



Making meaning of gender from role division in long-term, dual-earner marriages
by Barbara Jo Stelmack

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Home Economics

Montana State University

© Copyright by Barbara Jo Stelmack (1994)

Abstract:

The meaning of gender, as reflected in role division in the home, was qualitatively examined in couples who were married for ten years or more and both worked outside the home. A social construction theory framework was applied to the construction of gender to discern -the contingencies and interactions that inform gender meanings. Sixteen couples were conjointly interviewed regarding their role division in the domains of 1) housework and child-care, 2) financial management and decision-making, and 3) leisure and relationship. Grounded theory techniques guided the interview process and the data, derived from audio-tapes of the interviews, was presented descriptively. Couples were found to mostly conform to a contemporary model of role division where men assume primacy over work and financial matters, women assume primacy over the home, children and relationship concerns. Roles were influenced by primary socialization, ie., what had been learned in their families of origin; employment, ie., the relative amounts of time available for the home; and, changes in life circumstances, ie., work and children. Couples denied power imbalances in their marriages and adamantly stressed teamwork, fairness and equity in their roles. Although women took greater responsibility for negotiating changes in the home share, couples perceived gender to be incidental in their organization, citing balance and equity as driving their role division. Implications of contemporary role structures and the application of equity theory were discussed.

MAKING MEANING OF GENDER FROM ROLE DIVISION
IN LONG-TERM, DUAL-EARNER MARRIAGES

by

Barbara Jo Stelmack

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Science

in

Home Economics

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

April, 1994

71378
St 394

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by
Barbara Jo Stelmack

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

4-25-94
Date

Carmen Knudson-Martin
Chairperson, Graduate Committee

Approved for the Major Department

4/26/94
Date

[Signature]
Head, Major Department

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

5/10/94
Date

R. L. Brown
Graduate Dean

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under the rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in parts may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Signature

Date

Barbara Stetson
April 25, 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Theoretical Context.....	5
The Social Construction of Reality.....	6
The Social Construction of Marriage.....	10
The Social Construction of Gender.....	11
Summary.....	12
Definitions.....	13
CHAPTER 2.....	15
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
Gender as Social Knowledge.....	16
Differential Socialization.....	16
Biological Differences.....	18
Cultural Feminism.....	20
Masculine and Feminine Sex Roles.....	23
Traditional Sex Roles.....	24
Evolving Sex Roles.....	26
Sexual Bargaining.....	28
Family Structure.....	29
Gender Roles in the Household Context.....	32
Quantifying Household Labor.....	33
Qualitative Views on Family Roles.....	37
Summary.....	46
CHAPTER 3.....	48
DESIGN OF THE STUDY.....	48
Theoretical Basis of the Design.....	48
Selection of the Participants.....	49
Table 1, Description of Participants.....	53
The Interview Process.....	54
Analysis of the Data.....	58
Authenticity of the Study.....	59
Limitations of the Study.....	61
Summary.....	63

	Page
CHAPTER 4.....	65
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.....	65
Balancing the Household Share.....	67
Transitions.....	68
The Home Executive.....	74
One Woman's Guilt Was Another Man's Therapy.....	76
Welcome Home Daddy.....	78
Money Management and Decisions.....	82
Control With the Checkbook.....	82
The Power of Money.....	85
Decisions as Reflections of Power.....	89
Husbands Empowering Wives.....	91
The "Where" and the "Power" of Power.....	93
Leisure and Relationship.....	99
The Leisure of Separateness.....	100
Entitlement to Leisure.....	102
Social Ties.....	104
Family Ties.....	107
Managing the Couple Relationship.....	109
The Task of Caring.....	115
The Measure of Gender.....	118
Gender-Making.....	124
The Old and the New of Gender.....	125
Contributors to Change.....	129
Why Do They Do the Things They Do.....	130
Gender Awareness.....	131
CHAPTER 5.....	135
IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS.....	135
Implications for Theory.....	136
Role Structure.....	136
The Subjectivity of Equity and Fairness.....	138
Implications for Couples Therapy.....	145
Implications for Future Research.....	147
REFERENCES.....	150
APPENDICES.....	155
APPENDIX A.....	156
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	157
Household Tasks.....	157
Finances and Decision-making.....	157

	Page
Leisure and Relationship.....	158
APPENDIX B.....	160
CONSENT FORM.....	161
APPENDIX C.....	162
DEMOGRAPHICS FORM.....	163

Abstract

The meaning of gender, as reflected in role division in the home, was qualitatively examined in couples who were married for ten years or more and both worked outside the home. A social construction theory framework was applied to the construction of gender to discern the contingencies and interactions that inform gender meanings. Sixteen couples were conjointly interviewed regarding their role division in the domains of 1) housework and child-care, 2) financial management and decision-making, and 3) leisure and relationship. Grounded theory techniques guided the interview process and the data, derived from audio-tapes of the interviews, was presented descriptively. Couples were found to mostly conform to a contemporary model of role division where men assume primacy over work and financial matters, women assume primacy over the home, children and relationship concerns. Roles were influenced by primary socialization, ie., what had been learned in their families of origin; employment, ie., the relative amounts of time available for the home; and, changes in life circumstances, ie., work and children. Couples denied power imbalances in their marriages and adamantly stressed teamwork, fairness and equity in their roles. Although women took greater responsibility for negotiating changes in the home share, couples perceived gender to be incidental in their organization, citing balance and equity as driving their role division. Implications of contemporary role structures and the application of equity theory were discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Gender-making, defined as the meaning imbued in and derived from behavioral displays of male or female identities, is a dynamic, interactional process. Within the context of a long-term, dual-earner marriage, gender-making manifests in the negotiation and adaptation of labor division, decision-making, leisure activities and relationship maintenance. The purpose of this study is to examine how the meaning of gender both impacts and is affected by (as a circular process) the process of role division and/or sharing within the enduring, dual-earner marriage.

