

ROLE PERCEPTIONS OF SENIOR COLLEGE WOMEN  
AND THEIR MOTHERS

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Societies, or groups of people, bonded together by heredity or by common purpose, have traditionally defined the roles which members of the particular group should play. In most cases, members of the group have been compelled to take the roles which the group has defined. When the members fail or do not agree to take the defined roles, they either must find another societal group or experience such responses as frustration, criticism, or rejection. Factors as sex of the group member, his age, or function or expectation within the group situation have delineated the characteristics of the roles defined.

For many years, roles of women and men within our American society have undergone change. Typically it has been said in America that the "woman's place is in the home." The woman's role has been one of domesticity and motherhood. In many cases, however, the woman has played a dual role in our society. In our national history when many people moved westward, the woman was expected to perform work assigned to men in addition to her own female chores. Although a dual work role for women was expected, the rights and privileges of the dual roles were not actualized. Many narratives of our western culture suggest "heavy" responsibility for the woman yet she was not given the right to an education, the right to own property, or even the right to vote.

Women, as revealed through documented movements within this century, have desired and obtained the right to vote; equality in employment, job and career opportunities; the right to hold office; and the right, in some states, to own property. Two of these movements are the Nineteenth **Amendment** to the Constitution ratified in 1920 which gave women the right to vote and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination against women.

During and following the World Wars new opportunities became available to women. Technological achievements offered them new freedom by simplifying the task of house-keeping. Innovations in technology created more jobs necessitating employment of women.

Throughout history, variations in societal needs have had implications for the roles of the family members. The variations of needs offer, in many situations, an equality in male and female roles. However, needs, knowledge, and practical change have not necessarily advanced together. Each family member must still interpret his own role within the family as well as have expectations concerning the roles which other family members should play.

Changing role concepts and expectations have brought confusion both to men and women. Recent articles by such authors as Cogswell (1968), Sewell (1968), and Turner (1953, 1956) present diverse ideas as well as areas of agreement when discussing role-taking and role playing of men and

women. Agreement, then, as well as disagreement, has been found in research related to roles both available to and expected of men and women in today's society. Few research data to date have been assembled on how roles of women are perceived today, as contrasted with role perception of women several decades ago.

### Purpose of the Study

Since role interpretation and expectation are such important factors in familial interaction, and since role differentiation appears to be undergoing considerable change at the present time, it seems imperative that knowledge of women's perception of their roles be expanded.

The purpose of this study was to compare selected aspects of the college women's perceptions of their roles and contrast these with identical roles as perceived by their mothers. Specifically, the writer wished to investigate the:

- (a) college women's perceptions of their future roles as women-mothers;
- (b) college women's perceptions of their mothers' roles as women-mothers;
- (c) mother's perceptions of their own roles as women-mothers; and
- (d) mother's perception of their daughter's future roles as women-mothers.

## CHAPTER I

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of "socialization" or the "socialization process" has appeared in the literature a long time and has been a central theme in studies of role-learning and role-taking. Therefore, the literature examined here includes the historical review of role conception and studies regarding expectations, conceptions, or perceptions of marital or sex roles of the American woman as well as more recent research findings.

#### Historical Review of Role Conception

Many disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, and psychology, have contributed to an interpretation of socialization and the socialization process.

The field of anthropology has contributed to the rise of interest in socialization. Because of the influence of anthropologists such as Edward Sapir, Margaret Mead, Clyde Kluckhohn, John Whiting and psychoanalysts such as Abram Kardiner and Erich Fromm, infancy became a critical phase of socialization in psychoanalytically oriented studies. At the same time the early childhood years were also brought to interest through the writings of John Dewey. Later the importance of adolescent and adult socialization was noted in the research of O. G. Brim, Jr. (Clausen, 1968).

Along with anthropologists and psychologists, sociologists have been interested in the socialization process. Within the field of sociology four significant themes of study may be noted since World War II:

"1) concern with modes of social control (and more recently with the sociology of deviant behavior); 2) the significance of social interaction in the attainment of human nature, with particular emphasis on the development of the social self and the self-other patterns; 3) the influence of social structure and value orientations on childrearing practices and emphasis; and 4) the significance of social roles, role recruitment, and role training for the understanding of behavior" (Clausen, 1968, p. 48).

Psychologists have been concerned with establishing the relationship between socialization practices and child behavior. Studies have sought to establish the effects of parental influences on the developing child. This has been illustrated by researchers as Brofenbrenner (1963), and Bandura and Walters (1963), who were concerned with parents as role models for the child. In addition to the home atmosphere, psychologists have also studied the effects of teaching techniques, classroom atmosphere, and general school curricula emphasis on the motivation and performance of the student (Clausen, 1968).

Clausen gave credit to Adorno and Sears as the psychologists who have most influenced our knowledge of the process and variables of socialization. T. W. Adorno (1950) examined the family and socialization patterns found to be associated with authoritarian attitudes and

prejudices, and Robert R. Sears (1957) made a comprehensive study of the early childhood socialization in the United States (Clausen, 1968).

Over the years the definition of socialization has changed. The term socialization as used in the 1800's was defined as "The fact of developing social relationships, of shaping into a social group or society: the socialization of men" (Clausen, 1968, p. 22). Later, in the early 1900's socialization was used predominantly to refer to both the process of shaping a person and to the process of transforming an individual into a person. At the present, a consensus of researchers has defined socialization as a process of learning by which an individual is prepared to meet the requirements society has set for his behavior in a variety of social situations. The required behavior, including habits, beliefs, attitudes, and motives, is considered to be an individual's prescribed role (Sewell, 1968).

The socialization process in childhood has been of fundamental importance because it is the beginning of role learning. However, socialization in childhood cannot prepare an individual for the many roles he will be called upon to play throughout his life cycle since role learning continues. Throughout life some roles are abandoned, while new ones are acquired at different stages of the life cycle (Cogswell, 1968, and Sewell, 1968).

## Role Definitions

Lindberg's definitions give a basis from which to discuss the concept of roles. He defined role as:

"(the) pattern of behavior of individuals in a specific group in a society. The role concept includes norms, expectations, actions, and interaction with others in the society. . .

. . .Traditional role conception: sharp division between the sexes, with the father being the provider and the mother the homemaker" (p.4).

Social roles are the institutionally proper way for an individual to participate in his society and thus satisfy his wants and needs. Demands are placed upon the individual according to the various groups in which the individual holds membership; i.e., his family, peer group, social class, or occupational group. The demands vary from group to group and appear to change over a period of time (Toby, 1962).

Many of the social roles previously accepted by women and mothers have now been questioned. Because of the many changes in our society, traditional acceptance of role definition appears to be changing in favor of the equalitarian role. Hill (1968) defined the equalitarian role as:

"preferring the equal or balanced approach according to individual skills, interests, and time: (p. 10).

### Change in Role Concepts

Some of the factors which have influenced the changing of role concepts have evolved from changes in our society. For example, the opportunity to obtain an education and to choose an occupation has influenced many women. Other factors as changes in technology, increased educational expectations and aspirations, mobility of the population, and communication media may be involved. These represent a few of the factors which researchers suggested have contributed to the perception, adaptation, and/or acceptance of roles by women in today's society.

In America, the traditionally rigid definitions of sex roles appear to be gradually receding with some roles of men and women fusing. Men may take an active role in child care, and in housekeeping, while their wives pursue careers or interests once deemed to be a male prerogative. Women of today may keep the household budget, spend the money, and work at occupations formerly defined within the scope of the male role. Dress and appearance for men and women are merging. Both men and women have hair below their ears and wear pants for sport as well as formal activities.

Farson (1969) stated that the ideal of the woman as a homemaker is a major target of women's liberation groups throughout the country. They have expressed written concern

regarding the fact that "today the only avenue of self-esteem is to be attractive enough to get a man and motherly enough to raise a family. . .the women's movement for equal rights is becoming organized and gaining momentum" (p.22). Women are calling for an end to all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, access to leadership positions, and equal employment opportunities---not only in legislation but practice. Two demands have been included in their drive for legislation: free choice to have abortions and governmentally sponsored day care centers.

Koontz, Director of the Women's Bureau, stated in a United States Department of Labor Bulletin (1969), that the concept of the woman's "place-in-the-home" is a phenomenon of the past and speculated that nine out of ten females will work sometime during their lives. Many women are heads of households, others supplement the family income to improve opportunities for other family members, and still others work to realize personal and career objectives.

In contrast, only three years earlier, Rush (1966) stated that the role of today's American woman still to be that of a homemaker. Not speculating as strongly as Koontz, Rush stated that in addition to her primary role as a homemaker, one out of every three married women in the United States now has assumed the additional burden of occupational responsibilities.

In the United States the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution has now been in effect for a full half-century, and there are few who question the right of women to vote, to hold office, and in most states to own property. Women are admitted to all but a small and diminishing number of private colleges and have equal access to public schools. According to Woodring (1970) in Saturday Review, women are admitted to nearly all the professions; and at least three major professions---teaching, social work and nursing---employ more women than men.

#### Related Research

In addition to rights and changing concepts of roles, other factors seem to have influenced role perception and actualization. Research concerning feminine role perception has taken two directions: (a) the family member's perception of the female role and (b) attitudes toward justifiable reasons for women working outside the home.

#### Family member's perception of the female role

In the early traditional American families the sexual division of labor appeared to be far more significant in structural and functional aspects of marriage. Today each family member has his own perception of the female role. Not only does the family composition affect the woman's choice of role, but also her choice affects her children's role perception. Researchers found perceptions to be

influenced by such variables as age and sex or position of the family member, social class, education, and employment status. Studies have been concerned with the perceptions of university students and their parents, fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters.

Traditionally the roles of men and women have been thought to be precise or clear-cut. In agreement, Christensen (1963) stated, "There was a definite division of labor which was accepted by each family member" (p.2). Christensen administered a questionnaire to 345 University of Utah students and their parents concerning roles of mothers. The author considered age as a variable and found that younger men and women were more traditional than older persons in their definition of sex roles. Sex of the respondent was found to be significant and revealed that men were more equalitarian than women in their attitudes toward the role of the wife-mother.

In another study, woman's role was labeled as either traditional or companionship. Lindberg (1968) examined the male opinion toward the role of the wife-mother as expressed by a selected group of eighth and twelfth grade boys and their fathers. Lindberg reported that boys, in both grade levels, and fathers hold more prevalent the traditional rather than the companionship role definition.

Another study found women assuming more responsibility in their role. Rush (1966) surveyed the husbands and husbands' fathers of 100 university students to obtain opinions concerning the employment of wives. Findings indicated that 53 percent of the husbands of the women students approved employment for their own wives, with an additional 40 percent also approving under circumstances of: (a) financial necessity, (b) absence of small children in the home, and (c) suitable work and association conditions. Fathers of the men studied approved employment more often for the daughters-in-law than employment for their own married daughters. Rush's data revealed that the major role of today's American woman was still that of a homemaker.

