

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSEWIVES' EXPRESSED ATTITUDES
TOWARD HOUSEWORKING AND CERTAIN PERSONAL DATA

by

LORRAINE BRADT DENNIS

B.S., R.N., University of Minnesota, 1943

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education and Psychology

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1951

O/R-17-51 4

LD
2668
T4
1951
04
c.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of This Study	1
Need for the Study	1
THE PROBLEM AS EXPLORED IN THE LITERATURE	1
Historical Background	1
Current Comment	5
UNANSWERED QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
COMMENTS CONCERNING RESEARCH ON THE FAMILY	14
Limitations of Research Instruments	14
Definition of Terms	18
METHOD OF PROCEDURE	19
Selection of Sample	19
The Questionnaire	20
Description of the Categorizing Procedure	21
Description of the Statistical Methods Employed	23
RESULTS	24
Statistical Results	24
Qualitative Results	32
CONCLUSIONS	36
IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	40
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43
APPENDIX	48

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of This Study

This study was undertaken in an effort to learn the attitudes expressed by a group of American mothers toward their role as homemaker. It was further attempted to ascertain whether statistically reliable relationships can be obtained between the expressed attitudes of homemakers and certain personal data.

Need for the Study

Although, as will be shown, the attitude of the American homemaker toward her role is considered to be a problem of sufficient significance to warrant concern in the professional literature, this writer has been able to discover only one study (61) in which an attempt has been made to obtain attitudes toward homemaking from a group of homemakers themselves.

THE PROBLEM AS EXPLORED IN THE LITERATURE

Historical Background

The original family pattern in this country (and the woman's role in the family) was transplanted from Western Europe by the first settlers. The early rural economy held for women a role which was clearly defined. Although the unique conditions of pioneer society resulted in drastic changes in the valuation placed upon the traditionally desired qualities of femininity,

so that "Strong women, women with character and determination, in fact, women with guts became more and more acceptable," (31, p. 302) the concept that "woman's place is in the home" remained unchallenged. Indeed, on the small family farm of those early days, the homemaker's part in the family economy was indispensable. She contributed visibly and materially to the family welfare. Margaret Willis (59) says:

When the home was the basic unit of society, woman's function as a child-bearer, homemaker and contributor to the economic welfare of the family constituted a heavy burden, but one that gave her clear and undisputed function all her days.

But then came the industrialization and urbanization of our society. It is agreed (4, p. 22) that this trend affected the role of the homemaker in several ways.

First, a large measure of her activity as producer was turned over to the great mass-production forces. Weaving of textiles, fashioning of clothing and household necessities such as bedding and linens, drying, salting and canning of food--all once accomplished painstakingly by hand--became virtual lost arts with the easy accessibility of department stores and supermarkets. Her task of educating the young was surrendered to the public school system and, more recently, even to nursery schools. Religious education became the responsibility of organized religious bodies. Most of the nursing and medical care was taken over by professionals.

The second large effect resulted from the actual entrance of women into the labor force. United States Bureau of Census Reports (16) indicate that while in 1900 only four per cent of

all married women worked outside the home, by 1940 one out of every five or six married women in this country was gainfully employed. Here was a great rent in the "woman's place is in the home" pattern of expected behavior.

Superimposed upon these effects (Margaret Mead (37, p. 305) suggests that we speak of a spiraling process rather than attempt to define exact cause-effect relationships) can be laid the broadening concept of democracy as applied to the individual--the right of individual choice, the "right" of every girl to an education like her brother's if she so desires. There is no need here to recount the feminist movement except to point out that the struggle for female "rights" represented another break with traditional concepts of what constitutes the female role in society.

And, as woman claimed and won the "right" to compete with men in the man's world, education moved to offer her the opportunity to obtain the professional or vocational training with which to do it. Indeed, Dr. Lynn White (58) points out higher education went even further: "Both on co-educational campuses and in women's colleges we have assumed for educational purposes a woman is a man in disguise."

The broad outlines of this historical development are a standard part of almost every sociology text book. It is evident that women today, as a result of far-reaching changes in both the society in which one lives and in its changing concepts of "womanly behavior," have open to them a choice of several roles rather than the single one of yesteryear.

What, then, it could be asked, is the conflict?

If it is only a matter of selection, such as confronts the freshman college male with regard to a choice between medicine and journalism, presumably we are dealing with a problem for the vocational guidance clinics.

But, Margaret Mead (37) points out, no male surveys the career possibilities and decides to be a doctor or a lawyer or a salesman with the mental reservation, "unless, of course, I marry."

So here is the first complicating issue which enters the picture with regard to women. W. G. Sumner (52, p. 112) states the patently obvious when he says: "No amount of reasoning, complaining or protesting can alter the fact that woman bears the children and man does not." He continues by suggesting that, even granting the act of bearing a child to be a minor, temporary disability, it still creates for women a handicap with which men do not have to contend. To this biological reality can be added the fact that:

The task of integrating the lives of little children, even with the help of nursery schools, kindergartens and playgrounds, remains a full-time charge on some woman's time. If one woman leaves home to work, part-time or full-time, another woman must replace her unless the children are to suffer. (37, p. 336)

In other words, no completely adequate substitute for the association between homemaking and motherhood has been found.

To summarize briefly: It is apparent that new avenues and possibilities of individual achievement have been opened up to

woman through the years. And, by virtue of her education, she has been encouraged to think in terms of a vocation apart from homemaking. Marriage, however, continues to be the dominating life goal for most women (47), and inevitably the biological reality of bearing a child must interrupt any outside career at least temporarily. Furthermore, in our society only laboriously contrived arrangements can succeed in separating the physiological bearing of the child from physical and psychological rearing of the child.

Current Comment

Both the professional and popular literature reflect the fact that it is commonly assumed that a problem of role adjustment peculiar to women exists. The second common assumption is that the conflict finds its greatest expression in the attitudes of homemakers toward the homemaking role.

That it is regarded as a woman's problem is revealed simply in the absence of any consideration of a corresponding male problem. Nowhere, for instance, do we find statements indicating a belief that fathers would prefer homemaking as an occupational role. While there is concern for the dilemma of an unmarried girl with regard to role selection, the choice is depicted as between marriage (with homemaking implied) and some other possibility.

Those who have written on this topic advance a wide variety of factors which are believed to contribute to dissatisfaction with the homemaking role. One of the most recent, and perhaps most systematic treatments given the problem of the role of women in

today's society is that by Margaret Mead in her book, Male and Female (37). After a survey of the roles which other societies have assigned to their men and women, she considers the relationships between the two sexes in our own culture. Mead feels that although every known society has created some artificial barriers to certain activities, designating one as "male," another as "female," inevitably some loss occurs to the activity, since each sex possesses unique personal qualifications which would enrich it. Moreover, when--in the course of the social arrangements--the activities of one sex become depreciated, members of that sex are likely to suffer loss both in the ability to realize sex membership fully and in their sense of being full human beings. Mead feels that, perhaps as a result of the rapid social changes, there is a dangerous tendency to depreciate homemaking in today's culture.

Similarly, in the present ideals we set up for women, we imply that women should be full, choosing human beings and then define the choice that most of them make--homemaking for a husband and children--as somehow no proper choice at all. (37, p. 440)

In an article in the American Journal of Sociology (36),

Dr. Mead repeats her concern over this tendency:

Until her decision to marry she is expected to be guided by the same considerations in the choice of a job which influence her brother--chance for advancement or security, interest, or money or any combination of these. Once engaged, however, her life orientation is expected to undergo a sharp change--ambition to shift from job to home.

Agnes Meyer (39) is convinced that never before have there been so many women who are dissatisfied with being women and therefore with being wives and mothers. She, too, suggests that

society no longer accords the role of homemaker with the prestige or status which was once its due:

Today, however, the duties of the homemaker have become so depreciated that many women feel impelled to work outside the home in order to retain the respect of the community.

Clyde Kluckhohn (29) notes the educational gap in training for the role and the lack of socially-sanctioned, constructive possibilities for use of the homemaker's spare time:

Treatment of American women by American men and by society as a whole is ambivalent to say the least. They are increasingly trained for skilled and professional careers but expected to assume household responsibilities for which they get a minimum of training. With smaller families and labor-saving devices in the home, the mother whose children are in school all day has time on her hands. She is encouraged by advertisements to continue the glamour-role of courtship days, but her success-driven husband is seldom up to playing his part. He abdicates to her the total family participation in 'culture,' but she has sense enough to realize that he--and society generally--treats this role with half-concealed contempt. Up to a point this problem is increasingly being solved by entry into the occupational structure. The part-time career is a constructive solution for many.

John Sirjamaki (47) contends that there has been a lag between the social changes and covert sentiments which motivate overt behavior and thus express the value system.

Women are caught in a process of social change, in which the cultural configuration restrains them to traditional roles, while new ones are preferred by economic and social forces. There is much confusion among them as a result. The young college girl, for example, may have difficulty in knowing to which force to respond; should she be content with the domestic role and look to the main chance of marriage, or should she seek outlets which include both marriage and other roles. Apparently some urban upper-level women find the puzzle extremely hard to resolve and respond to it neurotically.

