institution and to the integration of society as a whole, observes Kanter. The reasoning behind such an idea was supported by the assumption that occupational life is based upon impersonal and objective standards of competence, while family life is organized around custom and emotional standards. "The myth of separate worlds," as Kanter calls the perception of incompatibility between career and family, has been perpetuated by certain occupational groups and some individuals who felt that they benefitted from separation.

More recently, work and intimacy have come to be viewed as processes or ways of organizing experience rather than as separate structures or activities. Kanter suggests that "work" be viewed as "the means by which people learn to mobilize for the accomplishment of tasks," and "intimacy" as "the way people orient themselves to one another . . ." (Kanter 1977:72). Recognizing that both tasks and relationships occur in both the occupational and family sectors, it is possible to see the potential for crossover in the ways people perform tasks and relate to each other, regardless of setting.

Neil Smelser expresses the idea in the following statement:

In the light of these evident similarities between the processes of working and loving, it might be appropriate to regard the two as different names for a very similar process of human adaptation, both involving a fusion of the different psychic forces--impulse, discipline or control, integration, and object attachment (Smelser 1980:5).

As Sophie Freud Loewenstein reflects:

In fact, the two orientations are so inextricably meshed that it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. For example, one can love one's work and one can, indeed it is well-advised, to work at love (Loewenstein 1980).

With a blending of the concepts of work and love have come changes in sex and gender role norms. Looking at the effect of changing sex roles upon family decision-making, John Scanzoni (1977) studied married women with young children who were in transition as a result of entering the work force. He found that young, well-educated women are coming to define work in the same ways as men: as a source of money, prestige, esteem, independence and autonomy. Scanzoni also observed that women's relationships with their

husbands are changing in terms of marital decision-making (Scanzoni 1977).

Bargaining is a more necessary strategy as decisions must be made about where to live, where and when to continue education, whether or not to have children, child care, housekeeping, consumption, and leisure-time activities. Scanzoni concludes that as women shift their interests solely from domestic goals to include goals and interests outside the family, they become "tougher" in bargaining, more goal-oriented than reactive, and less likely to negotiate on the basis of the collective interests of the family.

The ability to meet the changing needs of individual family members as well as the family as a unit will depend, in part, on the skill with which adaptation is made. An open system with regard to role behavior, for example, will facilitate adaptation within a family if illness, child-rearing, education, or labor force participation requires change (Winch 1971).

A role transition has been defined as the process of entering or leaving a social role, a change in the role expectations that are relevant for an individual, and consequently, a change in a set of behaviors (Burr 1973). The ease of making a role transition, suggests Burr, will depend upon how difficult the new role seems to be and how accessible resources appear.

Specifically, a role transition is facilitated by several factors: learning the role expectations before making the change, having explicit definitions of reciprocated behavior, matching dominant goals with roles, maintaining other meaningful roles while

making the transition to a new one, and experiencing a definite transitional procedure (Burr 1973). To neglect these adjustment factors is to risk role strain, or "the condition of awareness of an inability to meet the demands of all of one's roles" (Van Meter 1976).

In a study of role strain among married college women (Van Meter 1976) two factors are found to influence the amount of role strain: (1) the stage of the family career, and (2) the amount of perceived personal and family resources available. The resource viewed as most important by the adult women is the emotional support of their families. Other resources perceived as useful are: personal health, need for achievement, possession of management skills, physical and financial help from the family.

Results of the study indicate that women experiencing high role strain: (1) perceive their husband's support with the role priorities as low, (2) consider the family role as less important than the student role, and (3) are less satisfied with child care arrangements, adequate study space and their health than women with low role strain.

In another study of role adaptation among women, the researcher looks at the perceived costs of women combining family and a career. Results indicate that combining the tasks and relationships of the two is most successful for women (1) whose mothers work or have worked, (2) who have supportive husbands, and (3) who are highly autonomous (Berson 1977).

The relative status of husband and wife also influences role adaptation. In a study of social networks within the family, one study indicates that a husband's income is negatively related to shared roles, while a wife's education is positively related to shared roles (Ericksen et al. 1979).

Adaptation to role transitions at specific points in the family life-cycle has been the interest of a number of writers. Mid-life transitions have been of particular interest, especially when the process has involved the decision to use education as a means of effecting change in the lives of men and women.

Education: A Resource at Mid-Life

Throughout the life-cycle, an interaction exists in work, family and leisure, observe Rapoport and Rapoport (1980). "Together the three interlocking careers form what we have called 'the triple helix,' each with a logic and life course of its own, each affecting the others" (Rapoport and Rapoport 1980:13). As life's critical events present themselves and one stage evolves into another, an adaptive transition takes place. Each transition is completed by dealing with the specific tasks or challenges associated with that sequence.

People cope with the tasks of developmental transitions by using (1) their interests related to work, family, and leisure; (2) the opportunities perceived in the social environment; and (3) their resourcefulness, or "the quality which transforms

interests into action, using available opportunities" (Rapoport and Rapoport 1980).

At any period in the evolution of the life-cycle, education may support or facilitate an individual's progress through a transitional period (Weathersby 1976). For men and women in a mid-life transition, specifically, education may be perceived as a resource for re-evaluating commitments in work and love. The focus in the present study is on higher education in general, graduate school in particular, as a perceived opportunity for self-examination, confirmation, and/or change.

Much of the research related to adults' use of higher education has focused on adult women, age 25 or older, re-entering college after a hiatus of three years or more to complete an undergraduate degree. Some studies describe the characteristics of adult women students and their motivation to re-enter higher education (Durchholz and O'Connor 1975; Mahone 1977; Willis 1977; McCrea 1979). Some research focuses on the support service needs of adult women students (Posner-Cahill 1977; Mahone 1977; Willis 1977; Hedstrom 1977).

Some research compares adult women students with traditional-aged women college students (Mahone 1977; Gelwick 1975), while other research contrasts mature women students with adult men students as well as traditional-aged women students (Johnson et al. 1977). In general, an adult woman student re-entering undergraduate school is typically thirty years old,

has one child, a college-educated husband, and is enrolled with a career objective and/or a desire for a degree.

Not all recent studies support the career motivation of adult women students. In a study of the characteristics, motives and goals of adult male students compared with adult female students, Ladan and Crooks (1976) conclude that men continue their education for career-oriented reasons, while women seek more personal goals. Denney (1978) comes to a similar conclusion in a study of adults in which it is found that women rate learning for the sake of learning and self-stimulation as much more influential for them than do men.

The return to school constitutes a significant change for both women and their husbands, concludes Krieger (1977). Interviewing 55 couples, she found that all women become less traditional in role orientation, while their husbands' perceptions of an ideal woman become significantly more traditional. Women decrease their parenting and household roles, while men decrease their parenting role and do not change their performance in the area of household duties. Krieger suggests that men may verbalize the support of a self-oriented mode for women, but may find it difficult to cope with the reality of a more self-oriented wife.

A comparison of adult women students expressing high guilt feelings about their return to college and women expressing low guilt feelings is the subject of a study of 361 women, ages 26 to 61 (Emerson 1977). Each subject is married and has at least one minor child at home when she returns to college.

High guilt is found to be positively correlated with suppressed anger in several relationships: between the respondent's parents in childhood; of the respondent as a child; of the father. Guilt is also associated with criticism as a teaching method in the childhood home, as well as with personality needs of succorance and deference. High guilt is negatively correlated with personality needs of autonomy and intraception (Emerson 1977).

How adult women manage the process of re-entry into either school or work outside the home is the subject of one paper (Brooks 1976). Identifying the problems of a normal transitional state as confused motivation and goals, role conflict, low self-esteem, and time management, Brooks proposed resolution through a series of stages:

A. Preparation Phase:

Stage 1 - Vague discontent (role questioning);

Stage 2 - Inner preparation (deciding to risk reordering one's life);

Stage 3 - Intensive family involvement in the decision-making process;

B. Decision Phase:

Stage 4 - Assessment of abilities and interests;

Stage 5 - Generating alternatives (dream options);

Stage 6 - Narrowing alternatives and value clarification;

Stage 7 - Implementation and goal-setting.

The attitudes of faculty toward older-than-average students is the subject of one study (Plotsky 1975). Results indicate that

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most faculty are supportive of older students, with the number of years of teaching associated with degree of favorable attitude.

In another study of faculty attitudes toward older students, professors of adult education were asked to characterize three adult age groups (Gruetter 1977). Results indicate that faculty perceive the youngest age group (18-35) as the most effective and the least independent; the mid-adult age group (36-54) as the most independent and the most personable; the oldest group (55+) as the least effective and the least personable.

The age and sex characteristics of graduate students and alumni of the University of Michigan is the focus of a recent study (Coppard 1978). Women graduate students in contrast to men are found to desire more change in their life, want more education and are more likely to pursue it, are more open to new methods of instruction, seek more recognition for their study, are more likely to be making a career transition, and more often experience barriers in the pursuit of further education.

Younger students in contrast to older students are more concerned about finances, are less sure of the value of study, and question their abilities more, Coppard reports. Older students are concerned about job responsibilities and convenience of course offerings.

Older students, while enrolling for fewer courses, being employed, and involved in community activities, study as much as younger students, obtain grades equal to or better than younger

students, and spend an equal amount of time in activities associated with academic life (Coppard 1978).

In a study of the characteristics of graduate student applicants, several differences are found between older and younger applicants (Hartle 1977). Older adults are likely to be women who have previously attended graduate school, are more decided about a field of study, and are more likely to choose career-oriented fields.

In a comparison of male and female doctoral candidates, another researcher studied 182 doctoral students (McMahan 1977). Women differ from men in several aspects: their mothers are better educated; their fathers and spouses are more likely to be employed at professional and managerial levels; they are more purposeful in their reasons for entering; their children are older; their education and income levels are higher; they are more likely to be supported financially by their spouses.

In another comparison of male and female doctoral students (Johnson 1978), women are found to be older than men, are more likely to be single and childless, have fewer years of administrative experience, and belong to more professional organizations. Both men and women are seeking a doctorate primarily as a personal achievement. A lack of available positions is the major constraint perceived by both men and women.

The perception of the impact of a doctoral program upon the marriage relationships of doctoral students is the subject of a study of full-time male doctoral students and their wives

(Williams 1977). Forty doctoral students and their wives comprised the sample, along with forty control couples.

Results note a reported decrease in both the quantity and quality of communication as well as leisure time and sex life. Student couples also report a decrease in their spouse's valuation of them. Doctoral student couples express feeling under more pressure, worry more, and report more disagreements over finances when compared to control group couples. Williams concludes that a doctoral program has a significant negative impact upon the perceptions that many male doctoral students and their wives have of their marriage relationship.

The extent to which a spouse's level of education hinders or helps the careers of Ph.D. recipients is the subject of a recent study (Ferber and Huber 1979). Results indicate that having a Ph.D. negatively affects both the labor force participation of married women and the offices held and articles published by married men. The authors conclude that for both men and women, marriage to a highly educated spouse has at least some negative career effects.

In an analysis of the career aspirations of men and women graduate students, a researcher interviewed 613 adult students enrolled in educational administration at ten American universities. Results show that men have higher career aspirations than women, and women have higher standard achievement scores than men. There is no significant difference in career aspirations on the basis of age or marital status (Reynolds 1979).

Other research regarding women graduate students is descriptive of student characteristics (Stoddard 1977) and their interaction with their husbands (Galler 1977).

Still other studies take a look at role model influence on women graduate students (Cornfeld 1978; Sitzman 1979). Analysis of the role model research indicates that women have predominantly female role models--the most significant is a woman's mother, most role models are married and have children, and the greatest impact of a role model for women graduate students is due to their integration of marital, family and career styles (Cornfeld 1978).

It is the integration of all aspects of the self in relation to the world which stands as the goal of human development. The joining of forces and the balancing of polarities lie behind the developmental tasks of the life-cycle.

In a recent paper, Arthur Chickering points out the common objectives of Cardinal Newman's stated purposes of higher education, published in 1852, and the major dimensions of adult development (Chickering 1980). Recommending that the principles of adult development be accepted as a unifying framework for higher education, Chickering argues that the resources of education should be devoted to increasing the opportunities for each person to define

. . . change in ego development toward integrity . . .
 ethical and intellectual development . . . toward contextual relativism, which places human welfare as the highest value . . . change toward increased intellectual competence and complexity, toward increased concern for collaborative inquiry modes and for intimate relationships that involve the expansion for caring (Chickering 1981:11).

Summary

Beginning with a brief history of graduate education, the background for the study was developed. It was shown how graduate education has changed from serving as a liberal education training ground for young professional educators to a highly diversified component in American higher education.

Describing graduate education as a resource for the academic and personal development of men and women, Chapter II continued with a review of the historical antecedents of adult development theory. Following a discussion of early life-cycle concepts, contemporary human development theory was introduced with the writing of Freud (1900) through Erikson (1950).

Reviewing the literature of the 1950s and 1960s, the following two sections illustrated the growing interest in adult development as well as the emerging focus on aging.

Chapter II continued with a review of research and writing through the 1970s. Gender differences received special attention in light of the importance currently being placed upon sex differences, especially at mid-life. Decision-making at mid-life was highlighted at the close of Chapter II, with transitions and change events providing the organizational framework.

Career transitions and family transitions were used as the critical decision-making areas in the literature of adult development. Finally, education as a resource at mid-life was examined through recent research and writing.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Study Leading to the Development of the Proposal for the Ph.D. Dissertation

In a five-month period beginning in May, 1979, thirty faculty and administrators were interviewed for the purpose of determining areas of current concern regarding adult students in higher education. A number of issues were raised by twenty-one members of the Michigan State University community, many of whom reflected interests similar to those expressed by nine faculty and staff members at four colleges and universities in the greater Cleveland area and at the University of Colorado at Boulder (see Appendix C).

Three general areas emerged as the most frequently expressed concerns of the thirty educators interviewed: (1) personal decision-making of adult students; (2) institutional response, and (3) retention and/or attrition of adult students. In the area of personal decision-making, the questions raised most frequently by both faculty and administrators concerned the factors which had influenced the adult student to return to college at a particular point in time. There seemed to be considerable interest in the decision-making process employed by adult students as well as concern for the consequences of making the decision to return to college.

Interest in institutional response focused on both barriers and accommodations perceived by adult students. Faculty attitudes toward older students was another area of concern expressed by faculty and administrators concerned with institutional response.

Interest in the persistence of adult students was directed toward the factors which influence retention and/or attrition. With a broad range of personal and professional commitments represented by the educators interviewed, it was not surprising to find a diversity of specific concerns, including the identification of high and low risk students, and the influence of family, role behavior, and life changes upon the enrollment patterns of adult students.

Considering the above areas of interest, the personal decision-making process of adult women and men was selected as the focus for the study. It was decided to engage the subjects in ex post facto research, asking them to recall the process by which they made the decision to enter graduate school.

By definition, ex post facto research is that research in which the independent variable or variables have already occurred and in which the researcher starts with the observation of a dependent variable or variables. He then studies the independent variables in retrospect for their possible relations to, and effects on, the dependent variable or variables (Kerlinger 1964:360).

Reiterating the strengths and weaknesses of ex post facto research as described by Kerlinger, Pelowski (1979) points out that in the analysis of data, no direct cause and effect relationships

can be definitely cited. There is no control over the independent variables, as there is in experimental research design. There is, however, the opportunity to take the subjects as they are and disentangle the many variables in order to discover meaningful relationships. Citing Coelho (1962), Pelowski writes "that an individual, without the predisposition to WANT to establish relationships between variables could with objectivity identify, observe, generalize and communicate results free of value-laden effects" (Pelowski 1979:49).

In the study, the two key variables are women and men, selected on the basis of the current consensus that "gender differences far exceed age or stage differences found within either sex group alone" (Fiske 1980), and that differences between women and men are most pronounced at mid-life (Sheehy 1976; Gould 1980). The decision-making process is examined in relation to the women and men and the various characteristics which describe them.

To discover what similarities and differences exist between women and men in the process of decision-making, several questions were developed.

Research Questions

The study is designed to explore by what process women and men make decisions in middle adulthood. Specifically, the research is developed to investigate the process by which women and men choose graduate school as an alternative for effecting change in their lives. The research questions being addressed are as follows:

Educational History

1. What effect does educational history have in the decision-making process of women and men?
2. Will continuing education patterns be different for women and men?

Employment History

1. What effect does employment history have in the decision-making process of women and men?
2. Will employment patterns be different for women and men?

Human Resources

1. Who are the persons perceived by women and men as useful resources in the decision-making process?
2. Will women and men feel encouraged and/or discouraged by the same human relationships in the same ways?

Conditions and Bargains (Trade-Offs)

1. In order to follow through with the decision to enter graduate school, what conditions or bargains (trade-offs) do women and men perceive as necessary?
2. Will women and men feel the need to postpone or forfeit the same opportunities?

Consequences

1. What relationships will women and men perceive as having been affected by the decision to enter graduate school?
2. Will women and men perceive relationships as having been affected in the same ways?
3. What have been the unforeseen consequences of the decision?

Life Events

1. What life events or major changes are perceived by women and men as having helped to bring about the decision to enroll in graduate school?
2. Will women and men view the same life events as having precipitated the decision?

Population and Sub-SamplePopulation

The population of the study was composed of all women and men graduate students of age 35 or older who entered master's or doctoral degree programs at Michigan State University for the first time in the fall or winter term of 1979-80. A total of 198 graduate students were identified from student records in the Office of the Registrar as meeting the criteria, 166 of whom entered in the fall term, 32 in the winter term.

