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A Question of Salience: a Gender Analysis of the Work -Family Interface

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A QUESTION OF SALIENCE:
A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

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ABSTRACT

Work-family conflict is an often studied and widely experienced phenomenon. The goal of this study was to explore the work and family themes that emerged spontaneously in a larger study of the advantages and disadvantages of the male and female gender roles. Over 600 undergraduate students at a diverse southeastern university were asked to describe these advantages and disadvantages in a survey incorporating both open and closed elements. Of the major themes that emerged in each category (advantages and disadvantages each for men and women), the salience and resulting ease or difficulty of fulfilling work and family roles were among those most frequently mentioned. This largely qualitative research focuses on how the work and family domains are constructed differently for men and women, and whether men and women listed similar items in these areas. Generally, work and family were discussed by respondents as differentially associated with men or women, although women were more likely than men to discuss the ways family roles in particular were a disadvantage to them.

DEDICATION

To my husband, Joseph Sitter, thank you for all the encouragement, for patiently listening to me as I tried to work through tough sections, and for tolerating long nights.

To my parents and my friends, both fellow graduate students and all the "downtowners", thank you for encouraging words and reminding me to have a little fun in the midst of all the hard work.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

A major concern for today's family is the task of balancing work and family life. The second half of the 20th century has seen a departure from the previous mode of nuclear, single-earner families, where the male acts as the primary earner and the female is oriented toward family and home. Instead, a diversity of family types brings both women and men into the labor force (Wetzel 1990; Winslow 2005). The lack of a dedicated, home-oriented individual in the family results in additional time and role pressures for working members of the household. These pressures are particularly exacerbated in the growing number of single-parent households, which are mostly headed by women (Gerson and Jacobs 2004; Henly and Lyons 2000).

In addition, work itself is changing toward a more flexible model (McMenamin 2007). For some, this means extra long hours, night or rotating shift work, or contingent and contract work. These changes in work and family structure have led to increased conflict between the two realms (Winslow 2005), and researchers have focused a great deal of attention on understanding the nature of work-family conflict and its accompanying causes and effects.

One of the most significant effects of work-family conflict is its consistent association with poor physical and mental health, making it an important issue to study. Conflict in which paid work affects family life has been associated with alcohol abuse (Frone, Russell, and Cooper 1997), poor diet, and physical health problems (Allen and

Armstrong 2006). In the other direction, conflict in which family life impinges on work has been associated with poor physical health, depression, hypertension (Frone et al. 1997), sedentary lifestyle, poor diet (Allen and Armstrong 2006), and reduced life satisfaction (Nomaguchi, Milkie, and Bianchi 2005). In addition, illness can upset the sometimes delicate balance of work and family (Cunningham-Burley, Backett-Milburn, and Kemmer 2006). The competing demands of work and family can lead to stress and overload, highlighting the need to understand how families in the 21st century are able to successfully balance their work and family lives.

A number of theoretical perspectives on the sources and nature of work-family conflict have been developed which have greatly enhanced our understanding of this phenomenon (see Edwards and Rothbard 2000; Glass 2005; Major and Cleveland 2005; Voydanoff 2002, 2005). However, there are at least two unresolved issues in the literature that this thesis is well suited to address. First, although many of the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict are well-studied, these studies often do not explore the broader issue of the separation and gendering of work and family. To some degree, work-family conflict is bound up in the very ways masculinity and femininity are constructed in society. As a result, the work-family literature would benefit from a study that critically examines work and family roles from within the broader context of gender roles.

The second unresolved issue relates to how work-family conflict is presently studied. To the extent that gender differences in the experience and response to work-family conflict is examined in studies, current findings are inconclusive. Furthermore, many of these studies rely on the same small handful of datasets and do not address the

issue of response bias. Men, for example, might report experiences of work-family conflict via pre-constructed scales more frequently than they would if asked to describe gender roles, or even work and family roles more generally, due to emerging social norms that encourage the involvement of men in families

This thesis relies on data in which respondents were asked to describe perceived advantages and disadvantages for both the male and female gender roles. Thus, it is possible to examine how work and family – and the interaction between the two – are intertwined with conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Furthermore, because we did not ask respondents specifically to talk about work and family, it allows us to gain a better understanding of the actual salience of these roles to men and women. As a result, we can examine how gender constructions (i.e., schemas) lead to the structuring of individual lives through cultural pressures to engage in one role or the other.

As Moen and Orrange (2002:236) point out, these "gendered assumptions and expectations are more than just ideas that individuals are socialized to embrace, they are embedded in the functioning of institutions, framing the parameters of social interaction." Thus, even though there may have been changes in the actual experiences of individuals' lives (for example, more women are working), if there hasn't been a corresponding change in the gender ideologies which structure society, the resulting gap between experience and expectations will be experienced as the strains described as work-family conflict.

Two primary research questions will be examined, each addressing the gaps described above. First, how do men and women describe work and family obligations? More importantly, how do they describe the combination of these obligations? Examining

the content of work and family-related data may provide insight into how these roles are enmeshed with broader gender schemas. Second, do men and women mention work-family interactions with the same frequency? This question focuses on the salience of work and family to men and women without being limited by the use of pre-constructed scales.

Chapter two presents a review of the work-family literature. Examining current theories and research on the work-family interface provides clues to the separation and gendering of these domains. Chapter three describes the data supporting this thesis and details the proposed analyses. Chapter four addresses the first research question, presenting a detailed description of the types of statements made by respondents. Chapter five contains the results of quantitative analyses pertaining to the second research question. Finally, in chapter six, I return to the two unresolved issues described above with a discussion of how this thesis addresses them.

CHAPTER TWO
THE WORK-FAMILY INTERFACE

The concept of the work-family *interface* implies a multiplicity of connections between the two domains of work and family. These work-family connections operate in two directions: family life sometimes influences work (family-to-work) and work sometimes influences family life (work-to-family). The distinction in direction of influence is important to note, as it figures into the gendered experience of work and family. Yet, the idea of an "interface" also carries important assumptions about the separation of these domains, as will be discussed later.

With these two points in mind, this chapter reviews the work-family literature. Particular emphasis is given to common definitions and usage of the concept of work-family conflict. This concept merits additional attention due to its relation to the content of work-family themes in this study. Also discussed in this chapter is the long-lasting influence of the separation of work and family as a source of work-family conflict and the gendered variations in experience and response to this conflict.

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict is a major facet of the work-family interface and underpins much of the research in this area, whether the emphasis is on conflict, balance, or other aspects of work and family. Work-family conflict occurs, as the name implies, when demands from one or both areas conflict with those of the other. Greenhaus and Beutell

(1985:77) define it as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role."

Conflict, as defined above, may result from time demands, role strains, or behavior strains (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Since time is a finite resource, time spent in paid employment or caring for home and children reduces the time available to spend on the other role. The two roles may come into conflict if, for example, a work schedule makes it difficult to pick up children from childcare or if a sick child causes one to miss work.

Role strains, on the other hand, arise when stress from one role – and the accompanying fatigue or irritability, among other things, that may result – interferes with one's ability to fulfill real or perceived obligations in the other role. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) do not specify whether this represents actual role strain or more of a psychological appraisal of inadequate performance in the conflicting roles. Nonetheless, as W.I. Thomas pointed out, when we "define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas 1928:572). For example, the tired parent who, after coming home from a full day at work, chooses to order food instead of preparing a fresh meal at home may feel inadequate as a parent even though the family was fed. The *experience* of role strain becomes real whether or not there is some objective standard by which to measure performance and observe a failure to fulfill obligations.

The final form of work-family conflict identified by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) is behavior based strain. Conflict from this source results when the expected

behavior in one role is ill suited to the expectations of the other role and the individual cannot or does not adjust their behavior to fit. Although this type of conflict is the least fleshed out in Greenhaus and Beutell's framework, it can be understood in terms of the behavior and demeanor expected in the public versus the private worlds. In one, we expect impersonal relationships and goal oriented behavior. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) cite the example of the manager who is authoritarian, self-reliant, and aggressive, and point out that this stereotype is often associated with men. In contrast, the private world calls for more personal relationships characterized by warmth and nurturance. Given these differences, the boundary between the two realms may become difficult to navigate as the individual attempts to shift their behavior and demeanor to fit the role into which they are transitioning. Indeed, Hill, Hawkins, and Miller (1996) find that work-family conflict intensifies when the boundary between the two domains becomes too blurred; an inability to switch quickly between two roles and the behavior required of each may be part of the cause.

Clearly, work and family interact in a number of ways. Edwards and Rothbard (2000:179) identify six linking mechanisms, of which work-family conflict is only one. Each mechanism represents distinct "causal relationships between specific work and family constructs," although some, such as spillover or resource drain, operate similarly to work-family conflict. For example, resource drain occurs when one domain controls the majority of personal resources, such as time, thereby interfering with the completion of tasks in the other domain. In this situation, work-family conflict would be increased. However, these additional mechanisms can also *reduce* conflict, as when skills gained in one area spill over into another area and facilitate role performance. Ultimately, this

model does not clearly specify how work-family conflict is a mechanism separate from the others, nor how it is a process as opposed to an outcome. However, it is useful for understanding that work and family are linked in a variety of ways, with both positive and negative outcomes.

The Social Context of Work and Family

The body of work-family literature has revealed a great deal of variation in the experience of and reaction to work-family conflict based on such individual, family, and work characteristics as gender, class, marital status, parental status, and job autonomy. These variations stem from differences in the expectations placed on individuals and the strategies and resources available for coping with demands. High family income, for example, may lead to a reduction in work-family conflict due to the greater availability of resources; however, it may also lead to increased conflict due to the pressures of scheduling and time that frequently accompany high-wage careers (Green 1997).

One of the most basic points in the literature is that work and family are gendered, resulting in different demands on men and women. Sometimes this results in a focus on work-family conflict as a women's problem (Lopata 1993; Milkie and Peltola 1999); however, there is some disagreement in the literature over whether women experience greater work-family conflict than men (Desrochers, Hilton, and Larwood 2005; Hill 2005), or experience similar levels as men (Milkie and Peltola 1999; Reynolds 2005; Schieman, Whitestone, and Van Gundy 2006; Winslow 2005), though many studies do not provide results by gender (Allen and Armstrong 2006; Grzywacz and Bass 2003; Moen, Kelly, and Huang 2008).

A closer examination of this issue points to the ways in which men and women define conflict differently. Keene and Quadagno (2004) observed that men tend to report greater work-family balance when priority is given to work and the reverse appears to be the case for women. It is interesting that there is a perception of balance even when priority is not given equally to both domains. In this case, balance may be more reflective of congruence with cultural expectations than of equal participation in both domains.

Thus, differences in the way men and women experience work-family conflict appear to be, at their core, tied up with the uneven distribution of time: men spend more time than women working, women spend more time than men on housework and childcare, and men have more free time for themselves (Mattingly and Sayer 2006). In the period from 1975 to 1998, patterns of time usage changed. Both men and women are doing more with their time, but the greatest change has come from women. In 1975 women worked approximately 19 hours per week as compared to 32 hours per week in 1998, adding roughly 13 hours of paid work to their week while decreasing housework and childcare by only 30 minutes per day (Mattingly and Sayer 2006).