Esther Boorman Strong (49), writing in the American Sociological Review, feels that the materialistic emphasis of our society

has resulted in one's personal worth becoming defined in terms of actual productivity and that homemaking has therefore lost much of its meaningfulness in the eyes of society.

In an industrial society there is a status system based primarily, not on birth nor on possessions nor on religion, but on productivity. For the individual this productivity represents not only the out-put, but also the creative activity, meaningful to the person and to society; an opportunity to utilize his abilities and training and to know that his work has social value. Traditionally men find this activity primarily through their jobs. For women, society places primary significance on the bearing and rearing of children. Other forms of activity are considered secondary. In modern industrial society, however, women increasingly find that socially significant activities formerly carried on in the home have been taken over by mass production. As a result they too are more and more dependent on jobs for adequate and satisfying participation.

Paul Landis (31) suspects that the lack of preparation of boys for the role of husband and father plays an important part in homemakers' dissatisfactions:

Little wonder that the average husband and father places the full responsibility of family administration on the shoulders of his wife. Little wonder that he has little or no appreciation of the wife's role or the mother's role. Little wonder that the modern wife suddenly wakes up after a short period of marriage to the fact that she is actually a bondservant rather than an equal and that her life is subservient to the demands of her husband and children. The fact that she has virtually no life of her own except as she submerges her personality in these interests is the most difficult adjustment for the average individualistic woman, who has been taught throughout her school career that being someone in and of herself is something to be striven for.

Reuben Hill (25) uses the adjective "confining" in speaking of the role of wife and mother, and suggests that a number of women rebel against it.

If there is any modal type of family in America, it is the semi-patriarchal form in which a dominant

husband 'brings in the bacon' and a submissive woman plays a traditional wife-and-mother role. Child-bearing and homemaking are primarily the responsibility of the wife, whereas the business contacts and political activities of the family remain within the husband's province. This arrangement, midway between the familistic-patriarchal and the person-centered democratic family, is constantly being challenged by insurgent mothers who rebel against the confining role of wife-and-mother and by a few fathers who feel strongly that it takes two to make a home!

Ernest Burgess (8) sees the conflict in role expectation as one source of unhappiness:

The husband may expect his wife to be a devoted household slave like his mother, while she aspires to a career or to social or civic activities outside the home.

Margaret Redfield (42) suggests that our society ill-defines the present day role of its women:

Although American women are freer than most other women, they have often not known what to do with their freedom. This seems to come from the fact that beyond the roles of glamour girl and nursemaid, the part to be played by women is but vaguely defined in our society.

Elizabeth Nottingham (40), in tracing the effects of two World Wars upon middle-class women, notes that these emergencies threw open to women broad fields of participation which had hitherto been closed to them. Wives and mothers, conditioned to be psychologically and economically dependent upon the male, discovered that not only could they fend for themselves if they had to, but that it was possible for an energetic woman to provide for the family and to reap deep personal satisfaction from doing so.

At least two writers describe the social isolation of the urban housewife as a source of loneliness and frustration (48; 26, pp. 276-283).

Mirra Komarovsky (30) has become interested in the conflict in role selection evidenced by college girls who feel that they must choose between the "feminine" role and another more modern alternative which is essentially asexual in the attributes it requires for success. Her study, based upon the reply of a number of college girls, demonstrates that perhaps they regard the pressures upon them to "do A work" and also to "get a man" as incompatible. Dr. Komarovsky concludes:

Society confronts the girls with powerful challenges and strong pressure to excel in certain competitive lines of endeavor and to develop certain techniques of adaptation very similar to those expected of her brothers. But then, quite suddenly (as it appears to these girls), the very success in meeting these challenges begins to cause anxiety.

Clara Menger (38), in a study published in the Teacher's College Record (704 persons from widely diversified groups were asked to rank thirty-five occupations of women according to prestige), notes that the majority of young women among her judges ranked the occupation of homemaker among the lowest unskilled jobs.

Joseph K. Folsom (20), commenting on changing values in family relations, has said that:

There is an (increased) valuation of companionship between sexes in sports and activities formerly open only to males. To this is related a greater demand on the part of married women to be freed from continuous duty in the home. Not only are women becoming more like men in a general sense, but they are becoming highly individuated.

One study (61) is reported which seems to have particular significance with regard to the question of homemakers' attitudes toward homemaking. Questionnaires were sent to the alumni of the

class of 1934 from seven women's colleges, prior to a general "fifteenth year" reunion. Schools participating were Barnard, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Radcliff, Smith, Vassar and Wellesley. The investigators received a 47 per cent return on the questionnaire. Twenty per cent of the respondents indicated that they felt the need for changes in the liberal arts program, recommending shifted emphasis toward the graduate's future homemaking activities. They cited personal, felt needs for practical training in cookery, dress-making, household management, child care, psychology, and even in the "art of entertaining." More than 20 per cent felt that they had sacrificed careers to marriage, and one in six was sorry. But so many complained about dullness and monotony of homemaking routine that in addressing the actual reunion, Dr. Mildred McAfee Horton felt impelled to comment:

College failed to teach these women that most people accomplish most in the world by working through established institutions. And that the family is entirely respectable as a sphere of activity.

The popular magazines reflect a belief that interest in the problem is more than academic. Two articles appearing in different issues of Independent Woman have self-revealing titles, "Are Wives People?" (24) and "I'm Leaving Home Part-Time" (7). Both articles express dissatisfaction with the lack of recognition accorded homemakers and with the economic dependence which full-time homemaking confers upon its participants.

The Ladies Home Journal of January, 1944, published a statement by Leslie Homan (27), a psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins, stating that "working wives make the best wives." It was immediately countered with another point of view (3) insisting that "you can't have a career and be a good wife."

An article on the post-war generation in The Reporter (1) states that society now expects women to be able to handle marriage, babies and a job!

A Fortune magazine poll of September, 1946 (44), discovered that 32 per cent of its female respondents feel that a woman who has a full-time job leads a more interesting life, while 49 per cent of the female respondents decided that a woman who is running a home has a more interesting time. The remainder were undecided. The editors note parenthetically that the heaviest support for "running a home" comes from Midwestern women who are doing it.

Two recent books should also be mentioned. The American Woman in Modern Marriage by Sonya Ruth Das (13) suggests that the American woman has a new and distinctive "personality" and that this new individuality is correlative with a code of feminine ethics which gives her greater equality of status with men than ever before. Modern Woman, The Lost Sex (34), as suggested by the title, is devoted to the thesis that modern women are petulant, spoiled and neurotic, demanding too much of life in terms of personal happiness and unable or unwilling to give anything in return.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Although two notable studies have been concerned with factors involved in marital happiness (54,9), the contentment or dissatisfaction of the homemaker with her domestic role was not considered

by either Burgess or Terman. Yet it seems logical to suggest that a restless, frustrated wife, finding no joy in her daily activities, might materially affect both her own and her husband's outlook on marriage. It seems strange, therefore, that studies which document the presence or absence of this kind of conflict among today's homemakers with regard to their role are so few in number and peripheral in scope.

Among the unanswered questions occurring from a survey of the literature might be the following:

1. Are large numbers of today's homemakers dissatisfied with the homemaking role? If so, how widespread is the conflict?

2. If, as has been suggested, the schools and particularly higher education fail to prepare girls for homemaking, will the homemaker's attitude be affected by her level of education?

3. Would actual participation in another career affect her subsequent attitude toward homemaking?

4. Although Terman indicates that such factors as the ages of husband and wife, the number of children, and the ages when married show little or no correlation with marital happiness (54), what, if any, effect might these have on the homemaker's attitude toward her role?

5. Burgess suggests that wives who have worked before marriage tend to make better marriage partners than those who have not (9). Would the length of time the wife has worked tend to affect her attitude toward homemaking?

In an effort to begin to secure evidence regarding these questions, the present study was undertaken.

COMMENTS CONCERNING RESEARCH ON THE FAMILY

An editorial in Marriage and Family Living (18) states that: "We feel that we must press research in controversial areas where we frequently have more 'feelings' than 'facts'." Among the "controversial areas" cited is the example of mothers working outside the home by choice rather than because of economic necessity.

Leonard Cottrell, Jr. (12), writing on the "Present Status and Future Orientation of Research on the Family," says:

There are certain trends for which statistical indices are not readily available, but which are indicated by other types of evidence clearly enough to warrant confident assertion that the changes are taking place. These trends are in the changing concepts of the family, e.g. from institutional relationships to companionship relationships; from familism to individualism; from integration based on roles defined in the mores to that which is based on much more individualized patterns of relationships.

He continues by suggesting the "fruitful possibility" of accumulating attitude and opinion material on marriage and the family.

Limitations of Research Instruments

Since the present study makes use of an anonymous questionnaire intended to elicit attitudes toward homemaking, it becomes essential to consider the perils which beset the path of any investigator who attempts an attitude study.

