PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN BY PARENTS
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THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Denton, Texas
December, 1991

The primary research questions dealt with whether parents consider different personality characteristics of importance for boys and girls. Data were collected by conducting a telephone survey of a random sample of parents in the city of Denton with children under the age of eighteen living in the household. Respondents were asked whether they considered the personality characteristics of responsibility, strict obedience, being respectful of the opinions of others, showing good manners, being independent, and having loyalty to a religion not important, somewhat important, or very important for boys and girls. Of the respondents fifty-nine were fathers and one hundred and twenty-one were mothers. The analysis of the data revealed that mothers and fathers have similar attitudes concerning the importance of these personality characteristics.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Throughout history it has been assumed that vast differences exist between males and females which originate at birth and continue throughout the life of individuals. This has been repeatedly asserted, believed and documented in various ways. As a result, every human social group has used its own perception of biological sex differences in some way to organize gender definitions, kinship systems, social roles, and a division of labor (Barry, Bacon, and Child, 1957; Sanday, 1981). Another major result of this assumption has been that boys and girls in the majority of societies have been exposed to different treatment and expectations from their day of birth as well as throughout the process of their socialization (Lewis, 1972; Will et al., 1975; Rheingold and Cook, 1975; Leahy, 1983; Seavey, Katz and Zalk, 1975).

This exposure is of importance because it has been demonstrated that distinctive sex role conditioning affects various aspects of the individual’s personality characteristics, specific kinds of intellectual and emotional capabilities, as well as future professional potential and aspirations (Hamburg and Lunde, 1966; Frieze et al., 1978; Joffe, 1971; Orlofsky, 1977).

Research has demonstrated that boys and girls are treated differently by adults (Josselyn, 1967). It has also been
demonstrated that adults have different expectations regarding boys and girls and that these expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies as children are socialized. They can be considered self-fulfilling prophecies in that once females and males are defined as basically different in a number of aspects, they are treated as such. Therefore they develop in ways which confirm and reinforce the initial expectations of those holding the expectations. The expectations which adults impose upon children during the process of socialization are a result of stereotypes which have developed in our society and have become accepted as appropriate for males and females. Broadly speaking, the male stereotype contains an emphasis upon being instrumental, active, skilled, technically competent, directive, and exploitative. Males are expected to be successful and suppress overt emotions (Pleck, 1974). The female stereotype emphasizes being expressive, passive, decorative, manipulative, non-combatant, and non-competitive outside domestic and nurturing situations (Garskof, 1971).

In 1924-1925 and again in 1935, Robert and Helen Lynd studied a small industrial city they referred to a Middletown. It was, in actuality, Muncie, Indiana. In the Middletown of 1924, a sharp division of sex roles and responsibilities existed within the context of the family. The husband's primary responsibility was to be a good provider for the family. The wife was seen as being responsible for keeping the house, raising the children, and particularly in the business class, maintaining the family's social position. Women were viewed as emotional, illogical, incapable of sustained thought and as morally superior to men. More recently, in contrast to the findings of the Lynd's, Albrecht et al. (1977), found only moderate amounts of sex typing of personality.
characteristics but a very pronounced stereotyping of occupations among adults in Utah. They also discovered that respondents of both sexes tended to sex type personality characteristics similarly. In recent years, increasing public attention has been focused on the issue of sex roles. It has become increasingly evident that many apparent differences between men and women are not fundamental personality differences, but are the result of the roles we assign to the sexes and society’s reinforcement of varying behaviors for each sex (Oetzel, 1966; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

Within our society, attitudes toward sex roles have in many ways shown signs of becoming less traditional or distinctive. In fact, a shift has occurred in the thinking of some educators, psychologists, and various nonprofessionals toward a view that it is the variations in treatment of boys versus girls that contributes to many of the differences previously considered to be entirely biological in nature. As a result, the definition of sex roles has become a pervasive issue within our society. This issue affects the lives of every individual in a diversity of ways.

It has been suggested that many of our society’s conventional definitions of masculine and feminine behavior are being challenged due to the many structural changes occurring within our society. Some of these changes would include: an increase in the isolation of the nuclear family, an economy which has become less concerned with physical strength, access to higher education for women, the employment of women in positions of higher status, maternal employment, and the experimentation by individuals with alternative life styles. These structural changes have increased those conditions in our society favoring minimal sex differences. This has led some individuals to advocate the virtual elimination of
sex differences in socialization. Contributing to this stance has been suggestions that more androgynous attitudes toward sex roles may be linked to an individual’s positive conceptions of self and personal abilities. It has been suggested that the redefinition of appropriate sex role behaviors by our society could have beneficial results (Gardner and Labreque, 1986).

The purpose of the research proposed was to determine whether parents are emphasizing similar personality characteristics for both girls and boys and whether personality characteristics emphasized by mothers are different from those emphasized by fathers. When considering the structural changes our society continues to experience, it is expected that today’s parents are stressing similar personality characteristics for boys and girls more than was the case in the past. Research has demonstrated that whether an individual’s mother was employed outside the home during the individual’s childhood influences the attitudes held by the individual regarding sex roles (Meier, 1974; Hoffman, 1972; Vogel et al., 1970). Therefore, this issue will be controlled for to determine whether it can be considered to be influential to the results of the research.

The primary research questions will be: (1) do parents feel that specific personality characteristics are of the same importance for girls and boys; (2) are the personality characteristics mothers consider to be important for girls and boys different than those considered important for girls and boys by fathers; (3) have the personality characteristics considered important by today’s parents changed from what was considered important by parents in the past; and, (4) do parents feel that independence is more important and obedience less important than in the past.
Roles, Sex Roles and Sex Role Typing

A social role has been defined as "a set of duties, rights, obligations, and expected behaviors that go along with being in a certain position in a social structure" (Maccoby, 1966). A role's content is determined by what is considered to be role-appropriate behavior for a particular role and is expressed through society's expectations of the person occupying a specific role. Knowing a person's role can tell us a good deal about how that person ought to behave.

