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The women discussed in this chapter entered the University of Michigan in 1963 and graduated in 1967; that is, they are quintessential members of that turbulent cohort called the 1960s generation. Like many other colleges and universities, the University of Michigan used social science research methods to try to understand the needs and behavior of its student body in those years. This effort resulted in the Michigan Student Study (Gurin, 1971), which formed the basis for the Role Innovators Study (Tangri, 1969, 1972, 1974), which in turn grew into the Women's Life Paths Study (Tangri and Jenkins, 1986; Ruggiero and Weston, 1988).

The Michigan Student Study gathered extensive interview and questionnaire data on subjects' relationships with family, friends, faculty, and classmates, on their college activities, experiences, and attitudes, and on their future plans, including plans for careers and families. Pursuing her interest in women choosing role-innovative occupations, Sandra Tangri collected additional personality and questionnaire data on a stratified random sample of women from the Michigan Student Study. The first wave of these data (the Role Innovators Study) was collected during the spring of 1967 from 200 graduating seniors. Three years later, 152 of the women were interviewed by telephone or returned a mailed questionnaire. The most recent data were gathered by questionnaire from 117 women in 1981, when

Note: We want to thank Jo Ruggiero and Jan Hitchcock for their collaborative work on the 1981 data collection and Karen Chandler and Kathy MacDonald for extensive coding of open-ended data. This research has been supported by National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) grant no. 5-F1-MH-30,493-03, U.S. Department of Labor grant no. 91-34-71-02, funds from the Urban Institute to Sandra S. Tangri, grants from the Henry A. Murray Research Center of Radcliffe College to Jo Ruggiero and Sharon Rae Jenkins, funds from Providence College to Jo Ruggiero, funds from the University of California at Santa Cruz to Sharon Rae Jenkins, funds from Harvard University to Jan Hitchcock, and by funds from the Mobil Foundation granted to Radcliffe College and awarded to Sharon Rae Jenkins. The 1967 and 1970 data sets are archived at the Henry A. Murray Research Center, Radcliffe College, and are available for secondary analysis by qualified researchers.
they were in their middle thirties. For this follow-up, Tangri was joined by a
research team consisting of Jan Hitchcock, Sharon Rae Jenkins, and Jo
Ruggiero and assisted by Karen Chandler.

The initial focus (the Role Innovators Study) was on finding predictors of
nontraditional occupational choice by looking at family background,
personality, and experiences in college that could explain why some women
chose to go into fields that were then predominantly occupied by men. The
next focus was on the question of whether and how these occupational
choices were pursued. The researchers looked broadly at the full range of
circumstances of the women's lives, as well as at specific work and educational
experiences. We report here on the complex ways in which these women have
organized their lives, on their satisfactions and dissatisfactions, and on how
they view their experiences and the contexts shaping those experiences.

In this chapter, we review the history and context of the study, summa-
riage and integrate our quantitative findings, and present narrative portraits
of four women who represent four different life paths delineated in the study:
continuous Role Innovation, continuous Traditionality, movement toward
Role Innovation, and movement toward Traditionality. Finally, we discuss two
emergent issues raised by a number of our women: women's exodus from
teaching careers, and new complications in relationships among women.

The Historical Context

The years 1967 to 1981 saw dramatic shifts in demographic trends affecting
women's life patterns. These trends include reduced and delayed childbirth,
raising divorce rate, increased single parenting by women, and in-
creased women's labor-force participation (Gerson, Alpert, and Richardson,
1984). The "sex map of the occupational world" (Bird, 1968) started shifting,
to a significant degree, toward gender desegregation in politics and in the
professions.

In 1967, there was one woman in the U.S. Senate and there were eleven
in the House of Representatives. By 1981, the numbers had risen to two and
twenty, respectively. In 1967, only one of the mayors of major metropolises
was a woman; in 1981, 8.4 percent of these mayors were women. The first
women elected state governors in their own right (rather than as governors'
widows) began to take office during the 1970s and the first woman was
appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1981. Thus, more women not only
were working—and working more of their lives—but also were entering a
greater variety of fields (specifically, fields that had long been the nearly
exclusive provinces of men). National data show dramatic increases in the
proportions of women going into the physical sciences, life sciences, and
social sciences at the baccalaureate level (National Science Foundation, 1984)
and into dentistry, medicine, and law (National Center for Educational
Statistics, 1980, 1987). These trends were not temporary: the percentage of
women in these fields has continued to grow.

The University of Michigan Class of 1967

The University Context

The University of Michigan is a land-grant college conforming to the "mul-
tiversity" concept of public higher education in the United States. Even in the
early 1960s it was large (25,000 to 30,000 enrollment), recruiting students
both nationally and internationally and boasting many renowned graduate
programs and professional schools (still very sex-segregated), as well as a
strongly research-oriented faculty. It was often referred to as the "Harvard of
the Midwest."

While there, the class of 1967 witnessed teach-ins on the Vietnam war
and the resurgence of political consciousness that swept American campuses
during that time. Issues of population growth, environmental degradation,
free speech, and self-determination for students were discussed in the stu-
dent paper the Michigan Daily, the coffeehouses and the "quad." But there was
not much evidence of change in the traditional expectations associated with
sex roles. Fraternities and sororities were strong on campus. It was still men's
prerogative to initiate dating. No women were visible in campus politics. In
fact, Matina Horner's research (1972) on women's motives for avoiding suc-
cess was conducted on this campus in the mid 1960s. There was a contradic-
tion between the pressure for achievement in the sciences (for both sexes, a
pressure induced by the Sputnik I launching in 1957) and the pressure for
women to be "feminine" (that is, not competent in "male"—scientific—fields).
Yet the campus activism of this time was one of the roots of the modern
women's movement: after the Democratic convention of 1968, held a little
over a year after this cohort graduated, activist women who had worked for
civil rights and against the Vietnam war took up their own cause as their male
counterparts continued to relegate them to coffee-making duty.