Of the 198 graduate students, 87 were women, 111 were men. Information available from student records in the Office of the Registrar regarding marital status appeared to be unreliable, and therefore was excluded from the description of the total population. Information regarding race and nationality also was sufficiently incomplete that it could not be used to describe the total population. Table 3.1 shows the distribution of college enrollment for the 198 graduate students. It is noted that 145 graduate students, or 73.2 percent of the population, were enrolled in four colleges: Education, Business, Lifelong Education,* or Social Science.

Of the 37 students enrolled in the College of Business, 29 were enrolled in the Advanced Management Program, a two-year graduate program offering the Master of Business Administration to

*Graduate students enrolled in Lifelong Education, Class 6, hold at least a B.A., and are admitted at the master's level with "unclassified" status, frequently because they have missed an application deadline, often in the College of Education.

TABLE 3.1.--Graduate Student College Enrollment of Total Population.

College	Rank Order	Percentage
Total	Total N = 198	100.0
Education	55	27.8
Business	37	18.7
Lifelong Education	28	14.1
Social Science	25	12.6
Arts and Letters	16	8.1
Agriculture	10	5.0
Human Ecology	7	3.5
Communication	7	3.5
Natural Science	6	3.0
Engineering	5	2.5
Human Medicine	1	.5
Non-specified	1	.5

business executives. Students in the Advanced Management Program are sponsored by the companies or organizations with which they are associated, and enroll in a total of 13 courses at the Management Education Center in Troy, Michigan.

In light of the small but sufficient number of graduate students in the population, no sample was obtained. The survey instrument was mailed to the total population of 198 women and men. Of the 87 women and 111 men, 147 were registered in master's degree programs, 51 in doctoral programs.

Sub-Sample

To explore the decision-making process, a purposive sample of twenty respondents was chosen for in-depth interviews. The sample selected included women and men, married and single adults, parents and non-parents, master's and doctoral students, U.S. and non-U.S. citizens, and represented the range of ages, college enrollments, and dominant decision-making patterns.*

Procedure for Obtaining Data

Pre-Test

In order to obtain data regarding the decision-making process used by the population of adult graduate students, a questionnaire was developed in March 1980. The survey instrument was refined in a pre-test administered to 19 women and men graduate students enrolled in a class in tests and measurements at Lake Erie College. Twelve of the adult students were age 35 or older. Responses and suggestions indicated on the pre-test resulted in a reorganization and clarification of the content of the questionnaire. It was also determined that completion of the survey instrument would required approximately 15 minutes.

*Dominant decision-making patterns were secured by examining the combination of persons talked with by each of the respondents. Figure 3.1 shows the ten most frequently appearing combinations or patterns. For example, Pattern 1 indicates that four women and five men talked with a combination of persons, including their spouse, children and/or relatives, friends, faculty and/or graduate students, and employment resources. Pattern 7, by contrast, applies to three women and three men who talked with no one.

Talked with	Pattern									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A. Spouse	.	.	.	.	.	.		.	.	.
B. Children/relatives	.	.		.	.			.	.	
C. Friends	.		.	.	.			.	.	
D. Faculty/graduate students	.	.	.	.				.		
E. Professional resources								.		
F. Employment resources	.	.	.		.					.
G. No one							.			
Women/Men	4/5	4/3	3/4	4/2	5/1	2/4	3/3	2/3	4/1	0/5

Figure 3.1.--Distribution of Dominant Decision-Making Patterns.

Permission to Use Human Subjects

A request to conduct the research project using Michigan State University students as subjects was approved April 7, 1980 by the University Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.

The Survey Instrument

Along with an explanation of the research project and a consent form, the questionnaire was mailed in mid-April to the local address of each graduate student, age 35 or older, who had entered Michigan State University in the fall or winter term.

(Copies of the approval letter from the University Committee for

Research Involving Human Subjects, the cover letter, consent form, and the questionnaire are included in Appendix A of the study.)

A follow-up letter was mailed to non-respondents two weeks later.

In its final form, the survey instrument contained 20 questions, some of which included multiple responses. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Personal background, educational background, occupational background, and the decision-making process. The graduate students were encouraged to elaborate on most questions in the section on the decision-making process.

Pilot Interviews

Two pilot interviews were video-taped and critiqued in preparation for the in-depth interviews to be conducted. One woman and one man who had participated in the pre-test of the survey instrument were asked to elaborate on the decision-making process which had accompanied their choice to enter a graduate program.

The taped interviews were reviewed with Dr. Susan Malcolm Cowling, a faculty member and Ph.D. psychometrist at Lake Erie College. Suggestions resulted in the decision to use an unstructured interview approach which seemed to be most effective in deriving the responses desired.

Interviews

From the 93 respondents willing to be interviewed, 11 women and 9 men were selected in a purposive sample designed to identify a variety of ages, family structures, and decision-making patterns. Sixteen of the subjects were interviewed face-to-face, approximately

one hour in length. Four subjects, not available for in-person conferring, were interviewed by telephone.

The 11 women interviewed included married women with children, single women with children, a married woman with no children; included women ranging in age from 35 to 50; women who had graduated from undergraduate school by age 23 and others who had completed a baccalaureate degree at age 29 or older; women in a variety of employment patterns; women enrolled in five different colleges; and two women in doctoral programs. All but two of the women were enrolled all three terms.

All of the nine men interviewed were parents, eight of them currently married with children. The men ranged in age from 35 to 50; included men who had graduated from undergraduate school by age 23, others between ages 24-28; and others at age 29 or older; included both employed and unemployed men; included graduate students in four colleges; and five men in doctoral programs. All of the men were enrolled all three terms.

Procedures for Analysis

The Survey Results

There were 128 responses to the questionnaire, or 65 percent of the total number mailed. Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of responses. Eight of the questionnaires returned were withdrawn as: incomplete (N = 2); inappropriate subject, i.e. not a new graduate student or younger than age 35 (N = 4); or withdrawn at the subject's

0	198
Questionnaires mailed: N = 198	100%
Questionnaires returned: N = 128	65%
Valid questionnaires: N = 120	61%

Figure 3.2.--Distribution of Responses to Questionnaire.

request (N = 2). As a result, there were 120 valid questionnaires which were used in the study.

Among the 120 usable responses to the questionnaire, 10 graduate students did not return the interview consent form, and 17 did not consent to be interviewed (4 women and 13 men).

Non-Respondents

There were 70 women and men who did not respond to the questionnaire: 14 were enrolled in the Advanced Management Program at the Troy Center; 3 were residing outside the United States at the time of the survey; 2 could not be reached by mail.

Adding the eight graduate students whose questionnaires could not be used in the study, there was a total of 78 women and men not included in the response data. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of non-respondents and respondents according to the degree program in which they were registered. As is illustrated in Table 3.2, a significantly higher proportion of master's students responded than doctoral students among both women and men ($\chi^2 = 15.354$, D.F. = 1, significance level = .0001).

TABLE 3.2.--Percentage Distribution of Non-Respondents and Respondents by Gender and Degree Program.

Degree Program	Non-Respondents			Respondents		
	Total (N=78) %	Women (N=20) %	Men (N=58) %	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Master's	69.2 (N=54)	75.0 (N=15)	67.2 (N=39)	77.5 (N=93)	82.6 (N=57)	70.6 (N=36)
Doctoral	30.8 (N=24)	25.0 (N= 5)	32.8 (N=19)	22.5 (N=27)	17.4 (N=12)	29.4 (N=15)

Table 3.3 includes the data regarding the distribution of college enrollment for both non-respondents and respondents.

TABLE 3.3.--Percentage Distribution of Non-Respondents and Respondents by College Enrollment.

College	Non-Respondents			Respondents		
	Total (N=78) %	Women (N=20) %	Men (N=58) %	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	99.9	100.0	99.9	100.0	99.7	100.0
Education	26.9	40.0	22.4	30.0	37.7	19.6
Business	21.8	0.0	29.3	16.7	4.3	33.3
Lifelong Educ.	12.8	25.0	8.6	13.3	13.0	13.7
Social Science	11.5	10.0	12.1	14.2	14.5	13.7
Arts and Letters	7.7	5.0	8.6	7.5	10.1	3.9
Agriculture	5.1	0.0	6.9	3.3	1.4	5.9
Human Ecology	2.6	10.0	0.0	5.0	8.7	0.0
Communication	1.3	0.0	1.7	5.0	4.3	5.9
Natural Science	3.8	5.0	3.4	3.3	4.3	2.0
Engineering	5.1	0.0	6.9	.8	0.0	2.0
Human Medicine	0.0	0.0	0.0	.8	1.4	0.0
Non-College	1.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

A comparison of the age range of non-respondents and respondents indicates that respondents were more likely than non-respondents to be women, age 44 or younger. Table 3.4 includes the data regarding age distribution for non-respondents and respondents.

TABLE 3.4.--Percentage Distribution of Non-Respondents and Respondents by Age Groups.

Age Group	Non-Respondents			Respondents		
	Total (N=78) %	Women (N=20) %	Men (N=58) %	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ages 35-39	47.4 (N=37)	35.0 (N=7)	51.7 (N=30)	53.3 (N=64)	49.3 (N=34)	58.8 (N=30)
Ages 40-44	16.7 (N=13)	15.0 (N=3)	17.2 (N=10)	28.3 (N=34)	31.9 (N=22)	23.5 (N=12)
Ages 45-49	21.8 (N=17)	30.0 (N=6)	19.0 (N=11)	11.7 (N=14)	11.6 (N= 8)	11.8 (N= 6)
Ages 50+	14.1 (N=11)	20.0 (N=4)	12.0 (N =7)	6.7 (N= 8)	7.2 (N= 5)	5.9 (N= 3)

Analysis of Data

Examination of the completed questionnaires indicated that responses to more than half of the questions could be grouped for purposes of analysis. It became possible to collapse a total of 153 column responses for each respondent to a total of 76 column responses.

For the statistical analysis of the data, the responses of the graduate students were coded and key-punched onto cards. The data were filed with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.^{*} Once the information had been filed on the computer at Michigan State University, both frequency distributions and chi square tables were requested and obtained.

Demographic data were analyzed with the use of percentage distribution scores and frequency distributions. Comparative data were analyzed, primarily according to gender differences, using percentage distribution scores and tests of significance.

Summary

Beginning with a description of the exploratory study which led to the development of the proposal for the dissertation, Chapter III continued with an explanation of the decision to conduct ex post facto research. Summarized, the objective of the study is to discover what similarities and/or differences might exist between women and men in the process of decision-making.

Chapter III continued with a presentation of the research questions, listed under six headings: educational history, employment history, human resources, conditions and bargains (trade-offs), consequences, and life events. The population and sub-sample were then described, explaining how both groups were selected.

^{*}For a complete description of the statistical system, refer to Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent (New York: McGraw Hill), 1975.

The procedure for obtaining the data was then described, including the pre-test which helped in developing the survey instrument, and the pilot interviews which helped in preparing for the research interviews.

Chapter III concluded with a presentation of information regarding procedures for analysis, including the survey results, a description of the non-respondents, and a description of the methods used in analyzing the data.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Having described the research design and procedures in Chapter III, the following chapter includes the analysis of the data generated by the responses to the survey instrument, illustrated by the interview material. The questionnaire responses are presented under two broad headings:

1. A description of the respondents;
2. The decision-making process.

Throughout Chapter IV, both the descriptive and the comparative data are introduced by subject heading, summarized in appropriate tables, and analyzed along with illustrative quotations taken from the interviews.

A Description of the Respondents

The respondents to the questionnaire (N = 120) are described according to several demographic characteristics: age, marital status, parental status, employment status, college enrollment, level of degree program, and race/nationality. In each category, the characteristics of the women (N = 69) and the men (N = 51) in the study are presented along with a description of all respondents and a sampling of quotations extracted from the interviews or from comments in the questionnaires. Since the anonymity of the women and men in

the study has been assured, quotations are identified only by the gender and age of the respondents.

General Description

The women and men included in the study range in age from 35 to 59, many are married and have children, some are divorced with children, many are employed, some are not, there is a wide spread of college enrollments, many are enrolled in master's degree programs, fewer in doctoral programs, and most of the graduate students are white citizens of the United States, although approximately ten percent are from other countries. What follows is a description of the respondents as a whole ($N = 120$), partly in descriptive statistical terms, and frequently described in the subjects' own words.

Age

The ages of the women and men respondents were grouped into four categories: ages 35-39, ages 40-44, ages 45-49, and ages 50 and older. The age distribution of respondents is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 illustrates the fact that the women graduate students are somewhat older than the men, although the difference is not great after age 45. From the interviews it appeared that age was an important factor in the decision-making process, especially for women with dependent children.

The subject of age appeared to be a concern of some women and men as they entered graduate school at mid-life. One 35-year-old woman asked, "Was I too old for this stress?" while a

TABLE 4.1.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students by Age and Gender.

Age Groups	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ages 35-39	53.3	49.3	58.8
Ages 40-44	28.3	31.9	23.5
Ages 45-49	11.7	11.6	11.8
Ages 50+	6.7	7.2	5.9
$\chi^2 = 1.306$ D.F. = 3 Significance level = .7276			

42-year-old man wondered if he should not "have considered my age and the hours of intellectual reflection."

Being a mid-life graduate student was not necessarily perceived by the adult graduate students as a liability, however. A 52-year-old woman commented, "I felt encouraged to do graduate work in spite of my age." A woman, 35-years-old, stated, "I feel I have more options now than I would have at a younger age."

Marital Status

The marital status of the respondents was distributed among those graduate students who were (1) married, (2) separated, divorced or widowed, and (3) never married, and is presented in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students by Marital Status.

Marital Status	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0
Married	75.8 (N=91)	65.2 (N=45)	90.2 (N=46)
Separated, divorced or widowed; or never married	24.2 (N=29)	34.7 (N=24)	9.8 (N= 5)

 $\chi^2 = 9.982$

D.F. = 1

Significance level = .01

A Chi Square test was used to determine whether the distributions of women and men differ significantly in regard to marital status. In light of the small expected frequencies found in the value for the "never married" category, that column was collapsed with the column including the frequencies for separated, divorced, and widowed cases. There was significance at the .01 level.

While no specific tests have been conducted to detail gender differences, it is apparent from Table 4.2 that a higher percentage of women graduate students than men were separated, divorced or widowed. Actually, only one woman respondent reported being widowed, and she was anticipating marriage at the time she decided to enter graduate school.

The subject of marital status did not seem to be a critical issue among either the women or the men respondents in the study.

If a comment about marital status did arise in an interview, or on a questionnaire, it almost always reflected a continuing status or a change in the past, rather than an anticipated change. One 40-year-old woman commented about a recent change in her marital status by saying, "It (the decision to enter graduate school) only made the decision to separate come sooner."

Parental Status

The parental status of the women and men in the study was distributed among graduate students with (1) no children, (2) one child, (3) two or three children, and (4) four or more children, and is presented in Table 4.3.

TABLE 4.3.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students with Children.

Number of Children	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	99.9
None (0)	10.0	11.6	7.8
One (1)	11.7	13.0	9.8
Two/three (2/3)	62.5	55.1	72.5
Four or more (4+)	15.8	20.3	9.8
$\chi^2 = 4.146$	D.F. = 3	Significance level = .2461	

The parental status of the graduate students, illustrated in Table 4.3, varies between women and men. Eighty-eight percent of the women reported being parents, compared with ninety-two percent of the men. Women respondents more than men reported having either no children, one child, or four or more children. Men more than women reported having two or three children.

Not surprisingly, the decision-making process for a woman seems to be affected by the number of children she has. One 36-year-old woman, the mother of five children, reflected upon her experience when she said:

I waited quite a while and started thinking about graduate school, and then we had another child. That did slow down the decision-making process a bit!

Another woman, age 42, had anticipated continuing her education at a time when her parental status might have minimal impact on the decision. She said:

I resumed my college education seven years ago in anticipation of "the empty nest." I had four children in four-and-a-half years, and our youngest is now eighteen. . . . I have done what I can do.

A comparison of the data regarding parental status and marital status reveals that 20.3 percent of the women respondents reported being single-parents living with their children. None of the married men reported being a single-parent. One man did report being a parent and never married.

Comparing parental status with age of the graduate students in Table 4.4, it is apparent that the women with children are older than the men with children. That fact helps to explain the

TABLE 4.4.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students with Children by Age.

Number of Children	Ages 35-39		Ages 40-44		Ages 45-49		Ages 50+		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0										
Total	4	3.4	7	5.9	1	.8	0	0.0	12	10.0
Women	2	1.7	5	4.2	1	.8	0	0.0	8	6.7
Men	2	1.7	2	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	3.3
1										
Total	9	7.5	2	1.7	1	.8	2	1.6	14	11.7
Women	5	4.2	2	1.7	1	.8	1	.8	9	7.5
Men	4	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	.8	5	4.2
2 or 3										
Total	45	37.5	19	15.8	8	6.7	3	2.5	75	62.5
Women	22	18.3	10	8.3	3	2.5	2	1.7	37	30.8
Men	23	19.2	9	7.5	5	4.2	1	.8	38	31.7
4+										
Total	6	5.0	6	5.0	4	3.3	3	2.5	19	15.8
Women	4	3.3	5	4.2	3	2.5	2	1.7	14	11.7
Men	2	1.7	1	.8	1	.8	1	.8	5	4.1
Total	N=64	53.4%	N=34	28.4%	N=14	11.6%	N=8	6.6%	N=120	100.0

observation that fewer women graduate students than men reported having dependent children at the time of beginning a graduate program. As one 46-year-old mother of two children described her situation:

I waited to come to graduate school until my youngest child had completed high school and entered college herself. I wanted no "unfinished business."