Dour (1965) hypothesized that the level of education of women was related to how women view their role of working outside the home. Investigating some influences which the employment of mothers had on their teenage daughters' attitudes toward acceptance of homemaking responsibilities and educational and homemaking plans, Dour's study provided evidence that level of education and employment status of the mothers influenced their daughters' educational and occupational goals after high school graduation. Dour found that the higher educational level achieved by the mother, the more likely she was to be employed outside the

home; however, her employment status was not significantly related to the daughter's plans for work or education after high school graduation.

Adolescents' attitudes toward maternal employment have been the concern of researchers. King, McIntyre, and Axelson (1968) investigated the attitudes of adolescent ninth grade students toward the effects of maternal employment on the husband-wife relationship. Sons and daughters of college educated parents viewed maternal employment as not threatening to marital relations whether or not their mothers were employed. Both sexes were more accepting of woman's employment if their mother worked; this difference was more accentuated for males than females.

Husbands' attitudes toward the working wife has also been investigated. A study by Axelson (1963) explored husbands' attitudes toward the working wife and investigated the relationship of husbands' views of marital adjustments of working and nonworking wives. In the sample of 122 husbands, 37 percent had working wives. The author reported that "When asked under what circumstances a wife should work, ninety percent of the husbands of nonworking wives responded that she should never work or do so only in an emergency, while fifty-nine percent of the husbands of working wives agreed with these response categories" (p.193).

The decision for the woman to work outside the home appears to be influenced by many factors. Bowman (1965)

stated that a woman's choice of role is complicated because of pressures from three forces; namely, tradition, her biological nature, and opportunities for gainful employment.

Researchers have found several rationales used to explain acceptable conditions under which women work outside the home: (a) whether she valued her employment; (b) whether she received a greater feeling of worth; (c) whether she perceived her husband's attitude toward women working to be favorable; and (d) whether she had no children at home.

Weiss and Samelson (1958) questioned whether employment for women supplied a basis for feeling of worth which house-keeping failed to supply. After interviewing 569 women, randomly selected from all women age twenty-one and older living in the United States, Weiss and Samelson found that the women's choice of occupation was directly related to how she valued her employment. Women in professional, managerial jobs and service work were reported most likely to value their jobs. Women in semiskilled jobs and in private household work were reported least likely to value their employment.

In similar research conducted in the same year, Wise and Carter (1968) studied mothers and daughters in a tradition-oriented Mormon community to discover whether the mothers and their daughters defined the homemaking role differently. Included in the sample studied were 132 girls

who married in Weber County, Utah in 1960 and 84 of their mothers. The authors stated, "The contemporary trend toward wives sharing the husbands' provider role does not appear to have achieved greater acceptance by the daughters' generation" (p. 531). Wise and Carter concluded that instead of time influencing the concept of role, the wife's ordinal position in her former family, and whether or not she had been employed before marriage were the determining factors in the woman's attitude toward employment outside the home.

Acceptance of the woman's changing role as studied by Glenn (1968), gave somewhat contradictory evidence. Geographical location as well as religion may have contributed to the differences found. Glenn questioned women's attitudes toward justifiable reasons for working. She collected her data from homemakers in a small southern community. Data presented demonstrated that according to these homemakers it was acceptable for a married woman to work under two conditions: (a) if there were no children at home, and (b) if her husband did not object. The women studied thought their work should contribute to family goals, and did not accept employment for purely personal reasons as a condition for working.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Relationships between feminine role perceptions of senior resident hall women at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and their mothers' perceptions of the feminine role were explored in this study.

Procedural steps followed were: (a) selection of sample; (b) selection of measuring instruments; (c) collection data; (d) analysis of data; and (e) classification of respondents.

#### Selection of Sample

Women living in university resident halls and their mothers were selected for the study due to availability of the young women. Senior university women were selected since choice of feminine role appeared to be of crucial importance to them with graduation only months away. Mothers were used for contrast to determine whether perceptions of feminine roles have changed due to time.

All senior resident hall women enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University during the Fall of 1970 were asked to participate in the study. Because of the population of senior resident hall women at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the number of students needed for the study, random

sampling from a larger population of senior resident hall women and their mothers was not possible. It was recognized that the selectiveness of the group structure makes generalizations from this study to an entire population of college women or mothers of college women not feasible. Of the total of 144 resident hall women available, 101 responded to the request to participate in the research.

### Instrument

Two instruments constituted each questionnaire. They were a modified version of Sandra J. Christensen's "Comparison of Marital Role Perceptions of Men and Women" and a personal data form (Appendix A).

### Questionnaires

The basis of the major portion of the instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by Sandra J. Christensen (1963). It was designed to measure conceptions of appropriate roles for men and women. The author had correspondence with Christensen to obtain permission to use the questionnaire and to inquire of the validity-reliability of her test (Appendix B). Christensen's test was accepted on face validity.

### Personal Data Form

Personal data forms were developed by the author to acquire information about: (a) the mother's work role, age, home community, occupation, children, income level,

and educational status; and (b) the daughter's future work role, age, home community, number of brothers and sisters, and ordinal position in the family. These demographic data were used to classify the respondents.

#### Collection of Data

Contact was made with Martha Harder, the Dean of Men's and Women's Programs at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, to secure permission to use the students as part of the sample prior to the administration of the instrument.

The author made a personal visit to each upper-class women's resident hall and made final arrangements for the administration of the instrument.

Data were collected during the month of November, 1970. The instrument was administered at prearranged times with varying numbers of respondents present each time.

The first questionnaires were administered in the lounge of East Ambler-Johnston, an upper-class women's residence hall. To encourage frankness, the students did not sign their questionnaires. The procedure followed was (a) distribution of questionnaires; (b) addressing of an envelope to their mother; and (c) answering both questionnaires circling the most appropriate response.

The actual time required to complete the test varied from 10 to 20 minutes. The 30 students present were tested.

Due to lack of response received in a second residence hall meeting, a door-to-door approach was adopted for obtaining responses to questionnaires.

The questionnaires were distributed to senior women living in three upper-classman residence halls; East Ambler-Johnston, East Campbell, and Main Campbell. Questionnaires were completed by 71 senior women making a total of 101. Two questionnaires had to be eliminated because they were not completely answered.

Following each night of distribution, the addressed envelope containing two questionnaires was mailed to the senior woman's mother. Included with the two questionnaires was a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research and encouraging the mother's cooperation (Appendix A). The date of January 4, 1971 was established as the cutoff time for accepting questionnaires from the mothers. Of the 99 mothers available, 82 responded to the request to participate in the research. Three questionnaires from mothers were received too late to be included, hence 79 responses from mothers were used.

#### Analysis of Data

Instruments completed by 99 respondents who met the criterion of being full-time senior women living in residence halls at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and 79 of their mothers were analyzed for results.

Each response to questionnaire items was coded, key punched, and processed by the Computing Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The writer was advised by the statistician on the advisory committee to use descriptive analysis in the treatment of the data. The choice was made because the questionnaires were not matched prior to administration. Therefore, typical statistical treatment was not possible and it was decided to look for variation according to the mean scores.

#### Classification of Respondents

Demographic data from the senior college women and their mothers were requested. It was thought that the data might provide information useful in interpreting and analyzing responses pertaining to perceptions of roles. However, since the senior women and their mothers were not paired for the study, the demographic data served only to provide information about the sample.

#### Senior College Women

Demographic data from the senior college women were collected to determine information according to age, place of residence, the number of other children in the family, and their ordinal position in the family.

Type of home community. Each respondent was questioned concerning her place of residence as to whether it was a rural or urban community. No factors were listed by which she could make a decision.

Children in the family. The number of other siblings in the family was requested from the college senior respondent.

Ordinal position. The senior college women were asked to state their ordinal position in relation to the other siblings in their family.

### Mother

Demographic data were collected in order to be able to classify the mothers according to age, her present occupation, her husband's occupation, whether she lived in an urban or rural area, income level of the family, educational status, and the number of children in the family.

Socio-economic status. A. J. Reiss's classification guide, Occupations and Social Status (1961), was used to group the mothers and their husbands into one of the nine categories to determine socio-economic status:

- 0-None or not listed (unemployed or unknown)
- 1-Professional, technical and kindred workers
- 2-Farmers and farm managers
- 3-Managers, officials, proprietors, except farm
- 4-Clerical and kindred workers
- 5-Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers
- 6-Operatives and kindred workers
- 7-Service workers, except private household
- 8-Farm laborers and foremen
- 9-Laborers (n.e.c.)

Type of home community. Choice of rural or urban community was decided by each respondent in relation to where she thought she had lived during the majority of her life. No determination as to size of town or city was provided by which she could make a decision.

Employment status. Each mother was asked whether she had been employed outside the home during her married life and to state her present occupation. Employment status was additionally specified according to whether the mother's decision to work was made by choice or by necessity.

Educational status. The amount of education received by the mother was organized into one of five educational status groups: high school, high school graduate, college graduate, or post graduate.

Children in the family. Information concerning the number of children in the family and their ages was requested from the mothers.

#### Test of Significance

Information from the respondents was designed to elicit information on feminine role perception and contrast changes in perceptions of feminine roles between senior women and their mothers. However, the sample was not paired before mailing of questionnaires to the mothers. A matching of responses from each senior college woman and her mother was not possible and a test of significance was not considered

appropriate. Therefore, in the analysis of the various questions, the .05 level of significance was approximated with .25 as the criterion for distinguishing significant differences between average responses of senior college women and their mothers.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results and discussion were based on data collected in questionnaires from 99 senior resident hall women enrolled at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and 79 of their mothers during November, 1970.

#### Description of Sample

The range of ages of the senior college women was 20 to 24 years with 67 percent being 21 years of age. In answering the question concerning whether they lived in a rural or urban community, 66 percent of the young women indicated they lived in an urban area, and 34 percent in a rural community. Siblings of the 99 senior women respondents ranged in age from 2 to 35 years. In other questions relating to siblings in the family, 52 percent responded that they were a first child, 16 percent reported being a middle child, 19 percent reported being the last child, and 13 percent were in some other category. Of the 99 seniors comprising the sample only two responded they did not plan to work outside the home.

The mothers ranged in age from 38 to 62 years. About one-third of the mothers were 45-49 years of age and another one-third were 50-54 years of age. There was a

discrepancy between responses of mothers and daughters concerning whether they lived in a rural or urban community. The distribution of mothers indicated that 60 percent lived in an urban setting and 40 percent lived in a rural community. The demographic data revealed that 66 of the 79, or 84 percent of the mothers had worked outside the home, with a majority of 70 percent working by choice. At the time the data were collected, 47 percent of the women considered themselves full-time homemakers. Of the 53 percent of the mothers employed at the time of the questionnaire, 22 percent were clerical workers; 13 percent were professional-technical workers; 11 percent were managers; 5 percent were operatives and kindred workers; and the other 2 percent were foremen and laborers. The mothers of the senior women reported information concerning their husbands' occupation. The occupations of the fathers of the senior women were predominantly managerial-official and professional-technical, with 47 and 27 percent respectively in these categories. The remainder were farmers, operatives, farm laborers, or in an unknown category which included disabled or deceased fathers. Over one half of the families, or 57 percent, had an income of \$15,000 or more. The data revealed that 5 percent of the families of the senior women had an income of less than \$5,000. All mothers had at least some high school education with 27 percent having graduated from high school, 38 percent

having attended college, and 7 percent having completed some post graduate study.