Women report reduced life satisfaction when they encounter difficulties in spending time with family, while men only report reduced life satisfaction when outside demands impinge on personal time (Nomaguchi et al. 2005). Both respond similarly to strains resulting from time demands, but define their priorities differently. As a result, response to work-family conflict can vary. Women who reported high family-to-work conflict desired reduced work hours, but no such relationship existed for men (Reynolds 2005).

In addition to time, characteristics of the family and work must be taken into account, since they will influence the relative demands and resources present. For example, the number of children residing in the household has been associated with levels of work-family conflict (Maume and Houston 2001; Stevens, Minnotte, and Kiger 2004; Demerouti and Geurts 2004). Marital status and the availability of spouse and/or kin support may also have an impact on perceived conflict, as suggested by studies of equality within the household (van Willigen and Drentea 2001). The amount of time spent working (Bielby and Bielby 1989; Maume and Houston 2001; Stevens et al. 2004), specific work conditions such as autonomy and coworker support (Maume and Houston 2001; Demerouti and Geurts 2004), and the level of occupational segregation (Maume and Houston 2001) will also influence the degree of work-family conflict experienced.

Person-Environment Fit

A preponderance of the literature focuses on the conflict resulting from work-family interaction (Major and Cleveland 2005), however, not all of these interactions have negative impacts. There is an increasing emphasis on work-family balance, work-family facilitation, and work-family fit (Grzywacz and Bass 2003; Keene and Quadagno 2004; Moen et al. 2008). These additional concepts come from an ecological approach that treats work and family as separate microsystems of influence on the individual. These microsystems are situated within other, larger social systems. Thus, this perspective recognizes the complex ways various social systems interact and impact individual lives (Grzywacz and Marks 2001; Voydanoff 2005).

By taking into account the broader social context of work and family, conflict or mismatch between the two domains is understood less as an individual problem than in the perspective emphasizing role strains (Glass 2005). Because this thesis proposes to examine work and family within the larger context of gender roles – and because conflict is not the only interaction expected – this perspective warrants further discussion.

Working within the ecological, or person-environment fit, perspective, Voydanoff (2002, 2005) presents a framework of the work-family interface that emphasizes different configurations of resources and demands. The four main work-family connections identified are conflict, facilitation, fit, and balance. She (2005) points out that some researchers tend to equate different configurations (for example, where balance is described as merely the absence of conflict). However, her framework draws clear distinctions between each of these four concepts. Below I describe this model in further detail, beginning with definitions of resources and demands and then turning to each configuration of these.

Both work and family domains are assumed to have various resources and demands associated with them. Resources are assets that reduce demands and facilitate the completion of role expectations. Demands consist of those expectations associated with various roles, and require that the individual respond or adapt to them. Each type of interaction between work and family represents a different configuration of these resources and demands. This reflects a strength of the person-environment perspective alluded to above: the specific nature of the interaction between work and family depends not just on the congruence of an individual's multiple roles, but rather on the entire

context of the resources and demands associated with their work environment, family environment, spouse's work environment, and so forth (Glass 2005).

The first configuration, *conflict*, is congruent with the Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) definition discussed earlier. In this model, conflict results when demands from one domain exceed resources in the other, such that role performance or quality are diminished. *Facilitation*, on the other hand, occurs when resources from one domain enhance performance in the other. In both of these cases, interaction does not result simply from one domain exerting influence on the other, but rather from the confluence – specifically, the mismatch – of demands and resources between both domains. In a similar discussion, Edwards and Rothbard (2005) are also careful to make this point, citing it as a strength of the person-environment perspective.

If *conflict* and *facilitation* result in a mismatch between demands and resources, then *work-family fit* exists when the two are balanced. Fit can exist either between work demands and family resources or between family demands and work resources. In both cases, resources (e.g., financial, time and energy, skills and abilities, or psychological rewards) are perceived to meet demands (e.g., financial needs, time constraints, or skill requirements). *Balance* is defined specifically as the combination of fit between *both* work demands-family resources *and* family demands-work resources. Voydanoff (2005) specifies that this is a global assessment by the individual of balance and, in this configuration, role performance in both areas will be satisfactory. In addition, individuals may attempt to influence balance. Indeed, the goal of certain boundary-spanning strategies, such as reducing work hours or limiting childbearing, is to achieve relative fit between both domains.

An Ideology of Separateness

Approaches that emphasize work-family conflict – such as the framework laid out by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) – imply that resources are scarce and must be allocated according to demands on a zero-sum basis (Reynolds 2005). The person-environment fit perspective, however, recognizes that work and family domains are intimately connected; the boundary-spanning resources, demands, and strategies described by Voydanoff (2005) all highlight the multiple transitions that individuals make every day. According to this perspective then, the boundary between work and family can be described as a relatively flexible or permeable one (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate 2000).

A permeable role boundary is one in which the individual spans both domains while physically in one or the other, such as while working from home. Flexibility in responding to domain demands can decrease work-family conflict for some, while increasing it for others (Hill et al. 1996). It appears to become problematic when the boundaries become too blurred. Thus, doing paid work at home could facilitate managing family obligations. However, if a clear office space cannot be established, constant interruptions by children or other issues may impede fulfillment of work tasks.

The notion of permeable boundaries emphasizes the degree to which these two domains are separate from one another. That is, although individuals may engage in both family and work roles, they must nonetheless transition between the two. With very few exceptions, an individual cannot simultaneously focus on paid work and care for children or clean the house. Fletcher (2005) further supports this argument by pointing out how the focus on attaining work-family balance as opposed to *integration* indicates a mindset that implicitly recognizes the division of work and family.

This separation was most distinct at the height of the industrial era, when most paid work moved out of the home and into factories. An intensified division of labor resulted during this period, in which productive, paid work existed in a public sphere and reproductive, unpaid work existed in a private sphere. The breadwinner-homemaker family model emerged as a specialized means of adapting to the emerging industrial economy with its demands of paid employment, childcare, and household consumption. The gender ideology supporting this model placed men in the workplace and women at home, and was presented as a solution for several decades, even though it was an ideal not achievable by large segments of society (Ehrenreich and English 1978; Fletcher 2005).

In more recent decades, large scale changes in women's labor force involvement, men's earnings, family structure, and work organization have placed heavy strain on a model that depends on men and women being engaged in specialized roles in separate spheres. Women have entered the workforce in increasingly large numbers, adding paid employment to family and household duties (Cohany and Sok 2007; Mattingly and Sayer 2006). During this period, men's status as primary breadwinner has diminished. Their relative earnings declined, especially in the 1990s, and the number of dual-earner families increased (Galinsky, Aumann, and Bond 2009; Sweeney 2002). These changes along with increases in divorce rates and advances in reproductive technology led to a diversification of family types (Wetzel 1990). The economy underwent two major shifts: one in the timing and flexibility of work schedules, and second in a move away from manufacturing work toward knowledge and services (McMenamin 2007; Wyatt and Hecker 2006). This new type of work emphasizes a different skill set that is less reliant

on typically masculine attributes (Fletcher 2005). Men's and women's increasing involvement in *both* spheres and the structural changes occurring within each area, could thus been seen as a generating force behind the increase in work-family conflict.

Gendered Spheres

A critical component of the reality of separate spheres is the gendered nature of each. The very construction of the breadwinner-homemaker model places men in one domain and women in the other, but the issue goes much deeper than men and women being typically associated with one role set or the other. As Fletcher (2005:330) argues, the separation of work and family "result[ed] in a division of labor linked directly to definitions of *masculinity* and *femininity*." This point is particularly germane to this thesis, as I argue that a discussion of the interaction between work and family must be situated within the larger social context of gender roles. Three closely related issues are important here: (1) the means by which work and family become gendered; (2) the oppositional relationship of these spheres to each other; and (3) their relation to "doing gender."

Acker (1990) identifies five processes that result in the gendering of an organization. Although she focuses on the work organization, these processes carry similar implications for all modern institutions, including the family. First, there is a basic division of labor between men and women. This division of labor has been previously discussed, but it also applies to the typical duties associated with men and women in both spheres (e.g., managers vs. secretaries at work; yard work vs. cooking at home). Second, cultural symbols – such as images of businessmen or homemakers portrayed in the mass

media – are used to support this division of labor. Third, patterns of interaction reinforce gender hierarchies. That is, discourse and interaction between individuals is not gender neutral; it reflects power differentials and the gendered division of labor. Fourth, there is the production of a gendered identity that is consistent with the division of labor. Research on self-identities suggests this is an important point. Given that self-identities may be culturally shaped and that it is the congruence between role activities and self-identity that is especially important to well-being (Glass 2005), individuals may be under greater stress and pressure when their activities are out of line with cultural expectations. Finally, the fifth process Acker (1990) identifies is how these gendering processes serve to structure organizations.

Through the construction of separate, gendered spheres, Fletcher (2005) argues, the two realms are placed in opposition to each other. The resulting dichotomy is premised on the possession and requirement of different skills and operational logic. What is valued in one area is devalued in the other. Indeed, one domain itself is often devalued in relation to the other. This different appraisal of abilities may underlie the behavior-based strain described by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985): the stark distinction between dichotomized pairs of skills – rationality vs. emotionality, assertiveness vs. nurturance – means that to be skilled in one domain is to be lacking or out of place in the other (Fletcher 2005).

That work and family are deeply gendered contributes to our lay understanding of what being masculine or being feminine entails. That is, these spheres are conflated with "doing gender" (Fletcher 2005:332). As much as each sphere – or more generally, various jobs and duties - is associated with men or women, to fulfill obligations within

each is to *do* gender. This perspective moves away from a depiction of gender as a function of biology, socialization, or even structurally determined roles (Deutsch 2007). Instead, to "do gender" is to act and present oneself in ways consistent with culturally accepted definitions of masculinity and femininity (West and Zimmerman 1987).

Thus, although the characteristics typically thought of as masculine are highly valued in the modern, rational work environment, this is not because men naturally possess those attributes and are therefore better suited for work. Rather, the modern workplace and definitions of masculinity became enmeshed over time and acted out through daily gender displays that reinforce gendered elements of the workplace (Acker 1990; Deutsch 2007; Fletcher 2005).

A Question of Salience

In some ways, the general gender schemas we hold prepare us to experience work and family in certain ways. That is, gender schemas play a major role in both structuring work and family domains and shaping our experiences within them (Moen and Orrange 2002). Thus, the intersection of work and family should be examined within the broader context of gender role expectations and commonly assumed "traits" of men and women. The intertwined existence of these domains with popular conceptions of masculinity and femininity mean that to ask about gender is to ask about the structure and experience of work and family.

It is at this juncture that the two unresolved issues in the work-family literature discussed in the previous chapter meet. On the one hand, work-family conflict may be rooted in the separation and gendering of work and family. On the other hand, the gender

schemas supporting this separation exert pressures for men and women to identify more strongly with one or the other domain. Thus, work-family conflict may not be equally salient to men and women, particularly depending on the construction of work and family roles for each gender.

