Changing attitudes toward women's employment

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Changing attitudes toward women's employment

Daniewicz, Susan Carney, Ph.D.
Iowa State University, 1987
Changing attitudes toward women's employment

by

Susan Carney Daniewicz

A Dissertation Submitted to the
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

Attitudes about women's economic role in society have undergone dramatic change since the post war period in the United States. Prior to the 1940s, a woman's place was clearly in the home. Public opinion polls from 1938 show that only 20 percent of the men and 27 percent of the women surveyed approved of a woman's employment if her husband was able to support her. In spite of the steady increase in women's labor force participation, a "rampant ideology of domesticity" (Ryan, 1983, p. 254) existed during the 1940s and the 1950s. Women's area of primary responsibility and greatest fulfillment was centered around the home and family. During the war, large numbers of women entered the labor force. Approval for war-time employment was high, but this approval did not extend to peacetime employment (Oppenheimer, 1970). Defense work was seen as an emergency, a situation that would return to "normal" at the end of the war. Even during the war, the highest status was reserved for the wife and mother, the ideal role for most women (Ryan, 1983).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the growth of women, especially married women, in the labor force continued and accelerated, but attitude change occurred slowly. As late as 1960, when over 38 percent of adult women were employed outside the home (Chiswick & O'Neill, 1977), the approval rating for such behavior was only 34 percent (Oppenheimer, 1970). By the 1970s, however, a dramatic change had occurred. While approximately 46 percent of adult women were employed (Chiswick & O'Neill, 1977), 78 percent of the women surveyed in 1978 agreed that it was acceptable for a woman to work
even if her husband could support her. The purpose of this study is to explore that attitude change over the period from 1967 until 1982, with a goal of describing the pattern of that change and of understanding the relationship between behavior and attitude change.

The addition to the adult population of large numbers of young people who, because of differences in socialization, hold less traditional views regarding women's place in society is part of the reason that more recent studies indicate more egalitarian attitudes (Scanzoni, 1975b). Such change in the adult population is not sufficient to explain all of the attitude change. In order to account for the large changes in the proportion of approval for women's employment, individual attitude shifts must have occurred. Several panel studies have documented that change in individual attitudes has occurred, most often in the direction of increasing approval for women's employment (Macke et al., 1978; Statham & Rhoton, 1983; Thornton et al., 1983; Thornton & Freedman, 1979).

Attitude change on the individual level can be understood in terms of reference group theory. From this theoretical perspective, individuals' attitudes are influenced by the groups to which they belong (membership groups) and by the groups to which they aspire (reference groups). As more women join the ranks of the employed (seen here as a membership group), their attitudes would be expected to change in the direction of increased approval for women's employment. An additional influence, however, would be expected to occur when a woman identifies with and aspires to be included in such a group, whether or not membership actually occurred.
Studies of attitudes and attitude change toward women's employment have been consistent with these theoretical expectations, generally identifying employment and more education as key variables associated with more approving attitudes toward employment (Macke et al., 1978; Mason et al., 1976; Statham & Rhoton, 1983; Thornton et al., 1983; Thornton & Freedman, 1979). Since attitude toward women's employment has become increasingly positive with time, the pattern of attitude change has been assumed to be straightforward constancy or change and is determined by comparing response at time 1 with response at time 2 to determine if change has occurred. Whether women experience stable attitudes toward employment which gradually become more approving or whether more women experience a period of instability in their attitudes is not known. The pattern of change for employed women compared to the pattern for women outside the labor force is also virtually unexplored.

The first goal of the study, then, is to describe the relationship between employment, as a membership group and/or a reference group for the respondent, and attitude toward women's employment for middle aged women in the United States. The second goal is to model attitude change for these women over a fifteen year period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Women of different employment statuses will be compared in relation to their process of attitude change to determine the effect of employment and desire for employment on their pattern of change. Such an analysis will explore the effect of the key variables of employment and desire for employment on the process, as well as the fact, of change.
Importance of the Study

Understanding and predicting attitude change have been the focus of educators, advertisers, propagandists, politicians, reformers, as well as those who seek to understand human values and societal norms (Cohen, 1964; Insko, 1967). Interest has focused on attitudes as predictors of behavior or as tendencies to evaluate objects or symbols in a certain way (Insko, 1967). This latter view relates attitudes to the underlying norms and values of a society. When attitudes of individuals change, if that change is repeated in enough people, norms in a society are also affected. While the process is complicated by economic and political factors, an understanding of the process of individual change in attitudes can help us to understand normative change as a whole.

Norms are the shared beliefs about proper conduct in a society (Baron & Byrne, 1984). As such, they become institutionalized in laws and policies, both public and private, which are developed to provide order in a society. When attitudes change and norms shift, support is eroded for some existing programs and begins to accumulate for others (Hill, 1981). For example, while disapproval for women's employment was high, virtually no support could be generated for a public day care policy. Support developed initially for programs that would help poor, single mothers, a group whose employment was supported. The war years of the early 1940s saw women's entry into the highly supported war industry. The day care centers which flourished during this period rapidly disappeared when the war was over, as did approval for women's employment. It is interesting to note that the percent of women in the labor force never returned to pre-war levels. During the 1970s, as
approval began to increase for women's employment, interest and national awareness of the problem of day care increased accordingly (Hofferth, 1979). The change in willingness to address the problem has paralleled the rapid attitude change rather than the slow steady change in women's employment itself.

Thus, a greater knowledge of attitude change in a specific area like support for women's employment can increase our understanding of the process of normative change in general, and help to predict shifts in support for public programs (Mason et al., 1976). It is important to understand not only present attitudes but how and why those attitudes change. Predicting future attitude change can increase our ability to anticipate support (and the lack of it) for programs and policies.

In addition, attitudes affect women's behavior although the effect may not be straightforward. Women who approve of women's employment are more likely to be employed themselves at a future time even when controlling for current employment status (Waite, 1979b). This effect is not large, suggesting that other variables influence a woman's decision to seek employment, but the attitudes that she holds are part of the total picture determining future employment.

There is also evidence that attitudes toward employment are transmitted through the family to the next generation (Thornton et al., 1983). Mothers' attitudes are significantly related to daughters' attitudes about employment as well as to their intent to be employed in the future (Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Morgan & Scanzoni, 1987). While we know most women will spend some time in the labor force, regardless of their intent, those who plan
for their participation may prepare themselves more adequately and realistically for that eventuality.

Such a study is also relevant for improving the measurement of attitude change. In making possible the measurement of a respondent's attitudes at four points in time, a long-term panel study allows for the comparison of the pattern of change over time.

Theoretical Orientation

Attitudes and attitude change have long been the subject of inquiry for social psychologists and political scientists as a means of predicting subsequent behavior patterns. Many theoretical frameworks have been developed to organize knowledge in attitude development, attitude change, and the connection between attitudes and behavior.

Reference group theory provides a good basis for explaining why and under which circumstances attitude change occurs. It is particularly useful for our purposes because it provides a means for hypothesizing connections between social interactions and attitudes in the area of employment for women. A summary of the basic tenants of the theory will be presented and then its usefulness in addressing the question of attitude change will be demonstrated.

Reference group theory is based on the insight that "people's attitudes and behaviors are decisively shaped by the groups in which they participate" (Bock et al., 1983, p. 546). It is by means of interaction with others in groups to which one belongs, known as membership groups, that attitudes are formed and changed. The family of origin is the first membership group to which a
child belongs. By means of interaction in that group, a child develops the initial attitudes which comprise her value system. As the child grows, new groups are added to her social world: day care, school classes, peer groups. These groups become increasingly important to the development of attitudes as the individual's frame of reference shifts from her family of origin toward identification with these other groups. During adulthood, occupational group and family of procreation become important participation groups. To the extent that these groups present attitudes different from those espoused by the family of origin, pressure is applied to the individual to shift her attitudes to conform to those of important groups. "Group interaction is seen as the major determinant in attitude formation and attitude change" (Sherif, 1968, p. 85).

While operating within a membership group provides encouragement to adopt the attitudes of the group, the value the group holds for the individual is important as well. A group in which an individual seeks to continue her membership has a greater influence on her attitudes than a group she doesn't value. In addition, a group to which an individual does not belong but seeks to join will also influence her attitudes. This is the concept of the reference group: a group in which the individual "aspires to attain or maintain membership; . . . both membership and reference groups affect the attitudes held by an individual" (Siegel & Siegel, 1968, p. 394).

Membership and reference groups may or may not be identical. They are the same when a person wishes to maintain membership in a group to which she belongs. They are different when she wishes to leave a membership group or when she seeks to join a group to which she currently
doesn't belong. When a person becomes a member of a group, she is encouraged, by means of her interaction with other members, to adjust her attitudes to match those of the group. If she identifies with this group (i.e., it is a reference group for her as well as a membership group), she is more likely to change to match the attitudes of the group than if she merely interacts with the group without feeling a part of it.

Results that support reference group theory were obtained by Newcomb in a classic study of college students conducted between the years 1935 and 1939 at an expensive Eastern college. At the beginning of the study, the freshman students reported attitudes similar to their conservative parents. Four years later, their attitudes had shifted in the liberal direction, but the degree of change was a function of their identification, or lack of it, with sub-groups in the college population.

Most individuals in this total membership group went through rather marked changes in attitudes toward public issues. . . . In most cases the total membership group served as the reference group for the changing attitudes. But some individuals change little or not at all in attitudes during the four years of the study; attitude persistence was in some of these cases a function of the membership group as reference group and in some cases it was not. Among those who did change, moreover, the total membership group sometimes served as reference group but sometimes it did not. An oversimple theory of "assimilation into the community" thus leaves out of account some of those whose attitudes did and some of those whose attitudes did not change; they remain unexplained exceptions. A theory which traces the impact of other reference groups as well as the effect of the membership group seems to account for all cases without exception (Newcomb, 1968).
That is, some change occurred in almost everyone due to the effect of the membership group. The explanation of the amount of change, however, was vastly improved by knowing the reference groups that were important to the students.

Siegel and Siegel (1968) also found evidence supporting reference group theory in a separate study of residence preference of college women. Women who were required to live in a dormitory they did not choose shifted their attitudes toward the common attitude where they lived. Those who came to want to live in their assigned dorm (i.e., accepted their membership group as their reference group) experienced greater attitude change than did those who continued to prefer another dorm. The authors state that these findings contribute to our understanding of the processes affecting attitude change, i.e.,

attitude change over time is related to the group identification of the person -- both his membership group identification and his reference group identification (Siegel & Siegel, 1968, pp. 399-400).

In a theoretical article, Merton attempted to identify the type of collectivities that could be regarded as a group from the point of view of reference group theory. He identified three criteria as necessary, to a greater or lesser extent, for a group to exist. The first is interaction between members; while groups may vary on the extent of interaction, there must be some contact for individuals with some segment of the group. Secondly, group members must define themselves as members of the group and, finally, be defined by others, both in and out of the group, as members (Merton, 1968).

Reference group theory has been applied in situations which have expanded the concept of group for both membership and reference groups.
The theory has been applied to diverse situations to explain the anticipatory socialization of people aspiring to membership in various groups, such as, "an Army private bucking for promotion, ...an immigrant assimilating the values of a native group, ...a lower-middle-class individual conforming to his conception of upper-middle-class patterns of behavior. ...[and] a lower-class Catholic. ...casting a Republican vote" (Merton, 1968, p. 333).

In an effort to explain attitudes in relation to women's employment, reference group theory provides a good starting place. While employment has often been seen as a social category much like sex or marital status, in certain situations, "social categories can be mobilized into. ...groups" (Merton, 1968, pp. 353-354). It is the contention here that, for the period of the post war United States, employed women did indeed function as a membership group, because they fulfilled the criteria of interaction and social definition. In terms of interaction, women have generally been employed in "female" jobs: clerical, service and pink collar jobs where interaction is primarily with other women in similar jobs. Professional jobs for women were highly concentrated in teaching and nursing, positions that again promoted interaction with other women in similar positions. In addition, labor force participation reduced women's opportunity to participate in groups of full time homemakers whether these were formal community or cultural groups or informal friendship groups. Because employed women frequently have family responsibilities to which they devote greater time than do their male counterparts, their opportunity for socializing is more frequently met on the job. Thus, employed women are highly likely to interact with other employed women.
In addition, employed women are likely to see themselves and be seen by others as a member of a distinct group. In a period of time when social norms and expectations for women are changing and, therefore, unclear, women clearly defined themselves and others as a "working woman", "just a housewife", "a domestic engineer", or "employed". The success of magazines like *Working Woman* indicates the willingness that many women have to identify themselves as part of that group (as well as suggests the special problems and interests shared by these group members).

The extent of the effect of this membership group on attitudes and attitude change will be conditioned on whether or not employment is also a reference group. Employed women would presumably be encouraged to develop attitudes that are approving of women's employment. Women in the labor force out of necessity who would prefer not to be there (i.e., women for whom employed women are a membership group but not a reference group) would be expected to be less influenced by the attitudes of this membership group than women who want to be employed. Those women for whom employed women are both a membership and a reference group would be expected to have the highest levels of approval (see Figure 1.1).