Social construction theory declares that "...social interpretation and the intersubjective influences of language, family, and culture" (Atwood, 1993, p.116) comprise meaning systems. Gender is the socially constructed categorization into one of two behavioral patterns associated with male and female identities (Lorber & Farrell, 1991). Gender is an omnipresent social construction ever in the making as individuals interact (West & Zimmerman, 1991). It is a socially constructed social status that underlies virtually all known societies

(Kessler & McKenna, 1978).

In the contemporary Western world an emergent duality appears when examining the objectified, stereotypical masculine and feminine genders. Yet, much of the research in gender differences allows that men and women are fundamentally more alike than different (Kessler & McKenna, 1978). The complex social and economic climate of today allows us to construct our meanings of gender in new ways with more freedom of choice, movement and even confusion where gender-related behaviors are concerned.

The current proliferation of dual-earner marriages provides an environment that both necessitates and provides options for the construction and re-making of gender. Working couples represent a cross-over, or merging, of the behaviorally construed gender dichotomy as both men and women take responsibility for the family's financial support. The couple's sharing of the traditionally male responsibility of economic provision will likely reverberate to other aspects of their lives together. Division and/or sharing of household labor, decision-making, leisure activities and relationship "work" may require or bring about a reconstruction of gender in an ongoing, dynamic process as a family develops.

Purpose of the Study

Gender-making, the meaning-making of gender, both impacts and is influenced by the process of negotiating and adapting roles within marriage. This study examines, in-depth, the evolving meanings of gender manifesting around the process of role division of long term, dual-earner couples. It addresses a) how working men and women are and are not using gender as an organizing principle in their family roles, b) the contingencies, over time, impacting family roles and the reconstruction of gender, and c) what it means to be the husband or wife, respectively, in marriages where gender cross-over is evident.

This gender-making process is investigated within the paradigm of qualitative inquiry. The data is descriptive, presenting the content of the interviews. Grounded theory techniques (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) are employed in the interview process to enhance the rigor of the study. Grounded theory research seeks to discover and generate theory from social investigation; theory that is grounded in the socially derived data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While the present study does not generate new theory, the use of grounded theory techniques contributes to the theoretical understanding of the gender-making process. Inherent assumptions concerning the social processes under study are derived from social construction

theory as it applies to knowledge and reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1982, 1985); to marriage (Berger & Kellner, 1970); and to gender (Kessler & McKenna, 1978; Lorber & Farrell, 1991).

The researcher's primary aim in this study is to provide insight for marriage and family therapists into the implications of the social construction of gender in marital interaction. The secondary aim is to exemplify a research agenda that seeks to expose gender-making as a culturally situated, mutable, interactional process. The choice of a qualitative, narrative-based design for the examination of social construction provides a mirror for the application of social construction in the clinical setting. An understanding of the processes that reflect gender meanings in marriage can have implications for the often ignored or potentially invisible gender-making in a therapeutic relationship.

Costa and Sorenson (1993) address the ethical implications for clinicians of intruding into therapy with gender issues not directly presented. They consider this a matter of choice but conclude that family therapists have an ethical responsibility to be aware of the current, culturally situated feminist issues as well as the therapist's own gender-based transference issues. For Pittman (1985) family therapists need a non-sexist approach, becoming "gender brokers" (p.29) who can help to dispel the

myths of gender and their constraints, "...opening up the full range of functional and emotional activities to people of both genders" (p.30). Whether the choice is made to explore gender in therapy or not, the marriage and family therapist can benefit from understanding the social construction process as it applies to gender and other realities both for oneself and for clients.

This study holds particular relevance for marriage and family counselors wishing to incorporate social construction theory and gender awareness into their therapy. It contributes to an understanding of how gender meanings evolve.

Theoretical Context

Because gender is a dynamic, socially conceived concept it is best examined within the theoretical framework of social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 1982). The social construction frameworks of marriage (Berger & Kellner, 1970) and gender (Kessler & McKenna, 1978; Lorber & Farrell, 1991) discourage global social comparisons that lose sight of the particular interactional processes that contribute to their making. Instead, marriage and the gender categories, i.e., their construction and maintenance, are examined within the context of particular social groups and micro-groups such as the family. Gender is a fundamental underpinning of all societies yet must be understood in a

historical, societal and situational context.

The Social Construction of Reality

Berger and Luckmann (1966) acknowledge the historical origins and development of their theory in the works of Marx, Scheler, Mannheim, Mead and Durkheim, and others. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus will begin with Berger and Luckmann's seminal work on the social construction of reality and knowledge. The fundamental principle of the sociology of knowledge is that human consciousness is the product of the evolving social being. The acquisition of knowledge originates in social context and is disseminated, maintained and transformed through social interaction. Social interaction involves both maintenance and reconstruction of social knowledge.

A central concept in the sociology of knowledge is "ideology". Ideology, defined as "...ideas serving as weapons for social interests" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.5), influences virtually all thought and is inherent in every social context. The everyday realities and common sense knowledge shared by a society's membership are the source of its essential meanings. Common language substantiates, provides order and gives meaning to individual and shared human experience; creating an assumed, taken for granted reality that is not lightly challenged. "Typifications", the typical interaction patterns that come with shared knowledge and ideologies, may characterize a

society. However, typifications are subject to the variability and flexibility arising from the exchange of the subjective meanings of the participants. Although we approach face-to-face interaction from unique positions that may be grounded in a shared reality, it is the interplay of our relative, subjective experiences of that reality that will manifest and conceivably bear influence.