The fundamental problem of validity can never be settled with the precision we have come to expect of our scientific instruments. William J. Goode (23) cites five types of misrepresentation from

which attitude studies of adjustment patterns suffer: 1. cases in which the respondent simply lies; 2. stereotyped or lazy answers, often in conformity with social expectations; 3. situations seen in only a partial view (for example, a homemaker's idea of the glamorous possibilities of a career); 4. the actual reconstruction of reality by emotional needs; and, 5, possible cases of actual neurosis.

William Albig (2, p. 205) says:

That conventional answers, rather than opinion expressions of all attitudes involved, will usually be given to questions dealing with sex relations, miscegenation, religion or any other questions on which there have been strict mores is quite clear. The subject's rationalization, rather than any conscious deception of the investigator, will usually be indicated. So basic is this tendency to give the conventional answer that even anonymity may not modify the subject's response.

Terman (53) mentions the "halo effect" of happiness or unhappiness which he felt greatly colored the subjective replies to his questionnaire, though it did not seem to affect the responses to the background items.

Hartshorne and May found in their well-known Studies in Character and Conduct that cheating behavior is not a general trait but is related to the specific situation, and Stephen Corey (11) questions the entire concept underlying preoccupation with attitude studies: the assumption that a social attitude of a particular sort predisposes one to behave in a particular manner. He found that the expressed attitude toward honesty was not related to overt behavior when an opportunity to cheat was presented to the students. On the other hand, Daniel Day (14)

does not believe that Corey's study was a "sincere representation of the two variables." Day cites an unpublished doctoral dissertation (45) in which high correlations were obtained between expressed attitudes and actual behavior.

Thurstone (55, p.7) maintains that actions as well as opinion are a fallible indication of all the attitudes involved in a situation. His rationale for the use of attitude studies concludes:

Therefore we must remain content to use opinions or other forms of action merely as indices of attitude. It must be recognized that there is a discrepancy, some error of measurement, as it were, between opinion or overt action that we use as an index and the attitude we infer from such an index.

Otto Klineberg (28, p. 351) suggests that verbal behavior is important in its own right, since the attitudes of a person as expressed in his speech or his writings may also have direct practical consequences for himself and for his social relationships.

It is apparent that the investigator who undertakes an attitude study in the attempt to throw light upon any facet of social behavior must remain thoroughly aware of the limitations of any such study. Inherent in any instrument he uses will be an "error of measurement" which it is his duty to recognize and acknowledge.

As one of the instruments frequently employed in attitude studies, the questionnaire device is subject to considerable question. Indeed, it has been termed (46) a "pre-scientific procedure." There is some feeling, however, that under certain conditions the questionnaire can be employed to advantage.

Albert Ellis (19) in a study comparing the questionnaire versus interview methods concluded that for the purpose of studying love and marital relations of college students, the questionnaire method of gathering data may produce more self-revelatory data than the interview method, particularly as the questions become more ego-involving.

Vaughan (56, p. 620-621) suggests five weaknesses and three advantages for use of the questionnaire method. Three weaknesses cited have to do with the framing of the question: the difficulty of avoiding leading or ambiguously-worded questions and the pitfall of stressing explicit, categorical answers such as "yes" or "no" without qualifications or specification of limiting conditions. He warns against giving the statistical results more prestige than they deserve and overlooking the significance of unreturned questionnaires or unanswered questions. He suggests, however, that the questionnaire can be extremely useful in providing clues for further investigation.

Studies regarding the advantage of anonymity seem to be inconclusive. Corey (10) noted a tendency to be less forthright in expression of attitude toward cheating when the questionnaire was signed than when the opinion could not be identified, but the difference was not regarded as significant. J.B. Gerberich and J. M. Mason (21) felt that their students gave more self-revelatory answers when they did not sign their names.

With regard to the manner of distribution, Elmo C. Wilson (60) suggests the use of a mailed questionnaire may be especially indicated when the sample is homogeneous. A caution, however,

is voiced by Edgerton and his associates (17) with regard to the mailed questionnaire. They warn that the matter of who returns the questionnaire is a vital one and emphasize that:

Intensive and vigorous follow-up is a basic tenet in mail questionnaire research. Otherwise the tendency will be to obtain replies from those who have a special interest in the subject under study, or who exhibit some characteristic or characteristics different from the non-respondents.

Suchman and McCandless (51) noted the same tendency to obtain replies from respondents who were especially interested in the subject and also noted that these tended to have a better education.

The instrument used in the present study, then, must be considered as subject to all of the limitations noted by others who have been concerned with the validity of attitude studies. No attempt will be made to claim for it a special validity or to regard it as other than: "... a technique considered merely as antecedent to, and dependent upon, further experimental research." (46)

Definition of Terms

The definition of the descriptive word "role" in this study is taken from Ralph Linton's The Study of Man (33, p. 12). This means that it represents:

".....the dynamic aspects of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he puts the rights and duties which constitute a status into effect, he is performing a role.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Selection of Sample

Kent Village, Maryland, is a large, attractive, redbrick urban apartment development, situated about eight miles from the heart of Washington, D. C. It houses 810 families when filled to capacity; at the time this study was undertaken, some 560 families were in residence. The rent for apartments varies with the apartment size and location, ranging from \$70.75 per month for a one-bedroom, third-floor apartment, to \$128 per month for a three-bedroom duplex. Since the median monthly rent for single-family occupancy reported in 1948 ranges from \$19.03 (in the South) to \$33.24 (in the Northeastern States) (43, p. 301), it is evident that Kent Village rates are considerably higher than the median. A study of rental rates (43) reveals that only 13 per cent of all white, non-farm, tenant-occupied units were rented for over \$50 per month.

Conversation with the local elementary school principal indicates that Kent Village is regarded as "upper middle class" with respect to income and in the school program it is assumed that almost all the children of the Village will go on to college.

A sample selected from the population of Kent Village, while certainly by no means representative of the population of the country at large, will still have a homogeneity which might be advantageous for possible comparison with other groups in future research.

It was decided that the problems of homemakers with pre-school children at home might vary significantly from those of homemakers whose children are in school all day or whose children have grown up and left the home (5, 42, 41).

Therefore this study was concerned with full-time homemakers who have one or more pre-school children. At the time the study was undertaken, 333 homemakers with pre-school children were in residence. Twenty-nine of these were eliminated because they were working and therefore did not fulfill the criterion. Twenty others participated in the pre-test and were likewise eliminated.

The questionnaire which appears in the Appendix was distributed among the remaining 284 full-time homemakers with pre-school children by random selection of every other one. A total of 142 questionnaires were distributed.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire which was finally devised was evolved from a technique used by J. Stubbins (50) in his study of level of aspiration. Stubbins has suggested that use of a single, essentially unstructured "stimulus question" may succeed in getting behind the ego-defenses when introspection by the respondent is desired.

The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity of understanding by twenty mothers. The replies demonstrated that the questions were adequate in this respect. However, conversation with several of these mothers indicated the possibility of the presence of a time factor with regard to the replies; one woman, for instance,

stated that her reply was definitely influenced at the moment by an unresolved quarrel with her husband that morning. So it was decided that an additional question, regarding the possibility of the feelings expressed being temporary, should be added.

The questionnaire was distributed personally by the investigator. In every case it was explained to the homemaker that a study was being made of how homemakers feel about homemaking, and that the replies were to be anonymous without any possibility of identification. A questionnaire blank was given to the homemaker together with a stamped, addressed envelope for its return. No homemaker refused to cooperate at the time of the distribution.

During the ensuing three months, four advertisements were placed in the newsletter distributed weekly to all residents of Kent Village. These advertisements, reminded the cooperating homemakers of the questionnaire and requested that the missing ones be turned in. A final "follow-up" effort was made with a second round of personal visits.

Of the 142 distributed questionnaires, 73 were returned, a total of 51.4 per cent. One respondent, however, had failed to reply to the stimulus question, so her questionnaire was discarded. This left a total of 72 usable questionnaires, or 50.7 per cent.

Description of the Categorizing Procedure

Five members of the Kansas State College faculty agreed to

assist with the categorizing of the replies. The judges were Ira J. Gordon, (Ed. D., Teachers' College Columbia), Gladys Bellinger (Ph. D., Cornell), H. Leigh Baker (Ph. D., Yale), Roy Langford (Ph. D., Stanford), and Paul Torrance (Ph. D., University of Michigan). All of the judges have their degrees in psychology or in a related field such as Child Guidance or Education. Each judge was given an identical set of 72 cards. One reply to the stimulus question has been copied verbatim on each card, but other data regarding the respondent were omitted. The judges, working independently, were instructed to sort the replies qualitatively into five categories. The following scale was used as a basis for making the judgements:

- I--Very Happy: expressing deep satisfaction in and enjoyment of homemaking activities.
- II- Happy: Expressing satisfaction in the main and few dissatisfactions. No expression of desire to do something else.
- III-Fairly Happy: expressing both satisfactions and dissatisfactions. May indicate a vague desire to do something else.
- IV--Unhappy: enjoying few homemaking activities. More dissatisfactions mentioned than satisfactions. May indicate well-formulated desire to do something else.
- V---Very Unhappy: expressing much frustration and no satisfactions in the homemaking activities.

