1991

Marital quality in later years of marriage with dual-career spouses

Thomas J. Henrich
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Marital quality in later years of marriage with dual-career spouses

Henrich, Thomas J., Ph.D.
Iowa State University, 1991
Marital quality in later years of marriage with dual-career spouses

by

Thomas J. Henrich

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Human Development and Family Studies
Major: Family Environment

Approved:
Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Department
Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1991
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It is with sincere appreciation that I recognize the following individuals for their support in this project.

First, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Dr. Harvey Joanning. I have known Harv for the past six years as my teacher, mentor and friend. Throughout the course of this project, he always made himself available to me and gave me sound advice. I look forward to working with Harv in the future as colleagues and friends.

Second, I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Linda Enders, Dr. Chuck Cole, Dr. Tahira Hira and Dr. John Littrell, whose insights have proven invaluable.

Third, I am indebted to the couples who participated in this study without whom this project would not have been possible. The information obtained from them will be used to help better the human condition. For their input, we will all be grateful.

Lastly, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my family: my wife, Cecilia and two sons Thomas and Michael. Their unending support, patience and encouragement have been unmeasurable. The success of this dissertation is due in large part to them. My wife
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has shared the burden of this project with me equally and I feel that it is as much her accomplishment as it is mine. It is to you, Ceil, that I dedicate this work.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the institution of marriage has received a great deal of attention in areas of research and theory. During the 1970s alone, there were 150 research articles published which examined quality of marriage (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Americans seem to be obsessed with the desire to know how men and women respond to being married. We want to know the circumstances and causes of marital break-down as well as how we can avoid this situation. Couples can enjoy a "happy marriage" into old age which is viewed as a very popular status in our society. A "happy marriage" is ranked among the most important aspects of life by adult Americans (Campbell, Converse & Rodgers, 1976). Most older husbands and wives appreciate each other and are satisfied with their marriages (Gilford, 1986).

Marriage appears to enhance the quality of life for spouses in important ways; married persons, regardless of age, appear to be happier, healthier, and longer-lived than widowed or divorced persons of the same ages (Gove, Hughes & Style, 1983). Satisfaction with marriage can be used as the single greatest predictor of life satisfaction for older women and for men is second only to good health.
(Lee, 1978). Moreover, marriage is said to temper some of the difficulties accompanying such events as retirement, reduced income, and declining physical capacity that characterize later life for many persons (Gilford, 1986).

Each marriage, however, is bombarded with problems of differences in personality between the spouses, survival, goals (both personal and interpersonal), the search for self, and "something more". "Something more" has been defined in a variety of forms such as success, money, peace, understanding, and personal growth. "Something more" puts a significant amount of pressure on a marriage. In addition to the responsibility, adjustment, and compromise that marriage has always entailed, spouses are now asking each other to make changes more quickly or to accommodate to an individual's changes (O'Neill, 1977).

The question this and future generations will be required to answer is "Can we make our marriages last through all the changes in ourselves and in society?" (O'Neill, 1977). O'Neill thought the demands made on marriage for change and self-fulfillment are making it more and more difficult for marriages to survive.

In this society where the demands are for instant gratification, instant intimacy, instant communication, instant everything, are we, I wonder, no longer aware of the flow and cycles of life, of our need for roots and continuity? Are we no longer able to
accept the commitment of life together as growth? No longer able to last through the rough periods that inevitably come along in any marriage? (O'Neill, 1977, p. 209)

In recent years, women have looked to expand their talents past the domestic realm and are looking to gain more satisfaction in life by committing themselves to work outside of the home. Our culture has found itself face to face with another problem facing marriages: that of the dual-career household. Approximately 65% of American women between the ages of 20 and 54 are currently working outside the home, and almost 50% of all married women and 43% of married women who have preschool children are employed (U.S. Department of Labor, 1980).

Research in the area of the effect of careers on marriages have dealt almost solely with the life situation of the woman: with the complications and rewards she faces in trying to combine family and work. Although the importance of the husband is always assumed, little attention has been given to the relationship between the chosen life style of an educated woman and that of her husband. Only recently have some researchers begun to analyze the process by which men achieve an integration of family and their own work. There have been few studies relating to married women's work patterns that deals simultaneously with husbands and wives (Klein, 1988).
More emphasis should be put on studying the couple (spouse interaction) rather than on studying the spouses separately. Complementary information about the couple can be provided by studying the spouses individually (Klein, 1988).

Before a discussion and presentation of the literature dealing specifically with the dual-career marriage over the marital career can be given, it will be useful to have some background information surrounding the marital field in general. The research that has been done in this area has typically dealt with several related aspects of marriage: marital satisfaction, marital stability, marital adjustment, and marital quality. These terms and their history will be presented below along with some of the most significant research done in the marital field as it applies to long-term marriages.

Statement of the Problem

In a review of the literature of the 1970s, Spanier and Lewis (1980) found "the field is still dominated by the application of survey techniques." Few research projects employing observational techniques and other innovative approaches have found their way into the mainstream of published literature on marital quality.
"We are accustomed to devoting considerable research time to marriages of low quality and low stability (e.g., unhappy marriages which end in divorce). What about those unhappy marriages which remain intact?" (Spanier and Lewis, 1980, p. 836). What about the high quality and high stability marriages? Why not look at the good instead of the bad and learn from it? One limitation with much of the past research is that testing has set limits on the couples in the way they can respond to what makes up a good marriage. Researchers have used methodologies that require the couple to respond to questions the researchers thought were indicative of such aspects of marriage as marital quality, stability, and satisfaction. Gottman (1979) concluded in his literature review that findings on marital satisfaction have indicated there is no one set of variables that are characteristic of couples who report high marital satisfaction. There do not appear to be any empirical variables which have a high statistical correlation with marital quality (Gottman, 1979).

In the literature on marital quality and communication:

there seems to be a frustrating lack of congruence between the theoretical definition of marital quality, hypotheses developed to operationalize the theory, research findings about
these hypotheses, and the implications of these for further research (Dennis, 1987, pp. 32-33).

Researchers have not allowed couples the opportunity to describe, in their own words, what made their marriage highly satisfying, stable, or successful. The researchers imposed their own views upon the couple as to what they, as researchers, thought were the most important factors of a couple's marriage. This study will allow the individual couple to describe for themselves the aspects that make a good marriage for couples where both spouses had or have careers.

Spanier and Cole (1976) suggest that to operationalize their definition of marital adjustment, a set of items (questions) or techniques needs to be developed to reflect each component of their definition. The questions or techniques developed would need to meet several criteria as closely as possible:

1. They should be value free. They should be no assumptions made about what constitutes a good marriage.
2. They should apply to any male/female dyadic relationship.
3. They should allow the respondents to state what the important variables are in their relationship.
Spanier and Cole (1976) also suggested that "an open-ended interview with a professional counselor, therapist or diagnostician who could evaluate marital adjustment in an unstructured way but with regard to the same components" (p. 138) is essential for analysis of marital adjustment.

Socio-statistical methodologies focus so much on the "overall average" the "richness" of the individual case is lost; that is, the numbers alone cannot explain the complex processes involved in marital quality.

"Quantitative research focuses upon the empirical and objective analysis of discrete and preselected variables that have been derived a priori as theoretical statements in order to determine causal and measurable relationships among the variables under study" (Leininger, 1985, p. 7). Qualitative research, on the other hand, allows the subject to describe the meaning of experience in a subjective and personal way. It also recognizes that people construct realities to make sense of their world (Leininger, 1985).

In the qualitative realm, individuals are seen as active participants in constructing and defining the realities they encounter rather than as responding in robot-like fashion. The context of individuals in marital relationships may be the most important context in
studying marital quality (Dennis, 1987).

Research has shown that a couple's perception of variables is more important than the variables or behaviors themselves. For example, Scanzoni (1975) found that a couple's reported marital satisfaction centers around their perception of their economic situation, whether their income is adequate or not. Dennis (1987) thought the a couple subjective perception of what they thought was important for the success of their marriage is more valid than any objective measurement. Spanier and Lewis (1980) point out there is "a growing awareness that studies of the quality of life are finding few significant relationships between marital or family quality and traditional demographic variables" (p. 830).

Socio-statistical research also tends to use large samples which allow for generalization. By doing this, however, the researchers "wash out" the information that is needed to describe how some couples manage to cope while others fail. This is due in large part to the assessment tools they use (typically paper and pencil). These assessments have three characteristic limitations (Dennis, 1987):

1. They do not contain enough material to gain useful information, or if they could, they would be too long and cumbersome to complete.
2. The researchers using them begin the study with preconceived notions on the variables of the study and what will be found.

3. They do not let the couple construct and share their ideas as to why their marriage was successful or not and what qualities they think are important to the satisfactory development of their marriage (Dennis, 1987).

It is for these reasons that ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) will be used to interview couples and allow them the freedom to describe what they think are the most important characteristics that allow their relationship to thrive, despite both spouses having careers outside of the home setting. Ethnographies can paint a more complete and needed description.

Ethnographies can also be transferred to the public at large if it is so desired. It is the purpose of this study to lay the foundation for the development of a new model of marital quality for dual-career couples which is subject informed; a model that is constructed upon the perceptions of couples rather than researchers.

Qualitative methods also have weaknesses that bear mentioning:

1. Qualitative methodologies rely on small sample sizes making it difficult to
generalize findings to the public at large.

2. Qualitative methodologies are difficult to learn. Because they are a subjective measure and not generally standardized, they are more difficult to replicate, than quantitative methods.

3. Qualitative methods are useful only to the person from whom the data were obtained.

4. Analysis of data using the qualitative methods typically calls for an extensive review of all of the data collected to look for common patterns and themes that run throughout. This method of analysis can be very cumbersome.

The practical applications of such a model can readily be seen, however. It can be used extensively in the clinical setting where therapists will be able to help struggling couples to better understand themselves and their relationship. The model could also be used to educate young couples that are thinking of marriage and can give some insight to them as to what to expect. Lastly, it can be used for the development of better, and more substantive assessment techniques and devices.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the early research in the marital field was seen as conflicting, confusing and inconsistent. Several researchers found evidence they thought was indicative of a marriage that is high in quality; and others who found the same results concluded they were indicative of a marriage that is low in quality.

The first section of this chapter will look at several of the problems that researchers have had in the study of marriages over the past two decades. The development of the most common terms, theories in marital research, some of the early research in the field, a select look at some of the present day material as it applies to marriages in general, as well as dual-career couples will be reviewed. The last section of this chapter will look specifically at research and theory dealing specifically with dual-career marriages.

Section 1

Early Development of Marital Theory

Defining terms such as marital adjustment, satisfaction, stability, and quality has proven to be a difficult task. Graham B. Spanier and Charles L. Cole
1976) compared defining terms such as these to defining love; it is taken for granted that everyone knows what a person means when the term is used. This is not a pragmatic way to study these issues, however. For scientific research to grow and develop, definitions of terms need to be standardized and operationalized to be of any significant use.

Marital adjustment was one of the first of these terms used extensively in early research. A good marriage was seen as one in which the couple was highly adjusted to each other and to their marriage. Problems soon arose with this definition, however, because researchers couldn't agree on an operational definition for studying marital adjustment. Burr (1973) found it difficult to determine just what was meant by this term. He thought the term marital adjustment was a general and multifaceted term for which there is no precise and clear-cut definition. He thought the best definition is one that is operational to instruments used to study marital adjustment. To put it simply, the tools used to study marital adjustment should determine its definition.

Spanier and Cole (1976), however, proposed a standard to determine how well couples adjust to being married. This standard is determined by the degree of:

1. troublesome marital differences
2. interspousal tensions and personal anxiety
3. marital satisfaction
4. dyadic cohesion
5. consensus on matters of importance to marital functioning

This standard also falls short as a solution: it does not encompass all of the factors necessary to define a "good marriage." The idea that Spanier and Cole (1976) have developed does encompass another area of the marital field, that of satisfaction; but it leaves out several key aspects of marriage. For example, the model mentions nothing about the stability of the marriage or of the quality of the marriage. These are areas that research needs to address.

Since a single, clear cut definition of marital adjustment could not be obtained, it was also suggested by Spanier and Cole (1976) the term marital adjustment be abandoned for more umbrella-like term, which conveys the range of marital experiences previously referred to as satisfaction, happiness, adjustment, etc., and would allow us to focus on what we are really interested in--namely, the functioning and success of the marital dyad--without having to debate the confusing distinctions between the old concepts (pp. 125).

Two terms that follow Spanier and Cole's (1976)
suggestion have subsequently been developed and have found their way into current literature. They are marital quality and marital stability.

Robert A. Lewis, along with Spanier (1979), has developed excellent definitions for these two related terms. Marital stability is seen as "the formal or informal status of a marriage as intact or nonintact." Lewis and Spanier (1979) thought that a stable marriage was one that was terminated by the death of one or both spouses. An unstable marriage was willingly terminated by one or both spouses. The most common form of willful termination as defined by Lewis and Spanier (1979) is divorce, but annulment and desertion are also included.

Unfortunately, as with earlier ideas, the term marital stability does not encompass all of the aspects of a marriage. The definition for marital stability implies that if a marriage is stable, well adjusted, etc., it is therefore good and satisfying for the couple. This is not the case, however, when it can be clearly seen that not all the marriages that are stable, are good and satisfying. An excellent example of this is a couple who have been married for twenty years but is not happy and have stayed together for the "sake of their children." Their marriage is stable, but not satisfying or of high quality. The term marital stability, like the terms
marital adjustment and marital satisfaction, does not cover the entire range of what it means to have a "good" marriage.

Use of the term marital quality seems to have eliminated many of the problems that former definitions have had. Marital quality is defined by Spanier and Lewis (1980) as the "subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship on a number of dimensions and evaluations" (pp. 826). Lewis and Spanier (1979) thought the one best predictor of a marriage's stability would be marital quality. Lewis and Spanier (1979) go on to say that marriages with low adjustment and satisfaction are more likely to end prematurely in either divorce or separation.