### Questionnaires

Four questionnaires, which the writer modified from Christensen's test designed to measure perceptions of appropriate roles for men and women, were used to test feminine role perceptions of the senior women and their mothers (Appendix A). As noted earlier, each senior woman answered two questionnaires. One was designed to elicit her perception of her future role as a woman-mother and the other one was designed to elicit information concerning the student's perception of her mother's role as a woman-mother. Each senior woman's mother was also asked to respond to two questionnaires. One questionnaire was designed to elicit the mother's perception of her own role as a woman-mother and the other questionnaire was designed to elicit the mother's perception of her daughter's future role as a woman-mother.

The questionnaires, composed of 33 similar questions, were structured to investigate the senior college women and their mothers' perceptions of feminine roles in the areas of dominance and submission and division of labor. The two areas were further subdivided to investigate various related factors. The area of dominance and submission was subdivided with questions concerned with the wife choosing whether or not to work outside the home, planning of her

leisure time, making decisions with the husband as the "boss" or deciding between themselves, and her attitude toward being active religiously.

Questions forming the subdivision of division of labor were concerned with responsibility for disciplining and rearing of children, responsibility for household tasks, managing and spending of money, and general and specific responsibilities for division of labor of the husband and wife.

The senior college women and their mothers were asked to answer each question with one of four reponses:

(a) strongly agree, (b) agree, (c) disagree, and (d) strongly disagree. An unknown category was assigned the response number five in the event there was a failure to answer a question.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis showing mean scores of responses has been presented in nine figures. Each figure graphically displays the variation among the mean score to questions under the four areas of dominance and submission and the five areas included in division of labor. The questions pertaining to a particular topical areas were distributed throughout the questionnaire and do not appear together in sequence in the discussion of data. Hence, question numerals, appearing in

parentheses on each of the figures, are not analyzed consecutively in the discussion but are grouped in the figures.

In the analysis of mean scores, the response of strongly agree was given the rank of one. The response of agree was given the rank of two, the response of disagree the rank of three, and the response of strongly disagree the rank of four. The unknown responses were not included in the analysis of mean scores.

In the figures, one inch on each bar represents the ranking numeral value and displays one element of the response category. When mean scores of respondents strongly agreed, bar length is shown within the one inch scale. When mean scores of respondents agreed, the bar length is represented in the area between one and two inches. Mean scores suggesting disagreement are depicted within the bar area between two and three inches. When mean score responses were in the strongly disagree category, the bar area is shown between three and four inches. Unknown responses are not shown in the figures.

Senior women subjects are referred to as seniors in the figures and their responses concerning perceptions about their future roles are coded SS, meaning senior woman about self. The senior women's responses concerning their perceptions of their mother's roles are coded SM in all figures. The responses of the mothers concerning their

perceptions of their roles are coded MM, referring to mother about self, and the mother's responses concerning her daughter are coded MS, referring to mother's perception of her daughter's role.

#### Dominance and Submission

Data concerning the dominance and submission preferences of the participants with regard to feminine role were analyzed in the areas of attitudes toward the wife working, use of leisure time and recreation, a general area of dominance and submission, and religion. Attitudes and differences in perception of roles between the senior women and their mothers were investigated.

Wife working. Six questions in each questionnaire were concerned with the feminine perception of whether or not the wife should work. Two of the questions in the area dealt with the wife's decision to choose either a career or motherhood or combine the roles. Four questions were concerned with factors affecting the wife's decision to work, including the attitudes of the husband and expectations of personal satisfaction. Each of the six questions related to the senior women's and their mother's perceptions of the choice of the wife to work yielded a significant difference using the .25 measure and results are shown in Figure 1.

The two questions dealing with combining of motherhood and a career or the right to choose between motherhood and a career yielded significantly different responses. When

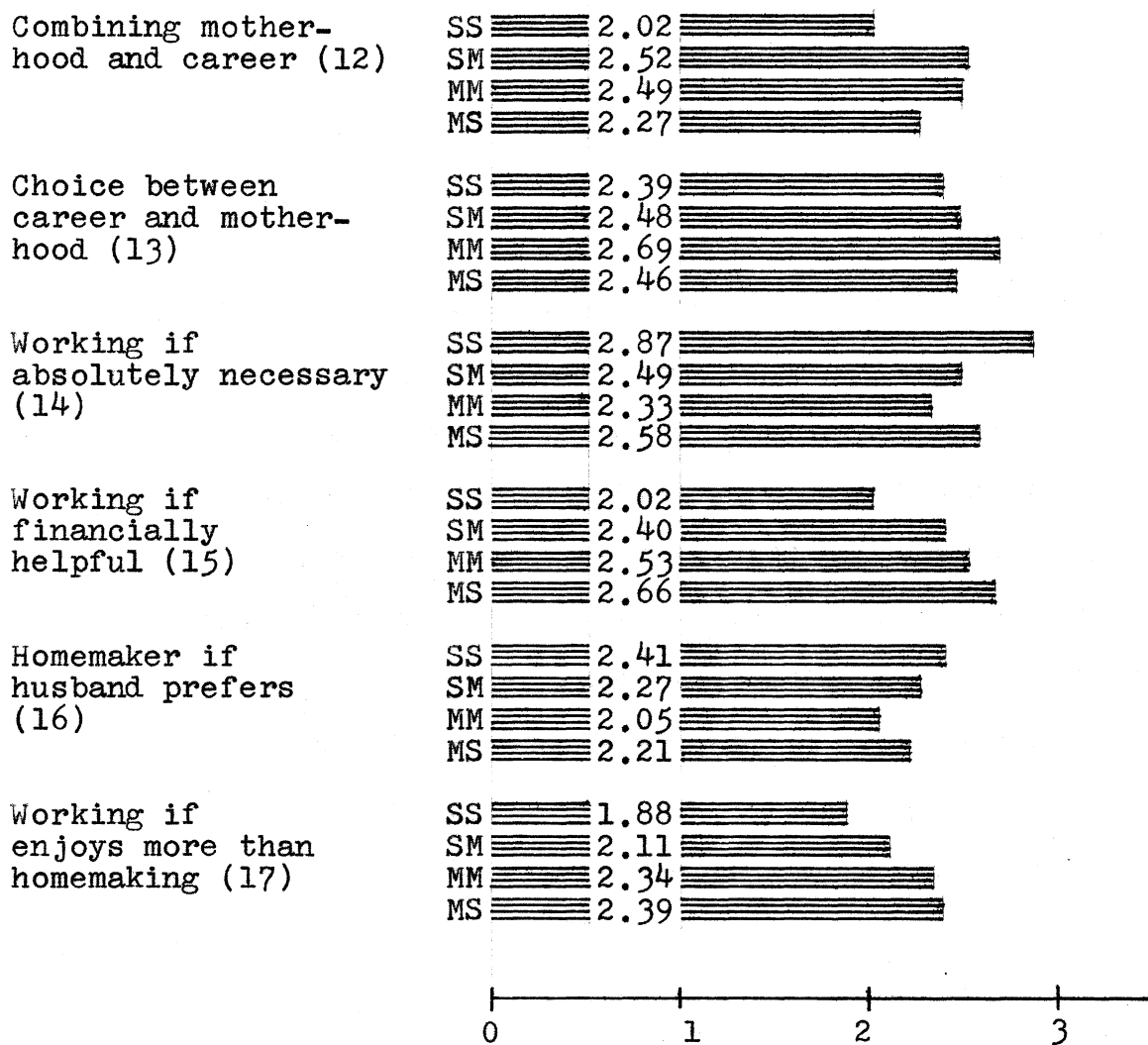
asked about combining motherhood and a career, if feasible, the senior college women responded significantly different from their mothers and also concerning their perception of their mother's role. The senior college women responded that they should be able to combine the roles of motherhood and careers if possible, but did not perceive their mothers combining the two roles. In the question related to the right to choose between motherhood and a career, a significant difference was found between the senior college woman's perception of her own role right and the mother's perception of her own right. In this question the senior college women perceived that they should have the right to choose between motherhood and a career, but the mothers perceived that they themselves did not have this right to choose.

Of the four other questions concerned with what factors should influence a wife's working outside the home, the greatest significant difference was found in a question concerning the wife working if it was helpful to the family financially. In this question the senior college women agreed that they perceived their role should be to work to help the family financially. The senior women did not perceive their mothers working if helpful to the family financially and the mothers did not perceive their role or their daughter's role as working just to help the family financially.

FIGURE 1

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Dominance and Submission

## Questions Concerning Wife Working



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother     MS = Mother-Senior

When asked whether a woman should go to work outside the home only if it was absolutely necessary, the senior college women disagreed significantly that this should be the only reason for their working. The disagreement is consistent with previous answers perceived by the seniors in that they perceived a woman as having the right to choose a career.

In another question, respondents were asked whether they would be happy to stay at home if their husbands were not in favor of their working. There were significant responses from both the senior women and their mothers. The senior college women disagreed, which might indicate that they would either be unhappy to stay at home or would work outside the home whether or not their husband favored their working. It is interesting that mothers of the senior college women took the opposite perceptual view regarding their role. The mothers agreed that they would be happy to stay at home if their husbands were not in favor of their working.

When asked whether they would go to work outside the home if they enjoyed working more than staying at home, the senior college women agreed that this would be a condition under which they might work. The mothers of the senior women disagreed that they or their daughters should work outside the home if they enjoyed the work more than staying at home. The responses to this question seemed

consistent with previous responses related to whether or not a wife would work outside the home and under what conditions she might work.

Leisure time and recreation. Another area under the heading of dominance and submission was use of leisure time and recreation. Questions in this subdivision, shown in Figure 2, were structured to determine whether senior college women and their mothers perceived their roles differently in deciding about, and planning for, use of leisure time and recreation. Basically the questions were structured to determine whether the wife should consider her husband's likes, dislikes, and free time, or whether she should decide how to use her leisure time according to her own likes, dislikes, and free time.

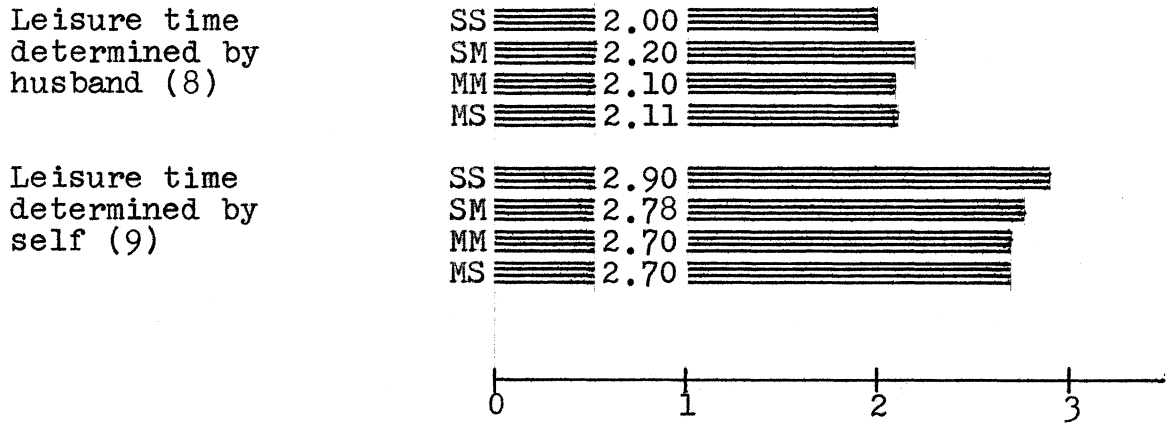
It is interesting that both the senior college women and their mothers agreed that their husband's wishes and free time would be considerations for planning and using free time and recreation. Perceiving their role consistently with past responses, the senior college women and their mothers responded with disagreement that it was not solely their own decision as to how they should use leisure time or recreation.

