Textile handcraft guilds: a conduit for identity, friendships, and successful aging

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Textile handcraft guilds:
A conduit for identity, friendships, and successful aging

by
Sherryl A. Schofield-Tomschin

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Textiles and Clothing
Major Professor: Mary Littrell

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
1997

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This is to certify that the Doctoral dissertation of

Sherryl A. Schofield-Tomschin

has met the dissertation requirements of Iowa State University

Signature was redacted for privacy.

Major Professor

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Program

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College
To those who have made all of this possible:

My loving and supportive husband Roger,

my wonderful children Ryan and Jessica,

an ever encouraging Mom and Dad,

and my dearest women friends,

Brecca, Harriet, and Jennie.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore inductively older women’s involvement in textile handcraft guilds as a conduit for interactions among textiles and their producers, successful aging, and friendships. Thirty women, representing 15 textile handcraft guilds and 8 different textile crafts, were interviewed throughout the state of Iowa. All informants were actively engaged in craft production and a guild. Content analysis revealed two superordinate themes, Craft as “I” and Guild as “We.” From these themes emerged a grounded theory of guild membership. Within the Craft as “I” theme three minor themes surfaced: (a) Process, (b) Product, and (c) Continuation. Process represented the act of craft production, while Product referred to the finished craft object and the expectation of that product to fulfill the specified goals of the informants. Continuation depicted both the goals of the informants, and the function of the craft product, in craft perpetuation. The Guild as “We” theme had two minor themes; For Self and For Self and Others. For Self referred to goals or benefits that were internalized by the women during guild interactions. For Self and Others represented the goals of the women to concurrently influence their own and other guild members’ guild experiences.

Through membership in the guilds women made an effort to consciously provide structure to their lives. The women were able to achieve identity and affective as well as cognitive experiences through craft participation and the resultant products. Guild membership provided the women additional benefits that could only be obtained in the presence of other guild members. The guild’s structure promoted interaction among and between individuals in an egalitarian setting which fostered validation, the sharing of information, and friendships.
The resultant social and craft support reinforced the women's craft production, thereby intensifying the affective components available to the women. As the women increased their levels of guild activity, they also increased the opportunities and benefits that were available to other guild members. Through textile handcrafts and guilds, the women were able to fulfill goals in their lives that promoted successful aging.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"And what is a stitch for?
To hold.
It binds past to present,
old country to new country
generation to generation."
Veronica Patterson, 1993

For thousands of years women have sat together spinning, weaving, and sewing, working, teaching, and learning in the community of others (Barber, 1994). Poets and authors have long recognized the power of cloth to symbolize the binding together of social relations (Weiner, 1989). Even the English language echoes the importance of fiber arts with cloth metaphors such as “the fabric of society” or “a close knit group.” In fact, “throughout early history, this art was the primary vehicle for articulating a woman’s various roles as mother, provider, worker, entrepreneur, and artist, and was a vital force for self-definition...” (Barber, 1994, book jacket).

During the Middle Ages, textile handcrafts continued through organizations known as guilds. The guild structure provided for knowledge and artistic skill to be passed along to new generation of artisans, male and female alike, as individuals worked together to produce similar goods in a workshop format. This formal guild structure served to both preserve and promote a variety of traditional textile arts. However, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the formal guild structure was weakened by changing economies in Europe and a developing middle class (Renard, 1968).

Up until the time of the Industrial Revolution, textile arts served as a valuable economic force for both women and men. However, the Industrial Revolution resulted in
many social, economic, and industrial changes in society, which included major changes in the production and distribution of textiles. Developments, including the production of inexpensive fabric, ready-made clothing, and the increasing availability of sewing machines, relieved many women of their former tasks of textile production in the home, particularly for middle and upper-class women. As a result, the focus of textile handcrafts shifted from one of paid employment or household necessity, to one of a leisure activity and an outlet for creative expression.

The end of the twentieth century has witnessed a renewed popularity of various textile handcraft guilds, including but not limited to, quiltmaking, weaving, and needlework (Cerny, Eicher, & DeLong, 1993; Fischer, 1995). Many women have joined guilds to reconnect with previously learned skills, as well as to experience traditional and contemporary techniques new to the craftsperson. The guilds facilitate the sharing and teaching of techniques in the community of other individuals (Fischer, 1995), as well as provide an opportunity for increasing the social networks of individuals.

The lifestyle of the contemporary American woman is structured by an intricate network of social relationships. Women are symbolically bound to other women by their membership in smaller social groups, whether based on age, occupation, religion, ethnic origins, and/or leisure interests (Lenz & Myerhoff, 1986). Social interactions in these groups, provides the opportunity for persons to share their common interests or values. Sustained interactions between these individuals results in solidarity, or a common conception of identity supported by a shared ideology. Specialized fiber arts/crafts guilds unify the purposes of women as they share their achievements in quiltmaking, knitting, needlework, etc. (Cerny,
Members gather for their mutual benefit and establish networks within the guild, with other guilds, and with the larger community. The guild structure serves as a vehicle for interpersonal relationships, while providing an environment to further women's growth as fiber artists.

Although social interactions are important for both women and men, Gilligan (1982) found that women may depend on social interactions more than men because they base their actions on a different set of values than do men. Gilligan states that women are never disconnected from the importance of others, from an ethic in which caring for others is perceived as just as valid a viewpoint as a detached, idealistic stance. As women grow older, they retain their commitment to human relationships as a basis for their actions. The ongoing process of attachment to significant others is an important source of identity, maturity, and personal power for women.

Social gerontology researchers are increasingly concerned with the nature of social relationships, particularly among older women. The trend toward lower fertility, increased longevity, national migration changes, and altering divorce, marriage, and remarriage rates, has reconfigured families, their household structures, and their intergenerational relations and exchanges (Myers, 1990). The impact of increased longevity and changes in marital structures provides the potential for an increased number and complexity of intergenerational friendships and relationships. At the same time, there is a tendency for women to outlive men (Myers, 1990), suggesting the need for research that addresses the particular life experiences and needs of women (Hess & Waring, 1983). Rossi and Rossi (1990) believe that women provide
a vital link between and among generations, serving as a core to one another and other kinspersons.

National migration changes in the United States may result in a larger percentage of older adults experiencing a change in their available kinship support, as the populations shifts between states. As a result, friendships outside the kinship network will become increasingly important to the older population as friendships, due to their voluntary nature, contribute to the physical, social, and psychological well-being of individuals. Friends frequently share many like characteristics and are therefore well suited to serve many basic functions such as identity clarification, reminiscing, and socialization (Litwak, 1989). Over the life course, a variety of different types of friends are needed in order to fulfill varying needs of individuals (Litwak, 1989). In conducting research on friendship, Blieszner (1989) has stressed the need for theoretically-based approaches as well as innovative data collection strategies. Blieszner and Adams (1992) conclude, “Only then will the scattered threads of conceptual and empirical approaches to the analysis of friendship be tightly woven into a cloth that fully displays the color, texture, and pattern of the friend relations” (p. 123).

Social scientists explore relationship patterns between people for a better understanding of human life. But what must also be considered are the interaction patterns between people and material objects. The things or objects with which people interact embody goals and shape the identity of the user (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). People are makers and users of objects and to a large extent a reflection of the objects with which they interact. Studying the interactions initiated during the production of an object,
including the learning, teaching, and sharing of knowledge, can provide a more complete picture of relationship patterns.

The making and sharing of one category of objects, such as textile handcrafts, has an impact on the physical and psychological well-being of adults (Schofield-Tomschin, 1994) while at the same time, provides opportunities for increasing social networks, the potential for the sharing of cultural traditions (Cerny, Eicher, & DeLong, 1993), and opportunities for role transitions (Hamon & Koch, 1993). In addition, intergenerational interaction provided through the sharing of textile handcrafts has the potential for decreasing stereotypes and ageism for individuals in the relationship (McGowan & Blankenship, 1994).

Guilds provide opportunities for increasing and affirming the social networks of individuals. Studying the interactions and communications shared through the guilds and transmitted during the production of handcrafts addresses the question, how do women incorporate textile handcrafts and textile handcraft guilds into their own successful aging process? Answers to the question provide a better understanding of the meaning and importance of textile handcrafts and textile handcraft guilds in the lives of contemporary American women.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to explore inductively older women's involvement in textile handcraft guilds as a conduit for (a) the interaction among textiles and their producers, (b) successful aging, and (c) friendship. This research investigated the attitudes and emotions of individuals involved in handcraft production within the guild structure, a structure that focuses on the teaching, sharing, and learning of textile handcrafts. The study emphasized
how the guild enabled older women to position themselves to age successfully. The friendships that have been formed and strengthened during guild participation were also examined, in an attempt to determine how the friendships that were formed around textile handcrafts fit into the overall friendship patterns of older adult women.

As such, the study investigated the conditions, meanings, and motives involved in the learning, sharing, and teaching of textile handcrafts within the guild. An examination of the roles that individuals assumed, the individuals’ perspectives that were transferred to others, and the friendships that were formed during the passage of handcraft skills, provided valuable insight into how older individuals manipulate their changing roles in society and negotiate successful aging.

The study was conceptually grounded in previous research. Various dimensions of successful aging in the literature served as a guide for investigating the relationship among guilds, successful aging, and friendships. These included self-directed learning, generativity, and leisure activities. In addition, two theoretical perspectives were employed in this research: symbolic interactionism, and the integrative model of friendship. Symbolic interactionism provided an approach to examine the meanings and creation of meanings that individuals apply to textile handcraft objects. The integrative model of friendship supplied a process or guide for investigating dyads, networks, and other patterns of older adult friendships.

Through in-depth, exploratory interviews with women actively involved in textile handcraft guilds, major and minor themes related to how the guild serves as a conduit for interactions, successful aging, and friendships were described. Results are intended to guide
further research on interactions between material objects and individuals, to further identify research which reflects the current dimensions of successful aging, and to expand the understanding of friendships in the lives of older women. Knowledge gained from this study may also help researchers and agencies to understand that there is modifiability in the aging process, that there are choices regarding the future of aging, and that no one ages entirely on their own.

**Definition of Terms**

**Friendship:** A relationship between individuals that involves the sharing of affect, concerns, interests, trust, and information (Hess, 1992).

**Friendship Dyad:** Two individuals who consider each other a friend.

**Guild:** an association of individuals who share an interest in preserving and promoting a similar interest or pursuit, and in the education of the association's members. For this study, an association of women who share the same interest in preserving and promoting a particular textile handcraft, and the education of the women through the teaching, production, and sharing of the handcraft.

**Meaning:** Can be defined as how a person understands or perceives things. Meanings are the significance one attaches to persons, places, events, or things. Meaning always occurs within context, whether that is historical, cultural, or personal, so will reflect those contexts. Meanings may include both affective and cognitive aspects (Blumer, 1969).

**Textile Handcrafts:** “Textile products are made by individuals or groups using their hands and supporting machinery. Creativity and power from the hand is central to the work” (Littrell, 1994, p. 5 ).
Objectives

This research investigated and interpreted several issues related to successful aging, friendships, transmission of knowledge and perspectives, the significance of these relationships in older women's lives, and the role that textile handcraft guilds play in facilitating these relationships. As such, handcraft guilds served as the foundation for beginning exploration.

The objectives from which this study was launched included:

1) Illuminate the roles that individuals assume within the guild during the teaching, sharing, and learning of handcraft skills.

2) Describe the goals of older women involved in the handcraft guild, and how these goals impact on their physical, social, and psychological well-being.

3) Identify cultural identities and knowledge transferred by older aged women to other individuals in the guild through textile handcrafts.

4) Explore the connection between the guild and individuals' friendship dyads.

5) Within the structure of the guild, describe the behavioral, cognitive, and affective processes fostered.

6) Describe how participation in the guild affects friendship patterns and dyadic relationships.

7) Develop a grounded theory of textile guild participation for older aged women.

8) Compare findings to the scholarly literature on symbolic interactionism, successful aging, and friendships.
Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is arranged in the following format. Chapter Two includes a review of literature pertinent to the three areas identified in the purpose: the interaction among textiles and their producers, successful aging, and friendships. This chapter also includes a summary of the literature's contribution to the study. The third chapter provides support for use of qualitative research methods and grounded theory, as well as describing the methods used in sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the analysis of data. Themes are described as they relate to the research objectives. In addition, Chapter Four includes the development of an emergent theory of guild membership. The fifth chapter contains a discussion of the findings as they contribute to the existing literature, recommendations for further research, and a summary of the study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

"He who works with his hands is a laborer:
He who works with his head and his hands is a craftsman:
He who works with his head and his hands and his heart is an artist."
~Author Unknown

To conduct an interpretative study on textile handcraft guilds and the role that the crafts and the guild plays in older women’s lives, it is important to review relevant literature in order to place the study within a scholarly context. In addition, conceptual frameworks serve as theoretical bases for study and provide insight into the research process. Four bodies of literature are examined here as they relate to the research questions. First, the symbolic dimensions of textile crafts and craft guilds will be examined. Here, the conceptual framework of symbolic interactionism will be interwoven with textile handcrafts to demonstrate the interaction of textiles and their producers. Second, elements of successful aging that various researchers have found to be salient to the process of aging will be discussed. This body of literature addresses self-directed learning, generativity, leisure activities of older adult women, and gender issues as they apply to leisure activities and social opportunities and constraints for women. Third, friendships of older adult women will be summarized. Demography, external structures, and intergenerational experiences will be discussed in relation to how they affect older adult women friendships. Within this body of literature on aging the integrative model of friendship will be reviewed.

Symbolic Interactionism

Compatible with the phenomenological perspective of qualitative research, symbolic interaction is based on the assumption that human experience is mediated by the interpretation
of individuals (Blumer, 1969). Objects, people, situations, and events do not possess their own meaning; rather, meaning is bestowed upon them based upon the participant's perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The participants' perspectives are embedded within structural, cultural, and historical contexts.

Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals understand their world and the processes involved in understanding that world. The emphasis is on the interaction, the activity whereby individuals interpret the actions of others and respond accordingly (Solomon, 1983). Blumer (1969) stated that symbolic interactionism rests on three basic principles: (a) human beings act toward objects based on the meanings that those objects have for them; (b) the meaning for such objects arises out of the social interactions of individuals; and (c) the meanings are interpreted and modified as the individual interacts with the objects they encounter. Thus, meanings are social products, created and formed through the defining activities of people as they interact (Blumer, 1969). Objects can be classified into three categories: physical or material objects, such as chairs or books; social objects, such as students or friends; and abstract objects, such as moral principles or ideas (Blumer, 1969).

Another important part of symbolic interaction theory is the development of the "self" (Blumer, 1969). The self is defined while interacting with others. In defining the self, people attempt to see themselves as others see them by interpreting the gestures and actions of other individuals, and by placing themselves in the role of the other person (Goffman, 1959). Thus the self is socially constructed, the result of persons perceiving themselves and then developing a definition of the self through the process of interaction (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).
Symbolic Interactionism and Material Objects

A material object may have different meanings for different individuals. The meaning of objects arises out of the way they are defined to the individual by others with whom the individual interacts. Out of a process of mutual indications, objects with the same meaning emerge for a given set of people and are seen in the same manner by them (Blumer, 1969). For humans are unique in that when they find themselves lacking, they attempt self-betterment, and in the process create not only material objects, but symbolic selves as well (Schouten, 1991). This symbolic self, or self-concept, is the understanding of who and what we are. Self-concept can be influenced by objects and other symbols that individuals use for self-understanding (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). These same possessions, acting as symbols of self-identity, can also communicate self-relevant information to others (Blumer, 1969). As such, social actions and interactions are influenced by material objects, and material objects influence social actions and interactions (Charon, 1985). Thus, there can be a relationship between material objects and the resultant social behavior.

Material objects can affect individuals’ self-perceptions. A study completed by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) showed that objects affect what a person can do, either by expanding or restricting the scope of the person’s actions and thoughts. For example, an individual can purchase an expensive car, and because that individual associates power and status with that car, he or she feels more powerful, thus expanding the individual’s thoughts and possible actions. Likewise, a car can serve to restrict an individual’s actions. An individual who owns a vehicle that is dented and rusty may not feel worthy of applying for a specific job, or asking a certain individual out on a date, thus restricting their actions.
a person does and how a person acts is closely connected to material objects. Because of this association between person and object, objects can have a direct effect on the development of the self.

Material objects can also serve to change self-perceptions within the society through differentiation and integration (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). For differentiation, the object separates an individual from a specific social context by emphasizing the owner's individuality or unique qualities, making him or her stand out from others. Differentiation objects, such as books, beds, sports trophies and musical instruments, refer directly to the self. Textile crafts were found to provide differentiation to tourists by providing unique show pieces in the home and as trophies for meeting the challenges of acquisition (Littrell, 1990). Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton also recognize the relationship between objects and integration. An object may symbolically express the dimensions of similarity between the owner and other individuals who share similar social contexts. Objects such as photos and visual art provide integration by providing meanings that stress relationships. Textiles provide opportunities for integration as individuals associate the objects with people, places, and periods in time (Littrell, 1990).

McCracken (1987) has identified how individuals use material objects as sources of cultural meaning, and how they manipulate that meaning to accomplish social, psychological, and cultural goals. He has suggested that cultural meanings are continually interacting and moving within and between locations in a triadic system: the culturally constituted world, the material object, and the individual. Meanings are transferred from the object to individuals through rituals. Rituals are defined as social actions devoted to the transfer of cultural
meanings for the communication and categorization of the collective and individual (McCracken, 1986). McCracken typified rituals as: (a) exchange rituals, where one individual chooses, purchases or produces, and presents a product to another; (b) possession rituals, where individuals accumulate, discuss, compare, reflect upon, and show off their products; (c) grooming rituals, where individuals insure that perishable properties are coaxed out of their products even though the property may be transient; and (d) divestment rituals, when individuals divest meaning in products from previous owners, or when the individual divests meaning prior to ridding themselves of the product.

Individuals also focused on the symbolic nature of their material objects to cope with changes in their lives. Three components were identified by McCracken (1987) that are applicable to the study of objects and their relationships with individuals experiencing transitions in their lives: (a) objects for mnemonic purposes to store memories of people, places, times, or events; (b) objects to negotiate role transitions; and, (c) objects as instruments of cross-generational influence. Blumer (1969) explained that material objects can serve this purpose because objects can change or expand in meaning over time. McCracken emphasized the need for more research investigating how older individuals use objects to renegotiate definitions of status during their changing life roles.

Individuals rely upon the social meanings inherent in material objects to guide their performance of social roles (Solomon, 1983). Products can be used as both a response to a behavior, and as a stimulus for a behavior. As such, Solomon believed that the linkage between products and behavior is bi-directional; products can be used as a tool for communication or to set the stage for role performances.
Symbolic Interactionism and Textile Objects. Textile objects have been shown to communicate meanings to the producers and owners of textiles. The literature suggests that there are two divisions of meanings for textile objects: meaning associated with the textile objects themselves, and meaning incorporated in the making of the textile objects.

Butterfield (1991) conducted a study on the meanings that are communicated through contemporary Danish fiber art. Butterfield’s qualitative study included interviews with both the artist and patrons of 45 fiber art pieces. The goal of the study was not to determine the precise meaning of any single work of art, but to establish various interpretations of meaning. According to the results of the study, contemporary Danish fiber art served a dual role: first it communicated expressive meaning for the creating artist; and second, it created expressive meaning for the patron who received it. For example, one artist used tapestries to retell personal experiences, but the patron viewed the tapestry and interpreted the scene as a place from her past. Likewise, another artist used woven wall pieces to convey her thoughts and visions of the world, but the patron used the piece to create impact and to unify the space where it was hung, without really analyzing whether there was a message communicated.

When studying quilts of Norwegian immigrants Figg (1994) discovered that quilts were incorporated into rites of passage such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and were used at specific events, as well as passed down through generations. Beyond the quilt’s role as a rite of passage, the quilts, through their design motifs, also communicated visual connections between the immigrants and their homeland. In addition, a quilt with a traditional Norwegian presence provided emotional warmth in an unfamiliar place. Similarly, Crews and James (1996) found that for over one hundred years (1870-1989) quilters in Nebraska
frequently created quilts for special occasions and for special people in their lives. Weddings and births were among the most cherished rites of passage in the lives of women, and the quilt served the role to communicate the quiltmaker's expressive feelings on those occasions.

In a recent case study, Fischer (1995) used a semiotics approach to examine an embroiderers guild in Texas. Through open-ended interviews, participants described the meanings that participation in an embroidery guild created for them. Fischer identified three broad categories of meaning in the interaction of the individual and the embroidery: embroidery for self, embroidery for others, and embroidery in conjunction with other individuals. The category of embroidery for self considered how the interaction of maker and object improved the individual's self-esteem. Embroidery for others included the teaching of embroidery skills, sharing the craft with others, and giving embroidery as gifts. The third component dealt with the learning of crafts in the shared community of other embroiderers.

While being involved in the embroiderers guild, individuals experienced various types and levels of friendships. In Fischer's study, the embroidered objects were being used by the participants to communicate feelings of connectedness between individuals and groups of people.