![Figure 1.1. Theoretical model for attitude change](image)
Reference group theory suggests differences in patterns of change as well. Women who join the membership group of employment but do not adopt this group as a reference group, would be expected to experience more ambivalence in attitudes about women's employment. Pressure from the dissimilar reference and membership groups could cause attitudes about women's employment to be less stable and more likely to change in either direction. By the same token, women who want to join the labor force but do not actually do so, would be expected to have an unstable attitude pattern similar to the preceding group. Women who adopt employment as both their membership and reference groups would be also expected to change their attitudes, but the change would be expected to occur more consistently in the direction of greater approval. They would theoretically be less likely to change from approval to disapproval. Women who maintain employment as both a membership and a reference group would be expected to have the highest approval as well as the greatest change from disapproval to approval. Women remaining outside these membership and reference groups would be expected to have the lowest approval and the least change from disapproval to approval.

Figure 1.2. Theoretical model for pattern of attitude change
In summary, both membership and reference groups are expected to influence attitudes about women's employment and attitude change. Changes in these groups as well as the congruence of the change between the two groups are expected to impact the pattern of attitude change.
Interest in women's sex role attitudes in general and attitudes toward employment in particular have varied during the 20th century. Gallup polls since the late 1930s have gathered data which reveal support (or lack of it) for women's non-family roles (Erskine, 1971), but it has not been until the decade of the 1970s that social scientists began to study these attitudes in detail (e.g., Ferree, 1974; Mason et al., 1976; Oppenheimer, 1970). Research which relates to the purpose of this study is focused in three areas: (1) documenting the change in attitudes toward women's employment, or the broader sex role attitudes, over time, (2) establishing the connection between employment and other variables to predict attitudes and attitude change, and (3) analyzing the determinants of attitude change and, in a few cases, the patterns of attitude change. The diffuse, often atheoretical, research findings will be applied to the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1 to obtain the specific hypotheses to be tested in this study.

The following chapter reviews the literature which relates to attitudes toward women's employment. All of the research to be discussed focus on women's attitudes and beliefs about the proper role for women regarding employment. Very few, however, define or measure these attitudes in the same way. In some studies, attitudes about employment may be assessed directly by asking if the respondent thinks women should be employed outside the home. For example, the Gallup polls and the General Social Survey used a question asking for "approval of a married woman's employment in business or industry if her husband can support her" (Spitze
& Huber, 1980). Macke et al. (1978) and Statham and Rhoton (1983), analyzing earlier waves of the mature woman cohort of the National Longitudinal Study, asked respondents if it was all right for a woman to take a full time job outside the home in each of three situations: if it was necessary to make ends meet, if she wanted to and her husband agreed, and if she wanted to even if her husband didn't particularly like the idea. These studies seek to address the issue of women's employment directly.

On the other hand, some studies infer approval (or lack of it) from questions asking the respondent to agree or disagree with sex role statements such as "A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work" (Mason et al., 1976), "A woman should have exactly the same job opportunities as a man" (Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Mason et al., 1976), or "A preschool child is likely to suffer if his mother works" (Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Mason et al., 1976; Thornton et al., 1983). While attitudes in these areas tell us something about attitudes toward women's employment, they confound them with beliefs about proper roles for mothers and for men, about the effect of mothers' employment on their children, and about gender roles in society. To further complicate matters, responses to these statements may be analyzed separately (Mason et al., 1976; Spitze & Huber, 1980) or scaled to obtain a measure of sex role attitudes (Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Macke et al., 1978; Statham & Rhoton, 1983; Thornton et al., 1983).

In spite of such extreme differences of definition and measurement, several variables have emerged as consistent predictors of attitude level and attitude change related to women's proper role in society. Therefore, results
from these diverse studies reveal a common pattern which is useful in the development of the model in this study. These findings, when viewed through the perspective of reference group theory, provide a basis and a direction for this study.

Changes in Attitudes toward Women's Employment

Women's employment outside the home has increased consistently since 1890 when 15 percent of adult women were in the labor market. The percentage of women in the labor force has increased about 3 percentage points per decade through the 1940s (Fuchs, 1983). Wartime employment caused an additional increase during the war years (about 6 percentage points between 1940 and 1950), but still the pattern was one of a steady rise. Between 1950 and 1960, the percent of employed women increased an additional 3 percentage points. An acceleration began in the 1960s producing a 6 percentage point increase by 1970. The subsequent decade has seen approximately a 9 percentage point increase (Fuchs, 1983), resulting in 51.5 percent of women in the labor market in 1980 (Foster, 1982, p. 155).

Employment of single and divorced women has remained fairly consistent over this period at about 75 percent (Fuchs, 1983). The group experiencing the greatest increase in labor force participation has been married women. In the 1920s and 1930s, most women "retired" from the labor force when they married (Oppenheimer, 1970); in 1940 only one-sixth of the married women were employed. By 1950 the proportion had increased to one in three. Between 1940 and 1960 the number of working wives doubled. "By 1980, the
The majority of American women were employed and the majority of families had two breadwinners, one of whom was a woman" (Ryan, 1983).

In recent years, the most dramatic increases and the most rapid growth in the labor force participation has been among mothers, especially mothers of young children (Smith, 1979). This group of women has traditionally had lower participation rates than other wives have had. In 1960, 20 percent of mothers of preschool children were employed; by 1977, that figure had increased to 41 percent (Waite, 1979a). And by 1980, "the majority of school age children had working mothers" (Ryan, 1983, p. 305).

Attitudes about women's labor force participation have lagged, rather than led, this change in behavior. A study involving data from the 1970 National Fertility Study revealed that 80 percent of the women interviewed disapproved of employment for mothers of children two and under, even though one-third of the same women had been employed when their own child was two or less (Waite, 1979a). In fact, traditionally most people have disapproved of married women working except for emergency situations of economic or national necessity. Oppenheimer, in her review of this literature, has documented that several early studies conducted in the 1930s revealed a general disapproval of employment for married women. "Less than 26 percent approved of a married woman working and, depending on the alternatives allowed them, from 40 to over 80 percent disapproved" (Oppenheimer, 1970). If the question stated that the woman had a husband able to support her as it was in a 1937 poll, disapproval of her employment was at 82 percent and approval at 18 percent (Oppenheimer, 1970). One year later, responses to the same question were separated by gender: 20 percent of
men approved of women's employment and 27 percent of the women approved (Spitze & Huber, 1980).

The war and the necessity for dealing with the immediate crisis affected people's attitudes. Sixty percent approved and only 13 percent disapproved of women working in the war industry in a poll conducted in 1942. When the emergency was over in 1945, a question phrased similarly to the one in the 1937 poll still only elicited an 18 percent approval rating, although disapproval had dropped to 62 percent. If a phrase is added to the question suggesting a limited number of jobs, fully 86 percent of the respondents disapprove (Oppenheimer, 1970).

By 1960, a national poll of married men revealed that 34 percent of the respondents approved, and 46 percent disapproved, of women's employment (Oppenheimer, 1970). While this study indicates an increase in the percent of those approving of women's employment in the 15 years following World War II, the percent of those approving is still not as high as the percent of women in the labor force, which was 37.5 percent in 1960 (Chiswick & O'Neill, 1977). By this point in time, approval rates were still below the actual participation rates. In this sample, 38 percent of the respondents had employed wives, yet only 34 percent approved of women working in general. Oppenheimer concludes that "employment of married women had undergone a radical increase between 1940 and 1960, but positive attitudes toward it had not kept pace" (Oppenheimer, 1970, p. 50).

In 1972, an analysis of General Social Survey data showed another sizable increase in approval. By then, 63 percent of the men and 68 percent of the women approved of women working even if they had husbands that
could support them (Spitze & Huber, 1980). For the first time, the percent of women approving of employment for women exceeded the percent of women in the labor force. Another survey in 1978 involving a younger sample found approval rates of 76 percent for men and 78 percent for women (Spitze & Huber, 1980). Studies involving sex role attitudes in general (of which employment for women is a part) concur in the findings of consistent increase in approval (Mason et al., 1976; Thornton & Freedman, 1979).

Clearly, then, attitudes have changed in the general population. Explaining that attitude change requires a panel design to avoid confusing actual change of individual attitudes with differences in attitude of various age cohorts. The few panel studies which have addressed this issue have found increasing approval for women's employment over time (Shaw & O'Brien, 1983; Thornton & Freedman, 1979; Thornton et al., 1983). Shaw and O'Brien (1983) found an increasing approval rate for women's employment under certain conditions from 1967 to 1977:

In 1967 well over 90 percent thought it was all right for a woman with school-age children to work if it was necessary to make ends meet and about 75 percent thought that such a woman should work if she wanted to and her husband agreed. However, very few approved of women working if the husband disapproved. [Ten years later] support for women working if necessary remained constant and almost universal. Support for working in the other two situations increased considerably, so that by 1977 nearly one-third of the women thought that a woman should work if she wanted to, even if her husband disagreed with her decision (Shaw & O'Brien, 1983, p. 7).
Connection between Employment and Attitudes about Employment among Women

Such a clear-cut and dramatic change has inspired attempts to find causes for that change. Two types of studies have appeared. The first has attempted to establish a connection between characteristics of the individual (i.e., employment, education, age, etc.) and the level of approval of employment for women. These studies have generally used cross-sectional data. The second type of study, using a panel design, has tried to determine the antecedents of change in the level of approval of individuals over time. The studies of the second type have often used individual characteristics (e.g., employment, education, age, etc.) to predict the level of approval of employment, while controlling for the initial level of approval and, sometimes, initial levels of education and employment.

In studies of the first type, age, employment and education have been found most consistently to be related to attitudes about labor force participation for women. Younger women hold more favorable attitudes toward women's employment than do older women (Slevin & Wingrove, 1983; Spitze & Huber, 1980). This relationship was evident as early as 1938 in Gallup poll data and remained a significant predictor through at least 1978 (Spitze & Huber, 1980). In studies of sex role attitudes in general, age has usually been found to have a similar relationship to attitudes, i.e., younger women having more egalitarian sex role attitudes than older women (Parelius, 1975; Scanzoni, 1975b; Thornton et al., 1983). An exception was the study by Mason and her colleagues (1976) which found older women were more certain that a working woman can have as warm a relationship with
her child as could a homemaker. While this, in some way, represents a
departure from other findings, it may be that these women are responding to
their differing childcare roles as well as to their views about women's
employment. When other variables are controlled, such as education and
employment, however, the relationship between age and attitudes often
disappears, suggesting that these other variables are more important
predictors of favorable attitudes to employment (Mason et al., 1976; Thornton
et al., 1983). Therefore, the relationship between age and attitudes is more
likely a reflection of the differences in levels of education and employment
that are characteristic of different age groups rather than a function of aging
itself.

While there are exceptions, e.g., Spitze and Huber (1979), most studies
find that women who are employed have higher approval for women's
employment than women who are not (Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Macke et al.,
1978; Slevin & Wingrove, 1983; Statham & Rhoton, 1983) and also have more
egalitarian sex role attitudes in general (Mason et al., 1976; Thornton &
Freedman, 1979; Thornton et al., 1983). Those women with the most recent
employment have the most egalitarian attitudes (Mason et al., 1976). Indeed,
it seems to be the fact of employment rather than the type of job held that is
responsible for this relationship. No significant relationship could be found
between occupational prestige and sex role attitudes (Thornton & Freedman,
1979) or between working in traditional male jobs and sex role attitudes
(Thornton et al., 1983). These findings suggest that it is the amount of time
spent in the labor force that is important in determining sex role attitudes
rather than the type of job held (Thornton et al., 1983).
The amount of education is significantly and consistently related to more favorable attitudes toward women's participation in the labor force. Women with more education are more likely to approve of women's employment (Spitze & Huber, 1980; Macke et al., 1978). The same relationship holds true for sex role attitudes in general: women with higher education hold more egalitarian sex role attitudes (Mason et al., 1976; Parelius, 1975; Thornton & Freedman, 1979; Thornton et al., 1983; Scanzoni, 1975b). In addition, the more recent the education, the stronger the impact of that education on sex role attitudes even after controlling for age (Thornton et al., 1983).

Thus, employment and education consistently appear in studies as significant predictors of attitudes concerning labor force participation by women, and they, unlike age, remain significant even when other variables are controlled. Therefore, employment and education seem to be important variables to include in any model of attitudes toward employment.

The theoretical discussion suggested that both membership and reference groups would be important determinants of women's attitudes toward employment and of attitude change. Membership group, in this case, is defined as being a member of the female labor force. Those outside the labor force would not be members of this group. The literature then has provided support for the contention that membership group affects attitude.

Reference group was defined as a group in which a person "aspires to attain or maintain membership" (Siegel & Siegel, 1968, p. 394). In this study, the desire to attain or maintain employment identifies an individual as having employment as a reference group. For employed people, the desire to
remain employed, often identified as "commitment to work," has been shown to be an important predictor of retirement attitude or of satisfaction with retirement. No connection could be found in the literature, however, between this variable and women's attitudes toward employment or the change of those attitudes.