Comparing single-parent graduate students (N = 19, all women) with the total distribution of respondents, it is clear that single-parents were somewhat older and had fewer dependent children than the parent group as a whole. Examination of the data indicates that the women single-parents chose to enter graduate school under one of the following conditions: (1) after their children had left home, (2) living away from their children (in most cases the children living with their father), or (3) living with their children and an unrelated peer (presumably as a means of emotional and financial support).

Employment Status

The employment status of the women and men at the time they decided to enter graduate school is compared in Table 4.5 with the employment status of the same group after their enrollment.

Chi Square tests were used to determine whether the women respondents differed significantly from the men respondents in regard to their employment status either before or after their enrollment in

TABLE 4.5.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students Employed Before Entering Graduate School and Employed After Enrollment.

Employment Status	Employment Before Entering*			Employment After Enrollment**		
	Total (N=120)	Women (N=69)	Men (N=51)	Total (N=120)	Women (N=69)	Men (N=51)
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Full-time	75.8	62.3	95.1	54.2	40.6	72.5
Part-time	11.7	20.3	0.0	25.8	36.2	11.8
Not Employed	12.5	17.4	5.9	20.0	23.2	15.7

* $\chi^2 = 17.365$ D.F. = 2 Significance level = .0002

** $\chi^2 = 13.154$ D.F. = 2 Significance level = .0014

a graduate program. In both cases, the differences were statistically significant at the .05 level.*

It is apparent from Table 4.5 that the percentage of full-time employment for men is higher than for women both at the time of entering graduate school and after enrollment. The percentage of part-time employment is higher for women than for men. In fact, no man reported being employed part-time when deciding to enter graduate school. After enrollment, however, 11.8 percent of the men respondents indicated they were employed part-time. More women than men reported not being employed either before or after enrollment, although the percentage increase in unemployment was greater for men than for women.

College Enrollment

Eleven colleges are represented among the total population (N = 198) of the study. Among the respondents to the questionnaire (N = 120), the same eleven colleges are represented in identical rank order. The percentage distribution of college enrollment for the women and men respondents is found in Table 4.6.

An examination of the percentage distribution of the women and men among the eleven colleges, reveals that 74.2 percent of all respondents were enrolled in one of four colleges: Education, Business, Lifelong Education, or Social Science. The highest percentage of women appears in the College of Education (37.7 percent),

*Note the zero cell in the third column (men), third row (part-time) which would tend to increase the Chi Square statistic.

TABLE 4.6.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students by College Enrollment.

College	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	99.7	100.0
Education	30.0	37.7	19.6
Business	16.7	4.3	33.3
Lifelong Education	13.3	13.0	13.7
Social Science	14.2	14.5	13.7
Arts and Letters	7.5	10.1	3.9
Agriculture	3.3	1.4	5.9
Human Ecology	5.0	8.7	0.0
Communication	5.0	4.3	5.9
Natural Science	3.3	4.3	2.0
Engineering	.8	0.0	2.0
Human Medicine	.8	1.4	0.0

while the highest percentage of men appears in the College of Business (33.3 percent). Judging from the interviews, some of the enrollments in Education or Business represent continuity in the educational experience of the graduate students. Often, continuation of a teaching position or promotion in a corporate structure was reported to be dependent upon a graduate degree, frequently a master's degree in education or a master's degree in business administration.

In several cases, however, enrollment in a specific college represented a change in the career focus of the respondent. For example, a 43-year-old woman who had completed her undergraduate work in psychology, enrolled in the College of Arts and Letters in the area of fine arts. In an interview she commented about her choice of a graduate program:

I never really got into fine arts until I went back to school at age 35. It was such a latent thing! . . . I just got up enough courage to take my first studio course and I've loved it ever since! . . . It's really a brand new experience for me . . . sort of a whole new value system.

Several men indicated that their enrollment was based upon plans to shift from one area of study and/or work to a career in teaching. In one case, a 40-year-old man, recently retired from a military career, described his reason for enrolling in the College of Communications.

For many years I worked in photography. About the middle of my [military] career I received a commission which took me into graphic arts management and calculations When I left the service I completed a degree in photo-journalism. . . . Now I'm in a doctoral program in mass media, planning to teach so I can have my summers free for traveling.

In the case of a 42-year-old man who had lost his job as a computer analyst with the closing of the remote mining community in which he had lived, the mid-life graduate student had entered a doctoral program with plans to begin a teaching career. As he expressed the change in his life, he said: "Now I'm interested in molding the thinking of others, rather than going out and solving the problems myself." Perhaps he was beginning to feel a need for "generativity" in his evolving life structure.

Level of Degree Program

All graduate students included in the study had entered a graduate degree program at Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80. Table 4.7 shows the percentage distribution of women and men graduate students by degree level.

TABLE 4.7.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students by Degree Level.

Degree Level	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Masters	77.5	82.6	70.6
Doctoral	22.5	17.4	29.4

 $\chi^2 = 2.430$

D.F. = 1

Significance level = .1190

While there are more mid-life women than men enrolled in master's programs, and more men than women enrolled in doctoral programs, the difference is not statistically significant in either case.

Race and Nationality

While the data regarding race and nationality are incomplete^{*} it is accurate to describe the respondents in the study as predominately white citizens of the United States. Approximately five percent of the respondents appear to be non-white, U.S. citizens, while it appears that approximately ten percent are foreign nationals.

A Chi Square test indicated a significant relationship between nationality and gender ($\chi^2 = 9.54$, D.F. = 1, < .005), with

^{*} Note that the information regarding race and nationality, obtained from student records in the Office of the Registrar is unreliable. The data often were incomplete or missing in the students' files and the survey instrument did not request the information.

the greatest deviation from the expected frequency coming from men registered as international students. In order to compute the Chi Square statistic, however, it was necessary to combine U.S. white and U.S. non-white graduate students. It also should be noted that the number of women international students was only two. (See recommendations for further study in Chapter V.)

The Decision-Making Process

Examining the process by which graduate school was chosen by the women and men in the study, the responses to the questionnaire were analyzed around six aspects of the decision-making experience: (1) educational history, (2) employment history, (3) human resources, (4) conditions and bargains (trade-offs), (5) effects of the decision, and (6) life change events.

In many of the interviews both women and men expressed having felt the need to search, change, or develop before they had considered entering graduate school. A 42-year-old woman, a mother of four children, commented:

I could see that I wanted to go on to something that was going to stimulate me. Where I would be a person. . . . It was really selfish . . . that I wanted something that was important to me. That I would be a person in my own right, using whatever abilities I had You really get to be a drag when you're just sitting around and waiting for somebody to come home for you to be their person, either their mother or their wife.

For a 42-year-old man, the decision to begin a graduate program held the promise of new experiences. He said:

I got to the point where I really felt that I had outgrown what I was doing. I got interested in human problems on a global scale. And so I started thinking about getting into, let's say, expanding in some new direction.

Another man, 48-years-old and the father of four children, simply said: "I had to have answers to my questions."

Educational History

In the decision-making process, each individual carries a personal history of decisions made. What possible effect does the educational history of women and men at mid-life have upon their decision to enter graduate school? Do the educational backgrounds and enrollment patterns of women and men differ? Table 4.8 illustrates the age at which women and men graduate students completed their undergraduate education.

TABLE 4.8.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students by Age at Which Completed Undergraduate Degree.

Age Completed Undergraduate Degree	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	99.9	100.0	100.0
Ages 21-23	53.3	65.2	37.3
Ages 24-28	13.3	5.8	23.5
Ages 29+	33.3	29.0	39.2

$$\chi^2 = 12.136$$

$$D.F. = 2$$

$$\text{Significance level} = .0023$$

It would appear from the data in the study that for women in mid-life the decision to enter graduate school may follow the undergraduate experience by more years than the time-span experienced by men. Women tend to complete their undergraduate work at younger ages than men do, and enter graduate school at older ages than men. The Chi Square test found the relationship between gender and age of completing undergraduate work to be significant.

Accustomed to delayed gratification by the nature of their life styles, some women may perceive the opportunity to enter graduate school at mid-life as a means of achieving postponed personal development. In an interview, a 35-year-old woman expressed her feelings about her decision to begin graduate study after a long wait:

My first child was born overseas eleven years ago. For six years I taught Latin and Greek in a Turkish school until my second child was born Then we moved back to the States, living with my parents for two-and-a-half years When my husband started school, we moved to East Lansing and I found out about all the different programs that were here, including Teaching English as a Second Language After all those years, I finally expect to gain some control over my life.

The data reported in Table 4.9 illustrate the point that the women and men who chose to enter graduate school in middle adulthood were accustomed to perceiving education as a resource in their lives.

Of all the respondents (N = 120), 75.8 percent reported continuing their education either full-time or part-time since completing their undergraduate degrees. As Table 4.9 illustrates, a slightly higher percentage of men (78.4 percent) had continued their education than the percentage of women (73.9 percent).

TABLE 4.9.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Patterns of Continued Education.

Continued Education	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
None	24.2	26.1	21.6
Full-time	30.0	23.2	39.2
Part-time	45.8	50.7	39.2

 $\chi^2 = 4.157$

D.F. = 3

Significance level = .2450

Recalling the data in Table 4.8 which indicate that one-third of all respondents completed their bachelors' degrees at age 29 or older, the persistent pattern may be viewed as a long-term commitment to education for some students. A 37-year-old man who had a history of continuing education experiences, commented, "I feel I have a lifelong learning commitment. I probably will always be taking courses."

For other students, men in particular, the investment in education may have to be extended over a period of many years in order to accommodate both full-time employment and family responsibilities.

It may be that the habit of continuing education has a positive effect upon persistence in a graduate program. Table 4.10 shows the enrollment patterns of the adult graduate students.

TABLE 4.10.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Enrollment Patterns.

Terms Enrolled	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Fall, winter, spring	71.7	66.7	78.4
Fall - spring	4.2	4.3	3.9
Fall, winter -	3.3	1.4	5.9
Fall only	5.8	5.8	5.9
- Winter, spring	11.7	15.9	5.9
- Winter only -	3.3	5.8	0.0

$$\chi^2 = 7.809$$

$$D.F. = 5$$

$$\text{Significance level} = .1671$$

Of the respondents who had entered graduate school in the fall term (85 percent) or winter term (15 percent), 83.4 percent had persisted without interruption in their enrollment through the spring term of 1979-80.

The slight difference between the spring enrollment status of women and men is depicted in Table 4.11.

Of all the respondents registered in the spring term, 55.8 percent were enrolled full-time, 31.7 percent part-time, with slightly more men than women enrolled in full-time study.

In summary, the educational histories of the adult graduate students do seem to affect the decision-making process for both women and men. Many of the women in the study had completed their

TABLE 4.11.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Spring Enrollment Status.

Spring Enrollment	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	99.9	100.0
Full-time	55.8	53.6	58.8
Part-time	31.7	33.3	29.4
Not enrolled	12.5	13.0	11.8

$$\chi^2 = .323$$

D.F. = 2

Significance level = .8509

undergraduate degrees by age 23 (65.2 percent), and while many had continued their education in some way (73.9 percent), more women had been enrolled part-time (59.7 percent) than full-time (23.2 percent). For the women in the study, the decision to enter graduate school came most frequently between the ages of 35 and 44 (81.2 percent) and at the master's degree level (82.6 percent).

Many of the men in the study, in contrast to the women, had completed their bachelor's degrees after age 23 (62.7 percent), and while many had continued their education (78.4 percent), equal percentages of men had pursued their education full-time or part-time. For the men in the study, the decision to begin a graduate program came about at a slightly younger age than it did for women (58.8 percent were younger than age 40), and included a higher percentage of doctoral level commitments (29.4 percent).

It would appear that for many women, the decision to enter graduate school at mid-life follows a history of early undergraduate education and part-time continuing education, while for many men, the decision follows a history of prolonged undergraduate education, both full-time and part-time continuing education, and more continuity within the educational experience.

Employment History

Past decisions regarding employment were thought to have an effect upon the decision-making process of the adults choosing to enter graduate school at mid-life. The employment status of the graduate students at the time they decided to begin an advanced degree is illustrated in Table 4.5. It is clear from the data that for many women (62.3 percent) the decision to enter graduate school at mid-life followed a history of full-time employment. For other women (20.3 percent) past decisions included part-time employment, and 17.4 percent reported not being employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school.

For most of the men in the study (94.1 percent), the decision to begin a graduate degree clearly followed a history of full-time employment. Only 5.9 percent had not been employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school and no man reported being employed part-time.

While Table 4.5 depicts significant differences between the women and men in the study in regard to their employment status, Table 4.12 demonstrates a high degree of similarity between the

TABLE 4.12.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Employment Leading to Study.

Employment Led to Study	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Led to Study	85.0	88.4	80.4
Did not	15.0	11.6	19.6

$$\chi^2 = 1.477$$

$$D.F. = 1$$

$$\text{Significance level} = .2242$$

women and men in their perception of employment leading to their chosen field of study.

Eighty-five percent of all the respondents indicated that their employment history, paid or volunteer, had led to their interest in a particular field of study. It may be surprising that more women (88.4 percent) than men (80.4 percent) associated their choice of an area of study with previous employment. A 36-year-old woman with a history of employment in psychiatric nursing expressed her thinking in an interview:

I became increasingly frustrated with the nursing role as I got more experience and was feeling a little more knowledgeable. I became more anxious to implement some of my own perceptions So I started thinking about going back to school outside of nursing or medicine, but doing something that would allow me to go back and work with mental patients. So, I looked into the program in rehabilitation counseling.

Another woman, age 50, who had been teaching in a nursing college in New Guinea as a missionary, said that she was beginning

a master's degree in education in order to maintain her job as an instructor.

One out of five men in the study indicated that his history of employment had not led to his educational interests. Comments made during the interviews suggest that for these men the decision-making process led them to perceive graduate school as a means of making a change from an earlier choice of employment.

A 42-year-old man who was divorced and unemployed at the time he decided to enter a doctoral program in geography, in the following comment expressed the need to leave his employment history behind him: "I had already lost my job and my money By coming back to school I more or less burned the bridges behind me. I figured from here on out, I have only new beginnings."

Another man, age 52, had been forced to retire from a career in scouting when he unexpectedly found himself needing hip surgery. In an interview he expressed his feelings about a career change:

My surgery and retirement from scouting, along with the idea of graduate school, posed a threat and an opportunity for me The biggest thing in my mind was could I do it? . . . I had been interested in gerontology, and suddenly I had two years and disability money to do graduate work I traded one hip for a Ph.D. and a change in my life I wish I had made 20 years ago.

For some women and men in the study the decision to begin graduate study evolved from their employment experience as it reflected their sense of self. A 40-year-old woman talked about her decision to begin an M.B.A. in accounting:

I had lost two jobs in a row. In both cases I was told it wasn't because I wasn't a good employee, but I still had that sinking feeling underneath that if I had done a better job, if I had worked a little harder, they would have tried a little harder to keep me on.

In an interview a 42-year-old woman referred to her employment history:

I had finished my undergraduate degree two years ago in psychology. I took a full-time job as assistant to a department head in a county government office. It bothered me a lot that my job classification was executive secretary. So I decided to gather some experience, go back to school in labor and industrial relations, and look for employment which would be more what I have in mind for myself.

Based upon the interviews and comments written on the questionnaires, it appears that employed men more often than employed women received financial support and "release time" from their employers to attend graduate school. For example, a 37-year-old man in the College of Business reported that the corporate officers in his firm volunteered to write letters of recommendation, cover costs, and authorize time away from the job.

Human Resources

In the process of deciding to enter graduate school, 95.8 percent of the women and men in the study talked with someone. Table 4.13 depicts the distribution of graduate students who talked with resource persons they perceived as useful.

Only five of the graduate students reported talking with no one. Three of the five adults were living alone, one with a spouse, and one with a spouse and two children.

TABLE 4.13.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Human Resources.

Talked with Someone	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	95.8	95.7	96.1
Did not	4.2	4.3	3.9

$$\chi^2 = .013$$

D.F. = 1

Significance level = .9080

Spouses were consulted by more mid-life graduate students than any other resource persons, whether they were currently married or not. Table 4.14 illustrates the distribution of married women and men who used spouses as human resources.

TABLE 4.14.--Percentage Distribution of Married Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Spouses.

Talked with Spouse	Total (N=91) %	Women (N=45) %	Men (N=46) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Yes	93.4	93.3	93.5
No	6.6	6.7	6.5

In addition to the married graduate students who reported having talked with their spouses, 11.1 percent of the women who were no longer married also indicated that they had talked with their spouses, presumably their former husbands. A 40-year-old woman with three children commented that her estranged spouse had refused to pay her tuition and had "provided overwhelming 'personal' barriers." In the decision-making process, the woman respondent acquired a legal separation, obtained a part-time job, applied for financial aid, and accepted the encouragement of her relatives and friends to enter graduate school.

Children were not talked with by many of the graduate student parents. Of all respondents, 90.0 percent reported having one or more children. As Table 4.15 illustrates, 64.8 percent of the graduate student parents did not include their children in their report of human resources used in the process of deciding whether to enter graduate school.

TABLE 4.15.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Student Parents who Talked with Children.