Differences in how men and women experience and respond to the interaction between work and family, as well as the numerous factors that may lead to a mismatch in demands and resources, point to this important question. Do mentions of work and family, and the interaction between the two areas, spontaneously emerge for both men and women to similar degrees and with similar content when they are asked to describe perceived gender role advantages and disadvantages?

For the most part, current studies within the work-family literature do not address this question. In many studies, where gender may not be the foremost research concern, gender differences in reported levels of work-family conflict are often not reported (Allen and Armstrong 2006; Grzywacz and Bass 2003; Moen et al. 2008). Among the remainder, results are contradictory: a large proportion find that women report greater levels of work-family conflict (Carr 2002; Desrochers et al. 2005; Hill 2005; Maume and Houston 2001), while others argue men and women experience similar levels (Milkie and Peltola 1999; Reynolds 2005; Schieman et al. 2006; Winslow 2005). Some have observed a greater increase in levels of work-family conflict for men over the past decades (Winslow 2005), with one study finding that fathers in dual-earner couples now exceed women in reported work-family conflict (Galinsky et al. 2009).

In addition, a number of these studies rely on only a few datasets, such as the National Study of the Changing Workforce (Galinsky et al. 2009; Hill 2005; Keene and

Quadagno 2004; Maume and Houston 2001; Reynolds 2005; Winslow 2005). Given the large sample sizes of these well-known datasets and the wide range of work and family related variables (including various work-family conflict constructs), this overuse is not surprising. As would be expected, almost all of these studies rely on pre-constructed scales of varying lengths and content. This is important, as it influences the observed results. For example, in a study conducted by Milkie and Peltola (1999), both men and women appear to be successful at balancing work and family, though men report more work-family tradeoffs than women. However, closer examination of the operationalization of work-family tradeoffs reveals that men made more of the tradeoffs that might be expected given their traditional association with work roles. Given the present method of studying work-family conflict, it would be difficult to accurately assess the salience of work-family conflict to men and women. It is possible, as observed in the previous chapter, that men or women might report greater levels of work-family conflict than actually experienced due to social norms that encourage involvement in the family.

Thus, the literature would benefit from the present study, as it relies on data that is firmly grounded within the construction of gender roles and did not specifically ask respondents to discuss work and family roles. With this data, is it possible to examine the gendering of work and family and to assess the salience of these domains, and any interaction between them, to men and women.

CHAPTER THREE
DATA AND METHODS

The data presented here resulted from a study investigating the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the male and female gender roles. These data were gathered in 2005 for a larger research project with the research goal of assessing changes in gender roles over the past four decades. This thesis examines one aspect of that study: the work and family themes which made up a large part of the data. As a result, these data provide an interesting glimpse into the context of work and family roles for men and women, and especially how these roles are gendered. Specifically, it provides a picture of gender roles and attitudes not dictated by a previously constructed scale. Because work and family – and the overlap between the two – emerged as important issues, these data are ideal for this thesis.

A survey consisting of both open-ended and closed elements was administered to undergraduates enrolled in lower-level sociology and women's studies courses at a diverse southeastern university. For the bulk of students, this was their first sociology or women's studies course, and the survey was given early in the term in order to minimize the influence of course material on gender attitudes. One half of the survey consisted of four, open-ended questions that asked students to list the advantages and disadvantages for both the male and female gender role. Students were allowed to list as many items as they wanted. The second half gathered basic demographic information and included several scales that measured traditional gender ideology, perception of discrimination

against women, and religiosity. Below, I describe each section in greater detail, giving particular attention to the method by which qualitative data were handled.

Qualitative Data

Most of the data generated by the survey come from the open-ended questions. Students were asked to respond to each permutation of the following statement:

> Based on common cultural definitions, please list as many [ADVANTAGES/ DISADVANTAGES] to the [MALE/FEMALE] gender role (cultural ideas about how males/females should behave, think, or feel) as possible.

Responses to the four open-ended questions mostly took the form of short phrases or sentences, resulting in several thousand responses that collectively could be taken as cultural perceptions of the expectations and privileges of the male and female gender roles. Working in a team comprised of various experience levels, genders, and perspectives, we developed a coding schema through an iterative process that lasted several years. This method approaches that described by Charmaz (2004): involving initial and focused stages of coding, though we did not follow a grounded theory method more generally.

The precise method by which we developed our coding schema fits more closely with that described by Weston and her colleagues (2001). In their process, a rough starting point was guided by the primary research questions. From this point, tentative codes were generated. A "recursive, iterative process" (p. 386) refined and reorganized subsequent versions of the codebook as new information and understanding was incorporated.

This procedure is intimately tied with the *analysis* of the data; thus, I will describe in detail how we arrived at the themes to be discussed in the following chapters. It is important to note that although this thesis presents certain analyses of the data, a large portion of analysis was carried out in the preceding years for the purposes of the larger study. As a result, the coding process cannot be treated simply as preparing and cleaning the data for analysis. The qualitative nature of these data mean that analysis and understanding are achieved during the process of organizing the data into a presentable form.

During the initial coding process, responses were sorted into detailed themes. Each new idea encountered was assigned a code, usually a shortened wording of the respondent's response. Four coders worked on the data independently and agreed on the assigned codes by consensus during weekly meetings. Since responses were assigned codes that remained as close as possible to the statement, this resulted in many similar codes separated only by subtle differences. Once all responses were given an initial code, the data was entered into *The Ethnograph* software.

The Ethnograph software supported the second, or focused, phase of coding. It provided diverse functions such as coding responses into themes, sorting the data, manipulating the codebook, and tabulating frequencies. During this stage, the main goal was to arrive at a taxonomy of major advantages and disadvantages that were consistent and remained true to the respondent's actual statements. To achieve this, themes were reviewed for internal consistency. Responses that did not fit were moved to a more appropriate theme. In addition, a number of themes were merged or grouped together into meta-themes due to conceptual similarity.

Throughout the coding process, data were handled without specific identifiers such as sex, age, and race. On the one hand, this method removed statements from the context of the individual. However, we feel that this circumstance (which was the result of how data were initially organized) forced us to remain more true to the actual statement and thereby minimized potential biases in interpretation. This approach was facilitated in part through the specific nature of our data. Were we working with interviews, for example, it would not be advisable to work with "anonymous" data.

Despite our attempts to remain true to the respondent's statements, there were some responses which were difficult to classify. Two strategies were adopted to handle these situations. First, wherever possible, the context of all of the respondent's statements was examined. This sometimes allowed us to determine whether the respondent was more focused on one issue or another, as evidenced by multiple similar statements. Second, in those cases where the response context was not illuminating or a consensus could not be easily reached, the response was dropped from analysis as vague. Similarly, some responses read more like criticisms or negative judgments of one gender rather than the role per se. These responses were also struck.

In the end, themes or meta-themes with fewer than 20 responses were ultimately dropped as idiosyncratic. A few were kept for qualitative and/or symbolic importance, but were not included as part of any quantitative analyses. In some of these cases, the themes represented historic change. For example, where the military draft would have appeared in earlier decades as a disadvantage to males (Polk and Stein 1972), only a few individuals mentioned this item in the present study. In other cases, the idiosyncratic theme was retained as an interesting contrast to a theme in another category, as for

example the female advantage that women "don't have to prove their femininity" in contrast to the male norm (and major disadvantage) that they "must prove their masculinity."

The codebook that resulted from this method is organized as follows. At the broadest level, responses are organized into four *categories* according to the question they addressed: male advantage (MA), male disadvantage (MD), female advantage (FA), and female disadvantage (FD). Within each category, responses are further sorted into similar *themes*. Several themes are repeated across categories (e.g., both male advantage and female advantage contain a theme called "economic advantage"); however, the specific content of each theme varies depending on the issues relevant to the broader category. Some themes are independent, while others are grouped into meta-themes. These *meta-themes* are more complex and cover several aspects of an area of life. They consist of a main theme, underneath which several sub-themes are organized. For example, in the category of male advantage, there are themes such as "protectors" and "higher pay." Although the "protectors" theme is independent, "higher pay" is grouped with other work-related items under the meta-theme "economic advantage."

Quantitative Data

The qualitative themes were ultimately merged with the quantitative half of the survey. This research strategy fits most closely with what Creswell (2003) described as a "concurrent nested model" in which both qualitative and quantitative data were simultaneously collected and linked for analysis. By quantifying the qualitative themes in these data and linking them with additional quantitative data, we can address further

research questions, such as the extent to which men and women responded differently with respect to the gender role questions.

Demographic information collected in the survey included *gender*, *race* (self-reported), *age*, and *academic major*. Respondents were also asked whether they had taken women's studies courses before and to list those courses, if any. Two sub-scales of the Liberal Feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale (LFAIS; Morgan 1996) were included. The first sub-scale, here called *traditionalism*, tapped into gender role attitudes, specifically the degree to which traditional beliefs were held. The second sub-scale, *discrimination*, dealt with "the respondents' beliefs that women have been and are still currently unfairly treated" (Morgan 1996:370). The final scale in this survey asked about the *religiosity* of the respondent. This scale included two items that asked respondents whether (1) religion is an important part of their life and (2) they believe in a literal translation of religious scriptures as the word of God.

In the next step, qualitative responses were entered into the dataset as count variables. For each individual, the following information was recorded: (1) how many total responses were given for each category; and (2) each response that an individual made as represented by the coding schema. Each major theme from the qualitative data became a variable in the quantitative data, and the number of times the respondent listed an item was recorded. In most cases, scores were zero or one; however, these variables were not initially entered in binary format in order to accommodate those cases in which an individual listed two unique ideas that were coded under the same theme. Furthermore, some individuals listed multiple items which were coded into separate themes but ultimately organized into a single meta-theme. In these cases, entering the

data as a count variable provided some sense of the magnitude of salience of an issue to a respondent that a binary variable would not provide.

Sample Characteristics

Of the 690 students surveyed, a full two-thirds were female (455 women to 227 men). Almost 70 percent were between the ages of 17 and 21 years old, reflective of traditional college age students. Approximately 58 percent were white, and there was a sizeable African-American portion (41 percent of the sample). As stated earlier, the bulk of students were in their first sociology or women's studies course. Over 78 percent were enrolled in an introductory sociology course and only 29 individuals indicated having a prior women's studies course. However, these courses are typically taken by a diverse range of students, and this was reflected in the academic majors listed by individuals.

There were some basic demographic and attitudinal differences between men and women. More men in the sample were white and more women African American than should have been observed. Almost all of the individuals with prior women's studies courses were women (24 of 29). Respondents' academic majors were relatively well spread out, with women overrepresented only in the Social and Behavioral Sciences and Pre-Health, which included Nursing majors. Men were overrepresented in Business and Engineering. Finally, there significant differences in mean scores for both of the sub-scales related to gender attitudes. Men were more likely to hold traditional beliefs and less likely to believe that women are and were unfairly treated.