**Theories on Marital Quality**

Through research, some interesting theories have developed dealing with marital quality. Cuber and Harroff (1963) developed a typology of marital quality and categorized American marriages as either:

1. **conflict-habituated**, which involves a great deal of fighting by the couple, but is endured and possibly enjoyed.

2. **devitalized**, which involves little or no fighting, but also little or no passionate involvement.
3. passive-congenial, where each partner is involved as much, or more, outside of the marriage as in it.
4. vital, where the couple is highly involved with each other, but not restrictive of the other so that each may experience personal growth.
5. total, in which the couple is constantly together and intensely share all mutual interests.

Burr (1973) developed a theory of marital quality that is broken into three parts:

1. Premarital factors—which include homogamy between possible mates, resources for marital role functioning, parental models, and support from significant others, such as parents and friends, toward the relationship.
2. Social and Economic factors—which include socioeconomic status of the couple, the wife's work status, approval of the marriage by friends and relatives, and the household composition.
3. Interpersonal and Dyadic Factors—such as positive regard for their spouse, emotional gratification in the form of expressing affection, communication skills of the couple,
role fit, and interaction with each other and other groups such as a church.

Huan and Stinnett (1982) have found the common factor of "comfortableness" is implied when talking about many of the marital qualities. They found six factors necessary to achieve this comfortableness. They are:

1. Empathy: trying to understand how the other feels by "putting yourself in his/her shoes."

2. Spontaneity: being able to be oneself without inhibition.

3. Trust: being able to count on the partner's being honest in the end.

4. Interest-care: being interested and interesting, cared for and caring for one's partner.

5. Respect: having a high regard for and belief in the other's right to be unique.

6. Criticalness-hostility: a negative factor showing that an individual is not respected or appreciated.

Seeing marriage as having more than one dimension is the common factor with these three theories. Marriage requires a variety of varying, and sometimes conflicting, ingredients.
Lewis and Spanier (1979) have also developed an Exchange Typology of Marital Quality and Marital Stability. This typology allows a marriage to be viewed on the dimensions of quality and stability at the same time. This theory, however, adds a new dimension—time. Unlike other theories, this typology allows the marriage to be analyzed at different times during the duration of the marriage.

In brief, the single greatest predictor of marital stability is marital quality, and it is probable those marriages with the poorest marital adjustment, satisfaction, happiness, etc., will be more likely to end in divorce or separation. This relationship is mitigated at times by more attractive alternatives, but may be strengthened by external pressures to remain married (Lewis and Spanier, 1979).

Marital quality also has another advantage that previous terms did not; it can also be seen as having different values at different times in the career of the marriage.

The Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale

One of the instruments most widely used to evaluate a couple's marital quality is the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) developed by Spanier (1976).
The DAS is completed by individuals on the basis of a subjective evaluation of their marriage. The scale is then scored and summed. Each individual is then given a DAS score which is used to determine satisfaction or distress with the relationship for that individual (Dennis, 1987).

The DAS is a 32 item scale which is completed by individuals in a dyadic relationship. The DAS was found to have a total scale reliability of .96 using Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Spanier, 1976). The DAS was found to have content validity by expert judges agreeing the scale did measure dyadic adjustment. The scale was also shown to have criterion related validity by the mean total scale scores for divorced and married subjects which were significantly different at the .001 level. A factor analysis indicated the 32 items that comprise the test can be grouped into four distinct areas: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression (Spanier, 1976).

Norton (1983) has pointed out the nuances involved in the operationalization of marital quality as a dependent variable are essential. To study marital quality, research has typically created measures which combine the variety of dimensions discussed earlier (e.g.: adjustment, satisfaction, communication, etc.).
The DAS does combine these "multidimensional" variables into a single scale. Norton (1983) discusses four difficulties that are involved with using the DAS as a measuring instrument:

1. areas of marital quality which are assessed as part of the dependent variable cannot be used as independent variables.
2. items are weighed inappropriately—different scales in the DAS have different point values for their items.
3. items are used disproportionately—there are four affection items, thirteen agreement items, ten satisfaction items, and five cohesive items.
4. factor analysis does not confirm the conceptual definition.

From the research that has just been described, it is safe to assume the DAS is a valid and reliable tool to assess satisfaction or dissatisfaction of an individual within a dyad. The DAS, however, has been used as a dependent variable in the majority of the literature, which is not its appropriate use.

**Marital Quality Research**

A variety of studies have been performed to try to
better understand the effects different variables have on marital quality. The amount of research and number of publications that cover the issue of marital quality is far too broad to be covered effectively here. Therefore, three specific topics dealing with marital quality will be reviewed. They are:

1. the issue of curvilinearity vs linearity as it relates to marital quality.
2. the birth of children.
3. marital satisfaction for elderly couples.

Curvilinearity vs Linearity

A serious disagreement concerning marital quality over time has developed. Several researchers (Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970; Spanier, Lewis & Cole, 1975) thought that marital satisfaction and marital quality follow a U-shaped pattern. The married couple starts with a high degree of marital quality and satisfaction at the beginning of their marriage. Soon after, however, the couple's marital quality and satisfaction begins and continues to drop. This decline in quality and satisfaction typically lasts until the last child has left home or as they enter into retirement.

Swensen, Eskew and Kohlhepp (1981) give reasons for this pattern. They thought that demands (such as a job or
children) are made of an individual that are different from those of his/her spouse. Because of this, they grow and develop along different paths. These demands (e.g., a career) keep the couple from having intimate contact with each other. A child's leaving or retirement provides them with the opportunity to become reacquainted and overcome their estrangement. Swensen et al. (1981) also found that over the life cycle child rearing was a determinant of problems in the relationship.

Cuber and Harroff (1965), however, thought that decline in marital quality and satisfaction is linear and that it continues throughout the marriage, whether children are present or not. In a review of marital quality literature in 1974, Rollins and Cannon came to the conclusion the reason results of the literature leaned toward linearity was due to the instruments used to measure the quality of the marriage. These instruments were designed for cross sectional analysis.

Another possible explanation for divergence in findings is offered by Swensen et al. (1981). They proposed that as the marital couple gets older, the amount of love disclosed between spouses decreases. This would measure the couple as having a low quality marriage on the examining instruments used. However, the older couple also showed they had fewer marital problems. This implies
the couple has a high quality marriage.

It is easily seen that much of the research that has been performed on marital quality in previous years has been cross-sectional in design; that is, researchers have studied marital issues at one point in the couple's marital career and generalized their findings to the rest of their marriage. Recently, however, researchers have started to see how marital quality changes over the course of the marital career (Schumm & Bugaighis, 1986).

Lewis and Spanier (1979) have developed an Exchange Typology of Marital Quality and Marital Stability. This typology allows a marriage to be viewed on dimensions of quality and stability at the same time. Unlike other theories, this typology allows for marriages to be analyzed at different times of their existence.

The Birth of Children

The issue of children's effect on their parents' marriage has received considerable attention in the past few years. Children do have some effect on their parents. Whether this effect is positive or negative on the relationship is in debate. Anderson, Russell and Schumm (1983) suggested that children compete for the amount of time spouses are able to share with each other in communication, the
presence of children played a strong role in determining the amount of discussion shared between the spouses, as well as determining the level of marital satisfaction perceived by wives (pp. 136).

The research on effects children have on their parents' marriage is divided. Some researchers think children are a major part of a couple's not achieving maximum satisfaction in marriage. Others think that children are the reason couples have any marital satisfaction (Cherlin, 1977).

Hicks and Platt (1970), however, concluded that children detract from parents' overall marital quality. Luckey and Bain (1970), however, found that among marriages with low satisfaction, children were the couple's only source of mutual satisfaction. Albrecht and Kunz (1980) found children to be the second major determinant of a couple's staying married, just below the need of financial support. Cherlin (1977) found the issue of financial dependence to be exceptionally true. Some women stay in an unsatisfying marriage because they have typically put their efforts into making a home and do not have talents for a job; therefore, it is hard for them to raise children by themselves without a steady income (Cherlin, 1977). Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) concluded the reason couples in their study had a longer than
average marriage was because children were present in families studied. Rankin and Maneker (1985) studied the importance of children in explaining variation in duration of marriages. They found the presence of children is associated with longer marital duration among the nation's divorcing population.

Thornton (1977) found evidence to support both sides of the issue; women with large families and those with no children were the most likely to experience disruption, the lowest dissolution rates were found with those with modest numbers of children.

The presence of children alone, however, is not the only determinant of a couple's satisfaction. For example, Rodgers (1973) thought that transitions in the family are seen to bring about changes in the internal dynamics of the family and, thereby, changes in the marriage. One transition that Rodgers thought occurred in the family was the birth of a child.

A great deal of research has been done to support the idea that births of children impact most marriages, especially for women (Abbott & Brody, 1985; Feldman, 1971; Rollins & Galligan, 1978; Russell, 1974; Waldron & Routh, 1981). The birth of the first child to a satisfied married couple was found to have detrimental effects on couple's satisfaction (Feldman, 1971; Rollins & Galligan,
1978). This seems to be especially true for women. In studies performed by Ryder (1973), and Waldron and Routh (1981), couples who were expecting their first child were given a test to determine the level of their marital satisfaction and were given the same test eight months after their child was born. Wives' ratings of their marital satisfaction dropped significantly from pretest to post-test. Husbands did not show any significant change (Ryder, 1973; Waldron & Routh, 1981). These wives also reported their overall degree of happiness in the marriage declined after their child's birth.

Number of children also seems to be one determinant of lower marital satisfaction, due to the fact the amount of time spouses have to spend together decreases (Feldman, 1981; Luckey & Bain, 1970). Again, the data are divided. Rankin and Maneker (1985) found the presence of one or more children is not related to an increase in marital quality, while Abbott and Brody (1985) found that not only were several children determinants of lower marital quality, but if the children were male, effects were even more significant for wives. Mothers with female infants reported no difference in their marital quality as compared to childless wives (Abbott & Brody, 1985). The difference between sexes is explained in two ways:
1. boys are more demanding temperamentally and behaviorally than are girls
2. when behavior problems occur with boys and the mother tries to manage the problem, the husband questions her actions (Patterson, 1980).

In brief, two children or the presence of male children affect more parent-child and/or spousal conflict because of the excessive demands placed on the couple, especially the wife.

**Elderly Couples**

Research on how elderly couples perceive their marriage has increased in the last two decades. Older couples appear to be very happy in their marriages (Gilford, 1986). These couples report higher levels of marital satisfaction than do their middle-aged counterparts, but not as high as young newlyweds (Gilford and Bengtson, 1979; Markides and Hoppe, 1985; Rollins and Feldman, 1970). Many older spouses report their marriages have improved over time (Skolnick, 1981), with the aging years among the happiest periods of the entire family life cycle (Sporakowski and Hughston, 1978).

With an increase in life expectancy, smaller families and a reduced number of child-bearing years, couples are faced with more time together with the children out of the
home (Borland, 1982; Glick, 1977; Norton, 1983). This time spent together without children in the home has increased from an average of two years, to thirteen years over the last eight decades (Glick, 1977). It would seem the marital relationship would undergo significant change during this period of the couple's life as well.

To older spouses, marriage literally is a joining of two people as a family (Sporakowski and Hughston, 1978). This joining appears to be a benchmark of marital success; for long-married couples who enjoy a close relationship with one another, family, and children tend to have high levels of satisfaction (Atchley and Miller, 1983; Gilford, 1984).

Atchley (1985) described three major functions that marriage performs for older couples:

1. Intimacy— including sexual intimacy, involves mutual affection, regard, trust, and loving (Atchley, 1985). A close intimate relationship is a goal for a majority of older couples (Atchley and Miller, 1983), and being in love is the most important factor contributing to a successful outcome of their marriage (Sporakowski and Hughston, 1978; Stinnett et al., 1972). These couples use their relationship to freely express respect, honesty,
and their true feelings for one another (Parron, 1982; Stinnett et al., 1972).

2. Interdependence - which involves sharing of housework, income, and other resources (Atchley, 1985).

3. A sense of belonging - which is finding their own meaning as a couple, sharing mutual interests and observations, and a "routine source of comfortable interaction and socializing" (Atchley, 1985).

In a review of the literature done by Stinnett et al. (1970) and Stinnett et al. (1972), several aspects of marital relationships have been discovered. The findings in these research studies is consistent with research done in other areas of marital satisfaction; much of the findings in different studies contradict one another.

1. Many older couples feel their married life is as satisfying or more so than in previous years (Bossard & Boll, 1955; Fried & Stern, 1948; Lipman, 1961).

2. Marital satisfaction declines in later years, particularly in the lower socioeconomic class, and in marriages where a small amount of shared companionship and satisfaction existed in the earlier years of the marriage Blood & Wolfe,
3. Marriages seen as satisfactory or unsatisfactory have been seen as such from the beginning of the marital relationship (Fried & Stern, 1948).

4. Men and women both feel that "love" is the area where they would like the greatest satisfaction (Stinnett et al., 1970).

5. Marriage contributes to both morale and continued activity in later years (Goldfarb, 1968; Neugarten, Havighurst & Tobin, 1961; Stinnett et al., 1970; Stinnett et al., 1972).

The major conclusion drawn from the Stinnett et al. (1972) research was the older husbands and wives in this sample expressed very favorable perceptions of their marriage relationships and present period of life. As a group, the respondents tended to perceive their marriage relationships as improving and increasing in satisfaction with the later stages of married life. These results suggest that progressive marital disenchantment over the life cycle is a myth (pp. 670).

Feldman (1964, 1969) outlines three stages of postparental life:

1. Launching: where one or more children have left
home and one or more are still at home, the couple is satisfied with their marriage. This satisfaction is exceeded only by honeymooners and the elderly. The couple's focus is still on their children and they still argue, and looking back on their marriage, they are not happy about it.

2. Launched, wife under 65: These couples are less satisfied than those with children at home. A high value is placed on calmness and companionship, and a low value on romance.

3. Launched, elderly: These couples are distinctly different from the previous two. These couples are preoccupied with health matters and topics of discussion usually center around home repairs and religion. The couple report a sense of peacefulness, an absence of stress, and satisfaction with the marriage, which is close to but not quite as high as the level of the newly married (Feldman, 1969).