The mean of the numerical value of the judges' ratings for each reply was then computed and assigned to the appropriate

questionnaire in order to secure five groups of replies with ratings ranging from "very happy to "very unhappy". Each judge's ratings were correlated with the final mean rating for each reply. The product-moment correlation coefficients were found to run as follows:

/ .838
 / .878
 / .884
 / .894
 / .910

A copy of the ratings, the means and the variances can be found in the Appendix.

Description of the Statistical Methods Employed

On the basis of the above categorization, the questionnaires were distributed into five groups:

	<u>N</u>	<u>Per cent of total</u>
Group I ----- "Very Happy" -----	14	----19.44
Group II ----- "Happy" -----	34	----47.23
Group III ---- "Fairly Happy" -----	17	----23.62
Group IV ----- "Unhappy" -----	5	---- 6.94
Group V ----- "Very Unhappy" -----	2	---- 2.77
	<u>72</u>	<u>100.00 per cent</u>

Ten items of background data were tabulated for each group and the mean for each group computed. These ten items included: age of the respondent, the number of children; the years of education; the months of such training as business school, beauty culture, etc.; the number of years the respondent worked before her marriage; her age at the time of the marriage; the number of years of the

husband's education; the number of months of any type of vocational training such as business school, courses in salesmanship, on-the-job training, etc. which may have been taken by the husband; the age of the husband at the time of marriage; and the yearly income, Table 1.

The difference between the mean of each group and the mean of each of the remaining four groups was then computed for every item, and the significance of the difference tested using the "t" technique for small samples (35).

Five additional items of background information were tabulated in the form of a frequency distribution along the five-point scale of equal-appearing intervals and are shown in Table 2. These items included the professed religion of both partners; the occurrences of marriages with "mixed" religious beliefs; the occurrences of second marriages; the family-home background of the wife; and the family-home background of the husband. The mean for each distribution was computed.

The mean for the distribution of the total sample in terms of the five-point scale of equal-appearing intervals was computed. This was compared with the mean for each of the five items above for significant differences using the "t" technique.

RESULTS

Statistical Results

Table 1 show that differences between the means of certain

groups, large enough to be considered significant at the five per cent level of confidence or better, occur only three times.

The difference between the mean years of education for Group I and Group IV is large enough to be considered significant at the one per cent level of confidence. The women in Group I, those considered to be most satisfied with the homemaking role, average .60 year of college work in contrast to the women in Group IV, considered to be "unhappy" with the homemaking role, who average 3.20 years of college training. A statistical analysis of the type of college training taken by these women is beyond the scope of this study, but it is interesting to note that major courses of study listed for Group I include education, home economics, elementary school teaching, and a "general" course. The majors listed for Group IV include economics, English literature, mathematics, and home economics.

The difference between the mean years of formal education for Group I and Group II is large enough to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis at the five per cent level of confidence. The women in Group II average 1.83 years of college training as compared to the mean of .60 year for Group I. Group II was considered to be "happy" with the homemaking role, though less so than Group I.

The third difference, which might be considered significant at the five per cent level, exists between the mean months of "training" (apart from formal education) accomplished by the husbands of the women in Groups II and III. The men whose

wives are in Group II average 13.20 months of such training while those with wives in Group II show a mean of 3.88 months of training. The kinds of training listed in Group III include: machinist, metalurgy, electronics, aviation mechanics, and meteorology. Training which has been taken in Group II includes: radio, hotel management, sales courses, blueprinting, and several types of business school courses. In every other comparison of the means listed on Table 1 the difference between the groups is so small that one must conclude such variation could easily have occurred by chance.

Table 1. Mean values for items of personal data for each group

Personal data items	Means				
	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V
1. Age of Respondant	28.64	29.79	30.23	29.40	27.5
2. Number of Children	2.00	2.23	2.00	1.60	2.5
3. Years of Education	12.60*	13.83*	13.67	15.20*	14.00
4. Months of "Training"	7.21	6.19	5.10	3.80	6.50
5. Years Worked Before Marriage	3.22	2.51	2.90	3.80	2.25
6. Age When Married	22.71	22.61	21.29	23.80	21.00
7. Husband's Years of Education	14.82	15.39	15.30	16.00	15.00
8. Husband's Months of Training	4.57	3.88*	13.23*	6.00	0

Table 1. ((concl.) Mean values for items of personal data for each group.

Personal data items	Means				
	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V
9. Husband's Age When Married	24.07	24.53	25.00	24.40	27.50
10. Yearly Family Income	\$4964	\$5603	\$6206	\$3900	\$5000

* Those means which vary significantly at 5 per cent level of confidence or better (35).

Table 2. Means for total and sub-groups on the basis of personal data.

Common factors	N	Mean	t
Total	72	2.26	
Religion			
Catholic Marriages	9	1.66	1.835
Protestant Marriages	45	2.26	0.000
No religion	3	3.33	1.900
Mixed religion	15	2.40	0.492
Second Marriages	6	1.83	1.089
Wife's family-home			
Metropolis	6	2.17	0.286
Large City	15	2.20	0.232
Middle-sized City	17	2.41	0.541
Small City	16	2.12	0.189
Rural Non-farm	11	2.45	0.620
Rural Farm	7	2.14	0.326
Husband's Family-home			
Metropolis	9	2.00	0.792
Large City	18	2.55	1.164
Middle-sized City	14	2.14	0.428
Small City	18	2.26	0.000
Rural Non-farm	8	2.00	0.760
Rural Farm	5	2.20	0.280

The null hypothesis was likewise tested with regard to the differences between the mean for the distribution of the total sample and the means for the distribution of marriages in terms of religious faith professed by the partners, Table 2.

It will be noted that the mean for the total sample distribution lies at 2.26. When this is compared to the mean for each of the distributions of marriages in terms of religious faith, no difference can be discovered which is large enough to justify rejection of the null hypothesis. This is also true of the mean for the distribution of second marriages. The sample did not include any couples who both professed the Hebrew faith.

The means for the distributions of the various types of family-home backgrounds were also compared with the mean of the total distribution, but in no case was a significant difference discovered.

It might be appropriate here to note that Lindquist (32, p. 132) suggests that recent practice among educational and psychological researchers is to utilize the one per cent or two per cent levels of confidence in rejecting the null hypothesis. McNemar (35, p. 66-67), in discussing the null hypothesis, points out that though it can be rejected, it can never be proved. Therefore, to accept it too often, insisting on a high level of significance for rejection, means the researcher runs the risk of overlooking real differences. However, he terms the five per cent level of confidence a "rather low level of significance for announcing something as 'fact'."

Helen Walker (57, p.293) suggests:

The usual research worker would feel that the evidence was not strong enough to cause him to reject the null hypothesis (at the five per cent level of confidence), but would hold it in the back of his mind that further research might reveal a significant difference.

In light of such references, it might be suggested that this study indicates that number of years of college training apparently varies between two groups of homemaking attitudes with a degree of significance great enough to warrant inference of a real difference. Though the researcher treads on uncertain ground in attempting to denote causative relationships from statistical differences, such writers as Louis T. Benezet (6) certainly imply that higher education does not help the homemaker to adjust to her role.

We thus sent four out of five girl graduates out to a life which for the next twenty-five years will be chiefly concerned with bearing and rearing children, creating and maintaining a home, integrating socially with the neighborhood, organizing club life and group welfare, and bringing up a husband. For this we equip them with tools magnificently unsuited to the task. We clothe them in academic garb taken straight from the men's ready-to-wear department and we do not even bother to call in the tailor to make alterations.

More intensive research would be necessary to verify the relationship between years of formal education and the homemaker's attitude toward her role, particularly the difference found significant at the five per cent level between the two most happy groups of attitudes.

Further research would certainly be necessary to verify and to investigate the possible implications of the difference dis-

covered between the average months of "training" for husbands in Group II and III. If such a difference can be verified, it would lead to the question of why the difference is demonstrated between the "happy" and "fairly happy" groups and no others.

Some interesting observations may be made with regard to this sample of homemakers. A study of the tabulated means, Table 1, reveals that the average age shows a range of only 2.7 years. Only one group shows an average of slightly less than two children. Almost every woman has had some college experience and only three women out of the total sample did not work before marriage.

Seventeen of the women had been secretaries before they were married. Eleven had served as office clerks. Eight were school teachers, five were registered nurses and six had worked as salesgirls. Three listed "stenographer" as their former occupation, two had been employed as newspaper reporters, two as laboratory technicians, two as accountants, two as bookkeepers and two as recreation directors. The sample also included a former nursery-school director, a child welfare worker, a junior engineer, a dental assistant, an economist, a photographer's model, a beauty operator, an advertising copywriter, and a proof-reader.