Though this subdivision of the questionnaire was labeled leisure time and recreation, no question had specific reference to recreation. It was inferred that recreation was considered a part of leisure time usage.

FIGURE 2

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Dominance and Submission

## Questions Concerning Leisure Time and Recreation



SS = Senior-Senior  
SM = Senior-Mother

MM = Mother-Mother  
MS = Mother-Senior

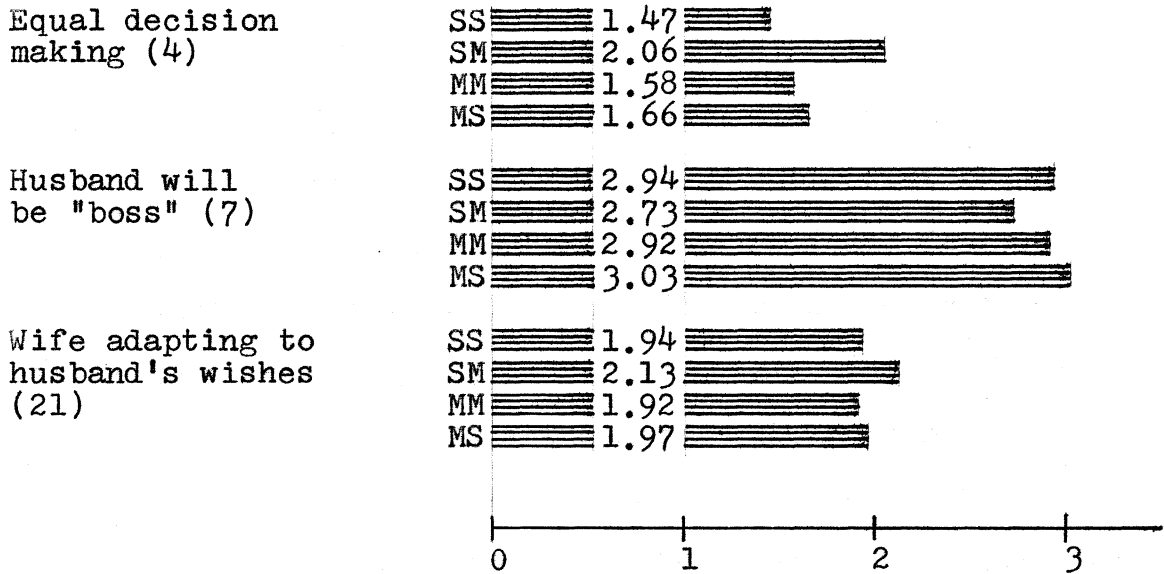
General area of dominance and submission. The third area under dominance and submission was a general one and is exhibited in Figure 3. In this area feminine perception of the husband's role, the wife's role, and decision making were considered. One of the three questions concerned the husband and wife having an equal voice in decision making. Another question concerned the husband being the "boss" and saying what would and would not be done in the home. The third question concerned whether it was important for a wife to adapt her life to meet her husband's wishes and needs. This is the only subdivision under dominance and submission where all questions were not significant. The question concerned with whether or not it is important for a wife to adapt her life to meet her husband's wishes and needs failed to be significant. Since there were no significant differences between the responses of the college women and their mothers to the question, one might infer that both senior women and their mothers perceived that it was important for them to adapt their lives to meet their husband's wishes.

In the question relating to whether the husband and wife should have an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole, the senior women and their mothers perceived the role of the mother differently. The senior college women did not perceive their mothers as having an equal voice in decisions affecting the family whereas the

FIGURE 3

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Dominance and Submission

## Questions Concerning the General Area



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

mothers perceived that they did. From the results, it was obvious that the senior college women and their mothers disagreed in the perception of the mother's role in decision making which affected the family.

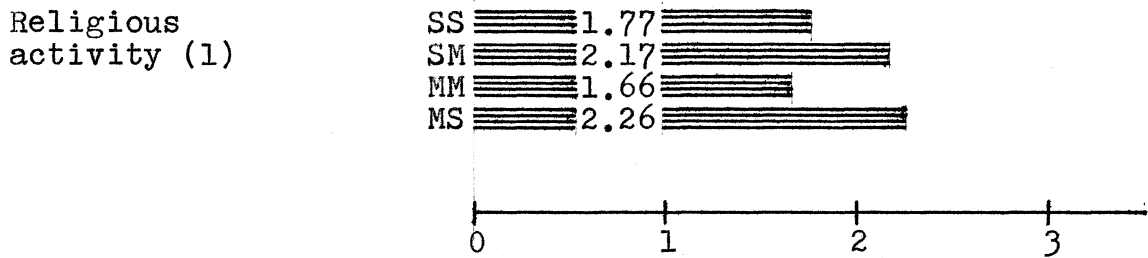
When asked if the husband would be the "boss" and say what was or was not to be done, there was a significant difference in perceptions between the mothers of their husbands and the senior college women of their fathers. The mothers disagreed that their husband would be the boss. However, many senior college women disagreed with their mother's perceptions and agreed their father was the boss in saying what was and was not to be done. This disagreement was consistent with the previous response made by the seniors in that they perceived their mothers as not having had an equal voice in decision making and thus inferring their father was the boss.

Religion. The last area under dominance and submission was religion. The question in this area shown in Figure 4, was structured to determine whether the senior college women and their mothers perceived it important in their role for them to be active religiously. The mothers agreed that in their role and their daughter's role it was important. However, the significant difference was that the senior college women did not agree that being active religiously was as important for they themselves and their mothers as their mothers did.

FIGURE 4

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Dominance and Submission

## Question Concerning Religion



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

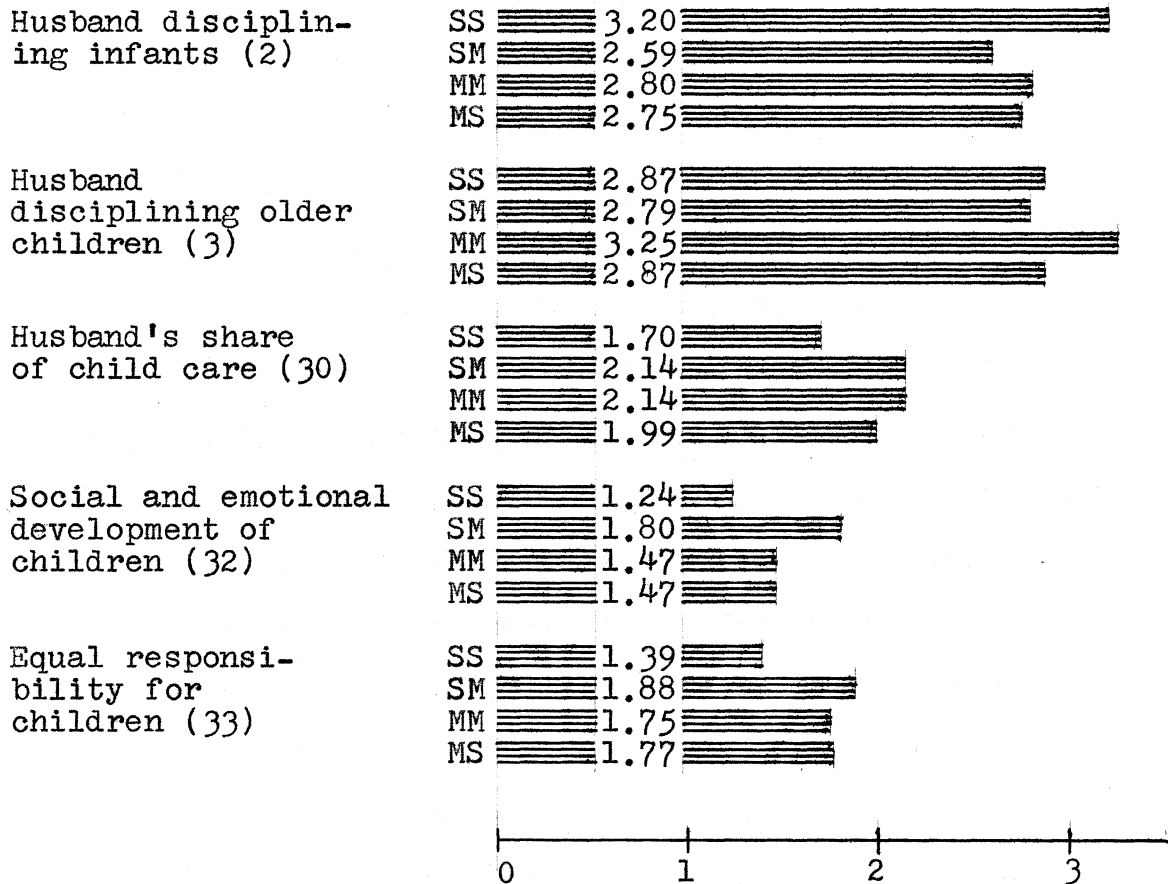
### Division of Labor

Perceptions of roles related to the division of labor were examined by a series of questions. Responses concerned attitudes toward the role of the wife in relation to the disciplining and rearing of children, spending of money, and general and specific responsibilities to division of labor for the husband and wife.

Discipline, child rearing, and child care. Five questions in each questionnaire were concerned with the feminine perception of whether one parent should accept all or both parents should accept equal responsibility for their children. Mean responses for the answers from the five questions are displayed in Figure 5. The two questions dealing with discipline of the children when they are babies and as they grow older were significant. When asked about leaving the discipline to the mothers when the children are babies, the senior college women responded significantly different from their mothers not only about their own role but concerning the roles of their mothers. The senior women responded that they disagreed that their husband would leave the discipline of the babies to them. In disagreement with their daughters, the mothers of the college seniors perceived both for themselves and their daughters that the wife should be responsible for the discipline of children when they are babies. In the question related to the husband being the main disciplinarian

FIGURE 5

Role Perceptions Pertaining to Division of Labor  
 Questions Concerning Discipline, Child Rearing,  
 and Child Care



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

of the children as they grow older, the significant difference was the perceptions of the mothers in contrast with those of their senior daughters. The mothers of the seniors perceived their husbands as well as their daughters' husbands to be the main disciplinarian of the children as they grow older.