With the launching of children, marital satisfaction appears to increase slightly (Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Spanier et al., 1975). Other studies suggest this period of the relationship's history is one of the happiest and most satisfying of life (Glenn, 1975; Stinnett et al.,...
Why exactly does this occur? Stinnett et al. (1970, 1972) suggests that once the children leave home, the couple leave their former roles and institutions and rely on each other for emotional security and companionship. The couple has more energy to devote to each other and can interact more together.

Two major events mark the marital relation in the second half of life; they are the shift of focus from the children to each other following the last child's leaving, and the incorporation of the husband in the household after retirement.

Lipman (1960, 1961, 1962) supported Feldman's theory of the effects of the husband's retiring. He found the couple begins to have undifferentiated roles. The husband moves away from an instrumental role of the "good provider" and takes on a more expressive role by "helping in the house. The wife moves from her instrumental role of a "good homemaker" to an even more expressive role of "loving and understanding."

Summary

To summarize, children do make an impact on their parents' marital quality for many, but not all, couples.
Marital quality was also seen to change over time. The marital couple starts marriage with a high degree of marital quality, but soon drops off, only to rise again after the departure of the last child from home or at the beginning of retirement. This suggests that marital quality is curvilinear over time for most couples. Lastly, with an increase in the amount of time the couple has to spend together and devote to each other with the absence of children, marital satisfaction seems to increase. The couple's marital satisfaction is at its highest level in the marriage since the "honeymoon" stage. The couple begins to rely upon each other for companionship and security. Also, "love" is seen as the greatest marital need for couples.

Section 2

Dual-Career Research

Dual-career couples are a relatively new phenomenon in family lifestyles in America (Maples, 1981). The number of dual-career couples in America has steadily risen over the past 10 years. In 1980, there were approximately 3 million dual-career couples in the United States (Parker, Peltier, & Wolleat, 1981; Rice, Near, & Hunt, 1980). A
dual-career couple may be defined as two persons pursuing and being highly committed to an occupation as well as a domestic relationship (Gilbert, 1986; Parker et al., 1981). The term "dual-career couples" usually refers to couples who hold professional or managerial employment, while the term "dual-working couples" typically refers to nonprofessional employment (Hall & Hall, 1978, 1979; Klein, 1988; Mott, 1982; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971; Rapoport, Rapoport, & Bumstead, 1978; Sekaran, 1982, 1984, 1986).

Hardesty and Betz (1980) reported that dual-career couples showed higher levels of marital adjustment especially when the wife had reached a higher level of education than the husband. Gilbert, (1986), who interviewed men in dual-career marriages, found that men who share family roles more equitably with their wives (e.g., share child care responsibilities), had considerable conflict between career demands and family demands.

One of the features of dual-career families suggested in the literature (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969, 1971; Bebbington, 1973) is the significant amount of stress and strain that accompanies this style of marriage. Rapoport and Rapoport (1976) identify five sources of stress to dual-career families. It is not suggested that these
sources of stress are the exclusive domain of dual-career couples, but rather these sources are even more dramatic for the couple in the present social context. These stresses arise from the conflict of the dual-career family pattern with society. They are:

1. Dilemmas of work overload- which arise from the problem of the couple having to perform in three roles at once. Background factors cannot influence the sheer volume of work involved but can influence the attitudes of the husband and wife in coping with the difficulties.

2. Dilemmas of identity- stemming from the socio-cultural definition of work as inherently "masculine" while homemaking and family rearing is "feminine". It is suggested that cultural confusion of sex role becomes psychological or even physical confusion, e.g., as reflected in impotence or frigidity.

3. Role-cycling- dilemmas derive from problems at crucial stages-for example, at the start of the family, or at a job promotion. Role cycling has an important property unlike other sources of stress in that it has a developmental pattern. It is a feature of a career, both career and family, there should be a series of
transition points at which restructuring of roles occurs (Rossi, 1968).

Other sources of strain arise from conflict of the dual-career family pattern with society in general. Two sources of strain may be identified as of this type:

1. Differences between personal and social norms may be a source of stress to the wife in a dual-career family because of the importance placed on the maternal and homemaking role as a wife's function by our society. That the husband has to take on domestic roles was generally thought to be a far smaller transgression of social norms than the necessity of the wife to give away a large part of the childrearing role.

2. Social network dilemmas. One of the products of work overload due to heavy demands of career and family is that social activities are significantly cut back (Bebbington, 1973).

It is reasonable to state, then, the dual-career pattern might have some negative effects on the partners themselves, as well as on their marital relationship.

Fogarty, Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) have distinguished dual-career couples from other couples by describing them as having a high commitment to work on an
equal basis and a plan for living which includes goals for career advancement. This couple's careers would be characterized as being highly satisfactory personally and continuously developing.

Studies in the 1970s with dual-career families indicate that egalitarianism in division of domestic responsibilities and in importance of career advancement are unrealistic expectations for most dual-career dyads (Bryson, Bryson, & Johnson, 1978; Epstein, 1971). "Although attitudes may be egalitarian, the actual division of home care responsibilities places the majority of these responsibilities on the female" (Hopkins & White, 1978, p. 254).

Current interest in variables affecting the maintenance patterns of dual-career families is reflected in the research concerned with marital happiness, satisfaction or adjustment of dual-career dyads. Safilios-Rothschild (1970) examined the relationship between a married woman's work commitment and marital satisfaction. It was found that women with high work commitment reported a significantly higher marital satisfaction than women not working outside the home (Hopkins & White, 1978).

A woman's ability to choose the dual-career life-style is seen as an important predictor of happiness in
marriage. Orden and Bradburn (1969) found that both partners are not as happy if the wife works due to financial necessity than if she works by choice. These authors also found that a woman's decision to work puts strain on the marriage only when there are preschool age children in the family (Orden and Bradburn, 1969).

Bailyn (1970) found a drop in the number of very happy marriages as women became work-and-career oriented. These drops in marital happiness did not significantly affect the level of marital satisfaction, however, unless they were accompanied by the presence of a husband who was very "career" oriented. She found that marriages tended to be happier when the husband found satisfaction in both career and family than when the husband was either just career- or family- oriented (Bailyn, 1970).

Although some of the literature concerning the career-oriented wife suggests that a dual-career relationship will undermine the marital relationship, Rapoport and Rapoport (1972) present another viewpoint. They believe the marital relationship is more likely to be strengthened if each partner has the ability to support him/herself and feels that he/she is achieving a great deal out of career and family.

Epstein (1971) has made it clear that one of the problems of the dual-career life-style seems to be the
guilt women feel who are not conforming to the work-family structures of society. However, several authors have suggested that even though there may be greater strain on the relationship, it is the marital-work partnership which creates a potential for greater communication and sense of purpose within the marital relationship (Epstein, 1971; Hopkins & White, 1978; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1972).

The conflict between traditional family roles and the lifestyles of the dual-career family frequently can lead to role strain (Ray, 1988). Both must find time and energy to balance career, home, family, and their marital relationship (Ray, 1988).

Even though there are added stresses and demands on time and energy, many couples express high levels of satisfaction with their marriages (Blumenstein and Swartz, 1983; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976). The two-career lifestyle offers a number of potential benefits, including a higher standard of living, increased sharing, and expression of egalitarian values (Price-Bonham and Murphy, 1980; Ray, 1988).

Previous studies report mixed results on the marriage satisfaction of two-earner families depending upon the variables used in the studies. For example, dual-worker marriages do not differ significantly in marriage adjustment from single-worker marriages (Locksley, 1980;
Some researchers found that working and non-working women reported no significant differences in happiness with their lives (Baruch, Barnett, and Rivers, 1983; Wright, 1978), but another study concluded that working women with high work commitment are more satisfied than non-working women (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970).

The impact on men who participate in dual-income families has received limited research attention to date. Most of the dual-earner research has focused on women's experiences in managing multiple demands due to expanding roles (Aldous, 1982; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Holmstrom, 1972; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1969, 1971; Rosin, 1990). Research which has looked at men has typically focused on two issues: the impact of working wives on men's job, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction (Benin & Nienstedt, 1985; Burke & Weir, 1976; Gilbert, 1986; Gupta & Jenkins, 1985; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, Rabinowitz, Bedelian, & Mossholder, 1989; Rosin, 1990; Staines, Pottick, & Fudge, 1986) and the effect of wives' employment on husbands' domestic participation (Coverman, 1985; Nickols & Mertzen, 1982; Rosin, 1990; Walker & Wallston, 1985; Weingarten, 1978).

Couples have recognized they are more dependent upon each other than they had previously realized. This is
displayed by a greater willingness to share the housework and "consumption activities" (Bott, 1957, cf. Whitehead, 1976). To the extent that such families value mutually shared activities, the demands of a career directly affecting availability for the family, will influence the whole family's ability to pursue this pattern of mutual dependence (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

The family as a whole is reliant on one of the parent's careers to maintain a certain life-style or standard of living. They may, therefore, choose to withstand some of the difficulties they may be faced with due to the role demands of the career for a better position in society for the family as a whole (Gowler and Legge, 1978). Career "commitment" may require not only a long training prior to full-time employment in an occupation, but other things as well, such as:

1. recurrent training and study (usually outside office hours)
2. a willingness to take work home
3. a readiness to travel because of work
4. to move (possibly in return for promotion to more demanding or materially more rewarding jobs)

The idea of contract is inseparable from any discussion of marriage, for marriage itself is stated in
such terms. In its basic form, marriage is an agreement between the potential husband and wife; their living together should be legally recognized in a way that gives both parties some mutual rights and obligations towards each other and over the material outcomes of their relationship (i.e., children and property) (Gowler and Legge, 1978). As a contract, it legally exists until it dissolves, either by death, or by mutual consent, or by one of the parties behaving in such a way as to be deemed in law to have broken the terms of the contract. In practice, this apparently clear definition becomes fuzzy (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

The family may have to accept the career may become the focus of interest and life-goals. The resulting formal and informal work contracts are likely to rest on the hidden "work" contract the spouse will provide the sort of back-up services that are often not just desirable, but necessary if he is to meet the physical, intellectual and emotional demands of his job (Berger and Handy, 1975; Gowler & Legge, 1978; Pahl & Pahl, 1971; Young & Willmott, 1973).

This further expression of the hidden work contract between husband, wife and employer has been referred by Papanek (1973) as the "two person single career", defined as a combination of formal and informal institutional
demands, which are placed on both members of a married couple. This hidden "work" contract in the conventional marriage is often balanced by the complementary hidden "marriage" contract. The wife may go along with the requirements of her husband's career in return for advantages in other areas. She may expect and be given a more equal (or even greater) share in using the material rewards that are a result of his career progression, more attention in his free time or a greater range of free time and holidays for herself (Gowler and Legge, 1978). Bailyn (1970) suggests that marriage happiness for these couples relies upon this overlap to counter their inbuilt separation of interests due to the husband's career roles and the wife's familial roles. The hidden contracts existing in "conventional" marriages would seem to work in a satisfactory way for most of the couples involved and for most of the time. At different stages in their life-, marriage- and career-cycles changes in a couples' priorities may occur. These changes may also be a potential source of threat to the maintenance of hidden contracts (Gowler and Legge, 1978). Thus Bailyn (1970) found that between one-half and two-thirds of the "conventional" marriages were very satisfactory to both partners.

A lack of agreement about the content and relationship
between hidden work and marriage contracts may bring forth problems over the use of resources, particularly of time and commitment, to work and family respectively (Gowler & Legge, 1978). Fogarty, Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) and Rapoport, Rapoport and Strelitz (1975) found the interest in work, family and leisure tend to change over time. The Pahls (1971) found in their sample that a significant number of wives who accepted the conventional hidden contract early in their marriage, felt disquieted; at midlife, they had little personal identity, apart from husband and rapidly departing children (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

Roles

In our early society, a high level of role segregation existed in the home. There were clear cut boundaries between role expectations of the job/career and those in the home with very little overlap between the two. Work contracts were separate from family obligation, but these contracts impact on family relationships was mediated by the husband and wife role segregation that still prevailed in the home (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

In recent years, this has changed. Role segregation in the home has ended to some extent. This is attributed
to several factors:

1. separation from their family of origin
2. separation from old social networks
3. changes in social values

Traditional role theories suggest the competing demands of different social tasks produce role strain or conflict (Goode, 1960; Merton, 1957; Sarbin & Allen, 1968; Slater, 1963). These theories imply that people have a limited amount of energy and resources to meet stresses and may become overtaxed by being required to fill too many roles. Psychological distress is a logical consequence when people fail to reduce role tension or overload (Pietromonaco, Manis & Frohardt-Lane, 1986).

In contrast, more recent theories suggest that individuals may profit from having multiple roles (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974; Thoits, 1983). It is suggested that having several roles may:

1. increase an individual's privileges and resources in a social context
2. assist in acquiring social and economic status as well as security
3. act as a buffer for problems or failures
Studies looking directly at the conflict between work and family roles are limited (Burke, 1986). The studies that are available are frequently based on a dependent variable-independent variable methodology (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986). Research has not been directed at the specific interaction between work and family factors. Mounting research clearly documents the numerous ways in which work affects the home, and conversely, as how family life influences work (Bedeian, Burke & Moffett, 1988; Moen, 1982).

A consistent outcome of much of the research is that conflict between work and family roles results in impaired marital functioning, which is manifested in poor marital adjustment and inadequate role performance, decreased verbal communication, and other negative outcomes (Barling, 1986; Bedeian et al., 1988; Blood & Wolfe, 1960; Jones & Butler, 1980).

This finding has not always been consistent, however. Thoits (1983) thought that multiple roles lead to a meaningful sense of self that enhance well-being. The positive impact of employment on both sexes' psychological well-being is well documented (Aneshensel, Frerichs and Clark 1981; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Coverman, 1989; Kessler & McRae, 1982; Radloff, 1975).

Many other studies conclude, however, that work-family
overload does, in fact, lead to psychological distress. It is thought that a person's time, energy, and resources are exhausted by multiple role involvement. This, along with the idea there will be conflicting role obligations, is believed to lead to role strain and a lowering of psychological well-being (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Goode, 1960). In addition, several studies have found the greater the husbands participations in domestic activities, the better the wives' mental health (Kessler & McRae, 1982; Krause & Markides, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Ross, Mirkowsky & Huber, 1983; Vanfossen, 1981).