Talked with Children	Total (N=108) %	Women (N=61) %	Men (N=47) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	35.2 (N=38)	50.8 (N=31)	14.9 (N= 7)
Did not	64.8 (N=70)	49.2 (N=30)	85.1 (N=40)

Faculty and graduate students were perceived by the respondents as the most useful human resources, following spouses. Educational resources were used by 60.0 percent of the respondents in the study as shown in Table 4.16.

TABLE 4.16.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Faculty and Graduate Students.

Talked with Educational Resources	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	60.0	60.9	58.8
Did not	40.0	39.1	41.2

Friends are an important human resource in the decision-making process, especially for women, as is evident in the data presented in Table 4.17.

Of all the women respondents (N = 69) 66.7 percent reported talking with their friends about returning to school. An even higher percentage of women who were not married reported talking with friends (87.5 percent), and those women who did not talk with their friends reported that it might have been helpful if they had.

Men respondents, on the other hand, indicated talking with their friends in only 45.1 percent of the cases. Only one man who

TABLE 4.17.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Friends.

Talked with Friends	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	57.5	66.7	45.1
Did not	42.5	33.3	54.9

did not talk with any friends indicated that he might have found that helpful, and he lived alone.

Employment resources were consulted by 56.2 percent of the respondents, as the data presented in Table 4.18 show, in spite of the fact that 87.5 percent of the graduate students reported being employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school.

TABLE 4.18.--Percentage Distribution of Employed Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Employment Resources.

Employment Resources	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	56.2	52.6	60.4
Did not	43.8	47.4	39.6

It may be that some of the women and men were entering graduate school in anticipation of an occupational change which they did not wish to discuss with an employer. Or, others may have avoided the subject in anticipation of an employer's criticism, as one 35-year-old woman expressed it: "If my supervisor knew I were taking two classes now . . . ! She doesn't feel an agency should put you through school."

Professional resources used by the respondents in the decision-making process included: clergy, physicians, attorneys, bankers, and professional counselors. As is illustrated in Table 4.19, more women than men chose to talk with professional resources.

TABLE 4.19.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students who Talked with Professional Resources.

Talked with Professional Resources	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Did talk	19.2	24.6	11.8
Did not	80.8	75.4	88.2

Three occupational roles appeared more frequently than others as human resources in the reports of both women and men respondents: physicians, professional counselors and clergy. Some of the graduate students talked in the interviews about the ways in which

they had found professional resources to be helpful. A 40-year-old woman told her story which included the help of a psychiatrist:

It started a few years ago when my father died. I lost my job then. I went back to school, but during that time I was hospitalized for psychiatric care. Then I got a divorce and changed cities . . . I guess the next thing was I found out I was pregnant. I lost the job I had then, and then my son was born When I was in the hospital last fall, I started thinking about coming back to study. The psychiatrist encouraged me to leave the hospital for a few days and find out what I had to do.

In another interview, a 37-year-old man talked about a clergyman who had helped him in the decision-making process:

The clergyman who encouraged me is not a Zambian; he is an American. He became a good friend of mine, and encouraged me to upgrade my professional knowledge When some of my friends said, "Now education won't make you rich," I replied, "I may not be as rich as you, but God has given each one of us a kind of defined light in life" My friend, the clergyman, persuaded me to study and wait, and one day I should contribute to the education of our people in Zambia.

Encouragement and/or discouragement could be found in the reports of the respondents regarding the human resources used. Table 4.20 depicts the responses of the women and men graduate students in relation to the question of feeling encouraged or discouraged by anyone.

Asking the question, "By whom did you feel encouraged?" resulted in multiple responses by the women and men in the study. Multiple responses were also received in reply to the question, "By whom did you feel discouraged in the decision-making process?" Consequently, a statistical analysis was done of the two broad questions in Table 4.20, and a descriptive analysis was completed with the specific responses.

TABLE 4.20.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Feelings of Encouragement/Discouragement.

	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Encouraged*	90.0	95.7	82.4
Not Encouraged	10.0	4.3	17.6
Discouraged**	37.5	43.5	29.4
Not Discouraged	62.5	56.5	70.6
* $\chi^2 = 5.763$	D.F. = 1	Significance level = .0164	
** $\chi^2 = 2.476$	D.F. = 1	Significance level = .1156	

It is apparent from the data that in general the respondents felt more encouraged than discouraged by the persons with whom they talked. It is also evident that women reported feeling both more encouraged and more discouraged by others than men did in the decision-making process. The differences between the women and men respondents are statistically significant in regard to feelings of encouragement but not discouragement.

While 90 percent of the mid-life graduate students reportedly felt encouragement from at least one person, it is clear in Table 4.21 that the women and men respondents did not always feel encouraged by the same human resources.

TABLE 4.21.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Sources of Encouragement.*

Encouraged by:	Total		Women		Men	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total	120	100.0	69	100.0	51	100.0
Spouse	77 (N=91)	84.6	42 (N=45)	93.3	35 (N=46)	76.0
Children and/or relatives	48	40.0	38	55.1	10	19.6
Friends	61	50.8	44	63.8	17	33.3
Educational resources	48	40.0	30	43.5	18	35.3
Professional resources	15	12.5	10	14.5	5	9.8
Employment resources	54 (N=105)	51.4	30 (N=57)	52.6	24 (N=48)	50.0

* Multiple responses were encouraged.

Specifically, more women than men reported feeling encouraged by all human resources. Total frequencies were adjusted for "spouses" and "employment resources" to account for only those respondents who reported being married and/or employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school.

Encouragement apparently was perceived by the graduate students as anything from words of moral support to commitments of financial assistance and sharing of responsibilities. A 36-year-old woman with five children observed:

I simply would not have entered a graduate program without my husband's being willing to say directly, "I'll help take over some of the responsibilities at home." With five children there's just more to do in a day than one person can possibly do and go to school.

Educational resources, particularly faculty members, were reported to be sources of encouragement. As a 42-year-old woman commented:

I had a particularly good relationship developed over a couple of terms with a woman in the psychology department. She encouraged me very much. I had to write a paper for her--a kind of autobiographical thing When she encouraged me to go on; that was all I needed

Employment resources appeared to be sources of encouragement for half of the women and men employed. A 38-year-old man beginning a master's degree in engineering reported that his employer had offered him 75 percent of his salary on a sabbatical leave with the expressed approval of his "fellow workers."

Encouragement from persons perceived by the mid-life graduate students as major relationships seemed to be important. What is striking are the differences reported by the women and men in regard to the human resources used and the encouragement or discouragement felt by them.

Men apparently regarded communication with their wives as more useful in the decision-making process than any other relationship. More men who were married reported feeling encouraged by their wives (76.1 percent) than by any other person. Second to their spouses, men reported feeling encouraged by their employers (50.0 percent).

Women, on the other hand, seemed to regard a broad range of relationships as important in the decision-making process. Like

men, more women who were married reported feeling encouraged by their spouses (93.3 percent) than any other resource person. Second to their husbands, however, women reported feeling encouraged by their friends (63.8 percent). A 35-year-old woman expressed the general response of the women graduate students when she said: "I found that for most of my friends, if they had something full in their own lives that was taking a lot of time and attention, they were supportive of my decision." A lively response came from a 42-year-old woman who reported feeling encouraged by a friend, saying, "My lover supported my conviction that I was definitely not too old to pursue the doctorate!"

Both women and men expressed feeling ambivalent support from their spouses, friends and relatives. A 40-year-old man commented that his wife "had mixed feelings about my going back to school . . . I think she liked the idea of the ultimate goal, but she wasn't too fond of what all you had to go through to get there."

A 41-year-old woman said, "My husband gave me a mixed message, my friends felt it wasn't worth the work involved, my mother thought I would be too busy--for her!" Another woman, 39-years-old, expressed her wish for more encouragement when she said:

Well, I wouldn't say my husband discouraged me. He just was not really excited about my going on (for graduate work). He doesn't interfere It's just not being really involved, which is sad I am not sure where my kids are coming from. I don't feel support nor excitement from them I feel like a loner at this point--kind of plugging along.

In some cases, the respondents reported feeling overt discouragement from the persons with whom they talked in the decision-making process. A summary of the graduate students' responses is given in Table 4.22.

TABLE 4.22.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Sources of Discouragement.

Discouraged by	Total (N=120)		Women (N=69)		Men (N=51)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Spouse and/or children	12	13.2	10	22.2	2	4.3
Relatives and/or friends	24	20.0	16	23.2	8	15.7
Educational resources	6	5.0	5	7.2	1	2.0
Professional resources	2	1.7	1	1.4	1	2.0
Employment resources	12 (N=105)	11.4	6 (N=57)	10.5	6 (N=48)	12.5

It is clear from the data that most mid-life graduate students felt encouraged by at least some of the human resources they perceived as useful in the decision-making process. Only 10.0 percent of the respondents reported feeling encouraged by no one (nine men and three women). At the same time, 37.5 percent of the women and men indicated that they felt discouraged by one or more persons.

Both women and men reported feeling more discouragement from relatives and/or friends than from any other human resource. Twenty-three percent of the women respondents and 16 percent of the men indicated feeling discouraged by their parents, children and friends. A 37-year-old woman who was supporting three children as a single-parent reported, "My relatives discouraged me by strongly suggesting I quit playing around at school and get a regular job."

Another woman, 36-years-old, said, "One close friend of mine asked me, 'What do you want to do that for? Don't you think you have enough to do with five kids?'" It may be that women, particularly mothers, are sufficiently aware of the multiple demands which going to school would place on most women, that they are more likely than others to perceive and articulate the drawbacks.

Sometimes it was the children's attitudes which were felt to be discouraging. A 39-year-old woman with three children had completed her undergraduate degree two years before beginning graduate school. She commented: "My children were tired of supporting me (emotionally and with housework) and wanted to return to a 'normal' family life."

Older than most of the respondents, a 50-year-old woman, divorced with one child, reported that she felt discouraged by other women, "especially parents with children about to embark on careers. They felt I was using resources which should be available to younger people."

Finally in regard to human resources, 35 percent of the graduate students in the study indicated that they might have found

it helpful to talk with some persons with whom they had not in the decision-making process. Forty-six percent of the women and 20 percent of the men reported that they might have found talking with other human resources to be helpful.

A Chi Square test was used to determine whether women and men respondents differed significantly in their reports of additional human resources who might have been consulted. Results indicated a statistically significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 9.237$, D.F. = 1, Significance level = .0024).

Specifically, 20 percent of the respondents thought in retrospect that they would have benefited from talking with educational resource people, particularly graduate students already in their program. Other human resources perceived by the women graduate students as potentially helpful were: employment resources (21.8 percent), professional resources (banker, attorney, counselor, clergy, and physician), and spouse and/or children (each mentioned by one woman). Men respondents mentioned several resources as possibly helpful: clergy, relatives and/or friends (15.3 percent each), spouse, employer, or professional resources (banker, attorney, and physician) each cited by one or two men.

In summary, human resources serve a vital role in the decision-making process of both women and men. Used to acquire information, gain moral support and understanding, as well as to obtain practical assistance, the family, friends and community resource people in a person's environment are important.

While human resources affect the decision-making process of both women and men, the human relationships in a woman's life seem to be more closely tied to the individual's sense of self-in-world than the relationships in a man's life. Women appear to be closely affiliated with a network of persons who provide both encouragement and discouragement in day-to-day and major life decisions.

Conditions and Bargains (Trade-Offs)

Any decision is considered in light of existing or anticipated conditions which are perceived by the decision-maker as supportive, interfering, or prohibitive. For example, one mid-life adult may consider entering graduate school on the sole condition that the decision be supported by that person's spouse. Whereas another adult, hypothetically, may consider the possibility only on the condition that financial aid be available, that classes not interfere with family life, community involvement or leisure time, and that all the human relationships in the person's life be supportive of the decision.

The process by which two or more persons attempt to agree upon the conditions under which a decision will be made is called bargaining. The process may, however, involve entering into an agreement with oneself or an "Ultimate Being." The resulting agreements may be called bargains or trade-offs.

Specific conditions and bargains were perceived by the women and men in the study as necessary in order to follow through with the decision to enter graduate school. The data are presented in Table 4.23.

TABLE 4.23.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and the Conditions/Bargains Anticipated in Entering Graduate School.

Conditions/Bargains	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Postpone/forfeit occupational opportunity	26.7	27.5	25.5
Postpone/forfeit leisure time	76.7	76.8	76.5
Use family financial resources	31.7	36.2	25.5
Seek financial aid	25.8	26.1	25.5
Postpone/forfeit relationship(s)	13.3	17.4	7.8
Reduce community activities	41.7	50.7	29.4
Adjust family responsibilities	60.8	69.6	49.0

Leisure time was the aspect of the mid-life graduate students' lives most frequently cited as a necessary trade-off with the decision to enter graduate school. Seventy-seven percent of the women and men felt that they would have to postpone or forfeit their leisure time if they began graduate work.

When asked what they would be doing in their leisure time if they were not in graduate school, some of the adults indicated that they would be spending more time with their families, enjoying more social life, or pursuing hobbies or sports. It appears that both women and men perceive leisure as an expendable use of time, and

view the reduction or elimination of leisure time as a legitimate condition under which they would enter graduate school.

Expectations regarding family responsibilities had to be adjusted in order for two-thirds of the women (69.6 percent) and about half of the men (49.0 percent) to feel that they could act on their decision to enter graduate school. For one woman, age 43, adjusting her expectations meant

switching my priorities in terms of basic housekeeping and mothering. I had to change my values to go along with my decision I changed the value I used to place on things, and increased the value I place on my self-esteem.

A 37-year-old man had to adjust his expectations for the care of his aging parents in another country. Another man, 52-years-old, admitted that he had had a difficult time making the decision to enter graduate school full-time while the family became dependent upon his wife's income. "I know it shouldn't bother me," he said, "but it does. That agreement made the decision possible, but it was a hard bargain with my ol' male ego!"

Not all of the respondents in the study felt they would have to adjust their expectations regarding their families. For some graduate students, especially men, entering graduate school would have little impact on their perceived responsibilities which often were identified by them as economic. For a few graduate students, existing conditions were viewed as ideal. A 44-year-old woman commented:

I had already made many adjustments in the way my family lives in that I do not do the housework or laundry My children do the laundry, my husband helps with the cooking, and we have a twice weekly housekeeper.

Community involvement was perceived by some graduate students as a necessary trade-off in the decision-making process. Fifty-one percent of the women respondents viewed the idea of entering graduate school at mid-life as possible if they postponed or forfeited their commitments in community activities. Fewer men (29.4 percent) expected to have to alter their community involvement. Both women and men anticipated the need to forfeit such activities as scouts, school committees, church functions, neighborhood associations, and speaking engagements.

Plans for the use of family finances appeared in the bargaining process of some women graduate students (36.2 percent) and fewer men (25.5 percent). Family funds needed for an adult's educational expenses might have been used for travel, purchasing land to build a house, or children's college education. One 43-year-old woman simply said, "If I hadn't planned on going to school, we could have paid up all our bills!"

Personal relationships were viewed as negotiable aspects of the bargaining process by some women (17.4 percent) and fewer men (7.8 percent). A 44-year-old woman gave a good example of postponing relationships in order to act on her decision, when she said:

We had just moved when I returned to school to get my M.B.A. It's turned out to be a very nice community for us. We began to make a lot of friends. But I know I would not have the time really to cultivate those friendships There are a lot of people out there who I hope are going to wait for me

Occupational opportunities would have to be postponed or forfeited from the viewpoint of 27.5 percent of the women respondents and 25.5 percent of the men. As a 42-year-old man reflected:

I was well-established in my career. I've had publications and I've spoken at international seminars I felt that if I wanted to stay in that business there would be ample opportunity for me But I figured I would sacrifice for a while, get my doctorate, and go from there.

Perceiving an occupational opportunity at the same time a decision is being considered which would require making a choice between a job and continuing education can be difficult. A 36-year-old woman commented:

I had an opportunity for a promotion to a supervisory position There were a number of options available besides going back to school. That made it harder because the things I was asked to do were opportunities I was interested in.

Effects of the Decision to Enter Graduate School

Every individual making a decision experiences certain consequences, some of which seem to affect other people. Who the graduate students felt had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school is shown in Table 4.24.

Only four graduate students, two women and two men, reported feeling that no one had been affected by their decision. One of the women reported living alone, not having talked with anyone about entering a graduate program, not feeling encouraged or discouraged by anyone, and with no other considerations in mind. She also was registered as a Hispanic student, and may have been living away from her home and friends. Another respondent who felt no one had been

TABLE 4.24.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students and Persons Affected by Decision to Enter Graduate School.

Persons Affected	Total (N=120) %	Women (N=69) %	Men (N=51) %
Spouse and/or children	85.0	84.1	86.3
Relatives	30.0	33.3	25.5
Friends	38.3	50.7	21.6
Employer	48.3	40.6	58.8
No one	3.3	2.9	3.9

affected by his decision was an Asian man who also may have been separated from the special relationships in his life.

Spouse/children.--Most of the women and men graduate students (85 percent) reported that their spouse and/or children had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school. At times it was the attitudes of family members which seemed to be affected, as in the case of a 36-year-old woman who commented:

At first my husband loved it. He thought it was great, my being in the den studying, because he had always been in the den studying That's really deteriorating a lot He keeps telling me he didn't know I was going to be such a serious student.

In other cases, the decision resulted in a shift in the role expectations of the mid-life graduate students. A 35-year-old woman

confessed that she had not fully understood what effect her decision would have on her family, as she said:

I knew my family would have to assume more responsibility, but I didn't fully integrate that into my understanding. I thought I was superwoman and could probably still do it all It just came to the point where I just couldn't do anything So my husband quit teaching his second job which gave him a little more time [at home].