Table 3.1. Descriptive Statistics by Gender

	Total	*Men*	*Women*
Gender		33.3	66.7
Mean Age	20.1	20.1	20.1
Race[a]			
White	58.6	72.3	51.9 ***
Black	41.4	27.7	48.1
Academic Major			
Social and Behavioral Sciences	25.1	19.2	28.0 *
Arts and Humanities	9.2	9.8	8.9
Math and Natural Science	12.5	15.2	11.2
Business and Engineering	11.4	21.4	6.3 ***
Education	5.6	4.9	6.0
Pre-health and Nursing	22.0	12.1	26.8 ***
Undecided or General Studies	14.2	17.4	12.8
Prior Women's Studies Course	4.3	2.3	5.4
Mean Traditionalism score	17.9	22.1	15.8 ***
	(7.2)	(7.3)	(6.1)
Mean Discrimination score	30.3	25.9	32.5 ***
	(8.0)	(7.2)	(7.5)

Note: All numbers are percentages, except where mean is indicated (standard deviations in parenthesis). Two-tailed t-tests for continuous variables, Chi-square test for categorical.

[a]6.6 percent of the sample indicated other race or ethnic backgrounds, including Hispanic or Asian. However, due to the small size of this group, they have been excluded from quantitative analyses. The numbers above represent the percentages of White and Black respondents after excluding respondents of other backgrounds.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the primary aim of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which work-family conflict is perceived as a problem for men and women. This must necessarily take place within the broader context of gender roles, especially given the gendering processes active within work and family that bind these domains to popular conceptions of masculinity and femininity. The two research questions identified at the outset of this thesis address: 1) what was said by *all* respondents about men and women in work and family; and 2) whether the content of statements made by men differed from those made by women.

Analysis for the first question is largely complete; this work, as described earlier, resulted in the themes which are presented in chapter four. As a result, this chapter consists largely of a qualitative discussion of themes in the data, with selected responses reproduced as necessary. Particular attention was given to the way in which work and family obligations interact with one another, such as when respondents said it was difficult to juggle the competing demands. However, as pointed out in previous chapters, it is important to focus not just on conflict between work and family but also other ways in which these two domains interact. In this section, the primary aim will be to explore how work and family are described in these data for both men and women, and to thereby arrive at an understanding of when the combination of work and family roles becomes problematic.

A full analysis of the gendered nature of the work-family interface, however, will require an investigation that differentiates between responses made by men and those made by women. Thus, the second section of analysis will make use of the quantitative data in order to determine whether there are gender differences in the frequency of responses pertaining to work and family themes. To answer this question, gender will be regressed onto the work and family meta-themes across all four categories, controlling for age and race. Specific hypotheses are not made regarding the direction of relationships between gender and the themes under focus. Rather, it is expected that the qualitative discussion in chapter four will inform the quantitative analyses in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR
WORK AND FAMILY IN THE DATA

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the content of the data, as it is informative first to understand what was said by respondents regarding the work and family related roles for men and women before determining whether there are systematic differences in the statements made by each. Thus, this chapter consists of a qualitative discussion of the data and will be followed by a quantitative chapter. A close examination of these statements uncovers gender role beliefs that may contribute to work-family conflict and details how this phenomenon is constructed.

It will be important to keep in mind throughout this discussion that all of the themes described here were generated from responses spontaneously mentioned by respondents. That is, we did not ask respondents to discuss work or family roles. That these themes emerged as such major topics demonstrates how central they are to the gendered experience of life. Thus, these themes reflect socially salient issues that merit an in-depth review.

Before describing these issues, however, I begin with a brief overview of the distribution of responses and its significance. The four open-ended questions asked of participants in the study generated 6,884 responses. This is the total number of unique ideas mentioned and coded during the first stage. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of

ideas coded across each of the main categories at the end of both the initial and focused stages of coding.

Table 4.1. Distribution of Qualitative Responses by Stage of Coding

	Initial	*Focused*	*Percent Retained*
Advantage			
Male	2,182	1,890	86.6
Female	1,632	1,268	77.7
Disadvantage			
Male	1,366	1,111	81.3
Female	1,704	1,453	85.3
Total	6,884	5,722	81.1

Male advantage was originally and continues to be the largest category; people listed more advantages for men than any other group – and this may represent an actual advantage in the social world on the part of men as a collective group. Similarly, they are also the least disadvantaged group, lending further weight to this argument. Women's advantages and disadvantages were listed – at least originally – in close to equal proportions. This changed some during the focused coding, where themes were consolidated and idiosyncratic responses discarded, but the gap between female advantage and disadvantage remains smaller than that between male advantage and disadvantage (185 vs. 779 responses, respectively). The ratio of women's disadvantages to advantages suggests that they are somewhat more disadvantaged, though there are some significant advantages to be found which are likely related to recent social changes. On the other hand, the large gap between men's advantages and disadvantages firmly points to their overall social advantage.

Overall, the majority of responses were retained, and this may suggest good consensus among respondents as to the composition of the collective advantages and disadvantages for men and women. It is interesting to note, however, that a somewhat greater percentage of responses were kept for male advantage and female disadvantage. These categories may have been more consistent than the others, perhaps indicating less social change in these areas. Female advantage contained the most idiosyncratic responses, suggesting perhaps that individuals are less certain about what constitutes women's advantages. Such an interpretation is not unreasonable considering the changing nature of their role.

Another way to examine the data is by the distribution of themes (table 4.2). This information echoes that above. Female advantage originally contained the greatest number of themes, but also lost the most (i.e., there was a high number of idiosyncratic themes). Male disadvantage follows closely behind. In both cases, shifting gender roles may indicate some uncertainty. Where women in the past may have had few advantages, they now have somewhat more, but with less social agreement on what those advantages are. The same is true for male disadvantage. In both cases, the change occurs where men and women had less to begin with. That is, men haven't lost advantages, women haven't lost disadvantages.

Table 4.2. Distribution of Qualitative Themes by Stage of Coding

	Initial	*Focused*	*Percent Retained*
Advantage			
Male	278	53	19.1
Female	317	47	14.8
Disadvantage			
Male	289	41	14.2
Female	295	59	20.0

If we consider the social context of the past decades, these patterns are readily understood in terms of the numerous changes that took place, largely in women's lives. Most changes signify or led to greater involvement in public spheres of life. That is, women entered the workforce in greater numbers, such that a working role became more normative. Yet there are still unresolved questions about how women should accommodate prior family roles. Men's lives have had to change in response to women's increased participation in work, but these changes appear to have been less dramatic. Although other examples of social change in gender roles could be discussed, work may be the most pivotal, as will be made clear below.

From here, I will describe the content of themes related to work and family across each of the four categories of advantage and disadvantage for men and women. In these discussions, particular attention will be given to responses that indicated some sort of interaction between work and family, whether it represents conflict or balance. Next, I will discuss how these responses fit with current work-family literature. Finally, the contents of this chapter should provide some idea of expected results in the quantitative analyses; to this end, I will present hypotheses at the conclusion.

One of the difficulties encountered in describing these data is that I am not working with complete narratives, such as might be found in in-depth interviews. Instead, I am faced with constructing a narrative from the collection of phrases which comprise the data. As a result, in the descriptions of themes below, I have adopted the respondents' voices to present a coherent picture. Where specific themes are named, the codes are italicized for easy identification. Except for a few statements intended provide clarity (or

make an apropos comment), I have saved the primary discussion and analysis for the final section.

It is also worth noting here that these data reveal a starkly dichotomized view of gender roles. A cursory overview reveals that respondents believe men are still the primary worker and women the primary caregiver. It is accepted – even expected – that women will work, and that there have been changes in women's roles, but these changes have largely been additive to existent family roles. Other aspects of gender roles – or more appropriately, masculinity and femininity – are mobilized to support this dichotomy, and it is within this division that work-family conflict resides.

Work Is a Man's World

Men

Advantages. In all four of the primary categories, work-related or economic themes were prominent. For men, the meta-theme *economic advantage* emerged as the largest by almost 150 responses over the next meta-theme. The advantages named in this theme centered solely around work, with the very association of men with work becoming the overall advantage. However, there were a number of specific ways in which this advantage operated; these responses point to men's ability to gain better and more frequent employment and wages. A summary of the themes related to economic advantage and example responses are produced in table 4.3.

First, men have *greater access to work*. This theme embodies the idea that certain jobs are better occupied by men (e.g., construction or "hard labor"), and there are more of these jobs. That is, men receive more opportunities to work (and perhaps more

opportunities *in* work). As a function of more choices and opportunities, men have an easier time finding work and are hired more quickly.

Table 4.3. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Male Advantage – Economic Advantage (*N* = 359)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Economic advantage	33
Greater access to work	99
"Males can work hard labor, therefore they have more job opportunities"	
"Males have an easier time getting a job"	
"Can get jobs that involve heavy labor easier"	
"Get hired quicker"	
"More opportunities for success (availability of employment)"	
"Freedom to choose career"	
Higher pay	121
"Get paid more at work"	
"Men earn more money on certain jobs"	
"Usually make more money than women"	
Better quality or ranked jobs	43
"Males have a better chance of getting a high position job"	
"Gets better job placement"	
"Men get the bigger and better jobs than women"	
More likely to get promotions or top positions	22
"Most positions that are CEO and executives tend to be male"	
"Males are promoted faster"	
"A lot of people say it's a man's world because at the top of most business firms there's usually a man"	
"Climb the corporate ladder easier"	
Less discrimination	23
"Males usually get preference in jobs"	
"Paid more than the women performing the same job"	
"Generally, males do not suffer from discrimination as openly as females do"	
"Males are less likely to be sexually harassed"	
"'Good old boys' network is alive and well"	
Seen as better workers	18
"Better suited for manual labor jobs"	
"Hard working"	
"Do not have to prove himself so much in the job market"	

Note: Organization of meta-theme is represented through indentation, with sub-themes and sample responses indented. Frequency of responses coded to each theme is indicated to the right, with the total for the meta-theme in parentheses in the table heading.

Second, men receive *higher pay*. As the fourth most frequently mentioned *single* theme across all four categories, this fact is one of the more salient among the respondents. This theme is fairly consistent; it is repeatedly stated that men make more money. Occasionally, respondents might qualify their statement by adding "in certain jobs" or "than women" but the fundamental sentiment remains the same.

Not only do men have greater access to work, but they obtain *better quality or more highly ranked jobs*. There were a couple ways in which this basic statement is modified, as indicated by the responses in table 4.3. An element of better jobs, but coded as a separate theme, is that men are *more likely to get promotions and top positions*. In this theme, the emphasis was on men's increased likelihood of receiving promotions or occupying the highest positions in a company rather than simply having better jobs in general. The emphasis on promotions and rank is significant, since better jobs could be interpreted widely to mean that the conditions of work were better. Instead, it is made clear here that "better" equals higher rank.