Role overload and role conflict are two useful concepts in understanding the relationship between multiple roles and stress (Coverman, 1989). Role conflict and role overload are unique concepts that are used interchangeably in the literature. Role conflict is said to exist when a person simultaneously fulfills a number of different, distinct roles, (i.e., spouse, parent, paid worker). In actuality, this is more true of role overload. Role overload is defined as having too many role demands and not enough time to fulfill them (Baruch, Barnett & Rice, 1983; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1976). Role conflict refers to "the extent to which a person experiences pressures within one role that are incompatible with the pressures that arise within another
role" (Kopelman, Greenhaus & Connolly, 1983). Role overload leads to role conflict only when the demands of one of the multiple roles make it difficult to fulfill the demands of another role" (Coverman, 1989).

In a study by Coverman in 1989, it was found that "role conflict decreases job satisfaction and the marital satisfaction of men and increases women's psychophysical symptoms, and job and marital satisfaction affect symptoms and well-being" (p. 978). Coverman goes on to say "the results suggest that satisfaction with marital and employment roles and perceptions of work-family conflict influence psychological health much more than does role overload (at least as currently measured)" (Coverman, 1989, pp. 978-979).

This is consistent with previous studies that concluded that subjective measures of job and family roles are stronger predictors of stress-related outcomes than are objective measures (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Coverman, 1989; Verbugge, 1986).

When the marriage first starts, the exact nature of the agreement between the man and woman is expressed in only general terms and is subjected to continuous changes and modifications and interpretations throughout marriage (Chitty, 1968). But, if this clear and explicit initial contract becomes fuzzy and unclear over the years, this is
partly because it has to co-exist with and adapt to other contracts or the husband and wife have to sustain with other parties (i.e., careers) (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

The relationship between work and marriage contracts becomes even more complicated when both partners are employed outside the home. "One source of potential problems between conflicting demands of work and marriage is seen in the development of the dual career family (Rapoports, 1971). The conventional marriage may be said to exist, when, "the husband derives his greatest satisfaction from his job/career outside the home, while the wife derives her's, not from a job/career commitment, but from her activities within the home itself" (Gowler & Legge, 1978, pp. 49-50). In other words, a conventional marriage is one in which the career-oriented husband along with his home-centered wife engage in a high level of differentiation in their respective productive roles. It is this type of situation that still tends to be seen as the relationship of choice to conventional couples (Gowler & Legge, 1978).

Unfortunately, our society does not reward work in the home as much as it does work outside of the home. Hertz (1986) thought that a higher social status has accompanied work in the economic sphere but not to work in the home, and those family members active as wage earners have
tended to exercise authority based on this higher status. Hertz goes on to say that a marriage needs to stand alone, outside of the societal and employment realm. It and each spouse's value in the relationship should be determined aside from these factors (Hertz, 1986). Hertz suggests the marriage should be considered a third career in the dual-career relationship that is "made," not imitated or automatically acquired. Unlike other contracts, therefore, it will involve confusion and uncertainty (Hertz, 1986).

Because both husbands and wives work, a marriage can no longer respond entirely to the demands of only one spouse or that spouse's career. Marriage can no longer define the division of labor between "bread-winner" and "homemaker" or, with that division of labor, no one spouse can have any more say than the other in terms of activities or set priorities for the relationship (Hertz, 1986). If two careers is the goal of a relationship, they must be governed by a set of rules about how conflicting demands are to be resolved and how the homemaking or reproductive activities of the marriage are to be organized. The predominant mechanism for negotiating individual careers is based on marriage as a third career. For dual-career couples, marriage is both a social contract entered into by a man and a woman for intimacy,
love, children, as well as the intangibles of such a union, which includes the merging of two careers. Thus, marriage comes to represent the subordination of two individual careers to a shared career development that has a variable influence counter to that of the organizations that structure formal economic careers. The approach couples take in resolving career conflicts is a product of an incremental process of decision making informed by a belief in and a commitment to a shared third career - the marriage (Hertz, 1986, pp. 54-55).

Gender roles still play a significant role in determining marital relations, and dual-career couples face a constant struggle not to fall back on old, out of date rules and roles of marriage they learned and observed as children (Hertz, 1986).

Years ago, couples hardly spoke directly about their equality. Instead, they spoke of trying to arrive at a balance between careers and family by keeping each other in check, so that neither spouse could usurp more authority for of his or her own career. Similar tensions may arise in the conventional relationship, but the difference for dual-career couples is the individual's trade-off of work and family is directly affected by the work demands of his/her spouse (Hertz, 1986). Negotiations in the dual-career marriages are continuous, defining mutual interests in work as well as defining the
relationship. This third "career" requires a clearer set of limits on the demands of the other careers (Hertz, 1986).

Job Satisfaction vs Career Satisfaction

Several theories, especially need-hierarchy theory (Maslow, 1970), two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1967), need-gratification theory (Wolf, 1970), and work-adjustment theory (Dawis & Lofquist, 1976, 1984), have significant implications for understanding job and career satisfaction. All of them share the view that some internal state exists in the individual called "need" or "motive" that may be satisfied or dissatisfied (Siegel & Lane, 1982).

There are four primary contributors to husbands' high levels of satisfaction in careers:

1. Career Autonomy- autonomy to determine the pace and shape of their careers is a major benefit of dual-career status.

2. Support and Empathy- the career support provided by their wives. In addition, wives' careers were perceived to provide independent sources of social interaction and support which reduced dependence upon husbands for this and thus freeing the men to meet the demands of
their careers.

3. Collegiality- Husbands cited the role of their wives as colleague and/or consultant as an important source of career satisfaction.

4. Career Influence- Some men attribute their actual career choice and/or performance directly to the influence of their spouses (Rosin, 1990).

Husbands, in experiencing high satisfaction consistently, value family as an equal to or even exceeding career in personal significance (Rosin, 1990).

Husbands perceived their dual-career relationship to contribute to their higher levels of marital satisfaction for the following reasons:

1. Companionship/Partnership- Wives were described as best friends and/or partners in life.

2. Vitality- Men perceived their marriages as vital and interesting as a consequence of the participation of both spouses in the world of work.

3. Independence- These men reported their being drawn to independent, active women" (Rosin, 1990).

As mounting numbers of employees face the task of having to balance work and family, employers may feel
under pressure to reassess their personnel and human resource management practices. Men's increasing desire for family involvement may be signaling the need for a major redesign of work and non-work priorities. A workforce whose values and needs are at odds with employers' can not be beneficial for either (Rosin, 1990).

To summarize, dual-career couple accept a number of roles both in their marriage and in the work place. These roles may at times be conflicting or too numerous. Literature on this issue is somewhat divided. Contracts are established in the work place, in the marriage, and between work and marriage. Agreement on the content and relationship between work and marital contracts is a potential source of stress in the couples life. Roles in the dual-career home have become less stereotypic in recent years, but some remain. The demands of a career can also potentially conflict with demands of a marriage creating another source of strain for a couple. A balance between work and marriage is seen as crucial.
Identifying Informants

The target subjects for this study consisted of male/female married couples. Each couple selected for inclusion into the population pool from which a sample was drawn met the following criteria:

1. The couple was married for a minimum of thirty years.
2. The couple defined their marriage as being high in quality.
3. The couple was identified as having a "good" marriage that is high in quality by third parties.
4. Both spouses had or have had a professional career outside of the home for at least 10 years of their marriage. Black's Law Dictionary (1990) defines a "professional" as a person who has "a vocation or occupation requiring special, usually advanced education, knowledge and skill....The labor and skill involved is predominantly mental or intellectual rather than physical or manual" (pp. 1210). The couples selected for this study will have to
meet the requirements of this definition to be considered for this study.

5. The couple's children, if any, were no longer a part of the couple's household.

The informants for this study were selected on an opportunistic basis; that is, the ethnographer chose couples who were available and meet the selection criteria (Kuehl, Newfield and Joanning, 1990). To meet the third criteria mentioned above, organizations throughout the cities of Ames, Iowa, and surrounding communities including Des Moines were contacted for possible informants. The leaders of these organizations were approached and asked to identify couples who met the above specifications.

Each of the potential couples identified completed a Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976). The couples identified as having a "good" marriage were used as the population pool from which the sample was drawn for the study.

The sample for this study consisted of 12 male/female couples. Interviews were conducted in this study until "saturation" of data occurred: that is, interviews were conducted until redundant information was obtained. Saturation occurred after approximately nine couples were interviewed. A prior research project (Henrich, 1987)
suggested that approximately nine to twelve couples would yield saturation.

This sample was drawn from a small, Midwest university town. The couples had a variety of backgrounds and professions. Examples of some of the careers pursued by the couples are teachers (both on a grade and high school level as well as college) accountants, real estate agents, small business owners and physicians. All of the couples had children. The number of children ranged in number from one-nine. Some of the couples had also adopted children.

Each of the couples was married a minimum of 30 years. The range of married was 30-42 years with a mean of 33.75 years. The men in the study ranged in age from 53-73 years with a mean of 59.83 years. The women ranged in age from 52-71 years with a mean age of 58.75 years. The mean score obtained for the DAS was 122.83. Spanier (1976) found that married individuals had a DAS average score of 114. The range of scores on the DAS was 120 - 127 for the men and 120 - 128 for the women. The mean score for the men was 122.25 and the mean score for the women was 123.42.
The ethnographic interview described by Spradley (1979) was used to study the married couples. The interviews were completed and analyzed using the Developmental Research Sequence (DRS) (Spradley, 1979). This allowed for less structuring of questions initially to enable the ethnographer to obtain as much unbiased information from the couple as possible (Kuehl et al., 1990). The interviewer in Spradley's (1979) model takes on the role of a "learner" during the interview and the couple assume the role of "teachers." The interviews were conducted in such a way as to help the "learner" understand the culture the "teachers" are in as the "teachers" understand it. In this study, the identified culture is the couple's marriage.

There are three basic elements that comprise Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interview:

1. The explicit purpose of the interview
2. An explanation of the purpose and process of the interview is given.
3. Three types of questions are used:
   a. Descriptive questions; used to have the informants describe certain aspects or areas of their culture to gain a better
understanding and language of the culture.
b. Structural questions; used to discover domains.
c. Contrast questions; used to discover meaning and distinguish objects and events in the world (Spradley, 1979).

Procedure

Each of the couples was first contacted by phone by the researcher. An initial time for the first interview was established at that time. The interviews were conducted in the home of the informants at times that were convenient for them. This allowed the couple to be interviewed in a surrounding that is familiar and comfortable to them. Also, this decreased the likelihood of the couple's not showing up for scheduled meetings if the interviews were held at a neutral site.

The interviews had no specific time frame. Interviews range from approximately one to one-and-one-half hours. Both partners in the couple were interviewed simultaneously. Neither informant's information was be regarded as "more valuable" than the other's.

With the permission of the informants, the interviews were audio taped and the interviewer took notes of the
conversation for accurate translation of the interview. The audio tapes were transcribed after each interview and reviewed by the ethnographer before the next meeting with the couple. Although the interview was directed by the informants, there were two structured questions used in the first interview to give guidance and purpose to the interview:

1. At the beginning of the first interview, the interviewer started the interview with the statement: "I'm interested in couples who have had a long marriage where both spouses pursued professional careers, have raised their children, and have a happy marriage now. Would you tell me the story of what it's like to be in your marriage now? We'll take as much time as you need to tell me."

2. At the end of the first session the interviewer requested "Would you keep a brief written log of your general daily activities, especially any significant relationship events of the day, things that happened during the day that stood out in your mind? List general activities and relationship events by morning, afternoon, evening. Do this for a few minutes before you go to bed." The diary will be used as a
secondary source of information and in the following interviews as topics of discussion.

Analysis

Ethnographic inquires are analyzed cyclically. The procedure of question-discovery occurs after each interview (Spradley, 1979). Questions are planned for and interview based upon analysis of previous interviews. Spradley's (1980) method of analysis was used to define the "culture" of the couple's marriage. Spradley has developed three areas of analysis in the ethnographic interview that was used for this study:

1. Domain analysis which is used to define categories of meaning within the culture. Objects, events, and activities can take on unique meaning in different cultures.

2. Componential analysis which is used to define attributes associated with the culture.

3. Theme analysis which is used to obtain specific themes and ideas of the culture.

At the end of the first interview, a second appointment was scheduled with each of the couples. The audio tapes from the first interview were transcribed by a typist and analyzed by the interviewer (there were
approximately 500 pages of text generated from these interviews). The transcript was initially perused by the interviewer with no attempt at analysis made. The interviewer then reread the transcript and highlighted key words and phrases. For example, in going through the first transcript of an interview, the interviewer notes words such as "commitment", "trustworthiness", "time alone", "heartache", "faithfulness" and "until death do us part". Each of these words or phrases was placed into its own separate computer file. Each of these computer files of words and phrases was compared with similar files. These similar files were then clustered together for each individual couple. For this example, "commitment", "faithfulness" and "until death do us part" would be clustered together. This procedure was followed for each of the interviews in this study.

Each of these couples also had one follow-up interview (for a total of 24 interviews). The goal of this second interview was for purposes of clarification of words and phrases identified in the first interview. At the beginning of the second interview, each couple was given the opportunity to disclose any further information they thought was relevant. If the couple took advantage of this opportunity, this information was explored. If not, the interviewer proceeded to ask for clarification
surrounding information gleaned from the first interview. At the end of the second interview, each of the couples was thanked for their participation and told that if they had any further questions, that they could contact the interviewer at any time. The interview was then transcribed and analyzed as the first interview. After all of the interviews were completed, broken down and analysed in the same manner as the first interview, related clusters of key words and phrases were gathered across couples to form the domains of meaning common to all of the couples.