The only second marriages, six in all, occur in the first two groups, designated by the judges as the "happiest". This, however, can be attributed to chance. The number of marriages of mixed religious beliefs are also numerically greater in the

two "happiest" groups, but once again this could have occurred by chance. It is interesting to note that for this sample there appeared to be a slight tendency for more Catholic marriages to be found on the "happy" side of the attitude scale, while marriages of no religious faith tend to cluster toward the "unhappier" end of the scale. While this cannot be considered statistically significant in this study, it would seem to concur with the facts cited by Duvall and Hill (15, p. 346) regarding the percentage incidence of broken homes in relation to the religious affiliation of the married couple.

With regard to the occupations of the husbands, this sample-- due to the proximity of Kent Village, Maryland, to Washington, D. C.--seems to have a preponderance of government employees and Armed Forces personnel. Eleven Navy officers, five Army officers and three Air Force officers are included in the total sample. Eighteen of the husbands work for the U.S. government, doing research, cost accounting and various types of supervision. Four lawyers, four newspapermen and three college professors are also numbered among the occupations. Eleven of the men are salesmen, two are high school teachers, three are electronics engineers and two own their own business- es. The miscellaneous occupations include a minister, a printer, an engraver, a pharmacist, a supervisor of track for the Pennsylvania Railroad and an inspector for Western Electric. It can be seen that this sample cannot be considered as representative, occupationally speaking, of the U.S. population. It

constitutes a high middle-class, professional sample. Any conclusions from this data must be interpreted with this fact in mind.

Table 1 shows that the "average husband" had at least two years of college work and at least one year more than his wife.

Qualitative Results

A comprehensive qualitative analysis of the replies elicited by the questionnaire is beyond the competency of this investigator and the scope of this study. However, certain characteristics of the replies seem clearly enough defined to invite at least a cursory comment.

Perhaps the most outstanding impression occurring from an over-all examination of the responses is that of the enthusiasm for homemaking which marks the replies of women in Group I and II. The picture of a "submissive woman" as described by Reuban Hill (25), passively content with the traditional mother-and-wife role, seems to be contradicted by this response from a woman with three pre-school children, a business school graduate, now the wife of a Navy chaplain:

I love it! I get tired and I get mad, but I wouldn't trade places with anyone in the whole world! High school and business school were only to fill up the time 'til I married and had children, so I really feel that I'm doing just what I always wanted to do. This is my career!

Nor does one receive the impression of John Sirjamaki's (47) "neurotic" urban, upper income-level housewife from this college graduate, an executive secretary for three years, and now the mother of three children, all under five years of age:

In general, I love homemaking--taking care of my house, trying to make it attractive and comfortable and most especially watching my children grow and develop and enjoying their antics. Like everyone else, I occasionally get bored with the routine tasks which must be done every day endlessly--but having worked as a secretary, I know that most jobs have the same routine tasks. I also know that a steel corporation executive has his "grumpy" days, just as my children do, and I'd just as soon deal with the children. And I never was as proud of a neat well-typed letter as I am of a clean, happy child! I wouldn't do anything else for any amount of money, fame, or what-have-you!

Moreover, these women, as a whole, seem to demonstrate a healthy, realistic assessment of the fact that any occupation has its moments of frustration. A former newspaper reporter writes, in part:

I think that the only housewives who are 'bored' with their homemaking activities are probably engaged in a little wishful thinking. The jobs they would hold outside the home probably would be just as routine, if not more so, than the ones they have.

A woman who has a degree in law, mother of an eight-month old baby, now married to an attorney, writes:

I feel that it is difficult to keep the everyday tasks incidental to homemaking from becoming boring at times, just as the routine procedures in any business tend to become boring. However, I find if I keep my sights on the larger objective, that of making a pleasant home for my husband, which will enable him to give his best to his career, and of raising our son to be a healthy useful citizen, I am inclined to feel that this career of homemaking is probably the most important, as well as the most satisfying to which a woman can aspire.

Thirty-six (50 per cent) of the women mention child-rearing specifically as a major source of satisfaction. Others speak of the satisfaction in "creating a happy home," "maintaining a 'homey' home for my family." It is interesting to note that only five women mention the sense of sharing homemaking responsibilities with the husband. One of these, a high school graduate, with a

yearly income among the lowest in the group (\$3001 to \$4000 per year), the mother of two small children, writes:

I thoroughly enjoy caring and keeping my family happy. Housework is not a task, it is a pleasure to see the results of my sincere efforts. I do not have the full weight of responsibility; it is shared equally by my husband and myself. Therefore in all we do, we do as a team and enjoy doing it.

Sixteen of the respondents (22.2 per cent) express a need or desire for some type of outside leisure-time activity. Eight of these women are from Group II, six were judged to belong in Group III, and two are in Group IV. One woman in Group II described her feelings with regard to the need for outside activity at considerable length, using the back of the questionnaire to do so. She is the mother of three small children, a college graduate who majored in physical education and who has also taken some graduate work. She says, in part:

Every employed person has a day 'off' or time off and certainly the homemaker needs her time off....Every now and then we need a stimulant to take the monotony from our routine task. Every housewife needs some outside activity... 'time off', in other words. This can be done in the form of social clubs, community activities and services or recreation. The children can be driving you mad--household chores piling up--go out for an evening, relax, come back. You can start the day with a fresh and wholesome attitude rather than one of drudgery. When I spoke of stimulant in the above paragraph I was thinking how helpful it would be if housewives could attend classes....I think every housewife would welcome adult classes which pertain to homemaking and to child-training. To keep up our interest in the home, children and family, we have to keep learning. Knowledge will take away boredom, I believe. I know I feel the need for knowing a lot more about homemaking and child-training.

Another woman, rated as a member of Group III, mother of children, states:

I would enjoy these tasks, I believe, if only I could get away from it all once a week at least. I've been pretty unfortunate in finding baby-sitters for during the day. I feel I can't afford a girl to come in for the whole day so there are some days I would like to scream. I do get over it in a short time and adore my little scamps and husband all over again. But I would enjoy a study group or a book review club. Anything to make me feel I'm going forward instead of at a standstill.

Only one woman in Group III felt that she might have been expressing a temporary attitude in her statement and explained that her "present lumpy stage of pregnancy" might be unduly affecting it.

The replies of all the women Group IV are characterized by a preoccupation with housework and a dislike of it which seems almost to eclipse other satisfactions. This reply, from a woman who majored in mathematics in college, has two small children and whose husband (a Ph.D.) earns about \$7000 per year, is rather typical:

I don't like housework since the children came along. It seems to take up all of my time which I would rather spend with the children. None of us are at ease when the beds are unmade, dishes dirty, clothes and toys on the floors. It makes even the youngest cross. But when things are in order all is peaceful. No matter how many different ways I go about housework so far as I am concerned it ends up as nothing but drudgery. The only time I have ever enjoyed housework was the two years before our first child was born. The house wasn't messed up all the time and I had a schedule which I enjoyed.

Both women in Group V seem to demonstrate an unrealistic desire to escape from their present situation. One wants an interesting job that doesn't take all her time, while the other longs for the luxury of being waited on.

I suppose I should be more conscientious about home-making. Frankly, there isn't enough to interest me. So long as my children are very small I will stay at home to care for their needs. The monotony of household tasks tend to make me dissatisfied with everything. I would much rather be taking courses in English and Art and eventually an interesting job, that doesn't take all of my time.

Frankly, I find no joy in being a homemaker. I feel that anyone with a minimum of brains can manage a house efficiently. To me, it is unmitigated drudgery from dawn to dusk. As soon as I have my son of nursery school age, I hope to obtain a position, preferably in a hotel or club, where I can have the luxury of being waited on--if only for lunch. No drug store counters or lunch rooms--this time I want atmosphere and the feeling I'm something more than a G.H.W.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken in an effort to learn the attitudes expressed by a group of American homemakers. It was further attempted to ascertain whether statistically reliable relationships exist between the expressed attitude of homemakers and certain personal data.

The study is subject to at least two possible sources of bias. One lies in the sample itself. The total number who responded to the questionnaires is small. One can only conjecture about the answers which might have been given by the 48.6 per cent of the sample of 142 who did not respond. Furthermore, as has already been pointed out, the sample cannot be considered as representative of the general United States population. The second known possible source of bias is inherent in the instrument used. The limitations of attitude studies in general and of

questionnaire techniques in particular have already been discussed.

With these limitations constantly in mind, certain tentative conclusions can perhaps be drawn with regard to this sample of homemakers.

1. The women in this sample seem to have expressed, on the whole, very positive attitudes toward homemaking. Two-thirds of the replies were adjudged "very happy" or "happy". Another 23.61 per cent were considered to be "fairly happy", while only 9.7 per cent of the replies were considered "unhappy" or "very unhappy". Though most of the literature concerned with the role-adjustment of the homemakers is not statistically documented, still it might be suggested that the large proportion of "happy" homemakers is not what one might anticipate from such statements as Agnes Meyer's: "Never before have there been so many women who are dissatisfied with being women and therefore with being wives and mothers;" (39) or Paul Landis' "Little wonder that the modern wife suddenly wakes up after a short period of marriage to the fact that she is actually a bond-servant rather than an equal...."(31)

If a number of these positive attitudes have been elicited by what the women feel is expected of them by society, it can be suggested that they feel society expects them to be happy and content with the homemaking role.