It has been stated by Rossi and Rossi (1990) that women provide a link between and within generations, serving the role of gatekeepers to one another and to other kinpersons. Many older women serve the role as teachers or directors of traditions and rituals (Keith, 1990). In this capacity, it is the making of textile objects that provides meaning to individuals. Cerny, Eicher, and DeLong (1993), in their study of quiltmaking in the modern guild, found that contemporary quilters consciously work traditional ideology into their creations, so that
the work can convey values as the object interacts with both the maker and viewer. Cerny and her co-authors found that guild members make quilts to bind themselves symbolically to the larger social environment of family, friends, neighbors, church, or other groups.

Within the quilt guild framework, Langellier (1992) found that “show-and-tell” frequently became the ritual through which the meanings embodied by the quilt were elaborated for the guild. Show-and-tell, the process where individuals provide a unique combination of visual (show) and verbal (tell) communication about their quilt, provided a connection between the quilts and the complex lives of their makers. At the same time, show-and-tell expanded the boundaries of quilting beyond the private sphere to a community of quilters. Show-and-tell provided “a safe space for diverse women to present their quilts, for women to support the creative work of other women, and for quilters to celebrate their bonds” (p. 143).

Spinola (1992) examined an apprenticeship folk art program in Iowa and found that the learning of textile folk crafts allowed some apprentices to be socialized into their community while allowing other apprentices increased appreciation for cultural diversity. Apprenticeships allowed the masters an opportunity to share their skills and knowledge, while it earned them respect and admiration not only from the apprentices, but from community members as well. Friendships were formed that affected the relationships of individuals and helped to continue textile folk art traditions.

In summary, individuals assume a number of roles in their lives, and they use textile handcraft products to guide their performance in these roles. Meanings are transferred from the culturally constituted world to products, and then to the individuals. Cultural meanings
are communicated from the product to the individual through rituals. Handcrafted textile products have been used to communicate meanings to both the producers and receivers of these textile products, as well as to develop self-concepts and to communicate self-relevant information to others.

**Successful Aging**

As the aged population grows larger, there is an increased awareness that successful aging is not trying to stay young, but trying to discover the rewards of a life fully lived to the end (Ryff, 1989). Much of the early work in the area of successful aging started in the 1940s at the University of Chicago where a group of scholars began studying personal and social adjustment in old age (Burgess, 1960). More popular books were also written during this time that provided advice on how to age positively (Ryff, 1989). Williams and Wirths (1965) continued to articulate the meaning of successful aging in their research by identifying four dimensions of successful aging: (a) the amount of activity in which the individual engaged, (b) the ability to disengage, (c) satisfaction with life, and (d) maturity or the integration of personality. Two additional components were later added to their dimensions of successful aging: a balanced exchange of energy between the individual and the social system, and a stable social system.

Of the identified dimensions of successful aging, life satisfaction became the most frequently researched dimension (Ryff, 1989). Research by Neugarten, Havighurst, and Tobin (1961) identified several life satisfaction constructs: zest versus apathy, resolution and fortitude, relationship between desired goals and achieved goals, self-concept, and mood tone. Research over the following years identified a myriad of new or related dimensions on
successful aging, yet small progress was made in identifying key markers for a successful aging experience (Fisher, 1995).

Fisher (1995) argues that part of the problem with previous research was that life satisfaction and successful aging were being used interchangeably; although the concepts were related, they are two different dimensions of subjective well-being. Fisher conceptualizes life satisfaction as representing basic needs being met, whereas successful aging corresponds more closely to higher order needs such as self-understanding, helping others, and feeling like one has made a difference. Fisher’s qualitative research identified five features of successful aging: (a) interactions with others, (b) a sense of purpose, (c) autonomy, (d) personal growth, and (e) self-acceptance. These five features correspond with five of six constructs identified by Ryff (1989) in her approach to successful aging that draws from life-span developmental theories, clinical theories of personal growth, and mental health perspectives. The sixth construct not fully supported in Fisher’s work, was identified by Ryff as environmental mastery.

Research conducted by Day (1991) attempted to characterize aspects of successful aging among a group of women in their late 70s and 80s. What Day hypothesized was that there were two main attitudes and behaviors that provided the sense of contentment for these women: (a) a sense of autonomy (the capacity to be independent and to direct one’s own life), and (b) a strong inclination for activity (the capacity to maintain an interest in and an active orientation toward social relations and community affairs).

Social relations were concepts identified in both the Fisher (1995) and Day (1991) studies, and reflected the findings of Nussbaum’s (1985) research. In his research, the elderly
individual's perceived level of closeness with family and friends was found to be a direct, causal predictor of successful aging. In addition, Nussbaum found that the elderly only need one significant relationship or confidant to score high on a life satisfaction scale. The research on successful aging suggests that successful social relationships play a key role in predicting successful aging.

**Successful Aging and Self-directed Learning**

Research on life satisfaction has been a major focus of gerontologists for nearly fifty years (Ryff, 1989). George (1979) has described life satisfaction as “essentially a cognitive assessment of one’s progress toward desired goals” (p. 210). Although life satisfaction has been linked to a myriad of variables, several studies have explored the link between life satisfaction and self-directed learning.

According to Candy (1991), self-directedness is both a process and a goal. As a process, self-direction is a mode of organizing instruction within formal settings. But, self-directed learning as a goal involves the learner taking responsibility for his or her own learning from a lifelong perspective, emphasizing autonomy and personal development (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Candy (1991) refers to this intentional self-education as autodidaxy — learner-controlled instruction outside formal institutional settings. The autodidactic process may, however, involve assistance from a guide or helper for encouragement, location of resources, and management of the learning process.

Research on self-directed learning and the autodidactic process has been either directly or indirectly influenced by Tough's (1979) seminal research on adults' learning projects. Tough defined a learning project as a series of related episodes that are designed to gain and
retain a knowledge and/or skill. Tough found that learners, if given the choice, prefer to assume considerable responsibility for planning and directing their learning activities.

Although for the most part research on learning projects research has been based on general adult samples, some studies have focused specifically on older aged adults. Brockett (1985) explored the relationship between the readiness for self-directed learning and perceived life satisfaction among a sample of adults at least 60 years of age. Brockett found a significant relationship between scores on measures of self-directed learning readiness and life satisfaction. Brockett expanded his previous work (1987) by examining several aspects of perceived life satisfaction and the extent to which one possesses attitudes and skills associated with self-direction in learning. His results suggested that there was a link between self-directed learning and life satisfaction that offered improved quality of life in the later years.

Estrin (1986) further refined her sample of older aged adults by examining the relationship between life satisfaction and learning participation among women living in two senior housing developments. Estrin found a significant positive relationship between life satisfaction and learning activity, both in terms of number of projects and number of hours spent engaged in learning. She suggested that participation in learning can be viewed as a strategy for enhancing life satisfaction in the later years.

Successful Aging Through Generativity

At the midpoint of this century, Erik Erikson (1950) introduced the concept of generativity in the context of a life-span theory of personality development. According to Erikson, generativity is a concern for guiding the next generation. In Erikson’s eight stage psychosocial model, the polar issue of generativity versus stagnation is the core of the seventh
of the major developmental stages. Individuals can arrive at this stage only after resolving conflicts of the early stages revolving around issues of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, and intimacy. The eighth stage is ego integrity.

According to Erikson, (1950) the generative crisis occurs most intensely at middle age. During adolescence individuals must form a sense of identity (Stage 5) before they are able to advance to the next level and form an intimate relationship with another individual (Stage 6). At middle age, this concern expands beyond the intimate relationship to encompass concerns about contributing to future generations, or generativity. Parenting is one of the most common expressions of generativity; however, one may be generative in a wide variety of life pursuits and settings, such as in work and professional activities, volunteer endeavors, participation in religious and political organizations, neighborhood and community activism, friendships, and even one’s leisure-time activities. Adequate negotiation of the generative crisis avails individuals to contribute in some way to the culture in which the individual belongs.

More recently in the area of personality and life span development, researchers have become interested in generativity as a psychological concept. Research on generativity has increased since the 1980s as researchers have used various methods to consider the role that generativity plays in people’s lives (McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Ruetzel, & Foley, 1986; Ryff & Heincke, 1983; Ryff & Migdal, 1984).

McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) view generativity as a multidimensional construct involving seven interrelated components uniquely organized within each individual. Specifically, McAdams and de St. Aubin argued that (a) inner desires along with (b) cultural...
demands are the motivational reservoir for (c) generative concerns and (d) generative beliefs. Generative concerns and beliefs stimulate (e) generative commitments that are transformed by individuals into (f) generative actions. Finally, the subjective meaning of the first six components is reported in (g) the generative script—the narrative that an individual creates about his life. McAdams and de St. Aubin reject the concept of discrete stages of generativity in adulthood, as suggested by Erikson (1950), and instead propose that as people become older, generativity becomes salient because of increasing cultural demands.

Other researchers view generativity as a cultural issue to be analyzed as a product of U.S. culture and its embeddedness in individualism (Alexander, Rubinstein, Goodman, & Luborsky, 1991). The U.S. ideology of individualism focuses on creating the "self" in U.S. culture; the goal is to stand out. However, as individuals age and become increasingly aware of death and the inevitability that this creation called self will be terminated, the search for continuation of self emerges. Alexander et al. argue that generativity is a cultural, symbolic act where individuals respond to the realization of impermanence by infusing part of themselves into another to attain immortality.

For the majority of the 161 older women in Alexander and his co-authors (1991) study, generativity was defined by having and mothering of children; the women's ultimate value and worth was conceptualized through this medium. Generativity included not only the guiding and nurturing of the next generation, but the continuation of traditions and institutions and the passing of family heirlooms. Material objects became symbolic and emblematic of the family and carried with them relationships and connections with individual family members. Kotre (1984) voiced the dynamic between the self and cultural tradition when he stated, "The
individual weaves an aspect of himself into a tapestry of meaning that has extension and continuity. He becomes the voice of a tradition larger than himself, and the tradition flows through him to the young” (p. 15).

It has also been hypothesized that older adults seek generativity in work settings (Mor-Barak, 1995). In a study of 146 job seekers (aged fifty-two to eighty-eight), Mor-Barak found four factors that represented the meaning of work for these older individuals: (a) financial, (b) personal, (c) social, and (d) generativity. The findings indicated that jobs that provide opportunities for the transfer of knowledge and experience to younger generations may be of particular value for older adults. This is consistent with the findings of Alexander and co-authors (1991) who found teaching to be a form of generativity for some of their participants. These women chose to nurture and guide the next generation through their teaching, not only through particular ideas and concepts, but through the dedication and “desire to mould and shape them” (p. 430).

Within the work setting, mentoring would appear to be an excellent vehicle for generativity. Mentoring has been used in professional, corporate, and educational contexts, and has been shown to contribute to knowledge enhancement, emotional stability, problem solving, decision making, and productivity (Kleiber & Ray, 1993). Often mentoring is entirely task related, but in some instances it has a more expressive, intrinsic, or psychosocial quality and builds relationships outside of and beyond the specific task. Mentors may also be an antecedent to generativity motivation (Peterson & Stewart, 1996). Participants in Peterson and Stewart’s research who recognized the presence of a mentor in their lives, were high on generative motivation, suggesting the possibility that generative ideals are passed on through
positive role models. In addition, volunteerism serves as a mechanism for passing experiences from one generation to another, as well as contributing to a sense of personal integrity (Kleiber & Ray, 1993). But what about activities more typically considered as leisure?

Leisure Activities as a Dimension of Successful Aging

Leisure is best described as a composite of varying degrees of perceived freedom, relaxation, and enjoyment (Shaw, 1985). Kelly and Ross (1989), in their research on leisure activities of elderly individuals, have coined the term high-investment activities for those activities that challenge an individual’s knowledge and skills and require an investment of effort. They suggest that those activities that have been developed over time, and require a great deal of effort, resources, and the acquisition of skill, are most likely to yield an enhanced sense of competence and worth. High-investment activities have the potential for generative motivation. Activities that encourage a sense of obligation or commitment to others, such as playing with one’s grandchildren or teaching a skill to another individual, could be perceived as being motivated by generativity (Mannell, 1989). Leisure activities encourage openness and responsiveness between individuals with mutually agreeable and supportive methods (Kleiber & Ray, 1989). Researchers have placed considerable emphasis on the role generativity plays in people’s lives. Leisure activities foster open and responsive interactions between individuals. Such experiences, whether intentional or accidental, allow for generativity to continue.

There is a growing belief among researchers that leisure needs to be more than just a pleasant, diversionary, escape-oriented experience if it is to contribute substantially to the quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). Mannell offers that “having a repertoire of
leisure activities that have the potential to challenge one's skills, and feeling committed to them, may contribute to the successful negotiation of the transition required of older adults as they move from a life-style dominated by constrained and obligated work activities to a life-style characterized by freedom of choice" (p. 143). Leisure activities, particularly those involving cross-generations, have the potential for generativity, as well as the possibility for increasing the quality of life for the participants.

However, all leisure activities are not viable for all ages. Just as the early stages of life are marked by considerable differences in physical, mental, and social capabilities, so are the later phases of life marked by different rates of decline in functional ability (Streib, 1993). As individuals age, they tend to shift the emphases of their activities from those that are more demanding of physical, psychological, and social resources to those that are less challenging. Each individual adapts and disengages differently as they decline. Atchley (1993) proposes that although there are changes in activities, adults have developed stable patterns of activity over their life and they will continue in thought and action designed to preserve and maintain those patterns.

Continuity theory, a theory of adult development, contends that middle-aged and older adults are both predisposed and motivated toward internal and external continuity (Atchley, 1989). Internal continuity is the persistence over time of psychological patterns including temperament, affect, experiences, preferences, skills, dispositions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and worldviews. Atchley defines external continuity as the remembered structure of physical and social environments, role relationships, and activities. Continuity theory asserts that as individuals age, and modify or restrict their activities, they will choose activity structures that
they have experimented with, developed, and refined over their entire adulthood. In the process of adapting activities to meet the challenges of aging, individuals will choose activity options that have served them well in the past.

**Issues of Gender in Leisure Activities.** For many, work has been considered the antithesis to leisure. So for many older people leisure has come to be associated with notions of merit, of being earned through hard work (Bernard & Phillipson, 1995). Retirement within this ideological framework can be problematic, especially for certain groups of older women who may never have been in paid employment outside the home. This antithetical view reflects a male dominated perspective of leisure, to the extent that leisure emphasizes freedom from obligation and opposition to work in its definition (Bella, 1990). Gender-role socialization may have oriented women to different meanings in leisure activities more directed toward relationships, sharing, communicating, and nurturing (Cutler Riddick, 1993).

Participation in leisure activities reveals patterns of differentiation and convergence. In a nationally representative sample of older women of varied employment backgrounds, Cutler Riddick (1985) found that older female homemakers and retirees, but not older female workers, used leisure roles as an important explanatory variable of life satisfaction. In a study of female British textile workers (Chambers, 1986), the women desired to be more active in leisure activities, but believed they were not entitled to leisure activities because of a lack of time. When time was found for leisure activities, the pursuits were channeled into activities that reinforced domestic responsibilities such as family-centered activities and constructive hobbies like sewing, knitting, and gardening. This is consistent with Henderson’s (1990) study which concluded that women felt they were not entitled to leisure; either the women
believed they had no right to leisure or felt guilty about placing leisure ahead of other obligations. Leisure then, seems to be linked with other social roles that shape women’s lives (Bernard & Phillipson, 1995).

**Older Adult Women Friendships**

There are important reasons for studying aging, women, and friendships in conjunction with each other. First, the U.S. society has experienced an unprecedented increase in life expectancy and a growing proportion of elderly in the population. These demographic changes are particularly significant for the family relations of older people, as the increase in longevity has altered the configurations of kinship structures. These new patterns of kinship have both strengthened the family and made it more vulnerable as a source of emotional and practical support (Riley, 1983). Changes in household structure and family composition may make friendships increasingly more important in providing a satisfying life during old age.

Second, aging has often been characterized by gerontologists as a series of role transitions or losses. Friendship, as a voluntary relationship, provides an enduring role for older adults and is important to the maintenance of older adults’ psychological well-being (Adams & Blieszner, 1989). Because women have a longer life expectancy, have more extensive ties with individuals other than kin, and are more intimately concerned with and dependent on their friends (Rawlins, 1995), women warrant individual attention in how friendships influence their lives as they age.

**Demographic Factors**

As a result of changing birth and mortality trends, the population aged 65 and older, and to an even greater extent, those aged 85 and older, are expected to grow rapidly in actual
numbers and as a percentage of the total population over the next 60 years (Cornman & Kingson, 1996). The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1997) projects that there will be 16.4% of the population aged 65 or over in 2020 (53.2 million), and 20.0% in 2050 (78.9 million), compared to 12.75% in 1996 (34 million).

Although fertility and mortality rates work to gradually change the age structure of the population, migration patterns of the elderly population are key components influencing state demographics. Half of older interstate migrants moved to just eight states between 1985 and 1990 (Longino, 1994). Florida received 24% of all older interstate migrants; California, Arizona, and Texas followed with a total of 16%. These increasing concentrations of older persons within particular states can be attributed to migration patterns referred to as accumulation, congregation, and recomposition (Morrison, 1990). Accumulation is the out-migration of the younger population, resulting in an increase in the percentage of older individuals as the overall state population decreases. Congregation is the in-migration of the older population into a socially attractive area, increasing the overall area population, as well as the percentage of older individuals. Recomposition is the result of a shift in populations, where elderly persons are drawn into an area where the non-elderly residents are leaving, resulting in a fairly constant state population, but contributing again to an increase in the percentage of older individuals. The Midwest and Northeast have had a greater increase in their elderly population because of accumulation; a large number of the young are leaving (Longino, 1994).

For Iowa, 15.5 percent of the population is 65 and over, placing them third in state rankings (“Growing Old,” 1996). However, Iowa leads the nation with 2 percent of its
population over 85, compared to a national average of 1.2 percent. The increasing percentages of older adults within Iowa is the result of accumulation, younger Iowans are leaving the state (Carter, 1997). It is estimated that Iowa’s population has grown only 2.7% since 1990, less than half the national average (U.S. Census Bureau, 1997). Of those Iowans 65 and over, 91.4 percent still live in a household residence, and 41.5 percent live in a community of 2,499 people or less.

Demographic trends have the potential to change family structures (Bengtson, Rosenthal, & Burton, 1990). Decreased fertility and increasing life expectancy decrease the number of family members within each generation, but increase the number of living generations within a family, resulting in a vertical family structure (Bengtson et al., 1990). Demographic trends have also produced truncated or altered family structures. For example, an unprecedented number of adults will enter old age having remained childless (George & Gold, 1991). Reconstituted families, the result of increasing divorce rates, are modifying kinship patterns as well (George & Gold, 1991).

Friendship structures are also affected by demographic trends. When the fact that women have a higher life expectancy than men, and therefore a higher probability of becoming widows, it nearly guarantees that women are more likely to maintain or achieve relationships and active lifestyles for longer periods of time than men (Hagestad, 1987). Even if men are widowed, they have a greater propensity for remarriage and therefore continued familial relationships with less emphasis placed on friend relationships (Bengtson et al., 1990).
Friendships

Members of Western culture define friendship in a myriad of ways. As Adams (1989, p. 19) observed, "Although we typically describe an individual as a friend with confidence that listeners understand our meaning, some might use the term to refer to either a mere acquaintance or an intimate." The voluntary nature of friendships is the conceptual difference between friends and nonvoluntary relationships involving relatives, neighbors, and coworkers (Adams, & Bleiszner, 1989). It is the element of choice that makes friendships unique from other social relationships. Friendships, at least within Western society, are not institutionalized; individuals are free to describe friendships as they wish and be friends with whomever they personally choose (Allan & Adams, 1989; Wiseman, 1986).

Friends persist as primary sources of enjoyment and pleasure for the young as well as old. Friends provide daily companionship as well as opportunities to talk, laugh, and have fun (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989). These social relationships are desired not only for the aid and security they afford, but because they provide opportunities for purely enjoyable interaction such as leisure activities and trading life stories (Rook, 1995). Unlike interactions aimed toward some goal attainment, these relationships are engaged in for their own sake. Rook (1995) argued that companionship is motivated by the hedonic rewards of positive affect and stimulation.

Friends spend many of their moments engaged in conversation. Over the life course, talking with close friends confirms individuals' self conceptions (Rawlins, 1995). This affirmation process is a significant provision of friendship, not only because of the affirmation, but because it comes from a person who responds voluntarily to the role of friend (Rawlins,
Among the elderly, friends shield the older person from others’ negative appraisals (Heinemann, 1985), prevent negative self-evaluations (Mancini, 1980), and encourage positive self-perceptions (Mancini, 1980; Lee & Shehan, 1989).