The Women's Life Paths Study

It was in this context that Theodore Newcomb and Gerald Gurin began the
Michigan Student Study (Gurin, 1971), a broad study of young-adult develop-
ment at the college, with a strong focus on the sources of student protest. It
followed two cohorts of entering students through their four years at the
university. The study provided a wealth of information about these students,
including their responses in their senior year to a questionnaire item asking
what occupations they intended to enter. This information provided the basis
for stratification of our sample.

Students' responses to this question were coded for sex ratios in those
occupations at the time. Of the 350 women from the class of 1967 who
participated in the Michigan Student Study, 80 percent wanted to go into
Traditional female occupations (those in which half or more of the workers
were women), 10 percent wanted to go into Moderate occupations (in which
30 to 50 percent of the workers were women), and 10 percent wanted Role-
Innovative occupations (in which fewer than 30 percent of the workers were
women). For her doctoral dissertation on the determinants of Role-Innovative occupational choices, Tangri (1969, 1972) selected a stratified random sample of 200 women to begin the Role Innovators Study. Of these 200 women, one-third were classified as Role Innovators, one-third were Moderates, and one-third were Traditions. (These included all of the Role Innovators, all of the Moderates, and a random sample of the Traditions.)

Shortly before graduation, these women were asked in a group testing session to provide some additional information. Most important, they wrote brief stories in response to five written Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) cues (the same ones that Horner used), such as "Carol is looking into her microscope." The resulting stories were scored, by established methods, for fear of success (Horner, 1972) and need for achievement (Jenkins, 1987b). The request for a description of "the kind of person you want to marry" received open-ended descriptions which were scored for content-analytical measures of a woman's expectation that her husband's life or her own would involve effortful responses to challenges or would be more concerned with security. These measures were used to determine whether the women were interested in achievement for themselves or were displacing their achievement concerns onto their hypothetical future husbands. This study of women's occupational aspirations became the Women's Life Paths Study. Information about the women's backgrounds (parents' education; employment; attitudes; family relationships), occupational decision making, college experience (friends, faculty, classes, extracurricular activities), and plans for families, careers, and further education had been gathered in 1967 by the Michigan Student Study. Information about graduate education, jobs, and family formation was gathered in 1970, through a mailed questionnaire and interviews, from 152 of the original sample (Tangri, 1974). In 1981, through a mailed questionnaire returned by 117 of the same women (Tangri and Jenkins, 1986), we brought the all information about education, work, and family up-to-date. Some issues were revisited. Perceptions of parents were asked about in 1967 and 1970 (to explore issues of identification with parents). Strength of commitment to the labor force was asked about in 1967, 1970, and 1981. Story protocols scored for motivation were collected in 1967 and 1981. Anticipation and then experience of conflict between marriage or children and having a career was asked about in all three years (with the question "Do you feel any conflict between marriage and career?"), as were hopes and aspirations for the future. Career commitment in 1967 and 1970 was measured by combining responses to three questions about whether the respondent planned to work after getting married, whether she planned to work after having children, and when she would return to work after having children. Career outcomes in 1981 have been evaluated in a variety of ways—as role innovation (Tangri and Jenkins, 1986), as work involvement (Ruggiero and Weston, 1988), as labor-force participation (Jenkins, 1987a), as motive-congenial, motive-arousing, or not motive-relevant (Jenkins, 1987b), and in terms of specific careers (Jenkins, 1989). In this way, longitudinal research allows us to follow the development of women in different careers.

Family Background and Personality

The women in this sample were born around the end of World War II and represent the leading edge of the baby boom. Almost half were eldest or only children, and most of their parents probably experienced the Depression as teenagers and young adults; even parents from economically privileged families would have been aware of the stress on their communities and on the nation. The war years had brought the parents new stresses; many of them (and many of the sample's other relatives) probably served in the armed forces and supporting services. The sample's mothers and aunts had been swept into the labor force in the resulting economic and patriotic boom and provided new models of women employed in nontraditional roles. Even when they wished to continue working, many of the same women then found themselves pushed out of the labor force by public pressure and propaganda when the servicemen returned. It was among them that Betty Friedan first diagnosed "the problem that has no name" (Friedan, 1963); it was about them that Marilyn French (1977) wrote The Women's Room.

Although the University of Michigan is a public institution, the sample was economically privileged. Most of the women's fathers and one-quarter of their mothers had completed college; another one-quarter of the mothers had at least some college education. One-third of the fathers and 10 percent of the mothers had advanced or professional degrees. About 40 percent of the mothers had been employed for more than five years since marriage. In 1967, 86 percent of the families had total annual incomes of more than $10,000, and about 40 percent made more than $20,000 per year (the median family income at the time was $7,933).

The Women as College Seniors

Compared to the Traditional, the Role Innovators were reared with higher family incomes, better-educated parents, and mothers who were employed longer and in more role-innovative jobs (Tangri, 1969). The women whose mothers were employed longer rated their own future careers as more important when they were college seniors, and they planned more often to return to work after having had their own children, aspired to higher degrees, and were more willing to assert their career intentions with prospective husbands. Their taking these positions predicted greater labor-force participation on their part in the years 1967-1981 (Jenkins, 1987a).