"Sex role" is the term used to refer to the different positions and behaviors of men and women within a society. Sex role stereotypes consist of those orientations and values about the personality characteristics and behaviors which are considered to be most typical and appropriate for women and men within specific societal groups. As such, sex role stereotypes can be viewed as public beliefs about the nature of men and women and also as the individual perception of what one is to be and how one is to behave. Because sex roles provide components of self-concept as well as components of role expectations regarding appropriate sex-typed behavior, they are considered to be self-fulfilling (Luepton, 1984).
In our society, men are believed to be and are expected to be aggressive, independent, unemotional, objective, and not easily influenced by others' opinions. They "know their way around", make decisions comfortably, and are self-confident, logical, competitive, and ambitious. People don't expect men to express tender feelings easily. Women are believed to be and expected to be talkative, warm, gentle, and aware of others' feelings. Women supposedly have a strong need for security. They do not hide their emotions well, nor are they able to separate feelings from ideas. They have trouble making decisions, mastering science and math, thinking logically, and acting skillfully in business. Women are not considered to be as naturally ambitious or competitive as men (Broverman et al., 1972).

Sex role typing is the process whereby children acquire the motives, values, and behavior regarded by their cultures as characteristically masculine or feminine (Belsky, Lerner, and Spainer, 1984). In the division of labor, in dress, in manners, in religious and social functioning as well as various other aspects of life, men and women are socially differentiated. Additionally each sex, as a sex, is strongly pressured to conform to the role assigned to it.

Historically, sex roles and sex role stereotypes were accepted, in part, because it was believed that personality differences existed between males and females. Despite the historical cultural context within which they evolve, stereotyped notions concerning men and women are frequently viewed as universal and are applied to all men and women. These generalizations are rooted in the popular belief that male and
female behavioral and personality characteristics are a consequence of biological functions. In reality there are relatively few basic personality differences between boys and girls (Oetzel, 1966; Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974).

In a classic study by anthropologist Margaret Mead, a number of primitive tribes in New Guinea were observed. Among these tribes sex-related personality traits were found to differ among three tribes in particular. Among the Arapesh, men and women behaved much alike. Both were gentle, passive, warm and nurturing people. In the Mundugumor tribe both men and women were aggressive, hostile, and uninterested in nurturing children. Among the Tchambuli’s, Mead discovered sex-related differences. Tchambuli men were dependent and emotional. The women were dominant, impersonal and managerial. Mead concluded that apart from individual differences, sex-related character traits and roles are more apt to result from cultural learning rather than from genetics (Mead, 1935). The view that differences in personality characteristics between men and women are not biological in nature has also been supported by the results of a series of studies in which children whose gender identity differed from their genetic sex. These children acquired sex role behaviors and attitudes that agreed with their gender identity rather than with their genetic sex (Money and Ehrhardt, 1972).

The Development of Sex Roles

As early as 1936, it was observed that the divisions of labor and assignment of statuses on the basis of sex could be considered fundamental to the structure and functioning of most societies
(Linton, 1936). Although these divisions and assignments are considered basic, a wide societal diversity exists with regard to the kinds of cues used to define social groups. Moreover, even cues that appear to be universally employed to categorize individuals (such as gender) are not necessarily considered to be equally important by different cultures (Barry, Bacon, and Child, 1957).

The content of sex roles and variations of these roles is determined by and dependent upon socially constructed realities within a culture. It is through institutionalization, legitimation, and internalization that these socially constructed realities are built. Institutionalization involves the development of stable patterns of interaction based on formalized rules, laws, customs, and rituals. Law, tradition, and religious dogma are examples of how we as a culture justify and explain the institutionalization which occurs within a culture. Once individuals accept, or legitimize, group norms, the norms of the group become internalized by the individual (Maccoby, 1966).

The particular sets of expectations associated with similarly defined groups often vary widely from culture to culture (Sanday, 1981). While the definition of what is man's work and what is woman's work varies from society to society, a division is visible everywhere. In some societies, sex roles are clearly defined and rigidly enforced, whereas in others, they are generalized and casual. Tasks are often divided by sex; although, it is not the nature of the task, but rather the cultural assignment of the task to one sex or the other that determines who will undertake it (Murdock, 1935).

Historically, men have most frequently been assigned the tasks which require leaving home and engaging in activities where a high level of skill yields important and extremely valued results. These
tasks, such as hunting and warfare, require an emphasis on self-reliance and achievement. In contrast, women have primarily been assigned tasks near home, such as child rearing and gardening, which stress nurturance. As men and women became accustomed to performing certain tasks, sex roles developed. In most cultures men's work and roles have experienced greater status than women's work and roles. As a result men have believed that their tasks are superior, more important, and more meaningful than are women's tasks. More importantly, women have become convinced of the same thing (Perry and Perry, 1973).

The Middletown study of 1924 emphasized the dynamic, functional aspects of contemporary life in this specific American community. The focus was on the changing behavior observable over the preceding 35 years. This study was conducted in the small industrial city of Muncie, located in Delaware County, Indiana. In Middletown a sharp division of sex roles existed within the family. Within the context of the family the husband's main responsibility was to be a good provider. The wife was seen as responsible for keeping the house, raising the children, and particularly in the business class, maintaining the family's social position. Women were viewed as emotional, illogical, incapable of sustained thought, and as morally superior to men.

Four out of five of those earning a living in Middletown were male. If a healthy adult male was not earning a living he was subject to losing the respect of the community for not participating in the traditional male activity of "getting a living". There were more women employed than in the past but working married women were less readily accepted than those who were unmarried. Everyone in the Middletown of 1890 got to work by walking and as a
result the workers tended to settle within the immediate neighborhood of a given factory. The new modes of transportation which had become available allowed individuals greater mobility which, in turn, diminished the tendency for the factory workers to live in close proximity to the factory.

The Lynd's also reported that the family groups were becoming smaller in the Middletown of 1924 and that a smaller percentage of the population was unmarried than had been a century earlier. The Lynd's attributed the occurrence of earlier marriage to circumstances such as the discontinuance of apprenticeships, increased opportunities for wives to supplement the income of the family by becoming part of the labor force, and the greater ease and respectability associated with ending a marriage through divorce.