Another woman talked about the changes in her expectations and a fairly typical breakdown in communications at home.

My five children (the oldest is fourteen) were very receptive to the idea of my going to school. They didn't complain about packing their own lunches, or simply making sure they have the clothes they need What has changed is that I'm not available to them every minute. A good example is this morning, getting up, someone said, "There's no cereal!" Now, here it is time for me to be leaving the house, and someone says, "There's no cereal!" I just blew up. I just can't function like that. I expect them to let me know those kinds of things ahead of time.

Many of the graduate students indicated that their decision had had a positive impact on their children, in several cases providing opportunities for new experiences with schools, friends, and occasionally, cultures. A 37-year-old man reported that his children had had to "become more responsible and learn to live in another country, learn the language, and adapt to the culture and customs of the U.S.A."

A 52-year-old man shared his feelings about the positive effect he felt his decision had had on his children, when he said:

The children have had to do the things I would have done. It can be a good thing. One of my interests in gerontology has to do with what a family does when somebody isn't there When you change who's doing what, there is the chance for all the members of a family to be "out of sync" with each other Tasks are picked up, or they rebel The plusses so far outweigh the minuses.

In general, the positive effects upon the graduate students' immediate families seemed to outweigh the negative effects of the decision to enter graduate school at mid-life. The effects of the decision were not felt by the graduate students to be as positive for relatives, friends, or employers, however.

Relatives.--One frustration in relationships expressed by the mid-life graduate students pertained to the time constraints which they felt had to be imposed upon contact with relatives. A woman, age 40, articulated the conflicts expressed by several women when she said:

My 75-year-old mother is upset because I don't drive the four hours down to see her as often. My siblings still expect me to host the family reunions, write once a week, and keep in touch. I'm past feeling guilty and ignore the comments, but I wish they could understand I'm now pursuing three careers: family, teacher, and student.

Two international students expressed concern about the ways in which their relatives may have been affected by their decision to begin graduate study in another country. A 36-year-old man talked about the responsibility he felt for his brothers and sisters after the death of their father, "because I am the eldest." Another man, age 37, had been caring for a nephew

who came to live with us when his father passed on and his mother had no job. He was shot by a bullet and just sits on his legs When we left he had no proper place to stay until I found him a home with my friend, the clergyman.

Friends.--The effect upon friends seemed to be felt more by women than by men. Fifty-one percent of the women respondents compared with 22 percent of the men reported that their friends had been

affected by their decision to enter graduate school. Some women respondents indicated that the greatest effect had been the change in their availability to friends for such shared activities as baby-sitting, carpooling, having coffee, or jogging at noon. Other women expressed regret that they had not felt able to take the time to "be there through the hard times" when a friend needed someone to listen.

In cases where the decision to enter graduate school was going to involve a geographical move, some respondents reported a change in attitude among their friends. As a 37-year-old man reported:

Before I came here, my friends knew I was going to come for a Ph.D. Many of them were my close friends, but when they knew I was leaving, I could sense that the relationship with some of them was lessening. They did not associate with me as much as before.

In other examples, the absence of major friendships seemed to support the decision to move and to begin graduate study. A divorced woman, age 35, observed that among her friends "there wasn't any man in the picture--no commitment that was strong enough to keep me from moving on."

Employers.--If the effect upon friends was felt more by women than by men, the effect upon employers was felt more by men who were employed than by women who were employed. Sixty-three percent of the men who were employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school reported that their employers and/or professional associates had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school. Forty-nine percent of the women graduate students reported feeling that their employers had been affected by their decision.

Both women and men seemed to feel that their decision had resulted in more responsibilities being assumed by their professional/business colleagues. For example, a 35-year-old woman who had been working as a secretary reported that the people in her office had had "to cover" for her because she had to take some of her classes during the day.

Other graduate students talked about the effect upon their employers stemming from the decision to earn an advanced degree which would add to their professional mobility. A 36-year-old man who had been working as a missionary said:

The Church has been affected by my decision in that I am staying away from Kenya longer than expected. I also don't expect to remain in Kenya as a missionary as long as I had planned because the graduate degree will allow for greater mobility and employment opportunities.

Graduate Students.--While the study excluded the graduate students themselves from the questions regarding who had been affected by their decision, it was clear from comments in the interviews that some of the women respondents felt pressed by their multiple roles. One woman, age 35, described her feelings when she said: "I had to devote myself to my family so they did not feel slighted, yet, do a huge amount of graduate studying--like balancing in the middle of a teeter-totter." Another woman, 43-years-old, commented that she felt "only a part of many worlds, belonging to none."

For other mid-life graduate students the decision to enter graduate school had resulted in exposure to new ideas which

sometimes challenged old assumptions. In one case, a 37-year-old man working as a religious educator smiled when he said he had found it "interesting trying to dove-tail psychodynamic theory with my theology as a life-long Catholic."

Both women and men reported being affected by their decision as a means of hope for the future. A 36-year-old woman stated that she expected to feel better about herself as a working person, while a woman, age 44, observed that she was becoming a much more independent person. Feeling hopeful about his future, a 42-year-old man commented that:

Coming back to school was sort of a retreat--an escape. I looked at it as a period of recovery from . . . a severe emotional problem: the loss of a sense of credibility, the erosion of my self-respect. I needed a complete change, and going back to school seemed like a really favorable change at the time. It has accomplished what I wanted to accomplish, and I think that when I leave here I will go on to do what I want to do.

The consequences of any decision may not be fully anticipated, as the graduate students indicated in their comments about considerations they might have given but did not to the decision to enter graduate school. Both women and men mentioned financial considerations such as losing their economic independence, applying for financial aid, or the actual costs of travel, books and child-care.

A 37-year-old man thought he might have considered what it would be like to become a student again, after having been a teacher. A woman, age 44, thought she might have considered how much physical and emotional energy graduate study would require. Feeling very positive about her decision, a 43-year-old woman commented that she had not considered how much fun graduate school would be!

Life Change Events.--Many of the adults (70 percent) reported that some kind of life event or change had precipitated their decision to enter graduate school. It should be noted that in the study a distinction was made between events which had occurred in the lives of the graduate students in the past two years, and specific events during that time which had served as catalysts for the decision to enter graduate school. The responses of the graduate students are presented in Table 4.25.

TABLE 4.25.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students who Cited Life Change Events as Catalysts in Making the Decision to Enter Graduate School.

Life Change Event	Total		Women		Men	
	N=120	%	N=69	%	N=51	%
Marital	9	7.5	9	13.0	0	0.0
Financial	15	12.5	9	13.0	6	11.8
Health	4	3.3	2	2.9	2	3.9
Employment	49	40.8	29	42.0	20	39.2
Relationships	28	23.3	22	31.8	6	11.8
Community activity	9	7.5	6	8.7	3	5.9
Death	5	4.2	4	5.8	1	2.0
New family member	1	.8	1	1.4	0	0.0
Change in residence	14	11.7	9	13.0	5	9.8
Personal achievement	12	10.0	7	10.0	5	9.8
Child entered school	9	7.5	7	10.0	2	3.9
Child left home	10	8.3	8	11.6	2	3.9
Spouse's employment	9	7.5	5	7.2	4	7.8
Spouse's student status	7	5.8	5	7.2	2	3.9
No changes	36	30.0	15	21.7	21	41.2

Of the fifteen categories of change suggested in the questionnaire, events related to employment ranked highest among all graduate students as having prompted the decision to enter graduate school. Of the respondents, 42 percent of the women and 39.2 percent of the men indicated that a new position, termination of employment, increased job responsibilities, a transfer to a new location, or a requirement for continued employment, helped to bring about their decision to enroll in graduate study.

A major change in relationships ranked second among the life events which served as catalysts, with 23.3 percent of the graduate students reporting changes in relationships with their spouses, employers, children, relatives and/or friends. More women (31.8 percent) than men (11.8 percent) attributed such changes to their decision to enter graduate school. A 35-year-old woman described the changes in relationships within her family which had precipitated her decision: "The fact that my children are living with their father in the wake of our divorce has relieved me of the day-to-day responsibility that made going back to school possible in a realistic sense."

Three other life event categories were mentioned by at least ten percent (N = 12) of the respondents as having helped to bring about their decision. A change in finances, in most cases a better financial situation, was cited by 12.5 percent of the graduate students as having prompted the decision. A change in residence was reported by 11.7 percent of the adults, and a personal achievement

was indicated by ten percent of the women and men as having precipitated the decision to enter graduate school.

In other areas, life events seemed to prompt the decision for fewer adults. For example, changes in marital status were considered to be catalytic events by 7.5 percent of the graduate students (all women). A new family member was viewed as a precipitating event by only one woman and by no men.

More women than men also reported catalytic changes in areas including changes in the student status of a spouse, a change in community involvement, a child entering school, a child leaving home, and the death of someone. A 39-year-old woman whose mother had died expressed a sense of urgency in her decision to begin graduate school when she said:

You don't know how close someone is to you until they die. When my mother died I felt an urge to obtain something more than what she had had an opportunity to do. I decided then to pursue what I wanted, and not wait to do it later It made me appreciate each day a little bit more.

Another woman graduate student, age 35, talked about the death of her father in relation to her decision to enter graduate school, as she said:

When my father died, that was sort of like the last support system. I really recognized myself as being on my own, and would have to control the destiny of my own life That prompted the decision about going to graduate school.

Not all the respondents viewed recent changes in their lives as precipitating events related to their decision to enter graduate school. Of the total number of women and men in the study thirty-six

graduate students reported that no changes in their lives had served as catalysts in the decision-making process.

It is noteworthy that 21.7 percent of the women and 41.2 percent of the men did not perceive any life change events as precipitating their decision, and they differ in a descriptive sense from the total group of respondents. The characteristics of graduate students who did not identify catalytic events are presented in Table 4.26.

Compared with the total group of respondents, the graduate students who did not identify any life change events as having precipitated their decision to enter graduate school, appeared to be younger and were more likely to be married with few or no children. Forty-one percent of all the men in the study compared with 22 percent of the women appeared in the "no life change" group of respondents, suggesting that more women than men viewed their decision to enter graduate school at a particular time as associated with specific happenings in their lives.

Other comparisons indicate that fewer of the "no life change" graduate students (19.4%) were enrolled in the College of Education than respondents in the "change" group (34.5 percent). More "no life change" adults than respondents in the "change" group were enrolled in Business (19.4 percent compared with 15.5 percent), or Lifelong Education (19.4 percent compared with 10.7 percent), or Social Science (16.7 percent compared with 13.1 percent).

TABLE 4.26.--Percentage Distribution of Mid-Life Graduate Students Who Did Not Cite Life Change Events Compared with Those Who Cited Changes as Catalysts in Making the Decision to Enter Graduate School.

Characteristics of Respondents	"No Change" Respondents		"Change" Respondents	
	N	%	N	%
Total	N=36	100.0	N=84	100.0
Gender:				
Female	15	21.7	54	64.3
Male	21	41.2	30	35.7
Ages:				
35-39	22	61.1	42	50.0
40-44	10	27.8	24	28.6
45-49	3	8.3	11	13.1
50+	1	2.8	7	8.3
Marital:				
Married	29	80.6	62	73.8
Separated/Divorced	3	8.3	21	25.0
Children:				
None	6	16.7	6	7.1
1	5	13.9	9	10.7
2-3	20	55.6	55	65.5
4+	5	13.9	14	16.6
Lives:				
Alone	1	2.8	11	13.1
With Spouse	5	13.9	3	3.6
With Spouse/Child	25	69.4	55	65.5
With Child only	3	8.3	11	13.1
Unrelated Peer	2	5.6	4	4.8

A higher percentage of "no life change" adults had pursued full-time education since completing their undergraduate degrees than respondents from the "change" group (41.7 percent compared with 25.0 percent).

In the decision-making process, compared with the adults who identified life change events as catalysts, the "no life change" respondents reported talking with fewer persons (with the exception of their spouses), feeling encouraged by fewer persons (except for their spouses), and feeling discouraged by fewer persons (with the exception of relatives and friends). They also viewed their decision as having less effect on other persons, with the slight exception of their employers, than did the other respondents.

Compared with the women and men who perceived one or more events as catalytic, the "no life change" adults did not feel as high a need to postpone, forfeit, or adjust conditions in their lives in order to follow through with their decision. It may be interpreted from the descriptive differences between the two groups of graduate students that the adults not perceiving life change events as catalysts may be less invested in human relationships and/or may not have associated in their own minds the changes in their lives with their decision to enter a graduate program.

While the "no life change" graduate students did not associate changes with their decision, most of the women and men accounted for one or more life events as having taken place, such as gaining a new family member, getting married, the death of a spouse or a

parent, changing residence, changes in relationships, changes in health, beginning a new job, losing a job, a child entering school or leaving home, a spouse entering school or beginning employment, changes in community involvement, or a personal achievement.

Finally, compared with the "change" group of respondents, the "no life change" group included proportionately more international students and fewer white, U.S. citizens. Approximately 17 percent of the "no life change" group were non-U.S. citizens, compared with seven percent of the "change" group. The higher percentage of international students in the "no life change" group of respondents may suggest a cultural bias on the question of life change events: see recommendations for further study in Chapter V.

Summary

The focus of the study was the decision-making process experienced by adult graduate students who had entered Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80. The research questions centered upon the similarities and differences which might be found between women and men as they made the decision to begin a graduate program during the life-cycle period of middle adulthood.

While a full discussion of the findings appears in Chapter V, the major findings of the study were as follows:

Description of the Respondents

Age.--Fifty-three percent of the women and men in the study comprised the youngest age group (35-39) with the remaining 47 percent

comprising the other three age groups combined (40-50+). The women graduate students tended to be somewhat older than the men.

Marital Status.--Three-fourths of the women and men were married at the time they entered graduate school. An additional 30 percent of the women and six percent of the men had been married at one time.

Parental Status.--Ninety percent of the adult graduate students were parents, 20 percent of the women being single-parents.

Employment Status.--Eighty-seven percent of the women and men had been employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school, a figure which dropped with enrollment.

College Enrollment.--Eleven colleges were represented among the total number of respondents, with 74 percent of the women and men enrolled in four colleges: Education, Business, Lifelong Education or Social Science.

Level of Degree Program.--Three times as many graduate students were enrolled in master's degree programs as were enrolled in doctoral programs.

Race and Nationality.--The respondents were a group of predominantly white U.S. citizens. Approximately ten percent of the graduate students were registered as international students; five percent as non-white U.S. citizens.

The Decision-Making Process

Educational History.--Both women and men in the study were accustomed to perceiving education as a resource in their lives. Of all the graduate students, 76 percent had continued their education in some way since completing their undergraduate degrees. Persistence in a graduate program was high, evidenced by the fact that 83 percent of the women and men had continued their enrollment without interruption from matriculation through the spring term of 1979-80.

Employment History.--The percentage of employment among men at the time they decided to enter graduate school (95 percent) was greater than the percentage of employment among women (62 percent). Both women and men reduced their employment commitment after enrolling in graduate school. More women respondents than men attributed past employment to their choice of a field of graduate study.

Human Resources.--Nearly all (96 percent) of the women and men graduate students reported talking with someone during the decision-making process. More adults reported talking with their spouses than any other resource person, followed by educational resources, friends, employment resources, children and/or relatives, and professional resources. At least half of all the graduate students reported feeling encouraged by their spouses and friends, and only a few reported feeling discouraged by anyone. More than one-third of the adults indicated that they might have found it helpful to talk with some persons whom they had not in the decision-making process. More than half of that group thought they would have

benefited from talking with educational resource people, particularly graduate students already in their program.

Conditions and Bargains (Trade-Offs).--More than three-fourths of the graduate students in the study had anticipated having to postpone or forfeit use of leisure time in order to follow through with their decision to enter graduate school. The condition cited most frequently after leisure time was having to adjust expectations regarding family responsibilities. In general, more women than men reported having to make adjustments in their lives before carrying out their decision.

Consequences (Effects).--Only three percent of the respondents in the study reported feeling that no one had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school. Most of the adults reported that their spouse and/or children had been affected, many times indicating that the consequences had been positive rather than negative. More than 50 percent of the women reported that their friends had been affected by their decision, while only 22 percent of the men reported the same feeling. Fifty-nine percent of the men compared with 41 percent of the women reported feeling that their employers had been affected.

Life Change Events.--Of all the respondents, 70 percent reported that some kind of life event or change had served as a catalyst in their decision to enter graduate school. Events related to employment ranked highest among the graduate students' responses

as having prompted their decision. A major change in relationship(s) ranked second, followed by a change in finances, a change in residence, and a personal achievement. Of the total number of women and men in the study, 30 percent reported that they did not feel that any life event had precipitated their decision. Compared with the adults who perceived one or more events as catalysts, the "no life change" graduate students seemed to be less invested in human relationships and may not have associated in their own minds the changes in their lives with their decision to enter a graduate program.

Conclusion

The graduate students in the study provided evidence that the decision-making process for adults at mid-life differs between women and men, primarily in regard to human resources, but including educational history, employment history, conditions and bargains, consequences, and life change events.

In general, women at mid-life make decisions in a complex network of human relationships, experiencing multiple consequences and anticipating positive changes in their lives. Men at mid-life make decisions more independently than women do, experiencing fewer predictable consequences, and also anticipating positive changes in their lives as a result of their decisions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

To perceive that present reality falls short of imagined possibilities is to be confronted with a need to make a decision. For any person the choice may be to alter some aspect of present circumstances or it may be to settle for what exists in light of the perceived costs of change. In either case, at the point of recognizing a conflict, a decision-making process has begun and a transition period initiated. For in spite of the outcome, the person in interaction with the environment has already begun to change and must seek an altered state of being.

