The Impact of Gender on Productive and Social Activities

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ABSTRACT

Increasing numbers of women are becoming members of
the labor force. Yet it is not clear to what extent
working for wages relieves women of their responsibility
for traditional and non-paid activities, such as house-
hold work and child care. This study examines the impact
of gender on the division of domestic labor among work-
ing women and men. This research focuses on three kinds
of productive activities (paid work, household work, and
child care). In addition to productive activities, two
kinds of social activities (time spent with relatives
and friends, and time spent in entertainment activities)
are included. This research also focuses on a select
category of workers--namely, professionals (including
lawyers, social workers, high school teachers, and col-
lege teachers). These types of careers may place spe-
cial burdens on women. Finally, several control vari-
ables are included in the analysis, such as social
status and life style factors, work factors, and several
potentially relevent interaction terms. The findings
indicate that gender is a major influence on all three
types of productive activities. The strongest impact is
on domestic work, including associations for gender by

itself as well as in interaction with age, having a
dependent child, and marital status. On child care,
gender interacts with having a dependent child. Gender
has almost no effect on social activities, with the only
significant association a weak interaction between gen-
der and marital status. These findings raise questions
about the pervasiveness of sex role changes in this
society. Not only does entering the labor force fail to
relieve women of their traditional role responsibili-
ties, it may in fact lead to an increase in what is
expected of them.

Until recently, social scientists have assumed that
the crucial life events for women are marriage and
widowhood. Furthermore, they have assumed that work and
retirement have minimal impact on women (Blau, 1973).
As the number of working women continues to increase,
social scientists have focused on the different ways
that men and women experience work. Research has ranged
from studies of gender differences in job satisfaction
to sex discrimination in the work place. Greater under-
standing of these sex differences can lead to employment
policies and programs which are more appropriate to the
specific needs of both sexes.

Most research involving gender differences in work
experiences has focused on work which is paid. Marked
differences in income are well documented. At every
skill level men receive higher pay than women (Steven-
son, 1975). This sex differential cannot be explained
by differences in education or work history. Sex segre-
gation by occupation, industry, and rank places women in
a significantly disadvantaged position relative to men
(Miller and Garrison, 1982). They receive less compen-
sation and less status for their efforts, and they
achieve less occupational mobility. Even in tradition-
ally female occupations such as teaching, nursing, so-
cial work, and librarianship, men are disproportionately
represented in higher status and administrative posi-
tions (Grimm and Stein, 1974).

While commitment to work has remained relatively
stable for men, it has apparently increased considerably
among women (Veroff et al., 1981). According to Veroff
and associates, a larger proportion of employed women
(47%) than employed men (35%) report that they would
rather be regarded as excellent at work than at either of

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the two family roles of marriage and parenthood, and this percentage appears to be increasing. Thus, women today appear to value paid work more than their male counterparts.

One might expect that, as women have increased the amount of time they devote to paid work, the hours they spend on unpaid work would decline. However, data reveal minimal changes in the amount of time that women allocate to house-hold labor. Compared to men, employed women still carry most of the responsibility for house-keeping. Men continue to take a less active part in family and household tasks (e.g., Berk, 1979; Robinson, 1977), even in families in which women work outside the home (Walker, 1970). When men do work at home, their activities tend to cluster around only a few jobs, such as yard work, home repairs, shopping, and travel on household errands (Vanek, 1980). Wives still have most of the responsibility for preparing meals, cleaning, and child care.

Pleck and Rustad (1980) report that employed women are still doiing roughly twice as much housework (23.6 hours per week) as their employed husbands (11.4 hours per week). Married professional women spend an average of 108 hours a week on professional and domestic tasks (Yogev and Vierra, 1980). Role overload is clearly a serious obstacle for women who attempt to combine work with marriage and family roles.

The explanation for these trends may lie in part in a rise in standards for cleanliness (Giele, 1982). Vanek (1974) found that, in spite of the technological improvements in the home over the last decade, the total amount of time women devote to housework has not changed and may have increased. She found that housewives in 1960 spent more time on family work than they did in the 1920's (Vanek, 1974). Clothes must be washed more often and the house must be kept cleaner (Giele, 1982). A renewed emphasis on adequate mothering has also caused some women to feel that to be "good" mothers they should spend more time with their children.