Although each friendship is unique, it is commonly considered that most friendships are established through a series of five stages: contact, involvement, intimacy, deterioration, and dissolution. In the first stage, contact is made and basic information is exchanged. If the decision to pursue the relationship is positive, individuals then move to the second stage, involvement. It is during the involvement stage that a certain level of commitment is made to get to know the other person as well as to reveal some of themselves to that other individual. Roberto (1989) has identified two different types of friendships: instrumental and affective. Instrumental exchanges are on a non-personal basis and provide materialistic types of assistance, such as transportation and helping with tasks, and are consistent with the involvement stage of a relationship (Roberto, 1989). Affective friendships supply needed emotional support, such as providing comfort and the sharing of problems and ideas. In this way, friends act as a filter for anxiety and stressful life events (Ward, 1985). The affective friendship coincides with the third stage of relationships, intimacy. The intimacy stage increases the commitment level between individuals to more of a primary relationship, one of closest friend, lover, or companion. The intimacy stage is reserved for a few select individuals.

Emotional intimacy and companionship are key functions and levels of support that friends provide (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989). Elderly persons’ psychological well-being and morale are significantly associated with the quality, not quantity, of interactions characterizing
their stable intimate relationships (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989; Lee & Shehan, 1989; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968). In fact, for the elderly, enjoying a relationship of confidence with at least one close friend may be enough to inhibit demoralization and provide psychological well-being (Blau, 1973; Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Nussbaum, 1983). Krause (1987) suggests that this type of social support helps to buffer the effects of stress and depression by sustaining individuals’ perceptions of self-worth. Involvement in friendships is a strong indicator of an individual’s perceived well-being (George & Landerman, 1984). Although the stages of friendship apply to both genders, women are more likely than men to reveal and discuss intimate concerns (Roberto & Kimboko, 1989).

The final two friendship stages represent decline in commitment levels. The deterioration stage occurs when individuals begin to feel that the relationship may not be as important as was previously thought. The final stage, dissolution, is the ending of the relationship. This final stage can be a stage of relief and relaxation or one of anxiety and frustration for the individuals involved.

Beyond different stages of friendships, it has also been suggested that individuals need different phases or durations of friendships. Litwak (1989) proposes that older people in modern society need three different phases of friends, varying by length of time of involvement in the friendship. These include long, intermediate and short-term friends at different instrumental and affectional levels. Long-term are associated with friendships that are relatively stable throughout the life course. Intermediate-term are associated with slowly changing roles in the life course, such as career changes or a marital shift. Short-term friends
are associated with immediate and rapid changes in roles, such as being a newcomer in a retirement community.

**Friendships and External Structures.** The previous discussion has centered on how people pattern and structure friendships. But there are additional factors over which individuals have little or no control that influence friendship patterns. For example, Allan and Adams suggest that the freedom associated with forming friendships may not be as great as it appears. Studies imply that people tend to choose friends of the same sex, age, race, religion, geographic area, and social characteristics (Adams, 1985; Blau, 1973; Verbrugge, 1977). Feld (1982) found that most relationships originate in activities that bring homogeneous groups of people together, and consequently homogeneous friendship networks. To some degree, the extent to which people avail themselves of opportunities for meeting with others and developing friendship patterns is partially a matter of personality and individual resources, but social and economic conditions under which people live also influence their opportunities for personal interaction and development of social ties (Allan & Adams, 1989).

Participation in leisure activities is a common setting for the development and maintenance of friendships (Bernard & Phillipson, 1995). Some friendships are activity based; they would not exist beyond the confines of the activity. Adams (1993) contends that leisure activities both provide context for meeting and making friends and are processes shared by friends. The specific activity provides the structure for friendships by encouraging or discouraging participation; some leisure activities are more conducive to friendships or friendship patterns than are others. For example, it may not be as easy to encourage friendships when doing physical exercise as compared to participating in a social club. The
leisure activity also provides the process for friendship formation and interaction. Processes, as described by Adams, are the behavioral events, as well as the cognitive and affective responses, that occur when people interact. Activities vary in the behavioral, cognitive, and affective processes involved. The amount of participation in the leisure context facilitates opportunities for unplanned interactions with friends and potential friends. Understanding the variations in these friendship patterns in relation to specific leisure activities is important because friendships predict well-being in individuals.

**Intergenerational Activities.** Activities that have the potential for intergenerational friendships provide opportunities for ontological change. Ontological change is a process whereby new experiences contradict old assumptions, resulting in self-reflection and changes in self-understanding (McGowan & Blankenship, 1994). As individuals experience something that forces them to rethink and view themselves differently, it can result in self-change. It follows that if individuals are exposed to experiences that contribute to self-change, there may be a change in their relationships with others. An intergenerational relationship that encourages self-change may provide an experiential learning tool to facilitate mutual understanding between generations (Hamon & Koch, 1993).

Relationships develop throughout the lifespan, and within these interactions, individuals discover not only who they are, but also find the strength and resources to manage their everyday existence (Giles et al., 1992). Giles (1992) states that, "Individuals do not adapt to the aging process in social isolation, but through and within their interactions with others" (p. 272). These relationships may combat ageism by showing a lack of fit between assumptions regarding aging and the actual meaning of aging experienced by elders.
Increased awareness of the normal aspects of aging and more realistic images of later life can facilitate mutual understanding between generations. Intergenerational relationships provide an opportunity for younger individuals to learn for themselves that aging is a natural process and that elders are individuals for whom aging is a diverse and varied experience. Through intergenerational relationships, elder individuals are able to experience change and adaptation, which promotes and maintains a healthy life (Hamon & Koch, 1993). These relationships also provide a thread of intergenerational continuity, giving individuals a sense of self, history, tradition, and roots.

**Integrative Model of Friendship**

Blieszner and Adams (1992) have developed a theoretical framework to organize the existing research findings on friendships from both sociological and psychological perspectives (see Figure 2.1). The elements of the model, and the identified connections among the elements will be discussed, starting with a single friendship dyad conceptualized in the far right panel of the model. The dyad was considered first, since the dyad is the basic component of a friendship, and since dyads are inherently embedded within the larger framework of friendship patterns. Individual dyads are influenced by the components of structure, processes, and phases. Structure influences dyads through the form of the ties linking the individuals in friendship. Structural aspects include homogeneity, the people's relative positions of power and status, and solidarity or degree of closeness between the individuals. Processes are the behavioral events, as well as the cognitive and affective responses, that occur within dyads (Adams, 1993). Phases represent the stage of development
of the friendship, whether that be at the contact, involvement, intimacy, deterioration or dissolution stage.

Figure 2.1 Theoretical Model of Friendship

Networks represent the structure of personal relations beyond the dyad, how the dyads function embedded within a friendship network. Although dyads are an integral part of friendship, friendship needs to be considered within the larger context. Network size, density, and configuration impact, and are influenced by, dyad behaviors. Network size represents the number of participants in a group or network. The density of the network is determined by the proportion of all possible friendships that exist among friends. Configuration depicts the pattern of connections among an individual’s friends.
The larger framework of friendship patterns are influenced by the dynamics of specific dyads, friendship networks, as well as the dimensions of structure, processes, and phases. Similar to the effects structure, processes, and phases have on the dyad, these components directly impact friendship patterns. The structure, including issues of homogeneity, power, status, and solidarity elicit different friendship patterns. Behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are the processes transferred in friendship patterns. Phases represents the stages in the friendship networks.

Friendship patterns are both directly and indirectly influenced by age (far left panel) and other social and individual characteristics (center panel). Age is conceptualized as the measure of stage of the life course and stage of development. The stage of the life course represents the social roles that individuals assume during a given period in time, such as motherhood and retirement, and the transitions between these roles. Age norms and cultural expectations govern these transitions. Stage of development is defined by the level of psychological maturity. For example, Erikson (1950) theorized that individuals are characterized by the eight stages of personality development and that during subsequent stages, individuals act differently. Both stage of development and stage of life course affect each other: individuals’ readiness for role transitions is affected by their maturity level, and likewise, individuals’ development is dependent upon the roles they assume (Blieszner & Adams, 1992). Age can directly influence friendship patterns. For example, Weiss and Lowenthal (1975) found that older adults, more than other age groups, tended to have more complex, multidimensional friendships.
Friendship patterns are also influenced by gender. In the model, gender represents the combination of both social structural opportunities provided individuals and the psychological disposition of individuals. Social structure, as explained by Blieszner and Adams (1992), is a pattern of interconnections between social positions and how these effect opportunities for, and constraints on, friendship. For example, structural components affect the expectations about how friends should act and the appropriateness of certain kinds of potential friends. Psychological dispositions or individual characteristics such as personality, motives, and personal preferences also affect friendship patterns. Gender directly influences friendship patterns; empirical research (Fischer & Oliker, 1983; Wright, 1989) has shown that middle-aged men tend to have a larger number of friends, while middle-aged women have more intimate friendships. Gillespie, Krannich, and Leffler (1985) attributed this phenomenon to the availability of different social communities, or the social structural components of friendship. The gender differences in friendship may also be attributable to cultural norms and society expectations (Rubin, 1985), consistent with the structural, cultural, and historical context in the model.

Finally, within the model, the overall components of age, other social and individual characteristics, and friendships patterns exist in the shadows of past, as well as existing, structural, cultural, and historical contexts. Structure represents fairly permanent patterns in the society such as social stratification or the division of tasks within the society. Culture consists of the shared ideologies, social structures, and technology that provide the means by which humans satisfy their needs (Hamilton, 1987). The structure and culture vary among
subgroups and over historical time. The elements of structure, culture, and historical time affect all of the elements of the model and the relationships between them.

Summary of Literature Review

Textile handcrafts have been shown to communicate meanings to both the producers and owners of textiles, and to communicate self-relevant information to others. From within the guild setting, each artist can establish her place in the world in a way that supports her own creative, personal, and social interests.

Successful aging is a subjective concept. The definition of successful aging varies, dependent upon each individual’s perceptions. The literature review has identified several dimensions of successful aging. The dimensions group into two major topics: (a) topics dealing with the continuing development of the self, including issues of autonomy, self-worth, self-directed learning, and generativity; and (b) topics dealing with the development of self during the course of social interaction, relationships, and leisure activities. Qualitative strategies that provide opportunities to broaden knowledge of growing old by listening to first-hand perceptions and experiences of those who have already lived a long time, have an important function in augmenting existing theory.

Life satisfaction and self-directedness in learning share an emphasis on independence and autonomy. Those individuals who can take control of their lives are in a stronger position to meet personal needs as they arise. Self-directedness in learning can be used as a strategy for increasing individual’s independence and, subsequently, their life satisfaction.

One method of self development for elderly individuals involves generativity, or the concern for establishing and guiding the next generation. However, generativity cannot be
understood from a single personal or social standpoint. Generativity should be viewed from multiple perspectives, which include the complex patterns of demand, desire, concern, belief, commitment, action, and narration. To comprehend the nature of generativity in a given adult’s life the complex patterns of generativity must be situated within a particular social or historical context before it can be assessed, interpreted, and evaluated.

The engagement in leisure activities by older adults seems to be another important element in the development of self and successful aging. The leisure activity is more than individuals just completing the physical operation; for many the activity produces a personal meaning or outcome for the participant. For some the meaning is intrinsic, focusing on the experience itself. Other activities may be more developmental or self-enriching, focusing on a specific outcome. Still other leisure activities provide a context for relationships, communication, and the sharing with others, as the meaning of the activity. Some individuals may incorporate some or all of these meanings in their leisure activities.

Friendships, or social relationships, are common goals of leisure activities. Friendships, as voluntary relationships, contribute to the physical, social, and psychological well-being of all individuals. For the elderly, relationships of intimacy can help promote self-esteem. However, different structures and processes interact to affect friendship patterns. Textile handcraft guilds provide a specific structure and process for observing friendship patterns of elderly women.

The literature suggests that there were a number of topic areas that need further investigation when considering the role that textile handcraft guilds play in the lives of older women. The textile object provides and communicates meanings to individuals. The symbolic
interactionism literature served as a guide for determining the relationship between textiles and the women in textile guilds. Likewise, the literature on successful aging provided a base of knowledge from which to view the relationship between guild membership and the lives of the women in the study. Specifically, the literature suggested how self-directed learning, generativity, and leisure activities impacts the successful aging process. This information contributed to the range of discussion topics within the interview setting. Finally, the literature suggested the importance of friendship in the aging process. The integrative model of friendship served as a guide for placing the textile guild within a friendship context. The guild became the friendship network part of the model, and focused the investigation of friendships within the network structure.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

"And the works of their hands clothed the living,
brightened the dark,
honored the dead,
and declared their delight."
Veronica Patterson, 1993

The purpose of this study was to describe inductively the roles that textile handcrafts and textile handcraft guilds play in the lives of contemporary Iowa women. Through the perceptions of these women, this study sought to interpret the motives involved during the teaching, learning, and sharing of textile handcrafts, at both the individual and guild levels. The challenge of analyzing meanings or perceptions that emerge during the data collection process suggested a qualitative research approach, since qualitative research unfolds as the researcher learns and follows new themes presented in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the decision to use a qualitative approach was based upon two basic tenets of this research project. First, the focus is on the process rather than simply the outcome or product under investigation; and second, the range of meanings, or participant perspectives, are of essential concern (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Instrument development, sampling, data collection, and data analysis techniques were used that would facilitate the discovery of issues relating to the objectives of this study.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is characterized by a pattern or a flow of development. Qualitative research, referred to as a naturalistic inquiry by Lincoln and Guba (1985), establishes the importance of context by carrying out the inquiry in a natural setting by using a
human instrument. Humans, as the primary data gathering instrument, allow for the adaptability necessary to grasp and evaluate a variety of realities emerging during the interaction between investigator and respondent. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to experience tacit knowledge, information that is implied or understood through nonverbal cues, but never directly stated. Often this transfer occurs without the knowledge of the sender. I, as the qualitative researcher, used part of this study to discover the questions that were important to the informants. Thus, the direction of the study emerged through the interview process, a direct function of the interaction between interviewer and participant and an important component of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Unstructured open-ended interviews are the primary research tool used in qualitative research (Glaser, 1992). The unstructured interview follows a non-standardized format, where the respondent reacts to broad issues raised by the inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The unstructured format allows for the interviewee to structure what they consider as relevant, rather than respond to the researcher's notion of relevance. The unstructured interview is suggested as the mode of choice when the interviewer does not know exactly what she is looking for (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data are also gathered from other sources including observations and document analysis. Data gathering represents the first of three major components of qualitative research, followed by the components of data analysis, and reporting of the findings (Glaser, 1992). Interpretive techniques are used by the researcher to analyze and conceptualize the data, frequently involving inductive methods such as grounded theory (Glaser, 1992).
One of the major criticisms of qualitative research revolves around the issue of trustworthiness, since many of the “conventional” methods of validity, reliability, and objectivity do not apply to qualitative research. Trustworthiness must be gained through research techniques to generate confidence in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) express the need for four criteria to be met in order to establish trustworthiness: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. Credibility can be accrued through methods such as prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observations, triangulation, and informant or member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation refers to the use of several different data sources and/or data collection methods. Transferability can be established if the researcher applies “thick description” to the study, so that transferability judgments can be made by potential appliers (Geertz, 1973). Audit trails, or written documentation of the steps involved in determining operational definitions and decision rules for various criteria throughout the research, address the issues of dependability and confirmability.

**Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory refers to an analytic procedure where the theory flows from the data rather than preceding them. This analytical approach allows for grounded theory to be responsive to the contextual environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hypotheses and theory are not proposed a priori, but emerge inductively from “many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, pp. 31-32). Stratum of meaning are laboriously uncovered and abstractly conceptualized by researchers, and emerge as grounded theory (Glaser, 1992).
There have been different methods designed to generate grounded theory, one of which is the constant comparative method. The constant comparative analysis method allows the researcher to analyze data in great detail in order to find patterns, themes, and eventually theoretical propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this process, incidents, such as phrases, sentences, or units of meaning are coded. Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to this process as unitizing. These units are then integrated into categories and sub-categories. Properties, or rules of the categories, are defined. The analysis of data begins early in the study and continues throughout the data gathering process. The analysis becomes more encompassing as new cases are presented, while the emerging theory becomes more refined (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). For this reason, the constant comparative method relies heavily on purposive sampling where the respondent is chosen to help accomplish a stated purpose (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, the constant comparative method may require theoretical sampling. With theoretical sampling the sample population is chosen based on emerging concepts deemed to be significant to the evolving theory of the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Although *a priori* formulation of theory and hypotheses is avoided to limit biasing or directing the researcher, it is appropriate for the researcher to draw knowledge from existing literature. Knowledge of the field of study, identification of sources, and placing the study within a context help shape analysis, not limit it (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). However, the researcher has to be careful not to limit the study by relying on preconceived or literature-suggested categories (Glaser, 1992). Thus, grounded theory emerges from the data during the duration of the study through systematic and inductive analyses.
Data Collection

For this study qualitative methods were chosen as the most appropriate means of data collection for the development of grounded theory. Triangulation was achieved by including observations and document analyses as well as the interviews in data collection. Techniques included audio taped interviews, field notes of observations, and analyses of guild documents. Therefore, data sources included the transcripts of the researcher transcribed interviews, written field notes, and documents created by the guilds. All data sources were not anticipated in the original design of the study, but became available during the research. Dependability and confirmability will be provided with the audit trail. Similarly, although the sample population was to be purposively drawn, the emergent theory required a theoretical sampling technique. Approval of procedures and instruments for this study, as well as the use of human subjects in research, was obtained from Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee (Appendix A).

Researcher as Instrument

As a research, I have life experiences that color my research topic, and particularly with qualitative studies, provide insights into data interpretation. As a student of textile handcrafts, I am intrigued by the multi-faceted venues that incorporate the use of textile handcrafts. It is with joy, excitement, and pride that I teach, learn, share, and participate in textile handcrafts. Engagement in these handcrafts served to prepare me for this study by providing me knowledge about the crafts, appropriate language, possible informants, and insights to issues that might not have otherwise been available. In addition, a previous qualitative study to determine the role of handcraft teaching in an older woman’s life provided
Instrument Development

The initial design of this study included both deductive and inductive techniques. A preliminary interview instrument was developed by deductively drawing concepts from literature related to the meanings provided through textile handcrafts, symbolic interaction, friendships, and generativity. These themes were inductively drawn from a feasibility study conducted prior to instrument development (Schofield-Tomschin, 1996).

The instrument focused on the goals of women involved in the teaching, learning, and sharing of textile handcrafts both at the individual and guild level. Questions focused on how women manipulate their social structures, processes, and role transitions through textile handcraft production. Symbolic interaction was applied to the study to provide an understanding of how individuals construct meaning in their lives. Because meaning and its creation is not limited to words, any number of objects or activities can develop meanings. Although these meanings can be transferred between and among individuals, new and unique meanings are created for each individual as they encounter and interact with objects and other individuals in the guild.

The theoretical model of friendship (Blieszner & Adams, 1992) served as one of the conceptual starting points for determining the direction of the friendship component of the research (see Figure 2.1). This research focused on the friendship pattern segment of the model. Research commenced with the investigation of friendship networks, specifically the
area of textile guilds structures, processes, and phases. In addition, issues of generativity among guild members were investigated.

The original design for the study focused on women only over the age of 65 in an attempt to limit historical contexts in the study. However, after conducting four preliminary interviews to ascertain whether the interview questions were clear and addressed the areas of interest for this study, I realized that the sample population should include a wider range of informants in terms of age. In addition, themes, such as the importance of the intergenerational interaction, were identified from these informants which added focus to the study in subsequent instrument development. These preliminary interviews were included in the final analysis. The final instrument was developed as a guide to direct participants during the interview session (see Appendix B). Thus, as respondents reacted to questions and themes, subsequent questions were posed to specific individuals that may not have been asked of other informants and are, therefore, not listed in the final instrument.

**Sample Criteria**

Participants in the study needed to be women actively engaged in a textile handcraft guild. Gender was held constant as a control in stabilizing the social structural conditions on friendships. The sample population was purposively selected to represent diversity — diversity in age, craft type, craft knowledge, and geographical distribution within the state of Iowa. The inclusion of a diverse range of textile crafts, even though these crafts were limited to the state of Iowa, afforded the opportunity for cultural context to be considered in this study. For example, the inclusion of hardanger embroidery by one of the informants in an embroiderer’s guild provided the opportunity for a different ethnic heritage to be considered.
Identification of potential participants was achieved through announcements of guild meetings in local newspapers, libraries, and the internet. Once some initial contacts were made, the use of snowball sampling techniques provided the remainder of the informants. Numerous guild members provided names of friends and acquaintances whom they thought would be beneficial to the study. Not all of the referrals were pursued in order to avoid a disproportionate sample of a particular craft, age, or regional area in Iowa.