There were a large number of clusters identified by individual couples but did not emerge as domains across all of the couples. For example, the two clusters of "finances" and "sex" emerged in one couple, but not across other couples. For couples having trouble, these are two areas where problems frequently occur. Some of these clusters may have added valuable material for this study, but could not be used because they were hardly mentioned.
The interviews for this study targeted a specific domain, that of marital quality in later years of marriage of dual-career couples. Nine characteristics of marital quality were found through the process of interviewing. These characteristics are: commitment, faith, time alone, children, goals/priorities, trust/mutual respect, different personalities, novelty, and job descriptions. These characteristics are perceived as included terms for the domains of marital quality in later years of marriage for dual-career couples. At the next lowest level, each of these included terms can be looked at as a domain with included terms and phrases of its own.

The results section will be comprised of two main parts. The purpose of part one is to provide the reader with an overview of the primary domains which emerged during the interviews conducted with couples in this study. Such a structural delineation is intended to provide the reader with a general impression of each of these domains as well as expose the reader to the range of terms and phrases the couples used when discussing each of these topics. This delineation requires a separation of one topic of discussion (domain) from another. Much of
the richness the interviews provide in each of these domains is lost through this process. As a result, part two of the results section will present a procedural delineation of the domains in the form of an idealized dialogue between an ethnographer and a couple. The interview in part two will be constructed from verbatim quotes taken from actual interviews. The interview is broken into its appropriate domains for the convenience of the reader.

The constructed interview is a conglomeration of all of the couples that participated in the study and the names and places mentioned in the interview have been changed for the sake of confidentiality.

It is anticipated that the reader will be struck by the optimistic tone that these interviews took. The sample for this study had an "up-beat quality about them in general. The couples generally were very optimistic about every aspect of life and looked for the best in every life situation. Another possible reason for the up-beat tone of the interviews could be attributed to the interviewer who views marriage as a positive experience and also attempts to find the potential good in any life situation. Qualitative methodologies view the interviewer as the instrument used to study this population and therefore affect how the data is perceived and presented.
It should also be noted that the couples did not complete the journals as anticipated. Several of the initial couple interviewed were asked to keep the journals, but did not follow through. After the third failed attempt, the interviewer no longer requested any of the couples to keep the journal.

Part I

Domain: Commitment

Characteristics of Commitment

It's always there; never felt not committed; just a given; something you understood; divorce was not an option; in it for the long-haul; faithfulness; marriage was for life; good attitude; it's going to work no matter what; we worked at it; determination; compromise; understanding; open-minded; work things out; taking responsibility I'll have to live with you tomorrow; accept the rules of the game; marriage is forever; it's until death do us part; I think that it involves total commitment.

Elaboration

One of the first and most pronounced domains to emerge was commitment. Each of the couples stated the success of their marriage was due in large to an unshakable belief
that when they got married, it was a life-long commitment. All of the couples were willing to "accept the rules of the game"—that is, marriage is forever. No matter what happened in their marriage, they were determined to work through it. This was not to say their relationship did not have its difficult moments. Each of the couples stated there were a number of difficult times for them in their relationship, but they approached them with the attitude that "I'm going to have to live with you tomorrow so I might as well be happy" as an incentive to work through their difficulties.

Many made the comment that they felt society was one of the main contributing factors leading to the breakdown of marriage. For example, they felt that a divorce has become too easy to obtain and that society is more likely to encourage a couple to breakup in times of trouble than it is to try to help them stick together and work things out. One couple used the analogy that "we live in a disposable society; if something is not exactly what we want or is not new long enough, we just throw it away and buy a new one. I think the same is true with marriages today." The couples did not specify how they obtained this unshakable belief, and they did not see any way to teach this to couples who are about to be married. They felt that it can only be taught in the home from an early
age and that it is learned through the example of the parents.

The couples did feel, however, that some marriages were not meant to be and that divorce may be the only option available, but these instances are rare. Examples of this are physical abuse and neglect. For the most part, these instances were seen as the exception and not the rule.

Domain: Faith

Characteristics of Faith

Spirituality; spiritual growth; God-centered; a journey; religion; commitment; a stabilizing influence; commonality; fundamental beliefs; togetherness; deep sharing of ourselves; reinforces; values; morals; our relationship has become deeper; love; knowing each other; perspective; priority; central; core; constantly searching

Elaboration

Faith of some sort was seen as a significant factor in a successful marriage. It did not matter what religion the couple practiced, just so long as there was some faith of some kind. It was necessary, however, for the spouses to have the same faith. They felt that something as
intimate as their faith needed to be shared. For one person to believe something different from the other was seen as potentially dangerous to the success of the marriage, not that it wasn't insurmountable, but that a couple starting out together has enough problems without adding more. They also felt that one faith for the couple is necessary because the entire family can share in prayer together, a sharing which strengthens both the marriage and the family.

Some of the couples described their faith further. Faith for these couples was not just religious tradition, although that was a significant part. Faith was seen as "the core of a person" and "my fundamental beliefs" as they pertain to life. These inner beliefs were seen as values and morals by the couples. Religious tradition was the ritualistic way they expressed or reinforced these fundamental beliefs. Faith is "our course through life which flows out of religious tradition". It was important to them these "fundamental beliefs" be shared as well.

**Domain: Time Alone**

**Characteristics of Time Alone**

Outside interests; travel; being absent from the house; being away; can be too much; has its drawbacks; absence makes the heart grow fonder; appreciation;
character building; mutual respect; give each other space; not dependent; growing; juggling of responsibilities; my night out; look forward to coming home; novelty; opportunity to share activities; separateness; we whipped the adversity; grow from difficult times; crisis; could be seen as detrimental if you wanted; adaptable; make the most out of opportunities.

Elaboration

For a marriage with both spouses actively pursuing professional careers to be successful, these couples felt that it was extremely important to spend some time by themselves. The form this time alone took varied greatly. Jobs for some of the couples were such that a great amount of time was spent traveling. For the couples that did not need to travel for work, time alone was seen as actively pursuing personal interests away from their spouse.

The expressed benefits of time alone were numerous. Each couple felt that it allowed them some space for personal development and fulfillment. Time alone also allowed the individual to stay current with events happening in the community and the world. When the couple would come together, they wanted to share their experiences which promoted communication. They also felt that it helped them stay interesting to one another.
For the couples who were required to travel a great deal for their job, it should be noted this experience was not one they particularly enjoyed, but the underlying attitude was they had to make the most of a difficult situation. They also felt that it significantly strengthened their relationship because of the yearnings to be home. They also felt this experience helped to keep their relationship fresh and exciting because of the limited amount of time they had to spend together.

**Domain: Children**

**Characteristics of Children**

Made time for them; effort; source of stress; source of growth; had them later on, not right away; planned for; understanding; made our marriage stronger; togetherness; joy; important to us; special times; precious time; teach you not to be selfish; our frame of reference is so different; it's a learning experience; kids are good for a marriage; they were an important part; to this day our children are very close; part of it is respect.

**Elaboration**

Children were seen as an asset to a marriage by each of the couples. The children helped the couple to get their priorities in order as to what is really important in
their lives. Children were seen as a potential avenue for the couple to grow and develop. These couples looked at the benefits the children gave them. Some of these benefits are a feeling of satisfaction in raising the future generations in the "right way" or the pleasure they were to have in the home. The children were seen as teachers of the parents. For example, the children were the teachers of patience, humility and unselfishness.

They also felt that it was important to spend as much time with the children as possible: to be with them and interact with them. By the same token, however, each of the couples felt that it was of extreme importance to get away by themselves for some individual time as a couple. This time alone was seen as "special times" when they could spend some time enjoying each other. These times did not necessarily have to be extravagant or expensive. In fact, they felt the best times spent together were inexpensive and spontaneous (e.g., a walk through the forest at sunset).

Domain: Goals/Priorities
Characteristics of Goals/Priorities

Saw eye-to-eye; important things; high standards; understand; compromise; insignificant arguments were avoided; stay on task; sometimes you have to keep your
mouth shut; some things are not worth fighting over; some things are worth fighting over; working toward individual and mutual goals; life philosophy; beliefs solidified; values; trust; responsibility; respect; inner woven; nobody is superior or dominant; projecting; monitoring; tough decisions.

Elaboration

This domain spoke mainly to the long-term goals and life plan the couple developed. Each felt that it was very important for married couples to have similar goals they are working toward. If goals and priorities are not the same, they felt the couple would be working in opposite directions and cannot have unity in their lives.

Priorities speak primarily to a life philosophy for the couple. The couple saw priorities as paying attention to things that are truly important in life and discarding those things that are not important. These unimportant things were considered to be not worthy of their time and effort because they were not important to the couple, or to the individual. An example of this is "petty arguments". The couple felt that most arguments are petty and not worth their time because they were senseless. An example on the individual scale is the wife not caring if her husband spends time in the workshop because it is
important to him.

Trust in your partner was seen as very important for priorities. This is not something the couple consciously tries to establish. In fact, the couples felt that when they were looking to select a life-partner they looked to find someone with similar priorities in life as theirs.

These priorities and goals speak both to the relationship as well as professional careers. None of the couples ever sat down specifically to set priorities and goals, but communication is constantly necessary. Monitoring and changing goals is done on a "as needed" basis. That is, if something comes up, the couple would usually discuss the situation and come to an agreement. Good communication skills and compromise were seen as key elements for this to be accomplished affectively.

The couples also felt there was a need to have individual as well as personal goals and priorities. On a day-to-day basis, neither individual or marital goals or priorities was seen as being more or less important. Decisions were made by a couple or an individual with the long-term or life goals to guide them. Marital goals and long-term goals were seen as having priority. If an individual goal affected the marital goals, a discussion was necessary to either place the individual goal ahead of the long-term goals, discount the individual goal, or
change the long-term goals. In any case, compromise is seen as exceedingly important.

Domain: Trust/Mutual Respect

Characteristics of Trust/Mutual Respect

Caring; each has to be trustworthy; honest with one another; no jealousy; part of professional life; industriousness; comfortable with decisions; consideration; professionally have to deal with people of the opposite sex; never worry; it's just there all of the time; know each other; expands over the years; judgment; dependability; support; brutally honest; had to be willing to hurt each other; gives you freedom; promotes growth; sincerity; complete honesty; came automatically; forgive, forget and go on.

Elaboration

An essential ingredient to a successful relationship for these couples was that they could trust each other implicitly. This trust took many different forms. They each felt very comfortable in letting their spouse interact with members of the opposite sex without fear of infidelity. They realized through their careers, each would have to work professionally with opposite sex co-workers and they decided early on in their relationship
this would not bother them because they trusted their partner. Trust also took the form of knowing their partner would do their assigned tasks in the family. As it relates to the domain of priorities and goals, each spouse trusted the other to carry themselves in a manner that would accomplish this goal, both as a husband/wife or as a professional.

Trust was not something the couple felt you "try to get". Instead, they felt trust and mutual respect just came. They did feel, however, that their spouse would have to be first be trustworthy. For these couples, trust came about in the dating process and naturally flowed into their married life. If trust were broken, none of the couples thought that it was possible to bring it back to its former level. They thought couples would be able to trust again, but never completely, especially in the area of mistrust (e.g., infidelity). It should be noted that on this last point, all of the couples were speaking speculatively because none of them has ever felt they have or have had their trust betrayed.

**Domain: Different Personalities**

**Characteristics of Different Personalities**

Enjoy different things; worlds apart, sometimes don't mix well; keep things separate; can't let it interfere;
personality conflicts; great; reinforcing one another; different perspectives; willing to try different things; makes life fuller; don't criticize; understanding; agree to disagree; happy medium; alike, yet unalike; policy; discussions; thought we were the same; differences are good if used right; revel in differences; make most of it; extremes; modify.

Elaboration

All of the couples felt their personality was different from their spouses. In fact, many felt they were on opposite ends of the spectrum in regard to their personalities. This was seen as an asset, however, because they felt they could grow from their spouse being so different from themselves. For example, an introverted husband saw it as a positive that his wife was so social because she could expose him to a whole other way of life that he would never had known if he would have married someone exactly like himself.

The couple felt that it was necessary to keep their differing personalities away from their marital life to some extent, however. They understood that all couple will have conflicting personalities in some form or another and they would not allow that to interfere with their relationship. For example, if one of the spouses
had to have "the toothpaste squeezed from the end", it was not fought over, being deemed insignificant by the couple. This relates to the domain of priorities: they felt to argue over something that is not likely to change (squeezing the toothpaste from the end which relates to an individual personality) makes no sense and is pointless, so why waste the time.

Over the course of time, each spouse learned to revel in their spouses differences and, again, see how it is positively affecting his/her life. An added benefit of having different personalities will be discussed in the domain of job descriptions, but it can be stated here that different personalities was useful in dividing up household responsibilities. Because each had a different personality and had different interests, each could assume the household tasks that interest them. In this way, it was not seen as a task, but as a pleasure. For example, the individual who likes the outdoors would acquire the responsibilities of gardening etc., while the person who has a head for numbers is responsible for the accounts of the home.

Domain: Novelty

Characteristics of Novelty

Remain novelties to each other; get out on their own;
an important factor; common interests; empathy for one another; make sacrifices for it; understanding; opportunities for married couples; tremendous for us in our marriage; setting time aside; dates; special time; not terrifically expensive; hard work; vacations; not boring; keep up with things; stay an interesting person; bring new ideas to one another; different perspectives; romance; time together; special dinner; special night; took time; priority; fun; our own getaway; exciting; boredom is a decision; spirit of adventure; night on the town; spontaneity; always something going on.

Elaboration

To maintain a successful relationship, especially with both individuals working, these couples felt that it was important to remain novel to one another. The couple felt that it was important to "do things that we've never done before". Once again, the idea of continued growth and development as a couple as well as an individual is essential. They also felt it important to make an effort to be creative (spontaneous) in their interactions. Understanding the needs of the partner is also very important. Each individual must be willing to "give of themselves" and make sacrifices for their spouse.

These novel times also did not have to be extravagant
or expensive. What was more important to each of the couples was the effort their spouse put forth and understanding that they had tried to please their mate. The idea that romance should never die in their relationship was seen as being very important. Again, having the same priorities as to what is important in a person's life is essential to staying novel.