Shared reality grows out of repeated patterns of action, or habituation, and grows into institutionalization; that is, the cultural embedment of behavioral patterns. Institutions are thus "...embodied in individual experience by means of roles" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.69) which, when internalized, "...represent the institutional order" (p.70). Role analysis is key to understanding how individuals subjectively experience and exemplify the objective meanings of their society and how identities are formed. The process of internalization and identification with "socially assigned typifications" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.84), or roles, is mediated by primary and secondary socialization.

Through primary socialization "...the individual's first world is constructed" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.125) as the "significant others" of childhood impart and exemplify social knowledge. There is no choosing of significant others for primary socialization; identification is limited to the options at hand representing the narrow

reality of the available possibilities. The internalization of one's primary socialization becomes firmly rooted in consciousness but, ultimately, is never complete in the ongoing internalization of society.

In secondary socialization the society's institutions are internalized with the adoption of specific roles and the achievement of the role-related knowledge that has foundations in the division of labor. The intractableness of primary socialization can present a problem for the imposition of new knowledge in secondary socialization, "...a problem of consistency between the original and new internalizations" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.129). Significant others play a major, although not exclusive, part in maintaining the individual's subjective reality and its central component, identity, throughout life. Conversation is the subtle conveyor "...that ongoingly maintains, modifies and reconstructs...subjective reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.140). A complex society presents a greater variety of objective realities and significant others. This leads to a "heterogeneity in the socializing personnel" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p.154) in competition for influence, obfuscating the socializing process with multiple options.

In summary of Berger and Luckmann's conception of the social construction of reality, there is a circular, dialectical process where humans are both the creators and

the created, the producers and the products of the societies that represent an objective reality. That objective knowledge is ever-susceptible to subjective interpretation. Identity is shaped by social processes and, once formed, is sustained, transformed or reconstructed by social interactions determined by social structure. Identities, in turn, influence the maintenance, transformation and restructuring of societies. Significant others play pivotal roles and language is the vehicle for reality construction and meaning. The social construction of knowledge, reality and self can only be understood from the foundation of the particular social context.

Gergen's (1982) use of the concept of reflexivity (for which he credits Alfred Shutz) must be added to Berger and Luckmann's delineation of the process of reality construction. Reflexivity is the consideration of past events such that the past can reassert itself in the present and, the possibility exists, for the past to be reconstituted by virtue of the present. Both the past and the present are co-constructors of both the present and the past in a complex, dialectical process.

This study examines the interplay of primary and secondary socialization in the gender-making process as roles and subjective meanings interact. Marriage provides an ideal setting for the examination of the contingencies and conversations that reconstruct typified gender

realities.

The Social Construction of Marriage

Berger and Kellner (1970) apply the social construction of reality to the institution of marriage on the microsocial level; that is, how marriage reflects social process for individuals in the context of a specific marriage. Marriage is viewed as a social configuration that gives order and meaning and helps to make sense of life. The meaning-making process is dependent on the society's rules for conduct, its role proscriptions within marriage, and the perceptions and interpretations of the married persons. The objective realities of marriage, defined by a particular social context, are subjectively experienced and conceivably reconstructed within each marriage.

Berger and Kellner (1970) consider marriage to be the most central "validating" (p.53) relationship in our society, requiring a "dramatic redefinition" of life as two histories merge. They further emphasize that in present-day society there is an alienation in the economic or public sphere that has led to the creation of a private sphere (home, family and friends) that plays the pivotal role in a person's self definition. Presently, it is a time of extreme demands and expectations within marriage.

Conversation is the vehicle for understanding and meaning-making, the material from which marriages are constructed (Berger & Kellner, 1970). As the objective

meanings of marriage for the individuals are subjectively played out through their interaction, a unique conversation evolves. Each person's reality is reconstructed as it interrelates with the reality of the other. What prior to marriage were considered the objective or typical pitfalls to be overcome within the marital arrangement becomes the unanticipated transformation of identity, "a new and ever-changing reality" (Berger & Kellner, 1970, p.59) resulting from secondary socialization.

Gender is a relational reality present in all heterosexual marriages. This study will examine the evolving marriage roles for their impact on the gender-making process.

The Social Construction of Gender

Lorber and Farrell (1991) assume a social structural position, based on social construction theory, for examining genders. Not gender, but genders are defined based on the historical situation combined with various social groups. Genders are products of context. Yet, it is a given that men and women remain distinguishable; that gender is fabricated in the social order as a social status; and that gender categories endure in the face of mutable sexual behaviors (Lorber & Farrell, 1991).

Kessler and McKenna (1978) agree, defining gender as the "...psychological, social and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness" (p.7). Gender is a "social

accomplishment" (p.22) and the construction of gender is a part of reality construction (p.162). They argue that the social and psychological dichotomies attributed to men and women grow out of the physical dichotomies; as long as the physical distinctions are emphasized the social and psychological distinctions naturally, however inaccurate, follow.

In this study the endurance and the mutability of genders will be questioned as gender cross-over manifests. How genders persist and resist in the face of shared roles inform the gender-making process in a marital context.

Summary

Social construction is the interaction of socio-cultural influences and a person's subjective perceptions and meanings of everyday life. Socialization results in typifications, or predictable patterns of behavior, that provide order and stability yet are subject to scrutiny and reformulation as primary and secondary socialization combine. The past informs the present while the present, through reflexivity, reconstructs the past. Just as the greater society and socializing influences bear on the social constructions of its membership, so do the meaning constructions of the members transform the society.

Gender is a social construction that no known human is without. The influence of gender is pervasive, manifesting

in every social encounter. Therefore, gender must be a pivotal factor in the marriage construction process as identities and roles combine in the making of new meaning systems. It is inevitable that gender will be reconstructed, and the process discernable, in marital interaction.