From the spring of 1976 until the fall of 1978, Caplow et al. conducted research in Middletown to make comparisons with what the Lynd's had reported earlier. During their research eight family roles were identified: provider, housekeeper, child care, child socialization, therapeutic, sexual, recreational, and kinship. Of these roles, three were found to be clearly sex-stereotyped. The responsibility of provider was seen as the male role while the responsibilities of child care and housekeeping were considered female roles. As the family dynamics were analyzed it was discovered that although the families of Middletown supported role flexibility in principle they actually practiced traditional roles within the family context.

More recently, Albrecht et al. (1977) found moderate amounts of sex typing of personality characteristics existing among adults living in Utah. They also found that respondents of both sexes tended to sex type personality characteristics similarly.
examining patterns of parental socialization values over time, Alwin (1984) found an increase in the value of autonomy and a decrease in the value of obedience for children by parents.

In the 1950s, sociologist Talcott Parsons analyzed the American family structure and concluded that in middle class families in our society the masculine personality emphasized instrumental interests, needs and functions, while the feminine personality emphasized expressive interests, needs, and functions. Parsons asserted that as a result of the nature of the masculine personality, men would assume more technical, executive, and "judicial" roles; women would assume supportive, integrative, and "tension-managing" roles (Parsons and Bales, 1955).

Parsons' dichotomy of female and male behavior in the family set the tone for many subsequent social-scientific analyses of gender roles. In addition, Parsons concluded that the "typical" American nuclear family, in which the woman is the housewife and child caretaker, is the most appropriate family structure for achieving the ideals and meeting the demands of American society. Thus, Parsons' analysis established a framework for the stereotype of the "middle-class suburban family," with members playing traditional roles, as the social ideal. His conclusions devalued other types of family structures.

The Changing Role of Women in the Work Force

Until the late nineteenth century, women in this country, whether married or single, worked almost exclusively in the home or as unpaid labor in family enterprises. This work involved not only the care of children and the upkeep of the house, but also the cultivation and preparation of food and the manufacture of many of the goods used in the home. Teaching and domestic service were
among the very few "outside" jobs open to women. However, with increasing industrialization during the nineteenth century, there was the greater demand for labor, and single women gradually began to leave home to work in factories (Nye, 1974).

The traditional pattern of female sex roles began to break with the shift of production from the home to the factory. Women began to flock to the factories because work there was considered less demanding than at home. In addition, the income that women brought into the home strengthened their position in the family to the point that they were almost equal with males. In the early twentieth century, single women began to fill sales and clerical positions and continued to expand their participation in teaching and factory work. By the beginning of World War II, it had become acceptable for a single woman to work in order to be self-supporting. The expectation, however, was that she would work for only a few years after completing her education, and then would marry and spend the rest of her life caring for her home and family.

By the end of World War II a number of changes had taken place in the relative emphasis placed on women's various roles. Young people were more likely to marry at an earlier age. As a consequence, women became mothers sooner, and had more children than in the 1920s and 1930s. It also became more common for both married and unmarried women to work outside the home for various economic reasons. In the years immediately following World War II most young women finished high school and worked full-time until getting married. Many of these single women planned to work only for a brief period and were already engaged to be married. They worked to earn money for their weddings, trousseaus, and household goods; after marriage they quit their jobs. The typical
woman had her first child after a year of marriage and two or three children over the next few years. It was expected that a woman's life would be focused primarily upon caring for her children and maintaining the home.

Of course, even during the 1940s and 1950s not all mothers were totally occupied with their wife and mother roles. Many women began to work part-time when their youngest child entered school. At this time, not only were younger women with children entering the labor force more frequently, but older women were also more likely to work outside the home than in earlier years. During this period children also tended to leave home earlier. So even with more children, parents experienced the "empty nest" syndrome when all their children were gone from home at an earlier age. For the women this meant a reduction in her roles of mother and homemaker. Women at this age turned to work outside the home presumably as a means of coping with this role reduction.

A number of societal indicators suggest that changes in sex roles have come even more rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s. The changes on women's participation in various roles have been caused primarily by three interrelated factors: changes in the economy affecting labor-force participation; changes in the age structure of our society; and changes in the values of our society. As a result of increasing numbers of women being active in the labor force changes have occurred. Even though their strengthened position has led to some legal changes, women are still far from having acquired equality with men. It has been proposed that such equality will not be forthcoming until we develop a new process of socialization in which children are not taught traditional sex role distinctions (Goode, 1968).
CHAPTER III

THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

Social Learning Theory

Explanations for the development of what are commonly referred to as sex roles characteristics have been attempted by various viewpoints and theoretical approaches. Social learning theory is one of the main theoretical approaches for attempting to explain the processes underlying the socialization of sex roles. Social learning theory treats the learning of sex roles as part of the same process which is involved in the learning of all other roles. In attempting to explain the development of sex role characteristics in males and females, social learning theorists have come to view sex roles as being learned as part of the basic attitudes and patterns of behavior which are transmitted during the process of socialization (Albrecht et al., 1977). Social learning theory associates gender-role acquisitions with the external reinforcements (rewards and punishments) that people receive for behaving in particular ways. Behavior is seen as being maintained by external, social forces rather than internal motives. This theory minimizes the role of stable personality traits considered to exist independently of
behavior is seen as being maintained by external, social forces rather than internal motives. This theory minimizes the role of stable personality traits considered to exist independently of external forces. It holds that we learn both "female" and "male" behavior by observing others. The behavior we perform is a function of whether it is rewarded or punished. Hence females and males act in gender-stereotyped ways because this behavior has been rewarded in the past and cross-gender behavior has been punished. Social learning theorists assume that much important sex role learning occurs when children are relatively young. The growing child is seen as continuing to adopt new behaviors and to alter or eliminate old behaviors as society changes its expectations and reward contingencies for that child (Gewirtz, 1969).

Socialization

Societal attitudes influence how we behave and think. As people learn to talk, think and feel the way society does, they internalize cultural attitudes; that is, they make the attitudes their own. Cultural configurations become an important part of people, influencing how they think, feel, and act. Besides attitudes, people internalize cultural expectations about how they are to behave. The process through which society is able to influence its members to internalize attitudes and expectations is called socialization (Lewis, 1972).