Procedures

Once the sample population had been identified and they had agreed to participate in the study, a letter detailing the study was provided to each informant either by mail or in person the day of the interview (Appendix C). Confidentiality and anonymity both verbally and in writing were assured to each informant. Between the months of April and July 1997, 30 in-depth interviews were conducted with textile handcraft guild members throughout the state of Iowa. All but one of the interviews took place in the informant’s home, the other took place in a local cafe. Each participant was given a plate of muffins or cookies and tea bags as a thank you for welcoming me into their home. It was hoped that this small gift would provide a friendly ambiance to the interview to allow for a more open, comfortable interview session. Prior to beginning the interview, a small tape recorder was engaged. The formal interviews ranged in length from forty minutes to one and a half hours. In most cases, longer periods of time were spent visiting, viewing crafts, and engaging on a more personal level. If information was provided during this informal period, field notes were completed at the end of the interview session. After the interview session, all informants were sent a handwritten thank you note.
All of the participants were cooperative and extremely enthusiastic about the subject matter. It appears that giving people the opportunity to talk about things that they love encourages open and intimate conversations; however, there were some noticeable differences in the mood of the interviews. In some instances the researcher may have provided an air of authority which provided anxious responses such as, “Is that okay?” One interview had to be stopped two separate times during the interview to allow the informant to regain composure from tears that were invoked from the questions. It was felt that, in this particular situation, it was the informant’s closeness to a recently deceased needle art mentor that prompted the tears, not the questions themselves. But in most cases, the interviews were resonant with sounds of laughter and wonderful stories of textile handcraft experiences. The researcher was welcomed with open arms and free flowing narration. As one informant put it when queried about the possibility of an interview, “I’ll talk to anyone who wants to hear about my embroidery.”

**Data Analysis**

Analysis procedures followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) recommendations for constant comparative methods of coding and interpretation of data. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and interviews and subsequent data were identified with an assigned informant number and name. NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing), a PC computer program specifically designed for qualitative data was utilized for data entry and management. During the transcription process, non-linguistic clues to the data were included by the researcher so that the reading and coding of the transcripts did not occur without the memory of the actual interview in mind. These
included notes such as laughing, nodding, smiling, etc. Discussions with research colleagues provided additional conceptualization of the data. It is through this layered approach that the final analysis emerged.

Coding

Data were analyzed throughout the collection period to determine major and minor themes and direct further interview sessions. After seven interviews had been completed, four transcripts were purposefully selected for analysis to identify themes. Interviews were chosen to represent diversity in age of informant, craft, and guild involvement. Each of these interviews were read by the researcher as well as a second reviewer experienced in qualitative data analysis. Initial coding began with the identification of broad themes that were assigned a name and a numerical code. In addition, each theme was sub-divided into minor themes and were assigned sub-code numbers. Each theme and minor theme were constantly compared to previous themes and refinements were made. From this initial coding, both readers compared and negotiated themes to arrive at a coding guide. Comparison and discussion of the coding guide with a third researcher led to a final coding guide to be used to code the remainder of the data (Appendix D).

Final data analysis utilized the computer program NUD•IST. All data were categorized and coded using a hierarchical system of indexing and nodes. Throughout this computer-aided coding process, categories and codes were combined, renamed, or redefined to address more precisely the data’s true meanings. All decisions for change were based upon discussions and negotiations with the second researcher.
Development of Emergent Themes

Once all of the data, including interview transcripts, documents, and field notes were numerically coded and named, the researcher examined the data to discover emergent themes. This process involved grouping the code names by like associations. The data grouped into three general themes; these themes were considered first-level codes. The first theme included data that related more to the Context of the study. For example, this theme included data that pertained to how the individuals learned their particular craft or other individuals who were influential in their craft development. The second theme centered around data that were more specific to the Craft, such as the aesthetics of the craft product or techniques related to its production. Data that focused on participation in the Guild formed the third theme, and included information such as the informant's perceptions of the benefits of guild participation.

With the themes of Context, Craft, and Guild established, the codes names associated with each theme were then sorted for further commonalities or concepts. A sub-code and minor theme name were assigned to these new divisions, and these were considered second-level codes. The names were chosen to be representative of the commonalities of the new group. For example, within the Craft theme, codes that were linked to the experiences of the individual during craft production, were now grouped under the minor theme of Process. Each minor theme was then examined for additional clusters of data within the group, these were considered third-order codes or sub-themes. Using the previous example, the process of doing a craft can have a perceived therapeutic effect for an individual, so the minor theme or second-order code of Process was assigned the sub-theme or third-order code of Therapy. Some sub-themes underwent further divisions and were given sub²-themes or
fourth-order codes. For example, Therapy was further divided by the fourth-order codes of Solidarity and Relaxation, representing two different types of experiences that were considered therapeutic by the informants. Theme development represented a hierarchical system of starting with abstract categories and, through associations and division of categories and groups, refining the data into more concrete concepts. Appendix E is included as a guide to the coding and theme development process for the minor theme of Process, as well as including data representing the other six minor themes that developed.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

"Every experience deeply felt in life needs to be passed along --
whether it be through words and music, chiseled in stone,
painted with a brush, or sewn with a needle,
it is a way of reaching for immortality."
~ Thomas Jefferson

Initial analysis revealed that the data split into three distinct themes; data that provided context to the study, data that dealt with the craft itself, and data that provided insight about membership within the craft guild. The nature of the three themes provided different types of informational data for analysis, and as such, they will be presented differently. The Context theme was used to provide a view into the lives of the informants -- how textiles have been used to color their world. These data contributed to a better understanding of the informants; it painted a picture from which to understand their perceptions. The remaining themes of Craft and Guild underwent additional analysis allowing for a theory of guild membership to emerge.

Although the main focus of this study was to specifically investigate guilds, and the roles that guilds play in the lives of women, crafts are an integral part of the guild structure resulting in some overlapping of craft and guild goals. Analysis of these two themes found that Craft related to internal structures, components that were realized by the self or the "I"; whereas, the guild dealt with external or social structures, components that required the recurrent involvement of other individuals to be realized, or the "We". Therefore, all further analysis was based on the two superordinate themes of Craft as "I" versus Guild as "We". Throughout the remainder of this results section, the capitalized terms Craft and Guild will
represent this I/We theme, whereas the non-capitalized craft and guild will represent the individual craft or guild.

Within these two superordinate themes emerged five minor themes: Process, Product, and Continuation within the Craft theme, and For Self and For Self and Others under the Guild theme. Although the minor theme of For Self represented components realized by the individual, the benefits could not be achieved in isolation; repeated interaction with other individuals enabled the components to be satisfied. Each of these five minor themes had third-order themes subsumed under the overarching and more general minor themes (see Figure 4.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRAFT as “I”</th>
<th>GUILD as “We”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Process</strong></td>
<td><strong>For Self</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identity</td>
<td>- Self-Directed Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Therapy</td>
<td>- Creative Inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creativity</td>
<td>- Energy to Continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Enjoyment</td>
<td>- Contact Around Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self Actualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Self-Directed Learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching</td>
<td><strong>For Self and Others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identity/Fame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support of Craftswoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Intergenerational Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mentoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Larger Craft Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aesthetic Experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Object</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Object Transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identity Transfer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1 Themes, Minor Themes, and Sub-Themes
The minor theme Process represented the actual act of being involved in a craft, the physical participation that took place by an individual. Seven sub-themes were associated with this minor theme: Identity, Therapy, Creativity, Enjoyment, Self Actualization, Self-directed Learning, and Teaching. These sub-themes represented goals that were sought and benefits that were achieved through participation in the craft.

The Product theme was a by-product of the craft process, and was the second minor theme under the Craft theme. This minor theme was more directly related to the finished craft object and the expectation of that product to fulfill the specified goals of the informants. The sub-themes of Identity, Aesthetic Experiences, and Object were associated with the Product minor theme.

The Continuation minor theme represented both the goals of individuals in the craft process and functions achieved from craft products, but is focused specifically on craft continuation. The three sub-themes of Object Transfer, Knowledge Transfer, and Identity Transfer referred to the role of the product in perpetuating the craft through the transfer of the object, and the goals of individuals to perpetuate the continuance of the craft through the transfer of knowledge. Identity Transfer was either a goal or a by-product of the transferred object and transferred knowledge.

The theme of Guild had two overarching minor themes, For Self and For Self and Others. Even though the guild was the externalization theme, there were still goals of the individual that were directly related to the self, that were only able to be achieved during interaction with others. Thus, the For Self minor theme represented the goals of individuals attained through repeated associations with other individuals. The sub-themes of Self-
directed Learning, Creative Inspiration, Energy to Continue, and Contact Around the Craft fell under the minor theme of For Self.

The final minor theme, For Self and Others, had eight sub-themes: Interactions, Friendships, Identity/Fame, Support of the Craftswoman, Intergenerational Interactions, Mentoring, Larger Craft Community, and Feelings of Responsibility. This minor theme and associated sub-themes portrayed both the goals and expectations of individuals in their guild membership. In addition to fulfilling these expectations, the guild also served as a catalyst for burgeoning unexpected social interactions, such as mentoring and intergenerational friendships.

These inductively generated themes demonstrated the purposes and functions of craft and guild participation for individuals. Most of the themes were not independent of each other; rather they complemented each other and/or enhanced the other themes. Although no one individual had data that were coded within all the themes and sub-themes, many individuals had interview data that were coded within many of the minor and sub-themes.

This chapter will be organized into five sections. The first section will discuss who the women in the study are, the characteristics of the sample population. Inasmuch as the emergent themes and sub-themes directed the analysis of the data, the final analysis did not take place in the isolation of the coding guide; the participants' responses were ultimately linked to their textile experiences, and these experiences provided a context to interpret the data. Thus, the second section will explain how textiles have influenced the participants' lives, both in the past and in the present, and will provide context to view the data. The next two
sections will provide a discussion on the influence of the craft and the guild in the informants' lives. The concluding section will discuss the emergent theory of guild membership.

**Sample Profile**

The final sample of interview informants consisted of 30 women representing 15 textile handcraft guilds and 8 different textile crafts: embroidery, knitting, quilting, rug hooking, sewing, spinning, tatting, and weaving. The sample was drawn from throughout the state of Iowa, and participants were chosen to represent diversity in both location and size of the city or town (Table 4.1). The sample was drawn from 13 communities and 8 counties. The counties chosen represent 22% of the total state population (U.S. Census Bureau, 1997), and three of four quadrants if Iowa was divided both vertically and horizontally through the approximate center of the state. Three informants who lived in rural areas were included in the town used in their mailing address, all of which were communities of less than 2,500. The three informants in the largest community were actually from three separate cities that join to form a larger metropolitan area.

**Table 4.1 Community Size and Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Size</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Different Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2,500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500-10,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001-60,000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 200,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 86 years old, with a mean age of 59.6 years (Table 4.2). Although the main focus of this research was on the elderly guild member, younger guild members were included in the sample as themes emerged that were relevant to
different ages, such as the theme for intergenerational interactions. As a result, there was a wide range in participant ages, but proportionately, older participants over all remained the focus of the study and represented approximately 77% of the sample population.

Table 4.2 Participant Ages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although not asked directly, my observations of the participants’ homes, furnishings, and clothing, as well as some of the informants’ responses, suggested that the guild members shared a middle class lifestyle. There were, however, individual differences with respect to family income level and employment. Both of these variables could influence the extent of a member’s participation in a craft or guild. Many of the informants commented on the cost, in terms of both time and money, to maintain their craft “habit.” The images of these guild members suggested a collection of supplies and books, appropriate to the particular craft, stocked away in drawers, cabinets, and even whole closets. One respondent, who was actually slowing down on her craft production due to her husband’s poor health said, “And even today I cannot pass a bargain on material or yarn. I think that it’s inbred.”

The expenditure of time and money may have been mirrored in the marital and employment status of the informants. For example, 24 of the participants were married, while
the remaining six were widowed. This suggested that a majority of the women had additional income to help support their craft. Only three of the 30 informants were currently working full time, and one of those was a professional spinner and weaver working out of her home studio. An additional 12 informants were working only on a part-time basis. The employment status of the informants suggested that the women may have had more time to be involved in crafts. Because of the nature of the study, 14 of the informants were 65 or older, an age that is commonly associated with retirement, but of the informants working part-time, three were older than 65, and two of those represented the two oldest informants in the study at 82 and 86 years old. Six of those working part-time were employed in an area directly associated with their particular craft, such as sewing out of their home or teaching weaving on a part-time basis. For an additional four, the part-time employment expanded beyond just additional monies and became their business. Here the individuals were designing, teaching, and selling their skills and goods. In all cases the businesses were used as a supplement to the family income rather than total family support. Thus, many of the women in the study were afforded extra time and money to facilitate their craft production due to their marital and employment status. Those women who did work often focused on their craft in their professional endeavors.

A majority of the respondents attended or graduated from college. Although this was not one of the questions asked, the information was frequently revealed during the interview session. At least 18 (60%) worked in areas that required some kind of an advanced degree or technical training, and three of the informants had a Ph.D. degree. This search for knowledge
may be a factor that directed individuals to a guild where educational components were included.

All but three of the women had children, with an average of 2.7 children. The younger informants expressed their difficulty in participation in both the craft and the guild due to the time required for their children. Likewise, when the informants were asked if they perceived their age impacted their participation in the guild, many of them stated that they were able to give more time and energy to the guild since their children were old enough to be on their own. This fact was represented in the smaller number of younger individuals active in any of the represented guilds.

The informants' participation with their particular crafts represented a continuum (Table 4.3). The shortest period that an informant had been involved in her craft was two years, in contrast to the longest period of over sixty years. Sometimes craft engagement correlated with age, but it was interesting to note that a 78 year old woman had the shortest time of two years craft participation. The competency of craft was equally varied, from a self-proclaimed level of novice from the 78 year old woman, to five who considered themselves professionals and were requested for national workshops and presentations. Most of the periods for craft involvement were only estimates by the informants; for example, Zoie knew that she learned in high school, and she was currently 57, so that was about 40 years since she learned. The times also represented the interval from when they first learned the craft until the interview, not necessarily the duration they have been consistently involved in the craft. For

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\(^1\) The names are fictitious, used for identification purposes only.
example, Nadene learned her craft when she was a child, but experienced a hiatus and didn’t resume craft production until she was in her late 20s.

**Table 4.3 Craft Participation in Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>21-30</td>
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<td>31-40</td>
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<td>51+</td>
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Guild participation represented a narrower range of time involvement than did craft participation. Some women, despite longer involvement in their craft, only recently joined, while others had been long standing members (Table 4.4). Although joining a guild was not dependent upon prior craft experience, all of the participants had some level of craft knowledge before joining the guild. Six months was the shortest time as a guild member, compared to fifty years for the longest standing member. Although the informants may have belonged to more than one guild, the length of time depicted in Table 4.4 represented membership in the guild about which the researcher first contacted the informant. Differences in length of guild membership were in part due to inception dates of guilds. For example, one of the weaving guilds was formed almost fifty years ago, whereas one of the tatting guilds is less than five years old. Seven informants were instrumental in forming their guild. An additional seven informants were either charter members of their guild, or joined within the first year of guild formation.
Table 4.4 Guild Participation in Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
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<td>26+</td>
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The informants initially learned their craft through three main venues: self-taught, formal instruction, and informal instruction. Five of the women felt compelled to learn their craft, and were self-taught through manuals and trial and error. Vivian explained how she found herself interested in hand spinning and taught herself to spin.

No, no, just had been reading about it in books. I mean not spinning books, just reading about it in history books or fiction books that had spinning, and I just had the urge. I've always been a knitter, and always worked with fibers. And always done a lot of reading, and just fooling around. I mean not fooling around practicing different things, I had kid's books on braiding, and always liked seeing museum textiles. ... so I ordered five wheels from New Zealand ... and taught myself. Took me two weeks. (22^)

Thirteen women took a course specifically directed to teach them the craft. The rationale for taking the classes varied, but centered around three main reasons: (a) the desire to learn the skill, (b) the desire to take a class, and (c) taking the class with someone else. Flora explained her decision:

I wanted to weave from the time my daughter did some weaving when she was in fifth grade. They had all the children weaving. She made a couple of placemats or something, and I thought this looks so fun, and I had always been interested in the craft. So when I got the opportunity to do this... I took the class. I learned at the museum...(06)

^ The number in the parentheses represents the code number for the informant providing the information.
The remaining 12 women used an informal approach to their craft knowledge, being taught by a family member at a younger age. With about equal frequency this informal instructor had been a mother or grandmother. The tutoring between members of the family frequently involved one or more of a trio of learning processes: (a) self-directed, the child asked to be taught; (b) influential, the child became interested because the family member was interested in it; and (c) the family member wanted to impart the knowledge, regardless of whether or not the child wished to learn it. These three approaches were echoed by Hannah, Kathryn, and Tara:

So I can recall going with her to quilt club, and the little kids playing underneath, you know, on the quilt and all around in the corner. But I was standing up at the edge sewing with a needle and thread. And for my sixth birthday, the lady who owned the general store ... gave me an embroidery hoop and a thimble and a printed embroidered piece for my gift. I still have the thimble. I have one granddaughter who’s going to get that. (08)

I’m sure that when I learned I didn’t do it with great enthusiasm after the first ten minutes either. So, you kept watching them do it, and you thought, “I can do this, I just know that I can.” My grandmother use to park us right in her lap, and so that was the big draw, because she would hold you. (11)

My grandmother insisted I learn how to crochet, because that’s what she did. So I learned how, but that didn’t do it for me at all. One summer and that was it, because all I knew how to crochet were doilies, and I’m not a doily person. (20)

The sample profile has provided a view into some specifics of the informants’ lives. How, when, and why the informants started their craft production, plus a brief look into their respective communities, was provided as a backdrop for the study. This information placed the informants within a subculture; a subculture that consisted predominantly of married, middle-class women who held long-time interest in textile handcrafts. But this information
does not place the informants within a context of textile handcraft experiences. The next section discusses the place that textiles have in the lives of the participants.

**Experiences with Textiles**

For the informants, craft production did not take place in isolation from the rest of their lives. Their past textile experiences have been a force in their current craft production. Family members, special textile craft objects, and events that were linked to textiles, have nurtured the contemporary craftsperson. The crafts assumed a spiritual existence when viewed from the informants perspectives. The following section provides excerpts of textile-related experiences that have influenced the informant's craft production.

**Family Influences**

All of the informants talked about other members of their families being involved with textiles in some way. Frequently the influential person was the mother or grandmother, but the father as a craftsperson was also mentioned. The participants placed great importance on their early introduction to textile crafts for stimulating them toward becoming craftspersons. Quinn explained how no one in her immediate past was a weaver, but that her family had always been interested in textiles.

There were people in, you know, several generations back that had done some. In fact, I've got some coverlets, a coverlet done by an ancestor.... And my grandmother on my father's side was a seamstress. Made her living, when her husband died prematurely, she made her living as a seamstress. So there is sewing, my mother’s an excellent knitter. There’s always been fiber around. (17)
Not all informants recognized their interest in textiles during their childhood, but still acknowledged the contribution of their parents in their craft production. As Bonnie phrased it:

My mother and father were both craftsmen. My father was a carpenter and my mother was a dress maker. And she was apprenticed to a dressmaker in Minneapolis when she was twelve .... But, according to my father, she’s the one that supported them during the Depression, with her sewing. And she was a wonderful craftsman, and he was also.... But I had, I wasn’t interested in crafts. I guess I must have been interested in as much as my mother had taught me to hem.... But it wasn’t a big part of my life. I was going to be a humanities teacher. (02)

A father interested in craft gave Doris and Vivian their first experiences with textile crafts.

But my father was an architect and did private residences, and then came the Depression. And the house they had built for themselves they lost, and he was just trying to find ways to put food on the table, and he made linoleum cuts among other things. He also made linoleum prints on linen. And he built himself a loom on the kitchen table and tried to make weave stuff to sell. Well, nobody had any money to buy that stuff. But from that time, I thought weaving sounded like a really neat thing I would like to do. (04)

My dad liked to do things.... nothing tremendous. But he would like, he did one kind of a thing where you pound nails. He’d make table runners, that were pompoms. I don’t know what you call that, they were all fluffy things..... But he was always just great at giving everybody all those things, stuff like that. I mean, always stuff on frames. And he’d make, dye yarn. But here’s another thing, my father and his mother made round wheel rugs. And I have my dad’s wheel. When I was little I use to sit, I’d forgotten about that, I use to sit and make round wheel rugs with the spokes. You know, you weave by hand, in and out. Well, I have one that my grandmother made and I have one that my dad made. (22)

Even extended family members influenced the participants. Olivia explained her mother-in-law’s contribution to her weaving process:

This is the piece that was woven by my mother-in-law, and it’s the only piece I have that she wove. And it’s special because if it hadn’t been for the fact that she had been a weaver, I don’t think I probably would have become one. I don’t know, you never know how those things are going to evolve. (15)
Continuing with the theme of family influence on craft production, the participants also perceived that their craft production has in turn influenced their own children's craft production. The following quote explains how Flora saw her children continuing in crafts, though not necessarily textile handcrafts.