The economic disparity in wages among men and women may also explain women's greater involvement in the homes. Vanek (1980) suggests that wives work longer hours in the home to compensate for their lower income in the workforce. Both spouses may feel that the wife

should perform more domestic work since her job is worth less financially.

Resistance among men to taking on household responsibility is another problem for working women (Giele, 1982). Some men may need to feel that they are the primary breadwinners, and participation in household chores threatens this traditional view (Lien, 1979).

Resistance among women may be equally strong, as some wives are reluctant to share housework. In her analysis of national survey data, Vanek (1980) found that as many as 84% of non-employed and 70% of employed wives wanted no additional "help" from their husbands. Women may believe that their husbands are incapable of adequately maintaining the home or, if this is one area in which women feel in control, they may be reluctant to give it up. In any case, women's disproportionate involvement in housework may well be consistent with beliefs held by both spouses that women's careers are secondary to men's.

These attitudes suggest that there has been little change in people's ideas about sex roles in America. Recent data show that 50% of women and 48% of men feel that the most satisfying and interesting way of life is a traditional marriage, in which the husband assumes the role of provider and the wife organizes the household and cares for the children (Vanek, 1980).

This study further examines the impact of gender on the division of domestic labor among men and women who are currently members of the labor force. Yet it goes a step beyond previous research by including a broader range of activities, including not only productive but also social ones. In most research, the focus has generally been only on domestic activities, without distinguishing different kinds, or on paid work. In contrast, a total of five kinds of activities are included in this research, three related to productive efforts (paid work, household work, and child care) and two related to social involvements (time spent with relatives and friends, and time spent in entertainment activities).

This research also focuses on a special group of workers—namely, professionals, including law, social work, high school teaching, and college teaching. The nature of these types of work careers may place special

burdens on women, particularly if they continue to be largely responsible for household work while they pursue a career. Although the conceptualization of "profession" is rather vague and is applied to an ever-widening circle of occupations, professional occupations currently represent "the pinnacle of work roles, the goal toward which any individual should aspire" (Braude, 1975:104). To be a professional requires not just particular skills, but generally an education that is intellectual in nature. Because of long and difficult training, professionals are generally perceived as highly committed to their careers as a way of life, as well as possessing autonomy in performing their work (Kilty and Behling, 1984). Furthermore, professionals are typically perceived as having altruistic motives rather than self-serving ones as an underlying motivation (Freidson, 1984).

Such idealistic perceptions of the professions may have limited reality, because status differentials clearly exist among the professions (Kilty and Behling, 1984). Yet professional careers provide women with new avenues of advancement, and many women seem to be taking advantage of these possibilities by entering professional occupations. Perceptions of these careers suggest that more effort is required for success than may be the case in many nonprofessional and lower status positions. If professional women are still expected to be responsible for domestic work as well as the development of a career, then they may be at a serious disadvantage, compared both to men in general and to women who pursue other occupations. An noted earlier, a study of women faculty members at a midwestern university suggests that the demands placed on professional women may, in fact, be excessive (Yogev and Vierra, 1980).

In addition to broadening the range of activities to be considered and to focusing on a special group of workers, a number of other variables are considered and controlled for. These variables may be grouped into three sets. The first is social status and life style factors. Included were a number of factors that may affect commitment to and involvement with career, such as age, household income, marital status, number of children, having a dependent child, and self-perceptions of conventionality. The second set concerned work factors, such as highest degree, profession, perceived

autonomy at work, and a number of attitudinal variables
that have been found to be related to commitment to work
(Kilty and Behling, 1984). The last set included sever-
al interaction terms, primarily related to gender and
where one might expect differential impacts in combina-
tion with other social characteristics (including gender
X age, gender X marital status, gender X having a
dependent child, and age X marital status).

Method

The data were collected as part of a larger study
concerned with the preretirement planning and attitudes
of professional workers (Behling et al., 1983; Kilty and
Behling, 1984). In addition to some basic social
forces, such as age and gender, two of the other factors
that were expected to affect retirement planning were
current life style and work alienation; these variables
provide most of the data for this study.