Although cross-sex parental identification had been hypothesized to predict role innovation, the findings suggested a more complex picture. Role-innovative daughters did see themselves as more like their fathers than
their mothers or like neither parent, but they described closer relationships with their mothers than with their fathers, despite their feeling that their mothers did not understand them and disagreed with them on their college goals. These findings suggest substantial independence from both parents, with the Role Innovator feeling warmly toward her mother, with whom she disagrees, and seeing herself as similar to her father (perhaps only because of a shared work orientation). Among the Role Innovators, however, those whose mothers had more education saw themselves as more like their mothers than their fathers, even though they still disagreed with their mothers on college goals and felt that their mothers did not understand them well. Role-innovative daughters of less educated parents showed more psychological distance from both parents but were not necessarily more conflicted. For most of these women, role-innovative aspirations would have represented upward socioeconomic mobility.

The characteristics that most strongly differentiated Role Innovators from Traditionalists had to do with personality and motivation. The Role Innovators were more autonomous and individualistic and were motivated by the desire to do their very best in their future careers. They also expressed more doubts about their ability to succeed and about identity, findings that reflect the fact that the academic choices they made were more difficult and more socially ambiguous. Traditionalists were more likely to displace their achievement concerns onto their hypothetical future husbands and were more likely to choose their occupations because they wanted to work with people, felt confident of their ability to do the work, and thought that these careers would not interfere with running a household but would promise a secure future.

Despite the relatively privileged nature of the sample, almost half the women worked for pay during college, often more than ten hours per week. The more hours they worked, the greater their labor-force participation in the fourteen years after graduation (Jenkins, 1987a).

Occupational choice was not easy for this cohort, which had grown up with the restless mothers described in Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and did not yet have the role models that emerged during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Two-thirds changed their prospective occupational choices during college, and half of these women reported having experienced a problem or crisis over occupational decisions. Many of these women (40 percent) were still very concerned as seniors with vocational decisions.

Concurrently at this university, Horner (1972) was developing her measure of the motive to avoid success, and this measure was included in the Role Innovators study. The amount of “fear of success” imagery seen in this study was comparable to that seen in Horner’s own, but Role Innovators and Traditionalists did not differ in their levels of “fear of success.” Neither was there any behavioral evidence that Role Innovators were rejected by men: Role Innovators and Traditionalists did not differ in the number of romantic relationships with men that they listed among their ten closest friendships, and the Role Innovators listed more nonromantic friendships with men, which may reflect their larger number of male classmates.

Because the Michigan Student Study included most members of the class of 1967 of both sexes, it was often possible to obtain the actual responses of our subjects’ closest friends. For 114 of the women in our sample, at least one of the top three close friends listed had also provided data for the Michigan Student Study. Traditionalists had more men friends who said they would disapprove of their wives’ having careers, or who saw a wife’s career either as meeting her obligation to use her education or as allowing her to avoid boredom or other negative consequences of not working. Role Innovator’s men friends, by contrast, supported a wife’s career because of the attractions or benefits it would have for her. A Role Innovator was also more likely to have a steady, serious relationship with a teaching fellow or a laboratory assistant in her own field.

The women friends of Role Innovators were not necessarily Role Innovators themselves, but they did give greater importance to having a career themselves after college than the women friends of Traditionalists did. Role Innovators also gave greater importance than Traditionalists did to the part played by college friends in choice of occupation. Overall, Tangri (1969) found surprisingly little support for the idea that college peers provided social support for the women’s role innovation. The Role Innovators themselves felt that only their parents had influenced their occupational choices and had done so significantly more than university faculty members, advisers, counselors, or friends. Faculty members were important, however, in the selection of the first academic major and may have had an indirect effect on choice of occupation.

There is also substantial integrity within each group in how work and family priorities have been organized. Women who had role-innovative aspirations in 1967 also tended to want to marry later and have fewer and later children than the other women, and they usually did so. They also had stronger commitments to work and career advancement, and they reported more conflict over wanting both marriage and a career. The combination of stronger work commitment, greater anticipated conflict, and longer postponement of family formation constitutes a reasonably functional constellation of values. Women who were Traditionalists as seniors chose their careers sooner in their lives, for altruistic and affiliative reasons and for security, but they also found staying home once children were born more attractive. They expected to live both for and through others and to rely heavily on the stimulation provided by husbands’ life challenges. Role Innovators, by contrast, planned to rely on their own efforts for their own satisfaction (Tangri, 1969).

The Women in their Middle Twenties

Between 1967 and 1970, most of these women shifted away from work, particularly from role-innovative work, as they started their families, pursued
graduate training, or worked in traditional fields that they would later abandon. Nevertheless, their aspirations in 1970 predicted that there would be a shift back into the labor force. There was also a smaller number of women (about one-fifth of the sample) who moved in the opposite direction, doing more role-innovative work than they had aspired to as seniors.

The women's specific occupational choices were still changing three years after graduation. About one-third said that their aspirations had been vague in college, and a few more (40 percent) said that they had changed fields since graduating or planned to change fields soon. Half of the women said that they were doing what they had aspired to do as seniors. Some would change their minds in the next ten years, but most would not.