Of the other three questions concerned with factors influencing acceptance of the responsibility of the children, the greatest significant difference was found in the question concerning the husband managing his time in order that he would be able to share in the care of children. In this question the senior college women agreed in their perceptions that their husbands should be responsible for sharing in the care of the children. In all responses, the senior women did not perceive their fathers having shared in the care of the children and mothers did not perceive their husband or their daughter's husband as managing his time to share in the care of the children.

When asked whether both husband and wife should concern themselves equally with the social and emotional development of children, the responses indicated reasonably close agreement by all respondents that husbands should share equally in the social and emotional developmental areas of children. However, significance of the question resulted from the variation in how the senior college women perceived their mother's role when answering the question and the responses

from the mothers concerning their husband's roles. This finding may indicate that the senior college women did not perceive their fathers as having had equal concern over their own social and emotional development.

Household tasks. Questions concerning responsibility for household tasks, mean responses displayed in Figure 6, was the second subdivision in the main area of division of labor. Feminine perception of responsibility for household tasks was considered in six questions concerned primarily with sharing task responsibility dependent on time, interests, and work conditions or defining tasks as the responsibility of the woman. Most of the questions in the area of division of labor yielded significant differences.

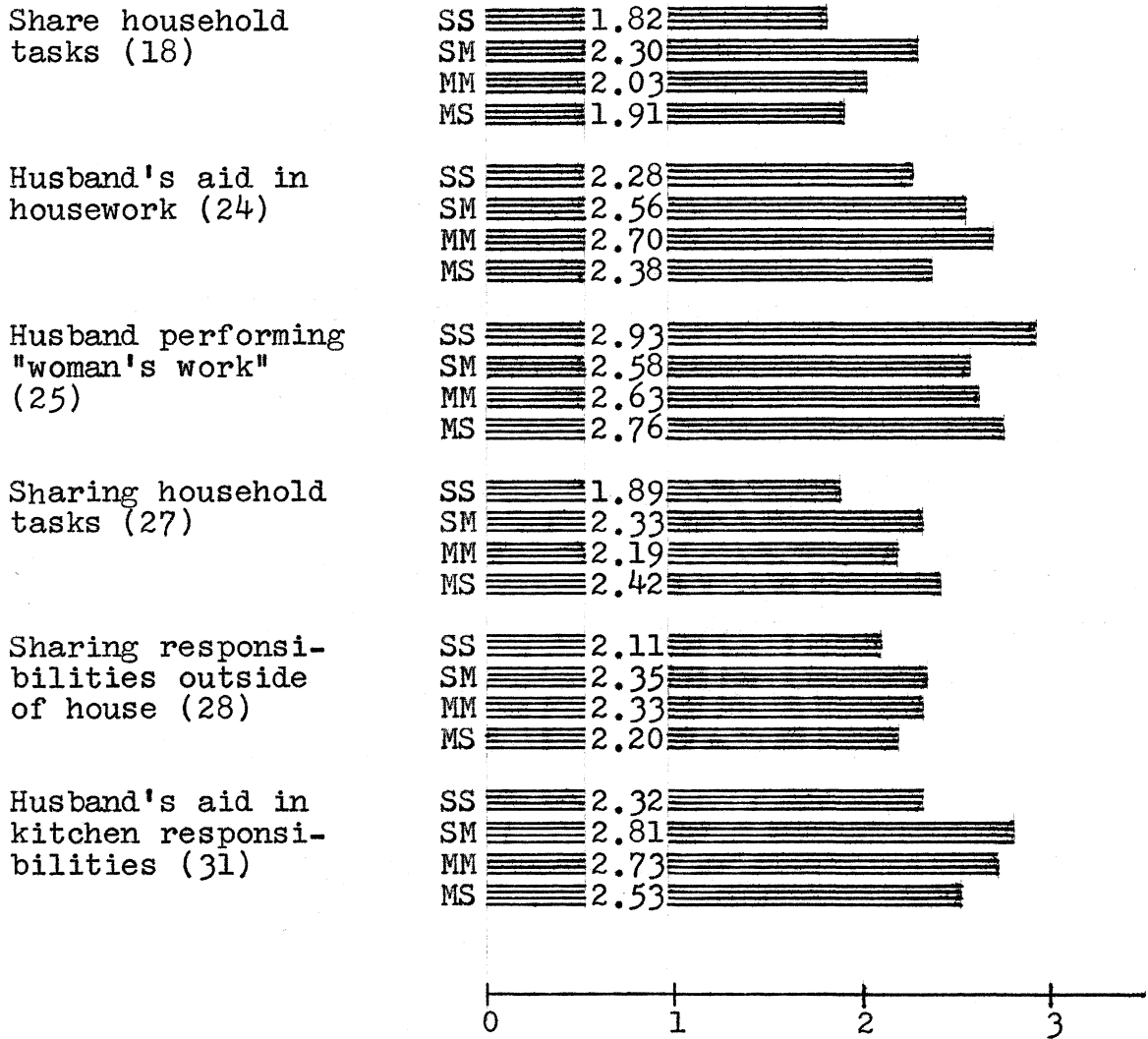
When asked the question concerning who should be responsible for keeping the yard, making repairs, and doing outside chores, no significant differences were found among the responses. Since there were no significant differences between the responses of the college women and their mothers to the question, one could infer that both senior women and their mothers perceived that the responsibility for such tasks would be that of the spouse having the time or interest.

There was a significant difference among the responses of the senior college women and their mothers in the other three questions related to sharing responsibility for the

FIGURE 6

Role Perceptions Pertaining to Division of Labor

Questions Concerning Household Tasks



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

household tasks. When asked whether the husband and wife should share the responsibility of work in the home if both worked outside the home, the senior women perceived the role of their mothers as being significantly different from their own. The senior college women did not perceive their mothers and fathers equally sharing the responsibility for work in the home. In the question relating to the husband helping with the housework, the senior college women disagreed significantly from their mothers. The seniors perceived that their husbands would help with the housework. When asked whether the husband and wife will share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities, the senior college women agreed that responsibility for household tasks would be shared. The agreement is consistent with previous perceptions given by the seniors that husbands and wives should share responsibilities for household tasks.

In the other two questions respondents were asked whether the husbands should feel responsible for tasks typically defined within the scope of traditional roles for women. In a question referring to the husband feeling no responsibility for laundering, cleaning, and child care, since they are a woman's work, the senior woman's perception of her husband was significantly different from her perception of her father's role. The senior women disagreed and the inference can be made that the young

women speculated that their husbands would feel some responsibility even though their fathers had little or no responsibility for such tasks. In another question respondents were asked whether husbands should be expected to regularly help wash of dry dishes. The senior women agreed that their husbands would help with the dishes and this was significantly different from responses given by their mothers. Both the senior college women and their mothers perceived fathers as not having helped with these tasks, but mothers perceived the husbands of their daughters as having responsibilities of this type.

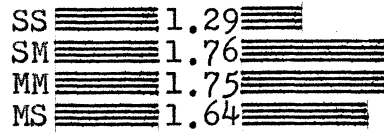
Money. Three questions in each questionnaire, mean responses displayed in Figure 7, related to the feminine perception of the wife being informed about the family's financial status and managing money or allowing the husband to decide about money management. There was close agreement among all respondents that the wife should be well informed about the financial status of the family and that both the wife and husband should plan and manage the spending money. However, the significant differences obtained from the responses to these two questions were observed in the variation in strength of agreement as the senior college women perceived their own role. This seemed to indicate that the senior women strongly perceived the management of money a joint proposition between themselves and their husbands.

FIGURE 7

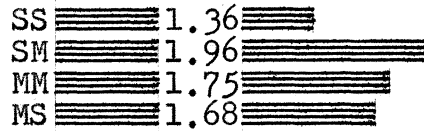
## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Division of Labor

## Questions Concerning Money

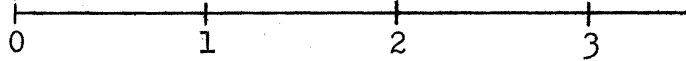
Wife informed on  
family finances  
(5)



Joint money  
management (6)



Husband determines  
household budget  
(11)



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

When asked whether the amount of money spent for keeping the house would be decided by the husband, the senior women and their mothers perceived the role of the mother significantly different. The senior college women perceived their fathers as deciding how much was spent on keeping the house whereas the mothers perceived they did not.

General responsibilities. In the fourth area of questioning, five questions concerned feminine perceptions of the husband's and wife's role with regard to general responsibilities to the family. Mean responses for this category are displayed in Figure 8.

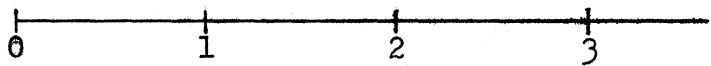
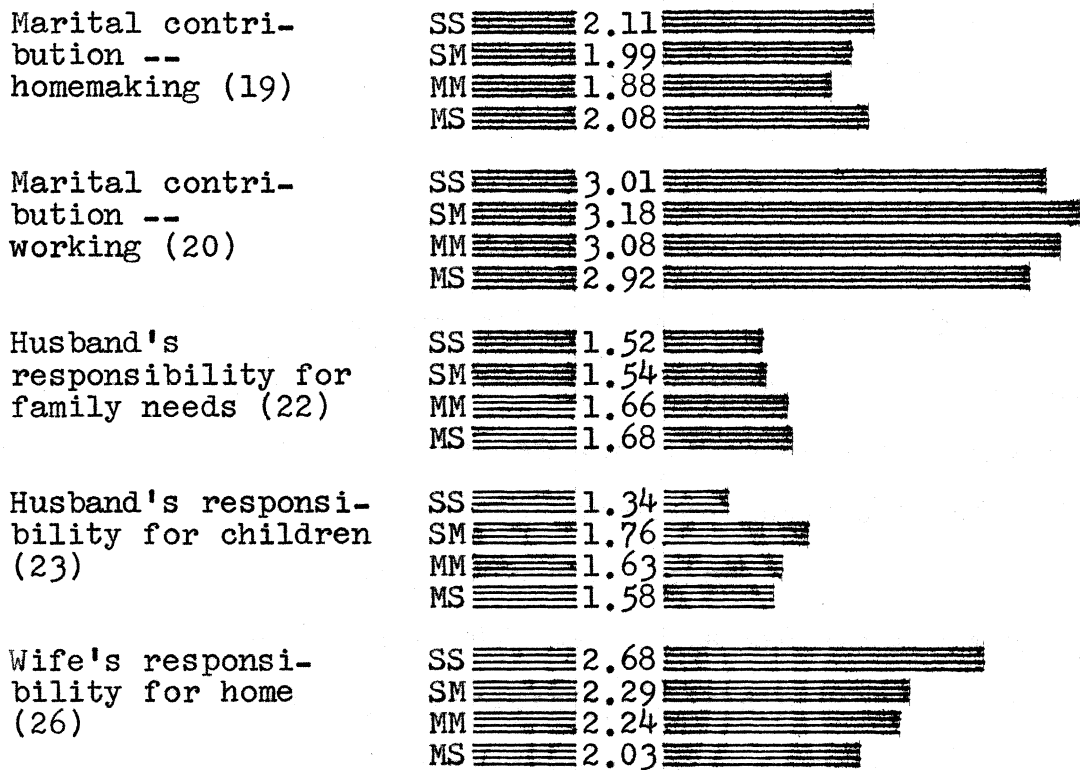
No significant differences were found among the perceptions of the senior college women and their mothers when considering the general responsibilities involved in the role of the wife. The senior college women and their mothers were in close agreement in their responses to the question that a wife's greatest contribution as a marital partner would be to stay at home and make their husband's hours at home as enjoyable and as free from tension as possible. Furthermore, both senior college women and their mothers disagreed with the question stating their greatest contribution to their families would be to work outside the home and help out financially.