Sample

A stratified form of sampling was used in order to
control for gender, age, and profession. The sampling
plan may be summarized in the form of a factorial design:
Gender (male, female) X Age (25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64)
X Profesion (law, social work, high school teaching,
college teaching). The purpose of this design was to
provide a sample that would cover the full range of the
typical work career across a diverse set of professions,
varying in occupational prestige, economic status, aand
entrepreneurial status (Kilty and Behling, 1984). The
data were collected in the Columbus, Ohio, metropolitan
area.

Of the 457 respondents, 239 are male (52.3%) and
218 are female (47.7%). There are 103 attorneys
(22.5%), 116 social workers (25.4%), 119 high school
teachers (26.0%), and 119 college teachers (26.0%).
Most of the sample is currently married (69.6%), with
17.1% never married and 13.3% not currently married.
The average number of children was 1.68, although a
third of the cases had no children, and household size
averaged 2.79. The typical respondent is Protestant
(63.2%), with 16.% Catholic and 4.2% Jewish; 2.0%
indicate some other affiliation and 14.7% no affilia-
tion. Most of the sample are white (92.1%). Not

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surprisingly, the sample is highly educated, with a mean of 18.67 years. The bulk of the respondents are in salaried positions (84.9%). The average household income is in the category of $30,000 to $34,999 (in 1979 dollars).

Independent Variables

Table 1 presents a summary of the variable titles, variable abbreviations, and metric information for the independent variables.

Social Status and Life Style Variables. Seven variables are included in the set: gender, age, household income, marital status, number of children, having a dependent child (i.e., having a child age 18 or younger), and a self-rating scale of conventionality. Since marital status is a nominal-level variable consisting of three categories (never married, currently married, and not currently married), it is dummy coded in order to be included in the regression analysis. The "not currently married" are used as the residual group.

Work-Related Variables. Eight variables are incuded in this set. The first is highest degree attained, measured on a 7-step scale from "high school diploma" to "doctorate." Although years of education was also available, highest degree was selected, since it seemed more likely to reflect the educational status of women more accurately. That is, women may have completed about the same number of years of formal education as men; however, they may not have completed as many degrees. The correlation between highest degree and years of education is .778.

Since profession is a nominal-level variable, it is dummy coded into three variables, with the college professors treated as the residual category.

Autonomy at work is a scale consisting of four items concerned with control over the work setting (authority to hire or fire, ability to influence or set others' rates of pay, supervision of others' work, and ability to decide when and how much to work). These questions were adapted from Wolf and Fligstein (1979), and each one used a "yes/no" type of response format. A factor analysis indicated that the four items are strongly interrelated (Kilty and Behling), 1984), and scores were generated by a count of the number of "yes" responses.

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Table 1

Variable Titles, Variable Abbreviations, and Metric Information

Variable	Abbreviation	Metric Information
Social Status and Life Style Variables		
Gender	SEX	Male=1; Female=0
Age	AGE	Years of Age
Marital Status		Never married=1; Currently married=2 Not currently married=3 Dummy coded
	MAR1	Never married=1; Other=0
	MAR2	Currently married=1; Other=0
Number of Children	CHILD	Actual number of children
Have a Dependent Child	DEPEND	Have a child age 18 or younger=1; Other=0
Household Income	INCOME	Scaled from 1=$10,000 or less to 15=$75,000 or more, at $5,000 intervals
Conventionality	CONVEN	Sum of three self-ratings of conventionality (work life, non-work life, and social relations). Scores could range from 3 to 21, where high scores indicate non-conventionality.
Work-Related Variables		
Highest Degree	DEGREE	High school=1; AA=2; RN=3; BA=4; Master's=5; Law degree=6; Doctorate=7
Profession		Attorney=1; Social worker=2; High school teacher=3; College teacher=4; Dummy coded
	PROF1	Attorney=1; Other=0
	PROF2	Social worker=1; Other=0
	PROF3	H.S. teacher=1; Other=0