Determinants of Attitude Change

Cross-sectional studies have been important in documenting the effect of membership group as a predictor of attitude toward women's employment. These studies, however, tell us nothing about attitude change. In order to determine the impact of education, employment and other independent variables on changes in attitudes toward women's employment, a different type of study is required. Change can be determined by a panel design which allows for measurement of respondents' attitudes at two or more points in time. In a study of this type, Macke et al. (1978) investigated the effects of attitudes on employment and of employment on subsequent attitudes, using the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) for the 1967-1972 period. Using a measure of employment attitudes in 1967 and of sex role attitudes in 1972, they looked at the reciprocal attitude/employment relationship controlling for initial employment, education and various family variables. Significant predictors of sex role attitudes favorable for women's employment in 1972 for white women were employment attitudes in 1967, extent of employment from 1967 to 1972, and education of the woman. Together their model explained 24 percent of the variance in 1972 attitudes (Macke et al., 1978). One way of interpreting their findings is to say that education and employment
contribute to the explanation of 1972 sex role attitudes, even when 1967 employment attitudes are held constant. Women who are employed and/or have higher levels of education are more likely to increase their approval of working women over this five year period than are women who are not employed or who have less education. A woman's perceptions of her husband's attitudes, husband's income, number of children, initial work status: none of these affected attitudes in 1972.

Essentially the same model was tested by Statham and Rhoton (1983) using the same data set but combining black and white women and extending the period to 1977. Differences in the subsample used and in the measurement of employment and attitudes, however, make the studies less similar than they first appear. Statham and Rhoton included both blacks and whites from the sample. Since Macke and his colleagues found significant differences between blacks and whites and since blacks were oversampled for comparison purposes, the two groups probably should not have been combined. Nonetheless, employment remains a significant predictor of attitude change, i.e., employment significantly predicts attitudes in 1972, controlling for 1967 attitudes. In looking at the regression equations for the time period 1972-1977, the authors conclude that "over time, the impact of work activity on subsequent attitudes has become even more important" (Statham & Rhoton, 1983, p. 83). These researchers did not explore the adoption of employment, the desire for employment or the effect of education, however.

Another panel study dealing with attitude change in individuals makes use of a sample of women who gave birth to white children during
July of 1961 in Detroit. The women were interviewed about their sex role attitudes over an 18 year period. Education and recent employment over the period were associated with more modern sex role attitudes of the respondents. Two variables measuring religion were also significant predictors of sex role attitudes. Being a member of a fundamentalist religion and the amount of church attendance in 1977 (any religion) were both associated with more traditional sex role attitudes in 1977 (Thornton & Freedman, 1979).

Studies that have included measures of job type or occupational prestige, as well as amount of time employed, have concluded that it is the experience of employment outside the home rather than the nature of the job itself that produced the attitude change (Thornton & Freedman, 1979). In addition, there was surprisingly little evidence that either childbearing or marital disruption produced changes in attitudes toward sex roles in general or toward women's employment in particular (Mason et al., 1976; Thornton & Freedman, 1979).

Patterns of Attitude Change

The pattern of change in attitudes toward women's employment has been largely uninvestigated. Thornton and his colleagues have studied the related area of sex role attitudes from a process perspective, however. In their study, they identify the proportion of the sample changing from traditional to modern sex role attitudes or vice versa from 1962 to 1977 and again from 1977 to 1980. Using various measures of sex role attitudes (none of which are specifically attitudes about women's employment), the researchers find that
"from 52 to 69 percent of the women who were traditional in 1962 were nontraditional in 1977. Although the great majority of the respondents who were nontraditional in 1962 retained that position in 1977, an important minority became more traditional from 1962 to 1977 (17-33 percent)" (Thornton et al., 1983, p. 215). Not surprisingly, they find less change between 1977 and 1980: "the relative stability of individual attitudes was greater between 1977 and 1980 than between 1962 and 1977" (Thornton et al., 1983, p. 215). By applying the observed transition rates for the 1977-1980 period to the 1962 data, the authors conclude "that the egalitarian pattern of individual change. . .may have been stronger between 1977 and 1980 than from 1962 to 1977" (Thornton et al., 1983, p. 217). They acknowledge that there is no way of telling whether the pattern of change over the longer period is constant over the five three-year periods between 1962 and 1977. No attempt was made to determine if employment or education affected transition rates.

Patterns of Change in Related Areas

Studies of patterns of attitude change, while rare in the area of attitudes about women's employment, are more frequent in other areas. In 1954, Anderson wrote an important article describing the process of change of attitude over time. Anderson proposed a model which predicted the future attitude based on a knowledge of the attitude held at present, i.e., a probability model. Using data on attitudes toward political parties, he proposed a mathematical model to describe the pattern of change. This model, known as a Markov chain, proposes a mathematical relationship between an initial and subsequent attitude. It involves calculating the probability that an attitude
will change and the probability that an attitude will remain the same over a specified period of time. From these data it is possible to estimate the proportion of the sample holding the various attitudes if those transition probabilities remain constant. Testing the estimates against actual data provides a means of determining whether the model provides a good description of observed reality. By means of this technique, he was able to demonstrate that the pattern of political attitude change varies based on the occurrence of party conventions. After the second convention, the previously consistent pattern of change shifted to one where the "probability of holding to a specific party intention is much higher and the probability of reserving judgment is lower" (p. 50). After the convention, people were less uncertain and more likely to stick to their choice. Anderson finds that the same pattern continues during the subsequent months but at a slower pace. Thus, he concludes that "the second convention sets into operation a new process which slows down as the campaign progresses (p. 51). Such a modeling of attitude change provides a different insight into changing attitudes than merely reporting the number of Republicans and Democrats at the beginning and the end of the period of study. It also reveals that, at least in political attitudes, change is not always a straightforward shift from one response to another but may involve different patterns of change. Considering the patterns as well as the end result provides a different perspective on change.

Since the 1950s, a number of studies have used this modeling technique. In 1962, Goodman suggested an expansion of the Markov model for use with political attitude data. In a reanalysis of the same data used by
Anderson, Goodman separated the sample into different groups, or strata, based on their initial attitudes. By analyzing the pattern of change separately for each strata, he demonstrated that the pattern of attitude change before and after the party convention was different only for those who responded "don't know" prior to the convention (Goodman, 1962). Therefore, he concluded that the party conventions had an impact on voters willing to label themselves as undecided but had little effect on the pattern of change of those who identified with a party. For the latter, the probability of attitude change was explained by their previous attitude. Thus, Goodman proposed that the population under study was not homogeneous but rather differed by initial attitudes. By calculating separate probabilities of attitude change for each group, he improved the fit of the model to the data.

In summary, probability models of various degrees of complexity have been used rather extensively to describe and predict attitude change; but these models have not been applied to attitudes about women's employment. Use of these techniques allow for the description of the process of attitude change and for the determination of whether that process is dependent on membership groups, reference groups, or only on prior attitude states.

Summary and Statement of Hypotheses

This review of literature has provided some support for the theoretical model developed in Chapter 1. Membership group (i.e., being employed) does influence attitudes toward employment. Women who have been employed, specifically women with the most recent employment experience, are more likely to espouse attitudes favorable to women's employment than
are women who are not employed. The same relationship is found in longitudinal studies even when initial attitudes are controlled. Therefore, employment is related to greater approval for working women as well as to larger increases in that approval over time.

No studies could be found that address the issue of reference group and its impact on attitude or attitude change. Commitment to work (a possible indicator of reference group identification) has appeared in the literature but not as a correlate of attitudes or attitude change.

Although the description of the pattern of attitude change has been a popular research endeavor in political attitudes, its application to employment attitudes has been minimal. The one related study reviewed here suggests that there is substantial vacillation of attitudes in the midst of overall normative shifts.

Applying the findings of previous research to the theoretical model presented in Chapter 1, the following hypotheses may be formulated:

1. Membership and reference groups affect attitudes toward employment:
   
   a. Women for whom employment is both a membership and a reference group will have the highest levels of approval for women working at all points in time.
   
   b. Women for whom employment is either a membership or a reference group will have intermediate levels of approval.
   
   c. Women for whom employment is neither a membership nor a reference group will have the lowest levels of approval.
2. Membership and reference groups will affect attitude change:
   a. Women who have employment as a membership group and a reference group will have the highest levels of approval controlling for their initial attitudes (i.e., their approval will increase relative to others).
   b. Women who have employment as either a membership or a reference group will have intermediate increase in approval.
   c. Women who have employment as neither reference nor membership group will have the least increase in approval.

3. Change in membership and reference groups will affect attitude change:
   a. Women who continue employment will have higher approval for women working, controlling for their initial approval, than will women who become employed, who leave the labor force, or who never enter the labor force.
   b. Women who maintain employment as a reference group will have higher approval for women working, controlling for their initial approval, than will women who change from disapproval to approval, who cease to view, or have never viewed employed women as a reference group.

4. Patterns of attitude change will be affected by membership and reference group affiliation:
   a. Women for whom employment is both a membership and a reference group will exhibit a different pattern of attitude change than other women: i.e., they will be less likely to change from an approving to disapproving
attitude toward women's employment and more likely
to change from disapproving to approving than other
women. They will tend more rapidly toward approval.

b. Women for whom employment is neither a membership
nor a reference group will exhibit a different pattern of
attitude change than other women: i.e., they will be more
likely to change from approving to disapproving and less
likely to change from disapproving to approving than
other women. They will tend toward approval more
slowly.

c. Women for whom employment remains a membership
group over a long-term (e.g., a 5-year period) will be more
likely to change from disapproving to approving of
women's employment and more likely to maintain
approval than women who become employed, who leave
the labor force, or who remain outside the labor force.

d. Women for whom employment remains a reference
group over a long-term (e.g., a 5-year period) will be more
likely to change from disapproving to approving of
women's employment and more likely to maintain
approval than women who adopt employment as a
reference group, who abandon employment as a reference
group, or who continue avoid employment as a reference
group.

e. Women who consistently belong to the membership
group of employed women for the entire study will tend
more rapidly to approval than other women.

f. Women who consistently remain outside the member-
ship group of employed women for the entire study will
tend less rapidly to approval than other women.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Data

The data to be used in this study are the results of four interviews at five-year intervals of a nationally representative sample of over 2500 white women. The National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience (NLS) began interviewing these women in 1967 when they were between 30 and 44 years of age. Known as the mature women's cohort of the NLS, this group was selected because it "represents a transitional stage when many women return to the labor force after staying at home with children" (Shaw and O'Brien, 1983, p. 1).

The sample chosen to represent this cohort was a national probability sample of the civilian noninstitutional population of U. S. women at the time of the survey. The sample was drawn by the Bureau of the Census from the primary sampling units used for the Monthly Labor Survey conducted from 1964 through 1966. A multi-stage probability sample was obtained from 235 sample areas comprising 485 counties and cities representing all states and the District of Columbia. These sample areas were obtained by grouping the U. S. counties and independent cities into about 1900 primary sampling units (P.S.U.s), and forming relatively homogeneous (on a socio-economic basis) strata from these P.S.U.s. A single P.S.U. was selected to represent each stratum, and a probability sample of housing units was selected from each P.S.U. The sample of 5393 mature women was obtained from these housing units (Parnes, 1984, pp. 5-6); of this sample, 5083 women were initially interviewed.
Blacks were oversampled "to permit a more confident analysis of differences in labor market experience between blacks and whites" (Parnes, 1984, p. 2), resulting in an interviewed sample containing 1390 blacks, 3606 whites, and 87 women of other racial groups. The rate of labor force participation has been consistently higher for black women than for whites, and that participation has been influenced by different variables. For these reasons, this analysis will be limited to white women.

The interviews were carried out by census interviewers who were trained especially for these interview schedules. Questionnaires were audited on a partial basis to determine if questions were answered and "skip" instructions followed. Thus, a conscientious effort was made to obtain accurate data from this representative sample of women.

While attrition is always a concern in panel studies, shrinkage of this sample has been relatively small. In the tenth year of the survey, 79 percent of the original sample of white respondents were interviewed. By the fifteenth year, 70 percent (or 2532) of these women were contacted; they constitute the sample on which this study is based.

In an effort to assure that the remaining sample was representative of the initial group, comparisons were made between the total white sample and those who would remain in 1982. Thus, Table 3.1 shows percentage frequencies comparing the attitudes toward women's employment, as expressed in 1967, of the total white sample to those in the sample that would remain in 1982. This comparison indicates that the 2532 women remaining in the sample in 1982 are very similar in 1967 to the total sample, at least in terms of attitude toward women's employment. Therefore, it would seem
reasonable to conclude that the sample remains representative of this cohort of women as it was constituted in 1967.

Table 3.1. Attitude toward women's employment in 1967: comparing responses of total and reduced samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Reduced Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=3606</td>
<td>n=2532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite disapproval</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapproval</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite approval</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>.3%</td>
<td>.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1total number of white women responding to survey in 1967.
2total number of white women remaining in sample by 1982 wave.