In 1970, half of the women in the sample were employed full-time. Slightly over one-fifth were full-time homemakers, one-sixth were full-time students, and fewer than one-tenth were employed part-time. Many were part-time students, either in degree programs or in advanced courses. Only one-quarter reported no further schooling by 1970; about one-third had at least some graduate school experience, and another third had taken at least some professional or business school courses. The full-time students, especially the doctoral students, were mostly Role Innovators. The Traditionalists were mostly working full-time, but nearly one-third of the Traditionalists had already earned master's degrees.

By 1970, 61 percent of the women in the sample were married, and 15 percent had children. Women who were Role Innovators in 1967 were less likely to have married by 1970, and married women tended to become more Traditional. In general, the two-thirds of the sample who had married seemed to have chosen husbands whose attitudes matched their own aspirations, with Role Innovators more likely to have supportive than unsupportive husbands and more willing to assert their career intentions with them in either case. The Role Innovators, who had agreed with the statement “I want and intend to have a career; my husband will have to take that for granted and adjust accordingly,” subsequently experienced greater labor-force participation through 1981 (Jenkins, 1987a). Women with supportive husbands reported less conflict between marriage and a career. Women whose husbands disapproved of their having careers were more likely to reject career goals entirely, in favor of homemaking.

Women who became more Traditional between 1967 and 1970 were more likely to be married and especially to have children and were more likely to have had lower career commitment in 1967. They had been less interested in 1967 in “being famous” someday, had planned a later rather than a rapid return to work after having children, and had displaced their achievement interests onto their hypothetical future husbands, describing the men they wanted to marry as leading exciting, challenging lives. Their descriptions, in 1970, of their future plans indicated that many of these women expected to return to role-innovative or moderate careers; others, traditionally employed, were considering more innovative career changes.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Their Expectations as Seniors</th>
<th>What They Had Done by 1981</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not want to marry</td>
<td>&lt;1% Had not married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to marry within 2 years</td>
<td>69% Married within 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to marry in 3–10 years</td>
<td>30% Married in 3–10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not want children</td>
<td>12% Had no children yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted 2 children</td>
<td>24% Had 2 children (including husband’s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted more than 2 children</td>
<td>62% Had more than 2 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children wanted</td>
<td>3.5 Number of children had 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted children within 4 years</td>
<td>44% Had children within 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted children after ≥4 years</td>
<td>43% Had children after ≥4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to stop at B.A.</td>
<td>59% Stopped at B.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to get master's degree</td>
<td>27% Got master's degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to get Ph.D. or professional degree</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to have a career</td>
<td>46% Spent no more than one year out of labor force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt family-career conflict</td>
<td>25% Felt family-career conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Innovators</td>
<td>32% Role Innovators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderates</td>
<td>32% Moderates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditionalists</td>
<td>36% Traditionalists (including full-time homemakers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Women in Their Middle Thirties

By 1981, the reversal anticipated in 1970 was nearly complete. Three-fourths of the women were employed (most of them full-time), and only one-fifth were not employed nor looking for jobs. The number of Role Innovators had increased by 25 percent over 1967 (from 37 to 46), the number of Moderates had decreased 42 percent (from 38 to 22), and the number of Traditionalists had increased by 17 percent (from 41 to 49) (see Table 11.1). Over half the sample's most recent jobs (whether or not the women were currently employed) were in role-innovative occupations.

Nevertheless, within these general trends there are significant continuities at the individual level. The majority of the sample (61 percent) was as role-innovative in 1981 as in 1967. Despite rather dramatic detours between 1967 and 1970, or between 1970 and 1981, the longer span shows greater continuity, particularly on the occupational dimension.

In education, these women far exceeded the goals they had stated as seniors in college, even though a few (10 percent) did not earn the degrees they had planned to earn. Only one-quarter of the women stopped with the bachelor's degree, as they had planned to do, and three-fifths of the higher degrees were earned by women who had originally wanted less.
The University of Michigan Class of 1967

Related to the decrease from desired to actual family size and to the increase in labor-force attachment was the increase in the number of women who felt that combining marriage and a career, or children and a career, created conflicts for them. The number reporting conflict rose, from one-fifth of the sample in 1967 to one-third in 1970 to one-half in 1981. Conflict increased the most for married women and for women with children. Women who became more Role-Innovative from 1967 to 1981 reported the least conflict (Tangri and Jenkins, 1987).

Asked to explain their feelings about marriage-career conflict, 18 percent reported that they already had both and were either managing or not feeling conflict. Another 18 percent said that they had chosen a family over a career, and 13 percent said that they had chosen a career over a family. Each of the following kinds of conflicts was described by 10 to 15 percent: conflicting time demands, conflicts between a couple's dual careers, and conflicts related to the demands of the husband's career on his wife, the husband's or partner's support, and the husband's or partner's resistance.

Several women cited their own perfectionism, either at home or at work, as a source of conflict. Underlying a number of the women's responses to questions about conflict between a career and a family was a sense of the difficulty of reconciling high performance standards in both areas with the real limitations imposed by finite time and energy.

For some women, this difficulty was felt as an unresolvable conflict, in which the choice of work was seen as selfish and the choice to meet children's needs was expressed with great moral conviction: "When one creates a child, that child deserves love and attention. A career robs the child of much of that love and attention due to lack of time. . . . I feel my first responsibility is to my child, not work or study. Any work or study I do must be the least destructive to mothering."

Others were able to reconcile this opposition by seeing connections between these roles and their own well-being (including their capacity to perform in several roles concurrently) and benefits for the well-being of family members, including children.