Definitions

Gender: The social and psychological delineations of male and female identities that grow out of the physical distinctions and become incorporated into social knowledge.

Gender cross-over: The merging or sharing of socially defined, gender related roles and behaviors by men and women.

Gender-making: The meanings of gender that infuse and grow out of the interactions between men and women; the construction and reconstruction of gender.

Primary socialization: The socializing influences of childhood, including the ideologies and relationships exemplified by one's social context and early caretakers.

Reflexivity: Understanding the present in light of the past as well as reconsidering the past in light of present knowledge.

Secondary socialization: The interplay of primary socialization and internalized roles, mediated by the cultural experiences and significant relationships of adulthood.

Social Construction: The dialectic of social knowledge as imparted by the agents of society and social knowledge as understood and interpreted by the society's members in everyday life; the continuous shaping of individuals by their social context and the concurrent influence of individuals on the evolution of their society.

Typifications: The repeated patterns of behavior that come with shared knowledge; the expected, culturally embedded behaviors associated with social categories, eg., roles or gender.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender related research proliferated in the 1970's. Deaux (1984), assuming a social psychology perspective, analyzed and classified the prior decade's research on sex and gender, finding three approaches: the examination of sex as a subject variable; the focus on individual differences in masculinity, femininity and androgyny; and sex as a social category. The latter approach most closely relates to the concept of gender by focusing on men's and women's conceptions of the categories. Much evidence is found to support the notion that "...sex serves as a social category, influencing judgements, explanations for performance, and expectations for behavior" (Deaux, 1984, p.113), revealing the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes.

This review will be less concerned with the reified or hotly debated conceptualizations of masculine and feminine traits but will emphasize gender as a social category and examine gender roles in the marital context. First, sex role socialization and the influences upon the social understandings of gender will be examined. Second, gender as sex roles and the resultant typifications will be addressed. Finally, current research on family roles and

the implications for gender will be explored.

Gender as Social Knowledge

The differences between the genders can be viewed through various lenses; including biology, socialization and social structure. Each perspective informs the social knowledge of gender, shaping the beliefs and expectations for gendered behavior. The impartation of gender knowledge begins early in life and continues throughout.

Differential Socialization

For social theorist Erving Goffman (1977) "Gender, not religion, is the opiate of the masses. In any case, we have here a remarkable organizational device" (p.315). Goffman finds the immutable, biologically based differences between the sexes to be inconsequential compared with the vast social consequences stemming from those differences. How the innate differences underlie social organization and how social institutions have secured the gender renderings is the process of "institutional reflexivity" (Goffman, 1977).

The process begins with the birth of an individual, the subsequent assignation to one of two sex classes (based on genitalia) and consequent labeling (boy-girl, male-female) that begins the "...sorting process whereby members of the two classes are subject to differential socialization" (Goffman, 1977, p.303). While gender is the complex "...sex-class-specific way of appearing, acting and feeling"

(Goffman, 1977, p.303), gender identity is the individual's sense of belonging and self appraisal based on the ideals of the sex class. A "genderism" (Goffman, 1977) is a "...sex-class linked individual behavioral practice" (p.305). These conceptions take form in the family of origin, the household, "...a socialization depot" (Goffman, 1977, p.314).

Using the example of a middle-class family where cross-sexed siblings are governed by the same parents in the same rooms, where equality of class and economics remain constant, the household becomes an "...ideal setting for role differentiation" (Goffman, 1977, p.314). The female will learn, here, that she is different from and subordinate to males; the male will learn (regardless of the family's social position) that he is different from and superordinate to females. Goffman states:

It is as if society planted a brother with sisters so women could from the beginning learn their place, and a sister with brothers so men could learn their place. Each sex becomes a training device for the other, a device that is brought right into the house; and what will serve to structure wider social life is thus given its shape and its impetus in a very small and very cozy circle. (Goffman, 1977, p.314-315)

This process represents but one example of institutional reflexivity where differential socialization is based on the presumed natural differences between the sex-classes and thus insures the production of those differences (Goffman, 1977). Goffman finds societal processes accountable to the core for manufacturing in every social environment and

encounter the setting for displays of gender.

Biological Differences

Antithetical to the argument for differential socialization is a currently popular understanding of the male/female differences as innately imbedded in our brains (Moir & Jessel, 1991) with differential organization and structure attributable to the influences of hormones. Based upon increasingly sophisticated methods of studying the brain, the reviewers of the researcher (Moir & Jessel, 1991) point to a "...startling sexual asymmetry" (p.5).

Moir & Jessel (1991) report findings of myriad distinctions attributable to different brains; revealing male superiority in spatial ability, hand-eye coordination and perception of abstract relationships; females exhibit superior sensitivity to sensory stimuli and are verbally more fluent. Female brain activity is diffuse, exhibiting a great deal of interchange between hemispheres, whereas male brain activity is specific, more localized. This accounts for, among other phenomena, the apparently superior ability of women to verbally express emotions that originate in the right hemisphere but flow easily to the left hemisphere where verbal ability is seated. Males do not exhibit such fluidity.

The researchers go on to associate the different brains with differing social behaviors, including aggression. Aggression is directly linked to the presence of the male

hormone, testosterone, both prenatally and subsequently. This connection leads to the male's greater, and the female's lesser, need to dominate and seek hierarchal ascendancy. Because of their differently wired brains, "his relationships are those of power and dominance; hers are those of interplay, complement, and association" (Moir & Jessel, 1991, p.101).