As has been previously discussed, the period of time during which these data were collected (1967-1982) was a time when dramatic attitude change about women's proper role in society was occurring. Since these are longitudinal data, they provide information about women's attitudes at various points in time as well as the effect of membership and reference groups on that change.
Variables

Approval for women's working was measured in the NLS by the response to three questions about the circumstances in which employment outside the home was acceptable. The questions were phrased as follows:

Now, I'd like your opinion about women working. People have different ideas about whether married women should work. Here are three statements about a married woman with children between the ages of 6 and 12. In each case how do you feel about such a woman taking a full-time job outside the home: it is definitely all right, probably all right, probably not all right, definitely not all right?

(1) if it is absolutely necessary to make ends meet.
(2) if she wants to work and her husband agrees.
(3) if she wants to work, even if her husband does not particularly like the idea.

Responses were scored from 5 through 1, with undecided responses receiving a 3, for each of the three situations.

These questions were asked originally in the initial interview (1967) and were repeated at five year intervals. Thus, responses at four points in time are currently available: 1967, 1972, 1977, and 1982. The change in approval rates over time to the third question corresponds to the trends in society's attitudes regarding women's employment. In 1967, only 12.6 percent of the respondents felt it was probably all right or definitely all right for a woman to be employed if her husband didn't particularly care for the idea. By 1972, that percent had increased to 20.3 percent and to 31.9 percent by 1977. By 1982, fully 43.9 percent of the women endorsed employment even when husbands didn't like it (see Table 3.2).
Table 3.2. Attitudes toward women working if husband is opposed (n=2532)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely all right</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably all right</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably not all right</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely not all right</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approval for employment under the other two situations is greater. When there is a clear financial need, approval is practically unanimous (between 92 and 96 percent) throughout the period of the study. If husband and wife concur, three-fourths of the respondents are willing to approve employment in 1967. By 1982, fully nine out of ten respondents approve.

Responses to these three questions have been combined in other studies using these data to form a scale and then treated as a continuous variable (Macke et al., 1978; Statham & Rhoton, 1983). Such techniques as analysis of variance and multiple regression have been used to analyze variation from the mean in the resulting scale. There are, however, a
number of problems with this approach. First of all, the reliability coefficient (Chronbach's alpha) is fairly low ($a=.535$ for 1967), suggesting that the three questions don't measure the same attitude even though they all refer to women's employment. Second, the summing of categorical data of this type results in equating several very different response patterns. For example, a respondent who felt that women's employment was probably all right under the first two situations and definitely not all right under the third would be assigned an aggregate score of 9. This same score would be assigned to an individual who was undecided in all three situations. When such dissimilar situations are equated, the meaning of the dependent variable becomes obscured.

In order to avoid these difficulties, the decision was made to analyze separately the response to the third question about women's employment, which focuses on attitude about a woman working "even if her husband does not particularly like the idea". This variable was selected because it focused most directly on the respondent's attitude about the legitimacy of the work role for women, apart from economic necessity and permission from husband. In addition, there is enough change in response to this question over the fifteen years of the study to permit analysis of this change.

Whether or not a respondent has employment as a membership group is determined by employment status at the time of the survey as well as by her past history. For the purpose of this study, a woman will be considered to belong to the group of employed women if she is currently in the labor force (i.e., those working, those who have a job but are not currently working, and those women who are looking for work) and if she has worked at least twelve
weeks out of the past year. Homemakers, retired women, students, as well as other women without jobs or who are just beginning jobs, will be considered not part of this group. Women who are looking for work constitute a small percent of the sample, always less than 3 percent, and women who have just begun employment average less than 3 percent of the sample. Thus, these categories have little effect on the overall trends. The majority of the women outside the labor force are homemakers. The proportion of women in the employed group increased from 41 percent in 1967 to 55 percent in 1977. By 1982 that proportion had decreased slightly (54 percent), possibly reflecting some early retirement (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Membership group by year (n=2532)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employed Group</th>
<th>Non-employed Group</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1331</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>1388</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1377</td>
<td>929</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 1967 | 41%          | 59%          |             |
| 1972 | 53%          | 44%          |             |
| 1977 | 55%          | 40%          |             |
| 1982 | 54%          | 37%          |             |

Since reference group theory has not been applied to the study of employment attitude change, there is no existing literature to guide the operationalization of reference group identification. Studies in other areas using reference group theory have identified an individual's reference group by measuring his/her expressed desire to be part of a group (Siegel & Siegel,
1968). In this case, the desire to be part of the employed group could be measured by employment preference, i.e., by differentiating between respondents who desire to be employed and those who do not. Employment preference, however, may be strongly influenced by the need for money. That is, a woman may prefer to be part of the non-employed group if she could afford to do so. Even though she may respond that she wants to be employed (because she needs the money), she may actually identify with the non-employed group. To allow for this possibility, reference group for women in the labor market was assessed by asking if they would continue to work if they no longer needed the money. Those saying "yes" are considered to claim employment as a reference group, while those who are undecided or who respond negatively are seen as not having employment as a reference group.

For those women outside the labor force, their identification with employed women was reasoned to be expressed as a desire for employment. Some women, however, may identify strongly with employed women but may be constrained by family obligations or personal restrictions from pursuing employment. Thus, some women may want to be employed but only if certain personal or family considerations could be resolved. Therefore, reference group identification for women outside the labor force was determined by their response to a question asking if they would accept a hypothetical job offer. Those women giving a positive or qualified positive response are considered to have employment as a reference group while those saying "no" are not (see Table 3.4).
Table 3.4. Reference group by year (n=2532)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed as reference</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>1038</td>
<td>1127</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed not as reference</td>
<td>1374</td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>1332</td>
<td>1291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, four categories of respondents may be constructed for each of the four time periods: (1) those for whom employment is both a membership and a reference group (willing workers), (2) those for whom employment is a membership group but not a reference group (unwilling workers), (3) those for whom employment is a reference group but not a membership group (potential workers), and (4) those for whom employment is neither a reference nor a membership group (content homemakers) (see Table 3.5). The first and fourth groups represent a consistent combination of membership and reference groups, while the second and third groups display a mixed combination. These categories are not proposed as ordered categories but merely represent the four possible combinations of the membership and reference group categories.

Educational level for this sample ranged from no formal schooling to six or more years of college. The median was 12 years and the sample mean was 11.5 years. Twelve years of education was completed by 1235 women (49 percent). Thirty-one percent of the women had less than a high school
Table 3.5. Membership/reference group combinations by year (n=2532)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing workers</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential workers</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwilling workers</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content homemakers</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

education and 20 percent had continued past high school. It is interesting to note that only 45 women (< 2 percent) had five or more years of college.

In 1967, 2223 respondents (87.8 percent) were married and living with their husbands. One hundred nine women (4.3 percent) had never married. The remaining 7.9 percent were widowed, divorced, separated or not living with their husbands for some other reason. By 1982, the number of women living with their husbands dropped to 1942 (76.7 percent). Only 86 women (3.4 percent) remained never married, while the widowed, divorced and separated group increased to 504 (19.9 percent).

Over 84 percent of the respondents had at least one child under 18 living with them in 1967. In 1972, that percentage was reduced to 73.6 percent,
and by 1977, only slightly more than half of these women (51.5 percent) had children under 18 at home.

Method of Analysis

The variable of particular interest in this analysis, attitude toward women's employment, is an ordinal variable. As previously described, the respondent may select one of five levels of approval concerning women's employment outside the home, ranging from low to high. While variables of this type are often treated and analyzed as continuous variables in order to take advantage of the statistical techniques developed for use with continuous variables (i.e., ANOVA and multiple regression), such an approach is not strictly appropriate (Rosenthal, 1983). In order to handle data of this type, a special class of statistical techniques has been developed: log-linear models. These models function in a way similar to multiple regression models: they seek "to identify the structure underlying a set of categorical variables" (Reynolds, 1977, p. 109). Instead of using values of the independent variables to predict values of the dependent variable as is done in multiple regression, log-linear models use variables that make up the cross-classification tables as independent variables and the number of cases in each cell as the dependent variable (Norusis, 1985). Thus, a model of hypothesized relationships between variables can be proposed, and frequencies in cells can be estimated based on that model. Those estimated frequencies can be compared with the actual frequencies to determine how well the model fits the data. A likelihood ratio chi-square statistic can be calculated as a measure of the fit of the model to the data. In the case when a model does not fit the
data, an analysis of the standardized residuals can provide a test of which cells of the table are not explained by the model.

Table 3.6. Approval of employment by employment status (hypothetical data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Not Employed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For example, suppose Table 3.6 reflected the relationship between employment and attitude toward employment in a sample. If it is hypothesized that employment and attitude toward employment were independent of each other (i.e., that approving or disapproving of employment was not affected by membership in the labor force), the hypothesis could be tested by estimating the frequencies that would occur in the cells if the hypothesis were true and then testing to see if the estimated frequencies matched the actual frequencies. Since some variation is expected due to sampling error even if the model were a good fit, a likelihood ratio chi-square statistic can be computed to determine whether or not the variation is within acceptable limits.

The formula for estimating the cell frequencies under the condition of independence is \( f = \frac{rc}{n} \) where \( f \) is the cell frequency to be estimated, \( r \) is the
marginal total of the row containing the cell, c is the marginal total of the column containing the cell, and n is the total of all cells. Thus, in this example, if attitude is independent of employment status, one would expect the frequency in the cell of the first row, first column to be \( \frac{140 \times 100}{280} = 50 \). The remainder of the expected frequencies can be calculated in a similar way, resulting in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Expected frequencies (hypothetical data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Not Employed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine if the differences between Tables 3.6 and 3.7 are of sufficient magnitude to claim a relationship between these variables, a likelihood ratio chi-square statistic can be calculated:

\[
L^2 = 2 \sum (\text{observed}) \ln \left( \frac{\text{observed}}{\text{estimated}} \right)
\]

where "observed" refer to the observed cell frequencies and "estimated" refer to the cell frequencies estimated by the model. This statistic has a chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom equal to the number of cells less the number of parameters fitted (Fienberg, 1981, p. 40). For this example, \( L^2 = 6.25 \); with one degree of freedom, the probability of type I error is less than .05. A significant statistic indicates that the model does not fit the data and the
hypothesis of independence is rejected. Therefore a relationship, or interaction, exists between the two variables, and this interaction must be included in a model in order to obtain an accurate representation of the data.

In actual practice, the equation used by the statistical package employed in this analysis (SPSS\(_x\)) to calculate the expected frequencies differs somewhat from the one used in the preceding example. First of all, natural logarithms of the numbers are used instead of the actual counts. A natural logarithm of a number is the power to which \(e\) (i.e., 2.7182818) must be raised to obtain that number. For example, the natural logarithm of 60 is 4.0943, because \(e^{4.0943} = 60\). Because of special properties of logarithms, they can express a multiplicative relationship in a linear equation which can then be estimated using computer programs for constructing linear models. Two rules of logarithms are important here:

\[
\ln (ab) = \ln a + \ln b \\
\ln (a/b) = \ln a - \ln b 
\]

Thus, \(f = (rc)/n\) is equivalent to

\[
\ln (f) = \ln r + \ln c - \ln n 
\]

In the case of a saturated model, an average of the logarithms of the cell frequencies is calculated and the parameters which represent deviations from this average are determined, much like the method used in the analysis of variance. Using the same example,

\[
\ln (f) = m + b \text{ (employed)} + b \text{ (approve)} + b \text{ (employed*approve)}
\]

where \(m\) corresponds to the grand mean produced in the analysis of variance. Instead of being the mean of the dependent variable, however, it is the average of the logarithms of the cell frequencies or 4.1926. The remaining
terms supply the adjustments resulting from being in various categories. Thus, \( b \) (employed) is the amount of change from the average associated with being in the labor force, or \( 3.8916 - 4.1926 = -0.3010 \). Similarly, \( b \) (approve) is the change due to approving of women's employment: \( 4.2382 - 4.1926 = 0.0456 \), and \( b \) (employed*approve) represents the interaction term: the amount of adjustment brought about by the connection between attitude and employment, "the 'boost' or 'interference' associated with particular combinations of the values" (Norusis, 1985, p. 299). Thus, \( b \) (employed*approve) = \( \ln(f) - (m + b \) (employed) + \( b \) (approve) \) or 0.1571.

A positive sign in front of the parameter indicates a higher than average count in that cell, while a negative sign indicates a lower than average count. In the above example, the negative sign indicates that there are fewer women in the labor force than outside. The positive sign reflects more women approving of women's employment than disapproving, and also more women who both approve and are employed than would be expected if those variables were not connected.

This model produces estimates of cell frequencies which exactly fit the data. This is because it includes terms for all variables (main effects) and for all combinations of variables (interaction effects). It is often useful to construct models which do not include all interaction effects. Such models estimate cell frequencies based on included variables; these frequencies can then be compared to actual cell frequencies. A likelihood ratio chi-square (described earlier) provides an overall indication of how well the model fits the data. Similar to the more familiar Pearson chi-square, it has the advantage of being divisible into parts attributable to the addition of effects to
the model. In this way, the contribution that the addition of a particular term makes to the fit of a model can be determined by the drop in chi-square which occurs when that term is added (Norusis, 1985).