Socialization is the transmission of behavior, roles, attitudes, and beliefs to the next generation. By direct prescription, by example, and by implicit expectation, a variety of people in a variety of relationships influence the growing individual. Gradually the child internalizes what he or she has been taught
(Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). The socialization of children consists of introducing them to what is considered to be the norms of behavior for the society. It is only after they are introduced to the social expectations that they can make sense of how others act toward them and how they should behave. The extent to which boys and girls conform, even partially, to the stereotypes of gender appropriate behavior depends in part upon the degree to which they have internalized the cultural pressures to conform (Rubin et al., 1974).

Children learn about their fundamental social nature and the basic social ideals of their culture when they are most profoundly psychologically dependent upon others for the fulfillment of their needs through social interaction. Consequently, the kind of self that develops is a function of the kinds of communications provided by the significant others tending to their needs. It is through these communications that children learn about the roles existing in their culture. Some of the major ways young children acquire the various aspects of the culture in which they live are through language, interaction with parents, the media, and the school.

Socialization begins right at birth with parents treating female and male infants differently. When a new father lifts his baby boy, he’ll probably jostle it a little. If it’s a girl, he’ll be more likely to cuddle it. Mothers look at and talk to female infants more than male infants. For the first three months of life, but not after, boys receive more physical stimulation than girls do. After six months, mothers are more likely to encourage daughters to touch and remain near, and physical contact between child and mother diminishes at a later age for girls than boys. Differences
have been observed in the ways in which mothers hold daughters and sons. After six months of age, girls are held facing toward their mothers whereas boys are held facing away (Lewis, 1972). One study of mothers' reactions to infants (actually one infant dressed differently) found that women were more likely to hand "Adam" (in blue pants) a toy train, and they more often smiled and cooed at "Beth" (in pink) and offered her a doll (Will et al., 1975).

As children grow up, fathers continue to play a bit more roughly with sons than with daughters. As a toddler, Mary will probably have a doll; by this time Johnny may already have his first football. In fact, boys have more toys that encourage activities directed away from the home and toward sports, cars, animals, and the military. Girls have more objects that encourage activities toward the home (Rheingold and Cook, 1975).

Early in life children acquire a basic sense of their own maleness or femaleness which appears invulnerable to change (Stoller, 1968). The acquisition of gender identity apparently stimulates children to adopt gender-stereotyped behaviors and beliefs. Once gender identity is firmly established, other factors guide children to adopt gender-stereotyped behavior and beliefs (Edwards and Spence, 1987). Gender identity rather than biological sex determines many components of the sex role one learns. Specifically, in a series of studies it was found that children whose gender identity differed from their genetic sex acquired sex role behaviors and attitudes that agreed with their gender identity rather than their genetic sex (Money and Ehrhardt, 1972). Research has shown that interest in future occupations is sex-typed in children as early as the second grade (Siegel, 1963); women anticipate and prepare for occupations that are consistent with the
traditional sexual division of labor; and, women have been more likely to choose roles that are primarily social-emotional, nurturant, and person-centered (Brim, 1958; Knudsen, 1969). The research conducted in the area concerning the socialization of children has revealed that our society has set up extremely different sets of behavior which are considered "masculine" and "feminine." It is within the context of the family that children are first exposed to these cultural roles and expectations associated with these roles.

The Role of the Family During Socialization

The family as the basic unit of social organization in all societies performs most of the early socialization by which a child becomes a member of its society. The processes involved in the transmission of attitudes and behaviors concerning the sex roles of a society begin at birth for each individual member of a society. It is during this process that children are exposed to gender cues through how others respond to them and through the repeated observance of adults and other children in their social environments (Leahy, 1983). As they grow children are exposed to and are often encouraged to conform to social expectations regarding how females and males are supposed to behave. They use this information to guide and monitor their own behavior (Maccoby, 1966).

Research strongly suggests that adults respond differently to children as a function of gender. A considerable body of research has demonstrated that both fathers and mothers treat their sons and daughters differently from birth. Personality stereotypes and behavioral expectations exist prior to birth and clearly affect subsequent interaction (Leahy, 1983; Seavy, Katz, and Zaik, 1975).
One study conducted by Rubin, Provenzano, and Luria (1974), found that parents of day-old sons viewed their babies as bigger than parents of day-old daughters. In actuality, the infants did not differ in either weight or length. Other kinds of stereotypes were also exhibited by those parents in the first 24 hours of the babies' lives. Girls were described as "softer", "smaller"; whereas, sons were described as "firmer", "more alert", and "stronger".

Beyond infancy the process of socialization continues to be different for boys and girls. Girls are taught to be more tractable, obedient, suggestible, dependent, and to follow "feminine" interests. Both sexes seem to acquire a sense that girls are less worthwhile than boys. Sanctions are imposed when behavior and attitudes contrary to the culturally prescribed patterns are exhibited, and activities that are defined as inappropriate for one's sex come to be avoided because they bring rejection rather than approval (Josselyn, 1967). Children are able to make sex role distinctions and express sex role preferences by the time they begin kindergarten (Brown, 1956). Hartley (1960) reports that by the age of four, children realize that the primary feminine role is housekeeping and the primary masculine role is wage earning. Although girls begin life as better achievers than boys, they gradually fall behind as they become socialized (Maccoby, 1966). Another interesting piece of research describes the important role picture books play in the early sex role socialization of children. Storybook characters were found to reinforce the traditional sex role assumptions that males are admired for their cleverness and achievements and females receive attention for their attractiveness (Weitzman, 1972).
In addition to differences in social treatment during socialization, the actual physical environments of male and female infants have been found to differ widely. Parents provide distinctive environments for girls and boys. Parents, grandparents, and friends give children a variety of toys and clothing which often vary by gender and decorate their rooms differently (Rheingold and Cook, 1975). Research has also suggested that fathers are somewhat more likely to sex-type personality traits (Block, 1973). Although both mothers and fathers generally agree that girls should be more timid, good-looking, sensitive, affectionate, virtuous, sympathetic, and submissive than boys, fathers are more likely to identify each of these characteristics as feminine. Fathers also tend to sex-type the characteristics of bravery, independence, aggressiveness, and daring for boys although both mothers and fathers tend to identify these characteristics as only or more desirable for boys (Albrecht et. al., 1977).