A high school administrator married to a teacher for eleven years said that she experienced no marriage-career conflict: "It makes me a whole person and a good role model for my child." Being a mother, she said, was "even more work and more rewarding than I thought," and it changed her feelings about working: "I've got to compromise. Work is no longer my priority. I have to leave school at a decent time."

A college professor with two children, married to a lawyer for ten years, wrote, "A working mother is always in a dilemma: Are you doing enough as a mother and professional? . . . I am a perfectionist and very demanding and therefore experience a lot of guilt. However, the guilt has greatly reduced this year!" Asked how being a mother had changed her feelings about work, she said, "I appreciate my job even more — when there
are pressures of mothering, the job is a release, and vice versa! It is also a juggling act, and my husband is a great help."

A part-time newspaper reporter with two children, married for thirteen years to a business executive, said, "The contrasts of raising and dealing with children and handling job challenges are mentally healthy for me. Each side gives me perspectives on the other."

**Portraits of Continuity and Change**

We would like now to flesh out this picture, already presented in numerical terms, with the self-descriptions offered by the women as they answered questions about various aspects of their lives. We offer four self-portraits, which we feel capture the dominant characteristics of the four groups of women in this study: those who were Role Innovators throughout, those who were Traditionalists throughout, those who became more Role-Innovative over the course of the study, and those who became more Traditional. The names have been changed.

**Ann, a Role Innovator Throughout**

Ann worked without interruption over the course of the study, was married, and has one child. She changed careers three times, but all of them were Role Innovative. In her senior year, she wanted to be a college professor. In 1970, she was working full-time as a computer programmer, and then she advanced into systems design. In the early 1970s she changed again and became a lawyer. By 1981, she had advanced to senior attorney for a computer corporation. Looking back, she says that she changed careers because her skills are better suited to the corporate environment and because she wanted to reduce stress and her working hours. She feels that this has been a bit of a compromise, which she made "in order to fulfill my job as a mother and to enjoy my daughter." Her major satisfaction is that "people are appreciative of my performance, [and] the job makes good use of my training and abilities." Nevertheless, she would like more "challenge and responsibility" and expects soon to have "a somewhat more responsible job, which may involve longer hours and more stress." She has been helped in getting what she wants out of working by her "intelligence [and] willingness to work hard" and hindered by her "inability to be 'assertive' enough."

Her first marriage, of eleven years, ended in 1979, two years before the last follow-up. She has been involved with a computer scientist for the last three years, and they have a daughter. He is "a good father," but he and Ann are not getting along very well right now. The relationship is important to her because he's the "father of my daughter, he's caring, and he needs my help." His major activities are "computer science, sailing, cars, and life crises." She feels conflict between her relationship and her career: "Both require a great deal of energy and mine is often limited; my partner sometimes resents my career achievements." She says he is ambivalent about her working because he "likes the income and my independence; but sometimes he feels threatened or envious of my success. He likes me to handle the household and day care." She is not very satisfied with his participation in household chores.

Children and career do conflict, she says, because there is "only so much energy and time to devote to either, but, overall, having a career is necessary for me in many ways, even though I love my daughter more than anything." Mothering has changed her feelings about work: "I cannot become involved in a job with a great deal of travel, stress, or more than forty hours per week, and I do not want to." Looking back at her life so far, she says that she wishes she had "demanded more from those around me."

**Barbara, a Traditional Throughout**

Barbara has concentrated on her family but has also worked part-time fairly steadily. As a senior, she wanted to be a physical therapist, and she has continued taking courses in this and related areas since 1967. She says that having a career was important to her, but this career was a bit of a compromise. She would have preferred to study medicine or fine arts, but these fields conflicted with her family responsibilities, required too much additional schooling, or met with objections or discouragement from others.

Three years after graduating, she was working full-time in her field. In 1967, she had wanted and intended to have a career and expected her future husband to adjust. Looking back, in 1981, she said that her goals back then were "to gain a supervisory position as a physical therapist in a large hospital rehabilitation facility," but by 1981 she preferred "to work independently and perhaps to teach" because of "my own maturity, an increase in my own self-confidence." She interrupted her career in 1972, when her first child was born, and returned to work part-time two years later.

In 1981, she found satisfaction in the chance to "observe patients' improvement with treatment" but was dissatisfied with her lack of control over her own patient load. She said that her most recent job had involved some compromise because of "my children's activities." She was hindered in getting what she wants out of working by "other involvements—children, and my current desire to work in various volunteer activities."

Barbara has been married for fourteen years to a businessman and has two children. Regarding marriage-career conflict, she said, "My husband generally supports my work. I feel a need to devote time to my children and husband at this time." Her husband likes the idea of her working because "he feels I am happier/more stimulated when I am working. We have enjoyed the extra money." She is fairly satisfied with others' participation in household chores; the division of labor in the home is fairly sex-stereotypical (she does most of the child care, and her husband takes care of most of the repairs).

Mothering has changed her feelings about working; "I feel it is difficult to divide time between the two. My work or my children suffer depending on
which I emphasize most—when [I was] working 45 hours a week, children had less attention. Now work is not as good because children are my priority." Children and career conflict: "I feel to be really good in a career, one must devote full time to it."

In retrospect, she "would prefer to have attained an advanced degree immediately following my B.S. — perhaps to have gone to medical school." Looking ahead, she says: "I would like my husband to attain the degree of success to which he aspires. I plan to devote much of the next several years to raising my children—and being active in my community. Once the children are older, I wish to pursue my career."