Autonomy	AUTON	Count of "yes" responses to four questions regarding control over the work place. Scores could range from 0 to 4, where high scores indicate autonomy.
Work Provides Active Interest	INTEREST	Sum of responses to five attitude statements. Scores could range from 5 to 35, where high scores indicate agreement.
Work Gives Meaning to Life	MEANING	Sum of responses to three attitude statements. Scores could range from 3 to 21, where high scores indicate agreement.
Work Is Too Consuming	CONSUM	Sum of responses to three attitude statements. Scores could range from 3 to 21, where high scores indicate agreement.
Work Is a Necessity	NECESS	Sum of responses to three attitude statements. Scores could range from 3 to 21, where high scores indicate agreement.
Satisfaction with Career	SATIS	Sum of responses to six attitude statements. Scores could range from 6 to 42, where high scores indicate satisfaction.

Interaction Terms

Gender X Age	SEXAGE	SEX * AGE
Gender X Have a Dependent Child	SEXDEPEN	SEX * DEPEND
Gender X Marital Status	SEXMAR1	SEX * MAR1
	SEXMAR2	SEX * MAR2
Age X Marital Status	AGEMAR1	AGE * MAR1
	AGEMAR2	AGE * MAR2

Note: A summary of the items included in each of the five attitude scales is available upon request.

The next four variables are attitude scales, all derived from a factor analysis of 15 opinion statements about work (Kilty and Behling, 1984). The scales are titled "Work Provides an Active Interest," "Work Gives Meaning to Life," "Work Is Too Consuming," and "Work Is a Necessity."

The last variable is a six-item scale of "Satisfaction with Career." This scale was originally developed by Aiken and Hage (1966) as part of their "Alienation from Work" scale. Since the items were initially constructed for a non-professional sample of workers, some of the wording had to be modified, in order to better reflect the work contexts of professionals. The scale has an alpha reliability coefficient of .861 for this sample.

Interaction Terms. There are several interactions that seemed likely to affect the various dependent variables, especially child care and domestic work. We examined for particular interaction effects: gender X age, gender X having a dependent child, gender X marital status, and age X marital status. Since marital status is a dummy coded variable, we transformed this variable into two variables.

Dependent Variables

As Table 2 shows, there are five dependent variables. Three concern productive activities: hours of paid work, hours of child care, and hours of domestic work. Two focus on social activities: hours spent with friends or relatives (including such activities as visiting, telephoning, and writing), and hours spent in entertainment activities (e.g., parties, eating out, or entertaining people). For all five activities, respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours spent in each activity during a typical week.

Analysis

The data were analyzed using ordinary least squares regression. The NEW REGRESSION procedure in Release 9 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Hull and Nie, 1981) was the computer program employed, and the analysis was carried out by using the stepwise regression design option. A preliminary check of the correlation matrix for the independent variables suggested that multicollinearity would not be a problem, although there were some substantial correlations among the dichotomous variables and the interaction terms.

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Table 2

Abbreviations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Dependent Variables

Variable	Abbreviation	Mean	SD
Hours of Working	WORK	49.03	10.44
Hours of Child Care	CHILD	6.96	14.71
Hours of Domestic Work	DOMESTIC	7.02	7.17
Hours with Family and Friends	FAMFR	3.62	4.44
Hours of Entertainment	ENTERT	4.20	3.88

Note: Means and Standard Deviations are based on the 448 cases who had
complete data on all independent and dependent variables.

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Productive Activities

As Table 3 shows, the regression analyses accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance on all three independent variables. However, the specific predictors varied across the dependent variables, with the sharpest contrast occurring between the results for WORK and for the other two dependent variables.

Professional Work. For time spent at work, the principal influences are the work-related variables. Both highest degree and type of profession have strong impacts. Degree is positively associated with hours at work, indicating that those persons with higher terminal degrees spent more time working, while all three of the dummy surrogates for profession are negatively related to work, suggesting that the attorneys, social workers, and high school teachers all spent less time working than the residual category of college teachers.

Three other work-related variables are also significantly associated with time at work. "Work Gives Meaning to Life" and "Satisfaction with Career" are positive associated, while "Work Is Too Consuming" is negatively related to hours of working.