They learned from it. Now my youngest son does scrimshaw... And if I hadn't done things at home, I don't think he would do this. He's very good at it. My daughter sews a lot of clothes, she does a lot of cross-stitching and embroidery. She's a harpist, so she has a different gift and is passing that on. And I think we, even though it may not be the one gift that we pass on, the interest in them goes on with us. One of my sons designed the stone for my husband's grave, one is an architect, so he does the drawing. Then one is a dental technician, has a dental lab. So he's forever making teeth, but they have to be perfect too. And he likes to make jewelry when he has time. So you see, it isn't the individual craft they have learned...My interest has spawned their interest too, I think, and they will pursue their own particular interest. (06)

**Appreciation of Textile Objects and Skills**

The informants voiced their appreciation of the skill level achieved in previously constructed craft items. These items were held in high esteem, and were instrumental in their own skill development. Often these items were the cornerstone of private collections, mounted in places of honor in their homes, and served as reminders of skills yet to be achieved. Bonnie explained how much she admired a crib blanket that her mother made for her, and how she marveled at the exactness of the embroidery.

And the blanket is completely outlined with that same pattern. And it's so impressive to me. And the scallops also are all hand done. It looks like it was done on a machine. And I just can't do that. I just can't make the satin stitch... It's funny, it makes me feel loved. I got it maybe, when I was, probably about 35... My brother died before I was born, but all three of us kids were born on the same day. And so I never even felt like I had a birthday. And that made me feel loved, to think that someone had done all of that. (02)
Abigail explained how a quilt handcrafted by her aunt was used as a standard for her own work. But rather than place the quilt in her own collection, she donated it to a museum.

She did lots of beautiful hand work, and I had a quilt that was, I was named after her, and I had this quilt.... And she did beautiful fine stitching, and so forth, so it was always sort of a standard.... This beautiful crazy quilt made out of satins...and then around the edge it had lace. And we were told this was hand-made lace... she used a different kind of a feather stitch or different design around all these. And if you look closely in it, you can see her initials...So we ended up giving it to B______.... I went out one time, you know I took some people out to see it, and I was practically ready to touch it, and this girl said, "Don’t touch, don’t touch!" And I thought, it’s my quilt, but I didn’t. (01)

Sometimes textiles items were collected specifically for the techniques used in constructing the item. For Quinn, the process was valued more than the actual item.

I think the process is more important.... Some of them are more interesting from a technical standpoint than others. Well, the coverlet hanging on the wall upstairs, is a wonderful piece and probably natural dyed colors.... I have some pieces of lace that are really intriguing and probably were done in the family. I have a piece of Peruvian textile that was done during the Nazca Period.... I think that our tradition was to inherit the capability of doing the process, and understanding the process, at least in my lineage. And that was the important thing, the process, not necessarily the pieces themselves. (17)

Events

Also influential in the current craft production of the informants were the memories of special occasions, people, or times in history. These memories, and their associated textile objects, structured the direction of many of the informants’ crafts. The events may have shaped their interest for a particular craft or pattern, as was the case for Abigail:

It’s the Devil’s Puzzle or the Drunkard’s Path. When I was a child I was sick. I rarely was sick, so I remember it being in this particular bed and this particular quilt. And I was trying to figure out the pattern. And I was so intrigued by that, so I always wanted that quilt.... So, when we were going through quilts, she said we might just as well throw this one away because it’s getting so ragged. And I said, “No, I want to keep this.” Someday I want to
People are frequently remembered through textiles, but for many it involves more than just the memory of the person. It also incorporates the memory of who that person was. When Nadene was showing one of her favorite quilts, she did more than just show the quilt. Although Nadene’s words are few, her physical embrace of the quilt told of its placement in her life.

My dad’s mother quilted, and I have a quilt from her... it’s a Piece Star. She gave it to me when I graduated from high school. (14)

When Kathryn was asked about her favorite textile item she pointed to a shadow box mounted on her wall. On one side of the box was a picture of an elderly woman, on the other side was a pair of red mittens with knitting needles piercing through them. When questioned about the significance of the box, Kathryn lovingly explained its contents in relation to her grandmother.

She would make mittens by the stacks...And so my dad went up and bought all of what they had left, after she started to go down hill, and then he kind of saw the writing on the wall.... It’s not the best photograph of her, but it’s her sitting in the window where she always worked. And if you sat at the table across from her, that’s really how she always looked to us. Because he sat in the chair across and took the photograph from the position where we usually sat when we were visiting. (11)

Treasured textiles also placed current craft production within an historical context for Cindy.

So I bought these two little pictures and they looked like Ann Hathaway type cottages, but it was on penelope canvas, which is, you know, big and small. And then this wool yarn that you did the sky, everything else was done. So I started with the sky, well then I got towards this petit-point and I didn’t quite know what to do with it, so I just left the canvas blank. I mean it was brown canvas, looked terrible, but I didn’t know what to do.... And I still have that picture right by my stitching chair in the family room, just showing me maybe
how far I’ve come, and maybe how far I have to go, but that was my first effort. (29)

Aesthetic Moments

Textiles had become such an integral part of many of these women’s lives, that they viewed life through “textile colored glasses.” Some of their favorite memories were textile related. Bonnie explained her pleasure at seeing her textiles integrated into her own backyard.

But the spinning, I never did much with my spinning, but I loved to do it. In fact, sitting out and carding wool. I guess one of the first years I did it, I sat out in the backyard and carded wool and the birds took the little pieces. And they were, Ruth had dyed them, so we had these nests with the brilliant colors sticking out of them, and it was delightful. (02)

Rachel fondly remembered the image of her daughter rolling down the street on fabric covered scaffolding.

I remember one instance, my daughter came back about five or six years ago.... and they were up painting in the front of the house on a scaffolding on the Fourth of July. And they decided they didn’t want to paint on the Fourth of July. And there’s a block party down on the corner, and they give a prize for the best thing on wheels. So they went to my basement and found all the red, white, and blue material, and draped it over the scaffolding and went down the street on the scaffolding and won the prize. (18)

Donna found enjoyment in knowing that her work with textiles provided more that just conservation of the textile – it provided a link to the past.

But I think the most fun I ever had with a sampler was, an attorney from Pennsylvania called me a couple of years ago and asked if I would chart a family sampler for his clients. The parents had passed away and they had this family sampler and the siblings, three siblings, were all fighting over it. And he, the youngest sibling by the way was 71, and they had finally decided that they would hold a lottery between the three of them and who ever won would get the original sampler and the other two would get all the materials and the chart so that they could hire someone to reproduce it. And I said, “Okay.” So he sent it to me, and the first thing I did, it was so faded on the front, I called him and I said, “Do you mind if I have it taken out of the frame so I can see the original colors on the back where the sun hasn’t gone through?” “No, nobody
cares.” So I took it to my framer, and she took the original paper off the back and this piece of note paper fell to the floor, just kind of floated. And I picked it up and it told the story how this little girl went to the general store on a certain date, bought her flax seed, went home, worked the soil, planted her seed, took care of them all summer long, processed them that fall and bound them in big clumps, and tied them onto rocks and dropped them in the pond so they’d be easier to make fiber out of the next spring. And the fabric that this sampler was on, was from those flax seeds. And it took her a year and a half from the time she bought the seeds until the sample was ready to work on the fabric. So we decided that God was up there saying that it’s about time somebody found this. And so when I had it re-framed I asked if I could put it in a different frame and they didn’t care. So I had a larger antique frame that would accommodate the sampler on one side and this paper beside it. And the attorney said there wasn’t a dry eye in the house when they got it back. (30)

Responses to interview questions for this section centered the place textile handcrafts had in the participants’ lives. Participants revealed how, when, and why, they learned their craft. They shared their past textile experiences, and how family, special occasions, and other textile objects have influenced their current craft production. Plus, the stories shared about textile moments provided a glimpse into the psyche of the informants. Clearly, the participants had textiles integrated into their lives, but what were the meanings the informants associated with their handcrafts and guilds? The next sections discuss the functions and goals, as perceived by the informants, that handcrafts and guilds played in the lives of the informants.

Craft as “I”

There were two superordinate themes that emerged from the transcript data; Craft as “I,” and Guild as “We.” Together these themes provided a context for interpreting the richly textured detail of the roles and goals associated with textile handcrafts and guild participation in the lives of the informants. This section will deal specifically with the theme of Craft as “I,” from this point forward referred to as Craft. The individual, or the “I,” was central to this
theme. This theme represented goals or roles that were sought by the individual during craft production. The goals were realized by the individual through the craft, whether or not the craft was completed within the guild context. For example, an informant may have found it therapeutic to knit at a guild meeting, but it was the knitting or the craft that was fulfilling the goal of therapy, not the guild meeting. The Craft theme represented an abstract level of thinking, where the specific craft expressed qualities to the producer beyond that of the object. For example, a woven craft expressed qualities of identity to the weaver that were not inherent in the object. Even though the object was central to the sub-theme of Object, there were still qualities realized by the producer beyond the utilitarian features of the object. For example, Meg may have made a quilt for use on her bed, but there were other rewards that were realized by using the handmade quilt, such as the benefit of personal satisfaction and the goal of being passed on to her daughter.

Subsumed under the theme of Craft were three minor themes: Process, Product, and Continuation. Process referred to the physical act of craft production and the goals of the informants during the craft production. There were seven sub-themes associated with Process: (a) Identity, (b) Therapy, (c) Creativity, (d) Enjoyment, (e) Self Actualization, (f) Self-Directed Learning, and (g) Teaching. The minor theme of Product pertained to the functions that completed textile handcrafts accomplished for the informants. Three sub-themes were linked to Product: (a) Identity, (b) Aesthetics, and (c) Object. Finally, the minor theme of Continuation related to the perceived responsibility of the informants to perpetuate their craft. Three sub-themes were relevant to Continuation: (a) Object Transfer, (b) Knowledge Transfer, and (c) Identity Transfer.
Process

Of all the minor themes analyzed, both in the Craft and Guild superordinate themes, Process had the greatest number of informant references. The large number of references for this theme suggested that the process of “doing,” served as a significant force in craft production. The common thread that tied the sub-themes together was the focus on personal enrichment, the betterment of the self through participation in the craft.

Identity. Frequently mentioned by the informants was the identity that they were able to realize through their craft production. They could provide their own identity beyond that of mother or wife that was not dependent upon other individuals. As Irene phrased it, “I am a knitter.” Doris explained her identity through crafts:

It gives you an identity of a different sort. Most women, we grow up being somebody’s daughter or somebody’s wife, or somebody’s mother, and that’s it. And this is one thing that is not, you’re not hitched to somebody else. You’re a weaver or a spinner, as well as a mother and wife, grandmother or whatever. (04)

Not only did the craft production provide an identity to the producers, the craft products became a symbolic reminder of that identity. For example, Ellie explained her perceptions of her craft items, “But I suppose they stand out because they are mine, you know, like my little babies.”

The women so identified with the process, that if they didn’t develop an attachment to the piece, they had difficulty in completing the piece. Flora described her problem in finishing an embroidered bell pull, and how another craftsperson made the connection for her between the process and the producer.
And I said, "Why do you suppose this one has taken so long?" She said because you're not a green person. I hadn't even thought of that, but it just took me so long to do that, it didn't go easy at all. (06)

Therapy. In addition to the process providing an identity to the producer, the "doing" also had a therapeutic value to the women. Through producing the craft, the women were able to relieve some of the stress of the world. The women partook in their craft to provide them with moments of solitude and relaxation. As Xandria said, "I call it my tranquilizer.... It's just very ... soothing I guess." Like many of the women, Irene found she needed the craft process in order to feel complete in her life.

If I work on the computer or do ... something with my head ... it's just harder to go to sleep. I have to unwind and I think crafts is a very good way to unwind.... And it's something I've done all my life. It's just kind of so deep in my system that I don't know what I would do if I didn't have crafts. (09)

Adeline was not the only one to realize the therapeutic effects of sewing in her house. Her children frequently urged her to sew when they believed she needed some relaxation.

It's relaxing. It's you get that sense of feeling of "I've created something." And my kids enjoy it, they really cheer me on. They see the difference in my personality when I do and when I don't (craft). They say, "Mom, you're crabby, go sew." It's an outlet for me and it's great. Yes, they do enjoy the benefits of having things, but that's a side line almost. (27)

For some of the women, their craft production became therapeutic in unusually stressful times in their lives. For Kathryn, her craft filled the hours in the hospital while her son was treated for cancer. For Rachel, the craft process was therapeutic in regaining mobility in her hand after a car accident, and for filling the void in her life with the death of her mother from the same accident. Still other informants used their crafts as therapy for less intense times of stress like waiting for planes to depart or doctor's appointments.
Another therapeutic effect for the women was the solitude they could achieve. The women shut out the outside world and became engrossed in themselves, even if for only short periods of time. Bonnie, a full time caregiver of her ailing husband, talked of how her crafts were therapeutic for her:

I would have lost my mind the last five years without these things. Solitary enjoyments, things that I can lose myself in while I'm sitting within sight of my husband. If I'm out of his sight he's scared. And that can be very waring, but if I have something to do that I can lose myself in.... understand how important I feel it is to my sanity, my stability. (02)

Creativity. Beyond the therapeutic effects of crafts, the women in the study found their crafts to be an excellent avenue for realizing their creative aspirations. The women were able to manipulate color, and change or create designs to make one-of-a-kind textile objects. Even for those women who didn’t consider themselves particularly creative, they mentioned changing something in the pattern or kit to make the design their own. Ellie started designing her own tatting patterns and explained, “The designing part gives me a huge creative outlet that I didn’t really realize I had before.” Likewise, Rachel perceived a creative role in her craft production.

It’s just like an art form and I like to do it. And I don’t like to follow patterns, I never have. If it’s something I want something different on, then I do it that way. I just alter it and change it however I want it to be. I just don’t do it to have something to wear, I want it to be something special. (18)

The informants didn’t believe that the design process was the only way for them to be creative. Blanche explained her creativity during both the designing and production processes:

And yet you can be creative in the approach with different stitches. You can try different stitches to see how that looks in that particular part of the design. Last year I was asked to do one of the stockings for the White House
Christmas tree, the theme was The Nutcracker Suite, and so we were asked to do our own design... It had to be something original ... and you had to use some part of the story.... So you know, I guess you do get into a little bit of designing whether you realize it or not. (28)

Wendy, on the other hand, did not feel that her strength was in designing, but in being creative with colors.

I don’t feel I’m an artist ... I think I’m a colorist. I think in my life I can see places that I know color goes together very well, and it’s comfortable for me. But I cannot draw worth a diddle. So I think when I saw that, I thought that’s probably an outlet for me. Something that is already pre-drawn, but has my idea of what it should be. (23)

**Enjoyment.** Whether the informants perceived they were being creative or not, they all emphasized the enjoyment that they received from their craft. There was a level of satisfaction that compelled the women to continue with the process. For example, Hannah said, “And it’s such a good pastime. I enjoy it. I try to sew a little every day on it, I just can’t keep from doing it.” For Tara, the process itself was the enjoyment, she liked the tactile experience of her craft.

I want to actually put the pedals down, I have a floor loom. I want to push the pedals down with my feet and I want to put it through with my hands. So I like the ... physical part of it. (20)

Leigh explained that the primary benefit of her craft production was just “personal enjoyment ... nothing more than that.” But when asked to expand on that comment she stated:

I like both the left and right brain aspect of it. You know it’s both artistic and analytical. I like the creative. I like the process. I’m a process person. And you know, weaving is totally process. So it fits in there. I just like it. I like to handle the things. (12)

Much of the satisfaction was associated with being able to work on their craft while they watched television or had down time in some way. The production of the craft legitimized
otherwise wasted time. The responses of Jackie and Ellie seemed to summarize the feelings of the informants; their craft provided an enjoyable process with a resultant end product.

It passes the time, it’s something to occupy your hands with when you’re watching TV or if you’re just sitting there bored. You have something to do, but you have something to show for it in the end. (10)

So I’m the kind of person that doesn’t like to just sit and just watch TV and do nothing else. I feel like if I’m doing something else at the same time it’s not as big of a time waster. So it gives me that feeling. (05)

**Self Actualization.** Beyond just the enjoyment and personal satisfaction level, there was also a sense of success. The informants saw some challenge in their craft, and received a level of pride and self-esteem upon completion. This sub-theme represented more than just the accomplishment of the craft, it symbolized pushing the self to a higher plane. As Zoie stated, “But it’s always a challenge, you know. And I won’t give up, I keep plugging away until I get it.” Olivia found that the challenge was one of the things she enjoyed most about her weaving.

Probably foremost, it’s always a challenge. I find with everything I do, I learn something new and I think that’s what I like the most about it, is the exploration and learning to understand what’s happening and what else you can do within the confines of the loom. (15)

Similarly, for Cindy, one of her favorite embroidery pieces was one of her most challenging pieces.

And I think that’s one of my very favorite pieces. I thought I’d never finish it. But I guess, technique wise and skill wise and so forth, that’s probably my best piece. (29)
More than just expanding beyond the women’s own personal limits, this theme represented the craft itself broadening the life experiences of the participants. Flora told about how her interests in crafts enlarged her visions of herself and her world.

I think it opens a person’s eyes to other things. You see much more than just the finished product. You see the process that people go through to do things. And I think that’s valuable.... The more you do, the more you’re broadened.

(06)

**Self-Directed Learning.** Along with the craft allowing informants the opportunity to increase their self-esteem and broaden their scope, crafts also permitted the informants the opportunity to continue their learning. The informants had a personal motivation to pursue educational avenues and to develop their own potential. For Abigail, tatting was something that she always wanted to learn. But that wasn’t sufficient, she continued with her tatting so that she could learn how “to make some of the fancy things,” just so she would “know how to make them.”

Although Irene belonged to the knitting guild, she has tried a variety of different crafts and techniques. Through the production processes Irene continued to expand her craft expertise, while simultaneously quenching her thirst for learning. According to Irene, “I’m just curious. I have to try, I have to. I know a little about a lot of things.... I’m just curious, and I have to get into things.”

Kathryn was motivated to learn Norwegian knitting styles due to her husband’s Norwegian ancestry. Through her craft education, Kathryn felt that she was contributing to the family heritage, and making connections with the past.

And then of course I learned, my husband’s mother is Norwegian, and so that’s how I got into doing the Norwegian knitting and stuff. Because there’s
nobody really in their family who did it anymore.... And I justified it as my contribution to keeping their part of the family culture alive. (11)

Teaching. Similar to the self-directed teaching, there were a few informants who felt compelled to teach their craft. But these informants were teaching for their own benefit, not for the benefit of the learners. Stephanie found that teaching her craft provided relief from the grief associated with her husband’s death.

I used it a lot. That’s when I really started teaching. I knew once a week these ten women, friendly women, are going to come in there and we never talk about our health, we never talk about our problems, we just talk about color and design.... And then, of course, I was left with all the different needs for dyeing for them. So I was busy all week until the next time they came. (19)

Ellie had a similar situation, but for her, it was the death of the woman who had taught her how to tat.

And I found out that my teacher had died, so I wanted to get it out again.... I wanted to pick up where she left off. I wanted to teach at least a few people. And then I ended up teaching an adult Ed class. Now I just teach in my home when I find people that want to learn. (05)

Gloria’s motivation for teaching was to get involved. When she moved to a new community she volunteered at a local arts center. This provided her entrée to the smaller weaving community she had become accustomed to in her old community.

For the informants, the craft process provided a number of different benefits for the producers. Some benefits were anticipated by the informants in advance of their craft production, and were considered goals of the craft process. These a priori expectations were especially true for the benefits of therapy, creativity, enjoyment, and self-directed learning. But whether or not the benefits were stated goals of the informants, the advantages were realized by the women.
Product

Besides the craft process providing benefits for the informants, the products were also a goal of craft production. For this minor theme, it was the finished textile object that contributed to goal attainment. Some of the benefits were intrinsic to the product, while others were obtained vicariously through the product. For example, the goal of the informants may have been to produce a garment, where the final product fulfilled the desired goal. For others, their goal may have been to receive recognition by wearing the garment; thus, the goal was achieved by way of the product. Still others may have tried to achieve both of these goals through their craft product. In the above example, recognition may have been dependent upon contact with another individual, but it was the product that provoked the admiration of others and the "I" that accepted that reputation.

Identity. Through the finished handcrafted product, the producer was provided an identity. The identity may have been realized by the producer through the finished product, or realized through other individuals. However, even if other individuals were needed for the formation of identity, it was the "I" that realized the identity. The other individuals may or may not have had direct contact with the producer. For instance, the producer may have heard second-hand what others said about their products and assumed the identity, or the producer may have only perceived what others thought and assumed the associated identity. Further analysis showed that identity was frequently assumed through (a) fame, (b) gifts, (c) showing others your interests, and (d) admiration of others. For this sub-theme, the identity was available to the women from outside of the guild.
For some of the informants their identity came from participating in very specific forms of the craft. In this case, the producers had direct contact with others before they assumed the identity. For example, Vivian was known for her Norwegian weaving techniques. Vivian was not seeking this identity, but found it thrust upon her, so she accepted it and lived it.

When I first started weaving ... I was trying to do everything.... But I was running out of time all the time and it was just getting ridiculous. And so then as I would go out and visit with people ... I found out that I was beginning to be known as the Norwegian weaver. People were sort of putting a label on me. And I started thinking, why not?... Why don’t I just try to do the Scandinavian.... So I decided to settle down and be known as the Norwegian weaver. (21)

Similarly, Nadene was locally known as the “quilt lady” in her town, Donna was nationally known for her work with cross-stitch samplers, and Tara was nationally recognized for her double-weave designs. For these women, they have been acknowledged as experts in their field. These women have assumed the role of expert and accepted the related identity.