Carol, Who Became More Traditional

Carol has focused on her family to the exclusion of work. As a senior and a Moderate in 1967, she wanted to be a high school history teacher. She expected to stop with the B.A. degree but said that a career was important to her and stated both career and family goals as part of her future life. In 1970, she was teaching full-time. She wanted to have a career and expected her husband to adjust. Nevertheless, she left the labor force in that year to have the first of her three children. In 1981, she said that she would not return to teaching but said, "I haven't the slightest idea what I want to do yet."

She has been married for thirteen years to a doctor who has a major administrative position in his hospital and who "feels that anything that would make me happy is OK with him as long as it doesn't interfere with my managing the house." Their relationship is important: "He's very independent in his work and very successful, he's very gifted, but I realize that he counts on me as his best friend." She is not very satisfied with her participation in household chores; she does most or all of everything: "My husband never offers any assistance with anything."

Regarding child-care conflict, she says, "I have very strong feelings that a person should do what she feels is most acceptable. I could not personally work and raise young people successfully; I'd have too many guilt feelings." Mothering changed her feelings about a career: "Children need a lot more discipline, love, and care than I realized before I had them," she says. "Financially, I don't have to work. Because my husband depends on me to run the household and care for the children, which I find to be very time consuming, I'm in no hurry to find a job."

In retrospect, she says, "I would have demanded more participation by my husband very early in our marriage. We have been married too many years for him to change and he won't—if I had realized this early enough, our marriage might be very different."

Dorothy, Who Became More Role-Innovative

Dorothy has focused on work to the exclusion of marriage and children. In 1967, she planned to be a psychologist (a Moderate occupation then), although she planned to get only a B.A. She saw her career as important and described both a family and a career as part of her future life. In 1970, she was working full-time as an interviewer and computer programmer and "still looking for a good teaching position" while taking courses in premedical sciences. She then went to dental school full-time. This was very much a compromise: she would have preferred to become a physician but was not accepted into medical school because she was "not a 'traditional' student." She gave several reasons for going to dental school: 1. A few positive contacts with professional women. 2. Coming to view myself as responsible for my own life. 3. The view that my ability to influence community changes will increase with my increasing credentials and expertise." What helped her get what she wanted from working was, in her words, "my own perseverance in developing the job and the working relationships necessary to function."

Shortly after finishing dental school, Dorothy married a government administrator. "I love my husband and he is very supportive and tolerant of me, my moods and needs," she says. The relationship is important because of "the intimacy, trust, sexuality, and closeness." She says she likes the idea of her working: "He feels that everyone should have meaningful work. I am more interesting to him as a worker." Nevertheless, she reports feeling conflict between marriage and a career: "There are times when time demands of my career interfere with my relationship with my husband. Sheer fatigue is often a problem." She rates herself as not very satisfied with their sex-stereotypical division of household labor: "Although my husband will help with domestic tasks if I ask him, he will rarely initiate an activity or offer to assist me when I'm cleaning, cooking, or doing laundry." She is undecided about having children: "The responsibilities of childrearing would be nearly totally mine, and would take time and energy from my career."

In retrospect, she says, "I would have pursued a graduate degree right after my B.A. I would have had children before getting so involved in my career. I would have pursued a more general degree, not the highly technologically oriented one I have received." Regarding her future life, she says, "I would like to become more involved in community affairs and in politics; to raise children, either natural or adopted, and to have an economically self-sufficient practice."

Creating and Responding to Social Change

We asked the women in our sample to respond to a variety of open-ended questions, and their sometimes long and impassioned answers brought to light several issues that represent points of friction between larger cultural trends and women's individual lives. Most notable among these issues are the
women's exodus from elementary and secondary school teaching and evidence of both support and strain in relations among women at both the ideological and the personal level.

**Exodus from Teaching**

Elementary and secondary school teaching were the most frequently chosen occupations among these women in 1967, preferred by 28 percent of the sample. (College teaching was also a common choice, at 19 percent.) As seniors, these women struggled less than their classmates did with vocational decisions, having made an early decision to teach. They were more likely to give "working with people" and/or "helping others" as reasons for their career choices. They did not differ from women who chose other careers in the priority that they gave to having a family relative to having a career (Jenkins, 1989). In retrospect, however, several women cited parental pressure to go into teaching. A former elementary school teacher, now at home rearing three children, said that in 1967 teaching was "a good job for a woman—good pay, good hours." Looking back, teaching seems to her to have been a compromise, made because of "pressure from parents—what a good job for a woman was—a secure job" and her own "need for a job that allowed for marriage and a family." In 1981, she preferred business, marketing, law, or banking.

By 1981, large numbers of these women had migrated to more role-innovative occupations: into college-level teaching or teaching in less traditional contexts, or out of teaching altogether and into business and the traditionally male-dominated professions. This migration was inspired both by the desire for broader, better-rewarded, and more challenging opportunities and by specific dissatisfaction with teaching.

One group of former teachers seemed motivated by specific intrinsic achievement concerns. A lesbian former high school teacher began graduate school for a master's degree: "Once I was there, I liked it and realized that I could do better than be a high school teacher. ... I realized that I had set my sights too low, and there were more interesting and challenging jobs that I could get with an advanced degree. I had formerly thought I could only ever be a teacher or a nurse." Another woman got her M.B.A. and became a cost analyst and investment tracker after eleven years as an elementary school teacher: "Mental boredom and lack of career opportunities (salary, challenge, responsibilities, and promotion) were crucial elements which started my exploration of other careers—plus the school system has a terrible track record of promoting women." In retrospect, she wishes that she had "quit teaching sooner—at age twenty-five." This group exemplifies the women who entered noncollege teaching with a high need for achievement, experienced further achievement-motivation arousal by the task characteristics of the teaching situation, and then changed to careers with social structures that provided opportunities for achievement and thus offered more frequent and intense achievement rewards (Jenkins, 1987b, 1989).