The senior college women and their mothers also agreed that the husband would contribute to the marital partnership

FIGURE 8

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Division of Labor

## Questions Concerning General Responsibilities



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother      MS = Mother-Senior

by being a good worker, respectable, and faithful to the family, and by being ambitious, a good provider, and successful in his work. There were no significant differences in their perceptions of the husband's role among the senior college women and their mothers to this question.

In another question the husband's contribution as a marital partner was considered as being kind, understanding, and sharing the responsibility of rearing and caring for children. Both senior college women and their mothers agreed that these qualities were important for their husbands. However, the significance of the statement resulted when the senior women more often perceived their own future husband as having this role definition.

When asked if the wife should be exclusively responsible for the cooking and cleaning of the house, the senior college women showed some disagreement. The mothers' responses indicated that they perceived their daughters doing all the cooking and cleaning. The significant differences resulted from the mothers perceiving their daughters being responsible for these tasks and the senior women not agreeing with this perception.

Specific responsibilities. Two questions concerned with specific responsibilities composed the last area under the division of labor. Responses to these questions are exhibited in Figure 9. When asked whether the husband and wife should jointly decide on the amount of money to spend

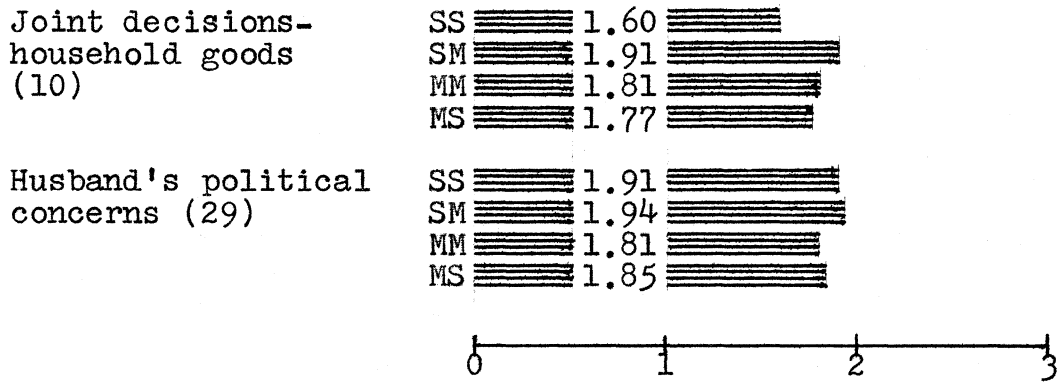
on appliances and furniture, there were significant differences between the responses of the senior college women as they perceived their roles and their mother's role. The senior women perceived their roles should be to jointly decide with their husbands the amount of money to spend on appliances and furniture. However, the senior women did not perceive their mothers as having had the same role responsibility.

In the last question there were no significant differences between the responses of the senior college women and their mothers when asked about the naturalness of the husband to be concerned with politics and what is going on in the world. All respondents agreed suggesting that they perceived it to be natural for the husband to be concerned about world affairs.

FIGURE 9

## Role Perceptions Pertaining to Division of Labor

## Questions Concerning Specific Responsibilities



SS = Senior-Senior      MM = Mother-Mother  
 SM = Senior-Mother     MS = Mother-Senior

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is thought that changing role concepts and expectations have brought confusion both to men and women. In America, the rigid definitions of sex roles appear to be gradually declining with roles of men and women fusing. Women of today may keep the household budget, spend the money, and work at occupations formerly defined within the scope of the male role. Agreement, as well as disagreement, was found in research related to the roles both available to and expected of men and women in today's society. Little research to date has been conducted on how women of today perceive roles as contrasted with role perception of women several decades ago.

The purpose of the study was to compare selected aspects of the college women's perceptions of the feminine role and contrast their perceptions with identical role aspects as perceived by their mothers. Specifically, the author investigated college women's perceptions of their future roles as a women-mothers, their perceptions of their mothers' roles as women-mothers, the mothers' perceptions of their own roles as women-mothers, and the mothers' perceptions of their daughters' future roles as women-mothers.

Subjects selected for this study were college senior women enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at Blacksburg, Virginia, and their mothers. Of the total of 145 senior resident hall women available, 101 responded to the request to participate in the research. The responses from two questionnaires were eliminated because they were not answered completely leaving a total of 99 questionnaires which were analyzed. Of the 99 mothers available, 79 responded to the request to participate in the research.

The four questionnaires used in collecting empirical data consisted of two parts: (a) a modified version of Sandra J. Christensen's "Comparison of Marital Role Perceptions of Men and Women"; and (b) a personal data form (Appendix A). Each questionnaire, composed of 33 similar questions, was structured to investigate feminine perception in the two main areas of dominance and submission, and division of labor. The area of dominance and submission was further subdivided to investigate perceptions concerning the wife working, leisure time and recreation, a general area, and religion. Subdivisions under the division of labor were: discipline, child-rearing, and child care; household tasks, money, general responsibilities, and specific responsibilities. The questionnaires were administered during November, 1970, with 99 from the senior college women and 79 from their mothers being usable.

Criteria used for selecting the sample were that the respondent be: (a) female, (b) a senior class student, and (c) a resident hall student.

Each participant was classified by a personal data form developed by the author to acquire information about the senior college women's: (a) future work role, age, home community, number of brothers and sisters, and ordinal position in the family; and (b) their mother's work role, age, home community, occupation, children, income level, and educational status attained.

A test of significance was not feasible since the sample was not paired and matching of responses from senior college women and their mothers was not possible. Therefore, in analysis of the various questions, the .05 level of significance was approximated with .25 as the criterion for distinguishing significant differences.

#### Results of the Investigation

In the area of dominance and submission, most noticeable trends or changes in role perception between young women of senior college age and their mothers, as seen from responses to questionnaires, were in the areas of the wife working and a general area of dominance and submission in decision making.

The senior women perceived themselves working outside the home even if it was not necessary or the husband

disapproved. Two circumstances under which the senior women would work were if they enjoyed working more than staying at home or if it would be helpful to the family financially. They perceived themselves as having the right to choose between or combine the roles of motherhood and a career. The senior college women also perceived that they would have an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole. In the seniors' feminine role perception they failed to see their husbands as the "boss" but felt that their father had been the "boss" and said what would or would not be done.

In comparison, the mothers did not perceive their own role as their daughters perceived their future role. The mothers perceived themselves working only if absolutely necessary. If their husbands desired, the mothers were willing to stay at home. The mothers did not perceive themselves combining the roles of motherhood and a career or having the right to choose between the roles.

Both senior college women and their mothers perceived their role as being influenced by their husband where leisure time was concerned. However, the senior women disagreed when they perceived their husbands' influence on their decision to work outside the home.

There were no significant differences in how senior college women and their mothers perceived the importance of

the wife to adapt her life to meet her husband's wishes and needs.

In the question concerning religion, all respondents agreed it would be important for them to be active religiously.

In the general area of division of labor the most noticeable perceptions reflecting change over time were related to the manner in which the senior college women perceived the roles of the husband and wife as sharing responsibilities in the areas of child rearing, money management, and household tasks.

In the area of child rearing, the senior women perceived the husband and wife managing their time to share in the care and discipline of children when they are babies as well as when children grow older. Specific responsibilities including decisions about amount of money to spend on furniture and appliances were perceived by the seniors as a joint responsibility for husbands and wives. Senior college women perceived their husbands feeling some responsibility for tasks typically defined within the roles for women. They expected their husbands to share with household tasks and regularly help with sanitation of dishes.

In comparison, the senior college women did not perceive their mothers and fathers sharing responsibilities. The seniors did not perceive their parents jointly

deciding on the amount of money to spend on furniture, appliances, or keeping the house. They did not see their mothers and fathers sharing responsibilities for household tasks. Also, the seniors did not perceive their fathers as equally concerned as their mothers over the social and emotional development of children or sharing in the care of children.

Opposing her senior daughter's perception of her future role, the mothers perceived the daughter's future husband as the main disciplinarian of the children as they grow older. The mothers also perceived their senior college daughters as responsible for all the cooking and cleaning.

There was close agreement among the senior college women and their mothers in their perceptions that the wife should be well informed about the financial status of the family and that both the husband and wife should plan and manage the spending money.

Traditional concepts about the wife being subordinate and the husband dominant in decision making appears to be shifting to the more conventional concept where young women perceive themselves more actively involved in pursuing their career, combining motherhood, actively engaged in decisions affecting management of the home, and division of household tasks and care of children.

### Limitations of the Study

The present study had several limitations. Only senior resident hall women enrolled at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and their mothers were chosen as respondents for this study and might not represent a group typical of other universities or academic institutions or other regions. The failure to pair and match the sample was a limiting factor. Because the respondents were all from Virginia's Land-Grant University, a great majority of them were middle class which did not allow sufficient socio-economic distribution. Improvement of the instruments would have been desirable. The measure of feminine perceptions might have been more conclusive with more contrasting questions in each category. Also, the test was published in 1963 and a more recent design might have included different dimensions of questions. Other factors which might have affected perceptions were not investigated in the present study. The study did not cover some specific areas where role perceptions could affect family or husband-wife interactions or where differences in role perception might be changing which could affect family life.

### Implications for Further Study

Some implications for further research were an outgrowth of the present study. A larger sample composed of women from different educational backgrounds, geographical regions, age levels, races, social classes, employment situations, or marital status might have revealed more differences in female role perception. Empirical data collected from women students regarding their college major, goals and ambitions, marital plans, and attitudes toward gainful employment would be important in discerning influences on feminine role perception. Research which compared respondents from a woman's college and those from a coeducational institution might be significant.

Effects of the political atmosphere, various youth movements, and feminist cults on the feminine role perception might also provide interesting areas for investigation.