However, identity did not only come to the experts in a field. Fame could also be achieved at a more personal level. Frequently this identity was indirectly formed, where the identity was assumed through hearsay information. For example, Bonnie was frequently recognized in her home town by the school aged children.

The second grade teacher asked if I would come over and do a bear unit.... And all of the kids wanted bears too, so I found a very simple three piece bear thing, and we sewed them together and they stuffed them. And then they would take them home and dress them and tell us stories about them.... And that was just lots of fun, and it’s interesting now, being my daughter teaches in the high school.... Well one kid came in, she and I look a lot alike, and he came in and he said, “You’re the bear lady.” (02)

To other informants, fame might have been a passing moment. For a brief instant, the informants were recognized for their craft. For example, Jackie recounted her favorite textile
item, “I entered it in the State Fair last year and I got an honorable mention. That’s probably one of my favorite ones.” Although for others, the memory of the State Fair has gone, for Jackie it provided her with a winning identity that she proudly displayed on her living room wall.

The informants also achieved identity through the gifts that they gave to others. For example, Jackie established her identity as a tatter by providing a gift to her sister, “I made some lace for my sister’s wedding dress the next year, so I guess that convinced her that I was really interested in tatting.” Kathryn enjoyed using her crafts as gifts to identify her as a craftswoman, and not someone who purchased “store bought gifty things.” In Kathryn’s case, the identity assumed by Kathryn is perceived through her gift giving, not confirmed by the receiver of the gifts.

Still other informants established identity by the gifts that were requested from them. Family members and friends asked to be given a craft item for that special occasion. Cindy stated that her family depended on her embroidery skills for their home decorating. “They expect me to decorated their house with pictures, and I do.” Similarly, Vivian found herself disappointing people when she didn’t give handwoven gifts, but as she became more involved in her craft, time constraints limited her gift production.

But there’s some people I wouldn’t dare to give anything else, they just have to wait. And that was the case with this one couple. I knew that’s what they just had to have, that’s why I made a Christmas runner, but three years late.

Exhibiting their crafts was a way of communicating the informants’ identities to others. Almost all of the informants had their art work displayed in a prominent location in
their homes, calling out to visitors, “There is a craftwoman residing here.” Blanche even apologized for not having her work displayed in her home, but “since we redecorated and added this room on ... I haven’t really put anything up here yet.” Ellie described the craft function in her home.

I decided I need to have some more things around the house to show that that’s an interest, and so I’m kind of developing ideas of what I want to do. Because I don’t want to have tatting just everywhere, but I do want some more things for the house. (05)

Finally, the informants’ identities were bolstered by the admiration of others. Olivia felt pleased with herself when one of her weaving projects appeared on the front cover of a weaving magazine. “I feel especially good about (it) because it combines my hand spinning and my weaving.” But the admiration of others did not have to come from a national source; it could be at a personal level. For instance, Yvonne found that the support from her co-workers and boss were sufficient motivators in her identity as a sewer.

And she was a seamstress and ... she’s really encouraged me.... She’s like, “Yvonne, you’ve got to enter this in the fair.” ... And sometimes my supervisor, I would ask him, “Well, can you tell the difference between stuff that I’ve purchased and stuff that I’ve made?” And he would say no.... So I think it’s encouraged me to sew more. (25)

Aesthetic Experiences. The craft object provided more that just an identity to the producer. There was an aesthetic appeal to the craft object. The textile item may have been appreciated for its external beauty or it may have been appreciated for the internal joy that the object invoked. Hannah perceived that all textile objects should be appreciated, “I think all textiles are special, I don’t even like to wipe up a mess with them, I’d rather use a paper towel.” Likewise, Ellie saw her tatting as an art form and wanted others to have the same
aesthetic appreciation as she did, “And I think I’d like to enter them in some of the art shows in the area, to see if the artsy people can see tatting as art like I do.” Blanche explained why her craft should be considered an art instead of a craft.

I guess we try to think of it more of an art than a craft because I think most people that are in the guild really want to treat their finished projects more as an art project than a crafty thing. And I’m not saying that all crafts don’t have an art background to them, but instead of making multiple things of one thing, we try to limit our interests to the things that we like to do.” (28)

Beyond seeing their craft as an art form, the informants found pleasure in the object itself. Xandria found aesthetic appreciation in having hooked a rug out of blue colors, and then decorating her bedroom around the rug. Wendy was pleased when she could adapt her craft into something that both she and her sons could enjoy. Ursula found aesthetic appreciation in maintaining strict rules of traditional designs.

True hardanger embroidery ... is worked on white linen with white linen thread, nothing else is acceptable.... If you stick with the more or less traditional motifs, the needle lace and things.... It’s all geometric. But there’s a variety of things that you can do and stay within the limits.... I’m trying to preserve this, and impress on people that there is correct hardanger embroidery and there is stuff that is not correct. I may be kind of strict on it. (21)

There was also a level of personal satisfaction that was realized through the craft object for the informants. There was a sense of a job well done, a task accomplished. Zoie recounted satisfaction with her craft projects.

Oh, it’s just the pride in seeing the finished product and having something unique that everybody else doesn’t have.... It’s kind of fun to have people say, “Oh, you made that? How’d you do that?” ... It’s something you enjoy doing and find fulfillment in. (26)

Personal satisfaction could be realized at a number of different levels, by the novice who was able to complete a simple design, or the expert who created her own designs.
Claudia found satisfaction in some of her beginning tatting. "I have made myself some
earrings, and I use those.... They’re just little beginner stuff, but I like them.” Likewise, Tara
found satisfaction in her hand-picked, double-weave coverlet.

What I haven’t told you is that I like cats, but we can’t have one because
D allergic to them, so I weave them.... So this is my “Nineteen Cats” ....
And it’s fun to have people look at it, and you can see them counting and
wondering why that’s the title.... But that’s one of my favorites, and it’s
mostly because it’s fun. It’s been in a magazine too ... it’s nice to have things
published. (20)

Object. Besides the object providing an identity and aesthetic appreciation for the
informants, the textile object also had some value of its own. The object satisfied a specified
end use for the informants. The most common end uses identified by the informants were
personal use, displayed in an exhibit, and as a gift. Even though the object was central to this
sub-theme, it was the interaction between the self and the object, that allowed the object to
achieve its end use. For example, if an informant made a sweater, she was expecting more out
of the sweater than just a garment; she was also anticipating other benefits, such as identity as
a knitter, the satisfaction of having knit it herself, uniqueness, or increased quality.

Doris found herself weaving fabric to make a dress for her son’s college graduation at
Dartmouth, but Doris expected something more from her garment than just a piece of cloth
covering her body.

And I was going to have to go to graduation and meet all these mothers of his
rich friends, aghhh! So I thought I’m going to have to spin, spin and weave
something to wear. My nana (security blanket) around me. It will give me
courage and confidence, so I did. (04)

Similarly, when Meg started quilting she expected more from the finished product than just a
quilt. She expected a less expensive product with similar aesthetic appeal to the one she had
seen in the store. But what Meg received from the quilt was even more than she expected; she had the quilt, a ribbon from the county fair, and the publication of instructions for her quilt in a book.

For some of the informants, the object represented a chance to exhibit their craft. The displayed object may have been intended for either a public or personal audience. Beyond the object, the informant expected to receive some personal reward. For Vivian, she had the expectation with her work that she would further the knowledge of weaving techniques within her community. Likewise, Ellie believed that exhibiting her work would broaden the acceptance of her craft as an art.

Additional rewards were also available to the informants through gift giving. Although gift giving was a vehicle for identity realization within the Identity sub-theme, these gifts provided benefits beyond identity to the producer. For example, Kathryn found that she could offer a feeling of gratitude that provided a direct correlation with her craft.

When my son was sick and in the hospital, I made a pair of mittens for the surgeon that did his surgery.... And ... this is so fun, and he was just thrilled. And it seemed like such an appropriate gift for the man whose hands saved my kid’s life. (11)

Donna found rewards in designing and making a counted cross-stitch sampler for her parents’ 50th wedding anniversary.

But my sister gave them an $800 clock and my parents appreciated it, and my brother and my other sister gave them something ... purchased. And they thought it was nice. And they got this and my dad cried like a baby. And my mother just cried, she just thought it was so nice. My mother knew the time it took. (30)
So for the informants, the craft object itself provided benefits beyond that of the intrinsic values of the object. The women were able to realize an identity through their crafts by the recognition they received, the gifts they gave, the interest they projected to others, and the admiration of others. Aesthetic experiences were available to the women through the textile object. In addition, the textile object provided venues for the women to express themselves.

Continuation

Continuation of the craft was a primary concern of many of the women. The women believed it was their goal to see that their craft or skill was transferred to the next generation. The informants enabled the continuation of the craft through the passage of craft objects and craft knowledge. The women also recognized the feasibility of transmitting identities to succeeding generations. The identity transfer was frequently realized through the exchange of craft objects and/or knowledge.

Object Transfer. The informants anticipated that their craft production would be used to sustain craft production. When they passed on a crafted item, it somehow helped with the continuation of the craft. Abigail saw her role in providing a model for future generations. “That’s one reason I’m doing that quilt, because I thought … I should do a quilt by hand to show that you really can do a quilt by hand.” (01)

Ursula copied a hardanger embroidered piece of her grandmother’s to share with other family members.

My sister had one and she let me copy it. I graphed it off very quickly … and came home and made a copy. And since then I have made a smaller version of that and have given it for weddings when any of the nieces and nephews have been married…. And then I include a little history with it. (21)
Irene believed there was importance in knitting craft products that were specifically created to be heirloom products.

I like to do things that last ... I never make anything that will be in for a season or two. That’s not worth my time.... And it’s not worth the material I put in it, because I don’t want to work with anything that isn’t good. And when you put the time and money into it, I don’t want to make anything that’s out next season. So I want to make heirlooms. (09)

But beyond making heirlooms, Irene was careful to whom she presented her knitting.

I have discovered though, that everybody doesn’t appreciate it as much as I would myself.... So I make something ... for the people I know treasure it and know how to take care of it.... Crafts are just too valuable to me. People don’t do it enough. It’s not the common ordinary thing anymore and I have the opinion, when you put your time and effort into making it, it should be something that you take care of. And that’s my philosophy. (09)

**Knowledge Transfer.** As well as the transfer of the textile object, the transfer of craft knowledge was also a goal of some of the informants. This sub-theme seemed more significant for those informants who participated in crafts which the women perceived as near extinction. For Ellie, an avid tatter, the transfer of craft knowledge was a primary concern.

“A lot of people, when they find out I tat, they say, ‘Oh, that’s a lost art!’ And so I’m trying to make it not be lost. Teach more people and hope that they want to keep doing it too.” (05)

Donna thought that cross-stitch was on an increase, but still believed there was a need to teach craft skills to all levels of her family.

So all my girls stitch. My two granddaughters, and they’re four and twelve, and then my two daughters and my daughter-in-law. But my son ... he’s probably the one that would take all of these home if he were given a chance. He loves the stitching. (30)

One of the strongest linkages was the transfer of knowledge between women and their grandchildren, specifically their granddaughters. Cindy accepted that she had more time to
devote to her grandchildren than she did to her own children, and found solace in teaching them her embroidery skills. She also recognized the broader linkage between herself and her own grandmother, and wished to continue with that tradition.

But I have a couple of grandkids that really enjoy doing it. In fact my youngest granddaughter made a wonderful card for her mother... And she did the stitching, I showed her how to do needlepoint... I was just so pleased... If I just have one... if they're here on a one to one basis with me, they will go to my needlepoint and pull out yarn and extra canvas and fool around. And that’s fine, I don’t care what they do with it, just so long as they’re doing... I think just fooling around may be enough to get them started without somebody trying to restrict their stitching. (29)

Identity Transfer. During the object and knowledge transfer, a secondary goal was often the transfer of identity. Through the passing on of an object or knowledge, the identity of the producer was also transferred. For example, Gloria still perceived the need to weave something that was really special to pass on to her grandchildren.

But even though I’ve done those two coverlets, I still feel I want to do something really worthwhile yet, and I don’t know what it will be... I’ve done a little hanging... but that’s special more to us, but not too much to our grandchildren. I want something for them to remember me by, and to pass it on. (07)

Through the identity transfer, Gloria was able to extend beyond her own mortality.

For some of the informants, particularly the ones with a strong ethnic heritage, the identity they wanted to pass on was their cultural identity. They wanted future generations to know from where their craft roots originated. Vivian believed that her Scandinavian background has helped her to focus her weaving and hopes that her weavings will help others to realize their identity.

But I think you get satisfaction in doing something historical... Because the minute I decided to focus on the historical, traditional, I just felt better about
myself. And I just focused more.... I feel like I have an identity. And I suggest to others that they try to focus as well. (22)

The transfer of objects, knowledge, and identity have allowed the informants in the study the opportunity to share their craft with others and to benefit from those transfers. The main advantage for the women was the perception that their goal of craft continuation would be realized. In addition to the continuation of the craft, there were secondary goals of identity transfer.

In summary, through the processes of craft production and the resultant products, the informants were able to achieve a variety of goals. The formation of identity seemed to be paramount for the women, since it could be realized in all three minor themes. In addition to the identities, the women participated in their crafts to be creative, to find enjoyment, and to realize the therapeutic effects of their craft. Through their craft production they were able to gain self-esteem and continue learning about themselves and their craft. The finished craft product enabled the women to experience aesthetic moments. The textile object also allowed the women to fulfill personal needs. Through their craft production, the women assumed the role of caretaker to the craft, and a promoter of its continuation.

**Guild as “We”**

The second superordinate theme that emerged from the data was Guild as “We,” referred to as Guild from this point forward. This theme represented the goals of the women in joining the guild, where the recurrent contact with other individuals was central to goal fulfillment. Embodied within this theme were two minor themes: For Self and For Self and Others. For Self referred to goals or benefits that were internalized by the women and
included four sub-themes: (a) Self-Directed Learning, (b) Creative Inspiration, (c) Energy to Continue, and (d) Contact Around Craft. For Self and Others represented the goals of the women to concurrently influence their own, as well as the other guild members, guild experiences. There were seven sub-themes included under the For Self and Others minor theme: (a) Interactions, (b) Identity, (c) Friendships, (d) Support of Craftswoman, (e) Intergenerational Interactions, (g) Mentoring, and (g) Larger Craft Community.

**For Self**

The For Self minor theme represented the affective and cognitive components achieved by the informants during interaction with other guild members. It was the addition of interactions within the guild setting that distinguished the For Self minor theme from the Craft as “I” theme. For example, the women’s goals in joining the guild included the component of self-directed learning, similar to the identified goal of self-directed learning in the Process minor theme; however, the learning occurred in the vicinity of guild member interactions. So, the individual had internalized benefits that were a direct result of guild participation.

The For Self minor theme also represented a transitional period in guild membership. All of the four sub-themes within this minor theme could be achieved by the informants even if their participation within the guild was more passive. For many of the women, their degree of active participation was directly related to length of guild membership. For instance, a woman could come to a guild meeting and expect to learn, and have creative inspiration, energy to continue, and contact around her craft, whether or not she personally interacted with other guild members. So even with passive guild participation, she was able to achieve her guild
membership goals. However, if that woman chose to actively participate in guild activities, she was internalizing her own benefits while simultaneously helping others to be influenced by guild membership. However, for this minor theme, the purposeful interaction to benefit others within the guild was not the goal of membership.

This passive to active transition was particularly salient for the sub-theme of Contact Around Craft. When the women were not as comfortable with their membership, they just enjoyed being around crafts. As their comfort level increased, they became more active in sharing their craft, and eventually chose to participate at a level that not only benefited themselves but other members within the guild. Although this passive to active shift was true for many of the informants, not all women experienced the transition. Some women join the guild at an active level, while others may never advance beyond the passive stage.

Self-Directed Learning. Within the Guild minor theme, the search for knowledge was the most frequently mentioned reference by the informants. The large number of references for this sub-theme indicated the importance of the learning component within the guild structure and in the lives of the women. Blanche’s reply exemplified the responses of the informants:

I just felt mainly because of the educational advances that they were offering. And learning different things. You know each person that belongs kind of has their own favorite thing to do and they’re very sharing of ideas and very helpful in showing you how to do things if you’re in doubt. So I guess ... the primary thing would be the education advances. (28)

Similarly, Xandria thought the educational component was so strong, that no matter how long you were a member of the guild, there would always be more to learn.

Somebody said to me, “Why do you have to keep going all the time?” No, you never quit learning. There’s just something, some new little trick or some new
idea that you get.... By being together, this person will find out this works and
tell you about it. (24)

Beyond the women feeding off of each other for craft knowledge, most of the guilds
offered structured learning experiences for the members. The programs were frequently
planned for the entire year at the first guild meeting, then published in the guild’s newsletter.
All of the guilds held monthly meetings, on either a nine or twelve month track, with the first
meeting of the year commencing in September. The programs were presented by members of
the guild either on a volunteer or assigned basis, or speakers were brought in for
presentations. Most guild meetings required a full day commitment from the informants, but a
few guilds met for half-days or in the evenings. Frequently the half-day or evening meetings
represented a younger membership. The programs provided the back-bone to the guild
structure. The members arranged their participation based upon the programs offered.
Adeline, who generally worked on guild meeting days, would take vacation days if the
program was one she was particularly interested in. In addition, some informants said they
would discontinue membership if the programs did not continue to meet their needs.

The programmatic structure was consistent within the guilds, except for three guilds
operating in a single community. These three guilds were consistent in all other respects with
the other guilds, except for the educational emphasis. Further analysis indicated that a
museum in the area was providing the educational structure for the guilds, so the learning
component was not key to guild participation. The community had a very focused ethnic
ancestry, and the museum was dedicated to the promotion of that ethnic heritage. In fact, the
whole community rallied together at least once a year to promote and advance their cultural
traditions. Each of the three guilds was sponsored by the museum; the museum allowed them free meeting space. In turn, the guild was to assist and promote the museum by exhibiting skills and products when requested. In addition, the museum had a textile handwork academy. The academy functioned to provide workshops and lecture series. The guild members in the three guilds participated in and promoted the academy. Thus, for these three guilds, the museum serviced the educational needs of the members, and was incorporated within the guild structure.

**Creative Inspiration.** Along with the focus on an increased knowledge base, creative inspiration was a common benefit sought through guild membership. The interaction and sharing of ideas between the members provided a wealth of new ideas. The fresh concepts and increased skill levels enabled the women to implement the ideas. As Leigh stated, “You get the stimulation of other people’s ideas, as well as other people’s successes and failures.” Zoie found inspiration through the hands-on programs.

I think you get a little more inspired when you see something that somebody else has done, and have a presentation that’s a little bit unusual, something that you hadn’t thought of doing. And I’m one that kind of needs something like that to motivate me. I’m not real creative in coming up with the ideas, I have to see something.... Especially if you do the sewing right as you’re there, I think that really gets you going. (26)

But the guild provided more than just inspiration for the next project. By working on her rug hooking within the guild meeting, Wendy was able to find inspiration for her “in-progress” project as well.

People just want to share. It’s a wonderful art form, and although you do it on your own, it’s different than painting. Painting you go into a room and you paint your own ideas and you’re kind of by yourself. This one, if you sit in a group of people and then say, “Well, what color should I put here?” Everybody has a different opinion, I mean it’s a share thing. (23)
Energy to Continue. In addition to providing inspiration to start a project, the guild structure gave the members incentive or energy to continue. Many of the women believed that without the support of the guild they might discontinue their active participation in the craft, or at the very least, reduce the amount of time they allocated to their craft. Seeing the other members of the guild involved in their crafts energized the informants to continue. As Abigail recounted:

I just vicariously get some enjoyment from their enthusiasm and the stuff that they’re doing.... I know that if I go to the meetings that I’ll keep my tatting going. I have no great yen to do anything major. However, when they were talking about this (lace edging), I thought well, I have a linen napkin that was my grandmother’s ... and it would make a nice bread ... (01)

Much of the energy boost came from the sharing of craft projects at the guild meeting. There seemed to be an unwritten rule that you don’t bring the same project time after time for the “show and tell” interval within the guild meeting. According to Nadene:

It gives you motivation to get more done by the next meeting. You don’t want to take the same thing every time, and you never did anything else.... It just keeps us going, showing everybody what we’re doing. (14)

In fact, many of the informants credited surges in craft production to upcoming guild meetings or exhibits.

Our guild meets on the first Saturday of every month.... And we maintain there’s more weaving done the last week of every month, because we always have show and tell. (20)

Contact Around Craft. While some women participated in the guild to fuel their craft production, other women participated in the guild to encounter a craft environment in which they could submerge themselves. The guild was crucial for these women. The guild fostered contact around the craft while it simultaneously allowed the women to benefit from
the craft environment. Claudia was able to keep abreast of what was going on in the tatting world by being around other interested tatters.