A large chi-square indicates a poor fit between the expected and actual cell frequencies, while a small chi-square reflects a good match. The probability associated with the chi-square statistic reflects the likelihood of obtaining a result of that size if the model fits the data. A low probability is associated with a poor fit, while a high probability indicates a good fit.

Unsaturated models also produce residuals, which are the differences between estimated and actual cell frequencies. These provide an indication of how well the modeled relationships actually match the observed data, cell by cell. Residuals can be standardized by dividing them by the square root of the expected frequency, and can then be interpreted somewhat like a t test. "Standardized residuals greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96 suggest important discrepancies" (Norusis, 1985, p. 305) and allow for identifying where the lack of fit occurs.

Log-linear models will be used in various ways to explore the relationships among employment, desire for employment and attitudes toward employed women. First of all, an unsaturated model including the main effects of the membership/reference group categories (willing workers, etc.) and the attitude toward employed women will be estimated for each of the four time periods. An examination of the standardized residuals will constitute a test for the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis will be tested by fitting a hierarchical model involving group categories and attitudes toward employment taken at two
points in time. The model will include the main effects of all variables as well as the terms representing the interaction between attitudes toward employed women at two points in time and the interaction between group and attitude at time 1. An analysis of the residuals along with an analysis of the parameters of the saturated model will indicate which group categories (if any) influence attitude change.

Hypothesis 3 involves the testing for the effect of group change on attitude change. New variables will be constructed to represent change or constancy of both membership and reference groups over each 5-year period. The main effects of these variables will be included in a model along with the main effects of attitudes toward employed women at the beginning and at the end of the period and a term representing the attitude interaction and the interaction between group and attitude at time 1. Again, examination of the standardized residuals and the parameters associated with the saturated model will indicate which categories of change or constancy affect attitude change.

The pattern of attitude change, referred to in hypothesis 4 will be analyzed using a probability model. The sample will be divided into groups based on their membership and reference groups. The aim is to describe the way women in different categories change their attitude toward women's employment over the period of the study. If employment and desire for employment are important variables influencing attitude toward women's involvement in the labor force, then the probability of attitude change should be different for willing workers than for content homemakers.
Events which occur, not with certainty, but with some probability less than 1, are called stochastic processes. Models developed to deal with these processes are "most useful when event complexities and uncertainties render extremely difficult a more deterministic...interpretation" (Kelton, 1983, p. 5). Their usefulness in describing attitude change has been demonstrated for political attitudes (Anderson, 1954; Goodman, 1962), by focusing on the pattern of that change rather than merely the end state or final attitude.

One type of stochastic process is a Markov chain (Isaacson and Madsen, 1976). Its probabilities of future change are dependent on the initial state of the variable and not on past state history (Collins, 1975). That is, the probability of an individual changing her attitude would be based on whether she approved or disapproved now, but not on the opinion she held in the past. The procedure for constructing Markov chains employs early waves of panel data to make predictions about later waves. While the data analyzed here would not be expected to conform to a Markov model because of the anticipated acceleration in approval, the procedure developed for Markov analysis can be useful. This procedure can be used to estimate the proportion of the sample approving or disapproving in 1982 if the rate of change established during 1967-1972 remains constant. These estimates can then be compared to the actual data to determine if the change rate has remained constant, accelerated or decelerated. The sample can also be divided into different groups and their rates can be estimated and compared. In this way, a determination can be made about constancy or change in the pattern of attitude change.
The procedure used in constructing a Markov model consists of two parts: (1) a matrix of the probabilities of change from one state to another (transition matrix), and (2) an initial distribution vector representing the proportion of the population in the various states at the initial time period. The transition matrix is constructed out of the observed probabilities of past trends for moving from one state to another (Collins, 1975). For example, suppose that the probability of attitude change toward women's employment is described by the following table:

Table 3.8. Marginal probabilities (hypothetical data)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Disapprove 1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1965</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove, 1965</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, of those approving of women's employment in 1965, 60 percent, or .6, continued to approve in 1970, while 40 percent, or .4, had changed their minds. By the same token, 30 percent of those disapproving of women's employment in 1965 retained their view in 1970, while 70 percent became approvers. The rows, unlike the columns, sum to 100 percent, or 1.0, because they represent the total of the people initially in a particular state. This transition matrix represents the probabilities of changing or remaining the same over this discrete 5-year period, based on the attitude state in 1965. The transition matrix can be represented as:
The second part of the model is composed of the initial distribution vector. Therefore, if 20 percent of the population approved of women's employment in 1965 and 80 percent disapproved, the initial state of the system can be represented as:

\[ p^0 = (0.2 \quad 0.8) \]

In this notation, \( p^0 \) refers to the state of the system in 1965, and \( p^1 \) refers to its state in 1970. \( p^2 \) would refer to its state in 1975, and so on for any 5-year interval.

The product of the initial distribution vector and the transition matrix yields the vector of probabilities for 1970:

\[ p^1 = p^0 p \]

For example,

\[ p1 = (0.2 \quad 0.8) \begin{pmatrix} 0.6 & 0.4 \\ 0.7 & 0.3 \end{pmatrix} \]

By matrix multiplication, \( p^1 = (0.68 \quad 0.32) \). This indicates that, in 1970, 68 percent of the population approved of women's employment, while 32 percent disapproved. The same process can be used to predict the proportion of the population approving or disapproving of women's employment in 1975.

\[ p^2 = p^1 p \]

or

\[ p^2 = (0.68 \quad 0.32) \begin{pmatrix} 0.6 & 0.4 \\ 0.7 & 0.3 \end{pmatrix} \]
The proportions of 63 percent approval and 37 percent disapproval can be converted to frequencies, then tested against the data to determine whether or not the transition matrix accurately describes movement from one state to another over time.

The familiar likelihood ratio chi-square is the statistic used to test actual frequencies against the expected frequencies obtained from the predictions of the model. A small chi-square would indicate a good fit and a constant transition matrix for both periods (Collins, 1975).

A similar method for testing the constancy of transition matrices is presented by Goodman (1962). This method involves rearranging contingency tables to provide a comparison of attitudes toward employment by group category (willing workers, etc.) controlling for attitudes at the previous time period. Thus, separate cross-classification tables are prepared for approvers and for disapprovers at time 1. Each table presents the attitudes at time 2 by group categories. The likelihood ratio chi-square statistic can be used to test whether group category affects attitude at time 2 for each category of attitude at time 1. The statistics can then be summed to test whether the pattern of change is consistent for all group categories (Goodman, 1962). This process will be used to test hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d. Hypotheses 4e and 4f will be tested by comparing the patterns of attitude change for the willing workers and content homemakers across the 3 time periods covered by the study, in the same way described above. A similar technique provides an opportunity to test whether changes in attitude are independent of changes in
group. Chi-square tests can determine if the differences in transition rates reflect significant differences as opposed to sampling errors.
CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Attitudes toward women's employment have changed dramatically in the 15 year period covered by this study. As discussed in the previous section, only 74 of the women who were interviewed in 1967 (less than 3 percent of the sample) felt it was definitely all right for a woman to work if her husband didn't like the idea. By 1982, the figure had risen to 236, or 9 percent. If the women who said it was probably all right are included as "approvers", their group grows from 319 (13 percent) in 1967 to 1100 (fully 43 percent) in 1982. Other studies have suggested that employment is an important variable explaining this change (Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Macke et al., 1978; Slevin & Wingrove, 1983; Statham & Rhoton, 1983). The intent in this study is to investigate systematically the relationship between employment and attitude change. In order to do that, the hypotheses will be discussed in order.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis predicts a relationship between employment, desire for employment, and attitudes toward employed women. Table 4.1 presents crosstabulations of attitudes and groups (based on their participation in and desire for participation in the labor force) for the four points in time covered by the study; the total sample used in this study is represented. The first group category, the willing workers, is composed of women who are in the labor force and choose to remain there. The potential workers, those women outside the labor force who would consider employment if personal or family restrictions could be resolved, constitute the second group. The
Table 4.1. Group category by attitude: 1967 - 1982 (n=2532)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Willing Workers</th>
<th>Unwilling Workers</th>
<th>Potential Makers</th>
<th>Content Makers</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
third, the unwilling workers, includes those women currently in the labor force who would leave if they could afford to do so. Those women who are outside the labor force and prefer to remain there are the fourth group: the content homemakers.

Table 4.1 indicates that, in every time period, the willing workers have higher percentages of approval than do any other group. Alternately, the content homemakers have lower levels of approval than do other groups. The mixed groups fall in between the first and fourth groups.

Table 4.2. Test statistics of models including main effects of group category and attitude toward women's employment by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>$L^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73.67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>107.98*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>79.52*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$.

A log-linear analysis was carried out for each time period that included only the main effects of group category and attitude, and employed all five categorical responses to the attitude question. For 1967, the likelihood ratio chi-square was 73.02 with 12 degrees of freedom, indicating the lack of independence and the importance of the interaction term for describing the data (see Table 4.2). Likelihood ratio chi-squares for the remaining time
periods are similar: 73.67 for 1972, 107.98 for 1977, and 79.52 for 1982. Thus, attitude toward women's employment is influenced by group category.

A determination of the group categories that are associated with levels of approval or disapproval can be made by an examination of the residuals for the various cells (see Table 4.3). The standardized residuals for the willing workers in the response categories of strong approval and approval are 2.85 and 3.39, respectively. Since both exceed 1.96, they indicate that the actual frequencies in those cells are significantly greater than would be expected in an independence model. The same is true for the three remaining time periods; all standardized residuals for approving attitudes exceed +/- 1.96.

The content homemakers display a similar but reversed pattern. In 1967, the standardized residuals for the strong approval and approval response categories are -2.68 and -2.38 respectively. These numbers indicate cell frequencies significantly less than what would be expected if there were no relation between attitudes and group. The remaining time periods follow the same pattern. In 1972, the cell frequency for those who exhibit strong approval is not significant but is in the expected direction. The remaining standardized residuals are all significant (see Table 4.3).

The mixed groups, the unwilling workers and potential workers, reveal an insignificant pattern of residuals for all four time periods, indicating that the lack of fit between the independence model and the data is not caused by these variables. Therefore, membership and reference groups, and their interaction, are important in understanding attitude toward women's employment. The willing workers and content homemakers differ significantly in their attitude toward employed women. In addition, the
Table 4.3. Standardized residuals from log-linear analysis under conditions of independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Willing Workers</th>
<th>Content Home-makers</th>
<th>Unwilling Workers</th>
<th>Potential Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong approval</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>-2.68</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>-2.38</td>
<td>-.97</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong approval</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>-.91</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>-.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>-3.97</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>-.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong approval</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>-2.58</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>-3.90</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong approval</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>-3.47</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>-2.55</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>-1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women who are employed but would rather not be do not demonstrate as strong approval as do the willing workers. Thus, it appears that while the fact of employment is itself an important variable in predicting attitude toward employment, its predictive power is enhanced by employment combined with the desire to be part of the labor force. Similarly, women for whom employment is a reference group but not a membership group also fail to match either the willing workers or the content homemakers. The desire for
employment is not in itself the key variable, but rather it is the combination of employment and the desire for that employment that is important.

The first hypothesis, then, is supported. The evidence suggests that membership and reference groups and their combinations are important in predicting attitudes at a particular point in time. Whether these groups are also important in explaining attitude change is addressed by hypothesis two.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis predicts a relationship between employment, desire for employment, and attitude change. It proposes that willing workers will have the highest levels of approval when controlling for their initial attitudes, while content homemakers will have the lowest. The mixed groups are expected to have intermediate attitude change. The picture which emerges from an analysis of attitude change is less clear-cut than the one involving attitude alone.

In order to test the effect of group category on attitude change, a log-linear model was estimated including attitudes at two points in time, the group category at the first point in time, and the interactions between attitudes at two times and between attitude at time one and group category. Such a model excluded the three-way interaction and the two-way interaction between group category and attitude at time 2. If such a model produced estimates of cell frequencies which fit the data, it could be concluded that group categories do not affect attitude at time 2, controlling the connection between group and attitude at time 1 and between attitudes at both time points. On the other hand, if this model does not fit the data, this indicates
that the connection between group and attitude at time 2 and/or the three-way interaction is important for understanding this relationship. An analysis of the parameter estimates and of the standardized residuals can indicate cells where significant deviation occurs.