APPENDIX A

ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE FIRST

## Senior-Senior's Role

QUESTIONNAIRE OF FEMININE ROLE EXPECTATIONS

It is important that you answer every question. Please circle the letters in the column which best represent your opinion of each statement. The key to the questionnaire is SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D - Disagree, and SD - Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
In my role as a wife and mother, I (expect or believe that):					
1. it will be important for me to be active religiously.	18	45	28	8	0
2. my husband will leave the discipline of the children up to me when they are babies.	1	8	60	30	0
3. my husband will be the main dis- ciplinarian of the children as they grow older.	5	22	53	19	0
4. my husband and I will have an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	58	35	6	0	0
5. I will be as well informed as my husband concerning the family's status.	72	25	2	0	0
6. managing and planning for spending money will be a joint proposition between my husband and me.	69	25	4	1	0
7. my husband will be the "boss" who says what is to be done and what is not to be done.	4	20	53	22	0

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
8. planning and using my leisure time will be done with my husband's likes, dislikes, and free time in mind.	25	52	19	3	0
9. it will be entirely my business how I decide to use my leisure time.	5	18	58	18	0
10. my husband and I will jointly decide upon the amount of money to spend on appliances and furniture.	47	46	5	1	0
11. the amount of money spent for keeping up the house should be decided by my husband.	5	11	63	20	0
12. to combine motherhood and a career if that proves possible.	29	47	15	8	0
13. if I prefer a career to having children, I have the right to make the choice.	16	37	37	9	0
14. to go to work outside the home only if it is absolutely necessary (husband disabled, etc.)	5	22	53	19	0
15. to go to work outside the home if it is helpful to us financially (such as saving for a car, a home, major appliances, etc.).	17	67	11	4	0
16. if my husband is not in favor of my working, I will be happy to stay at home.	13	40	38	8	0
17. to go to work outside the home if I enjoy working more than staying at home.	31	52	13	3	0

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
18. my husband and I will share the responsibility of the work in the home if we both work outside of the home.	36	47	14	2	0
19. during most of our married life-- not short term financial crises-- my contribution as a marital partner will be greatest by staying at home, making my husband's hours at home as free from tension as possible and making them enjoyable.	29	41	18	11	0
20. my greatest contribution will be made by working outside of the home and helping out financially.	4	11	63	20	1
21. it will be important for me to adapt my life to meet my husband's wishes and needs.	29	50	17	3	0
22. my husband will contribute to our marital partnership by being a good worker, respectable, and faithful to our family, and by being ambitious, a good provider, and successful in his work.	51	44	2	1	1
23. my husband will contribute to our marital partnership by being kind, and understanding, and sharing the responsibility of rearing and caring for our children.	66	32	1	0	0
24. my husband to help with the housework.	9	56	31	3	0

	Strongly 1 Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	Strongly 4 Disagree	5 Unknown
25. since doing things as laundry, cleaning and child care are "woman's work" my husband will feel no responsibility for them.	2	21	58	18	0
26. it will be exclusively my responsibility to do the cooking and keep the house in order.	10	21	59	9	0
27. my husband and I will share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to "woman's work" or "man's work."	27	57	12	2	1
28. keeping the yard, making repairs, and doing outside chores should be the responsibility of whoever has the time and wishes to do them.	12	64	23	0	0
29. it will be only natural that my husband will be concerned about politics and what is going on in the world.	26	58	13	2	0
30. my husband will manage his time so that he will be able to share in the care of the children.	37	55	7	0	0
31. my husband will frequently or regularly help wash or dry the dishes.	14	43	38	4	0
32. that both my husband and I will equally concern ourselves with the social and emotional development of our children.	78	18	3	0	0
33. my husband will feel equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as I will.	68	23	8	0	0

Please check the following questions in the category which most nearly describes you or your family situation:

1. Do you plan to work outside the home during your married life?

Yes 97  
 No 2  
 By choice 68  
 By necessity 29

2. Your Age:

14 20 or below  
66 21 years  
18 22 years  
1 23 years

3. Classify the best description as to where your home is located:

Rural 34  
 Urban 65

4. Number of other children in your family:

18 under 6 years  
41 6-12 years  
26 13-20 years  
13 21-30 years  
1 30 years or over

5. Where do you rank in relation to sibling order?

First 51  
 Middle 16  
 Last 19  
 Other 13

## Senior-Mother's Role

QUESTIONNAIRE OF FEMININE ROLE EXPECTATIONS

It is important that you answer every question. Please circle the letters in the column which best represent your opinion of each statement. The key to the questionnaire is SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D - Disagree, and SD - Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unknown
	1	2	3	4	5
In my mother's role as a wife and mother, I (expected or believed that):					
1. it was important for her to be active religiously.	23	40	28	8	0
2. my father left the discipline of the children up to my mother when they were babies.	14	26	46	13	0
3. my father was the main disciplinarian of the children as they grew older.	6	21	60	12	0
4. my father and mother had an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	27	45	21	6	0
5. my mother was as well informed as my father concerning the family's financial status.	47	33	15	4	0
6. managing and planning for spending money was a joint proposition between my father and mother.	38	34	20	7	0
7. my father was the "boss" who said what was to be done and what was not to be done.	9	30	39	21	0

	Strongly 1 Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	Strongly 4 Disagree	5 Unknown
8. planning and using my mother's leisure time should be done with my father's likes, dislikes and free time in mind.	17	51	25	6	0
9. it was entirely mother's business how she decided to use her leisure time.	3	28	56	12	0
10. my father and mother jointly decided upon the amount of money spent on appliances or furniture.	30	51	15	3	0
11. the amount of money spent for keeping up the house was decided by my father.	11	24	52	12	0
12. my mother to combine motherhood and a career if that proved possible.	12	36	39	12	0
13. if my mother preferred a career to having children, she had the right to make the choice.	10	42	36	11	0
14. her to go to work outside the home only if it was absolutely necessary (husband disabled, etc.)	11	38	40	10	0
15. her to go to work outside the home only if it was helpful financially (such as saving for a car, a home, major appliances, etc.)	10	46	36	7	0
16. if my father was not in favor of her working, my mother was happy to stay at home.	18	43	31	7	0
17. her to go to work outside the home if she enjoyed working more than staying at home.	24	47	21	7	0

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unknown
	1	2	3	4	5
18. my father and mother shared re- sponsibility of work in the home if they both worked outside the home.	16	45	30	8	0
19. during most of their married life-- not short term financial crises-- my mother's contribution as a marital partner was greatest by staying at home, making my father's hours at home as free from tension as possible and making them enjoyable.	34	39	19	7	0
20. my mother's greatest contribution was made by working outside of the home and helping out financially.	6	14	35	44	0
21. it was important for my mother to adapt her life to meet my father's wishes and needs.	21	49	24	5	0
22. my father contributed to their marital partnership by being a good worker, respectable, and faithful to our family, and by being ambitious, a good provider, and successful in his work.	57	35	3	4	0
23. my father contributed to their marital partnership by being kind, and understanding, and sharing the responsibility of rearing and caring for the children.	50	29	14	6	0
24. my father helped with the house- work.	10	45	23	21	0
25. since doing things as laundry, cleaning, and child care are "woman's work", my father felt no responsibility for them.	18	22	43	16	0

	Strongly 1 Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unknown
26. it was exclusively my mother's responsibility to do the cooking and keeping the house in order.	27	24	40	8	0
27. my father and mother shared household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to "woman's work" or "man's work".	17	43	28	11	0
28. keeping the yard, making repairs, and doing outside chores was the responsibility of whoever had the time and wished to do them.	15	44	30	10	0
29. it was only natural that my father was concerned about politics and what was going on in the world.	26	55	16	2	0
30. my father managed his time so that he was able to share in the care of the children.	20	52	20	7	0
31. my father frequently or regularly helped wash or dry the dishes.	11	22	41	25	0
32. both my father and mother equally concerned themselves with the social and emotional development of their children.	45	36	11	7	0
33. my father felt equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as my mother did.	42	36	12	9	0

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 24061

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT,  
HOUSING AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

November 4, 1970

Dear

Let me first introduce myself by this letter. My name is Donna Frost and I am from Lebanon, Tennessee. I am presently a graduate student in the Department of Management, Housing and Family Development and engaged in research for my thesis. I hope you will help me in my research by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

For my study, I am trying to investigate differences in how mothers and daughters view their roles within a family. Specifically, I want to find out how mothers view their own roles and, also, how they think their daughter's role as a wife and mother will differ from theirs.

Your daughter has recently participated in my research and has indicated that you would probably agree to participate. I received your name and address from your daughter when she completed the questionnaires designed to ask how she viewed her future role as a wife and mother and how your role differs.

My research is conducted with authority and consent from Miss Martha Harder, Dean of Women and Men and Dr. James E. Montgomery, Head of the Department of Management, Housing and Family Development, here at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

I would appreciate your completing the questionnaires and return them to me as quickly as possible. Enclosed please find a self-addressed envelope for returning the questionnaires. There is no need to identify yourself on the questionnaire as your responses will be grouped with the responses of all other mothers who are participating in the survey.

Please accept my thanks in advance for your help.

Sincerely,

Donna Frost

sds

Enclosure

ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE FIRST

## Mother-Mother's Role

QUESTIONNAIRE OF FEMININE ROLE EXPECTATIONS

It is important that you answer every question. Please circle the letters in the column which best represent your opinion of each statement. The key to the questionnaire is SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D - Disagree, and SD - Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
In my role as a wife and mother, I have (expected or believed that):					
1. it was important for me to be active religiously.	34	38	7	0	0
2. my husband to leave the discipline of the children up to me when they were babies.	2	22	45	10	0
3. my husband to be the main disciplinarian of the children as they grew older.	3	18	44	14	0
4. my husband and I have an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	36	41	1	1	0
5. I am as well informed as my husband concerning the family's status.	25	50	3	1	0
6. managing and planning for spending money was a joint proposition between my husband and me.	24	52	2	1	0
7. my husband was the "boss" who said what was to be done and what was not to be done.	0	18	49	12	0

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
8. planning and using my leisure time should be done with my husband's likes, dislikes, and free time in mind.	6	60	12	1	0
9. it was entirely my business how I decided to use my leisure time.	2	23	51	3	0
10. my husband and I should jointly decide upon the amount of money to spend on appliances and furniture.	19	57	2	1	0
11. the amount of money spent for keeping up the house should be decided by my husband.	0	14	60	5	0
12. to combine motherhood and a career if that proved possible.	3	36	37	2	1
13. if I preferred a career to having children, I had the right to make the choice.	2	27	42	7	1
14. to go to work outside the home only if it was absolutely necessary (husband disabled, etc.).	10	34	34	1	0
15. to go to work outside the home only if it was helpful to us financially (such as saving for a car, a home, major appliances, etc.).	3	35	37	4	0
16. if my husband was not in favor of my working, I would be happy to stay at home.	11	53	15	0	0
17. to go to work outside the home if I enjoyed working more than staying home.	3	48	26	2	0

	Strongly 1 Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	Strongly 4 Disagree	5 Unknown
18. my husband and I to share responsibility of work in the home if we both work outside of the home.	14	49	16	0	0
19. during most of our married life-- not short term financial crises-- my contribution as a marital partner was greatest by staying at home, making my husband's hours at home as free from tension as possible and making them enjoyable.	22	45	9	2	1
20. my greatest contribution was made by working outside of the home and helping out financially.	1	7	56	15	0
21. it was important for me to adapt my life to meet my husband's wishes and needs.	12	61	6	0	0
22. my husband should contribute to our marital partnership by being a good worker, respectable, and faithful to our family, and by being ambitious, a good provider, and successful in his work.	28	50	1	0	0
23. my husband should contribute to our marital partnership by being kind, and understanding and sharing the responsibility of rearing and caring for our children.	31	46	2	0	0
24. my husband to help with the housework.	2	25	44	6	2
25. since doing things as laundry, cleaning, and child care were "woman's work" my husband should have felt no responsibility for them.	5	24	45	5	0

	Strongly 1 Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	5 Unknown
26. it was exclusively my responsibility to do the cooking and keep the house in order.	10	40	29	0	0
27. my husband and I should share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to "woman's work" or "man's work".	7	52	18	2	0
28. keeping the yard, making repairs, and doing outside chores should be the responsibility of whoever has the time and wishes to do them.	4	47	26	2	0
29. it should be only natural that my husband should be concerned about politics and what is going on in the world.	20	55	3	1	0
30. my husband to manage his time so that he was able to share in the care of the children.	8	53	17	1	0
31. my husband should frequently or regularly help wash or dry the dishes.	1	23	51	4	0
32. that both my husband and I equally concern ourselves with the social and emotional development of our children.	43	35	1	0	0
33. my husband to feel equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as I do.	29	49	5	0	0

Please check the following questions in the category which most nearly describes you or your family situation.