College teaching also seems to have served an important transitional role for many women. One-fifth of the sample expected to teach in college in 1967; in 1981, 14 percent were college faculty members, but only three of these were the same women. College teaching may serve as a stepping-stone occupation that combines a sex-stereotypical task role with higher status and greater financial and intellectual rewards than are available in noncollege teaching. The training, visibility, and professional contacts available in college teaching may enable women to pursue better-paying jobs in the private sector (Jenkins, 1989).

**Strains Among Women**

Although the women in our sample were generally appreciative of the positive effects of the women's movement, some also expressed feelings of strain regarding their place in our changing social world. In their spontaneous comments at the end of the questionnaire, many cited the importance of feminism as a positive force in their personal and/or career lives. Ann, the physical therapist, said, "I feel that the women's movement was significant in raising my own self-esteem and in improving/raising my own feeling about women."

Some full-time homemakers seemed to feel compelled to defend the legitimacy of their choices and the importance to the world of rearing their children well. They cited pressure to have a career and devaluation of the social contribution of mothering, pressure that they attributed to other women. A Moderate with two children, now working as a part-time newspaper reporter and doing volunteer work and community service, expressed annoyance:

> I have felt susceptible to current pressures, from women's groups especially, about working women. I have felt the pressure as "unless I have a paying job, I'm not very valuable to society, or not too exciting."

Now that I have a respectable part-time job, I can more clearly see how futile it is to make personal decisions based on cultural trends. I feel angry at messages that I pick up, such as "Women who are worth anything have a career plan." I would joyfully welcome messages promoting thoughtful mothering. For me, though, my job has truly added excitement and satisfaction to my life. I also care about my mothering role.

A former high school teacher, who in 1981 was rearing her three children while working part-time as a bookkeeper for her dentist husband and as a property manager, commented as follows:
Women's Lives Through Time

So many girls are postponing marriage and children for a career. Those who choose a career over a family are missing out on what life is all about—sharing yourself intimately with others—putting their needs over your own. I am not a martyr, and often reach my limit—but I really feel so fortunate to be a wife and mother. Sounds corny? Of course, the ideal would be to have so much energy, you could do both simultaneously—and my hat goes off to those women!

In the remarks of a former teacher, now a homemaker of nine years for her two children, we heard a muted dysphoria: "For women of my age, it is so important to come in contact with women who have broken away—who are not sitting in their suburban homes all day, arranging Junior League meetings!" Other women expressed feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, as well as tentative hope for a "legitimizing" career in the future. Carol, the former high school teacher who became more of a Traditional and had been rearing her three children since before 1970, noted that the questionnaire "made me reflect on the last ten years of my life, which were totally committed to raising our family. It made me feel inadequate. I really haven't done much for myself—I mostly live for others—however, I'm happy. Maybe when you question me again in ten years, I'll be able to feel as though I've done more for myself." A full-time mother of two, who had taught as a substitute until 1974, offered the following comment:

I feel like a throwback to the "housewife" of the 1950s. In my day-to-day life, however, I really don't think I am. I do still use my brain, my creativity, and my independence, but most of my "duties" are traditional. I strongly support the [proposed] ERA [Equal Rights Amendment] and feel women should have freedom of choice. I have deliberately chosen my present role and am sometimes uncomfortable with myself for half-believing outside influences who demean my role.

Both overtly and covertly, these responses give the impression that Traditional women felt attacked and devalued for their choices, even when they felt sure of their adequacy and legitimacy.

At the same time, Role Innovators also expressed dissatisfaction with how they are treated, especially by other women. A medical research scientist with three children described her problem:

One of the hardest things for me is to find and keep female friends. We have moved quite often, due to my husband's internship, residency, and being drafted. But in addition to this, there are rarely any wives in my neighborhood or place of work who are married with children and who have a "serious" professional career. I have always joined neighborhood book clubs and craft groups whenever we move anywhere new. I am always well accepted until they find out I have a

The University of Michigan Class of 1967

Ph.D. Then they treat me differently and have trouble relating to me. Some act as if they couldn't possibly carry on a conversation with me when they ask me what I do at work. They can't seem to understand that I am human, too, and that I am raising children like them, that I cook dinner, pay bills, shovel snow like them! Sometimes I don't tell anyone I have an advanced degree because I can't stand the isolation. Sometimes I am very lonely.

We should note that painful perceptions of other women are shaped by both temporal and societal contexts. Temporarily, almost all the women in each group (that is, employed women and women working at home) will at some point experience the circumstance of the other. Those working at home generally have been and will again be in the labor force. Those now employed outside the home often have been and may again be spending time at home with small children, or for other reasons. Perspectives on each life-style are shaped by current but temporary circumstances. These are not two permanent camps of different individuals. Societal failure to provide care for children whose parents work outside the home sets up a situation in which parents who are at home can get sucked into the resulting vacuum (Silverstein, 1991). This contributes to feelings of inequity in those who offer to help out.