Decision-making, then, becomes a key process by which persons in general, and adults in particular, deal with change in their lives. In light of current theories about adult life-cycle development, a reasonable question seemed to be whether women and men might manage the decision-making process differently, particularly in middle adulthood when gender differences are believed to be their greatest.

It has been suggested that in times of transition adults use educational opportunities to seek redirection (Weathersby 1978). With that concept in mind, a study was designed to explore the

differential process by which graduate school was chosen by women and men, ages 35 and older, as a means of effecting change.

A summary of the study, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, comprise the content of Chapter V.

Summary of the Study

The Problem

The purpose of the study was to explore the similarities and differences in the decision-making process by which adult women and men, ages 35 and older, chose to enter graduate school at Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80. The specific purposes were to study the differential effects of educational and employment history upon women and men in the decision to enter graduate school; to identify the human resources used by the women and men in the decision-making process; to determine with what conditions or "trade-offs" the decision was made; to identify the persons perceived by the adult graduate students as having been affected by the decision; and to determine what life events or major changes were perceived by the women and men as having precipitated the decision to enter graduate school.

Significant Literature

As background for the study, a brief history of graduate education opened the second chapter, pointing out the desirability of perceiving graduate education as an appropriate and effective resource for the personal and professional growth of adult students.

Literature in adult life-cycle development was presented in four chronological parts: historical antecedents through 1950; the period, 1950-59; the decade of the sixties; and finally, 1970 to the present. The review of research and writing revealed an increasing interest during the seventies in the adult development of women and men, with a focus on the process of change throughout the life-cycle, especially the years of middle adulthood.

The themes and principal writers in the study are:

1. adult life-cycle development theory (Erikson 1950; Neugarten 1968; Gould 1972, 1978; Levinson 1976, 1980; Sheehy 1976; Vaillant 1977, 1980; McCoy 1980; Smelser 1980);
2. the process of loss and change (Shontz 1965; Kübler-Ross 1969; Marris 1974; Imara 1975; Bridges 1980);
3. gender differences in adult development (Neugarten 1968; Sheehy 1976; Barnett and Baruch 1978; Gilligan 1979; Gould 1980; Fiske 1980; Lehmann 1980);
4. intimacy as a developmental task (Lowenthal, Thurnher, Chiriboga and Associates 1975; Lowenthal and Weiss 1976; Gilligan 1979; Loewenstein 1980; Douvan 1980; Giele 1980);
5. life-change events (Holmes 1967, 1973; Knox 1978; Aslanian and Brickell 1980; Bridges 1980);
6. decision-making theory (Paolucci, Hall, and Axinn 1977; Scanzoni 1977; Paolucci 1979);
7. adults' use of education in times of stability or change (Weathersby 1976, 1978; Knox 1978; Lehmann 1980; Aslanian and Brickell 1980).

Other topics included in the review of the literature are: career transitions, family transitions, and education as a resource at mid-life.

Methodology

In the study which led to the development of the proposal for the Ph.D. dissertation, thirty educators indicated their interests regarding adult students in higher education. The three issues raised most frequently were: (1) personal decision-making of adult students, (2) institutional response to adult student needs, and (3) retention and/or attrition of adult students. Of the three interest areas, personal decision-making of adult women and men most closely fit the interests of the writer, and was chosen as the subject for the research project.

The study was designed to explore the decision-making process of women and men, ages 35 and older, who had chosen to enter graduate school at Michigan State University in the fall or winter term of 1979-80. The research questions were outlined as follows:

Educational History

1. What effect does educational history have in the decision-making process of women and men?
2. Will continuing education patterns be different for women and men?

Employment History

1. What effect does employment history have in the decision-making process of women and men?
2. Will employment patterns be different for women and men?

Human Resources

1. Who are the persons perceived by women and men as useful resources in the decision-making process?
2. Will women and men feel encouraged and/or discouraged by the same human relationships in the same ways?

Conditions and Bargains (Trade-Offs)

1. In order to follow through with the decision to enter graduate school, what conditions or bargains (trade-offs) do women and men perceive as necessary?
2. Will women and men feel the need to postpone or forfeit the same opportunities?

Consequences

1. What relationships will women and men perceive as having been affected by the decision to enter graduate school?
2. Will women and men perceive relationships as having been affected in the same ways?
3. What have been the unforeseen consequences of the decision?

Life Events

1. What life events or major changes are perceived by women and men as having helped to bring about the decision to enroll in graduate study?
2. Will women and men view the same life events as having precipitated the decision?

In order to conduct the study, a total of 198 graduate students were identified as having entered Michigan State University in the fall or winter term at age 35 or older. In light of the small but sufficient number of graduate students in the population, no sample was obtained. In April 1980, a survey instrument was mailed to the 87 women and 111 men in the population.

The questionnaire had been refined in a pre-test administered to adult graduate students at Lake Erie College. Permission to conduct the research with Michigan State University students had been obtained from the University Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects. In its final form, the survey instrument contained twenty questions with opportunities for comments by the respondents.

There were 128 responses to the questionnaire, or 65 percent of the total number mailed. It was possible to use 120 complete and valid questionnaires in the study (61 percent). There were 70 non-respondents and eight graduate students whose questionnaires could not be used, totaling 78 women and men not included in the response data. As reported in Chapter III, there was not a great difference between the research population and the non-respondents in regard to gender, age, college enrollment or degree level, although the non-respondents tended to be older men in doctoral programs.

To be able to gain greater insights into the questionnaire responses, in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive subsample of the respondents. Eleven women and nine men were chosen on the basis of acquiring a full range of the characteristics of the respondents. Sixteen of the subjects were interviewed in face-to-face conferences, approximately one hour in length. Four subjects, not available for in-person conferences, were interviewed by telephone.

Responses to the completed questionnaires were grouped for analysis, coded and key-punched in preparation for use in a computer

program written with the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences as well as the BMPDIF-Two-Way Frequency Tables-Measures of Association Program from the University of California, Los Angeles, November 1978. Data were retrieved in a form which would provide both demographic information about the 120 graduate students, as well as comparative data in frequency distribution tables and Chi Square tests for the 69 women and 51 men in the study.

Findings

Summarizing the findings of the study in Chapter IV, the data were organized under two broad headings: (1) a description of the respondents, and (2) the decision-making process.

Description of the Respondents

Responses to a series of questions in the survey instrument, as well as student records in the Office of the Registrar, provided information about the graduate students' age, marital status, parental status, educational history, employment history, college enrollment, level of degree program, and race and nationality.

Age distribution of respondents was coded into four groups: (1) ages 35-39, (2) ages 40-44, (3) ages 45-49, and (4) ages 50 and older. As a group, more than half of the respondents (53.3 percent) comprised the youngest group (ages 35-39), with the remaining 46.7 percent comprising the other three age groups. Women graduate students tended to be somewhat older than men students.

Marital status of the respondents was coded into three groups: (1) married, (2) divorced, separated, or widowed, and (3) never married. Of all the respondents, 95.6 percent of the women and 96.1 percent of the men reported having been married at one time, but 30.4 percent of the women and 5.9 percent of the men currently were divorced, separated or widowed. The one graduate student who had been widowed was planning to be married soon.

Parental status of the respondents was coded into four categories: (1) no children, (2) one child, (3) two or three children, and (4) four or more children. Ninety percent of the adult graduate students reported being parents. The most striking difference in the parental status of the respondents is the percentage of single-parent women (20.3 percent) compared with no single-parent men. An observation made during the interviews and supported by comments written on the questionnaires is that the women are more likely to have fewer dependent children than men at the time of beginning a graduate program. That fact might be the reason for the older ages of the women graduate students.

Employment status of the women and men was determined on the basis of two questions: (1) employment at the time of deciding to enter graduate school, and (2) current employment while enrolled as a student. At the time of deciding to enter graduate school, 87.5 percent of all respondents were employed either full-time or part-time. The most obvious distinction between the women and the men is that more men (95.1 percent) than women (62.3 percent) were employed full-time. No men reported being employed part-time,

compared with 20.3 percent of the women. In the report of current employment, both women and men indicated decreasing in full-time employment, and increasing in both part-time or no employment, at the time of their enrollment in graduate school.

Educational status of the respondents was determined by accumulating information about the graduate students' college enrollment, level of degree program, and enrollment patterns. Eleven colleges were represented among the respondents, with 74 percent of the women and men enrolled in four colleges: Education, Business, Lifelong Education, and Social Science. Percentage distributions illustrate several differences in college enrollments between women and men. The most notable distinction appears in the College of Education where 37.7 percent of the women were enrolled, compared with 19.6 percent of the men, and in the College of Business where 33.3 percent of the men were enrolled, compared with 4.3 percent of the women.

Comparing level of degree program with women and men, 29.4 percent of the men and 17.4 percent of the women were enrolled in doctoral programs. Persistence was high for both women and men, evidenced by the fact that 83 percent of all respondents had continued their enrollment without interruption from the date of their matriculation through the spring term of 1979-80. At the time of the survey, 55.8 percent of all respondents were enrolled full-time, 31.7 percent were enrolled part-time, and 12.5 percent were not enrolled for the spring term.

The Decision-Making Process

Responses to a series of questions in the survey instrument provided information about the decision-making process experienced by the women and men in the study. The areas studied were: educational and employment history, human resources, conditions and bargains (trade-offs), consequences (effects), and life change events.

Educational history was analyzed by looking at the patterns of continuing education among the women and men in the study. Apparently both women and men were accustomed to perceiving education as a resource in their lives. Of all the graduate students, 76 percent had continued their education in some way since completing their undergraduate degrees and before enrolling in graduate school in 1979-80. The data indicate that a slightly higher percentage of men than women had continued their education, with 39.2 percent of the men and 23.2 percent of the women engaged in full-time study in the process of continuing their education. Part of the reason for the gender differences may be that more men than women reported receiving both financial assistance and "release time" from their employers for the purpose of pursuing their education. Another gender difference related to educational history is evident in the percentage of women entering graduate school in the winter term rather than the fall term, and more often than men with part-time status.

Employment history was analyzed by studying employment patterns for both past and present participation in either

full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer work. The information gathered regarding employment illustrates a broad range of experience among both women and men. Much of the data is reported in the description of the respondents under "employment status." The most noticeable change in employment behavior reported by the graduate students is the increase in the percentage of men choosing no employment while enrolled in graduate school. Comments offered by the men respondents suggest that one reason may be linked to the opportunity for some men to attend graduate school with few financial or time restrictions by virtue of employment benefits. Other comments offered by the men indicate that the full-time employment of a spouse may provide for the choice of unemployment.

Most women and men (85 percent) reported feeling that some form of employment led to their field of study. It may be somewhat surprising to note that more women (88.4 percent) than men (80.4 percent) pointed to their paid or volunteer employment as having affected their decision to choose a particular area of study.

Human resources were identified on the basis of who the women and men reported talking with in the decision-making process, and were analyzed according to whom the graduate students had felt encouraged or discouraged their decision. Of all the respondents, 95.8 percent reported talking with someone. More adults reported talking with their spouses or former spouses than any other resource person, followed by educational resources, friends, employment resources, children and/or relatives, and professional resources.

It is noteworthy that while 90 percent of the adult graduate students reported having children, 49.2 percent of the mothers and 85.1 percent of the fathers did not report talking with their children and/or relatives in the decision-making process. It should not be surprising that only 55.1 percent of the women and 19.6 percent of the men reported feeling encouraged by their children and/or relatives!

It is evident from the research data that friends are considered by the respondents to be an important human resource in the decision-making process, especially by women. In fact, the percentage of women reporting talking with friends (66.7 percent) is second only to the percentage of women reporting talking with spouses. The information takes on greater meaning when it is remembered that 35 percent of the women were not married at the time of making the decision to enter graduate school. Men reported talking with friends in only 45 percent of the cases.

Outside their family and friends, both women and men reported talking most frequently with people they perceive as educational resources. Of the respondents, 60 percent reported talking with faculty and/or graduate students at Michigan State University. Less than half of the graduate students reported talking with employment resources, in spite of the fact that 87.5 percent of the women and men reported being employed at the time they decided to enter graduate school. Professional resources were consulted by more women than men, according to the reports of the graduate

students, with both women and men consulting most frequently with physicians, professional counselors and clergy.

At least half of all the graduate students reported feeling encouraged by their spouses and friends and discouraged by no one. Both women and men reported feeling encouraged by their employers in 45 percent of the cases. To a lesser extent, the graduate students reported feeling encouraged by their children, relatives, faculty, graduate students, and professional resources.

Both women and men reported feeling discouraged by their relatives and/or their friends more than by anyone else. Considering the fact that 66.7 percent of the women reported talking with friends, it is important to note that 23.2 percent of the women respondents indicated feeling discouraged by their friends. One explanation for discouragement by friends may be that some women, particularly women with multiple roles of their own, may recognize that the problems are greater for women who are trying to combine such roles as spouse, parent, employee, community leader and student.

Finally, in regard to human resources, 35 percent of the graduate students in the study indicated that there were other people they might have talked with but had not in the decision-making process. It occurred to more women (46.3 percent) than men (19.6 percent) that they might have found additional human resources to be helpful. Of all the respondents, 20 percent reported feeling that they might have found it helpful to talk with educational resource people, particularly graduate students already in their

program. Others reported that they might have found it helpful to talk with a professional counselor, sometimes specified as a vocational counselor, or with relatives, friends, or various professional resource people.

Conditions and bargains (trade-offs) were those agreements with other persons or circumstances under which the respondents expected to follow through with their decision to enter graduate school. Both women and men saw the necessity for postponing an occupational opportunity (26.7 percent), postponing leisure time (76.7 percent), and seeking financial aid (25.8 percent).

When women and men differed it was in the perceived need to use family financial resources (women 36.2 percent, men 25.5 percent), or to postpone a relationship (women 17.4 percent, men 7.8 percent), or to reduce community activities (women 50.7 percent, men 29.4 percent), or to adjust family responsibilities (women 69.6 percent, men 49.0 percent).

Effects of the decision to enter graduate school were those consequences perceived by the mid-life graduate students as affecting other people. Almost all the respondents (96.7 percent) reported that someone had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school. Most of the women and men (85.0 percent) indicated that their spouse and/or children had been affected, usually in a positive way.

Women and men differed most in their perception of the effect of their decision upon their friends. Fifty-one percent of the women compared with 22 percent of the men reported feeling that their

friends had been affected, if only by having to adjust to a change in the availability of a graduate student friend.

Differences were also reported in the perceived effect upon relatives (women 33.3 percent, men 25.5 percent), and the effect upon employers (men 62.5 percent, women 49.1 percent), sometimes with negative consequences.

Both women and men graduate students voluntarily reported that they had been affected, often describing the consequences of juggling multiple roles, or of facing new challenges to old assumptions, or of arousing hope for the future.

Unanticipated consequences were reported by both women and men in an open-ended question regarding other considerations they might have given in the decision-making process. The consequences mentioned most frequently were that: (1) the financial investment was greater than expected, (2) role changes were more difficult than imagined, and (3) the physical and emotional costs were higher than anticipated. A few respondents indicated that the graduate school experience had been more fun than they had expected!

Life change events were reported by 70.0 percent of the respondents as having precipitated the decision to enter graduate school. Events related to employment were cited most frequently by both women (42.0 percent) and men (39.2 percent) as prompting their decision. A major change in relationships ranked second among the life change events which served as catalysts for 31.8 percent of the women and 11.8 percent of the men.

Three other life event categories were cited by at least 10 percent of the respondents: a change in finances (12.5 percent), a change in residence (11.7 percent), and a personal achievement (10.0 percent). In each case the event had prompted the decision for more women than men.

A higher percentage of women than men also reported catalytic changes in areas including: changes in the student status of a spouse, a change in community involvement, a child entering school, a child leaving home, and the death of someone.

Only women reported that a change in marital status or a new family member served as a catalytic event in their decision to enter graduate school.

The only two life event categories cited by more men than women as having prompted their decision were financial events and a change in the employment status of a spouse. In both areas, however, the differences between the responses of women and men were 1 percent or less.

Not all the respondents viewed recent changes in their lives as precipitating events related to their decision to enter graduate school. Thirty percent of the respondents (21.7 percent of the women and 41.2 percent of the men) reported that no changes in their lives had served as catalysts in the decision-making process.

In summary, the data indicate that the women respondents were much more likely than the men to view their decision to enter graduate school at a particular time as associated with precipitous events.

Conclusions

Having presented a summary of the study and the findings, Chapter V continues with conclusions drawn from the study and focused upon gender differences.

Educational History

The educational history of the graduate students indicated that for most of the women, the decision to enter graduate school followed a fifteen to twenty year period after completion of the undergraduate degree. For the men, the decision followed a pattern of continuing education in which the undergraduate degree was completed at a significantly older age than the age at which women completed their bachelor's degrees.

Both women and men demonstrated a history of continuing education with 75.8 percent of all respondents having pursued their education in some form between the time of completing their undergraduate work and entering graduate school in 1979-80.

Employment History

The employment history of the graduate students indicated that for a significantly greater number of men than women, the decision to enter graduate school followed a period of full-time employment. Ninety-four percent of the men were employed full-time at the time they decided to enter graduate school, compared with 62 percent of the women. A significant difference reappeared at a somewhat lower level when employment patterns were examined for women and men after enrollment. At that point, 72.5 percent of

the men were employed full-time, compared with 40.6 percent of the women.