The reviewers conclude that the social dichotomies and labor divisions of men and women are the natural consequences of differently wired brains, in spite of feminist argument. Carol Tavris (1992), whose explicit premise is to dispel the notion of "...universal and unvarying...natures of men and women" (p.21) exposes the biases in the assessment and reporting of gender differences in the brain-sex research. She argues that as long as the focus remains on the biological as opposed to the circumstantial, on the inner psyche as opposed to the social structure, inequities will persist. The history of brain research shows evidence of new technology that has failed to eradicate the antiquated values and biases (Tavris, 1992).

After providing a compelling argument, Tavris (1992) concludes that although the data about brain-sex differences may be weak, they support the prevailing beliefs about gender, thus earning more credit than due. They, however, "...cannot account for the complexities of people's everyday behavior" (Tavris, 1992, p.54).

Cultural Feminism

Recent trends in feminist research that acknowledge the gender differences with a shift in valuational emphasis have gained notoriety, impacting the social reconstruction of gender knowledge. Carol Gilligan (1982) challenged accepted theories of psychological development based on the male model of separation and independence. Measuring female development, with inextricable ties to connection and care, by the patriarchal yardstick deems female development immature and inferior, overlooking the importance of the developmental process of half of the species (Gilligan, 1982).

Tavris (1992) describes the work of Gilligan and others who seek to "...overcome society's sexism by celebrating women's special qualities, women's ways, women's experiences" (p.59) as "cultural feminism". She warns that the cultural feminist paradigm perpetuates the polar opposition of the genders and may serve to keep women subjugated by virtue of their "specialness". Tavris (1992) applauds Gilligan for expanding the views of moral reasoning to include the ethic of care but exposes flaws in her research. Tavris also notes that attempts to replicate Gilligan's findings have repeatedly failed. She suggests that "woman's voice", although certainly evidenced as different from "man's voice", is not a function of inherent

gender differences but the result of the historical power inequities and different roles of men and women. She concludes that "...many (but not all) of the qualities associated with 'women's voices' prove to be qualities associated with women or men who are powerless" (Tavris, 1992, p.87).

Hare-Mustin (1987) expresses the same sentiment; that Gilligan's findings have not been corroborated; that her conclusions reinforce differential sex roles, obscuring the power differences; and that the popularity of her claims is explained by their support of the status quo, relieving society's members from the compunction leading to change (Hare-Mustin, 1987).

Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen (1990) explores the differences in conversational styles of men and women. She defines the feminine style, "rapport talk", as emanating from woman's unique world that seeks connection and consensus. The masculine style, "report talk", originates from the man's world of competition, of hierarchal superiority and status. Tannen (1990) finds the origins of the dichotomous styles, or "genderlects", not in biology but they "...grow out of the distinct kinds of relations women and men learn and practice as boys and girls growing up" (p.292). Instead of encouraging the duality, Tannen sees the advantage of men and women learning each other's styles, breaking out of their automatic ways toward more flexible

styles.

Tavris (1992) acknowledges Tannen's research as appealing in that it shows "...how women and men differ in their use of language, and it characterizes many familiar misunderstandings" (p.298). However, she observes that Tannen's approach overlooks the verified position that the variation in speaking styles "...often depend more on the gender of the person they are speaking with than on their own intrinsic 'conversational style'" (Tavris, 1992, p.299). Tavris argues, and provides support for, the view that women in positions of authority speak more like men and men in subordinate positions speak more like women. The different styles, then, have less to do with gender or even socialization but, again, reflect power imbalances (Tavris, 1992).

The differing conversations of men and women reflect their different worlds, the relations of gender. The interaction of male and female voices reveals the social knowledge of gender. The language can both support their historically relative positions, preserving the culture, or reconstruct the social relationships and, ultimately, society.

The ongoing debate over gender differences is not an academic controversy over the salience of either biology, psychology or sociology (each story leaves something amiss) but a dialectic of power, context and relationship (Tavris,

1992). The proclivities of science impact the manufacturing and understanding of gender categories, the social knowledge of genders. But, ultimately, genders define not what we "are" but what we "do", situationally and interactionally (West & Zimmerman, 1991).

Masculine and Feminine Sex Roles

What men and women do is largely comprised of roles that are differentiated by sexual category. The study of sex roles is central to the understanding of gender and family (Scanzoni & Fox, 1980). Scanzoni (1975) broadly refers to sex roles as "...differences among persons and groups that are the result of gender, i.e., differences based on ascribed characteristics" (p.20).

Sociology and psychology diverge in their respective foci for sex role research (Scanzoni, 1975). Whereas sociology is concerned with "...the norms, ideologies, values, and beliefs that are used to label, apply to, or define the two sexes" (Scanzoni, 1975, p.20), psychology is concerned with the behavioral aspects, including attitudes, traits, overt behaviors and interactions. Somewhere between the two schools of thought is a little studied process that links norms to behaviors, inspiring questions concerning the predictability of behaviors based on norms; the degree to which behaviors fail to conform to norms, and why; and, the circumstances that act to transform and create new norms

(Scanzoni, 1975). This discussion of sex role theory and research will address the aforementioned concerns in a family context: examining the normative ideologies, the growing deviations from normative behaviors and the conditions contributing to new sex role norms.

Traditional Sex Roles

Although much maligned in recent years, the work of Talcott Parsons (Parsons & Bales, 1955) represents the bedrock of theory of sex roles in family. Parsons viewed the family as an isolated, economic unit dependent on the earnings of the father. The man's role, based on his occupational status, was that of "instrumental leader". The man determined the standard of living and life style of the family. Woman's role, by virtue of the bearing and nurturing of children, was that of "expressive leader". The irrefragability of woman's reproductive role naturally confined her to the interior domain of family, forcing the man to negotiate the external functions of the family.