And when the conventions are going to be, or who's going to give instructions. And you also learn what magazines you can get articles about tatting from, and where you can send for material. Supposing you need a new tatting shuttle or a new thread... And so you learn all these things ... somebody always has information for you. (03)

Ellie perceived that contact around the craft that was available within the guild enabled women to remain involved in their craft without actively participating in craft production or the guild structure.

I think maybe a lot of people like to talk about tatting more than they like to actually sit and tat.... Well, some of them work full time, and when I worked full time I didn't do it near like I am now.... They still come to the meetings and they keep their interest in it alive, and then whenever they feel like it enough, they'll take the time and actually do it. (05)

Jackie, too, found there was information to be shared when women interested in the same craft came together. The information shared was different than self-directed learning where the focus was on the attainment of new knowledge. Rather, this information was more idiosyncratic in nature.

When you're around other people who do that, you can discover things that they've discovered without having to work it out on your own. And discuss things that maybe you hadn't thought of before.... It's just all the information going around. (10)

The For Self minor theme provided benefits to the women, that were not realizable when the women produced their crafts in isolation. Through membership in the guild, the women were able to recognize new levels of learning, creative inspiration, and motivation.

The presence of other women involved in the same craft provided the benefit of additional
information for the women. In addition, the more involved the informants became in sharing their craft and themselves at guild functions, the more they were able to realize the beneficial attributes of guild membership. Likewise, the more the women realized the benefits of guild membership, the more they wanted to help others realize the affective components of being a guild member. This was the transitional point where the minor theme of For Self transformed into the minor theme of For Self and Others.

**For Self and Others**

For Self and Others was the second minor theme. This minor theme recognized the affective and cognitive expectations and realizations of the women in being guild members, but also acknowledged the women’s goal to influence other guild members through their guild participation. The main difference between the For Self and the For Self and Others sub-theme is the active participation of the women that enables others to benefit from their guild participation. For instance, a woman experienced affective components due to her mentoring role in the guild, but also influenced other guild members’ experiences through her mentoring.

**Interactions.** The most frequently realized benefit of guild membership, according to the number of responses that were coded in this sub-theme, was the interactions that transpired within the guild setting. There was an immediate sisterhood for the women. Through the women actively interacting with other guild members, they received validation for their craft and perceived they were part of the group. The interactions benefited themselves as well as the other guild members. This advantage was achieved even by new guild members. As Donna explained the experience:
And I went, and it was like, I didn’t know anybody but we knew each other. Do you know what I mean? We just, we had this common bond. And I think I’ve only missed three meetings in twelve years. (30)

Yvonne recognized the common bond, but also affirmed the importance of having a common interest.

Ya, camaraderie of being around other sewing people, that you’re not the only one.... You can say stuff like this is a Bernina 9000, and the conversation will keep going, it’s not going to die. (25)

Paula alluded to the validation available to guild members through social interactions.

Something different to talk about than just what your kids are doing in school. And people get tired of the routine work that goes with home making, that its nice to have something that can stand on its own, independently of family members. And yet it can be shared at different levels. (16)

But there was more than just the interaction of women with similar interests. The interactions took place in an egalitarian environment. The homogeneity of interests were contrasted by the heterogeneity of the individual women.

And we have all social strata. We have a poor little old lady, she must be in her seventies and she’s taking care of her mother who’s 92.... But she has neglected herself terribly.... But everybody accepted her. And then on the other hand, we have the wife of the surgeon in town, probably the wealthiest man in town.... And then you’ve got everybody in-between. (19)

The interactions inherent within the guild setting have provided the women the opportunity to share their craft with others of like minds. The sisterhood created in the guild validated their own craft participation, and provided occasions for the sharing of information in an egalitarian setting. The interactions allowed the women familiarity with other guild members. As so aptly phrased by Doris, “For me it’s an enabling device with the fibers themselves, but it ends up with friendships.”
Friendships. The friendships seemed to flow from the interactions. Many of the women emphasized their expectation of friendships as providing some of the impetus for their guild membership. Quinn, who has belonged to textile guilds in communities throughout the country, admitted that the main reason for her current guild membership was social. Likewise, Leigh joined her local guild the first week she moved to a new town so that she might “reach out for people with similar interests” with whom to make friends. Zoie’s description of her experiences within the guild was similar to many of the other informants’ experiences.

Well I guess it’s the sharing, knowing that you’ve got somebody else that you can talk to if you run into a problem.... Even though it’s such a diverse age and a big area, there’s a real camaraderie between us. I mean it’s just like we’ve always been friends, even though you don’t see them all that often, it’s just a friendship that is developed real quickly. (26)

With such a strong emphasis placed on acquiring friendships within the guild, the informants were asked to provide a definition of friendship. Although the responses were varied, the main points were sharing, caring, closeness, and having someone you could rely on. But there was inconsistency between the women’s definitions of friendship and what they received from the guild members. For some of the informants, the other guild members never really moved past an acquaintance level. As Jackie and Ellie remarked:

Well, they’re not a real close friendship, but they’re people that I’m really comfortable around and I can talk to. I don’t know, I suppose they’re a little bit beyond acquaintance, but they’re not real close.... I don’t know, they’re people to talk to. They’re fun people to be around and I enjoy the group. (10)

I feel like they’re very close acquaintances I guess.... But there’s friends, and then there’s really close friends. But they’re friends, I guess acquaintances sounds like you maybe barely know them, and I guess I feel like I know them better than that. So maybe friends, as opposed to best friends is where I would categorize most of them. (05)
When Claudia was asked if she could call on her guild friends for help she replied:

Outside of tatting? Well, I wouldn’t feel free to do that because I don’t know them that well personally.... Just anything to do with tatting would be appropriate to talk to them about. (03)

Even when the informants were asked about the types of conversations they had during social times at the guild meetings, the frequent response was similar to that of Irene:

Very little personal conversation. Very little. They come together to share the craft. And I think too, that these gals ... most of them meet only at the guild meetings.... They don’t know much about each other, other than what they are doing in that craft. (09)

However, having guild members only as acquaintances was not true for all informants. Some of the women reported having a few select women within the guild who advanced to a level of self-described friend. Many of these informants assessed their friendships on a familial level, where guild members took on the role of family. As Meg stated, “Since my family lives so far away, I think it’s (the guild) family.” The other guild members were often referred to as sisters by the informants, similar to Hannah’s response, “And we have a good time. It’s like having sisters.” In the cases where the friendships were referred to as family, this close friendship level was dependent upon the length of guild membership of both the informant and the friend.

There were, although, times when self-described close friendships were not dependent upon length of guild membership. For these informants, there just seemed to be an immediate bond between the woman and another guild member. These friendships represented shared interests in a variety of areas. For example, Bonnie explained how the guild was only the starting point for friendships.
If not the binding force, the starting force. And then you find all the other areas that you have common interests. E_____ and I have discovered books, we’re both avid readers, and we’ve discovered books that we like and other stuff as well. (02)

It became apparent through the data that there were expectations of friendships through participation in the guild, but the guild members may not have yet advanced to the level of close friend. The development of close friendships were frequently dependent upon time of guild involvement by both the informant and their guild friends. However, the emphasis on the potential for friendships within the guild was embedded within the minds of the informants and provided within the guild structure.

**Identity/Fame.** With increased levels of interaction and as familiarity was gained among guild members, the informants’ self-perceived identities and individual strengths were recognized by the rest of the group. Kathryn was recognized as an expert in her field, and was frequently sought out by other guild members for advice on their own quilting projects. Kathryn was glad to share what information she could, but admitted, “I don’t think I’m much better than some of them.”

Hannah’s expertise provided her an identity even beyond the confines of the guild to the local craft community.

Well, probably it’s helped me to be able to be better known. I can walk into a quilt shop and people know my name. If they don’t recognize me, if they hear my name they might know who I am because I’ve been an officer, I’ve been a speaker. So, it’s kind of fun. (08)

Ursula has found satisfaction in being referred to as “the local authority” in her guild, and admits that the standard response is frequently, “Go see Ursula.” But the authority status has also afforded her opportunities to provide educational programs throughout surrounding
states. This recognition even brought the editor-in-chief of Better Homes and Gardens where Ursula taught embroidery techniques.

For the members, there was a symbiotic relationship between the guild and their own craft identity. The guild’s recognition of the women’s craft skills not only bolstered the women’s self-esteem, but encouraged them to continue sharing their craft knowledge within the guild, thereby further benefiting other guild members. Thus, the guild and its members profited from the cyclical sharing of information.

**Support of Craftswoman.** Through the recurrent interaction of guild members, the informants were able to find support for their craft participation. This support was available in a number of different venues, such as instructional help and information shared during social interactions. But one of the main benefits the informants perceived that was available through the guild was support of the craft. The women received various levels of affirmation and validation during guild interactions. The women saw this as reciprocal in nature, the other guild members supported them and, in turn, they supported the other guild members.

Doris relayed her guild experiences:

But really they’re good people, they’re supportive and helpful and they’re ... which is generally true of fiber people I find, are cheerful, and friendly, and supportive, and they’re not demanding and picky. We have a good time. (04)

Bonnie found similar support in her guild.

Of course we talked about other people’s decorations ... and said how neat this one was, or that one, and how we hoped we lived up to what everybody else’s projects were. (02)

Although support was available to the informants through a variety of activities, a common support ritual within all the guilds was Show and Tell. During Show and Tell guild
members took turns sharing their handcrafted item, and amidst oohs and aahs, a woman provides information about her project, followed by questions or comments from the audience. Information shared may vary from brief explanations about the craft procedure to elaborate stories about why the craft was made. To many of the informants, Show and Tell was the highlight of the meeting. Jackie appreciated the affirmation available to her through the Show and Tell process.

I usually feel pretty good because you have worked so hard on this and you’re with people who can really appreciate the work that went into it. And they’re like, “Oh wow, this is so cool. How did you do this?” And you can talk about it and it makes you feel pretty important. (10)

And although the oohs and aahs were important to the informants, they also appreciated the help that followed during the questions and comments portion of Show and Tell.

Or people will come and say, “Do you think this looks okay? or, What should I do?” And then somebody will say, “Oh, you might try this, you might try that.” ... And then somebody will come over and show you how to do it, or help them with it, or everybody will help them. And it’s great ... that’s how people communicate. Who knows something about this, because different people are better at different things. (11)

Through Show and Tell the informants even found affirmation in the craft projects of which they were not so proud.

Show and Tell for the guild, if this is a problem, we’ll help you with it. If you don’t like it at all, there’s somebody there who’s bound to like it, so therefore you feel a little bit better about this thing you don’t like. I mean, we’ve really tried to be that kind of support. (20)

Through the guild structure, and particularly through Show and Tell, the women found support for themselves and their craft. But beyond finding support for themselves, when they
actively participated in the Show and Tell process, they allowed other guild members to receive affirmation and validation.

**Intergenerational Interaction.** The repeated interactions available to guild members through their activities, provided opportunities for individuals of various ages to exchange ideas. As Irene stated, “It’s a benefit that you can meet across the age lines.” Claudia, a woman in her early 70s, envisioned herself as a role model to the younger members, “They can know that they can continue to do this all their life, until they get to my age.”

The informants found the intergenerational associations beneficial to themselves and to the guild. The older women in the study found themselves energized by the younger members through their unbridled excitement with the craft. But the older women also perceived that the younger guild members benefited from their years of craft experiences. Likewise, the younger women in the study believed they provided stimulation and motivation to the older members, and received holistic knowledge from those more experienced in a craft. As Adeline stated:

> The young show the ability for the craft to continue, which the old seek to see. The old bring experience, especially those that have been doing it life long or for a long period of time. Especially in sewing guild you see the ones that have done it for a long period of time, or doing it professionally for some reason or another, that they bring knowledge to the group. And they are a lot of the programs that are done. (27)

By virtue of the intergenerational interactions, friendships were formed that would otherwise have not been realized. Doris found herself very close to a younger member whose mother was Doris’ age, “But T_____ and I have hit it off. We have enjoyed each other, and I think it’s mutual.” Irene also established a close friendship with a younger guild member.
We have grown really close friends and she is probably twenty years younger than I am. We have done a lot of things together. And we feel like we are more sisters now. And I don’t have a sister so it’s great. And she says, “You are more sister to me than my sister is.” And we have reached that point through the knitting.”

These friendships have also provided a valuable support system for the older women, particularly for those with smaller support systems outside the guild from which to draw. One of Nadene’s closest friends that she made through guild was recently transferred to a nursing home, and Nadene has taken on the role of her daughter.

Her daughter lives in Virginia, and she doesn’t get to see her very much. So we go in and see her once a week and take her out to lunch and visit with her. And we take her shopping or play bingo.

Thus, the intergenerational activities that are promoted through the guild structure benefit the young and old members alike. The variety of ages provided a diversity to the guilds that all members found beneficial. In addition, the older women were offered a support system from which they could draw.

**Mentoring.** The sharing that was inherent within the guild structures provided mentoring opportunities for the guild members. There were different degrees of mentoring within the guilds. Guild members frequently provided their expertise to the members through formal programs or workshops. Some guilds established semi-structured mentoring processes where the more established craftswomen would purposefully space themselves throughout the meeting room, while other guilds had a more informal mentoring processes. The mentors perceived they benefited as much from the mentorship role as did the mentees. This was particularly true when the informants taught a workshop or a program. As Zoie explained:

I think you probably learn more than what the people do, you know when you do a presentation like this. Because you have to work out all the little
techniques on how to do something, so I think you probably learn more than they do in going through the process of getting to the point where you’re happy with how it’s turned out. (26)

There also seemed to be an expectation for a give and take relationship; where the mentee eventually became the mentor. Quinn explained this relationship:

I think with my experience, it’s more of a teaching role (in the guild). I really benefited when I was first in the guild from other members’ experiences and their willingness to share their experiences. And I want to pay people back if they want. (17)

There was a strong feeling of responsibility by the informants to the guild and to other guild members. If they were a member of the guild, they needed to actively participate, to share what they knew with others. This was reflected in the responses of Cindy and Rachel.

I think that we have a big responsibility to make sure that these people learn anything that they would like to learn. Or make sure that they’re comfortable in that situation, because some of us have been around for ever. And that doesn’t mean we know a whole lot more, but I think it’s really important to be cognizant of where these new people are and what we can do to help. (29)

And then there’s a responsibility in if you’ve learned something new or found something new or whatever, then you do share it with everybody else, and they do the same thing back. (18)

Overall, the informants assessed that benefits were both received and provided during the mentor/mentee relationship available in the guild. The women received knowledge and craft wisdom from other guild members, and they in turn shared their knowledge and craft expertise with others. The structure of the guilds provided mentorship roles to be availed through both formal and informal configurations.

**Larger Craft Community.** A final benefit recognized by the informants was the connection to a larger craft community through their local guild membership. Many of the
local guilds welcomed members from other guilds to their meetings or programs, thereby expanding the knowledge base from which the informants could draw. Ellie explained:

There's an Omaha tatting group that has a seminar.... And I went to this and they presented all these things that I'd never even heard of ... and which I couldn't understand because they were presented bang, bang, bang -- but I was exposed to them. (05)

Local membership also provided connections at the regional or national level. All of the guilds in the study were local chapters of their national guilds. By being a member of the local guild, women were entitled to participate in national conventions, where nationally known speakers provided seminars and workshops. The national guild also sponsored newsletters that provided members information about upcoming programs and legislative decisions, as well accepting articles from the local guilds.

By participation at the regional or national level the informants experienced increased interactions. All of the benefits that the informants identified through local guild membership were compounded when they became involved at the regional or national level. There were more chances for self-directed learning, creative inspiration, energy to continue, and identity. The levels of intercourse available through the larger craft community provided more opportunities for interactions, friendships, support, and validation of the craft. In addition, when the informants participated at this level, they perceived increased responsibility to share the new information with members at the local level.

In summary, membership in the guild provided the women in the study increased opportunities for interactions which would not have been realized only through individual participation in the craft. The exchange among guild members was crucial to goal attainment.
Through guild membership, the women sought to increase their own opportunities for learning, sharing, motivation, and identity formation. But beyond self-motivation, there was the expectation to simultaneously affect other guild members’ experiences. Through actively participating in guild activities with other guild members, the women were able to build friendships, provide leadership, and validate their craft to themselves and to others.

Expectations of reciprocity to the guild by the women provided a symbiotic relationship among the women and other guild members. The benefits that were achieved through guild participation then affected individual craft production. This provided a natural cycle of the craft benefiting the informant, thereby contributing to active participation in the guild which ultimately provided impetus for more individual craft production.

These two sections, Craft as “I” and Guild as “We,” have provided insight into why the women participate in their craft, and the benefits the women seek and receive through guild membership. The women shared the importance they placed on their craft production, and how the guild functioned to fulfill their goals of craft in their lives. From this information a theory of guild membership emerged. The theory of guild membership reflected the broad scope of meanings illuminated through the study, and will be discussed in the final section.

**Proposed Theory of Guild Membership**

Individual participation in a craft and membership in the guilds represented a conscious effort by the women to provide structure to their lives and to promote successful aging.

Figure 4.2 depicts the relationship among the aging craftswoman, craft production, and guild participation. Starting in the center with the aging craftswoman, the women chose to participate in textile handcrafts because they realized the affective and cognitive components
that were available to them through the craft process (Arrow #1). The craft process provided identity, therapy, creativity, enjoyment, self-actualization, self-directed learning, and teaching. The resultant craft product provided qualities such as functional objects and gifts, as well as afforded the women opportunities to experience additional identity and aesthetic appreciation. Through the craft process and the resultant product, the women perceived that they were helping to promote the continuation of identities, craft products, and craft skills (Arrow #2). In addition, their interest in the craft prompted them to join the guild (Arrow #3).

Guild membership provided additional benefits for the women that could only be obtained through guild participation. The guild activities provided the women additional opportunities for self-directed learning and creative inspiration because of the interaction with other guild members. In addition, guild activities provided the women with energy to continue and contact around the craft. The added advantages fueled craft production at an individual level (Arrow #4).

The structure of the guild promoted reciprocal interactions among and between guild members in an egalitarian setting. The more active the women became, and the more support they received, the more responsibility they felt to influence the experiences of other guild members. This symbiotic relationship fostered validation, the sharing of information, and friendships, which ultimately strengthened the guild structure. The resultant guild support reinforced the women's commitment to their craft, encouraging them to continue with their own craft production (Arrow #6). Increased levels of craft production intensified the affective benefits available to the women, and provided impetus for further increasing their guild participation (Arrow #5). So in a cyclical manner, craft participation promoted the guild,
Arrow #1: Motivation to participate in craft production
Arrow #2: Outcomes from craft participation
Arrow #3: Motivation to participate in the guild
Arrow #4: Outcomes from guild participation
Arrow #5: Craft fuels guild participation
Arrow #6: Guild fuels craft production

Figure 4.2 Proposed Model of Guild Membership
which in turn provided support back to the craft. Increased guild participation provided additional benefits for the women as well as affecting the experiences of other guild members. As such, through textile handcrafts and guilds, the women were able to fulfill goals in their lives that promoted dimensions of successful aging, such as interactions with others, a sense of purpose, autonomy, personal growth, and self-acceptance.

In summary, the women have used their textile craft as a conduit to continual learning, affective and cognitive experiences, friendships, and managing successful aging. But without applying this knowledge to a larger arena, the information gathered in this study would make no further contribution to the body of scholarship from which the research was launched. The next chapter provides connections between this study and the current literature and makes recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"The individual weaves an aspect of himself
into a tapestry of meaning that has extension and continuity.
He becomes the voice of a tradition larger than himself,
and the tradition flows through them to the young."
~ Kotre, 1984, p. 15

The purpose of this study was to explore inductively older women’s involvement in textile handcraft guilds as a conduit for interactions between textiles and their producers, successful aging, and friendships. The final objective of the study was to determine how the study contributed to the existing scholarly literature. The objective is addressed in this chapter by placing the finding of this study within a broader research context. In addition, limitations and recommendations for further research are provided. This chapter ends with a summary of the research.

Contributions to the Literature

The objectives of the study served to direct the inquiry, and to provide insights into the meanings the women associated with guild membership. The theory of guild membership that emerged reflects the broad scope of meanings illuminated through the study. The results of this study contribute to the existing literature that supported the study’s design: symbolic interactionism, successful aging, and friendships.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals understand their worlds and the processes involved in understanding those worlds. Blumer (1969) stated that symbolic interactionism rests on three basic principles: (a) human beings act toward objects based on
the meanings that those objects have for them, (b) the meaning for such objects arises out of the social interactions of individuals, and (c) the meanings are interpreted and modified as the individual interacts with the objects they encounter. Specifically for textile objects, the literature suggested that there were two divisions of meanings: meanings associated with the textile object, and meaning incorporated in the making of the textile object. This study strengthened the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism and provided insight into specific ways that older women used their textile handcrafts to understand their worlds, and to interact within their worlds.