There were two additional work-related advantages named for men, both of which are likely related to the preceding advantages in a complex manner: both a result of these related advantages and providing the conditions for those advantages to emerge. First, men face *less discrimination* in the workforce, or what discrimination does exist favors them. That is, there is a preference for men in work, which may manifest as a preference in hiring or in receiving greater benefits in work. Situations in which men are paid more than women for the *same* job were mentioned with some frequency. But respondents also reported that men faced less discrimination or no sexual harassment, even though the preceding indicated discrimination that actually *favored* men. The second and final theme

was that men are *seen as better workers*. They are hard working and better at performing physical labor. It is through this perception that men are likely to gain many of the advantages listed above.

Disadvantages. Although certain *economic disadvantages* were named for men, it was a far smaller theme (52 responses compared to 359 for male advantage) and the issues mentioned had less to do with work and more to do with the expectation that men make more money than women and the obligation to pay for "dates" and other expenses. Instead, the more relevant theme here is not some sort of economic disadvantage but the *pressure men face to work* (table 4.4). While the association of men with work benefits them collectively in a number of very specific ways, it also means that working is not optional. Thus, respondents stated that men experience great pressure to remain employed and are looked down upon if not working.

Table 4.4. Frequency and Selected Responses for Male Disadvantage – Pressure to Work (*N* = 35)

Selected Responses
"They can't stay at home, they have to work"
"Has to work even if sick"
"Looked down on for not obtaining jobs"
"Is expected to work full-time, no matter what"

Women

Advantages. A number of *economic advantages* were also listed for women, but unlike those listed for men, most were not work related. Instead, they focused largely on other ways women receive income or pay for fewer things. However, there were 33 responses that were similar to the type of advantages listed for men (N = 359). Women were seen as possessing certain job opportunities. Feminized occupations appeared to be

attractive because they are seen as "jobs guys can't get." That women are considered a minority also led to "certain" advantages, though the nature of these advantages was not elaborated upon. While these responses find advantage in a limited market, another frequent response was that women could hold any job, especially any job that men could do. Yet, it is telling that comparatively so few mentioned work related advantages for women.

Table 4.5. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Female Advantage – Economic Advantage (*N* = 163)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Economic advantage	3
In workforce	33
"In some careers, there are demands for females"	
"Certain advantages in job market because females are a minority"	
"Can hold down jobs that men sometimes don't (nurse, secretary, etc.)"	
"Now, they can have any job and do anything men can do"	
Less financial responsibility	22
"Women might have less financial responsibilities"	
"If you choose to be a 'homemaker' you can get basically everything provided for you"	
"More likely to be supported rather than support"	
"Aren't expected to be the 'bread winner' for the family"	
Supported financially by men	9
"Can rely on men to be the source of income"	
"Has a man to provide for her"	
Less pressure to work	53
"Don't have to work if they're married"	
"Females have the opportunity to be a housewife"	
"Is more acceptable for a woman to stay home and not work than a man"	
"Has the ultimate choice of deciding to choose family over career or vice versa"	
"Don't have to work"	

Note: Two sub-themes not discussed here contribute to the total for the meta-theme: 1) doesn't have to pay for things, especially dates (N = 41); and 2) more government aid (N = 2).

More prominent was a group of responses that clustered around three important ideas. First, women have *less financial responsibility*. Specifically, women's income is

not required to support a family. Some pointed out that women are "more likely to be supported than support." Second, a few people pointed out explicitly that *men are women's source of income* and provision. And third, both of these points come together such that women feel *less pressure to work*. Thus, according to respondents, women have the opportunity to stay home and be a housewife, especially if they "marry wealthy". In sum, women find economic advantage through sources of support and income not contingent upon working.

Disadvantages. That women are not associated with work appears to disadvantage them in multiple ways. Work related disadvantages were a highly salient issue for women, far outstripping the few advantages listed (201 vs. 33 responses, respectively). In fact, women's economic disadvantages read much like the reverse of men's economic advantages.

The first disadvantage named for women is that they experience *limited or unequal access to work*. That is, women have fewer opportunities to work and a more limited range of choice in occupations. Interestingly, this is in reverse to the few who said an advantage for women was that they could work in any job. The responses thus revealed a perception that women aren't able or allowed to work in male-dominated occupations and that competing with men for jobs is difficult.

Another major disadvantage is that women *receive less pay* than men or low pay more generally. Much like the male advantage *higher pay*, this category consistently reflects a singular idea: women make less money and can't get jobs that pay well.

Table 4.6. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Female Disadvantage – Economic Disadvantage (*N* = 201)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Economic disadvantage	8
Limited/unequal access to work	59
"They do not have the good job opportunities"	
"Still positions/jobs that can't be obtained by women"	
"Sometimes hard to compete with males for jobs"	
"Often more limited occupational scope than males"	
"Ridiculed for choosing 'male' career (construction worker)"	
Less pay than men	61
"Women get paid less than men"	
"More responsibility, less pay"	
"Can't get a high paying job"	
Limited to lower quality or ranked jobs	10
"Lower job positions"	
"Should be a secretary, sales assistant, and not a high business position"	
"More menial jobs"	
Less likely to get promotions or top positions	18
"Women are confined by a glass ceiling"	
"Overlooked for promotions"	
"Less room to advance in the workplace"	
Discrimination in the workplace	25
"Discrimination in the workplace"	
"Not be treated equal in the workplace"	
"Treated unfairly in workplace"	
"Get paid less than men to do the same jobs"	
Not seen as equal workers to men	20
"Women get paid less and are less likely to get hired because they're seen as less competent or overemotional"	
"Because of equal opportunity women are thought of being lesser because the standard was lowered when they entered the job force"	
"Can't do as much as males in the job aspect"	
"Often have to work harder to gain respect in a 'man's world' (business or otherwise)"	

Not only is access to occupations – especially high paying jobs – restricted, women are also *confined to lower ranked or low quality jobs*. In this theme, respondents repeatedly said that women's jobs weren't as good or they were restricted to menial jobs such as being a secretary. Furthermore, women are *less likely to receive promotions* or

the highest ranked jobs. Here, the "glass ceiling" was mentioned more than once. This hints at another theme that demonstrates how *discrimination* is a common issue for women. According to these responses, women are discriminated against through unfair treatment at work and by not being paid equitably for the same work.

However, the ultimate issue returns to the fact that women are not associated with work in the same way men are. Thus, women are *not seen as equal workers to men*. Respondents stated that women must work harder to prove themselves in the work domain, and are seen as inferior in various ways.

A Woman's Place Is at Home

Men

Advantages. As above with the work-related themes, both men and women were portrayed within the data as having assorted family-related responsibilities, but in such a way that maintained the separation of work and family. More importantly, the separation of men and women within these realms was maintained. This begins with the specific role men play within the family. Two themes were named in this area as a male advantage. First, men should *take care of the family* and second, *family roles can be less salient* to men without negative sanction. Although these themes at first appear contradictory, each plays out in specific ways that resolve this contradiction.

In the first theme, a few people named a caregiver role for men. That is, they should "be there for wife and children" and in general *take care of the family*. In part, the *father role* – that is, the "supportive father/male figure" – is the means by which this caregiver role is carried out. Although not elaborated on by respondents, the image

conjured is that of men as the anchor of the family: a necessary component if the family is to thrive.

More importantly, however, men take care of the family by being *financial providers*. This is the classic "breadwinner" role, and this theme made it clear that our respondents still see it being socially enacted. Though a few respondents recognized other sources of family income, it is primarily men who are expected to make a living and support the family, and this presumably accrues advantages. Certainly, it is part of what associates men so strongly with work.

Table 4.7. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Male Advantage – Expected to Take Care of Family (*N* = 184)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Expected to take care of family	13
Expected to be providers	82
"Being able to make a living for family"	
"Make the majority of money in the household"	
"Breadwinners"	
"Generally, males provide for their families"	
Head of household	74
"Males are considered as head of household"	
"He should have final say in the house"	
"Males are used to being considered the head of the household"	
"Leader of the family"	
Male father figure	15
"Supportive father/male figure"	
"Father"	
"Male figure for children"	

Additionally, the provider role may be closely related to another part of taking care of the family: acting as the *head of the household*. According to respondents, men are seen as the leader of the family, granted with authority for decision-making. They have the "final say" in household matters. In some ways, this is related to men's public

roles as workers and as leaders in the social hierarchy. In fact, one respondent makes this explicit connection:

> Men are seen as leaders of the households, therefore most people think they are better suited to run companies, political offices, and departments

The second theme focuses on the ways in which *family roles are less salient* to men. First, a few respondents mentioned that there is less pressure for men to engage in or commit to family roles through marriage (i.e., the bachelor vs. the old maid). They also have less responsibility at home and can spend more time away from home doing other things. Specifically, men's reduced familial role centers around being *less responsible for housework* and *less responsible for childcare*.

The latter theme is interesting for some of the ways it plays out beyond simply being less responsible for children. In the ultimate act of reduced responsibility, men may leave their children. A more common response, however, is that men experience less pressure to be *good* parents. Indeed, men become good parents by working outside of the home. Furthermore, men are not expected to give up their free time or otherwise alter their schedules to care for children. These telling responses point to ways in which men are less likely to experience work-family conflict: that is, their work and family roles are more likely to be congruent with one another due to the specific nature of men's role in the family. The specific contents of these themes also show how the apparent contradiction is resolved: men take care of the family financially, but do not have to engage in the emotional, caring side of family life.

Table 4.8. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Male Advantage – Family Roles Less Salient (*N* = 75)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Family roles less salient	18
"Fewer responsibilities in the home"	
"As they grow older they're still a bachelor as opposed to a 'old spinster'"	
Less domestic responsibility	27
"Can be messy and it will be looked at as just 'being a guy'"	
"Have the idea that women are responsible for doing all housework. I am very used to the phrase, 'But, that's women's work…'"	
"Less responsibility in household chores"	
"Lack of participation in household chores viewed as normal"	
Less responsibility for children/child-rearing	30
"Can walk out of their child/ren's life"	
"Can be a parent, and work full-time without being called a bad parent"	
"They do not have as much pressure at being a good parent as women are"	
"Do not have to spend all his free time with the kids"	
"Does not have to alter his schedule around the kids"	

Disadvantages. The very points that advantaged men in the family – their provider and head of household roles and their reduced familial responsibilities – also function to disadvantage men. The *head of household* responsibilities are seen as somewhat burdensome, though this burden was less frequently mentioned than the advantages the role provides. The obligation to lead and being in charge of discipline becomes taxing, especially when men are then blamed for problems in the family. However, the most important disadvantage is associated with the provider role. Men's *financial responsibilities*, specified as the expectation that men support the family, was the second most frequently mentioned single theme for male disadvantage and fifth across all four categories.