Parsons (Parsons & Bales, 1955) explicitly viewed the occupational role of the man as most important role in the family, insuring its survival. He did not see the early trends of women entering the labor force as a move toward symmetry. Instead he mostly saw working women as women without men (single, divorced, widowed). The differentiation of male instrumentality, representing technical and executive expertise and adaptive functions,

and female expressiveness, representing cultural expertise and integrative functions, formed the complementarity necessary for a healthy model of family (Parsons & Bales, 1955). The relative differentiation of male/female roles persists, according to Parsons, even when married women enter the labor force due to the superior income and economic status of men, and "Where this ceases to be true the repercussions on the family may be profound..." (Parsons & Bales, 1955, p.164).

Criticism of Parsons's functionalist view of family targets his view of career women as dysfunctional, undermining the health of family, and his failure to acknowledge the power differences between men and women while indirectly proffering status and importance on men (Hochschild, 1973). However, Parsons's concepts of instrumentality and expressiveness permeate the literature on sex roles, having become virtually synonymous with the traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity, and his model of sex role division in family was the benchmark for subsequent inquiry.

The traditional, functional family paradigm assumes a linear developmental process that focuses on the structure and stability of its narrow form, ignoring process and decrying change and deviation as unhealthy (Scanzoni, Polonko, Teachman & Thompson, 1989). Problems with the traditional paradigm include its failure to apprehend the

experiences of minorities and women, the lack of relevance as it applies to fewer and fewer households, a failure to acknowledge change and discontinuity in family development, and "...the functionalist notion of family qua institution, which misses the point that institutions are not handed down by metaphysical fiat; rather persons create, conform to, and change them" (Scanzoni et al., 1989, p.14).

Evolving Sex Roles

When Bernard (1982) and Scanzoni (1982) examine relationship trends of the 1960's and 1970's, the durability of the traditional family seems less assured than it did for Parsons in the 1950's. Both Bernard and Scanzoni view the alternative coupling and family configurations (including single parent and remarried families, couples lacking legal sanction, communal living and non-heterosexual unions) not as signifying the demise of family but as the evolution of family forms. The primary impetus for the revolution in family is seen as the ever-increasing trend of married women and mothers in the labor force (Bernard, 1982; Scanzoni, 1982).

Bernard (1982) describes the distinctive "his" and "her" experience of marriage as differentiated by roles, status, benefits and mental health. The ascendancy of sex role norms over behavioral reality may represent a crucial part of the process of gender-making in modern marriage where beliefs about behaviors are constructed, not

necessarily in a conscious or accurate way, but to maintain gender comfort within the social structure.

Bernard (1982) uses power in marriage as an example of this process, where the objective realities, the socially proscribed male/female roles, are so salient they eclipse subjective realities. Women who exert power in marriage may suffer guilt or punishment; at least they will be considered deviant. Consequently, in a study of the congruence between objective and subjective power in marriage, wives tended to report they were less powerful than the objective measures revealed, and men reported themselves more powerful (Bernard, 1982). The couples reported what "ought" to be based on expectations and acceptability, providing evidence for the intransigence of primary socialization and cultural norms.

Changes in marriage, as an institution, have historically been a function of technology, "...the way in which the society made its living" (Bernard, 1982, p.278). Bernard sees the increasing trend of working wives as among the most striking developments of the late 20th century. In spite of a "cultural lag", observed by sociologist W.F. Ogburn (Cited in Bernard, 1982, p.279) early in the century, where institutions such as marriage fail to keep pace with technological advances, Bernard suggests that the convergence of male/female roles equalizes the costs and rewards of the "his" and "her" marriage. Such convergence,

according to Bernard (1982), is characterized by role sharing where both men and women provide support for the family, care for the children and share in the housework.

Sexual Bargaining

Scanzoni (1982) stresses the importance of increased role interchangeability and concomitant "sexual bargaining" in the reconstruction of marriage roles. Citing the growing valuation of more equal or egalitarian marriages by both men and women and the documented increases in parenting by men, Scanzoni (1982) sees a trend that approaches, but falls short of, equal status for women. With increased education and success in the labor force, however, women's bargaining power inevitably grows and, as the provider role is increasingly shared, so, too, should role interchangeability in home related roles (Scanzoni, 1982).

In Scanzoni et al.'s (1989) nonfunctionalist view of family, couples achieve relative status through a bargaining where conflict is endemic. Gender defines the relative positions, making conflict unavoidable as the interests of the genders are negotiated. Conflict is necessarily initiated by the subordinate group, women, as "...it is rarely in the interests of the dominant group ever to disturb the status quo" (Scanzoni, 1982, p.32). Although both men and women show movement toward egalitarian preferences, women are outpacing men as it is women's individualistic achievements that are at stake (Scanzoni

et al., 1989). As our society allows and requires women to diverge from traditional patterns, more pressure is exerted on men to make changes. Conflict is the product of men's resistance to change in response to women's bargaining for change in the partnership of economic interdependence (Scanzoni et al., 1989).

Family Structure

Scanzoni et al. (1989) classify families on a continuum between the conventional and contemporary models based upon three factors: ideology, process power (decision-making) and labor division (market and home). Three partnership arrangements emerge from his classificatory system.

The head-complement partnership (HC), found at the conventional end of the spectrum, has a male head and female complement who is generally not in paid labor. The HC male subordinates family concerns to economic concerns and the HC female subordinates outside employment to family responsibilities. Decision-making must not interfere with the man's role as provider. Women in this arrangement may work at times and men may find themselves temporarily out of work but he maintains the head position, she the complement.

According to Scanzoni et al. (1989) the junior/senior partner arrangement (JSP) is replacing the HC arrangement as the most common in the United States. Both men and women are in paid labor but the woman's status is "junior" to the

man's "senior" status. However, men are more likely to engage in home related labor and should the woman's paid employment become more salient she may achieve senior status.