Domain: Job Description

Characteristics of Job Description

Roles; a change in times; not degrading; a different world; sharing of responsibilities; take on responsibilities, not assigned; their fair share; not demeaning; generational issue; not uncomfortable; experimented; do what you do best; household chores; teach children; some traditional; find something that works for you and do it; just came about; evolved; commitment to help one another; just did things; who ever was better at it did it; help each other out; assistant; change again and again; willing to change; desire.

Elaboration

Jobs in and out of the household were seldom stereotypic for these couples. Jobs in the home were assigned on the basis of who liked to perform a task
and/or who was better at the task. The remaining tasks in the household (those neither wanted to do or both wanted to do) were divided between the two evenly.

The men in these relationships tended to perform tasks in the home that would not fall stereotypically within their realm. Most took the responsibility of doing many things for themselves (e.g., ironing their own shirts) and never had any regrets that it wasn't "a man's job". They felt their care for themselves was their responsibility. All felt that it took special effort on their part to accomplish this, however. All of the husbands came from traditional homes where their fathers did not do any of the housework. They felt that being on their own for awhile after leaving their parents home was indicative of this change. Also, each of these men felt that it was their responsibility to perform these tasks. They felt great respect for their wives and understood the pressures they had with their own job and felt it unfair to burden them with the added responsibility of maintaining the house as well as a career. None of the men ever expressed any embarrassment over performing "women's work" and thought it silly if other marriages would follow such traditional roles.
Part II

Characteristics of Commitment

**Husband:** All the things that we do with one another is a commitment. I guess we don't think of doing... it's always been there. It's so hard to define because I don't think we have ever felt not committed. We've never not wanted to be together.

**Wife:** It was just a given I guess. Commitment was a given it wasn't something you talked about it was something you understood. We never thought of divorce as an option. People of our generation didn't go into marriage with the idea that you could get out of it if you wanted to. You're in it for the long haul and that's it. You just don't think of any other alternative.

**Husband:** I don't know, somewhere along the way I think that Lisa and I both felt that marriage was for life. I never wanted to divorce or separate or anything like that. It wasn't a consideration. We always went on and worked it out somehow.

**Ethnographer:** And having that attitude that divorce is not a consideration, has been very important.
Husband: Yeah, I think you can talk yourself into anything. If you don't want to buy a new car, don't go sit in one.

Ethnographer: With that underlying philosophy, that it's just going to work, you can make it through it.

Husband: We worked at it. It wasn't a conscious thing though. I was married. As far as I was concerned I was married for life and I was the luckiest guy in the world, just plain lucky.

Wife: Divorce wasn't an option.

Husband: No, it wasn't an option. That's good. That's the phrase. It's not an option.

Wife: If you didn't like the way things were going, you worked to make it better. You talked it over and maybe you changed some of your own attitudes. We wouldn't get divorced so you would have to get along. You have a choice. Either you can be miserable or you can be happy, but you are going to be married.
Husband: Sometimes you would go to bed at night and you were at odds. That's all there is to it but you would try to talk. Lisa I think more so than me. She'd try to show me....

Wife: I was determined that I was never going to lay anything like that on my children. I just thought that this was a dirty trick you played on your children that we were just never going to do. No matter what.

Husband: You know, if she was upset about something I did or said or something like that, I would sense it right away too, but we would try to work it out. But I begin where I'd try to see her point of view and she'd try to see my point of view and we'd make a compromise out of it and go on and make up. But it wasn't always easy.

Wife: I remember a next door neighbor we had once. He just said well I think I am going to get a divorce. I don't think I love my wife anymore. Just like that. And I thought at the time that what he was really saying was things have changed and I don't see anyway to solve it so I'll just give up.

Husband: It seems easier sometimes to just quit than to
work it out because it's so painful to work through some of these things. Especially when we let them build up.

**Characteristics of Faith**

**Wife:** We were always interested in our spiritual growth and we have pursued that together. An important factor in our relationship was our faith journey. It's hard for us to imagine or explain our marriage without a faith dimension. I think being the same religion and being committed to that religion has been a stabilizing influence. I think that might be stressful for some people if they aren't.

**Ethnographer:** Would you say it matters which religion it is? Any religion or a specific religion?

**Husband:** I'm not sure it has anything to do with "religion". I think there probably has to be some commonality with their fundamental beliefs. I don't want to use the term religion....okay, we have our religious tradition that we embrace. Faith is our course through life which flows out of our religious tradition. Our religious tradition strengthens our faith from time to time in several ways.
Ethnographer: So they're very different components then? Religion and faith are not the same thing.

Husband: We don't think so, I don't think so, do you?

Wife: Right. You choose a religious tradition to strengthen your faith.

Ethnographer: It sounds like the faith is much more influential than the religious influence in your relationship.

Husband: Well, yeah. We talked last evening a little bit about spirituality and we basically think that everybody has spirituality. The fact that everybody does have spirituality depends on what fills their spirituality. What makes their spirit move. Everybody has a spirituality of some kind or another and it's that center core which then gives them their lifestyle, whatever it is. I think that we both realized that God put something in marriage that nobody will ever exhaust, and because of that, if you are still searching or trying to discover each other and realize that we can never exhaust all that marriage has and you keep searching and you just keep
going.

Wife: Well you think of some of the Mormons we know, family is very important and they are committed. And some of the Jewish families we know are very family oriented and very committed to each other. I felt that it was important to have that sound fundamental belief. You can go places together, go to church together, go to activities together. I think that some of the groups that we have been a part of, have helped us cement our values. They are going through the same kind of problems that we are going through or have gone through. It reinforces that you are not alone. I think we have had more of that kind of support through the church than we have through any other kind of social or professional group.

Ethnographer: So faith is one of the keys for your success.

Wife: Well, yeah it is.

Husband: It must just be an extra problem to deal with having different faiths.

Wife: Especially if one of the persons has a really strong
religious belief like mine. I think that Steve's faith became more important because it was important to me. Our relationship with one another became deeper.

Husband: Yeah, this kind of love and you always hear about the different kinds of love but I...but it's deeper.....I guess maybe it's experiencing those deeper kinds of love than you ever could imagine. But if you are your God or if your work is your God or whatever is your God, well then one can become very independent and think that I'll get this all figured out myself. As a result, the person comes up short and doesn't really develop or become aware of the full potential of marriage.

Wife: It helped our marriage too.

Characteristics of Time Alone

Wife: I think it's been helpful that early in our marriage, I traveled with the extension service at Iowa State and then after all of the advance degrees were over and Steve got his first job after his Ph.D. then he traveled. So in a sense I suppose that you would say being absent from the house because of job has had some benefit in this way for both of us. Not continuously, you
know, but for a day or so or he might be gone. Our jobs have not been such that we are here for breakfast, lunch and dinner day after day after day.

**Ethnographer:** And that's one aspect that was beneficial.

**Wife:** I think that could be beneficial. It also had its drawbacks you know, I mean sometimes when the kids were hurt or if a bad snowstorm came well, Steve was out of town or something like this.

**Husband:** I don't know if absence makes the heart grow fonder, but at least there is something in that and I think some appreciation when the other came home.

**Wife:** In a sense it's character building because the one who is here knows that things have to be taken care of no matter what comes up. When the refrigerator broke down I wasn't concerned at all about going out and purchasing one and getting it delivered. I know other families who just can not do that kind of thing. I think it's the mutual respect that we have for each others decisions.

**Husband:** One of the things I think probably that we were able to do is to give one another space. We have
permitted one another to have a life of their own as well as group life together.

**Wife:** I'll be down at the legislature soon and for 4 weeks I'll be down there everyday. Well, I don't worry about whether Steve is able to get meals for himself. That's not an issue at all. I'll probably have to stay down there until 7:30 at night, but that doesn't bother him. But if he were spoiled or dependent, or if I weren't home to cook a meal he could make my life miserable.

**Ethnographer:** It sounds like there are family priorities but also individual priorities.

**Wife:** Yes. Now Steve and I get up and spend some time together before we leave. But we just do that, that's a priority that each of us has.

**Husband:** We both feel that the individual has to have space to exercise their interests. I have taught, since I've been retired, I've been teaching... and part of the time I taught in the afternoon and evening because it is so hard to get people to do. And you also have to be willing to be alone sometimes. Someone always feels that his partner has to be there then there can be a problem.
Wife: I met a friend for a couple of hours tonight and talked. Steve frequently goes to the gym after work. I think both of us would feel a little smothered if we felt we had to do everything together. Our time together is precious and wonderful and good but it's not all encompassing.

Husband: It's probably our dispositions too. We just don't have to be together all of the time. And that's been an advantage several times when I've changed jobs and I actually wind up living by myself for several months before the family would come. One of the things I always joke about is the reason our marriage lasted so long even though we've been married 30 years we really have only been together about five.

Ethnographer: Sounds like a lot of juggling of responsibilities.

Husband: Ordinarily on Friday's I would come in from the road. That was Lisa's night out. She could go out every Friday and I'd be in charge then relatively. On her own.

Wife: I would go out and have dinner by myself. It was a
break. That was my night out. But you know, I still had some time by myself and it was also the fact that I could do things without taking the children with me. Nothing more difficult than taking a child with you all the time.

Husband: Young people seem to run togetherness so much into the ground that there is no space. I was thinking of a woman I was visiting with coming out of church one morning and she said where is Lisa and I said well Lisa has gone off to Des Moines to lobby for the legislature for AARP. And she said doesn't that bother you? I said of course not it doesn't bother me. I said we try to give one another some space. I think that we have tried to do that over the years is to give one another permission to have some private life as well as a married life.

Ethnographer: You have to be an individual...

Husband: That's totally right. We talked and she will tell me what she is doing and I tell her what I am doing so that we can share things that we are doing. We like doing things together. Yesterday we went shopping, dinner, a movie and just had a good time.

Ethnographer: Then you have special togetherness as well
as time apart.

Wife: Oh yes, Oh definitely. I would be fearful of a relationship that was too separate. If he goes out and does something with his life and I go out and do something with my life and then we come together and share that. I guess it make us more interesting to one another.

Characteristics of Children

Wife: We didn't really see it as a problem, having kids.

Husband: We tried to go to all the plays, and all the ball activities.

Wife: Oh sure, we did the same thing every other parent did. Sat at their little league games and tried to take them on family vacations and to their music lessons and we were just an average family.

Husband: Camping stuff.

Ethnographer: How did it effect the two of you?

Wife: Well, you know, we just made time for it and for
each other.

**Husband:** We just took time. We know people now, they wouldn't have a baby-sitter and they can't do anything now because they have the kids.

**Wife:** When I worked I always had sitters come in so we never took them to day care or anything like that.

**Ethnographer:** Always in the home?

**Wife:** Yeah. And I think we had some stress over the children. His style of parenting and my style are just worlds apart. I think I was pretty child centered. Don't you think that Steve?

**Husband:** Yes, and you know, since we had only two children and they came with great difficulty and by the time you wait seven years for a child, you are ready to really put attention on that. We had already spent a lot of time on our relationship.

**Ethnographer:** So you were ready to have children and spend time with them. It sounds like you were comfortable with your relationship by the time the children came along.
Wife: Well, that's true.

Husband: It was something both of us wanted.

Wife: Yeah, and one of the things we weren't married when we were nineteen. And I had graduated from college, worked in Washington D.C., spent a year in Europe and Steve had been fighting a war in the South Pacific and so we had some of those things out of our system and so we were ready for kids.

Husband: Then the kids were a common interest. They were not unplanned and it wasn't something that just happened by accident. Boy, they were planned for.

Wife: So I don't think it took away from our time. That's a question that I've heard posed before but I don't think that we ever really thought about it. That was just part of some of the fun things that we did.

Husband: I think that was the reason it was so easy for me not to go play golf and to give up bowling. That's why we have always been going our own ways to some extent.
Wife: Well, no because we did everything together as a family. If we did anything we went to a football game, always together. We went to drive-in movies. I guess that we were just too much a family, a group. I think that we...he would always hug me in front of the kids, I don't think that they missed anything. We were very interested in our family and our family was very important to us and most of the things we did, we did as a family. Very seldom....

Husband: No, we didn't have feelings that "gee, we didn't have any time together by ourselves". We did. We had time to ourselves. It wasn't that difficult.

Wife: The time we shared with the family we didn't resent.

Husband: We were so busy, the time we had together was precious.

Wife: The years went fast. We had a policy that on Saturdays we would take the children on some kind of a special trip. We went down to Des Moines and went to the museum one weekend and then walked around the capitol building and things like that so we had some kind of a special time for the children.
**Husband:** For example, we had a cabin on a lake and mom and dad always got the boat in the evening. We went out and we would fish and we fished off the big boat or just drive around the lake. But we had time together.

**Wife:** We would maybe just go for a ride around the lake and fish a little bit.

**Husband:** So we had time for each other and that time was precious. Maybe wasn't tremendous or glamorous, but it was precious to us. We were just by ourselves.

**Characteristics of Goals/Priorities**

**Husband:** We saw eye to eye on a lot of things.

**Wife:** Not on everything, but many things.

**Husband:** Many, many things. The big important things. Both of us had high standards. Whether it was in academics or in household chores. That helped. The fewer hurdles that you have to overcome, the easier it is. So the adjustments to married life were not tremendous as far as I was concerned. The problem a lot of young couples
have are around insignificant arguments.

Wife: You know some things are not worth fighting about.

Husband: This comes back again to giving the other person some space in order to have some of their own priorities carried out or completed. This may mean some compromise by the opposite partner so that that person can carry those out. That's probably what you're thinking about in terms of being one sided or working towards a goal. I think I have an adjustable personality. When you go off to do some of the things you do then I get a chance to work on some of the things in the basement or do some things that maybe I haven't been able to do when you were here. So, the end result is you go off to work on some of your priorities and have some fun too. I want to do that when I have absolutely no interruptions.

Wife: It is tougher when you are both retired.

Husband: Perhaps not. I haven't been...as a matter of fact I think this retirement is kind of good life.

Wife: We have similar backgrounds and our values are similar. I think the thing that is unique about our
relationship is the need for those goals that are established on the value system that we have. We go about arriving at those in our own way individually with the knowledge that the other person is accepting of that and expects that person to work to these goals.