Two of the social status and life style variables produce significant associations as well. The first is gender, with men spending more time at work than women. The second is conventionality, with ratings of oneself as non-conventional associated with more hours working. That seems somewhat surprising, since professionals are traditionally perceived as hard-working and dedicated to their careers (Braude, 1975; Freidson, 1984). At the same time, the association is independent of gender; perhaps men and women who consider themselves as non-conventional are more likely to be active in their careers--certainly a non-conventional attitude for women who are still expected to spend more time in family and domestic activities. If work is no longer a central life interest for men (e.g., Durbin and Goldman, 1972), then those who work longest may well be non-conventional.

None of the interaction terms yield a statistically significant regression weight.

Child Care. The amount of time spent in child care activities is the most predictable of the dependent

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Table 3

Summary of Regression Analyses of Productive Activities:
Significant Standardized Regression Weights

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables		
	WORK	CHILD	DOMESTIC
Social Status and Life Style Variables			
SEX	.203		-.428
AGE		-.138	.232
MAR1			
MAR2			.264
CHILD			
DEPEND		.898	.324
INCOME			
CONVEN	.101		
Work-Related Variables			
DEGREE	.134		
PROF1	-.239		
PROF2	-.278		
PROF3	-.190		
AUTON			-.095
INTEREST			
MEANING	.130		
CONSUM	-.156		
NECESS			
SATIS	.135		
Interaction Terms			
SEXAGE			-.583
SEXDEPEN		-.571	-.301
SEXMAR1			
SEXMAR2			-.349
AGEMAR1			
AGEMAR2			
R^2	.233	.440	.314

variables, and yet there are only three significant predictors. The strongest independent variable is having a dependent child. The unstandardized regression weight reflects an addition of 26.55 hours a week devoted to child care for those who have dependent children.

There is also a very strong interaction between gender and having a dependent child. The unstandardized weight is 18.39 hours. It is negative because men do not assume more responsibility for child care. That is, males are scored "1", as are those having a dependent child. In effect, this result indictes that women with dependent children suffer a severe liability. A simple breakdown for gender X having a dependent child yields an average of 27.76 hours of child care for women with dependent children, which compares to 8.84 hours for men in the same situation. For both men and women without dependent children, the means are nearly zero.

The last significant predictor is age, with younger people not surprisingly more involved in child care than older people (unstandardized weight of -0.18 hours).

Domestic Work. Trying to predict the amount of time devoted to domestic work produces a complex equation, involving several interactions as well as main effects.

Of the eight social status and life syle variables, four are associated with domestic work. Gender is negatively related, indicating that women spend more time in these activities (an unstandardized weight representing 6.13 hours more each week). Age is positively associated (unstandardized weight of 0.15 hours per year of age), as is having a dependent child (unstandardized weight of 4.67). In addition, the currently married spend more time doing domestic work (unstandardized weight of 4.10 hours) compared to the not currently married (the residual category) and the never married (for whom the regression weight is not significant).

Interestingly, autonomy, one of the work-related variables, is related to domestic work. Since the association is negative, this result indicates that those who have greater autonomy at work do less household work, regardless of whether they are male or female. At the same time, men are more likely to be in autonomous work situations than women (Kilty and Behling, 1984).

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In addition to these main (or additive) effects, three interaction terms are also significant. The strongest is for gender X age, and the slope is negative, indicating that domestic activities decline for men as they get older (but not for women). A simple breakdown for this interaction, where age is recoded to four categories at 10-year intervals, shows that these activities do drop slightly for men across the age groups. The 25-34 year old man average 4.81 hours a week, compared to 3.97 hours both for men 35-44 and those 45-54, and 3.54 hours for men 55-64. Among the women, the youngest group are the most like comparably aged men, but the other three groups of women work substantially more than the men. The 25-34 year old women average 6.97 hours a week, compared to 12.96 hours for the 35-44 women, 10.09 for the 45-54 women, and 11.33 for the 55-64.

The impact of the gender X having a dependent child interaction is similar to its effect on hours of child care, with the men who have dependent children having a substantial advantage over comparable women. A simple breakdown of average domestic work time shows that men with dependent children (mean of 3.97 hours) spend about the same amount of time doing domestic work as men without dependents (mean of 4.20). Yet, women with dependent children (mean of 13.91) spend over three times as much time in domestic work as comparable men, while women without dependents (mean of 8.54) only spend twice as much as their male counterparts.