In the equal partner arrangement (EP) conventional norms are rejected and replaced by values that embrace caring and commitment over stability and predictability, stressing individualism and gender-role interchangeability. As the woman becomes more attached to career, she conceivably has more power to bargain with her mate over housework, childcare and geographic relocation.

Scanzoni et al. (1989) define partnership status as "...neither fixed nor unilinear" (p.79). They regard shifts between HC and JSP status as common when women enter and leave paid labor with the advent of children. Typically, they believe, couples adhere to a JSP pattern when first united, move to an HC pattern when children are born and back to JSP when children are grown. Giving up JSP status for childbirth, however, decreases status and bargaining power for women and subsequent re-entry into paid labor, because of the occupational penalties for discontinuous employment, does not appear to reinstate relationship status (Scanzoni et al., 1989).

According to Scanzoni et al. (1989), egalitarian women are minimizing the losses associated with bearing children by delaying childbirth (cultivating their labor force

involvement), having fewer children to minimize their absence from paid labor or by maintaining part-time employment instead of severing work ties completely. However, income and employment inequities for women, coupled with the benefits for men, act to reinforce and maintain traditional, patriarchal patterns (Scanzoni et al., 1989).

Bernard (1981) saw the changing roles for women in the 1960's and 1970's as usurping men's traditional, specialized role as the "good-provider". With the good-provider role came the identification of particular work endeavors with specific genders, a "...sexual 'territoriality'..." (Bernard, 1981, p.3). For men, providing had been synonymous with masculinity. Women's increased labor force participation revolutionized sex role division, adding to the burdens of the good-provider with "...increased demands...especially in the form of more emotional investment in family, more sharing of household responsibilities" (Bernard, 1981, p.8) without due appreciation. Even when ideologically prepared for role sharing, as many younger cohorts of men appeared to be, Bernard viewed the implementation as a struggle compared to deprogramming a cult member. The good-provider role was undermined, if not eradicated, by the prevailing economic and social trends; what remained unclear was the complexion of men's successive role.

A recent Time magazine cover story (Gibbs, 1993) expresses the frustrations of contemporary fatherhood as fathers receive mixed messages from both their workplace and from their wives. Asking for paternity leave is hazardous to their careers, yet pressure is on to become more fully involved in childcare. Mothers insist on greater involvement by fathers while concurrently defending and maintaining her ascendancy over the domestic domain. Mothers want more sensitive mates but fear the loss of their strength. Men want more family-accommodating careers yet the men at the top of their professions can't afford that luxury. Fathers, the article concludes, have not found equality in parenting. It appears that the difficulties for women seeking instrumental power in the economic realm are mirrored in men's quest for expressive power in the family.

The foregoing review underscores the importance of economic contingencies in the social construction of gender identities. It appears that recent decades have seen a construction boom that is reshaping the configuration of gender roles in the family context. It is not an orderly process, however, as changes for women do not predictably bring equivalent changes for men.

Gender Roles in the Household Context

From 1960 to 1990 the labor force participation rate for married women doubled, reaching 58% (U.S. Census Bureau,

1992a). The proportion of working mothers increased most with 59% of mothers of preschoolers working and 74% of mothers with school age children employed outside the home (U.S. Census Bureau, 1992a). By 1990, 70% of married couples with children were dual-earners. Married-couple families with three children or more dropped from 15% in 1970 to 6% of families in 1991 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1992b). Whether or not a cause-and-effect relationship exists between women's labor force participation and contemporary family constellations, as Scanzoni et al. (1989) suggest, family size is shrinking. Labor trends lend support to the apparent need for the renegotiation of household work.

Quantifying Household Labor

Utilizing survey data and diaries kept by participants, Berk (1985) examined labor division in 335 American households. Conceptualizing household labor along three dimensions- 1) the amount, 2) the allocation and 3) the responsibility "for" household work, Berk found that while all family members made significant contributions, women assumed most of the work and, largely, the responsibility for that work. Children, whether helpers or recipients, had the greatest impact on the volume of work and time spent in household production.

Work allocation, both within the home and between home and market endeavors, revealed a "gendered" allocation system where women's contributions to market time, while

eliciting assistance from men, did not bring about a substitution of effort in the home by the rest of the family. Berk concluded that the working wife's decreased availability may promote help from husband and children but only as a secondary source of labor; they remain more the benefactors than the producers of home labor. Unlike Scanzoni et al.'s (1989) system where the home share is more predictably bargained, based on the market share, Berk found a more complex exchange mediated by children and various role demands.

Families where husbands' home contributions were equivalent to wives, comprising 10% of the sample, had more and younger children, the parents were slightly younger and poorer and the wives worked full time (Berk, 1985). Homes with both preschool children and full-time working mothers constituted "labor-intensive" households where Berk believed fathers had little choice in their level of contribution. The sheer volume of home labor and economic demands informed the division of the home share, allowing less room for gendered patterns.

Berk (1985) sees a circular relationship between home and market forces that serves to excuse the lopsided division of labor in the home. Women's lower earnings from market labor renders her supreme household share legitimate. In turn, women's commitment to home and children assumedly precludes commitment to market labor, justifying lower

wages.

Berk views the household as a "gender factory" where the division of home and market labors results not only in the production "goods and services" but in the "...production of gender" (p.201). Berk concludes that a future "degendering" of home and market labors will be mediated by the "...intractability of the dominance and submission orchestrated around gender" (p.210). Equalizing labor force participation does not negate a long history of power inequities.