One cross-cultural study which examined 110 cultures while investigating sex differences in the process of socialization, revealed that during socialization, pressure toward nurturance, obedience, and responsibility is most often stronger for girls, while pressure toward achievement and self-reliance is most often stronger for boys. While the culture variations in the tasks and roles which are assigned girls and boys and men and women are great, all cultures have clearly defined tasks and behaviors which are more appropriate for one sex than the other (Barry et. al., 1957). Research has demonstrated that while sex role typing tends to expand the personal options available to men; for women, sex role typing tends to restrict the alternatives of action and expression that are available (Block et. al., 1973).
CHAPTER IV
IMPLICATIONS

In our society men and women learn to see themselves and judge themselves within the context of a culture that has always held females to be inherently emotional, illogical and physically weak. Males are expected to be inherently tough, logical, mechanical and physically strong. The roles we choose for ourselves have many consequences. They define the behaviors expected of us by others; they are major sources of our feelings about ourselves; and, they expose us to experiences which can affect our later attitudes, feelings and behavior. Roles play a major part in shaping our experiences and personality. Existing evidence indicates that as early as age one but no later than age three, children come to think of themselves not as persons but as males and females. From then on gender identity is the cornerstone of the self-concept (Hamburg and Lunde, 1966; Frieze et al., 1978).

In the recent past many changes have occurred in our society which may have influenced the way we perceive sex roles. Many of these changes have been taking place in the family. There has been a considerable shrinkage in the size of households. While the median size of a household was 5.4 in 1790 and 4.2 in 1900, the average household size in both 1940 and 1967 was 3.3. This was attributed
to several trends occurring such as the decline in the birth rate, the aging of the population, and the age when first married. As the size of households decreased, several functions previously considered to be the responsibility of the family were being increasingly transferred to agencies outside the family. Those functions included economic, protective, recreational, educational, and religious (Winch, 1970).

In the years between 1950-1980, most major social changes were either concerned with or had a great impact on sex role changes. Some of these changes included both men and women marrying later than they had in the recent past, the size of household decreasing, and the increase in the proportion of women in the paid labor force from 34% in 1950 to 52% in 1980. Some of the consequences of men and women marrying later are lower divorce rates, delayed childbearing, and more opportunity for women to be educated and to enter the labor market. This could be seen as implying that the family has become less central to the identities of contemporary U.S. citizens (Winch, 1970).

While conducting research on women's sex role attitudes over a ten year period, Mason et al. (1976) found that egalitarian sex role attitudes are related to education and employment experience. Meier (1974) reported a positive association between the number of years the mother was employed and egalitarian attitudes held by college youths concerning sex roles. Hoffman (1974) summarized studies that pertained to adolescent views of social attitudes. The studies indicated that maternal employment was associated with less traditional sex role concepts, more approval, and a higher evaluation of female competence. Vogel and Associates (1970)
more likely to have androgynous sex role concepts. They concluded that children of working mothers felt freer than their parents to engage in overlapping role behaviors and to achieve a greater degree of sex role equality in their own lives. There is some evidence, at least in the expectations of college women, that the preference for traditional occupations is on the decline. (Gross, 1968).

Traditional and distinctive sex role socialization channels members of each sex into restrictive roles that limit the life options and behavioral choices of each (Joffe, 1971). More innovative attitudes toward sex roles may be related to a positive conception of self and abilities (Orlofsky, 1977). Intellectual achievement and assertiveness are often defined by our society as unfeminine. As a result, it is likely that some talented females develop a "fear of success" as a defensive mechanism to protect their femininity. This "fear of success" conflicts with any urges a female might experience for achievement, mastery, and independence. The conflict between the two may produce psychological strains (Breedlove and Cicirelli, 1974). Hence adolescent girls faced with conformity to less desirable sex roles, become more self-conscious and develop a more negative self-image than do males (Simmons et. al., 1975).

To the degree that women adopt attitudes and behaviors that have traditionally been designated feminine, they are deficient in autonomy when compared to men. According to Erikson (1963), individuals failing to learn autonomy experience self-doubt and feelings of inferiority. Women are more likely than men to feel depressed, bored, "empty", dissatisfied with life, inadequate and excessively guilty (Gove and, 1972).
With regards to sex typing, Bem (1981) has developed the concept of gender schemata. She has proposed that sex-typed individuals can be described as gender schematic. A gender schematic individual consistently organizes information about themselves and other persons, objects, or events on the basis of gender linked associations in addition to or instead of other potentially available categorical information. On the other hand, non-sex-typed, schematic individuals are relatively unresponsive to stereotypically masculine and feminine cues when processing stimulus information.

According to Bem (1981), traditionally sex-typed individuals (i.e., masculine men and feminine women) differ from androgenous people, who are both highly masculine and highly feminine, to the extent to which gender serves as an organizing schema, guiding perception, information processing and social evaluation. Winch (1970) contends that at least two conditions maximize the degree of differentiation between sex roles. These conditions are related to how much importance a society associates with activities requiring: (1) strenuous physical exertion and strength and (2) absence from home and spatial mobility. Because the importance of masculine strength and of spatial mobility have decreased, as a society we have been minimizing the conditions which generate a high degree of sex role differentiation in the past.

In 1935 Mead asserted that a society which standardizes the personalities of men and women and then adapts the institutions within the society to be congruent with that standardization would be wasteful of the talents of many women. She also suggested that such standardization would be wasteful of mens’ talents because the regimentation of one sex results in, to greater or lesser degree,
the regimentation of the other. Rossi (1964) has proposed that appropriate sex role behaviors be redefined by our society to cultivate positively valued characteristics that in the past have been traditionally linked with the other sex. Such changes in societal constructions of appropriate sex role behaviors undoubtedly can be expected in the light of other trends already existing within the society. For example, access to higher education has expanded for large segments of young adults, and education appears to be associated with more androgynous sex role definitions (Dahlstrom and Welsh, 1960; Gough, 1960, Murray, 1963). Larger numbers of women are now employed and in positions of higher status which is associated with less polarization in sex role definitions (Vogel et al., 1970). Finally, the experimentation with different sex role patterns that characterized a numerically small but culturally influential group of contemporary young adults seeking alternative life styles may also facilitate societal change. Not only in sex role definitions but in the broader value emphasis conveyed to our male and female children in the process of socialization (Block et al., 1973).