The last significant effect is the interaction between gender and marital status, particularly for gender and the currently married. A simple breakdown for the three categories of marital status by the two categories of gender indicates that the contrast between men and women is most extreme for those who are currently married--as suggested by the regression analysis. The difference between never married men and women is 4.20 hours a week, and it is 2.06 hours for the not currently married men and women. In contrast, the currently married women devote 9.14 hours more than the currently married men to household work each week.

Social Activities

The results for the two social activity dependent variables are presented in Table 4. The set of independent variables used in these analyses predicts less

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Table 4

Summary of Regression Analyses of Social Activities:
Significant Standardized Regression Weights

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	
	FAMFR	ENTERT
Social Status and Life Style Variables		
SEX		
AGE	-.368	
MAR1		
MAR2	-.560	
CHILD		-.134
DEPEND	-.113	
INCOME	.101	.161
CONVEN	.181	
Work-Related Variables		
DEGREE		
PROF1		.099
PROF2		
PROF3		
AUTON	-.147	
INTEREST		
MEANING		.108
CONSUM		
NECESS		
SATIS		
Interaction Terms		
SEXAGE		
SEXDEPEN		
SEXMAR1	.117	
SEXMAR2		
AGEMAR1		
AGEMAR2	.465	-.168
R^2	.197	.096

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strongly the amounts of time spent in these activities than was the case for the productive activities. The coefficient of determination for time spent with family or friends, however, is comparable to the preceding results. More importantly, gender is not a particularly useful predictor for either variable, in contrast to its impact on productive activities.

Family and Friends. Of the eight social status and life style variables, five have an impact on the amount of time spent each week with family and friends. The strongest is marital status. The currently married spend substantially less time visiting than the not currently married (the residual category); the unstandardized weight reflects a difference of 5.38 hours a week. There is no difference between the never married and the not currently married.

Age also has a substantial impact, with younger people spending the most time with family and friends. Having dependent child reduces the amount of time spent in these activities. Household income is positively related to the time involved with family and friends, as is conventionality, where those who perceive themselves as less conventional spend more time with family and friends.

The only work related variable found to be significantly related to these activities is autonomy. The negative association indicates that those who are more autonomous at work spend more time with family and friends.

Two interactions produce significant regression weights. The stronger of the two is the age X marital status interaction, particularly for age in combination with the currently married category. For the married, there is an increment in their time spent with family and friends for each unit increase in age, in contrast to the not currently married and the never married.

The other interaction is gender X marital status, which is mainly due to the never married group. In effect, the never married men spend more time with family and friends than any other combination of the two variables. This is the only instance where gender impacts in any way on time spent in social activities. The effect is small and probably due to the small number of cases of never married males (N=14). In fact, of the

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239 men in the sample, 89.5% are currently married, compared to 47.7% of the women. Marriage is apparently a more convenient arrangement for men than for women professionals.

Entertainment Activities. The regression analysis for entertainment-related activities is the least successful of the five analyses. While the outcome is still highly significant in statistical terms, an unusual combination of predictors relates to this variable.

Two social status and life style variables impact on the amount of time devoted to entertainment. Having a dependent child is negatively associated, while household income is positively related.

There are also two work-related variables associated with this dependent variables, implying that entertainment activities may overlap with work, at least to some extent. The first influence is one of the profession dummy surrogates, where being a lawyer is positively associated with entertainment activities. Interestingly, the "Work Gives Meaning to Life" scale is also positively related to this way of spending time.

Finally, the interaction of age X marital status is significantly related to hours of entertainment, and this is mainly due to the currently married category. Those who are currently married are less involved in these activities as age increases, in contrast to the not currently married and the never married. A simple breakdown on average hours by age and marital status shows that entertainment hours are curvilinear for the never married and not currently married (highest at both ends of the age range), while the amount of time for the currently married is relatively linear and declines across age categories.

Discussion and Conclusion

The dramatic entry of women into the labor force is, of course, well documented; however, the data from this investigation raise questions about the pervasiveness of sex role changes. We find gender differences in three separate areas of productivity: professional work, child care, and domestic work. Compared to men, women spend significantly more time on both types of domestic activities and less time on the job.