Table 4.9. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Male Disadvantage – Head of Household Responsibilities (*N* = 151)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Head of household responsibilities	34
"'No good' is not able to take care of family"	
"Too much pressure to be the head of household"	
"The assumed "head of household' role can be a burden"	
Financial responsibilities	117
"Looked down upon if they are not the bread winners in the household"	
"Usually up to the male to support the family"	
"Men have to work harder for their families"	
"Men are generally expected to be the breadwinner of the family. Not entirely a disadvantage, but it can cause stress if he feels that he is not adequately supporting his family"	
"Most have to support their family because wife doesn't make enough money"	

The second family related theme again centered on the *reduced salience of family roles* for men. Although it was seen more as an advantage for men, the fact that they are not as involved in family life is also listed as a disadvantage. That men are *seen as less responsible in the home* is a small part of this disadvantage (and not surprisingly so – who wants to do housework?). The bulk of this theme, however, focused on how men are *less involved in the caregiver or parent role*. The responses in this theme painted the following picture: Men are worse parents than women. They are not as nurturing and can't be the primary caregiver without negative sanction. Work frequently takes precedence over childcare, and as a result men spend less "quality time" and have a weakened bond with children. Interestingly, where the advantages discussed earlier highlighted the ways in which men's work and family roles are congruent, these responses suggest that men may experience work-family conflict through being forced into a restrictive role with heavy emphasis on the work domain.

Table 4.10. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Male Disadvantage – Family/Domestic Roles Less Salient (*N* = 57)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Seen as less involved in caregiver/parent role	48
"Poorer parents"	
"Can't stay at home with kids while the wife works without judgment"	
"They also might feel inadequate if they are in charge of taking care of the children"	
"Do not have the same attachment to their children as do women"	
"They don't get to spend much quality time with their family"	
Seen as less responsible in the home	9
"Domestically incapable"	
"Not knowing what it takes to run a household"	

Women

Advantages. Family-related themes comprised a major group of advantages for women. This meta-theme is fleshed out to a greater extent than men's corresponding roles, and consists largely of the ways in which women are involved in the family. First, women are *caregivers*. Some respondents state women are better at this role than men, and others argue that the caregiver role is just as important as traditionally male roles. More specifically though, women *raise children*. Women are described as better and more knowledgeable parents, have greater influence on children, and simply "get to be with kids".

Women are also seen as maternal or *motherly*. In part, this makes them better parents. Some respondents phrase it as "natural parenting ability" or "maternal instincts". In both cases, it is stated as a unique quality possessed by women that connotes nurturing and emotional care giving, much as Coontz and Parson (1997) point to the traditional use of the word "mother" as a verb and "father" as a noun (remember the static image suggested by the male *father figure* theme). Because women are motherly caregivers,

they are seen as being more connected to the family. They share a *stronger bond with family and children*, which several respondents attributed to childbirth.

Table 4.11. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Female Advantage – Family and Children (*N* = 161)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Caregiver/caretaker	28
"They usually tend to people like husband, children, more than males"	
"The female role is more of taking care of the families. They should not feel less than their husbands because that job is just as important as the male role in the family"	
"Women are better caretakers"	
Raising children	49
"Women are typically supposed to know more about raising a family"	
"Get to be with the kids"	
"More influence in raising kids"	
"Good at taking care of children"	
"Raise their own children instead of having to resort to daycares, nannies, etc."	
Motherly	31
"Mother figure"	
"Females are maternal (motherly and sensitive)"	
"Natural parenting ability"	
Stronger bond with family and children	27
"They share the beauty (some anyway) of bearing children, creating a strong bond between mother and child"	
"Women are generally closer to their families than men are"	
"A more emotional bond towards her child/children"	
"Can be openly affectionate with their children without criticism"	
Can stay home to raise children	13
"Can stay at home with children and not be looked down on"	
"Stay at home mom"	
Capable of balancing family and career	6
"Females can raise a family and still have a successful career"	
"That women can work and still be good mothers"	
Backbone of the family	7
"Keep a family together"	

Similar to an earlier theme associated with work, in which respondents state that women experience less pressure to work, women *can stay home to raise children*. Unlike

the former theme, however, this one placed greater emphasis on raising children and being a stay-at-home mom. An important component of this theme is that women are not negatively sanctioned for staying at home. Thus, although a few respondents stressed the ability to *balance work and family*, women appear to be more strongly associated with family. Indeed, women are seen as the *backbone of the family*. "They keep a family together".

Finally, women's last family related advantage is that they are *homemakers* and take care of the house. This represents an area of decision-making and power for women. It is an area in which women possess greater knowledge of or are better at required skills. In short, women *are* domestic.

Table 4.12. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Female Advantage – Homemaker (N = 50)

Selected Responses
"Make most family decisions as far as meals, activities, etc."
"More likely to acquire homemaking skills"
"We know how to maintain a household"
"Females usually know how to cook, clean, and raise children"

Disadvantages. Women's family responsibilities constitute a major disadvantage, and collectively is the largest meta-theme mentioned as a female disadvantage. This theme covers a wide range of topics, many the direct counterparts to advantages, but is easily summed up by a single phrase: a "woman's place is at home".

First, women's *domestic responsibilities* become a disadvantage because women are either confined to the home as a housewife or the only one doing housework. Respondents did not clearly specify whether these domestic responsibilities were women's only obligations. If they are, and the frequent mention of being reduced to a

housewife role suggests this is possible, then the disadvantage is primarily enacted through being confined to a restrictive role. A second circumstance, however, is that women experience domestic responsibilities as a "second shift"; in such a case, the disadvantage arises out of a lack of help from men with housework.

Second, and closely related, is the *caregiver role (especially of children)*. Women are seen as the sole caregiver, which may lead to fatigue. Childcare obligations are frequently mentioned in conjunction with housework. *Single parenthood* was mentioned uniquely as a women's problem. That is, women may be left to raise children alone, and there is concern over being cast into this circumstance.

One cluster of disadvantages centered on women's *pressure to engage in family roles*. First, women must get married. The image of the "old maid" is contrasted with the more positive image of the bachelor. After marriage, women are expected to *want* children and then to *bear* children. Some respondents even went so far as to say women are defined exclusively by these familial roles.

> Being defined by roles like mom and house-maker simply by being a woman and being excluded from others without being given a choice in some cases.

The final cluster of disadvantages is of primary importance to this thesis and focuses specifically on *work-family conflict*. This is the first time this issue is mentioned so explicitly, and is described in three basic ways: 1) if women try to fulfill both work and family roles, they must *juggle obligations*; 2) accordingly, women *must choose* one or the other; and 3) the *appropriate choice is family*. Some of the responses coded here may not represent work-family conflict in the classic sense of the concept, however, they were coded to this theme because they represented some form of tension between work and family obligations.

Table 4.13. Frequencies and Selected Responses for Female Disadvantage – Family and Domestic Responsibilities (*N* = 279)

Theme and Selected Responses	*N*
Family and domestic responsibilities	5
Domestic responsibilities	71
"Females bear the burden of taking care of a household	
"Some people expect women to do everything in a household (like cooking, cleaning, taking care of kids)"	
"Being a female in this society there are still people think that women should just tend to homely things and can't do anything else productive"	
"Have to be the one to take care of house and children 90% of the time"	
Caregiver, especially for family and children	76
"Childcare is thrown on them most of the time"	
"More of a responsibility with children"	
"Often given sole responsibility for childrearing"	
"Females may feel guilty if they don't take care of the children"	
Single parenthood	11
"Females are often left alone to be single mothers"	
"Fear of single parenthood"	
Pressure to engage in family roles	(46) 6[a]
Pressure to marry	17
"It is almost unacceptable for a woman to be single late in life, but for men, that is often considered a good thing"	
"Old maid if not married"	
Expected to desire children	5
"Still seen as 'unfeminine' to not want marriage or kids"	
Pressure to bear children	18
"Still expected to have kids as well"	
"If you don't have children, everyone wants to know why"	
Work-family conflict	(70) 0[a]
Expected to juggle family and work obligations	21
"Still expected to run household with chores and raise a family but now have a good job as well"	
"Women are sometimes expected to work at a job all day and take care of the family at night"	
"Having children can be hard on your career"	
"Women who do work and have a family have more responsibilities than the man"	
Must choose between work and family	9
"Whether they should have a family or start a career"	
"Women are forced to either choose between a career and a family or if they have both, they have to take care of family and work while males only work"	
"Somewhat impossible to have a successful career and family at same time"	
Pressure to choose home and family	40
"Females who have a career are seen as not being as good a parent as stay-at-home moms"	
"Socially confined to the home with children or aging family"	
"B/c of cultural history, certain expectations to make sacrifices for family and children (like quitting job and so forth) when men are not"	
"Expected to put having children over career aspirations"	
"If you work full time you are a bad mom"	

[a] The number in parentheses represents the total for the cluster of sub-themes grouped together. The second number refers to the frequency of responses in the individual theme.

First, women may be *expected to juggle family and work obligations*. Although pursuing a career was sometimes phrased as a choice for women, this was not always the case. The dual-career family is sometimes a necessity. However, in these cases, respondents stated that women are responsible for all or most of the housework and childcare and now must also work. That is, work becomes an *added* role on top of existent family obligations. As a result, women are burdened with more responsibilities than men, and must try to find ways to maintain work while being expected to alter schedules around family life.

The difficulties of managing both roles may force women to *choose between work and family*. It becomes clear then, that for respondents, work and family is an "either/or" issue. The roles are depicted by them as disparate enough that balance or integration is not possible. However, the choice is not made easy for women as indicated by the following response:

> Women usually are made to feel guilty b/c if they want a career, people judge her relationship w/children but in the same, if she wants to be a homemaker, she is looked down upon by many women's groups and strong feminists.

If women must choose between one role or the other, they experience *pressure to choose home and family* over work. The housework or childcare obligations discussed earlier that confined women to the home in effect force this choice. Thus, respondents expressed an expectation that women delay any goals in life not related to the home, especially if children are present. Women who choose to work anyhow are then negatively sanctioned as bad parents, or experience guilt over not devoting more time to home.

Summary

As the themes discussed above demonstrate, the traditional divide and gendering of work and family remain strong cultural beliefs. The themes revolving around work show that this domain is firmly associated with men. That is, this is a "man's world" and most of the benefits of working accrue to men. And although women have made great gains in labor force participation, pay equity, and access to a wider range of work, the picture painted here is one where women routinely struggle for genuine access to good work, are viewed less favorably as workers, and not paid as well as men. Thus, where the association of work with men led to multi-faceted advantages for men, the association of women with work is far more negative and highlights a persistent cultural belief that the work domain is not meant for women.

The same is true of the depiction of family life. As described by the respondents, women are primarily responsible for taking care of the family and home. While this confers certain advantages, it also leads to major disadvantages when women are expected to fulfill these obligations without assistance or in conjunction with paid employment. Men, on the other hand, are described as less involved with the family, except in their role as a financial provider. This again demonstrates the importance of work for men. The negative sanctions imposed on men and women for not working or not caring for home and family, respectively, result in different experiences within the social structure that reinforce separate spheres of activity for males and females.

Although respondents do not explicitly list work-family balance or conflict, these concepts nonetheless emerged (and were subsequently coded) in their responses. Balancing work and family played a minor role in these data. Instead, work and family

are depicted as too disparate, requiring greater identification with one or the other. Thus, work-family conflict is the more salient issue, as indicated by the frequency of responses describing tension instead of balance (70 vs. 6). This tension between work and family was associated most clearly with women, and both of the themes which were coded to represent work-family balance or conflict were found in the categories of female advantage and disadvantage, respectively. There were some statements that suggested men may also experience some work-family conflict, but this interpretation was usually implied by the response.