Traditional gender expectations can also be seen as limiting for men. Overemphasis on productivity, competition, and achievement creates anxiety or emotional stress, which may contribute to males' shorter life expectancy (Chafetz, 1978). The masculine role not only requires that "real men" undergo pressure for success but also encourages them to discount or ignore their anxiety and physical symptoms of stress (Jourard, 1976). Men also learn to hide emotions of vulnerability, tenderness and warmth when they are in public (David and Brannon, 1976). However, in general sex role typing for men appears to expand, in a relative sense the personal options
available to them. For women, sex role typing seems to restrict the alternatives of action and expression that are available (Block et al., 1973).

Social learning theorist and experimental psychologist Albert Bandura (1969) suggest that the introduction of rewards for cross-sex behavior will enable girls and boys to expand their behavioral repertoire with little difficulty. This assertion is a result of his research demonstrating that when reinforcements for behavior are changed, behavior changes accordingly. For example, when women are rewarded rather than punished for engaging in "masculine" activities their behavior changes accordingly.

Studies suggest that the potential for future reductions in sex segregation is increasing. The family cycle appears to be becoming less determinate in the lives of American women. Later marriage, later initiation of child bearing, reduced family size expectations and the rising number of female headed households reduce the time spent in the family cycle. Furthermore, the growing number of older women in higher education and the rapid rise in the labor participation by married women suggest that the family cycle is becoming less constraining for those women currently experiencing it (Van Dusen and Sheldon, 1976).

Many are favoring the androgynous personality, meaning a personality with the capacity to experience a full range of human emotions, and to engage in a full range of actions. While specific sexual differences may be appreciated, the individual who incorporates both "female" and "male" aspects of personality would be a whole and balanced individual. Many disciplines are beginning to view androgeny as a realistic and achievable goal. Psychologists are beginning to view the ideal human as one who balances such
traits as assertiveness and cooperativeness (Bem, 1981; Kaplan, 1979). Sociologists are coming to emphasize the overlapping of "female" and "male" behavior rather than their mutual exclusiveness. They are reworking social theory and definitions of gender roles, and acknowledging the extent to which socialization processes form such behavior and could form different behavior.
CHAPTER V

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

Generalizations concerning the division of labor and the assignment of statuses according to sex as an integral component of societal organization seems much less certain now than in the past. Traditional definitions of masculine and feminine sex roles have come under attack and biological explanations have been refuted (Block et al., 1973; Money and Erhardt, 1972). Researchers continue to search for explanations for the origin and transmission of sex roles and conduct research demonstrating the existence of sex roles and the process involved in the stereotyping of sex roles.

Due to the many structural changes occurring in our society, much of our behavior is becoming increasingly less tied to traditional sex role distinctions. In spite of this, many sex-linked social expectations which greatly influence many diverse aspects of our lives continue to exist. While sex role attitudes and standards are changing, many adults and children still maintain rather traditional and stereotyped conceptions regarding sex roles. Males in our society continue to be regarded as more assertive, independent, dominant, and competent in dealing with problems in the environment. Females continue to be considered more submissive, warm, emotional, and sensitive to interpersonal
situations (Hetherington, Cox, and Cox, 1978). Many researchers have been involved in studies to gain a clearer perception of the evolution of the family within our society as well as that of sex roles within the family context.

The review of the literature on sex role stereotypes suggests several important variables related to preferences parents have for the personality characteristics of children. One important variable is the gender of the parent based upon evidence that fathers are more likely than mothers to sex type behavior (Block et al., 1973). Research has also demonstrated that children whose mothers were employed outside the home while the children were growing up tend to have less traditional sex role stereotypes as adults. This research focused on sex role stereotyping by parents as expressed through the attitudes they hold about specific personality characteristics in children. More specifically it attempts to analyze whether a difference exists between those personality characteristics considered most desirable in boys and those considered most desirable in girls; and, whether the specific personality characteristics fathers consider to be most desirable in children differ from those considered most desirable by mothers. In this regard two primary questions will be asked: (1) are the personality characteristics desired by parents different for boys and girls; and, (2) are fathers more likely than mothers to sex-type personality characteristics? Data on the questions should better allow us to understand the dynamics involved in the transmission of sex role attitudes within the family during the process of socialization. Because the family unit is basic to the socialization of children, determining which personality characteristics parents stress will
enable us to gain some insight into how our society's views of sex roles may or may not be changing.

Methodology

Data for the project were collected by conducting a telephone survey of a random sample of parents in the city of Denton with children under the age of eighteen living in the household. The GTE Everything Pages directory serving Denton in June 1989 was utilized as a sampling frame and the survey was conducted by graduate students at the University of North Texas. Telephone numbers were randomly selected. Using a table of random numbers, the pages from which the phone numbers would be selected were determined. From each of the selected pages a systematic sampling procedure was followed. The random number table was used to determine a starting point within the predetermined interval of seven. Every tenth phone number after this point was recorded on a "phone numbers and results' sheet. If the entry preceding the number indicated it was not a residence, the next number above or below which appeared to be a residence was selected in an alternating fashion. On each phone number sheet five numbers were put in slots where fathers were to be interviewed and four were listed for mothers (to increase the number of fathers who would be interviewed. This was an attempt to increase the number of fathers participating in the survey as it was believed that mothers would be more likely to be home, answer the phone, and participate.

A total of 2,008 telephone numbers were selected. These numbers were called by trained interviewers who included all members of the graduate class as well as volunteers from selected undergraduate classes. Interviews were carried out in the afternoons (Monday through Friday) and evenings (Monday through
Thursday) starting on October 23, 1989 and ending on November 3, 1989. During this two week period 147 interviews were completed. This represents 8.8% of all the numbers called. In households where someone answered the telephone and which contained an eligible family, an appropriate parent completed the interview 47.4% (the rest were refusals). Additional interviews were conducted in the following weeks to complete calling the numbers which had been selected for the sample. These additional interviews brought the number of interviews completed up to 180.