For 85.0 percent of the respondents in the study, the decision to enter a particular field of graduate study was associated with an aspect of their employment history.

Human Resources

While 95.8 percent of all the graduate students reported talking with one or more persons in the decision-making process, women were more involved than men in the use of human resources. With the exception of employment resources (consulted by 62.5 percent of the employed men and by 49.1 percent of the employed women) and a 93.0 percent-tie with spouses, more women than men utilized all other human resources.

The largest gender differences in the use of human resources appeared in the reports of respondents talking with their children and/or relatives and respondents consulting friends. Fifty percent of the women who were parents compared with 15 percent of the men who were parents reported talking with their children and/or relatives. More women (66.7 percent) than men (45.1 percent) also reported talking with their friends. In the case of both women and men, friends were consulted more often and were felt by the graduate students to be more encouraging than either children and/or relatives.

Smaller gender differences appeared in the reports of professional resources consulted. Twenty-five percent of the

women compared with 12 percent of the men indicated talking with professional resources, usually physicians, professional counselors, and/or clergy.

Virtually no gender differences appeared in the reports of educational resources consulted. Both women and men (60.0 percent) talked with faculty and/or graduate students already in their program.

While women graduate students were more involved than men in talking with human resources, a significantly larger percentage of women (95.7 percent) than men (82.4 percent) also felt encouraged by one or more persons. In fact, more women than men reported feeling encouraged by all human resources. The largest gender differences appeared in the percentages of women and men who felt encouraged by their children and/or relatives (women 55.1 percent, men 19.6 percent), by their friends (women 63.8 percent, men 33.3 percent), and by their spouses (women 93.3 percent, men 76.0 percent).

Smaller gender differences appeared in the categories of educational resources, professional resources, and employment resources consulted. In each category, however, more women than men reported feeling encouraged by the persons involved.

More women graduate students than men may have reported feeling encouraged by human resources, but more women (43.5 percent) than men (29.4 percent) also indicated feeling discouraged by others. The largest gender differences appeared in the reports of women (22.2 percent) compared with the reports of men (4.3 percent) who felt discouraged by their spouse and/or children.

Most of the discouragement was felt by single-parents from their children, although several married women felt discouraged by their husbands who seemed to view their continuing education as either an economic burden or a psychological threat.

Smaller gender differences appeared in the reports of women and men feeling discouraged by relatives and friends (women 23.2 percent, men 15.7 percent), educational resources (women 7.2 percent, men 2.0 percent), professional resources (men 2.0 percent, women 1.4 percent), and employment resources (men 12.5 percent, women 10.5 percent).

While the women respondents talked with more persons than men did, felt both more encouraged and discouraged by others than men did, more women than men also indicated that there were more persons with whom they might have found it helpful to talk! Forty-six percent of the women and 20 percent of the men indicated that they might have found other human resources to be helpful, particularly graduate students already in their program.

Conditions and Bargains (Trade-Offs)

In the course of making a decision, certain agreements are reached and circumstances accepted. In the study, seven conditions and bargains (trade-offs) were suggested to the graduate students as possible considerations.

In every case, the women graduate students more than the men perceived the need to postpone or forfeit specific opportunities. Gender differences were greatest in the perceived necessity to

reduce community activities (women 50.7 percent, men 29.4 percent) and to adjust family responsibilities (women 69.9 percent, men 49.0 percent). More women than men also felt that they would have to postpone or forfeit use of family financial resources (women 36.2 percent, men 25.5 percent) or postpone or forfeit one or more relationships in order to follow through with their decision to enter graduate school.

Both women and men felt that they would have to forego much of their leisure time if they began graduate work (76.8 percent), and approximately one-fourth of all the respondents anticipated having to postpone an occupational opportunity or seek financial aid.

In general, the women graduate students more than the men reported feeling the need to accept certain limitations before making the commitment to pursue a graduate degree.

Consequences (Effects of the Decision)

Almost all the graduate students (96.7 percent) reported that one or more persons had been affected by their decision to enter graduate school. The greatest gender differences appeared in the reports of the women and men who felt that their friends or their employers had been affected. Women (50.7 percent) more than men (21.6 percent) reported that the consequences of their decision had been felt by their friends, while men (58.8 percent) more than women (40.6 percent) felt that their employers had been affected.

Smaller differences were reported regarding the effect upon relatives, although more women (33.3 percent) than men (25.5 percent) seemed to feel that there were consequences for their relatives. A high percentage of both women and men (85 percent) reported that their spouse and/or children had been affected by their decision.

Most of the graduate students seemed to feel that the effects upon their families had been positive, although the men seemed more confident of that opinion than the women did. The women, on the other hand, seemed to be more aware of the effects upon themselves than the men seemed to be, and more conscious of the adjustments made to accommodate their decision.

Of all the respondents, 35.8 percent reported one or more consequences which they had not anticipated. The area mentioned most frequently by both women and men was the large demand on their financial resources. Women more than men mentioned the drain on their physical and emotional resources, and the strain of managing multiple roles.

Life-Change Events

Many of the graduate students attributed one or more life-change events to the timing of their decision to enter graduate school, although more women (78.3 percent) than men (58.8 percent) felt that particular events had served as catalysts.

The greatest gender differences appeared in regard to major changes in relationships, primarily marital relationships. Of all the graduate students, 31.8 percent of the women compared with

11.8 percent of the men reported that at least one major change in a relationship had precipitated their decision. Thirteen percent of the women and no men specified marital changes.

All other gender differences were relatively small, with more women than men citing specific events in almost every area as having prompted their decision to enter graduate school.

Not all graduate students identified life-change events as having precipitated their decision. Compared with all respondents, the graduate students who did not identify any life-change events as catalysts, tended to be younger, married men with fewer children than the total group.

In summary, the women graduate students were more likely than the men to perceive their decision to enter graduate school as having been precipitated by one or more life-change events.

In an overall sense, the decision-making process for the mid-life graduate students began within the complex lives of the women and men at a point of transition. Between the age of 35 and their 50s, the graduate students entered the decision-making process with a history of continuing education and employment, both of which had contributed to their choice of an area of study.

With few exceptions, the graduate students reported experiencing major recent life changes in their work and relationships, and many viewed the changes as having precipitated their decision to enter graduate school. Women more than men attributed their decision to enter graduate school to catalytic events within the

relationships of their lives. Major changes in the area of employment more than any area prompted the decision for many men.

For the most part, the changes in work and relationships had already taken place, and graduate school had been chosen as a means of effecting the transition. Graduate school itself represented continuity for some of the mid-life adults who were evolving from one stage of employment to another level of possibility. For other graduate students, however, the choice signified a place and a process through which they expected to discover new life styles or unexplored aspects of themselves. It seems clear, in any case, that the decision-making process was used as a means of effecting change in the lives of women and men at mid-life.

Recommendations for Further Study

Knowing that the decision-making process is different for women and men in middle adulthood, other studies might be conducted to determine whether the gender differences are unique to the mid-life period or characteristic of women and men throughout the life-cycle. Based on existing literature and research, it might be hypothesized that the gender differences would diminish or reverse in populations of women and men in either or both early and late adulthood.

Further research might be designed to explore ways of applying knowledge of gender differences in the decision-making process. For example, since more mid-life graduate students reported talking with physicians, professional counselors, and

clergy than other professional resources, in what ways might those professional groups apply knowledge of decision-making behavior in their work with mid-life adults?

Data within the study indicate that further exploration of the decision-making process of adults might differentiate between U.S. citizens and adults of other national origins. There is evidence in the study to suggest that the decision-making model and the research methodology employed may possess a cultural bias which would warrant further attention. Since this was not the focus of the present study, however, the suggestion is offered as a recommendation for further research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A-1

APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)
238 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
(517) 355-2186

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

April 8, 1980

Ms. Barbara G. Pelowski
328 Mentor Avenue
Painesville, Ohio 44077

Dear Ms. Pelowski:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "Decision-Making at Midlife: Graduate
School as an Alternative in Effecting Change in the Lives
of Men and Women, Age 35 and Older"

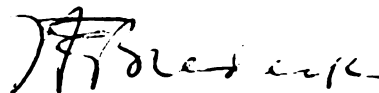
The above referenced project was recently submitted for review to the UCRIHS.

We are pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and the Committee, therefore, approved this project at its meeting on April 7, 1980.

Projects involving the use of human subjects must be reviewed at least annually. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to the anniversary date noted above.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Henry E. Bredeck
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Dr. Walter F. Johnson

APPENDIX A-2

PRE-TEST

Information for the pre-test sample

As a Ph.D. candidate in higher education administration at Michigan State University, I am in the process of designing a study involving graduate students, age 35 and older. Specifically, I am interested in the decision-making process at mid-life when men and women may be using graduate school as a means of making a change in their lives. Since very little research has been done in this area, I am hoping that the results will be helpful to educators working with adult students in higher education.

In order to refine the questionnaire survey and interview outline with maximum reliability among graduate students, age 35 and older, I am asking you as someone representing such a population to answer a few questions about your decision-making experience when you entered graduate study. Since I am interested in looking at the obligations related to being a single or married graduate student, or being a single or married parent, I have included a few questions about your family responsibilities.

I want to assure you that your name will not be identified in any way in the course of the study. The answers you give will be coded so that I may contact you for the purpose of providing further information as I develop the final questionnaire for the research project. Your cooperation will be very much appreciated.

Barbara Gould Pelowski

PRE-TEST

Michigan State University
 College of Education
 Department of Administration and Higher Education
 April, 1980

Questionnaire survey: research related to Ph.D. dissertation

(Please indicate at what time you began the questionnaire:
 WRITE IN _____ PM)

NAME _____

QUESTIONNAIRE NO. _____ DATE COMPLETED _____

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. How old are you? WRITE IN: _____-years-old
2. What is your sex? CHECK ONE
 - () 1. Male
 - () 2. Female
3. What is your marital status? CHECK ONE:
 - () 1. Married
 - () 2. Sparated, divorced, or widowed
 - () 3. Never married
4. How many children do you have? CHECK ONE:
 - () 1. None
 - () 2. One
 - () 3. Two
 - () 4. Three
 - () 5. Four
 - () 6. More than four (specify) _____
- 4a. (If you have children): What are the ages of your children? WRITE IN: _____ ages of children
5. Do you live alone or with one or more other people? CHECK ONE:
 - () 1. Alone
 - () 2. With other(s)
- 5a. (If with other(s)): What is the relationship of each person to you? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:
 - () 1. Spouse
 - () 2. Child (children)
 - () 3. Parent(s)
 - () 4. Other relative(s) (specify) _____
 - () 5. Unrelated peer(s)
 - () 6. Other (specify) _____

Pre-test (p. 2)

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

6. In what year did you graduate from college at the undergraduate level? WRITE IN: _____ year
7. Prior to enrolling in your present program, had you continued your education in any way since the completion of your bachelor's degree? CHECK ONE:
- () 1. Yes
() 2. No
- 7a. (If yes): Did you attend part-time or full-time?
- () 1. Part-time
() 2. Full-time
8. Are you currently enrolled part-time or full-time? CHECK ONE:
- () 1. Part-time
() 2. Full-time

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND

9. At the time you decided to enroll in your present graduate program, were you employed with financial compensation? CHECK ONE:
- () 1. Yes
() 2. No
- 9a. (If yes): Were you employed part-time or full-time?
- () 1. Part-time
() 2. Full-time
10. Are you currently employed with financial compensation?
- () 1. Yes
() 2. No
- 10a. (If yes): Are you employed part-time or full-time? CHECK ONE:
- () 1. Part-time
() 2. Full-time

Pre-test (p. 3)

AVOCATIONAL BACKGROUND

11. At the time you decided to enter your present graduate program, were you involved in community or volunteer activities? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

- 11a. (If yes): Were you involved in full-time volunteer activities (approximately 40 hours per week), part-time activities (approximately 20 hours per week), or occasional activities (10 hours or less per week)? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Full-time
☐ 2. Part-time
☐ 3. Occasional

12. Has any volunteer experience led to your interest in your current field of study? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE

Pre-test (p. 4)

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

13. With whom did you talk in the process of deciding to enter graduate school? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s)
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I did not talk with anyone about my decision to enter graduate school.

14. At the time you decided to enter your present graduate program, who encouraged your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relatives other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Professional associate(s)
- ☐ 6. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 7. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 8. I do not feel that anyone encouraged my decision to enter graduate school.

14a. (If you felt anyone was encouraging your decision):
In what ways did the person(s) encourage your decision? WRITE IN:

Pre-test (p. 5)

15. At the time you decided to enter your present graduate program, who discouraged your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s)
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I do not feel that anyone discouraged my decision to enter graduate school.

- 15a. (If you felt anyone was discouraging your decision):
In what ways did the person(s) discourage your decision? WRITE IN:

16. At the time you decided to enter graduate school, what conditions or bargains did you feel you had to make in order to follow through with your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

I felt I had to:

- ☐ 1. Postpone or forfeit an occupational opportunity
- ☐ 2. Postpone or forfeit leisure or personal time
- ☐ 3. Postpone or forfeit family plans
- ☐ 4. Seek financial aid
- ☐ 5. Postpone or forfeit an opportunity in a personal relationship (e.g. to develop a friendship, to marry)
- ☐ 6. Agree to a "trade-off" with another person (e.g. "I'll go to school now, you can go next.")
- ☐ 7. Reduce the amount of time I was spending in community activities
- ☐ 8. Adjust my expectations regarding family responsibilities
- ☐ 9. Other (specify) _____

Comment: (Please feel free to comment further if you wish):

Pre-test (p. 6)

17. Looking back, whom might you have talked with, but didn't, about the possibility of entering a graduate program?
CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s)
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I cannot think of anyone I might have talked with, but didn't.

18. Looking back, what considerations might you have given, that you didn't, to the decision to enter graduate school?
WRITE IN:

19. Who has been affected by your decision to enter graduate school? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Extended family
- ☐ 4. Friends
- ☐ 5. Employer
- ☐ 6. Other(s) (specify) _____

Pre-test (p. 7)

20. In what ways have others been affected by your decision to enter graduate school? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. My family has had to assume more responsibilities at home.
- ☐ 2. My professional/business colleagues have had to assume more responsibilities at my place of employment.
- ☐ 3. My family has had to change their standard of living.
- ☐ 4. My friends have had to compensate for the changes in my availability.
- ☐ 5. My children have had to become more self-sufficient.
- ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

Comments: (Please feel free to comment further if you wish):

21. Which of the following events or changes contributed to your decision to enter graduate study at this point in your life? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. A major change in marital status (e.g. marriage, divorce, separation)
- ☐ 2. A major change in finances (better or worse)
- ☐ 3. A major change in health (better or worse)
- ☐ 4. A major change in employment (e.g. changed positions, left employment, accepted promotion)
- ☐ 5. A major change in relationship(s) with:
 - ☐ a. My spouse
 - ☐ b. My child (children)
 - ☐ c. My extended family
 - ☐ d. My friends
 - ☐ e. Community acquaintances
- ☐ 6. A major change in community involvement (e.g. added or dropped activities)
- ☐ 7. Death of someone close
- ☐ 8. Gained a new family member
- ☐ 9. Change in residence
- ☐ 10. Outstanding personal achievement
- ☐ 11. Child entered school
- ☐ 12. Child left home (e.g. marriage, attending college)
- ☐ 13. Spouse began or ceased employment
- ☐ 14. Spouse began or ceased school
- ☐ 15. Other events or changes (specify) _____

Comments: (Please feel free to comment if you wish):

(Please indicate at what time you completed the questionnaire: WRITE IN: _____ PM)

APPENDIX A-3

ORIGINAL LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE RESEARCH

To:

April, 1980

From: Barbara Gould Pelowski
Ph.D. candidate
College of Education
Department of Administration and Higher Education

Subject: Dissertation research

You have been identified by records in the Registrar's Office as a graduate student at Michigan State University, newly enrolled in a graduate program this year. I am a doctoral candidate in higher education administration, conducting research regarding the decision-making process of men and women, age 35 and older, as it specifically relates to enrollment in graduate school at mid-life.

Since very little research has been done in this area, I am asking you as someone representing the research population to answer a few questions about your decision-making experience related to your enrollment in graduate school this year. Interested in looking at the obligations related to being a single or married graduate student, or being a single or married parent, I have included a few questions about your personal background.

I want to assure you that your name will not be identified in any way in the course of the study. The answers you give will be coded numerically so that I may contact you for additional information.

It would be desirable to contact a sample of respondents for the purpose of providing further information in the study of the decision-making process. Would you be willing to participate in an in-person or telephone interview? If so, please provide me with your telephone number on the enclosed Consent Form, and indicate when it would be most convenient to reach you.