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Having a dependent child appears to be the most influential factor related to hours spent on child care, but an additionally important factor is the gender X having a dependent child interaction. According to our data, women with dependent children spend more time on these tasks than men in comparable situations. Gender is also a significant variable in the prediction of hours spent on domestic activities, indicating that married women spend a greater amount of time on household chores than single women. These findings concur with previous results, which indicate that women carry the bulk of the responsibility for household management. The fact that these results are observable in a sample of highly educated, professional women is noteworthy.

When potentially confounding factors such as income and age are considered, these gender differences still maintain. This division of domestic labor appears remarkably intractable to the influences of life stage and economic status. While the sample as a whole is relatively high in social status, there was stustantial variation in such variables as income, years of education, and occupational prestige. Yet these factors have little or no impact on domestic work.

These findings have important implications for the future of sex roles. Surprisingly, most women support the status quo. In a recent study of professional women, for example, Yogev and Vierra (1980) observed that women did not report feeling overburdened, even though they invested long hours in productive work. Similarly, Baruch and Barnett (1983) reported that women who combine work and family are the most statisfied group of women. Since this issue was not addressed in this study, the explanation for these high levels of satisfaction remains speculative.

Education itself does not appear to provide a solution to inequities in the distribution of domestic responsibilities. We had speculated that, since professional workers are among the most educated members of this society, the level of education of our respondents might affect the divisions of labor in their families and lead to a more equitable arrangement for men and women. Yet our results, as well as those with similar samples (e.g., Yogev and Vierra, 1980), contradict this notion. Education may well simply perpetuate tradi-

tional sex role conceptions. After all, the purpose of socialization is to pass on cultural traditions and values.

Changes in sex roles may be occuring much more slowly than attitudinal studies suggest (e.g., Thonton et al., 1983). In fact, in spite of the number or working mothers, advocates who oppose women with young children working remain a major force in the media and in the psychological literature. Many women feel ambivalent about combining work and family. They may feel that their primary allegiances should lie with family nurturing and household management and that it is men who should invest most of their time in professional activities. On the other hand, women who have adopted the ideology of the "superwoman" assume that they should maintain the home, care for the children, and pursue a career. This new role requiring that women do everything is becoming increasingly prevalent in our society.

Problems with this life style arise when women's disproportionate involvement in domestic work deprives them of the rewards associated with the pursuit of a successful career. For example, in this study, significant relationships were observed between hours spent on professional work and such attitudinal scales as "Work Provides Meaning" and "Satisfaction with Career." To the extent that a trade off exists between time spent on domestic chores and hours invested on the job, many career women are placed in a disadvantaged position relative to men on the job. That is, women are denied the satisfaction of accomplishment as well as the meaning derived from working hard on a task. This may be especially true for academic types of jobs, where success means writing and publishing, activities that take time outside of the office.

Finally, objectively, the productive lives of many of these women seem excessive. Maintenance of this life style over a long period of time is likely to be stressful. The consequences of women's excessive involvement in productive activities for their mental and physical health has not been adequately investigated. At present, most researchers rely on women's subjective reports of their well-being. A more useful research strategy might examine symptoms associated with mental and physical health. This approach would avoid contami-

nation of self-reports by ideological beliefs about how men and women are "supposed" to feel.

Certainly, working women have other options. They can choose not to marry, a life style that has become increasingly common in this society (e.g., Havens, 1973). In this study, nearly 30% of the women had never married, and this finding was consistent across age categories (Behling et al., 1983).

Another option is childlessness (Yogev and Vierra, 1980). Marriage without children is less time consuming, and this life style is likely to increase in popularity. Of the women in this study aged 25 to 34, 79% were still childless at the time of their participation in the research.

A final alternative is for men to change their behavior and for parity to be reached between men and women. Rarely are men expected to sacrifice their careers for child care and domestic obligations. Yet many women are frequently forced to choose, or, if they don't, they pay the price for attempting to maintain two demanding responsibilities. A change in men's roles is the only option which would truly grant parity to women. According to the data presented here, major changes in sex roles in domestic and child care activities must accompany the developing opportunities and the work place before genuine equality can occur.

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