Over a ten year period, Douthitt (1989) found significant reductions in the overall amount of home related work among working wives. Both the presence of children under five and larger numbers of children increased home labor for women. Men's contributions to the home were largely a weekend phenomena. Time spent in childcare occupied a larger percentage of total home labor at the expense of meal preparation and house chores. Regardless of the wife's employment status, men showed increased percentages of time spent in childcare and meal preparation. However, men of employed wives did not spend more time with children than men whose wives were not employed. Douthitt concluded that while working couples showed a decrease in home related work, they devoted a greater portion of that time to children, revealing a shift in priorities.

Blair and Lichter (1991) argue that, to better understand gender roles in family, the segregation of tasks must be explored along with time spent in home related work. In their study of household labor division, utilizing data from a 1988 National Survey of Families and Households, the researchers found a high degree of sex segregation of tasks (Blair & Lichter, 1991). They found that women performed twice the household labor of men. Task segregation, while still remaining high, decreased with increased female education; long-term couples showed more segregation than new couples; female employment and relative increases in earnings acted to increase the male's hourly performance and decrease task segregation; and, the presence of children reinforced traditional sex segregation of tasks (Blair & Lichter, 1991). These researchers concluded that even when men contributed a larger proportion of time to home related work and embraced an egalitarian ideology, task segregation and gender role inequality persisted, mediated only slightly by women's increased earning power (Blair & Lichter, 1991).

While survey research taps a larger segment of the population, the statistics may oversimplify the processes studied. When Blair and Lichter (1991) reported that men averaged 14 hours a week in household labor, the standard deviation was ten, meaning most men spent anywhere from four to 24 hours a week working in the home. For women the average hours was 33 with a standard deviation of 17.

Averages may obscure or fall short of apprehending what is happening in families. Turning to qualitative research reveals more about the process of labor division in, albeit, fewer families.

Qualitative Views on Family Roles

Qualitative investigations provide a micro-view of life that reveals the every-day realities and interaction processes that guide behavior. Silberstein (1992) and Hochschild (1989) both examine role division in marriage for gender implications. Their findings illuminate the influences of primary and secondary socialization in the construction of gender roles within families.

Whereas Bernard (1982) considers the middle class as the "advance guard", and the working class as the "rear guard", in changing sex role patterns, Silberstein (1992) views the dual-career marriage, where educational attainments and job commitment for both men and women remains high, as holding "...center stage in the drama of changing gender roles" (p.2). Silberstein interviewed, individually, 20 dual-career couples with children, to examine the politics of gender in marriages where work and family roles collide.

Silberstein (1992) explored the transgenerational continuities and discontinuities in gender roles. Most of the participants grew up in traditional, one-career households. In spite of changing career patterns, the

primacy of careers for men and the primacy of family for women held across generations. Men in the study, however, believed they were giving more attention to childcare than their fathers, expressing a need to compensate for the dearth of fathering they had received. For most of the men, transgenerational gains in childcare outweighed gains in housework, seen as less rewarding and undermining their masculinity.

A larger generation gap was reported between women and their mothers with the addition of careers. The majority of women considered the costs of full-time home-making, including the dependency and insecurity of not being able to provide, greater than the benefits home-making could provide; that is, more leisure and less stress.

What changed between generations was that men ceased to be "sole providers" and became somewhat more involved in family life; women ceased to be full-time mothers and homemakers, opting for careers. As priorities, however, the importance of work roles for men and family roles for women endured.

Expectations for home and career begin in the family of origin; subsequent experiences are "...layered on rather than replace prior expectations" (Silberstein, 1992, p.34). Individuals bring expectations about both their own and their spouse's role into marriage; the experience of the marriage can lead to the coexistence of dissonant beliefs.

When the expectation of two careers was in place from the outset of marriage it was "...not synonymous with an expectation of two equal careers" (Silberstien, 1992, p.40.). One quarter of the participants entered marriage with the expectation of equal careers; the rest assumed the woman's career was neither psychologically nor financially as necessary as the man's; men needed to be more successful. Even when women expected to be a primary economic contributor, the expectation of primacy over the home persisted. Many women reflected the need to be a "superwoman", unwilling to give up their influence over the domestic and childrearing domains. Silberstein (1992) speculated that the unrealistic desire for supremacy in the home, besides a reflection of mens' resistance and lack of involvement, could be womens' compensatory reaction to their threatened feminine role. Egalitarian couples who shared a great deal of the housework still retained the wife as "chief executive". She was both the initiator and enforcer of changes in labor division with increased career demands and the advent of parenting.

Although both men and women reported that the arrival of children led to the greatest conflict between work and home related roles, two-thirds of the women accommodated careers to fit family needs. Both genders considered similar accommodations of the man's salient career as unfeasible. For some couples, those with more traditional

arrangements in the home, the arrival of children "propelled" them toward more egalitarian practices. Adding childrearing to the woman's assumed domestic role became an over-burden. For other couples, children led to a more traditional, gender segregated division of the home as women accommodated their careers to allow for more of the home share.

Regardless of ideology, sex-linked segregation of tasks endured with women assuming the bulk of domestic tasks (meals, housework and childcare) and men tending to repairs, cars and garage. Many men considered their giving permission to hire domestic help as their contribution to the housework. One-third of the women were conflicted about hiring help for "their work" and only women expressed guilt over the decreased cleanliness of their homes.

Silberstein (1992) concludes the "...asymmetrical foray into the opposite gender's domain..." (Silberstein, 1992, p.159) is explained by power dynamics: Women gain power moving into the male's economic domain whereas men lose status and suffer greater threats to their identities by assuming domestic roles. Women's success becomes the sum of home and career accomplishments (providing a back-up role should careers fall short); men still rely, perceiving less choice than women, on career for self definition (Silberstein, 1992). It is the clash between expectations and ideologies on one side and economic and behavioral