2. The results of this study would also seem to indicate that for this sample the items of personal data cannot very well

serve as reliable predictive indicators of the attitude toward marriage. The number of years of formal education was found to be the only item which might differentiate between two of the groups with a level of confidence great enough to justify a tentative assumption of a real difference. Of this sample it might be said that the women with the lowest average number of years of formal education seem to be happier in the homemaking role than another group with a higher mean for formal education. These findings suggest the possibility that "educated" people may be less content than "uneducated people, an hypothesis which might warrant further study.

3. There seems to be a possibility that the vocational training of husbands has some sort of bearing on the attitude of women toward their homemaking role. It cannot be said why this should be so, and further research would certainly be indicated to verify such a tendency.

4. This study has been able to discover no statistically significant difference with regard to a possible religious factor in women's acceptance of the homemaking role, although the means for the distributions of Catholic marriages and marriages with no religious affiliation seem in line with known facts about the incidence of broken homes in relation to religious affiliation of the partners. Duvall and Hill (15, p. 346) show that the number of broken homes is slightly less for Catholic marriages than for Protestant marriages and greatest for marriages with no children. In this sample, there seems to be a tendency for a greater

frequency of Catholic marriages among the "happier" respondents and an apparent tendency for marriages with no religious belief to cluster toward the "unhappier" side of the mean of the total distribution. Once again, it should be emphasized that this was not found to be statistically significant, and further research would be necessary to verify such a trend. On the other hand, while the Duvall-Hill chart (15, p. 346) shows a high proportion of broken homes occurring for "mixed" marriages, the mean for the distribution of "mixed" marriages in this study was not found to vary from the mean of the total distribution with a statistically significant difference.

5. Margaret Mead (36) suggests that it is motherhood rather than housewifeliness which is a source of pride for the urban married woman. This would seem to be somewhat confirmed by the replies in this study, one-half of which pointed to the rearing of children as one of the largest satisfactions in homemaking.

6. The contention of Reuben Hill (25) and Paul Landis (31) that the responsibility for child-rearing and homemaking seems to rest primarily upon the shoulders of the wife might find some confirmation in this study. Only five women mentioned sharing the responsibilities with the husband. The remainder speak in terms of "my children", "my family".

7. Both Kluckhohn and Redfield (29, 42) have noted the lack of socially-sanctioned, constructive possibilities for use of the homemaker's spare time. The number of women who mentioned a desire for some sort of outside activity suggests that perhaps a real need exists. It would seem that this need might carry implications

for adult education and for courses in both high school and college designed with the future leisure-time needs of the homemaker in mind.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It has already been suggested that further research would be necessary to verify certain of the differences discovered with regard to the possible effects of husband's vocational training on the homemaker's acceptance of her role, and with regard to a possible religious factor in her adjustment to homemaking.

Another avenue of investigation is suggested by the fact that rearing of the children is mentioned so often as a major source of satisfaction. This might lead to an inquiry as to what changes in the attitude toward homemaking take place when this source of satisfaction is removed, i.e. when the children are in school all day and when they leave the home as adults.

Since this sample can be considered to be a group of urban homemakers, perhaps it would be fruitful to compare the results of this study, both quantitatively and qualitatively, with those who live in a small town.

The essentially homogeneous income level of this group suggests comparison with other groups in lower or higher income brackets.

It can be suggested that the use of more rigorous statistical techniques, beyond the scope of this investigation, might reveal valuable and pertinent information.

Because the sample was so small, it was not feasible to investigate the relationship between the type of college training and the homemaker's attitude toward her job. One might conjecture that perhaps a difference could be demonstrated between the attitudes of women who majored in home economics and its allied fields, and those of women who were trained professionally for a field in which they would compete with men.

Finally, since the study suggests that certain items of personal data do not seem to affect the homemaker's attitude toward her role, it might be suggested that her adjustment is affected by more subtle factors; i.e. the presence or absence of opportunity in childhood for identification with someone functioning in the homemaking role; the amount of childhood imaginal rehearsal of the role through play or other similar activity; and the nuances of the interpersonal relationship between the husband and wife. It would appear that the use of projective techniques might offer some interesting possibilities for securing information on the personal dynamics of adjustment to the homemaking role.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This manuscript is dedicated to my husband, Larry Dennis, and to our young son, Patrick Michael, without whose constant understanding, encouragement and co-operation the project could never have been undertaken; and to my major instructor and advisor, Dr. Ira J. Gordon, whose tireless efforts in my behalf, far beyond the call of duty, made the execution of this project possible.

The writer also wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to Dr. Paul Terrance who served as her adviser in the concluding stage of the project. Dr. H. Leigh Baker, too, generously dealt with many of the problems which confronted the writer in attempting to carry out the study in absentia.

Dr. Roy Langford and Dr. Gladys Bellinger must also be thanked for their gracious assistance in categorizing the questionnaire responses.

In addition, a word of thanks is due Dr. Maurice Moggie for his advice concerning the statistical procedure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- (1) Adams, Mildred. "Chip on Her Shoulder?" The Reporter, 3:10-15, July 4, 1950
- (2) Albig, William. Public Opinion. New York: McGraw Hill, 1939.
- (3) Anonymous. "You Can't Have a Career And Be A Good Wife." Ladies Home Journal, 61:106-107, January 1944
- (4) Barnes, Harry Elmer, and Green M. Raedi. The American Way of Life. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1942
- (5) Belknap, Ivan, and Hiram Friedsam. "Age and Sex Categories as Sociological Variables in the Mental Disorders of Later Maturity," American Sociological Review, 14:367-376, June, 1949
- (6) Benezet, Louis T. "Modern Mythology in Women's Education," American Association of University Professors Bulletin. 36:487-497, Autumn, 1950
- (7) Brummond Kathryn. "Are Wives People?" Independent Woman. 25:329-330, November, 1946.
- (8) Burgess, Ernest W. "The Family in a Changing Society." American Journal of Sociology. 53:417-423, May, 1948.
- (9) Burgess, Ernest W. and Leonard Cottrell, Jr. "Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage." New York: Prentice-Hall, 1939
- (10) Corey, Stephen M. "Signed Vs. Unsigned Attitude Questionnaires," Journal of Educational Psychology. 28:144-149, February, 1937.
- (11) Corey, Stephen M. "Professed Attitudes and Actual Behavior," Journal of Educational Psychology, 28:271-281, April, 1937,
- (12) Cottrell, Leonard Jr. "The Present Status and Future Orientation of Research on the Family." American Sociological Review, 12:123-134, 1948.
- (13) Das, Sonya Ruth. The American Woman in Modern Marriage. New York: Philosophical Library, 1948.

- (14) Day, Daniel D. "Methodological Problems in Attitude Research." Journal of Social Psychology, 14:165-179, August, 1941.
- (15) DuVall, Evelyn Millis, and Reuben Hill. When You Marry. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1945.
- (16) Durand, John. "Married Women in the Labor Force." American Journal of Sociology, 52:217-224, November, 1946.
- (17) Edgerton, H. and others. "Objective Differences Among Various Types of Respondents to a Mailed Questionnaire." American Sociological Review, 12:435-444, August, 1947.
- (18) Editorial. "Research in Marriage and Family." Marriage and Family Living, 10:33-34, 1948.
- (19) Ellis, Albert. "Questionnaire Versus Interview Methods In the Study of Human Love Relationships." American Sociological Review, 12:541-553, October, 1947.
- (20) Folsom, Joseph K. "Changing Values in Family Relations." American Sociological Review, 2:717-727, October, 1937.
- (21) Gerberich, J.B., and J.M. Mason. "Signed Vs. Unsigned Questionnaires." Journal of Education Research, 42:122-127, October, 1948.
- (22) Gillin, John Lewis, and John Philip Gillin. An Introduction to Sociology. New York: MacMillan and Company, 1942.
- (23) Goode, William J. "Problems in Post-Divorce Adjustment." American Sociological Review, 14:384-401, June, 1949.
- (24) Hanson, Rhoda Pratt. "I'm Leaving Home Part Time." Independent Woman, 25:363-365, December, 1946.
- (25) Hill, Reuben. "The American Family Type." American Journal of Sociology, 52:129, September, 1947.
- (26) Homans, George C. The Human Group. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950.
- (27) Homan, Leslie. "Working Wives Make the Best Wives." Ladies Home Journal, 61:106-107, January, 1944.
- (28) Klineberg, Otto. Social Psychology. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1946.
- (29) Kluckhohn, Clyde. "Manners and Morals, 1950 A.D." New Republic, 123:10-15, June 12, 1950.