Several women made insightful comments such as this one, on historical and intergenerational change:

We have been the generation, I believe, that was most influenced by the early women's movement. All intelligent women, whether they work inside or outside the home, have in some way been touched. I have a strong sense of being a straddler of two eras in women's roles—of wanting both home and family, but being nagged somewhat by a sense of not fulfilling my talents because I'm not working. A woman once described my feelings/dilemma: our generation feels the need to be the mother of five, maintain a perfect house, and play first string with the Boston Symphony. My hope for my daughters is that whatever choice they make in life, they will not have any doubts about the wisdom of their choice for them. And for me—that I will someday come to peaceful terms with the choices I have made.

Despite these tensions, there was also optimism:

I seem to realize now—at the age of 36!—how very strong women can be. I feel as if I am in the "spring" of my life with many new paths and opportunities ahead of me. As if I have reached the mountain meadows after a long and difficult hike. I want to develop a career and also keep my family unit intact. I feel a great deal of responsibility in this. I love my husband and children dearly—but with insight also! I very
much need a mentor in my task of developing a career—and I hope that I find one. Every generation of women seems to have a different task or challenge. My paths are different from those of my mother—but my daughter’s will definitely be different from mine. I think research needs to be done in the area of parental expectations—and college mentors. I feel that U Mich lacked in this area and I’m going to think long and hard about campus selection for my daughter. Right now I can definitely see the advantage to a women’s campus.

Conclusions: The Paths They Walked

In a poetry reading by Ray Gwyn Smith, which one of the authors attended during initial analyses of these data, the following lines stood out: “It didn’t matter which path she walked. What mattered was the sense she made of it.” Among our findings from the first wave of data in the Women’s Life Paths Study were several items that laid to rest myths about career-oriented women, misconceptions that may sound quaint today but were common at the time (Helson, 1972). In college, the career-oriented Role Innovators did not identify with their fathers in preference to their mothers; rather, they took their more educated working mothers as role models. Although they saw themselves as less extremely feminine and conventional and more intellectual, self-reliant, and dependent on by others, they did not reject the core female roles of wife and mother. They were not wallflowers; they had as many romantic and casual relationships with men as their Traditional peers did. Their commitment to their future careers even while they were in college, and especially the importance they gave to advancement opportunities, were greater than among women going into female-dominated professions, so that their decisions to continue working cannot be viewed as having been made by default when other alternatives failed. In fact, choosing supportive boyfriends (and eventually husbands) seemed to play some role in helping them pursue their career goals, despite feelings of conflict.

Our longitudinal approach enabled us to compare these women’s plans in college to their adult life paths and to ask questions about continuity and change. In 1981, the majority of the women in the sample (61 percent) were classified as Role Innovators or Traditionalists, as they had been in 1967. Despite rather dramatic detours in the intervening years—and most to early family formation, the longer time span shows great continuity, particularly on the occupational dimension.

The original Role Innovators, true to the values they expressed as seniors in college, were more likely to be working full-time, had taken less time out from the labor force, and were overwhelmingly (81 percent) working in role-innovative occupations. Early graduate training helped them consolidate their career plans and persist in setting and pursuing their goals. For some women, it involved a new appreciation of their abilities and an increase in educational aspirations. These women most often resolved marriage-
career conflicts by remaining single, postponing childbearing, having fewer children than the other women, and choosing spouses who supported their career aspirations. The 1981 Role Innovators who had not begun with role-innovative aspirations in 1967 came to share most of these characteristics except for having remained single.

Many Traditional seniors were employed full-time in their chosen fields after college, delaying their family formation somewhat and reducing their expected family size. Although some of them returned to work in these fields after having children, others, especially among noncollege teachers, moved into role-innovative careers that sometimes required their returning to school as reentry students. This phase often intensified feelings of marriage-career conflict; for those with nonsupportive husbands, divorce sometimes resulted.

Early full-time homemaking was most common for women who as seniors had wanted to marry and have children early. These women resolved their marriage-career conflicts by forgoing careers. They were more likely to choose husbands who preferred homemaking wives and to take vicarious pleasure in their husbands’ achievements in lieu of pursuing careers of their own. Even so, many of them returned to the labor force and to higher education earlier than they had expected to as college seniors, and some of these moves were in role-innovative career directions. Such moves were often accompanied by increased feelings of marriage-career conflict.

In this study, the general trends over time regarding occupational attainment, marriage and childbearing patterns, and conflicts experienced over combining marriage and a family reflect and contribute to the larger social changes of which this cohort is a part. More women in our study were employed in 1981 than expected to be in 1967; fewer were married, and they had fewer children. They attended graduate school, attained advanced degrees, and worked in role-innovative occupations beyond their 1967 aspirations as a group. They are also experiencing more conflict between marriage (or childrearing) and a career than they thought they would.

A far cry from the women whom Freud saw as having finished their lives and development by middle age, these women in their middle thirties—Traditionalists, Moderates, and Role Innovators—are clearly engaged in an active, conscious struggle to define themselves and design their own choices, mindful of the social changes they are creating. From a woman who had to begin again after her first marriage ended comes an eloquent testimony to the pain and joy of living in “interesting times”:

My coevals have had the best and worst of the decade. In 1967 we reasonably expected marriage, motherhood, and successful husbands by whom we could be defined; albeit with plans to go back to school ourselves or to work “someday.” Losing that expectation is awfully harsh when mixed up with the liberation of and changing career/life goals of women just a few years younger, who always
expected to have careers as well as what we expected. I'm a survivor, proud of it, and no doubt not the only woman my age who's had to shift gears. We're the ones, I think, who really do have it all!

References

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