Recalling that Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) defined work-family conflict as "a form of interrole conflict in which … participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role," it is clear that the responses identified as work-family conflict in these data do not always meet the classic definition. However, they do represent a measure of tension between the two domains. Sometimes respondents were very clear: being expected to perform one role made it difficult to engage in the other. However, sometimes this tension was expressed in more subtle terms: a forced choice between the two, exasperation with "doing it all", and regret over foregoing life goals or relationships with family.

Furthermore, the pattern described by the data fits with some of the work-family literature, such as findings that suggest men place greater emphasis on the work role, while women prioritize the family role (Keene and Quadagno 2004). Responses that suggested women are responsible for both working and taking care of the family, often with little assistance, also support the time use literature. These responses echo the results Mattingly and Sayer (2006) reported from their time use diary study, in which women

worked less than men, but spent more time in housework and childcare, and ultimately had less free time than men.

In the next chapter, I turn to the quantitative analyses, and the pivotal category to examine seems to be family-related themes in the male disadvantage category (though all work and family related themes will be examined). The statements in these themes suggest that men must provide financially for the family and cannot be engaged in primary (i.e., nurturing) caregiving/childcare. There are two possible interpretations to these themes, each depending on whether men or women provided the majority of these responses. On the one hand, if men are responsible for most of the responses, it may represent some form of work-family conflict. That is, the themes may suggest a desire to engage in family roles that cannot be realized due to the more relevant work role.

However, if women made these responses, it may serve as additional evidence of the increased salience and experience of work-family conflict for women. Given the present association of the work-family conflict theme with women, and the greater degree to which family related themes are fleshed out, it is more likely that women will express that men's lack of involvement in the family is a disadvantage.

CHAPTER FIVE
"WHO'S SAYING WHAT?"

The aim of this chapter is to explore whether there exist systematic differences in the responses given by men and by women. While the previous chapter focused on *what* was said, this chapter turns to *who* made these statements. Logistic regression analyses were used to compare men's and women's perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of work and family roles. The qualitative data were merged with the quantitative half of the survey, making information on respondent sex, age, and race (among other variables) available for analyses.

The dataset was originally set up with qualitative themes entered as count variables indicating how many responses an individual gave that fit within a theme or meta-theme. This would normally be ideal for Poisson regression, but the final distribution of values did not fit a Poisson distribution, making this technique unsuitable[1]. All variables were subsequently converted to a binary format indicating whether an individual's responses fit a given theme at least once. Logistic regression analyses were then used to predict whether men or women were more likely to mention the work and family themes discussed in the previous chapter. Age and race were also entered in the analyses.

A few general observations are worth noting as way of introduction. First, although men and women agreed on the disadvantages faced by each with respect to

[1] See appendix A for detailed notes on the selection of an analytic technique.

work, respondents were more likely to record work-related advantages of the opposite sex. Second, there were significant associations with sex observed in most of the family-related themes, with women more likely than men to provide these responses. Third, age and race (binary, indicating white) both revealed interesting patterns. These will be discussed insofar as they coincide with relevant sex differences in responses.

Work-Related Themes

Results for work-related themes are presented in table 5.1. As noted above, gender was not significant in predicting mention of work-related disadvantages. These results suggest that men and women are equally aware of and agree on the cultural pressures men face to work and the structural disadvantages faced by working women. Where men and women did not agree was on the work-related advantages for the *opposite* sex. That is, the odds of women reporting *male* economic advantages were 49 percent greater compared to men (1 – 1.49 = -.49), but women were 36 percent less likely than men to name *female* economic advantages (1 - .64 = .36).

Table 5.1. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Predicting Work-Related Responses

	Male Advantage	Male Disadvantage	Female Advantage		Female Disadvantage
	Economic Advantage	*Pressure to Work*	*Economic Advantage (Model 1)*	*Economic Advantage (Model 2)*	*Economic Disadvantage*
Female	1.49 *	.71	.64 *	.77	.89
Age	1.08 *	.96	.92	.92	1.13 **
White	1.12	1.23	----	2.98 ***	.94
N	554	499	528	528	508

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

However, when race is taken into account, gender is no longer a significant predictor of female economic advantages (model 2 for female advantage). Instead, whites were almost three times as likely as blacks to mention ways women benefit from reduced financial obligations. Given the relatively high proportion of men that were white (66.5 percent) and women that were African American (45.4 percent), this result makes more sense. Were a measure of social class available, it is possible that race would also cease to be a predictor for this theme. Currently, it suggests that whites are more likely to have experienced and/or be aware of the middle-class ideal associated with the housewife role.

Family-Related Themes

In contrast to the work-related themes, there were significant differences by sex for all but three of the family-related themes (table 5.2 and 5.3). Two of the three were related to men's role as head of household (both as an advantage and a disadvantage). The third was women's role as a homemaker (female advantage). As before, these non-significant results suggest that men and women agree that men are the head of household and support the family financially while women are homemakers, since neither male nor female respondents were more likely to give such responses.

Where they do not agree, as indicated by significant coefficients, is in men's and women's roles in the family as caregivers. That is, women were more likely to mention the meta-themes concerned with the salience of family roles to men (both as advantage and disadvantage) and their own roles within the family. The increased odds of women mentioning these themes ranged from 80 percent greater to over five times that compared

to men. This pattern lends further weight to the argument that women are more responsible for family, even when it is generally accepted that women are working.

Table 5.2. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Predicting Male Family-Related Responses

	Advantage		Disadvantage	
	Take Care of Family (Provider)	Family Roles Less Salient	Head of Household/Provider	Family Roles Less Salient
Female	.83	5.77 ***	1.22	3.94 **
Age	.98	1.20 **	.99	1.12 *
White	.93	2.24 *	1.13	.94
N	554	554	499	499

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Table 5.3. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Predicting Female Family-Related Responses

	Advantage		Disadvantage	
	Family	Homemaker	Responsible for Family	Work-Family Conflict
Female	1.80 *	1.70	2.13 **	2.76 **
Age	.98	1.04	1.14 ***	1.06
White	1.44	.61	1.16	2.02 *
N	528	528	508	508

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; ***$p < .001$

Interestingly, older respondents were more likely to name both the family salience variables and women's responsibility in the family as a disadvantage, suggesting that as respondents age, they begin to experience some of these issues (i.e., the increasing salience of family-related issues, in which men don't help enough with the family and women do most of the work, makes it more likely that the respondents will write responses related to this).

Summary

Although the statistics presented in this chapter are brief, they are sufficient to address one of the primary research questions for this thesis: are work-family issues equally salient to men and women? The preceding discussion suggests they are not. Women appear to be more aware of the ways in which men do not contribute to family labor and of the ways in which they are expected to be "responsible for it all."

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the pivotal theme would be the male disadvantage focused on men's reduced role in the family. This theme described some of the ways in which men cannot be engaged in primary caregiving, largely due to the obligation to provide for the family financially. If women made most of the statements falling into this category, it would support the argument that familial responsibilities were primarily women's concern. However, if men made these statements, then it suggests some form of tension between work and family roles. As observed above, it turns out that women made the vast majority of all family-related themes – including men's reduced familial role as a disadvantage. These results add further support to the conclusions drawn in the preceding chapter regarding the content of these themes.

CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A primary goal of this thesis was to assess the degree and manner in which the work-family interface is salient to men and women, particularly given the gendered aspects apparent within these domains. As discussed earlier, a primary concept within this field is that of work-family conflict, which describes how these roles are sometimes difficult to combine and result in role overload for the individual. However, individuals can and do successfully combine work and family roles, and various concepts such as fit and balance are gaining attention.

Understanding these concepts seemed important because I was aware of some responses that indicated work-family conflict in the data. However, I had not explored the work and family themes systematically or with the intent of assessing the most prevalent form of interaction. Furthermore, some arguments in the literature suggest the more important issue than work-family conflict is the dominant cultural construction of these two domains as separate and incompatible (Fletcher 2005).

As cultural changes in gender roles have taken place, the traditional gender ideology maintaining this divide has come under strain – and caused strain within individuals' lives. Moen and Orrange (2002:240) suggest "there is a gap between: (1) the reality of rising individual and societal expectations about gender equality and expanding options for women at work and men at home, and (2) the persisting organization of work based on the outmoded male breadwinner/female homemaker template. This is reflected

in a socialization of ambivalence - producing expectations, values, and goals directly at variance with one another." The data explored in this thesis supports this argument. In this chapter, I consider the primary findings in light of the gendering processes of work and family discussed earlier. I also discuss some of the strengths and weaknesses of this study before turning to the final conclusions.

Gendering Processes at Play

In chapter two, three points were made with respect to the gendering of work and family and the maintenance of a division between the two. First was the gendering processes identified by Acker (1990). Two processes stand out as particularly relevant. The gendered division of labor should be clear, especially given the myriad ways in which respondents associated men with work and women with family. There are cracks in this division, given widespread acceptance that women can and should work, but the basic features of the split remain.

Respondents frequently relied on cultural images to support this division of labor between men and women, citing businessmen, heads of households (in lay conceptions, almost always male), homemakers, and housewives. Respondents did not often elaborate on what was advantageous or disadvantageous about the roles implied by these images, but the gendered element was clear. Men were never named as homemakers, women never head of household.

Second, these gendering processes placed the two domains in conflict with one another. Aside from the obvious manifestations of this conflict, there were subtle tensions related to the differential recognition, and thus value, placed on the masculine-public and

the feminine-private axes. That is, the "work" men do in the family is recognized and acknowledged as important: they are financial providers. The "work" women (i.e., family and home) do for the productive realm is largely unacknowledged. The productive role assigned to men is associated with work, money, and the public sphere, and supports the reproductive, familial realm. Left unsaid are the ways in which reproductive roles (associated with women) facilitate the productive role (i.e., by providing a new generation and socialization of future workers). The relationship is described as unidirectional, with the masculine role positioned as the more important.

Implicit in these responses is the favorable position granted to work and public sphere roles. However, respondents did not seem to argue that work roles are only beneficial to men and family only beneficial to women. Instead, there is a general social advantage to be had by maintaining the traditional division. By this argument, both men and women are advantaged by men working, and both men and women are advantaged by women taking care of the family, so long as both men and women adhere to the prescribed roles. However, we should not forget that the roles ascribed to women are time-limited (e.g., child bearing and rearing) and leave them economically undervalued in this arrangement. Thus, although some might argue that the general social advantage benefits all, this is not actually the case, and relates to the devaluing of the reproductive roles relative to productive roles.

Of course, respondents did recognize that this social arrangement, which depends on the split between work and family, men and women, is not always possible or desired. This was most evident in the themes involving some sort of interaction between work and family. Work-family conflict appeared to be the more salient issue, and this tension was

most clearly associated with women. Furthermore, the statistical analyses conducted suggest that certain aspects of these roles are not equally salient to men and women. Women in this study appear to be more aware of the ways in which men do not contribute to family labor and of the ways in which they are expected to be "responsible for it all."