- (30) Komarovsky, Mirra. "Cultural Contradictions and Sex Roles." American Journal of Sociology, 52:184-190, November, 1946.
- (31) Landis, Paul H. "Training Teachers for Family Life Education in High Schools." Marriage and Family Living, 10:88-89, 1948.
- (32) Lindquist, E.F. A First Course in Statistics. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1942.
- (33) Linton, Ralph. The Study of Man New York: Columbia University Press, 1936.
- (34) Lundberg, Ferdinand and M. Farnum. Modern Woman: The Lost Sex. New York: Harpers, 1947.
- (35) McNemar, Quinn. Psychological Statistics New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949.
- (36) Mead, Margaret. "The Contemporary American Family as an Anthropologist Sees It." American Journal of Sociology, 53:453-459, May, 1948.
- (37) Mead, Margaret. Male and Female. New York: William Morrow and Co., 1949.
- (38) Menger, Clara. "The Social Status of Occupations for Women." Teachers College Record, 33:696-705, May, 1932.
- (39) Meyer, Agnes. "Women Aren't Men." Atlantic, 186:32-37, August, 1950
- (40) Nottingham, Elizabeth. "Toward an Analysis of the Effects of Two World Wars on the Role and Status of Middle-Class Women in the English Speaking World." American Sociological Review, 12:656-676, December, 1947.
- (41) Popkin, Zelda. "Widows and the Perilous Years." Harpers, 199:69-75, September, 1949.
- (42) Redfield, Margaret P. "The American Family: Consensus and Freedom." American Journal of Sociology, 52:174-184, November, 1947.
- (43) Report of Inter-agency Committee on Background Materials. The American Family: A Factual Background. National Conference on Family Life, May, 1948.

- (44) Roper, Elmo, and Others. "Women in America." (Fortune Survey) Fortune, 34:5-6, September, 1946.
- (45) Roskelley, R.W. "Attitudes and Overt Behavior: Their Relationship to Each Other and to Selected Factors." Unpublished Ph D dissertation. University of Wisconsin, 1938.
- (46) Ruckmick, Christian. "The Uses and Abuses of the Questionnaire Procedure." Journal of Applied Psychology, 14:32-41, February, 1930.
- (47) Sirjamaki, John. "Culture Configurations in the American Family." American Journal of Sociology, 53:464-470, May, 1948.
- (48) Spock, Benjamin. "What We Know About the Development of Healthy Personalities in Children." An Address to the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, Washington D.C.
- (49) Strong, Esther Boorman. "Individual Adjustment in Industrial Society." American Sociological Review, 14:335-346, June, 1949.
- (50) Stubbins, Joseph. "The Relationship Between Level of Vocational Aspiration and Certain Personal Data." Genetic Psychological Monographs, 41:327-409, May, 1950
- (51) Suchman, E. and Boyde McCandless. "Who Answers Questionnaires?" Journal of Applied Psychology, 14:758-762, December, 1940.
- (52) Sumner, W.G. and A.G. Keller. The Science of Society. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1927.
- (53) Terman, Lewis M. "Effect of Happiness or Unhappiness on Self-Report Regarding Attitudes, Reaction Patterns and Facts of Personal History." Psychological Bulletin, 36: 197-203, March, 1939
- (54) Terman, Lewis M., and others. Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness. New York: McGraw Hill, 1938.
- (55) Thurstone, L.L. and E.J. Chave. The Measurement of Attitude Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929.
- (56) Vaughan, Wayland F. General Psychology. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1939
- (57) Walker, Helen Mary. Elementary Statistical Methods. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1943.

- (58) White, Lynn. "Educating Women in a Man's World." Atlantic, 185:52-56, February, 1950.
- (59) Willis, Margaret. "Working Women." Journal of Educational Sociology, 17:473-478, April, 1944.
- (60) Wilson, Elmo. "The Measurement of Public Opinion." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. 250:121-132, March, 1947.
- (61) Wilton, James. "The Class of '34 Looks at Fifteen Years." New York Times Magazine, June 12, 1949.

APPENDIX

RATINGS GIVEN EACH REPLY BY THE JUDGES

<u>REPLY</u>	<u>JUDGE 1</u>	<u>JUDGE 2</u>	<u>JUDGE 3</u>	<u>JUDGE 4</u>	<u>JUDGE 5</u>	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
1.	3	2	3	2	3	2.6	0.3
2.	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	0
3.	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	0
4.	1	1	1	2	1	1.2	0.16
5.	2	2	3	2	2	2.2	0.2
6.	3	3	3	3	3	3.0	0
7.	3	1	4	2	2	2.4	1.3
8.	4	4	4	4	3	3.8	0.2
9.	3	2	3	2	2	2.4	0.3
10.	2	2	2	1	2	1.8	0.2
11.	2	1	2	2	2	1.8	0.2
12.	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	0.
13.	5	5	5	5	5	5.0	0
14.	2	2	3	3	3	2.8	0.35
15.	2	1	2	1	2	1.6	0.3
16.	1	1	3	2	1	1.6	0.8
17.	2	1	2	2	2	1.8	0.2
18.	3	2	3	3	4	3.0	0.5
19.	2	2	2	1	2	1.8	0.2
20.	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	0
21.	4	3	4	4	4	3.8	0.2
22.	2	1	2	2	2	1.8	0.2
23.	3	3	3	3	3	3.0	0

RATINGS GIVEN EACH REPLY BY THE JUDGES (con't)

<u>REPLY</u>	<u>JUDGE 1</u>	<u>JUDGE 2</u>	<u>JUDGE 3</u>	<u>JUDGE 4</u>	<u>JUDGE 5</u>	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
24.	3	2	2	2	2	2.6	0.35
25.	2	1	3	2	2	2.0	0.5
26.	3	2	3	2	2	2.4	0.3
27.	1	1	2	1	1	1.2	0.2
28.	3	1	1	2	2	1.4	0.9
29.	3	2	3	3	3	2.8	0.2
30.	2	2	2	2	1	1.8	0.2
31.	4	3	2	3	4	3.2	0.7
32.	2	2	3	1	2	2.0	0.5
33.	2	2	1	2	1	1.6	0.3
34.	1	1	2	1	1	1.2	0.2
35.	3	4	3	4	3	3.4	0.3
36.	5	5	4	5	5	4.8	0.2
37.	3	3	3	4	4	3.4	0.3
38.	3	3	3	3	4	3.2	0.2
39.	1	1	2	2	2	1.6	0.3
40.	3	1	3	3	2	2.4	0.8
41.	2	2	1	2	2	1.8	0.2
42.	1	1	2	1	1	1.2	0.2
43.	1	1	1	2	1	1.2	0.2
44.	1	2	2	1	1	1.4	0.3
45.	1	2	1	2	1	1.4	0.3
46.	1	2	2	3	1	1.8	0.7

RATINGS GIVEN EACH REPLY BY THE JUDGES (con't)

<u>REPLY</u>	<u>JUDGE 1</u>	<u>JUDGE 2</u>	<u>JUDGE 3</u>	<u>JUDGE 4</u>	<u>JUDGE 5</u>	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
47.	4	4	4	5	4	4.2	0.2
48.	2	1	2	1	2	1.6	0.3
49.	3	2	2	2	3	2.4	0.3
50.	3	1	3	2	2	2.2	0.7
51.	2	2	3	3	3	2.6	0.3
52.	1	1	3	2	1	1.6	0.8
53.	3	2	2	2	2	2.2	0.2
54.	3	3	4	3	3	3.2	0.2
55.	2	2	1	1	2	1.6	0.3
56.	1	2	1	1	1	1.2	0.2
57.	5	3	3	3	2	3.2	1.2
58.	2	2	3	2	2	2.2	0.2
59.	4	2	3	3	3	3.0	0.5
60.	1	1	1	1	2	1.2	0.2
61.	4	4	4	4	4	4.0	0
62.	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	0
63.	2	2	3	2	2	2.2	0.2
64.	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	0
65.	3	3	3	3	2	2.8	0.2
66.	4	4	4	4	4	4.0	0
67.	3	3	3	3	2	2.8	0.2
68.	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	0
69.	2	2	3	2	2	2.2	0.2

RATINGS GIVEN EACH REPLY BY THE JUDGES (concl.)

<u>REPLY</u>	<u>JUDGE 1</u>	<u>JUDGE 2</u>	<u>JUDGE 3</u>	<u>JUDGE 4</u>	<u>JUDGE 5</u>	<u>MEAN</u>	<u>VARIANCE</u>
79.	1	1	1	1	1	1.0	0
71.	2	2	2	2	2	2.0	0
72.	2	2	2	3	2	2.2	0.2

1-1.4 Group I
 1.6-2.4 Group II
 2.6-3.4 Group III
 3.6-4.4 Group IV
 4.6-5 Group V

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS NOT TO BE SIGNED!

Much is being said and written these days about "what modern women want." There have been articles which claim that women are restless and bored with their homemaking activities...that they look enviously at girls with careers outside the home. On the other hand, when a woman stated in a popular magazine recently that it is impossible to achieve personal satisfactions from home-making, over 340 housewives and mothers wrote scornful letters to the effect that the author of the statement was all wet!

We are interested in what you, individually, as one of today's homemakers, feel about your own homemaking activities.