All phone numbers were called up to four times on various days and times. For 15% of the numbers no person ever answered the phone (many had answering machines) and 12% of the numbers turned out to be non-resident or non-working. Among the residence phone numbers, the majority (54% of all numbers called) were for persons who were not eligible to complete the questionnaire. Among the households containing an eligible parent, the majority (52.6%) declined to participate. Although efforts had been made to increase the number of fathers participating in the survey, only 59 fathers completed the questionnaire compared to 121 mothers.

The questionnaire was comparable to those used for the Middletown studies during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1970s, which helped provide details about parent-child relationships over a sixty year period but some alterations were necessary due to differences in the administration of the questionnaire. Instead of utilizing in-person interviews as the Lynds had in the 1920s and the Caplows had in the 1970s, telephone interviews were conducted. This made it necessary to make some changes in the format of the interview. The questionnaire was pretested before being administered by those involved with the project.
The primary dependent variable was the degree of sex role stereotyping by parents as expressed by the attitudes they profess to hold regarding the desirability of certain specific personality characteristics. The independent variable considered was the gender of the respondent. The questionnaire utilized while conducting the survey included a series of questions concerning what the respondents considered to be important personality characteristics for boys and girls. The respondents were asked whether they considered the personality characteristics of responsibility, strict obedience, being respectful of the opinions of others, showing good manners, being independent, and having loyalty to a religion as not important, somewhat important, or very important.
CHAPTER VI

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of research

For this research parents were asked whether they considered specific personality characteristics "not important", "somewhat important", or "very important" for boys. They were then asked the same questions in reference to girls. Table 1 shows what percentage of the 180 parents interviewed rated each of the specific personality characteristics "not important", "somewhat important", and "very important" for boys.

Table 1:
Percentages for Importance Level of Personality Characteristics Desired for Boys as Rated by Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinions</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Manners</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>.6%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to religion</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*"R" refers to ranking of characteristic in comparison with others.
Overall, the only personality characteristic not considered very important by the majority of the parents interviewed for boys was strict obedience. Strict obedience was considered very important by only 48.3% of the parents interviewed. Good manners was rated very important with the highest percentage of 92.8%. The parents interviewed considered it most frequently a very important personality characteristic for boys. All other personality characteristics were considered very important by at least 50% of the parents interviewed. Good manners was ranked first; respecting the opinion of others ranked second; feeling a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate ranked third; being independent ranked fourth; being loyal to a religion ranked fifth; and, strict obedience ranked sixth. Table 2 shows what percentage of the parents interviewed rated each of the specific personality characteristics "not important", "somewhat important", and "very important" for girls. It also shows how the characteristics ranked in comparison to one another.

Table 2:
Percentages for Importance of Personality Characteristics desired for Girls as Rated by Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinions</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good manners</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to Religion</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When looking at the results for girls, strict obedience is also rated as very important by the lowest percentage of respondents. It was considered very important by only 48.9% of the parents interviewed. All other personality characteristics were considered very important by at least 50% of the respondents. The personality characteristics considered very important for girls by a higher percentage of respondents when compared with the results for boys were responsibility, strict obedience, and loyalty to a religion. The personality characteristics of respecting the opinions of others, good manners, and being independent were considered very important for boys by a higher percentage of respondents than was the case for these same characteristics for girls. For girls, good manners ranked first; feeling a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate ranked second; respecting the opinions of others ranked third; being independent ranked fourth; being loyal to a religion ranked fifth; and, strict obedience ranked sixth. Table 1 and Table 2 demonstrate that only slight differences exist in the personality characteristics considered very important for girls versus those considered very important for boys. The rankings of the characteristics for boys and girls were identical except that for boys respecting the opinion of others was ranked second and feeling a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate was ranked third. For girls, feeling a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate ranked second and respecting the opinion of others ranked third. Good manners ranked first and strict obedience ranked sixth for both boys and girls.

The next question to be considered is: is there a difference in those personality characteristics considered very important by fathers and those considered very important by mothers? Table 3
and Table 4 offer insight into the answer to this question. Table 3 shows the results of crosstabulating the personality characteristics by whether the respondent is a mother or a father for boys.

Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality Characteristics</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Strict obedience</th>
<th>Respect opinion</th>
<th>Good manners</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Loyal to religion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>Fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td></td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good manners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.I. refers to "not important"; SI. refers to "somewhat important"; and V.I. refers to "very important".  
**R refers to the ranking of the personality characteristics.
Table 4 shows the results of crosstabulating the personality characteristics by whether the respondent is a mother or father for girls.

Table 4:
Crosstabulation of the Personality Characteristics by the Sex of the Respondent for Girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>N.I.</td>
<td>S.I.</td>
<td>V.I.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>N.I.</td>
<td>S.I.</td>
<td>V.I.</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>N.I.</td>
<td>S.I.</td>
<td>V.I.</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinions</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good manners</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to religion</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N.I. refers to "not important," S.I. refers to "somewhat important," and V.I. refers to "very important." ** R refers to the ranking of the characteristics.

A higher percentage of mothers than fathers considered all but one of the personality characteristics as very important for boys. That personality characteristic was loyalty to a religion. It is interesting to note that while only 69.5% of the fathers considered
responsibility very important for boys, it was considered very important for boys by 87.6% of the mothers. The other personality characteristic with a notable difference between the percentage of mothers and the percentage of fathers considering it very important for boys was being independent. Of the fathers interviewed, 62.7% considered being independent a very important personality characteristic for boys as opposed to 72.7% of the mothers interviewed. When looking at the rankings of the personality characteristics for boys, good manners was ranked first by both mothers and fathers. Strict obedience was ranked sixth by fathers and tied with loyalty to a religion for the last position by mothers.