1. Have you worked outside the home during your married life?

Yes 66  
 No 13  
 By choice 46  
 By necessity 20

Present Occupation:

37 None or not listed  
10 Professional, technical and kindred worker  
0 Farmers and farm managers  
9 Managers, officials, proprietors, etc.  
17 Clerical and kindred workers  
1 Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers  
4 Operatives and kindred workers  
0 Service workers, except private household  
0 Farm laborers and foremen  
1 Laborers (n.e.c.)

2. Your Age:

3 39 and under  
14 40-44 years  
27 45-49 years  
25 50-54 years  
9 55-59 years  
1 60 and over

3. Classify the best description as to where your home is located:

Rural 32  
 Urban 47

4. Husband's Occupation:

12 None or not listed  
21 Professional, technical and kindred worker  
2 Farmers and farm managers  
37 Managers, officials, proprietors, etc.  
0 Clerical and kindred workers  
5 Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers  
1 Operatives and kindred workers  
0 Service workers, except private household  
1 Farm laborers and foremen  
0 Laborers (n.e.c.)

## 5. Number of children in the family:

<u>6</u>	only
<u>23</u>	1-2
<u>34</u>	3-4
<u>16</u>	5 or more

## Age range of children:

<u>0</u>	under 6 years
<u>1</u>	6-12 years
<u>2</u>	13-20 years
<u>6</u>	21-30 years
<u>0</u>	30 and over
<u>2</u>	0-20
<u>60</u>	13-30
<u>8</u>	other

## 6. Income level of family:

\$0 - \$5,000	<u>4</u>
\$5,000 - \$10,000	<u>10</u>
\$10,000 - \$15,000	<u>20</u>
\$15,000 - or more	<u>45</u>

## 7. Your educational status:

High School	<u>11</u>
High School Graduate	<u>21</u>
College	<u>30</u>
College Graduate	<u>11</u>
Post College	<u>6</u>

## Mother-Daughter's Role

QUESTIONNAIRE OF FEMININE ROLE EXPECTATIONS

It is important that you answer every question. Please circle the letters in the column which best represent your opinion of each statement. The key to the questionnaire is SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D - Disagree, and SD - Strongly Disagree.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unknown
	1	2	3	4	5
In my daughter's role as a wife and mother, I (expect or believe that):					
1. it will be important for her to be active religiously.	23	51	5	0	0
2. her husband will leave the disci- pline of the children up to her when they are babies.	2	23	47	7	0
3. her husband will be the main dis- ciplinarian of the children as they grow older.	2	18	47	12	0
4. her husband and she will have an equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	28	50	1	0	0
5. she will be as well informed as her husband concerning the family's financial status.	28	50	0	0	1
6. managing and planning for spending money will be a joint proposition between her husband and she.	27	50	2	0	0
7. her husband will be the "boss" who will say what is to be done and what is not to be done.	0	11	55	13	0

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
8. planning and using her leisure time will be done with her husband's likes, dislikes, and free time in mind.	4	63	11	1	0
9. it will be entirely her business how she decides to use her leisure time.	3	20	54	2	0
10. her husband and she will jointly decide the amount of money to spend on appliances or furniture.	9	58	1	0	1
11. the amount of money spent for keeping up the house will be decided by her husband.	0	12	57	10	0
12. she will combine motherhood and a career if that proves possible.	3	55	18	3	0
13. if she prefers a career to having children, she will have the right to make the choice.	3	41	31	4	0
14. she will go to work outside the home only if it is absolutely necessary (husband disabled, etc.).	4	26	48	1	0
15. she will go to work outside the home only if it is helpful to them financially (such as saving for a home, a car, major appliances, etc.).	1	28	47	3	0
16. if her husband isn't in favor of her working, she will be happy to stay at home.	6	51	20	1	1
17. she will go to work outside the home only if she enjoys working more than staying at home.	2	46	29	2	0

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
18. her husband and she will share responsibility of work in the home if they both work outside of the home.	11	64	4	0	0
19. during most of their married life--not short term financial crises--her contribution as a marital partner will be greatest by staying at home, making her husbands' hours at home as free from tension as possible and making them enjoyable.	10	54	14	1	0
20. her greatest contribution will be made by working outside of the home and helping out financially.	2	7	64	5	1
21. it will be important for her to adapt her life to meet her husband's wishes and needs.	9	63	7	0	0
22. her husband will contribute to their marital partnership by being a good worker, respectable, and faithful to their family, and by being ambitious, a good provider, and successful in his work.	28	49	1	1	0
23. her husband will contribute to their marital partnership by being kind, understanding, and sharing the responsibility of rearing and caring for their children.	34	44	1	0	0
24. her husband will help with the housework.	4	43	30	2	0
25. since doing things as laundry, cleaning, and child care are "woman's work" her husband will feel no responsibility for them.	1	24	46	7	1

	Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Disagree 3	Strongly Disagree 4	Unknown 5
26. her husband and she will share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to "woman's work" or "man's work".	8	61	10	0	0
27. it will be exclusively her responsibility to do the cooking and keep the house in order.	2	42	35	0	0
28. keeping the yard, making repairs, and doing outside chores will be the responsibility of whoever has the time and wishes to do them.	4	57	16	2	0
29. it will be only natural that her husband will be concerned about politics and what is going on in the world.	14	63	2	0	0
30. her husband will manage his time so that he will be able to share in the care of their children.	12	56	11	0	0
31. her husband will frequently or regularly help wash or dry the dishes.	3	33	41	2	0
32. both her husband and she will equally concern themselves with the social and emotional development of their children.	42	34	3	0	0
33. her husband will feel equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as she does.	22	53	4	0	0

APPENDIX B

*Dr. and Mrs. Andrew H. Christensen*  
*Box 1171 - 825 Villa Nueva Drive*  
*Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340*

January 9, 1971

Donna L. Frost  
1614 Draper's Meadow West  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060

Dear Miss Frost:

This letter is to assure you that you have my permission to use any material from my Master's thesis, "Comparison of Marital Role Conceptions of Men and Women," in 1963, which is relevant to your research. I do hope that you may find this helpful.

I am sorry to inform you that at this time I do not have access to any of my records, reference material, or information that is not referred to in my thesis.

My best wishes to you in your work.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Christensen

1614 Draper's Meadow West  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060  
November 6, 1970

Dean Martha B. Harder  
Dean for Men's and Women's Programs  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

Dear Dean Harder:

I talked with you via phone on October 30, 1970, regarding the possibility of involving senior women who live in the VPISU residence hall as the sample in my research. As you know, I am working toward my Master's of Science degree in the Department of Management, Housing, and Family Development and my special interest is in the area of Child and Family Development. My thesis is concerned with mothers' and their college daughters' perception of the woman's role.

I want to thank you for your permission to use the senior women in my research. Now that I have recieved verbal consent, I hope you will please accept this letter as a formal request.

Enclosed you will find copies of the four questionnaires I will be distributing to the students and their mothers.

I appreciate so much your consideration and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Donna L. Frost

Enclosed: Four questionnaires

# VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE and STATE UNIVERSITY

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 24061

STUDENT PERSONNEL DIVISION

December 4, 1970

Miss Donna L. Frost  
1614 Draper's Meadow West  
Blacksburg, Virginia

Dear Donna:

This is to officially approve your request to do a survey of senior girls who are living within the university residence halls at Virginia Tech as part of your thesis for your Master's of Science degree. It is my understanding that you will be working very closely with the Head Residents, House Councils, and Resident Advisors in our upperclass women's residence halls in obtaining this information.

If I can help in any other way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Martha Harder  
Dean for Men's and  
Women's Programs

MH:bbm

cc: Dr. James E. Montgomery, Head, Home and Family Development  
Miss Paula Angle  
Miss Donna McGill  
Miss Jill Leonard

1614 Draper's Meadow West  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24060  
October 20, 1970

Mrs. Sandra J. Christensen  
Box 1171  
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340

Dear Mrs. Christensen:

I talked with you via phone on October 10, 1970, regarding the possibility of using your inventory in my research here at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. To reintroduce myself, my name is Donna Frost from Lebanon, Tennessee. I am working toward my Masters of Science degree in the Department of Management, Housing, and Family Development. My special interest is in the area of Child and Family Development. My thesis is concerned with mothers' and their college daughters' perception of womans' role as a wife and mother in 1970.

I want to thank you for your permission to use your Marital Role Inventory. Now that I have received your verbal consent, I hope you will please give me written permission to use, with modification, the inventory taken from your Master's thesis "Comparison of Marital Role Conceptions of Men and Women," in 1963.

Were any tests of validity or reliability conducted in relation to your Inventory? If so, could you please tell me where I can find a reference on this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you and appreciate so much your help and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Donna L. Frost

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ROLE PERCEPTIONS OF SENIOR COLLEGE WOMEN  
AND THEIR MOTHERS

by

Donna Louise Frost

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationships between feminine role perception of senior college women and their mothers. The sample was comprised of 99 senior college women living in the resident halls of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and 79 of their mothers. Questionnaires used in collecting data consisted of a modified version of Christensen's (1963) "Comparison of Marital Role Perceptions of Men and Women" and a personal data form; Each of four questionnaires contained 33 similar questions measuring either seniors' or their mothers' perceptions of their own role or the other's role. These questionnaires investigated feminine role perception in the two main areas of dominance and submission, and division of labor. The sample was not paired, therefore, a test of significance was not feasible. An analysis of various questions was made and the .05 level of significance was approximated with .25 as the criterion for distinguishing significant differences.

The senior women and their mothers differed significantly when perceiving their roles in the areas of the wife working, dominance and submission in decision making, sharing in the discipline and care of children, managing money, and responsibilities of household tasks. Traditional concepts about the wife being subordinate and the husband dominant in decision making appears to be shifting to the more contemporary concept where young women perceive themselves more actively involved in pursuing their career, combining motherhood, engaged in decisions affecting management of the home, and division of household tasks and care of children.