Please take approximately fifteen minutes to complete the attached questionnaire, returning it with a signed copy of the Consent Form in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope. I very much appreciate your taking the time to assist me in my research, and I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE RESEARCH

CONSENT FORM

In signing the following statement, I agree to participate in the research project being conducted by Barbara Gould Pelowski, and I acknowledge:

1. That I understand the purposes of the research project which have been explained to me;
2. That I will be expected to complete a questionnaire survey and, if I wish, to offer my availability as a subject to be interviewed in person or by telephone;
3. That I understand that my identity will remain anonymous and all results will remain confidential;
4. That I am voluntarily participating in the research project with no expectation to benefit from the results;
5. That I am free to withdraw from participation at any time without consequence.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Would you be willing to participate in an interview?
CHECK ONE:

- () YES
() NO

(If yes): Please provide a telephone number where you may be reached. WRITE IN:

(Area code) _____ (Telephone) _____

(If yes): Indicate when it would be most convenient to contact you. CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- () Weekdays, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
() Weekday evenings, after 5:00 PM
() Weekends (specify time) _____
() Comments: _____

Questionnaire no. _____

APPENDIX A-4

QUESTIONNAIRE

Date completed _____ Questionnaire no. _____

QUESTIONNAIRE:

DECISION-MAKING AT MID-LIFE

Michigan State University
College of Education, Department of Administration and
Higher Education
April, 1980

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. How old are you? WRITE IN: _____-years-old

2. What is your sex? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. Male
- ☐ 2. Female

3. What is your marital status? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. Married
- ☐ 2. Separated or divorced
- ☐ 3. Widowed
- ☐ 4. Never married

4. How many children do you have? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. None
- ☐ 2. One
- ☐ 3. Two
- ☐ 4. Three
- ☐ 5. Four
- ☐ 6. More than four (specify) _____

5. Do you live alone or with one or more other people?
CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. Alone
- ☐ 2. With other(s)

5a. (If with other(s)): What is the relationship of
each person to you? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Parent(s)
- ☐ 4. Other relative(s) (specify) _____
- ☐ 5. Unrelated peer(s)
- ☐ 6. Other (specify) _____

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

6. In what year did you graduate from college at the undergraduate
level? WRITE IN: _____ year

7. Prior to enrolling in your present program, had you continued your education in any way since the completion of your bachelor's degree? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

- 7a. (If yes): Did you attend full-time or part-time?
CHECK ONE:

(NOTE: Full-time enrollment is defined as 7 or more credits per term; part-time as 6 or fewer credits per term.)

I had continued my education:

☐ 1. Full-time (7 or more credits per term)
☐ 2. Part-time (6 or fewer credits per term)

8. Are you enrolled for the current term (Spring, 1980)?
CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

- 8a. (If yes): Are you enrolled full-time or part-time?
CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Full-time (7 or more credits per term)
☐ 2. Part-time (6 or fewer credits per term)

OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND

9. At the time you decided to enroll in your present program, were you employed? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. Yes
☐ 2. No

- 9a. (If yes): Were you employed as a volunteer or with financial remuneration? CHECK ONE:

☐ 1. As a volunteer
☐ 2. With financial remuneration

- 9b. (If you were employed): Were you employed full-time, part-time, or occasionally? CHECK ONE:

(NOTE: Full-time employment is defined as approximately 40 hours per week; part-time as approximately 20 hours per week; occasionally as fewer than 10 hours per week.)

I was employed:

☐ 1. Full-time (approximately 40 hours per week)
☐ 2. Part-time (approximately 20 hours per week)
☐ 3. Occasionally (fewer than 10 hours per week)

10. Are you currently employed? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No

10a. (If yes): Are you employed as a volunteer or with financial remuneration? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. As a volunteer
- ☐ 2. With financial remuneration

10b. (If yes): Are you employed full-time, part-time, or occasionally? CHECK ONE:

(NOTE: Full-time employment is defined as approximately 40 hours per week; part-time as approximately 20 hours per week; occasionally as fewer than 10 hours per week.)

I am employed:

- ☐ 1. Full-time (approximately 40 hours per week)
- ☐ 2. Part-time (approximately 20 hours per week)
- ☐ 3. Occasionally (fewer than 10 hours per week)

11. Has any employment, volunteer or paid, led to your interest in your current field of study? CHECK ONE:

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

12. With whom did you talk in the process of deciding to enter graduate school this year? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s) at Michigan State University
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I did not talk with anyone about my decision to enter graduate school.

13. At the time you decided to enter your present graduate program, who encouraged your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s) at Michigan State University
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I do not feel that anyone encouraged my decision to enter graduate school.

13a. (If you felt anyone was encouraging your decision):
In what ways did the person(s) encourage your decision?
WRITE IN:

14. At the time you decided to enter your present graduate program, who discouraged your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s) at Michigan State University
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I do not feel that anyone discouraged my decision to enter graduate school.

14a. (If you felt anyone was discouraging your decision):
In what ways did the person(s) discourage your decision? WRITE IN:

15. At the time you decided to enter graduate school, what conditions or bargains did you feel you had to make in order to follow through with your decision? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

I felt I had to:

- ☐ 1. Postpone or forfeit an occupational opportunity.
- ☐ 2. Postpone or forfeit leisure or personal time.
- ☐ 3. Postpone or forfeit family plans for use of financial resources.
- ☐ 4. Seek financial aid.
- ☐ 5. Postpone or forfeit an opportunity in a personal relationship (e.g. to develop a friendship, to marry).
- ☐ 6. Reduce the amount of time I was spending in community activities.
- ☐ 7. Adjust my expectations regarding family responsibilities.
- ☐ 8. Other (specify) _____

Comment: (Please feel free to comment further if you wish):

16. Looking back, whom might you have talked with, but didn't, about the possibility of entering a graduate program? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- ☐ 1. Spouse
- ☐ 2. Child (children)
- ☐ 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
- ☐ 4. Close friend(s)
- ☐ 5. Faculty member(s) at Michigan State University
- ☐ 6. Graduate student(s) already in the program
- ☐ 7. Clergyman or spiritual advisor
- ☐ 8. Physician
- ☐ 9. Attorney
- ☐ 10. Banker
- ☐ 11. Professional counselor
- ☐ 12. Professional associate (peer)
- ☐ 13. Person to whom I report in my employment
- ☐ 14. Other (specify) _____
- ☐ 15. I cannot think of anyone I might have talked with, but didn't.

17. Looking back, what considerations might you have given, that you didn't, to the decision to enter graduate school? WRITE IN:

18. Excluding yourself, who has been affected by your decision to enter graduate school? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- () 1. Spouse
 () 2. Child (children)
 () 3. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
 () 4. Close friend(s)
 () 5. Employer
 () 6. Professional associate(s)
 () 7. Other(s) (specify) _____
 () 8. I do not feel that anyone has been affected by my decision to enter graduate school.

- 18a. (If you feel anyone has been affected by your decision): In what ways have others been affected? CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- () 1. My family has had to assume more responsibilities at home.
 () 2. My professional/business colleagues have had to assume more responsibilities at my place of employment.
 () 3. My family has had to change their standard of living.
 () 4. My friends have had to compensate for changes in my availability.
 () 5. My children have had to become more self-sufficient.
 () 6. Other (specify) _____

Comments: (Please feel free to comment further if you wish): _____

19. In the past year or two, you may have experienced one or more major changes or significant events in your life. Please indicate which of the following events or changes have occurred in your life in the past two years: CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY:

- () 1. A major change in marital status:
 - () a. Marriage
 - () b. Separation
 - () c. Divorce
 - () d. Death of spouse
 - () 2. A major change in finances:
 - () a. For the better
 - () b. For the worse
 - () 3. A major change in health:
 - () a. For the better
 - () b. For the worse
 - () 4. A major change in employment:
 - () a. Began new position
 - () b. Ceased employment
 - () c. Increased responsibilities
 - () d. Transferred to new location
 - () e. Continuation of position dependent upon graduate study.
 - () 5. A major change in relationship(s) with:
 - () a. My spouse
 - () b. My child (children)
 - () c. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
 - () d. Close friend(s)
 - () e. My employer
 - () f. My professional associate(s)
 - () g. Other (specify) _____
 - () 6. A major change in community involvement:
 - () a. Increased activities
 - () b. Decreased activities
 - () 7. Death of someone (other than spouse)
 - () 8. Gained a new family member
 - () 9. Change in residence
 - () 10. Outstanding personal achievement (specify) _____
-
- () 11. Child entered school
 - () 12. Child left home
 - () 13. Change in employment of spouse:
 - () a. Spouse ceased employment
 - () b. Spouse began employment
 - () 14. Change in student status of spouse:
 - () a. Spouse ceased school
 - () b. Spouse began school
 - () 15. Other events or changes in my life (specify): _____
-
- () 16. I do not recall any major changes or significant events in my life in the past two years.

20. You may feel that specific events or changes served as catalysts for your decision to enter graduate school. (For each major change or significant event you have experienced in the past two years): Did the event or change help to being about your decision to enroll in graduate study?
CHECK YES () OR NO ():

1. A major change in marital status:
 - YES () NO () a. Marriage
 - YES () NO () b. Separation
 - YES () NO () c. Divorce
 - YES () NO () d. Death of spouse
2. A major change in finances:
 - YES () NO () a. For the better
 - YES () NO () b. For the worse
3. A major change in health:
 - YES () NO () a. For the better
 - YES () NO () b. For the worse
4. A major change in employment:
 - YES () NO () a. Began new position
 - YES () NO () b. Ceased employment
 - YES () NO () c. Increased responsibilities
 - YES () NO () d. Transferred to new location
 - YES () NO () e. Continuation of position dependent upon graduate study
5. A major change in relationship(s) with:
 - YES () NO () a. My spouse
 - YES () NO () b. My child (children)
 - YES () NO () c. Relative(s) other than spouse or child
 - YES () NO () d. Close friend(s)
 - YES () NO () e. My employer
 - YES () NO () f. My professional associate(s)
 - YES () NO () g. Other (specify) _____
6. A major change in community involvement
 - YES () NO () a. Increased activities
 - YES () NO () b. Decreased activities
7. Death of someone (other than spouse)
8. Gained a new family member
9. Change in residence
10. Outstanding personal achievement (specify)
11. Child entered school for first time
12. Child left home
13. Change in employment of spouse:
 - YES () NO () a. Spouse ceased employment
 - YES () NO () b. Spouse began employment
14. Change in student status of spouse:
 - YES () NO () a. Spouse ceased school
 - YES () NO () b. Spouse began school
15. Other events or changes in your life (specify):
16. I do not feel that any major change or significant event in my life in the past two years served as a catalyst for my decision to enter graduate school.

APPENDIX A-5

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO NON-RESPONDENTS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE RESEARCH

328 Mentor Avenue
Painesville, Ohio 44077
May, 1980

Dear Graduate Student Colleague,

About two weeks ago you should have received a research questionnaire concerning the decision-making process involved in your enrollment in graduate school this year. As of this date, I have not received your response.

Knowing how much professional interest has been expressed regarding the research study, I am particularly anxious to have the results reflect the experiences of as many new graduate students, age 35 and older, as possible. If your response and my reminder have crossed in the mail, I thank you in advance for your support. If, however, you have not completed the questionnaire, please take approximately fifteen minutes to respond to the questions, and mail it to me with the Consent Form. In case you have misplaced your original copy, a duplicate may be requested by calling collect: (216) 352-1863.

As an academic colleague with multiple roles of my own, as a fulltime graduate student, married, a parent and a professional educator, I very much appreciate your taking the time to assist me in the completion of my research project. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Barbara H. Pelowski

Barbara Gould Pelowski

APPENDIX B

ERIKSON CHART AND LETTER OF PERMISSION

The Eight Stages in the Life Cycle of Man

- I. Infancy: Trust vs. Mistrust. The first "task" of the infant is to develop "the cornerstone of a healthy personality," a basic sense of trust--in himself and in his environment. This comes from a feeling of inner goodness derived from "the mutual regulation of his receptive capacities with the maternal techniques of provision"--a quality of care that transmits a sense of trustworthiness and meaning. In the second half of the first year, there is a natural sense of loss as the child gradually recognizes his separateness from his mother. If discontinuities in care occur during this period, there is an acute danger that this natural sense of loss may increase to a basic sense of mistrust that may last through life.
- II. Early Childhood: Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt. With muscular maturation the child experiments with holding on and letting go and begins to attach enormous value to his autonomous will. The danger here is the development of a deep sense of shame and doubt if he is deprived of the opportunity to learn to develop his will as he learns his "duty," and therefore learns to expect defeat in any battle of wills with those who are bigger and stronger.
- III. Play Age: Initiative vs. Guilt. In this stage the child's imagination is greatly expanded because of his increased ability to move around freely and to communicate. It is an age of intrusive activity, avid curiosity, and consuming fantasies which lead to feelings of guilt and anxiety. It is also the stage of the establishment of conscience. If this tendency to feel guilty is "overburdened by all-too-eager adults," the child may develop a deep-seated conviction that he is essentially bad, with a resultant stifling of initiative or a conversion of his morality to vindictiveness.
- IV. School Age: Industry vs. Inferiority. The long period of sexual latency before puberty is the age when the child wants to learn how to do and make things with others. In learning to accept instruction and to win recognition by producing "things," he opens the way for the capacity of work enjoyment. The danger in this period is the development of a sense of inadequacy and inferiority in a child who does not receive recognition for his efforts.
- V. Adolescence: Identity vs. Identity Diffusion. The physiological revolution that comes with puberty--rapid body growth and sexual maturity--forces the young person to question "all wholeness and continuities relied on earlier" and to "refight many of the earlier battles." The developmental task is to integrate childhood identifications "with the basic biological drives, native endowment, and the opportunities offered in social roles." The danger is that identity diffusion, temporarily unavoidable in this period of physical and psychological upheaval, may result in a permanent inability to "take hold" or, because of youth's tendency to total commitment, in the fixation in the young person of a negative identity, a devoted attempt to become what parents, class, or community do not want him to be.
- VI. Young Adulthood: Intimacy vs. Isolation. Only as a young person begins to feel more secure in his identity is he able to establish intimacy with himself (with his inner life) and with others, both in friendships and eventually in a love-based mutually satisfying sexual relationship with a member of the opposite sex. A person who cannot enter wholly into an intimate relationship because of the fear of losing his identity may develop a sense of isolation.
- VII. Adulthood: Generativity vs. Self-absorption. Out of the intimacies of adulthood grows generativity--the mature person's interest in establishing and guiding the next generation. The lack of this results in self-absorption and frequently in a "pervading sense of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment."
- VIII. Senescence: Integrity vs. Disgust. The person who has achieved a satisfying intimacy with other human beings and who has adapted to the triumphs and disappointments of his/her generative activities as parent and co-worker reaches the end of life with a certain ego integrity--an acceptance of his/her own responsibility for what his/her life is and was.

Adapted from Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1950.



THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Adult Life Resource Center
Division of Continuing Education
1246 Mississippi Street, Annex A, Lawrence, Kansas 66045
(913) 864-4794

April 30, 1981

Barbara Gould Pelowski
1304 South Main St.
Findlay, Ohio 45840

Dear Barbara:

Thank you for calling and for your interest in reprinting the Eight States in the Life Cycle of Man which was adapted from Erik H. Erikson's, Childhood and Society.

You have permission to reprint the adaptation. Credit should be given to Erikson as cited on page 6 of the Life Transitions Reader. In addition, "reprinted by permissions of the authors of Life Transitions Reader. Copyright (c) 1980 by the Adult Life Resource Center, Division of Continuing Education, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS. 66045

Good luck with your continuing scholarly life, Barbara.

Sincerely

Colleen Ryan Counselor
Adult Life Resource Center

APPENDIX C

CONSULTATION RESOURCES

APPENDIX C

CONSULTATION RESOURCES LEADING TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR
THE PH.D. DISSERTATION

In a five month period beginning in May 1979, the following educators* were interviewed for the purpose of determining areas of current interest regarding adult students in higher education:

Michigan State University

Gaston Blom, Professor, Psychiatry, Elementary and Special Education.

Elaine Cherney, Assistant Professor and Reading Coordinator,
University College Learning Resource Center.

Betty Deldin, Director of Student Withdrawals, Division of Student
Affairs.

John Duley, Associate Professor, Learning and Evaluation Services.

Mildred Erickson, Assistant Dean of Lifelong Education, Professor of
American Thought and Language.

Richard Farace, Professor, Communication, Director of Graduate
Studies.

Richard Featherstone, Professor, Administration and Higher Education.

Costelle Gentry, Associate Professor, Secondary Education and
Curriculum, Learning and Evaluation Services.

*Names and titles were current in June 1980. No attempt has been made to update identification of the persons consulted.

Michigan State University (cont.)

Steven Gold, Graduate Student, Psychology.

Howard Hickey, Professor, Administration and Higher Education.

Walter Johnson, Professor, Administration and Higher Education.

Mary Jim Josephs, Associate Professor and Director of the Venture Program, Justin Morrill College.

Karen Karelius-Schumacher, Graduate Student, Administration and Higher Education.

Dora Marcus, Instructor and Research Associate, Justin Morrill College.

Peter Monge, Associate Professor, Communication.

Beatrice Paolucci, Professor, Family Ecology.

Max Raines, Professor, Administration and Higher Education.

Camille Smith, Career Information Specialist, Counseling Center.

Ruth Hill Useem, Professor, Sociology, Institute for International Studies.

Raymond Vlasin, Professor and Chair, Resource Development; Dean of Lifelong Education.

Barbara Ward, Acting Dean and Associate Professor, Justin Morrill College.

Lake Erie College, Painesville, Ohio

Susan Malcolm Cowling, faculty in psychology.

Betty Stanley, Director of Alternative Education.

John Carroll University, Cleveland, Ohio

Carol Iorillo, Director of Choices for Women, Counseling Center.

Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio

Annie Clement, Associate Dean, College of Education.

Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, Ohio

Evelyn Bonder, Director, Lifelong Learning Institute and Women
Focus.

Marsha Julian, Counselor in Career Development.

University of Colorado at Boulder

Melissa D'Kiefer, Director of Mini-College, The Center for Lifelong
Learning.

Doris Olsen, Women's Center of the Counseling Center.

Darcy Sease, Women's Center of the Counseling Center.