Ethnographer: Let me make sure that I am getting what you are saying. Individual...

Wife: I expect him to do what he says he is going to do or what his responsibility is and I don't worry or fret about it. I just assume that he is going to do his job and do it well. I feel that he feels the same way about me. That the things that I undertake that are in my responsibility realm, I will assume and accomplish in the direction of the goal that we have established.

Husband: That is something that is not always predictable until things come up and the fact that you have to make a few allowances and give sometimes doesn't really bother us. There are some things that we do separately and some things that we do together. When we are doing things together it's usually a joint effort; nobody is superior, nobody is dominating, and it just kind of is a mutual respect that we are working towards this particular goal.
It's respect for what we have deemed important for us and our lives. I think that we both realize that there are many ways to accomplish a goal. It doesn't necessarily have to be his way or my way. If a person feels strongly about it, then there is compromise. We just don't feel that every decision needs to be fought over. We know what the important things in our lives are and they are our priority. Everything else can wait. Some things are important and some things are not.

Ethnographer: Did the two of you ever sit down and say that this is our goal in life or anything.

Wife: It sounds so good doesn't it?

Ethnographer: Yeah, it does.

Wife: No, I can't say that we haven't done that because in doing some of our family planning, projecting I think we had an understanding and a goal.

Husband: I think initially, we did more so in terms of career. Obviously we had to talk about that. That's not accidental. There were times in our marriage when it has been more important. Recently we have been thinking in
terms of retirement. What are we going to do. How are we going to be able to accomplish what we want to do. So I think I suppose we have done it spasmodically, not annually, But when you begin a new stage in your life.

**Ethnographer:** I'm getting kind of a sense for what you've been saying that: there are some things that are extremely important, that are shared, and there are also things that are important that can be different in your relationship.

**Wife:** Yes! But, there was the compatibility of activities and beliefs and goals that we didn't have conflict over. Well I don't know if it's necessary but it certainly has been helpful in our lives because Steve is very professionally directed and so that has created time and opportunities for me to take advantage of and blossom in the areas that I wanted to in my work. He has encouraged me. He has never discouraged me from working. Is that not right?

**Husband:** Yeah! If she wants to work I say fine if that's what she wants to do. The main thing is are you comfortable with that decision, is that what you really want to do and if that's what you want to do then fine.
Wife: Times are really different today.

Husband: But then too I would be the primary wage earner and supported the family. We sort of compromise with one another, although our tastes on things aren't that different. Like when buying houses or buying cars there's not that much difference.

Wife: That's not the kinds of things we disagree on.

Husband: I don't think we have ever had anything that we were adamantly against each other about. We may each have our own opinions but they can be reconciled, we can meet on medium ground. And then a lot of times we just give in.

Ethnographer: It sounds like it's important for both to know what is important to the other person.

Husband: Yeah, and you try to compromise when you don't agree.

Characteristics of Trust/Mutual Respect

Wife: Trust. Trust. You know I have a lot of friends. I
have some really very good friends but I believe that he's probably the one that cares about me the most in the world and visa versa. Each one of them has to be trustworthy. Trust is something that you develop because you know your partner is trustworthy.

*Husband:* I would think that any couple that is going to make it has to be up-front and be honest with one another. And there can't be any room for jealousy.

*Wife:* But that comes with the trust. Well, I don't look to him to make me happy. He does make me happy. But he is not my only source of happiness. Both of us have a lot of inner sources of happiness. And you are going to deal with people of the opposite sex in your professional capacity. I never worry and I don't think he worries about it. But that's part of the mutual trust.

*Ethnographer:* How did you build some of the trust that you have been talking about.

*Husband:* I think that just was there all the time.

*Wife:* I think it was always there.
Husband: We went together for five years before we got married and knew each other quite well. I don't know how we built it. It was probably expanded over the years but I think there was a lot there to begin with.

Wife: I really admired Steve's faithfulness and his dependability and trust. I know that you're always going to be there. You look for someone that you can spend your whole life with. And someone that you can respect forever and someone that you think is going to respect you. I think those are the things that I looked for. I saw those traits in Steve. I could always believe him. He didn't tell me stories and make up lines and that kind of thing. I have always trusted him. Just complete trust and that sort of an atmosphere gives you freedom to grow. I think I have grown in this marriage. We probably both have.

Husband: I have too, no question about it.

Wife: I think that this atmosphere of trust really sponsors or promotes growth. I felt free to do some of the things that I wanted to do. I couldn't expect him to fulfill all of my emotional needs. I am a person. But when I got into real estate, I found that to be highly satisfactory, although it's a rough game. Yet, it is
working with people and I enjoy that.

Husband: I think it's a very intricate part of a relationship. Apparently we chose each other because we saw in each other the qualities that epitomize trust and mutual respect.

Wife: I think one thing that is very important that we had to learn in means of trust was how to forgive. When you live with someone, not everything they say and everything they do is going to please you. But we have learned to forgive, forget and just go on. And, we don't hold grudges. We just don't do that. This is something I think you do need to work on though. I don't think that we have ever done anything to make the other one not trust. I think that's maybe what it is. I've always tried to live by the golden rule do unto others as you would have them do unto you and I think that that probably helps a lot. So you agree to respect the other person's opinion. You don't necessarily agree with what they think, but you respect them enough to have their own opinion.

Husband: I have my beliefs but I am not going to get on a soapbox and say this is the way it has to be done.
Characteristics of Different Personalities

Husband: In a sense we are very different. She's much more social and she gets involved with a lot of other people whereas I am the kind of person who could go off in the woods by himself. But I am enough of a social person that I do enjoy some of that.

Wife: We're worlds apart. He's the non interventionist, permissive parent and I fluctuate between the authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles.

Ethnographer: Did you different personalities mix well?

Wife: No, they didn't.

Ethnographer: You were able to can live together somehow.

Wife: Well we have to keep that separate from our relationship. We can't let that interfere.

Husband: You are going to have problems in every marriage and you can't let those differences destroy you. You're going to have some personality conflicts. We have very
different personalities. You know we used to talk about those and thought it was great because we sort of reinforced one another. I think we have tried to work through our weaknesses. I think I have worked on being more outgoing.

Wife: I haven't worked on being less outgoing.

Husband: We kind of do reinforce one another. We're able to see different perspectives. I think she enjoys walking through the woods and she may not have enjoyed that if I hadn't like to do that. And even though she has to kind of drag me to dancing, once I get there and get involved I enjoy it but I would have never done it if somebody hadn't dragged me there. So you have to be willing to do some things that you think you might not enjoy. You need to keep an open mind about new and different things.

Wife: Steve's a lot better record keeper than I am and so he does all of the record keeping and that works pretty well. I am active politically and he's not that interested in politics. But I am. But he doesn't criticize me for my activity in the political....

Husband: We just realize that we don't agree on everything
but we always come to a happy medium.

Ethnographer: Would you say you're more alike or not alike.

Husband: Alike.

Wife: In some ways. But in other way very unalike. I think that one thing I always liked about being married to Steve was that there was always something going on. Always exciting. Always some new thing coming up.

Husband: It isn't so much what you say, what you do speaks louder than what you have said.

Wife: I think you need to discuss it and vocalize it and point out some of these things that I'm not sure that they just get from observation. I think that it's important to discuss these things.

Husband: But we would also execute. One thing about...I always said that with Lisa's brains and my brawn we would get along alright. I am a great executor and she is a great thinker and she thinks about things that are good for the family and for ourselves.
**Wife:** I got so I said that I was almost afraid to make any suggestions because I really wanted to make sure I wanted it done before I said anything because otherwise I would turn around and it would be done. I had to be careful what I said.

**Husband:** That's my nature though. Like I said, the good Lord put the two of us together. It was just a good match. We complimented each other.

**Ethnographer:** So you use differences to modify...

**Husband:** The tendency is that you are attracted to something but once we are living together then we try to change that thing that we admired before or liked. I think that is sort of a chemistry that people have. Anyway, what sometimes will irritate will sometimes amuse you. I have enjoyed life because she is so outgoing. It's not that I don't enjoy it, it's that I am a little hesitant and the fact that she's outgoing and I have had a lot of fun.

**Characteristics of Novelty**
Wife: We both have lives that are separate from each other and so we don't sit here at night wondering how to entertain each other or what to talk about. So that when the times that we do come together then they're special times.

Husband: We keep trying to do things that we have fun doing.

Wife: And we keep trying to do things that are different than we have done before. Well, this is the year that we are going to learn all that we can about art. Or last year was the year that we were going to do as much theatre as possible. But those are the kinds of things. When we did find time together it was quality time. We used the time in a quality way and we remained novelties to one another.

Husband: We hired a baby-sitter so that we could get some time, some space away from the kids. And that's probably a pretty important factor that you need to go out. I think married couples need to have some common interests that they can enjoy together. And you need a sense of empathy for each other. If I had two nights off, I spent it at home because I was really working all of the time.
I remember when we were first married, I was bowling and I had just started to bowl so the first night I said that this was my bowling night and I went bowling. So the next week I said that this was my bowling night and Lisa said you know you have two nights off a week and you are spending one night bowling. And you know I haven't bowled since. An understanding about the needs of your partner is necessary.

Ethnographer: It sounds like you took advantage of the time you had.

Husband: Yeah, right. It's more just setting the time aside. Allowing time because it just doesn't automatically happen. You also have to be firm. If a friend would call and say we are having this party could you come and you say well, I'm sorry but my wife and I have plans alone together that evening. That's not a typical thing in society today. And it wasn't just going out. When the children were small I can remember after we put them all to bed we would sit at the table and have a cup of tea together and just visit. So that was sort of a little special thing that we had always after the children were in bed. You know what I am saying?
Wife: Well I guess just because we have a lot of interests. I mean you know if you have a lot of interests and you keep up with things then you are an interesting person. We have always had a lot of romance. Always. We've never let the romance die. When the kids were little one night of the weekend we would put them to bed early and then we would have our time together; a special dinner, bottle of wine or we would go out. Actually we always did it on Sunday night.

Husband: We sort of did it at home. Sunday night was usually our night.

Wife: And we always took time to do it. Always. And we still do. We would have family vacations but we would also find time to get away on a weekend or have our own little getaways.

Ethnographer: Sounds like it takes a lot of effort.

Wife: If it's a priority for you to go out, you'll do it. And you don't have to do it constantly, if you just do it.

Husband: There are some nights she would fix something special and we would have drinks and then we'd have a
We always had the attitude that life was just opening up new things, always exciting. You never had time to think about being bored or life being dull.

Wife: I think boredom is a decision you make about your life and I think there are a lot of bored people.

Husband: All I'm saying is that we had a spirit of adventure.

Ethnographer: Could you describe what you mean by spirit of adventure?

Husband: Well, for example, when we got the cabin. We were invited up to the lake by one of the young women who lived with us. We loved it of course. We took out whole brood up there and oh the lake was wonderful. Well, Lisa and I let the kids go a minute and we drove around this small lake and we noticed that there were a number of cabins for sale. One we liked real well and we said gee this would be a nice place for us. So, we looked at each other and said well let's go for it. It was an adventure for us you know. It was something new and the kids loved it.
Wife: There was always something going on that's for sure.

Husband: Then we did something else. House came up for sale and we said well we ought to buy that house and so we became a landlord. Well, that was a whole new adventure for us. So we thought that was important.

Characteristics of Job Description

Wife: Assuming it's not the role of the man at that time. You do a lot of things that your father nor my father ever did.

Husband: That's just a change in the times.

Wife: I mean, he can do the laundry and I don't think you've ever ironed, but he can clean the house and he will do these things without me even expressing it. He has always done this. Why he does it, what in his background prepared him to first of all be knowledgeable enough to do that and then to feel that it was not degrading himself emotionally, I don't know.

Husband: Well, we shared a lot of the responsibilities and we have never sat down and come to any specific agreement
on what responsibilities we were going to take and we just assumed the responsibility. We worked very well together. Like tonight we are going to have a dinner party and I say I can cook which means I am K.P.

**Wife:** It means that I dust and he vacuums.

**Husband:** And I peel the potatoes and clean up the kitchen.

**Wife:** And so we've just sort of done that. That has made my working easier. I hear a lot of women complain that their husbands don't do their fair share. I really can't complain. Steve has always done his share. But we have job descriptions in our hands.

**Ethnographer:** Were the job descriptions based on any societal stereotypes?

**Husband:** None at all.

**Wife:** But I like to cook.

**Husband:** And I'm not crazy about cooking.

**Wife:** Taking care of the house plants is in my job
Husband: Taking care of the house plants is not in my job description.

Wife: You have to remember that I am the generation where the woman stayed home and took care of the children but the other half of that was all of my siblings in my family, all of the women have had to work for one reason or another and we all have college degrees. And he said that since I had a head for figures that he would just let me do the books and I've done our taxes, I've done everything.

Husband: Then I did my household chores. Gardening.

Wife: Nothing in the house at that time.

Ethnographer: Is it necessary to have different job descriptions? How did they develop? Who developed them?

Husband: They just came about. We kid about that's not in my job description but we never wrote any job descriptions like you would in an office or anything like that. What happened was, I think like Lisa was a better cook than I
was and I could see that I could help in many other ways. I could probably build a little better on the house than she could, I could probable run the vacuum sweeper because of my physical strength maybe better than she could. They just sort of evolved.

Ethnographer: Is it important to have certain roles or certain tasks that each one is not assigned so much...

Husband: They're not assigned but it is important I think to have a commitment to help one another and to have some empathy for what the other person is doing. Don't you agree or do you?

Wife: Yeah! I think we probably just did things, whoever was better at them, and it was easier.

Husband: So the other one became the assistant or the helper. Our roles have changed again and again and again.

Wife: I know that a lot of couples when they are married they think, well, we've got to sit down and discuss about who is going to do this and who is going to do that, but the way we found it to be is that you have to be willing to change that role when there is a need for it. It has
been about three years ago he was doing a lot of the cooking. My job was such that I had to eat late. But he came home and did the cooking. Now it's my job to do the cooking again. So it changes.