- I. Won't you please describe for us, in the space provided below, something of how you feel in general about all of the tasks, activities, joys, problems and responsibilities which go to make up what a homemaker does every day?

II. Does the attitude indicated in your answer to Question I represent a temporary state of mind, or does it express your predominant, over-all attitude? Check one:

- (a) _____ Temporary feelings toward homemaking
(b) _____ Predominant feelings toward homemaking

III. THE FOLLOWING DATA WILL BE USED FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS ONLY

1. Your age _____
2. Number of children _____
3. Ages of children _____
4. Your educational background:
 - (a) Last grade completed _____
 - (b) If you attended college:
 - (1) Number of years attended _____
 - (2) Degree(s) earned _____
 - (3) Major _____
 - (c) Other schooling (Business school, Nurses' training, Beauty culture, etc.):
Type of school or training _____
Length of time attended _____
Did you finish the course? _____
5. Where did you spend most of your childhood....that is, what do you think of as your "family home?" Place a check after the correct description below:
Metropolis (population 1,500,000 and over) _____
Large City (population 100,000 to 1,500,000) _____
Middle-sized City (25,000 to 100,000) _____
Small City (2,500 to 25,000) _____
Rural Non-farm Community (under 2,500) _____
Rural Farm _____

6. Work history:

List the jobs or positions which you have held, the length of time worked at each and the salary. Place a star in front of any one or several which you particularly enjoyed.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Length of Time</u>	<u>Salary</u>
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----

7. If you worked before marriage:

Total length of time worked before marriage _____

8. Your religion _____

9. What was your age at the time of the marriage? _____

10. Is this your first marriage? _____

11. Husband's religion _____

12. Husband's educational background:

(a) Last grade completed _____

(b) If he attended college:

(1) Number of years attended _____

(2) Degree(s) earned _____

(3) Major _____

(c) Other schooling (Business school, On-the-job training, etc.):

Type of school or training _____

Length of time attended _____

Did he finish the course? _____

(please go on to the next page)

13. Where did your husband spend most of his childhood.... what does he think of as his "family home"? Place a check after the correct description below:

Metropolis (population 1,500,000 and over) _____

Large City (population 100,000 to 1,500,000) _____

Middle-sized City (25,000 to 100,000) _____

Small City (2,500 to 25,000) _____

Rural Non-farm Community (under 2,500) _____

Rural Farm _____

14. Husband's age at time of marriage _____

15. Is this his first marriage? _____

16. What is his present occupation? _____

17. Approximate family income (yearly): Which of the income ranges listed below would include your family?

Place the appropriate letter here: _____

- (a) \$1000 to \$2000 per year
- (b) \$2001 to \$3000 per year
- (c) \$3001 to \$4000 per year
- (d) \$4001 to \$6000 per year
- (e) \$6001 to \$8000 per year
- (f) \$8001 to \$10,000 per year
- (g) \$10,001 to \$12,000 per year

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOMEMAKERS' EXPRESSED ATTITUDES
TOWARD HOMEMAKING AND CERTAIN PERSONAL DATA

by

LORRAINE BRADT DENNIS

B.S., R.N., University of Minnesota, 1943

ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education and Psychology

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1951

PURPOSE

This study was undertaken in an effort to learn the attitudes expressed by a group of American mothers toward their role as homemaker. It was further attempted to ascertain whether statistically reliable relationships can be obtained between the expressed attitudes of homemakers and certain personal data.

PROCEDURES

The study was undertaken in an urban apartment development which is considered to represent an upper middle-class level of income. The study was concerned with full-time homemakers who have one or more pre-school children. At the time the study was undertaken, 333 homemakers with pre-school children were in residence. Twenty-nine of these were eliminated because they were working and therefore did not fulfill the criterion. Twenty others participated in the pre-test and were likewise eliminated.

The questionnaire was distributed among the remaining 284 full-time homemakers with pre-school children by random selection of every other one.

The questionnaire devised used a single, essentially unstructured stimulus question, designed to elicit a free description of the respondent's attitude toward homemaking. In addition, a series of questions regarding certain personal data was included. The questionnaire was distributed personally by the investigator, and it was explained to the homemaker that a study

was being made of how homemakers feel about homemaking, and that the replies were to be anonymous without any possibility of identification. A questionnaire blank was given to the homemaker together with a stamped, addressed envelope for its return. No homemaker refused to cooperate at the time of the distribution.

Of the 142 distributed questionnaires, 72 usable questionnaires were returned, a total of 50.7 per cent.

Five members of the Kansas State College faculty categorized the replies. One reply to the stimulus question had been copied verbatim on each of the 72 cards given each judge, but other data regarding the respondent was omitted. The judges, working independently, sorted the replies qualitatively into five categories.

The mean of the numerical value of the judge's ratings for each reply was then computed and assigned to the appropriate questionnaire in order to secure five groups of replies with ratings ranging from "very happy" to "very unhappy." Each judge's ratings were correlated with the final mean rating for each reply using Pearson's product-moment method. The correlation coefficients were found to be as follows: .838, .878, .884, .894, and .910.

The following ten items of background data were tabulated for each group and the mean for each group computed; age of respondent; the number of children; the years of education; the months of such training as business school, beauty culture, etc.; the number of years the respondent worked before her marriage; her age at the time of marriage; the number of years of

husband's education; the number of months of any type of vocational training such as business school, courses in salesmanship, on-the-job training, etc., which may have been taken by the husband; the age of the husband at the time of marriage; and the yearly income.

The difference between the mean of each group and the mean of each of the remaining four groups was then computed for every item and the significance of the difference tested, using the "t" technique for small samples. Five additional items of background information were tabulated in the form of a frequency distribution along the five-point scale of equal-appearing intervals. These items included: the professed religion of both partners; the occurrences of marriages with "mixed" religious beliefs; the occurrences of second marriages; the family-home background of the wife; and the family-home background of the husband. The mean for each distribution was computed.

The mean for the distribution of the total sample in terms of the five-point scale of equal-appearing intervals was computed. This was compared with the mean for each of the five items cited above for a significant difference, using the "t" technique.

RESULTS

The difference between the mean years of education for

respondents in Group I and those in Group IV can be considered significant at the one per cent level of confidence. The women in Group I, those considered to be most satisfied with the homemaking role, average .60 years of college work, in contrast to those in Group IV, considered to be "unhappy" with the home-making role, who average 3.20 years of college training.

The difference between the mean years of formal education for Group I and Group II is large enough to warrant tentative rejection of the null hypothesis at the five per cent level of confidence. The women in Group II average 1.83 years of college training as compared to the mean of .60 years for Group I.

The third difference, which might be considered significant at the five per cent level of confidence, exists between the mean months of "training" (apart from formal education) accomplished by the husbands of the women in Groups I and III. The men whose wives are in Group III average 13.20 months of such training, while those with wives in Group II show a mean of 3.88 months of training.

In every other comparison of means, the differences found are so small that one must conclude such variation could easily have occurred by chance.

CONCLUSIONS

It must be noted that this study is subject to several possible

sources of bias. One lies in the sample itself. The total number who responded to the questionnaire is small. Furthermore, both with regard to income level and type of occupation of the husbands, the sample cannot be considered as representative of the general United States population.

Another possible source of bias is inherent in the instrument used. The limitations of attitudes studies in general and of questionnaire techniques in particular are discussed in the manuscript.

With these limitations constantly in mind, certain tentative conclusions can be drawn with regard to this sample of homemakers:

1. The women in this sample expressed, on the whole, very positive attitudes toward homemaking. Two-thirds of the replies were adjudged "very happy" or "happy." Another 23.61 per cent were considered "unhappy" or "very unhappy."

2. For this sample, the items of personal data tabulated cannot very well serve as reliable predictive indicators of attitudes toward marriage. Number of years of formal education was found to be the only item which might differentiate between two of the groups with a level of significance great enough to justify a tentative assumption of a real difference. Women with the lowest average number of years of formal education seem to be happier in the homemaking role than another group with a higher mean for formal education.

3. There seems to be a possibility that the vocational

training of the husband has some sort of bearing on the attitude of women toward their homemaking role. It cannot be said why this should be so, and further research would certainly be indicated to verify such a tendency.

4. The suggestion in the literature that it is motherhood rather than housewifeliness which is a source of pride for the urban married woman would seem to be somewhat confirmed by the replies in this study, one-half of which pointed to the rearing of children as one of the largest homemaking satisfactions.

5. The contention in the literature that the responsibility for child-rearing and homemaking seems to rest primarily upon the shoulders of the wife might find some confirmation in this study. Only five women mention sharing the responsibility with the husband. The remainder speak in terms of "my home," "my children," and "my family."

6. The study suggests a need for socially-sanctioned, constructive possibilities for use of the homemaker's spare time. Over one-fifth of the women (22.2 per cent) felt strongly enough about this to express the feeling in their replies. It might possibly be suggested that this could carry implications for adult education and for courses in both high school and college designed with the future leisure-time needs of the homemaker in mind.