Third, the means by which work and family are gendered, expressed, and divided are caught up with cultural conceptions of masculinity and femininity. More than once, men's provider role was cited as a means of proving their masculinity, and women's connection to the family was said by respondents to be rooted in bearing children. In addition, there were several other non-work or family related themes, such as the biological capacity for childbirth and the gender appropriate handling of emotions, which could be used to support both this traditional divide between the public and private spheres and the appropriate place of men and women in each. These themes support gender essentialist thinking, in which being biologically male or female justifies role appropriateness, and highlights how, in lay conceptions, *sex* and *gender* are not separate issues.

Limitations and Strengths

There were some limitations which are important to note. First, as mentioned above, the respondents in this study were relatively young. Although we did not collect data on marital or parental status, it is statistically likely that a relatively small proportion of the sample were married or had children, since the median age of marriage in the U.S. is approximately 27 years for men and 25 years for women (U.S. Census 2009). Less than

10 percent of our sample was over the age of 25. However, the data do suggest an anticipation of future roles, and this seemed especially true for women. This conclusion is also supported by analyses involving age. These analyses showed that older respondents were more likely to name both the family salience variables and women's responsibility in the family as a disadvantage, suggesting that as respondents age, they begin to experience some of these issues (i.e., the increasing salience of family-related issues, in which men don't help enough with the family and women do most of the work, makes it more likely that the respondents will write responses related to this). Ultimately, since this study was a modified replication of a previous study, this was exactly the age range desired.

Second, there are a few other weaknesses resulting from the source of the data. Given the particulars of the sample as a group of Southern college students enrolled in social science courses, generalizability may be weak. This is often the case with qualitative data, and further studies would be needed to assess the full extent of this weakness. However, two comments may be made regarding this problem. First, while the gender attitudes discussed here may not represent those of the entire nation, to the extent that Southern views tend to be more traditional (Rice and Coates 1995), the conclusions drawn from this study may represent a more conservative side of work-family issues. However, the university was recently named the third most diverse college in the nation (Princeton Review 2009); thus, it is difficult to determine whether the results presented are truly reflective of the conservative values typical of the Southern region.

Second, the students surveyed were enrolled in social science courses and may not adequately represent the student body. However, as most were enrolled in

Introduction to Sociology courses and this was a core curriculum class, it meant that the sample was diverse in majors. Furthermore, surveys were administered early in the semester to minimize the influence of class material on the data.

A third limitation results from the emphasis on dichotomy and difference implicit in the survey questions and our method of coding. Feminist theorists have criticized the dualisms characteristic of Western thought, especially in how it relates to the subordination of women. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and Judith Lorber (2005), for example, point to how the construction of a binary pair means that one group is designated as the norm and the second as the "other." The two groups are thus defined in terms that stress *difference*, with the dominant group especially concerned about not appearing similar to the other. This dynamic was observed in the data in a number of places, and is likely a driving force behind the heavy sanctions placed on men for engaging in primary caregiving. This thesis agrees with these criticisms, finding work-family conflict a problematic phenomenon resulting from the separate spheres ideology that is composed of several binary constructions.

However, despite the emphasis on the split between work and family, masculine and feminine, I should point out that for the majority of themes, the advantages named for one gender were often repeated as disadvantages, or the same advantage was assigned to both men and women. In addition, even though cultural expectations may be thought of as disadvantageous to individuals, many advantages were described in these terms. Thus, although the presentation and discussion highlights difference, the boundaries do not seem to be so clear for respondents.

There are at least three features of this study that make it unique and well-suited to the questions raised in this thesis. First, the relatively large sample size for qualitative data ensured that the data derived are relatively robust. Few studies of this type sample beyond 100 individuals, let alone over 600. By doing so, we were able to develop codes that cut through idiosyncratic responses to reveal commonly held perceptions about men and women.

Second, the open-ended nature of our primary survey questions meant that we could construct a full picture of gender roles. This open-endedness proved particularly critical to the research questions of this thesis, as it allowed for an analysis of salience. Respondents wrote on those issues important or relevant to them – thus, that work and family-related responses emerged with such frequency highlights their importance to respondents. Furthermore, that women provided family-related responses far more often than men demonstrates the salience of these issues to them.

Third, the coding method developed for handling the qualitative data preserved respondents' statements. This is partly evidenced by the code names chosen, which were usually a shortened version of the first response encountered embodying a new idea. However, the more telling evidence is the consistency of language within each theme. As a result, we have high confidence that our own biases in interpretation and beliefs were minimized.

Conclusion

Ultimately, these data point to the continued existence of the ideology of separate spheres. A powerful dichotomy is constructed that clearly delineates a division of labor.

Thus, to imagine masculinity and femininity is also to imagine the split between work and family. Even though this split no longer reflects the lived realities of most Americans, it still represents a major cultural belief about the basic characteristics of men and women.

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APPENDIX A

QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

The Poisson regression technique is especially well-suited to count variables which record the incidence of an event (in this case, responses coded to a specific theme). These variables are frequently distributed with a preponderance of scores in the low range and few higher frequency values. Scores may cluster around 0 to 3 and trail off rapidly, with upper values reaching 10 or more. Regular OLS regression can be used on count variables with a Poisson distribution, but it sometimes leads to inaccurate estimates. If the count variable were such that it was centered around higher values and approached a normal distribution, then OLS would have been a more appropriate technique.

Ultimately, the observed distribution did not fit the requirements of either Poisson or OLS regression. In most cases, an individual gave only one response that fit a particular theme. However, where the meta-themes were concerned, it was feasible that a respondent would give responses that fit each of the sub-themes contained within the larger meta-theme. Thus, if there were seven sub-themes contained under male *economic advantages*, a respondent could have had responses fitting in all seven subs. Their total value for the meta-theme would have been seven.

I originally suspected that there might be a difference between respondents with only one response in a theme and those with more than one. This was the basis of entering the data in the method described above. Another method would have been to code all of the variables as binary indicators of whether the respondent made any mention of an item or no mention. Even if, in the example above, a respondent named all seven of the *economic advantage* sub-themes, their recorded value for the meta-theme would simply be one.

Once the data were entered, it was possible to see whether there was any advantage to entering them as count variables. It was apparent there was not. In chapter five, 11 meta-themes were described; all 11 contained counts greater than one. However, there was a preponderance of zeros, and comparatively few instances of counts greater than one (table A.1). Simply stated, the resultant distribution did not strictly fit a Poisson distribution. Although there are additional techniques to accommodate this sort of situation, the paucity of high count data suggests that there may be little to gain by retaining the count variable format.

Table A.1. Distribution of Meta-Themes as Count Variables

	Frequency by Number of Responses Per Case				
	0	1	2	3	4
Male Advantage					
Economic Advantage	323	193	75	4	1
Take care of the family	446	120	29	1	
Family roles less salient	541	38	15	1	1
Male Disadvantage					
Pressure to work	503	35			
Head of Household	393	140	5		
Family roles less salient	485	49	4		
Female Advantage					
Economic advantage	426	121	21		
Family	426	126	16		
Homemaker	520	47	1		
Female Disadvantage					
Economic disadvantage	393	112	37	5	
Responsible for family	356	123	52	14	2
Work family conflict	481	62	4		

As a result, all of the data were converted into a binary format, where 0 indicates the respondent did not make any mention related to the theme and 1 indicates the respondent made at least one mention. At this point there are two options for carrying out

analyses: cross-tabulations with the chi-square statistic or logistic regression. Although both techniques led to similar conclusions, the latter offered some improvement in understanding how race and age modified the relationship between gender and making a given response.

APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVAL

UAB **Project Revision/Amendment Form** IRB

RECEIVED
JUL 23 2009
OFFICE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

(PLEASE TYPE: In MS Word, highlight the shaded, underlined box and replace with your text; double-click checkboxes to check/uncheck.)

- Federal regulations require IRB approval before implementing proposed changes.
- Change means any change, in content or form, to the protocol, consent form, or any supportive materials (such as the Investigator's Brochure, questionnaires, surveys, advertisements, etc.).
- Complete this form and attach the changed research documents.

Today's Date: *7/23/2009*

9/24/09 gv

1. Contact Information

Principal Investigator's Name: *Becky M. Trigg* BlazerID: *btrigg* E-mail: *btrigg@uab.edu*
Contact Person's Name: *Becky M. Trigg* BlazerID: *btrigg* E-mail: *btrigg@uab.edu*
Telephone: *205-934-0825* Fax: *205-975-5614*
Campus Address: *460Q Heritage Hall, 1401 University Boulevard*

2. Protocol Identification

Protocol Title: *"Is the Grass Greener on the Other Side?" Revisited: An Analysis of Perceived Advantages/Disadvantages of the Female and Male Gender Roles*
IRB Protocol Number: *X050812001*

Current Status of Project (check only one):

- ☐ Currently in Progress (Number of participants entered:_____)
- ☐ Study has not yet begun (No participants entered)
- ☐ Closed to participant enrollment (remains active)—
  Number of participants on therapy/intervention:_____
  Number of participants in long-term follow-up only:_____
- ☒ Closed to participant enrollment (data analysis only)—
  Total number of participants enrolled: *696*

This submission changes the status of this study in the following manner (check all that apply):

- ☐ Protocol Revision
- ☒ Protocol Amendment
- ☐ Study Closed to participant entry
- ☐ Study Closure
- ☐ Other, (specify) _____
- ☐ Revised Consent Form
- ☐ Addendum (new) consent form
- ☐ Enrollment temporarily suspended by sponsor
- ☐ Change in protocol personnel

3. Reason for change

Briefly describe, and explain the reason for, the change. If normal, healthy controls are included, describe in detail how this change will affect those participants.
Include a copy of the protocol and any other documents affected by this change (e.g., consent form, questionnaire) with all the changes highlighted.
Granting Sarah Ballard, Sociology graduate student, permission to use the data gathered under this protocol for her Master's thesis. Her thesis will be titled, "A Question of Salience: A Gender Analysis of the Work-family Interface." Currently, she is listed on the protocol as an "other investigator". She has assisted in every phase of this project, including data collection, data entry, and coding qualitative data.

4. Does this change revise or add a genetic or storage of samples component? ☐Yes ☒No

If yes, please see the Guidebook to assist you in revising or preparing your submission, or call the IRB office at 934-3789.

5. Does the change affect subject participation (e.g. procedures, risks, costs, etc.)? ☐Yes ☒No

6. Does the change affect the consent document(s)? ☐Yes ☒No

If yes, briefly discuss the changes. _____
Include the revised consent document with the changes highlighted.
Will any participants need to be reconsented as a result of the changes? ☐Yes ☒No
If yes, when will participants be reconsented?_____

Signature of Principal Investigator [signature] Date 7/23/09
DoA 5-8-09

APPROVED
[signature] 9-24-09
MARILYN DOSS, M.A.
Vice Chair – IRB