Table 4 reveals that all personality characteristics under scrutiny were considered very important by a higher percentage of mothers than fathers. The personality characteristics with the greatest disparity between the percentage of fathers considering them very important for girls and the percentage of mothers considering them very important for girls were being responsible and being independent. Being responsible was considered very important by 66.1% of the fathers and 91.7% of the mothers interviewed. Being independent was considered very important by 50.8% of the fathers and 70.2% of the mothers interviewed. Once again goods manners ranked first and strict obedience ranked sixth for both mothers and fathers.

Table 5 and Table 6 show the results of crosstabulating the personality characteristics for boys and girls by whether or not the respondent’s mother was ever employed full-time outside the home.
Table 5:
Crosstabulation of the Personality Characteristics for Boys by Whether the Respondent's Mother was ever Employed Full-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>***E.E</th>
<th>*N.I.</th>
<th>*S.I.</th>
<th>*V.I.</th>
<th>***R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect opinions</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Manners</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>8.9%</td>
<td>91.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>6.5%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>35.7%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.8%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal to religion</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.I. refers to "not important", S.I. refers to "somewhat important"; and V.I. refers to "very important".

**E.E. refers to whether respondents mother was ever employed outside the home.

***R refers to the ranking of the characteristic.
Table 6:

Crosstabulation of Personality Characteristics for Girls by Whether the Respondent's Mother was ever Employed Full-time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>**E.E.</th>
<th>* N.I.</th>
<th>* S.I.</th>
<th>* V.I.</th>
<th>***R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>87.3%</td>
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<td>17.5%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strict obedience</td>
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<td>41.8%</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Respect opinions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<td>16.4%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>---</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good Manners</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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<td>89.1%</td>
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<td>5.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>60.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.8%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loyal to Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N.I. refers to "not important"; S.I. refers to "somewhat important"; and, V.I. refers to "very important".
**E.E. refers to whether the respondents mother was ever employed full-time outside the home.
***R refers to the ranking of the characteristic.
By examining Table 5 and Table 6 it is easy to ascertain that a definite difference in the personality characteristics considered very important for boys and girls does exist. A higher percentage of respondents whose mother had never worked full-time outside the home considered responsibility, strict obedience, and loyalty to a religion as being very important personality characteristics for boys and girls. A higher percentage of those respondents whose mothers had been employed full-time outside the home considered respecting the opinions of others, good manners, and being independent very important personality characteristics for boys and girls. The rankings of the personality characteristics remain the same with good manners ranking first and strict obedience ranking sixth.

Comparisons with past research

Comparing the results of this research with the results obtained by the Lynds or by Albrecht et al. is difficult. In Middletown, the Lynds reported which “habits” were thought to be important in the training of children by interviewing housewives. As a result, we are only given an indication of what mothers felt should have been stressed most in the training of children. Therefore, it is impossible to ascertain which “habits” fathers felt should have been stressed or whether it was thought that for boys and girls the “habits” to be stressed were different. When looking at the current data, several trends emerge. The two characteristics that appear to have remained of the same importance are strict obedience and loyalty to a religion. All other characteristics appear to be considered of more importance at present. The other prominent trend is that of mothers considering independence much more important than fathers tend to consider it for boys or girls.
In Albrech et al.'s research there are three personality traits which are comparable to those considered in this research. They are independence, responsibility, and obedience. Independence was considered only or more desirable by 31% of the male respondents and 19% of the female respondents. It was considered equally desirable for boys and girls by 67% of the male respondents and 79% of the female respondents. Responsibility was considered equally desirable for boys and girls by 92% of the male respondents and 95% of the female respondents. Obedience was considered equally desirable for boys and girls by 96% of the male respondents and 97% of the female respondents. These findings are extremely comparable to those of this research when considering parents in general as opposed to mother compared to fathers. The results of the present research demonstrate the mothers and fathers rank the importance of the personality characteristics considered similarly.

The results of the present research also compare with Alwin's assertion that parents consider strict obedience less important than they had in the past. In every comparison, strict obedience ranked last of the personality characteristics considered.

Conclusion

It has been suggested by Winch (1970) that there are two conditions which when occurring within a society result in the maximizing of sex role differentiation. Those conditions are: (1) the necessity of strenuous physical exertion and strength and (2) required absence from the home. There have been times in the past when our society when these conditions were much more prominent than at present due to our society becoming more of a "high energy" society. It would be expected that as a result of the
decline of these conditions we, as a society, will continue to move toward deemphasizing the differences between the sexes.

While the campaign for greater equality of opportunity without regard to gender gains momentum, there is evidence that there are important additudinal barriers that will continue to impede equal treatment of the sexes. Moreover, general stereotypes are apt to have a pervasive and continuing influence because sex roles usually are learned at home and parental attitudes tend to be transmitted to their offspring. Because sex roles are learned largely through the socialization process, significant change will be, at least in part, a function of change in attitudes and behavior patterns transmitted from parents to their children. It seems important that the parental attitudes continue to be identified and their diversity or homogeniety documented. It is important that more research be conducted looking at the attitudes people hold toward sex roles and how the behavior exhibited by people may differ from the attitudes they profess to hold.
APPENDIX
The interview was preceded by the following introduction:
Hello, my name is_____________________. I am a student at the University of North Texas. I am calling from the Sociology Department. Our research class is conducting a survey of parents in Denton to obtain their attitudes on family relationships. Your telephone number was drawn randomly. Are there any children under the age of 18 living in your household? 
(If no) I'm sorry, we need to interview only parents in this survey. Thank you for your time. 
(If yes) Okay, it is important that we interview a father in some households and a mother in others so that the results will truly represent all the parents in Denton. According to the method used by our University I need to interview the _____________ in your household. May I speak with that person"

The questions relevant to this research were:

How important do you feel it is for boys to make a name for themselves?

How important do you think it is for boys to feel a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate?

How important do you think it is for boys to show strict obedience?

How important do you think it is for a boy to show respect for opinions that are different from his own?

How important do you think it is for a boy to show good manners?

How important do you think it is for boys to be independent?

How important do you think it is for boys to be loyal to a religious faith?

The second series of questions were identical except the word "boy" was replaced by the word "girl". The options for responses were: very important, somewhat important, and not important.
REFERENCE WORKS