Table 4.4. Test statistics for goodness-of-fit for various hierarchical models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>L²</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>([A_1A_2][A_1G_1][A_2G_1])</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>([A_1A_2][A_1G_1])</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>([A_2A_3][A_2G_2][A_3G_2])</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.37</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>([A_2A_3][A_2G_2])</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32.61</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>([A_3A_4][A_3G_3][A_4G_4])</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>([A_3A_4][A_3G_3])</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.39</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = attitude
G = group category
1 = 1967
2 = 1972
3 = 1977
4 = 1982

Table 4.4 presents a summary of the likelihood ratio chi-square statistics for hierarchical models for each of the three time periods. A refers to attitude and the subscripts designate the time period: \(A_1\) indicates attitude at time 1, etc. G refers to group category and the subscripts, again, designate the time period: \(G_1\) indicates group category at time 1. The saturated models including the three-way interaction and the lesser-order terms always produce a \(L^2\) of 0. For the 1967-1972 period, the model that eliminates the
three-way interaction (i.e., contains all 2-way interactions and the main effects) has a $L^2$ of 5.34 (see Table 4.4). This statistic is not significant at the .05 level with 3 degrees of freedom, indicating that the three-way interaction is not necessary to a description of the data, i.e., a model without this term fits the data quite well. When the two-way interaction between group category and attitude in 1972 is removed, the resulting model produces a chi-square statistic of 18.10 (d.f. = 6; $p < .006$) (see Table 4.4), indicating that the model no longer fits the data. Because of the additive properties of the likelihood ratio chi-square (Norusis, 1985), the difference between the two statistics can be interpreted as the contribution made by this interaction term: $18.10 - 5.34 = 12.76$ (d.f. = 3; $p < .01$). Thus, the term which represents the interaction between group category and attitude in 1972 provides information which is necessary to describe these data accurately, i.e., group category affects attitude in 1972 even when attitude in 1967 is known. This is the same as saying that group categories affect change.

The parameter estimates for the saturated model indicate deviations from the average cell frequencies. $Z$ scores for parameter estimates for the interaction between group and attitude-in-1972 indicate significant differences. The $Z$ score for parameter 1 (willing workers disapproving in 1972) is -3.02, reflecting significantly fewer than average in this cell due to this interaction. Parameter 4 (content homemakers disapproving in 1972) is also significant ($Z = 2.33$) and indicates a higher-than-average cell frequency due to this interaction.

An examination of the standardized residuals in the reduced model indicates no residuals exceeding +/- 1.96. The direction of the variation,
however, consistently produces estimates which are too small for the approving willing workers and too large for the approving content homemakers who approve in 1972.

For the period from 1972 to 1977, the elimination of the 3-way interaction term produces a model which no longer fits the data ($L^2 = 9.37$, d.f. = 3, $p < .025$). The significance of the three-way interaction may be interpreted to mean that group category affects the pattern of change as well as the fact of that change. The contribution of the interaction between attitude in 1977 and group categories may be determined by subtraction of the chi-square statistics obtained from hierarchical models with ($L^2 = 9.37$) and without ($L^2 = 32.61$) this interaction (see Table 4.4). The resulting statistic ($L^2 = 32.61 - 9.37 = 23.24$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$) provides evidence that group category has an effect on attitude in 1977, controlling for attitude in 1972. Therefore, the data suggest that attitude change is affected by group categories during 1972-1977.

The first parameter estimate is significant for the three-way interaction ($Z = -2.32$), indicating significantly fewer respondents among the willing workers who disapprove in both 1972 and 1977. The parameter associated with unwilling workers is also significant but the sign is positive ($Z = 2.33$). Significantly more unwilling workers than average maintain disapproval across the period. In this period, at least, employed women have different patterns of attitude change based on whether or not they would choose their employment. One parameter associated with the two-way interaction between group and disapproval in 1977 is significant. That parameter indicates that significantly more content homemakers than average
disapprove of women's employment in 1977 (Z = 3.19). The parameter associated with willing workers who disapprove in 1977 marginally indicates fewer willing workers than average in this category (Z = -1.91).

The standardized residuals (S.R.) in the reduced model indicate three cells where this model is a particularly poor fit. This reduced model significantly overestimates (S.R. = -2.07) the number of willing workers who maintain disapproval over this period and underestimates (S.R. = 3.52) the number who will change from disapproval to approval. In addition there are significantly fewer happy homemakers adopting approval (S.R. = -2.44) than this model predicts. In addition, none of the standardized residuals associated with the mixed groups exceed +/- 1.96. This information is consistent with the conclusion that knowledge of both membership and reference group is important to an understanding of attitude change.

For the period from 1977-1982, the three-way interaction provides no important information for the model (L^2 = .08, p < .994), but the two-way interaction between group and attitude in 1982 adds a significant predictive power to the model (L^2 = 18.39 - .08 = 18.31, d.f. = 3, p < .001). Thus, for this period as well, it seems appropriate to conclude that group category affects attitude change.

The parameters for the interaction in question are significant in two cases: the connection between group and attitude in 1982 produces fewer disapproving willing workers (Z = -3.309) and more disapproving content homemakers (Z = 3.10) in 1982 than would be expected without this interaction. The standardized residuals indicate a significantly poor fit in two areas of the reduced model. The model underestimates the number of
willing workers changing from disapproval to approval (S.R. = 1.98) and overestimates the number of content homemakers making the same change (S.R. = -1.96).

Taken as a whole, the analysis indicates that knowledge of group categories (i.e., membership and reference groups) provides information about stability and change over the period of time from 1967 to 1982. For all three periods of time, parameter estimates indicate that being a willing worker or a content homemaker affects approval of women's employment at the end of the period, even when attitude at the beginning of the period is controlled. In every case, the willing workers were less likely to disapprove and content homemakers were more likely to disapprove, controlling for initial attitude. Support is provided for the second hypothesis: that group category affects attitude change. Specifically, willing workers are most likely to change in the direction of approval of women's employment relative to other groups, content homemakers are least likely to change in the direction of approval, and the mixed categories fall in between.

**Hypothesis 3**

Constancy and change in membership and reference groups also affect attitude change. In order to analyze these relationships three new variables were constructed. The first is attitude change; this is represented by an A with two numerical subscripts indicating the time period involved. For example, \( A_{12} \) refers to attitude change over the 1967-1972 time period. Similarly, \( A_{23} \) indicates attitude change over the 1972-1977 period and \( A_{34} \), attitude change for 1977-1982. Each variable has four categories: (1) approval at both time 1
and time 2, (2) change from disapproval at time 1 to approval at time 2, (3) change from approval to disapproval, and (4) disapproval at both times 1 and 2.

The second variable describes change or constancy in membership group for each of the three periods. \( M_{12} \) represents the period 1967-1972, while \( M_{23} \) and \( M_{34} \) indicate employment change for 1972-1977 and 1977-1982, respectively. The third variable, reference group change, is similar: \( R_{12} \), \( R_{23} \), \( R_{34} \) indicate change or consistency over the three time periods. Both groups of variables have four categories: (1) employed at both times 1 and 2, (2) adopted employment, (3) leaving employment, and (4) outside employment at times 1 and 2.

Table 4.5. Test statistics for goodness-of-fit for various hierarchical models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>( L^2 )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>56.93*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>69.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>38.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>79.69*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>67.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>38.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>72.14*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*\( p < .05 \).
Hierarchical log-linear models were constructed excluding the three-way interaction and the two-way interactions between membership group change and attitude change and between reference group change and attitude change. If all models were to fit the data, it could then be concluded that these interaction terms are not important for estimating cell frequencies. The omissions which produce a significant change in the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic indicate the presence of interactions that are important for explaining the data.

Table 4.5 presents a summary of the likelihood ratio chi-square statistics and degrees of freedom for hierarchical models for all three time periods. The three-way interaction fails to add significantly to the models at any time period. However, for the first two time periods, both the interaction between attitude change and employment change, as well as the interaction between attitude change and change in desire for employment, are significant contributors to the model. For the 1977-1982 period, only the interaction between attitude change and employment change is significant.

An examination of the parameters of the saturated model reveals two significant Z tests for the interaction between attitude change and membership group change during 1967-1972. The Z score for the parameter corresponding to remaining employed and maintaining approval is 3.15, indicating a higher cell frequency due to this interaction. However, this interaction means that there are significantly fewer women who maintain employment and change to approval (Z = -2.02). None of the parameters in the interaction between reference group change and attitude change produce significant differences in cell frequencies.
For the 1972-1977 period, the cell frequency associated with maintaining approval and maintaining employment is significantly affected by the interaction between attitude change and employment change ($Z = 2.41$). Again, no parameters associated with the interaction between attitude change and reference group change are significant.

In the final period, parameter 1 (those maintaining approval and employment) is again significant ($Z = 2.31$). In addition, the parameter associated with women who begin employment and change to approval is positive ($Z = 2.04$), indicating a higher frequency due to this interaction. The parameter for the interaction between change in desire for employment and attitude change is significant. This interaction contributes significantly to the cell associated with women who maintain their desire to work as well as their approval.

Therefore, hypothesis 3 is only partly supported. The interaction between employment change and attitude change is necessary to describe the data at all three time periods. Specifically, maintaining employment is associated with maintaining approval during all three time periods. This supports the hypothesis that women who maintain employment are more likely to maintain approval, relative to the other groups. The association between maintaining employment and adopting approval is less clear cut. During 1967-1977 that association is negative: fewer women than expected continued to be employed and changed to approval. However, during 1977-1982, becoming employed is positively associated with changing to approval.

Changes in reference group affiliation interact with attitude change significantly during the first two time periods, but not during 1977-1982. It is
only during this time period, however, that a parameter is significant: maintaining a desire for employment while maintaining approval.

Thus, log-linear analyses indicates that interaction between employment change and attitude change is important in developing a model which fits the data. Individual parameters indicate a connection between maintaining employment and maintaining approval throughout the study. This is consistent with the theoretical orientation which suggests that interaction with others in one's membership group provides encouragement to maintain attitudes consistent with those of the group. The same theory would predict that attitudes would shift toward approval as a result of the membership group interaction. Changing to approval is positively affected by the course of employment, however, only during 1977-1982. Perhaps it is contact with employed women at all, rather than the duration or change in that contact which affects changing from disapproval to approval.

Reference group theory further suggests that change or consistency in desire for employment would influence attitude change. The interaction between change in desire for employment and attitude change is necessary to obtain a model which fits the data prior to 1977, i.e., even with the interaction between employment change and attitude change in the model, the additional information provided by the reference group change/attitude group change interaction is necessary to obtain a satisfactory model. From 1977 to 1982, this interaction term may be eliminated from the model and still produce estimates which fit the data reasonably well. The significant parameter during this time period, however, indicates that there are significantly more women than average who both remain constant in their
desire for employment and in their approval. Thus, while change in reference group, in addition to change in membership group, appears to be important in understanding attitude change, the dynamics of the connection remain unclear. Perhaps, it is the impact of membership and/or reference group that contributes to the variation in attitude change, and perhaps the duration of those affiliations affect attitude change. These questions will be addressed by hypothesis 4.

**Hypothesis 4**

Attitude change toward increasing approval can occur in two different ways, with different probabilities of change associated with each of the ways. The first way is changing a disapproving attitude to approving; the second way is maintaining an existing approving attitude. Each of these changes occurs with a given, and almost certainly different, probability. Each of these probabilities affects the net result of the number of women approving of women's employment. It is anticipated that each probability will depend on the group category.

**Hypotheses 4a and 4b**

Hypotheses 4a and 4b suggest that women for whom the labor force is both a membership and a reference group (i.e., willing workers) will exhibit a different pattern of attitude change from approval to disapproval and from disapproval to approval than will other women. Table 4.6 presents the marginal probabilities for holding an attitude at time 2 given an attitude at time 1, for willing workers and for all other women. For example, of the
Table 4.6. Marginal probabilities for attitude at time 2 given attitude at time 1 by group category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willing Workers</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1967</td>
<td>.536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapr., 1967</td>
<td>.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1972</td>
<td>.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapr., 1972</td>
<td>.334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

willing workers who approved of women's employment in 1967, almost half (46.4 percent) of them would change their mind by 1972. By contrast, over 60 percent (63.4 percent) of the other women would change from approval to disapproval. Thus, in the period from 1967-1972, approval for women's employment is an extremely unstable attitude for the women in this sample. The willing workers, however, are less likely than other women to abandon their approval.

To determine if these differences are significant, Goodman's method (1962) as described in chapter 2 was used. The cross-classification tables were rearranged to obtain a table comparing groups (willing workers, etc.) with attitude in 1972, for those women approving of women's employment in 1967. A likelihood ratio chi-square was computed for this table, testing the
hypothesis that group and attitude in 1972 were independent, given approval in 1967. A large statistic is evidence that group has an effect on attitude change. For the respondents who approved of employment in 1967, the test statistic is 8.33 (d.f. = 1, p < .05), indicating that willing workers are significantly less likely than others to change from approval to disapproval from 1967 to 1972 (see Table 4.7).

For those women who disapproved of women's employment in 1967, the pattern of change varies by group as well. Almost 20 percent (19.5 percent) of the willing workers adopt approval over this 5-year period compared to

Table 4.7. Test statistics to determine whether the pattern of change is different for select groups compared to the remaining sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Willing Workers vs. Others</th>
<th>Content Home-makers vs. Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willing Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1967</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaprv., 1967</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, 1967</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1972</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaprv., 1972</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, 1972</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1977</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaprv., 1977</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total, 1977</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.
only 16.2 percent of the other women. This difference, however, only approaches significance ($L^2 = 2.68$, d.f. = 1, $p < .15$). According to Goodman (1962), these statistics may be added producing a statistic which also has a chi-square distribution with $2 \times 1 = 2$ degrees of freedom and which tests the hypothesis that the two groups have the same transition probabilities. The sum is $8.33 + 2.68 = 11.01$ (d.f. = 2, $p < .05$). Thus, this suggests that being a willing worker contributed to increasing approval for women's employment more by maintaining already existing approval than by changing disapproving attitudes, although both patterns were present to some extent. That is, willing workers increased in approval for women's employment in 1972 relative to other groups, more by maintaining approval at a greater rate than the others.