**Ethnographer:** It doesn't sound like stereotypes had any part to do with that.

**Husband:** Yeah, there are certain things that frustrate each of us and certain things that don't so we have our own tasks.
In general, this study supports the majority of the literature in the area of marital quality. The results section summarized domains of meaning which emerged from interviews conducted with couples sampled in this study. Some of these domains supported earlier research findings and theoretical literature. Other domains seem unique to the couples interviewed. This chapter will discuss findings similar to literature cited in the introduction and will highlight findings which contribute new information about marriage described by these couples.

The couples interviewed for this study supported the general ideas put forth by Fried and Stern (1948), Bossard and Boll (1955), Lipman (1961), Rollins and Cannon (1974), Rollins and Feldman (1970), Spanier, Lewis and Cole (1975) and Stinnett et al. (1970, 1972). Research to date has typically stated that, as the marriage lengthens, marital quality decreases. Marriage typically begins with a great deal of satisfaction, but soon begins a steady decline, especially when the first child is born. Marital quality does not begin to increase again until the last child has left home. Marital quality then begins a slow, but steady, increase. However, the level of marital quality
never equals that of when the couple was first married.

The couples interviewed disagreed with these researchers by saying their relationship has reached a higher level of satisfaction now than when they were first married. They felt the present is the best time for the two of them because the children have left the home and things are not quite as stressful for them as a result. In general the couples' viewpoint could be summarized as "you work hard all of your life and at the end you should get your reward."

The couples did agree with Swensen et al. (1981) and their proposed reasons for this curvilinear pattern. Trying to make a living to support the family and the time needed to raise children were seen as detrimental to the marriage by the couples. It was not seen as detrimental to the marriage in the same manner as Swensen et al. (1981) described, however. The couples felt their marital quality did decline after the birth of children, but the decline was not as steep, or as severe as Swensen et al. (1981) describe. The reason for this difference was that children were seen as an asset rather than a liability, thus mediating the decrease in marital quality. The couples saw this as an opportunity to grow and develop as well as receive pleasure from their children. The only negative aspect of having children was seen as having to
make initial adjustments in the home with the birth of the first child. This was seen as decreasing after approximately the first six months.

The issue of children produced other unexpected results in this study. Past research has stated that the birth of children is detrimental to the marriage because children compete for the amount of time the spouses share with each other in communication (Anderson et al., 1983; Feldman, 1971; Rollins & Galligan, 1978; Routh, 1981; Ryder, 1973).

This was not seen as the norm for the couples in this study. Although they stated that children are "hard on a marriage" for many of the same reasons that previous research has mentioned, such as the children take time away from the couple spending time together, the couples felt they were more of an asset than a liability. Many felt that it strengthened their marriage because the couple spent time together when they were with the children. These ideas support the work by Wallerstein and Kelly (1980) which found that the reason the couples in their study had longer marriages was the presence of children. Furthermore, they felt content and satisfied to spend their free time with their children. Finally, the couples looked upon raising their children as a challenge and as a way they grew together as a team.
The most important of all domains discovered, as expressed by the couples, is that of commitment. These couples felt they went into their marriage with an unshakable belief that their marriage would last forever. This attitude does not seem to be dominant in the previous research literature. The couples in this study thought this is an area where changes in society have affected the number of divorces in our country. According to the couples, "... we no longer instill in our children the idea that when a couple is married, it's for life." The couples all stated these ideas need to be taught to children at a young age and the best way to instruct children is through their own example.

It was also very important for these couples to be committed to each other in other ways than just marital stability. A strong desire to work toward established goals and to take responsibility for one's actions are examples of this.

The domain of job descriptions was also noted as supporting much of the present day literature. Linville (1982), Marks (1977), Sieber (1974), and Thoits (1983) all thought that individuals profit from having multiple roles. The couples in this study would agree. They saw having multiple roles as a means for them to expand themselves and to be a vital part of a community. This
information is in contrast with Goode (1960), Merton (1957), Sarbin and Allen (1968), and Slater (1963) who all thought that multiple roles were detrimental to marital happiness.

Many of the husbands in this study would question the findings of Hertz (1986) who stated that roles are still determined significantly by gender. The men in this study accepted non-gender roles as a matter of course and felt no humiliation from doing "women's" work. In support of the current research, these men wanted to accept their responsibility for the household and ease the burden carried by their wives (Kessler & McRae, 1982; Krause & Markides, 1985; Pleck, 1985; Ross et al., 1983, Vanfossen, 1981).

The key to much of the findings in this area are that for most of the couples interviewed, the wife was able to choose whether to work or not; it was not thrust upon her out of necessity. The job was then used as a means of furthering oneself for personal goals. This supports research performed by Hopkins and White (1978) and Orden and Bradburn (1969).

Religious faith does not seem to be a prominent variable in most of the empirical research reviewed earlier. However, Newfield (1985), Thornton (1978), Bumpass and Sweet (1972), and Coombs and Zumeta (1970)
found that religious homogamy is a predictor of marital stability. Newfield (1985) found this to be the single greatest predictor of marital stability. The couples in this study supported this notion. The couples stated that true faith is needed for the marriage to develop. Faith does not necessarily have to be organized as a particular religion, but it should be the same for both partners and for the family. More importantly, the couples saw faith as going beyond the limitation of any particular religious tradition and saw it as a fundamental belief in a person. Traditional religious practices are seen as a way of deepening those fundamental beliefs as well as a means to demonstrate one's faith. The important aspect for the couples was in finding a person to marry who has essentially the same beliefs, but also the same religious traditions to express those beliefs. This notion was seen as particularly important because the couples thought that experiences as intimate as marriage and faith should be shared. They also saw it as providing an opportunity for the couple to grow closer to each other and to their children by spending time together.

Time alone is a domain that appears to be somewhat limited in the literature. Several theories have touched upon this idea, however. For example, Cuber and Harroff's (1963) typology on marital quality has one component in
which the couple is highly involved with each other, yet do not restrict each other so that each may experience personal growth. The couples interviewed for this study would adamantly agree with this statement. Without fail, each couple felt that individual development of both spouses was highly indicative of their success. This quality kept the relationship fresh and interesting. They also understood the idea that to have a solid marriage, each would first have to be a solid individual.

Time alone also had one interesting aspect in regard to the couples when one individual was required to travel for his/her employment. These couples still thought that it was a positive influence on their relationship. This was so because they began to appreciate what they had and were always anxious to get home and spend time with their family. The couples did not particularly enjoy this time, but they made the best of a difficult situation.

The domain of goals/priorities spoke mainly to the long-term goals and life plan the couple developed. Each felt that it was very important for married partners to have similar goals that they are working toward. Priorities were used as a "measuring stick" of events as they relate to goals. The couple saw priorities as paying attention to things that are truly important in their life, and discarding unimportant things because it is not
useful for them to ever be considered. If goals and priorities are not the same for both partners, they felt the couple would be working in opposite directions and can not have unity in their lives.

These priorities and goals speak both to their relationship as well as professional careers. None of the couples ever sat down specifically to set priorities and goals, but communication is constantly necessary. Through the dating process, they felt they knew each other and what aspects of life were important to them. These goals and priorities were seen as "inbred" more than "set". Burr (1973) stressed the importance of agreement of spouses before marriage. Monitoring and changing goals is done on a "as needed" basis. That is, if something comes up, the couples interviewed would usually discuss the situation and come to an agreement.

The couples also felt there was a need to have individual as well as personal goals and priorities. Neither individual or marital goals or priorities was seen as being more important than the other. Decisions were made on a day-to-day basis by a couple or an individual with the long-term or life goals to guide them. If an individual goal affected the marital goals significantly (e.g., accepting a new professional position), a discussion was necessary to either place the individual
goal ahead of the long-term goals, discount the individual goal, or change the long-term goals. Gowler and Legge (1978) state that a family may have to accept the fact that a career may have to become the focus of interest for the family and become the life goal. The couples in this study would agree with this statement, but they felt decisions such as this were made on a mutual basis. For this example, other researchers (Pahl and Pahl, 1971; Young and Willmott, 1973; Berger and Handy, 1975; Gowler and Legge, 1978) would imply the other spouse would have to assume a secondary, back-up role and take on less desirable activities for the family. Again, the couples would agree that one spouse may have to change their individual career goals, but in no case would any of the couples have agreed that any role would be considered secondary, a back-up or less desirable. Rather, they would see they are fulfilling an important role for the family. In any case, compromise is seen as exceedingly important.

An essential ingredient to a successful relationship for these couples was that they could trust each other implicitly. Huan and Stinnett's research (1982) also found trust to be of significant importance to a relationship. This trust took many different forms for the couples in this study. One of the first areas where
trust manifested itself was in dealing with individuals of the opposite sex when their spouse was not around. They realized early in their relationship that through their careers, each would have to work professionally with opposite sex co-workers. This also relates to the domain of priorities. The couples understood there are some things that are not worth the time and effort to worry over because it was not of significant importance. Prioritizing life events as to what is important and what is not is critical. A sense of peace, freedom and security was the ultimate result of this trust. This allowed them as an individual as well as a couple to "enjoy life more" because they did not need to worry about trivial matters.

Trust also took the form of knowing that their partner would do their assigned tasks in the family. Each spouse trusted the other to carry themselves in a manner that would accomplish their mutual, but also individual goals, as well as knew they were being trusted to complete their assigned responsibilities.

Trust was not something the couple felt you "try to get". Instead, they felt that trust and mutual respect evolved in their relationship, starting from the time they first dated. They did feel, however, an individual would have to be trustworthy first and always conduct themselves
accordingly. If trust was broken, none of the couples thought that it was possible to bring it back to its former level. They thought couples would be able to trust again, but never completely, especially in the area where the mistrust occurred (e.g., infidelity). Each spouse thought their trust in their spouse was broken at some time in their relationship, but only in minute and insignificant ways (e.g., did not cook dinner as promised). They did not feel that incidents such as this were breaking the deep seated trust they had for one another in major areas of their life (e.g., philosophy of raising children).

A unique domain appears to have emerged in the importance of having differing personalities. Many of the couples felt they were on opposite ends of the spectrum in regard to their personalities, yet this was seen as an asset. The reason for this seems to rest with an underlying factor with all of the couples: they will take any situation or quality, turn it to their benefit, and grow from it. For example, an unsocial husband saw his wife's social nature as positive because she could expose him to a whole other way of life that he would never have known if he would have married someone like himself.

The couples felt that it was necessary to keep their differing personalities away from their marital life to
some extent, however. The underlying principle here, again, is that of life priorities. If it is not deemed as being severe, they felt that it is useless to waste time and energy trying to change something (or someone) that is not likely to change. More importantly, they expected themselves to adapt rather than require their spouse to change.

Over the course of time, each spouse learned to revel in their spouse's differences and, again, see how these differences are positively affecting his/her life. Having different personalities was useful in dividing up household chores and responsibilities. Because each had different fundamental interests, each could assume the household tasks that interested them. In this way, it was not seen as a task, but as a pleasure. For example, the individual who likes the outdoors would acquire the responsibilities of gardening etc., while the person who "has a head for numbers" was responsible for the accounts of the home.

Another somewhat unique idea in recent literature was that of novelty in a marriage. One of the included terms for this domain is spontaneity. Huan and Stinnett (1982) thought it important the couple be spontaneous and be able to be oneself without inhibition. For those marriages in which both spouses work, the problem of time and energy
for the effort needed to be creative is limited. Special effort on the part of both spouses was seen as exceedingly important if a relationship is going to remain novel if both spouses are working. Once again, the idea of continued growth and development as a couple as well as an individual is essential, but also the ideas of priorities and doing things that are truly important come into play. If a couple has as its goal to keep the relationship fresh through novelty, then it will find a way to make time to do it. To accomplish this, each individual must be willing to "give of themselves" and make sacrifices for their spouse. These sacrifices are made on both the individual as well as professional level. These novel times also did not have to be (and in many cases preferred not to be) extravagant or expensive. What was more important to each of the couples was the effort their spouse put forth, and understanding they had tried to please their mate. In talking with the couples, it appeared they knew of the paradox in "trying to be spontaneous". They realized that to plan spontaneity was a contradiction in terms. They did feel, however, that couples can be aware of the need to be spontaneous so that when an opportunity presents itself, it can be acted upon.

A general point of view readily emerges among all of the couples interviewed which can be summarized as
follows: Take any negative situation and turn it to your advantage in some way or another. The key to success is having the desire to make the best of life's hard times. The perception of the couples in this study is that the trend of our society is exactly the opposite. We have become a "society of convenience and disposability". For example, if a child's toy breaks, a new one is purchased in place of repairing the broken toy. Furthermore, sticking to something is considered old-fashioned and out-of-date. In fact, many of the couples stated they thought this may be a product of having lived through the depression and the idea of nothing ever being thrown away also applied to their marriage.

The couples felt that this can easily be seen in marriages. If the marriage is not going well, society has made it easy for anyone to obtain a divorce. Divorce has also become socially acceptable. This attitude shift has had a detrimental effect on our society at large. The trend toward easy divorce and remarriage has left us with a society that has no roots and people who no longer have a stable background. A person only has to look at the trouble that we are having with drug abuse and addiction among our youth to see the change that having no stable and high quality family life has done.

Although the comments expressed by these couples are
certainly not shared by everyone, they do express an interesting insight into how a small group of Midwest American couples construct their view of contemporary marital and family life.

The purpose of this study was not to find fault with the research done in the past. Valuable information has been gained from their efforts. The purpose of the study was to seek a new way of looking at this topic. By doing these ethnographic interviews, a person can gain a significant amount of information relatively quickly that would normally be missed with the standard measurements. Traditional research focuses on generalizing to the population at large and can fail to see that each couple is unique and has unique problems. This can also be seen by some as one of the study's greatest weaknesses.

Many people will look at this study and state the sample for this study is biased because it is drawn from a highly specialized population. The sample was drawn from this population for one reason. The target group for this study, happily married couples consisting of two spouses who have actively pursued careers are prevalent in the geographical areas studied (a university city). It is the author's hope that by deliberately focusing on this sample of happily married couples, some of the ingredients that are necessary for a marriage to be successful have been
clarified.