This pattern was not repeated in the next time period. From 1972 to 1977, the willing workers were no more likely to maintain approval for employed women than were the remainder of the sample ($L^2 = .012$, d.f. = 1). They were, however, much more likely to change from disapproval to approval than were other women. Fully one-third (33.4 percent) of the disapproving willing workers had changed their minds compared to only 22.6 percent of the other women ($L^2 = 22.36$, d.f. = 1, $p < .01$). Summing the two statistics ($L^2 = .012 + 22.36 = 22.37$, d.f. = 2, $p < .05$) indicates a significant difference in rates of change. For this time period, then, the increase in approval for willing workers was not due to a larger "retention" rate as in the previous period, but rather was due to a higher "change" rate relative to the other group.
In the third period, both patterns are operating. Willing workers are less likely to disapprove of women's employment if they approved before than are other women. Almost three-fourths (73.3 percent) of the willing worker approvers maintained this attitude compared to two-thirds (66.2 percent) of the remaining approvers ($L^2 = 4.39, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .05$). In addition, 36.8 percent of the disapproving willing workers changed their minds compared to 29.5 percent of the others ($L^2 = 7.89, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .01$). The total is again significant ($L^2 = 4.39 + 7.89 = 12.28, \text{ d.f.} = 2, p < .05$).

When a similar type of analysis is used to compare the transition rates of willing vs. unwilling workers, differences are significant only for the 1972-1977 period, and only for those initially disapproving. Thus, for respondents disapproving of women's employment in 1972, willing workers were significantly more likely to change their minds by 1977 than were unwilling workers ($L^2 = 13.78, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .05$). Thus, during the mid-1970s, women who were employed because they wanted to be were significantly more likely to change from disapproval to approval than were women employed out of necessity.

Over the 15-year period, both patterns of consistency and change are operating. Membership and reference groups are useful in identifying some differences in the patterns of change but not all of them. The information in Table 4.6 indicates that both willing workers and others are changing their attitudes toward approval in two ways: by becoming increasingly likely to maintain approving attitudes as well as increasingly likely to change disapproving ones. If the pattern of change between 1967 and 1972 had continued over the next two time periods, the proportion of willing workers
approving of women's employment would be 29.2 percent and those disapproving, 70.8 percent. The actual proportion in 1982 is 52.6 percent, an excess of 23.4 percentage points over the prediction. Disapproval was actually 47.4 percent in this group, instead of the predicted 70.8 percent. Clearly, the rate of change toward increasing approval is escalating.

This escalation is also evident in the other group. The rate of change evident in the 1967-1972 period, if repeated over the period of the study, would result in 20.3 percent of the non-willing workers approving of women's employment in 1982. The actual approval rate is 39.4 percent, an excess of 19.6 percentage points over the prediction. Therefore, the rate of change is escalating for this group as well; in fact, the rate of change is only slightly greater for the willing workers than for the others. The differences in numbers of those approving appear to be due to higher approval rates that were in place at the beginning of the study for willing workers and to the entry of women into the willing worker category.

When content homemakers are compared to the remaining sample, their pattern of change is different from that of the remainder of the sample (see Table 4.8). Fully 64.2 percent of the content homemakers who approve of women in the labor force would discard their approval from 1967 to 1972 compared to 54.7 percent for the remaining sample. In the 1972-1977 period, over half (51.3 percent) would change from approval to disapproval, while 40.9 percent of the approvers in the remaining sample would change. From 1977 to 1982, 36.8 percent of the content homemakers would change to disapproval vs. 29.4 percent of the others. The content homemakers who disapproved of women's employment would be significantly more likely to
retain that view in five years than would the remaining sample \((L^2 = 7.49, 13.24, 8.83, \text{ respectively; all } d.f. = 1; \text{ all } p < .05)\) (see Table 4.7). Tests for different patterns of change support this hypothesized difference during all three periods of change: \(L^2 = 9.74, 16.92, 11.84; \text{ all } d.f. = 2; \text{ all } p < .05\). They are, however, no more likely to discard approving attitudes once these have been adopted than are the other women (see Table 4.7).

When content homemakers are compared to potential workers, it is only during the 1972-1977 period that the difference in the pattern of change is significant. Support is provided for the previous conclusion that employment itself, regardless of whether that employment is chosen, is important in explaining attitude change before and after the mid-1970s. During the mid-seventies, however, the information about reference group adds significantly to the understanding of attitude change.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b are accepted; the pattern of attitude change is significantly different during all three periods for willing workers and for content homemakers. Willing workers tend more rapidly to approval than do the remainder of the sample. During the first 5-year period, it was by maintaining approval. During the second 5-year period, it was by changing from disapproval to approval, and women who worked because they chose to had significantly greater change than women who worked out of necessity. From 1977-1982, willing workers were more likely to maintain approval and to shift from disapproval to approval than were the remainder of the sample.

Content homemakers displayed the reverse pattern; they exhibited a different pattern of change than the other women. They were consistently more likely than the remaining sample to maintain disapproval during all
Table 4.8. Marginal probabilities for attitude at time 2 given attitude at time 1 by group categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Homemakers</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>Disaprv.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1967</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaprv., 1967</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1972</td>
<td>.487</td>
<td>.513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve, 1977</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaprv., 1977</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.731</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

three periods. They were, however, no more likely than the others to abandon their approval once they adopted it. During 1972-1977, women who were out of the labor force by choice were significantly more likely to maintain and to adopt disapproval than were other unemployed women. Thus, for this period the combination of membership and reference group provides significantly more information about attitude change than either group alone.
Hypotheses 4c and 4d

Hypotheses 4c and 4d propose that employment change will affect the pattern of attitude change, as will change in desire for employment. Specifically, it is predicted that women who are employed both at the beginning and end of each period will have a different pattern of attitude change than will women entering, leaving or remaining outside the labor force. In addition, women who continue their desire for employment are expected to exhibit a different pattern of change than other women.

For the period from 1967-1972, women who are in the labor force at the beginning and the end of the period are as likely to change from disapproval to approval as are women who join the labor force during the 5-year period (see Table 4.9). Both these groups are more likely to change than are women who remain outside or who leave the labor force ($L^2 = 13.53$, d.f. = 3, $p < .01$).

In the next period, the women who were continually employed were the most likely to change from disapproval to approval (30 percent), and the women continually outside the labor force were the least likely to change (20.7 percent). Those entering the labor force during this period were more likely to adopt approval (26.5 percent) than were those leaving (22.6 percent) ($L^2 = 17.35$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$).

In the final period, those women entering the labor force had the highest probability of abandoning disapproval (41.9 percent) of all the groups, while those women remaining outside the labor force had the lowest (24.6 percent). Those women remaining in the labor force would adopt an approving attitude with the probability of 37.3 percent ($L^2 = 31.49$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$). Therefore, throughout the period of the study, remaining outside the
Table 4.9. Probabilities of attitude at time 2 given employment categories by attitude at time 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remain in L.F.</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>.602</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.275</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter L.F.</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>.407</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.296</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave L.F.</td>
<td>.400</td>
<td>.600</td>
<td>.478</td>
<td>.522</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.310</td>
<td>.609</td>
<td>.391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain O.L.F.</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td>.483</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>.609</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L² = 16.01, p &lt; .01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 6.23, p &lt; .15</td>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 8.15, p &lt; .05</td>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 31.49, p &lt; .001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
labor force resulted in the lowest probability of adopting approval. Even this group increased their attitude change rate, but the amount is small: 10.9 percentage points over the study period. The number of women in this category decreased, however, from 961 in the first five-year period to 798 in the last.

In summary, labor force participation resulted in higher rates of change from disapproval to approval. Whether remaining in or entering had the bigger impact varied by 5-year interval. The first period produced no difference; those remaining in and those entering were equally likely to change. The second period showed a slightly greater change for those staying in the labor force, while the last period indicated higher change for those entering. Women leaving the labor force during the period had change rates in between those staying in and those staying out. By 1982, the probability of change to approval for those staying in the labor force for at least five years increased by 17.7 percentage points, while the probability of change of those entering the labor force had increased by 22.1 percentage points. Clearly, being in the labor force affects changing from disapproval to approval.

What about the probability of maintaining approval? Over half (52.4 percent) of the continually employed women who approved maintained that attitude from 1967 to 1972, compared to 43.1 percent of those entering the labor force. An even larger difference was found between women with some labor force experience and those with none. Women who remained outside the labor force had only half the chance (25.9 percent) of maintaining approval as did those who were continually employed ($L^2 = 16.01$, d.f. = 3, $p < .01$). While labor force participation made a small difference in attitude
change toward approval (6.2 percent), it made a sizable difference in maintaining an approving attitude (26.5 percent) during this first period. Even among those remaining in the labor force, however, there was only slightly better than a 50/50 chance that approval would be maintained.

During the next period, the women in the labor force continued to maintain approval at a higher rate than those outside the labor force, but this difference was not significant ($L^2 = 6.23$, d.f. = 3, $p < .15$). There was, however, a dramatic increase in the stability of the approval attitude for women remaining outside the labor force: now 48.3 percent of these women maintained approval during this period, compared to 26.5 percent five years ago. Apparently, maintaining an approving attitude is affected less by employment during the 1970s than is change from disapproval to approval. Such a dramatic change occurring during the period from 1972 to 1977 may reflect the impact of the woman's movement on attitudes. That is to say, the women's movement may have functioned as a source of support for women which enabled them to maintain an attitude of approval once they had attained that attitude. The fact that the most dramatic change in maintaining approval is among women outside the labor force may suggest that the women's movement provided them the support that employed women provided for women in the labor force five years before. Change from disapproval to approval, however, remains associated with labor force activity.

By the third period, both those remaining in the labor force and those remaining outside it have increased their rate of maintaining approval by about 12 percentage points. Thus, while women remaining in the labor force
have a 72.5 percent chance of maintaining approval compared to a 60.9 percent chance for those outside the labor force, this difference is due to differences between groups at the beginning of the study. Said another way, the differences between employed and unemployed women in terms of maintaining an approving attitude are growing smaller during the period of study, while the differences in terms of changing disapproval to approval are increasing. This suggests that employment and employment change affect the probability of a woman's abandoning disapproval for women's employment. The chance of maintaining that approving attitude, once adopted, appears to be less influenced by employment, particularly after the first period.

In summary, differences are evident in patterns of attitude change based on employment change categories. The largest and most consistent differences are between those women remaining outside the labor force and women with some labor force experience. Still, women remaining in the labor force have higher probabilities of retaining approval, but that difference is large only during 1967-1972. Adopting approval appears to be more connected to recent labor force experience; whether or not that labor force experience also existed five years previously was less important. In fact, women entering the labor force during 1977-1982 were more likely to change than women remaining in the labor force. Therefore, hypothesis 4c is not supported: some experience in the labor force over the previous five years appears to be more important for predicting attitude constancy and change than remaining in the labor force.
An analysis of the effect of change in reference group reveals a similar pattern. Women who continued to identify with employed women were the most likely to adopt approval (22.6 percent) followed closely by women who adopt employment as a reference group (19 percent). Women outside the labor force were less likely to change from disapproval to approval ($L^2 = 17.14$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$) (see Table 4.10).

The same pattern is repeated during the next two 5-year periods. Thirty-five percent of the women retaining the labor force as a reference group during 1972-1977 adopt approval during that period compared to 19.2 percent of the women remaining outside the labor force ($L^2 = 38.8$, d.f. = 3, $p < .001$). During the next period, adopting approval occurs with a probability of .359 for women retaining the labor force versus .274 for women remaining outside the labor force in regard to their reference group ($L^2 = 10.89$, d.f. = 3, $p < .01$). In all three time periods, there is a significant difference in the probability of adopting an approving attitude based on reference group change. Women whose reference group remains outside the labor force are consistently least likely to adopt approval, while women retaining employed women as their reference group have the highest probability of adopting approval.

The probability of retaining approval is not affected by reference group change (see Table 4.10). The pattern of change is not significantly different for any of the three time periods. Therefore, hypothesis 4d is only partly supported: women who retain employed women as a reference group are more likely to change from disapproval to approval, but are no more likely to retain approval than are other women.
Table 4.10. Probabilities of attitude at time 2 given reference group categories by attitude at time 1

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approve 1972</td>
<td>Disapprove 1972</td>
<td>Approve 1977</td>
<td>Disapprove 1977</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt ref. grp.</td>
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<td>.226</td>
<td>.774</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td>.330</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>.641</td>
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<td>.190</td>
<td>.810</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>.451</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay w/o ref.grp.</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>.597</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.853</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>.483</td>
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<td>.726</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 6.85, p &lt; .10</td>
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<td>L² = 16.68, p &lt; .001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adopt ref. grp.</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.351</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.325</td>
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<td>Leave ref. grp.</td>
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<td>Adopt ref. grp.</td>
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<td>.359</td>
<td>.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave ref. grp.</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.686</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay w/o ref. grp.</td>
<td>.667</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>.274</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 3.45, p &lt; .35</td>
<td></td>
<td>L² = 10.94, p &lt; .05</td>
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Hypotheses 4e and 4f

Those women who were never a part of the labor force during this study were, in 1967, less likely to approve and more likely to disapprove of women's employment at that time than were women who spent some time in the labor force. During the next 15 years, their attitudes would shift toward approval but at a slower rate than the other groups. Therefore, women who never joined the labor force increased their difference from the other members of the sample even though all groups were more likely to approve in 1982. In 1967, for every woman who approved of women's employment, there were 10 who disapproved. By 1982, there were only 2.1 disapprovers for every approver among the never employed.

For women who would remain in the labor force throughout the period of the study, each woman approving of employment for women was matched by 4.8 women who disapproved in 1967. By 1982, the approvers outnumbered the disapprovers; in fact, for each woman who approved there were only .93 disapprovers.

If the women who were never employed had maintained the pattern of attitude change established in the 1967-1972 period, they would have produced 14.4 percent approvers and 85.6 percent disapprovers by 1982 (see Figure 4.1). In actuality 31.9 percent of these women approved of women's employment in 1982, 17.5 percentage points higher than expected, while only 68.1 percent disapproved.

The women who were consistently employed also increased their rate of change. If the probability of change established between 1967-1972 remained consistent until 1982, 30.2 percent of these women would be
Figure 4.1. Expected proportions of approval/disapproval among
the never employed

\[
p^0 = \begin{pmatrix} .091 \\ .909 \end{pmatrix}
\]

\[
P = \begin{pmatrix} .240 & .670 \\ .128 & .872 \end{pmatrix}
\]

\[
p^3 = \begin{pmatrix} .145 & .855 \\ .144 & .856 \end{pmatrix}
\]

\[
p^3 = p^0 p^3
\]

expected to approve and 69.8 percent to disapprove (see Figure 4.2). Over half
(51.9 percent) fully-employed women approved in 1982, a difference of actual
over expected of 21.7 percentage points. Forty-eight percent disapproved.
Therefore, both unemployed and employed groups increased their rate of
change in favor of approval. The fully employed women, however, had a
greater increase than did the unemployed women. Coupled with the fact that
the employed women were more likely than the never employed women to
approve of employment for women in 1967 (17.3 percent vs. 9.1 percent), this
15-year period saw the difference between the two groups increasing rather
than shrinking. Women who spent some time in the labor force during the
period of study exhibited rates of change in between the two groups. While
there is clearly a sizable amount of attitude change not affected by
employment, there is nonetheless a significant portion influenced by
employment participation, particularly long-term participation. The greater
change in the fully employed group, coupled with the increase in the number
of women comprising this group in the larger population, affects attitude change in general.

Hypotheses 4e and 4f are supported. Women who are part of the labor force at each of the four points in time increase in approval more rapidly than the other women. The entire sample is more likely to approve of women’s employment by 1982, but the consistently employed change at a greater rate. Those women who are outside the labor force at all four points in time change most slowly. While there are differences in probability of approval between the groups in 1967, these differences are not great enough to explain the differences in 1982. Nor are the patterns of change established during the period from 1967-1972 sufficient to predict proportions of approvers and disapprovers by 1982. The rate of change is increasing for both groups throughout the study, but most rapidly for the long-term employed, and least rapidly for those remaining outside the labor force.
In summary, each of the hypotheses has been discussed individually. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 have been supported. Hypotheses 4a, 4b, 4e and 4f have been supported as well, while hypothesis 4c was not supported and hypothesis 4d was only partly supported. The implications of these findings will be discussed in chapter 5.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been to explore the change in attitude toward women's employment over the period from 1967 to 1982, by investigating the pattern of attitude change as well as the relationship between behavior and attitude. Reference group theory has provided the theoretical orientation; a woman's membership and reference group is expected to influence her attitude and attitude change. For women during the late 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, employed women could characterize a group: they met the criteria of providing interaction between members. In addition, employed women tended to view themselves as part of a group of "working women", and be identified as such by others. Women who belonged to the employed group were presumably influenced by the pro-employment attitudes of working women and were, therefore, more likely to adopt those attitudes. Reference group theory further suggests that women who identified with employed women also would be likely to shift attitudes in the direction of approval.

The literature review established a connection between women's labor force participation (membership group) and approval for women's employment. Reference group affiliation (defined in this study as desire to be part of the labor force) was not addressed by the research that was reviewed.

The findings in this study constitute support for reference group theory and concur with and extend the previous research in the area. Indeed, for all four times for which data were available, women having employment as both a membership and a reference group (i.e., willing workers) had the
highest levels of approval for women's labor force participation. At the same time, women with employment as neither a membership nor a reference group (i.e., content homemakers) had the lowest levels.

When attitude change was considered, willing workers were most likely of all groups to change their attitudes toward increasing approval, in spite of their higher approval rates initially. Even though approval is increasing in the entire sample, attitude change is accelerating more rapidly for women for whom employment is both a membership and a reference group than for the remaining women. Concurrent with this acceleration in approval is the greater probability in 1982 that a woman will be in the willing worker category than was true in 1967.

Content homemakers were the least likely of all groups to change their attitudes toward approval, although some change did occur. They were also most likely to abandon an approving attitude if they had previously adopted one. The trends for the willing workers and the content homemakers result in attitudes for women in these two groups in 1982 that are more dissimilar than their attitudes had been in 1967. For attitude change, as well, both membership and reference groups are important variables in predicting probability of change.

When change in group categories is taken into account, there is evidence of both short term and long term effects on attitude change. In the first period, those women in the labor force in 1972 were more likely to change to approval; their probability of change was not affected by whether or not they were employed in 1967. The women in the labor force both in 1972 and 1977 were most likely of all groups to change to approval during that
period. By the last period, the women in the labor force in 1982, but not in 1977, were more likely to change to approval than were women employed both in 1977 and 1982. Women who remained outside the labor force were consistently the least likely of all groups to change from disapproval to approval.

An analysis of the pattern of change for willing workers indicates that, during the first time period, their difference relative to the remainder of the sample came more because of their increased ability to maintain approving attitudes in those that had them, rather than by changing the mind of the disapprovers. In the second period, the pattern is reversed: willing workers are much more likely to change disapproving attitudes than are the other women. They are, however, no more likely to maintain approval than are the other women. After 1972, membership and reference groups appear to have less effect on the probability of maintaining approving attitudes; all groups increased their likelihood for maintaining approval. In the last period, both patterns were combined. Relative to the other women, willing workers were more likely to maintain a pre-existing approving attitude; if they disapproved in 1977, they were more likely to change that attitude by 1982 than were the remaining women.

The content homemakers, during all periods, were more likely to maintain disapproval and were less likely to change from disapproval to approval than the remainder of the sample. They were less likely than the remainder of the sample to maintain approval but that difference is not significant. In fact, their increase in the probability of maintaining an approving attitude over the 15-year period being studied is the greatest of all
groups. The content homemakers and the willing workers are becoming more similar in the probability of their maintaining approval, and more dissimilar in the probability of changing from disapproval to approval.

Attitude change about women's employment, therefore, has been clearly influenced by behavior throughout the period covered by this study. In the late 1960s, when being employed without a husband's approval had little support, women often disapproved of employment under such circumstances. Even if they did approve, they were not likely to maintain that approval. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, employed women, particularly willing workers, were much more likely to maintain this approval than were other women. The experience of employment and the association with other employed women were likely to change attitudes during this time as well: women who were employed in 1972 were much more likely to have adopted approval than others.

By the 1970s, the probability of maintaining an approving attitude, once adopted, increased dramatically for women outside the labor force. While employed women increased their likelihood of retaining approval as well, the employed and unemployed became more similar during this period. However, changing from disapproval to approval became more likely for the employed group, particularly the willing workers; they increased their distance from unemployed women during the mid-1970s in terms of the probability of attitude change.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, all groups became more likely to maintain approval but the relative difference between being in and out of the labor force remained the same. The probability of adopting approval was the
highest for those women entering the labor force, and lowest for those women remaining outside it.

The patterns of change in this analysis suggest that being in the labor force affects attitude change from disapproval to approval of women's employment, as suggested by reference group theory. Women who are in or who want to be in the labor force are more likely to adopt approval than those who are content to remain outside the labor force. The pattern for maintaining existing attitudes of approval is different and less affected by employment and changes in labor force activity, however, at least after 1972. In the first period, the probability of maintaining approval was greatly influenced by employment patterns. During this period, support for women's employment under the condition of a husband's disapproval had little support. Perhaps other employed women provided the support needed to maintain this unpopular attitude. The sharp increase in approval maintenance rates occurring over the period from 1972 to 1977, however, suggests that the women's movement may have provided some support for approvers and that this support may have functioned independently of employment desire or activity. It appears then that the increased probability of maintaining approval for women's employment may be due to this societal-wide trend unaffected by employment status. The rise of the women's movement in the 1970s (Wirtenberg & Richardson, 1983) coincides with this increased probability. While other studies have failed to find support for the contention that the woman's movement has influenced attitudes (e.g., Mason et al., 1976), they have not separated maintaining approval from changing disapproval. Perhaps it is reasonable to conclude
that the women's movement had more impact on women who already approved of women's employment, regardless of whether they were in the labor force or not. Those women would be more likely to be receptive to the movement's arguments, whereas women who disapproved might be less likely to hear the message at all. At the same time, it is a mistake to negate the effect of the change in the probability of maintaining approval on attitude change in general. By separating attitude change into parts and analyzing them separately, it is possible to understand more clearly the effects on attitude change of individual behavior and belief, on the one hand, and society-wide trends, on the other.

By analyzing in detail the attitude change over this 15-year period, tentative conclusions may be drawn about normative change in society. First of all, attitude change in the aggregate is influenced by the probability of people adopting a new attitude as well as by the probability of maintaining that attitude once it has been adopted. It has been shown that these processes may be different and may be influenced by different variables. Maintaining a new attitude, once adopted, may be influenced by different factors depending on how much support that attitude has in society. Unpopular attitudes may require interaction with groups of individuals also supporting that idea in order to be maintained. When an attitude begins to develop wider support in society, e.g., the kind of support that women's employment received from the women's movement, then maintaining that attitude may depend less on interaction with a particular membership group. The process of adopting the new attitude may be different and more affected by personal experience, i.e., interaction with others who espouse that attitude. Even when support for an
attitude is increasing in society, that support may have less effect on people who disagree with the attitude; for them, their own behavior, e.g., becoming employed or remaining employed, may be a more critical variable. Indeed, logical or emotional arguments may primarily function to shore up the attitudes of the already convinced rather than to sway the opinions of the unconvinced. From a policy standpoint, there is evidence here that efforts to maintain favorable attitudes may be as important to the total amount of those backing a particular policy (perhaps more so) as are efforts to convince those in disagreement.

Recommendations for Further Study

Normative change in society presents many problems to the researcher. Since such change is difficult to anticipate, studies must utilize retrospective data or depend on the good fortune that a variable will be included in a longitudinal design which will reflect such a change over the period of the study. This situation has occurred in the NLS with the item measuring approval for women's employment under the condition that her husband didn't care for the idea. There is more to be learned from the patterns of response to this item, some of which may be spelled out, based on previous research and on the findings of this study. The review of the literature presented in chapter 2 identified two key variables associated with attitude toward women's employment and change of those attitudes: those variables are employment and education. This study has attempted to explore the influence of employment on attitudes and attitude change; the connection between employment and attitude has been made clearer by the
addition of the concept measuring desire for employment. The next logical step would be to explore the connection between education and attitude toward women's employment. Several aspects of education would be important to consider: these include level of education attained, recentness of educational experience, interaction between level of education attained, employment and desire for employment.

The exploration of the interaction between employment and education as it affects attitude change is important to the further understanding of how normative change occurs in society. Does education function merely as a propaganda source encouraging the espousal of more liberal or change-oriented attitudes? Whether education functions primarily by encouraging attitude change in the direction of increased approval or by reinforcing existing approval could be explored by such a study. Having longitudinal data would facilitate the determination of how education affects attitude change. Does increased education create attitude change during the educational process? Does the increased education make possible a different type of employment career which leads to change? Do women with higher educational attainment exhibit different patterns of attitude change than women with less education? These and other questions could be addressed by a further exploration of this data set.

In addition, more work is sorely needed to increase the sophistication of theoretical models which can then be tested using survey data of the kind employed here. Current work, carried out largely in laboratory settings, provides more understanding of short-term attitude change. While such knowledge is clearly important, longer range and societal-wide attitude
change is also important. Reference group theory has proven useful here in explicating the connection between behavior and attitude change. Perhaps it could form the basis of renewed theoretical efforts. In any event, it is important that the larger question of attitude change in society continue to be addressed both theoretically and analytically.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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