Foremost in the study was the formation of identity for the informants. Symbolic selves, described by Schouten (1991) as when individuals understand who and what they are, were formed through both the textile process and product. The women were able to define themselves as craftswomen, roles that were defined by the women based solely on their crafts. The roles of craftswomen were not dependent upon other individuals for achievement, it was something beyond being a wife, mother, or employee, it was their own self-concept. The craftswomen role evolved from individual craft participation and was strengthened through guild membership.

The role of craftswoman also served to provide differentiation and integration (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) within the guild. Specific craft skills or craft orientations proved to identify the woman as an expert or specialist within the guild, thereby emphasizing her unique qualities and providing differentiation. However, her identity as craftswoman made her immediately part of the group, a sister within the guild, and recognized her for her similarity to the other guild members.
McCracken (1987) identified how individuals use material objects as sources of cultural meaning and how they manipulate that meaning to accomplish social, psychological, and cultural goals. The differentiation that was available to the women through their textile crafts became avenues to disperse those cultural meanings. This dissemination was available both at the individual craft level and through guild participation. For some of the women, the craft process enabled them to interact at a ethnic level. The women used techniques similar to those used in traditional ethnic crafts, and enabled them to identify with their ethnic heritage. In addition, when the product was transferred to others, the women perceived that the product communicated that cultural identity to others.

According to Solomon (1983), products can be used as a stimulus for a behavior. The women in the study were actively participating in their craft and the guild in a conscious effort to achieve the associated affective and cognitive benefits. The women knew that through the craft process they were afforded the opportunity to continue their learning, to be creative, to find enjoyment, and to realize the therapeutic effects of their craft. Within the guild, the women's craft product and associated techniques were used as a tool for communication between members.

Solomon (1983) also stated that products can be used as a response to a behavior. The women participated in their craft and the guild in reply to the behaviors of others. As individuals responded favorably to either the women's craft product or to the women's roles in the guild, the women chose to continue that action in order to evoke those same behaviors from others.
Individuals also focused on textile handcrafts to cope with changes in their lives. According to McCracken (1987), there are three components that relate to objects and how individuals experience transitions in their lives: (a) objects for mnemonic purposes to store memories of people, places, times, or events; (b) objects to negotiate role transitions; and (c) objects as instruments of cross-generational influence. Similarly, the women in the study were producing craft products that enabled them to capture specific memories. However, it was the craft process that allowed the women to negotiate role transitions and cross-generational influences. Through the sharing of information, the women were able to find new identities or to strengthen old identities as they experienced transitions in their lives, such as the death of family members. Although it was the craft process that helped the women negotiate the transition, it was the guild structure that provided an environment of women interacting and sharing. Similarly, the guild structure supplied the interactions necessary for intergenerational influences to transpire.

The craft product was also used to set the stage for role performances (Solomon, 1983). Through the women’s craft production and their actions within the guild, the women were able to assume the role of caretaker to the craft. This role enabled the women to promote craft continuation.

As such, within this study, the textile handcraft guild provided the environment where individuals could meet and interact in support of a craft and themselves. During the interactions that are associated with craft processes and products, meanings are communicated to both the producers and receivers of the textile products. In addition, self-concepts were developed and self-relevant information was transferred to others. The textile
craft object and the associated guild helped the women to interact in, and understand their world.

**Successful Aging**

A number of dimensions have been associated with successful aging. According to Fisher (1995) these dimensions include (a) interactions with others, (b) a sense of purpose, (c) autonomy, (d) personal growth, and (e) self-acceptance. Themes that developed through this study are applicable to these components of successful aging.

**Generativity.** The literature suggested that generativity plays a role in successful aging through interactions with others and by providing the women with a sense of purpose, both of which are dimensions of successful aging. According to Erik Erikson (1950), generativity is a concern for guiding the next generation, providing a sense of purpose, and primarily middle-age individuals. McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) view generativity as a multidimensional construct involving seven interrelated components uniquely organized within each individual, where desires stimulate concerns and promote generative actions. McAdams and de St. Aubin proposed that as people became older, generativity became salient. Alexander, Rubinstein, Goodman, and Luborsky (1991) argued that generativity is a cultural, symbolic act where individuals respond to the realization of impermanence by infusing part of themselves into another to attain immortality.

This study suggests that generativity is an active component of the textile handcraft guilds. Generativity was fostered through social interactions that were inherent within the guild meetings, particularly through intergenerational interactions. Through the sharing of life and craft experiences, the women felt they were contributing to the next generation of
craftswomen. Through mentoring, the women passed on their knowledge and interacted with the other guild members. Mentoring was perceived by the women to be a responsibility of guild membership. Techniques and identities that were shared during the guild interactions provided impetus for craft production. The transmission of skills was seen as a way to influence the next generation and provided a purpose to the women's lives.

The data supported McAdams and de St. Aubin's (1992) multidimensional generativity construct. The informants did have inner desires that were fueled by cultural expectations to guide the next generation and to impart the concept of generativity within the next generation. The generative commitment on the part of the women was transformed into generative actions by way of stories, experiences, and support. Similar to McAdams and de St. Aubin's expectations, generativity was important to the older women in this study.

In addition, there was support for Alexander and co-authors' (1991) argument that generativity is a cultural act where individuals try to infuse part of themselves into another to attain immortality, and was frequently implemented through the continuation of traditions and the passing of family heirlooms. The informants did perceive that they could attain some continuous identity through others and through the transmission of craft skills and objects. However, the women did not participate in generative actions only to attain immortality; they felt a deep level of concern for the next generation.

Finally, results provided partial support for Erikson's (1950) life-span theory of generativity. According to Erikson, generativity is most intense at middle age when the individuals are concerned about contributing to future generations. The data from this study suggested that generativity, using Erickson's theory, was more intense for the women in the
study who were in their 50s, providing partial support for Erikson's theory. However, generativity was important for the older women in the study as well. In this study, the women in their 50s openly stated that they wanted to impact the next generation. In contrast, the older women perceived more importance in the generations helping each other. Thus, the intergenerational interactions were seen by the older women in the study to provide support for the next generation, and to be self-benefical. This study provided only partial support for Erickson's life-span theory of generativity because of its unilateral approach. Erickson saw generative actions occurring by older populations and directed at younger populations.

Erickson's definition of generativity was the concern for guiding the next generation. Perhaps the definition should include a bi-directional approach, where generativity is described as the concern for guiding and supporting other generations. This study supports an interpretation of generativity where different generations join together in support of each other.

In summary, generativity was an active component of the guild structure. It was expected that the members of the guild interact during workshops, Show and Tell, and other social times. The women in the study sought out the younger members in the guild to provide support for the craft and the younger members. Through the generative avenues of interactions and by providing a sense of purpose, the textile guild was contributing to successful aging.

Self-directed Learning. Self-directed learning has been described by Brockett and Hiemstra (1991) as the learner taking responsibility for his or her own learning across the lifespan. Estrin (1986) found that there was a significant positive relationship between successful aging and learning activities, both in the number of projects and the number of
hours spent engaged in learning. Self-directed learning about craft provided personal growth and a sense of autonomy for the women in this study.

Embedded within the guild structure were opportunities for the informants to participate in learning activities. These learning activities were available formally through workshops and seminars, and informally through Show and Tell exchange and other social interactions. Guild members were encouraged to participate at the local, regional, and national levels in learning activities. Beyond just attending the workshops, the members were motivated to teach a program, thus providing an experience where the teacher often learned more than the students.

As the women became more involved in guild learning activities, they were inspired to work on their own crafts. Through their personal craft production, they found encouragement to further share their craft information with others, thereby reinforcing the learning environment within the guild. As such, as the women became more involved in the guild, the number of projects and hours spent learning about their craft also increased. Therefore, the guild was instrumental in promoting successful aging by providing the women with control over their own lives and by experiencing personal growth.

**Leisure Activities.** There is a growing belief among researchers that leisure needs to be more than just a pleasant, diversionary, escape-oriented experience to contribute to quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi & Kleiber, 1991). Kelly and Ross (1989) found that high-investment activities, or those activities that challenge an individual’s knowledge and skills and require an investment of effort, are most likely to yield an enhanced sense of competence and worth. These high-investment activities are related to the successful aging dimensions of purpose and
self-acceptance. Cutler Riddick (1993) contended that gender-role socialization may have oriented women toward leisure activities that involve relationships, sharing, communicating, and nurturing. These types of leisure activities promote the successful aging dimensions of interactions and purpose for the women. This study asserts that membership in textile handcrafts guilds provided challenges and an enhanced sense of worth through high-investment activities. In addition, the guild provided leisure activities that involved relationships, communication, and caring. Activities associated with the guild contributed to interactions with others, a sense of purpose and self-acceptance, and ultimately successful aging.

**Friendships**

The literature suggests that involvement in friendships is a strong indicator of an individual’s perceived well-being (George & Landerman, 1984). Among the elderly, friends shield the older person from others’ negative appraisals (Heineman, 1985), prevent negative self-evaluations (Mancini, 1980), and encourage positive self-perceptions (Lee & Shehan, 1989; Mancini, 1980). There seems to be no argument that friendships contribute to successful aging.

Friendships were mentioned as a common benefit of textile handcraft guilds. Therefore, the guild contributed to successful aging, but at what level? Bernard and Phillipson (1995) contend that some friendships are activity based; they would not exist beyond the confines of the activity. The specific activity provides the structure for the friendship. The data from this study confirm this finding. Although the women quickly attested to the friendships that they formed in the guild, many of the friendships did not exist
beyond interest in the craft. The friendships that were formed within the guild served to provide support at the craft level. However, there were some close friendships that were formed within the guild. The close guild friendships in this study were dependent upon two additional components: (a) the lack of other support systems, or (b) interests beyond just the craft. For example, the informants who did not have access to a personal support system seemed to have more close friendships within the guild. Likewise, close friendships were formed when the informants had interests in common with other guild members beyond just the craft.

Roberto (1989) identified two different types of friendships: instrumental and affective. Instrumental exchanges are on a non-personal basis and provide materialistic types of assistance, such as transportation and helping with tasks. Affective friendships supply needed emotional support, such as providing comfort and sharing problems and ideas. Within this study, the guild members fit into the definition of affective friendships. The guild members did provide emotional support for each other in a number of ways, but it was provided through a focused lens. Even though the support was channeled through the craft, the women achieved the support at a variety of levels, such as enhanced self-esteem, personal identity, and emotional well being. Thus, the friendships formed within the guild did provide affective needs for the women. But in general, the friendships had not yet advanced to an intimate level, but were beyond an involvement stage.

In relation to the Theoretical Model of Friendship (Blieszner & Adams, 1992), the guild represented members of a friendship network from which close friendships could be drawn in the form of dyads. The guild contributed a structure of fairly homogenous
individuals in an egalitarian setting. The processes provided by the guild included the behaviors or activities within the guild. In addition, the guild afforded both cognitive and affective avenues for the guild members. The phases of the guild network, or the stage of development of friendships, was dependent upon the length of guild membership by the women, as well as the inception date of the individual guild.

The guild provided the circumstances from which individual friendship dyads could evolve. There were numerous friendship dyads within each guild. All of the informants reported having a number of friends within the guild, and many of them called the friendships close. However, the women reported that only a very few of the friendships formed within the guild were really at an intimate level. But even though the friendships were not intimate, the friends still provided the processes to affect the women in a positive way. The guild network provided the structure and the processes which enabled the individual dyads to interact, even if they did not reach an intimate level.

Limitations

A primary limitation of this study was the sampling technique. The sample population was selected through snowball sampling; early informants provided information for contacting potential later informants (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992.) It is possible that this technique promoted the inclusion of like-minded individuals. Therefore, the conceptual themes and subsequent emergent theory may not be generalizable to more divergent populations.

Research Recommendations and Applications

Because of the close association between women and handcraft guilds, there is need for more research focusing on the meaning and place that textile handcraft guilds play in the
lives of contemporary women. This study concentrated on a small group of women. An expanded study that included a larger and more diverse population would augment knowledge on the function of textile handcrafts in women’s lives.

Analysis of other structures similar to guilds, such as artists’ co-ops, could provide additional information about the importance of handcrafts in both men’s and women’s lives. An expanded format would allow for an investigation into other aspects of meaning that are provided through other artistic avenues. The inclusion of a male population would provide insights into components of identity, friendships, and successful aging across both sexes.

More theoretical work needs to be done on women’s cultures centered around themes other than textiles. Working with a large group of women who share a common bond would offer unique opportunities to investigate across cultures. As it is suggested that women are the keepers of culture, such a study would contribute to a deeper understanding of women’s activities and endeavors. Also, by comparing across cultures, information could be provided about what is unique to textile-focused cultures.

Generativity was a strong goal of the women within the study. However, the generativity was evident through a number of different guild venues. Further research needs to focus on the distinct forms of generativity in the lives of older women. Research should also address the generative actions across different lifespans.

The formation of friendships was an important part of this study, and was recognized as a benefit by all of the informants. The women referred to many of the other guild members as close friends, but these friendships did not fit the definition of a close friend that the women described. The guild structure was providing affective friendships, which were needed by the
women in the study, but they did not advance to intimate friendships. More research on affective friendships that do not progress to an intimate level would advance the literature on friendship formation and the friendship needs of older women.

Finally, at an applied level, the strong affective components that are available through textile handcraft guilds, and the implication that participation in the guilds plays in successful aging, suggests the need for the promotion of handcraft activities at senior centers. As the population continues to age, funding from government or private sources may need to be lobbied.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore inductively older women’s involvement in textile handcraft guilds as a conduit for interactions among textiles and their producers, successful aging, and friendships. Thirty women, representing 15 textile handcraft guilds and eight different textile crafts, were interviewed throughout the state of Iowa. All informants were actively engaged in craft production and a textile handcraft guild. The sample population was purposively selected to represent diversity in age, craft type, craft knowledge, and geographical distribution. The interview instrument focused on the goals of women involved in the teaching, learning, and sharing of textile handcrafts both at the individual and guild level. Analysis procedures followed Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) recommendations for constant comparative methods of coding and interpretation of the data.

Content analysis revealed two superordinate themes, Craft as “I” and Guild as “We.” From these themes emerged a grounded theory of guild membership. Within the Craft as “I” theme, three minor themes surfaced: (a) Process, (b) Product, and (c) Continuation. Process
represented the act of craft production, while Product referred to the finished craft object and expectations of that product to fulfill the specified goals of the informants. Continuation depicted both the goals of the informants, and the function of the craft product, in craft perpetuation. Through the processes of craft production and the resultant products, informants were able to achieve a variety of goals. The formation of identity seemed to be paramount for the women, since it could be realized in all three minor themes. In addition to identities, women participated in their crafts to be creative, to find enjoyment, and to realize the therapeutic effects of their craft. Through their craft production women gained self-esteem and continued learning about themselves and their craft. The finished craft product enabled the women to experience aesthetics moments. The textile object also allowed the women to fulfill personal needs for functional items and products to treasure and share. Through their craft production, the women assumed roles of caretaker to the craft and promoter of its continuation.

The Guild as "We" theme had two minor themes, For Self and For Self and Others. For Self referred to goals or benefits that were internalized by the women during guild interactions. For Self and Others represented the goals of the women to concurrently influence their own and other guild members' guild experiences. Membership in the guild provided the women increased opportunities for interactions which, in turn, allowed them to achieve goals that would not have been attainable through individual craft participation. The reciprocity that was exchanged among guild members was crucial to goal attainment. Through guild membership, the women sought to increase their own opportunities for learning, sharing, motivation, and identity formation. But beyond self motivation, there was
the expectation to simultaneously affect other guild member’s experiences. Through actively participating in guild activities with other guild members, the women were able to build friendships, provide leadership, and validate their craft to themselves and to others. Expectations of reciprocity to the guild provided a symbiotic relationship among the women and other guild members. The benefits that were achieved through guild participation then effected individual craft production. This provided a natural cycle of the craft benefiting the informant, thereby affecting active participation in the guild which ultimately provided impetus for more craft production.

Through membership in the guilds women made an effort to consciously provide structure to their lives. The women were able to achieve identity and affective as well as cognitive experiences through craft participation and the resultant products. Guild membership provided the women additional benefits that could only be obtained in the presence of other guild members. The guild’s structure promoted interaction among and between individuals in an egalitarian setting which fostered validation, the sharing of information, and friendships. The resultant social and craft support reinforced the women’s craft production, thereby intensifying the affective components available to the women. As the women increased their levels of guild activity, they also increased the opportunities and benefits that were available to other guild members. Through textile handcrafts and guilds, the women were able to fulfill goals in their lives that promoted successful aging.
APPENDIX A: HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University

1. Title of Project: Textile handcrafts Guilds: The facilitation of friendships, generativity, and successful aging.

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Principal investigator: Sherryl Schofield-Tomschin
Signature: [Signature]
Department: Textiles and Clothing
Campus address: 1052 LeBaron Hall
Phone number to report results: 294-6964

3. Signatures of other investigators:

Marilyn Lueck
Signature: [Signature]
Date: 4/14/97

4. Principal investigator(s): (check all that apply)

Major Professor

- Faculty
- Staff
- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Student

5. Project: (check all that apply):

- Research
- Thesis or dissertation
- Class Project
- Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects: (complete all that apply)

- 30 # Adults, non-students
- 0 # ISU students
- 0 # Minors under 14
- 0 # Minors 14-17
- 0 other: explain

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, item 7.)

The purpose of this study is to (a) explore the friendships of older adult women formed during the interactions with other individuals involved in textile handcraft production, and (b) describe how individuals perceive these friendships help them to age successfully. I propose to interview women over the age of 55. Informants will be identified by their participation in textile craft guilds throughout the state of Iowa. Informants will be purposively sampled to represent diversity in textile handcrafts.

(Please do not attach research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed consent: □ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
- □ Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)
- □ Not applicable to this project.

GC 6/96
9. **Confidentiality of Data:** Describe below the methods you will use to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

Interviews will be held in the homes of the respondents or in private areas, where others are not privy to the responses. Transcribed tapes will delete or provide pseudonyms for all names of people referred to in the interviews. No names of respondents will appear on transcriptions. Transcriptions will be identified by a coded number that only the researcher can identify. No information will be provided to respondents about how others in the study responded at the time of the data collection. Respondents who so wish may receive a summary of the study’s results.

10. **What risks or discomfort will be part of the study?** Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects’ dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

None.

11. **CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:**

   - [ ] A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
   - [ ] B. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
   - [ ] C. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
   - [ ] D. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
   - [ ] E. Administration of infectious agents or recombinant DNA
   - [ ] F. Deception of subjects
   - [ ] G. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or
   - [ ] H. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
   - [ ] I. Research must be approved by another institution or agency

   **Items A–E**

   Describe the procedures and note the proposed safety precautions.

   **Items D–E**

   The principal investigator should send a copy of this form to Environmental Health and Safety, 118 Agronomy Lab for review.

   **Item F**

   Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

   **Item G**

   For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects.

   **Items H–I**

   Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research and the letter of approval should be filed.
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule. The following are attached (please check):

12. X Letter or written statement to subject indicating clearly:
   a) the purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, numbers), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
   d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) that participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. □ Signed consent form (if applicable)

14. □ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. X Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First contact: 4/21/97  Last contact: 6/15/97

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased: 6/15/98

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer
   4/14/97  Textiles and Clothing

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:
   X Project Approved  □ Project Not Approved  □ No Action Required

   Patricia M. Keith, Committee Chairperson  4/14/97  (signature of committee chairperson)
APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
Interview Guide

Textiles frequently play an important role in women's lives. I would like to talk with you today about how textiles have influenced your life. My questions will revolve around five basic ideas. The first section involves basic information about yourself. The second set of questions will deal with the craft itself, how you learned to ______, and how the craft is important to you. In the third set of questions, we will talk about your participation in the guild, and what it means to be a guild member. Friendships are a common result of guilds, so the fourth set of questions will include ideas about specific friendships, and how the guild intermeshes with your friends. The final section deals with passing your craft knowledge on to others, specifically younger members in the guild. So we'll start with the section on basic information about yourself.

First of all, do you mind telling me your age?

Are you currently, or have you ever, been married?

Do you have any children?

Are your children close by?

What sort of activities do you currently do with your family?

Do you or have you ever worked outside the home?

What kind of activities are you involved with in your community?

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about the craft.

Tell me about when you first learned to ______. (Who, how, when)

Why is this craft of interest to you?

Do you have a textile item that is special to you?
    Can you describe for me the importance the item has for you?

Tell me about your participation in this craft? What are the benefits for you?
    What are some of the disadvantages for you?

Have you done this craft continuously, or was there a time when you stopped for awhile? Why?
Next we’re going to talk about the guild, and what it means to be a guild member.

How did you learn about the guild?

What were some of your reasons for joining the guild?

How long have you been a member of the guild?

Tell me about the other guild members. How many members are there and what are their ages?

Tell me about a typical guild meeting.

Tell me what it means to you to be a member of the guild.

What do you see as the benefits of being a guild member?
What do you consider the downfalls of being a guild member?

Have you encouraged others to join the guild? Why or why not?

What kind of changes has participation in the guild brought to your life?

How do you think your age helps and/or hinders participation in the guild?

How do you feel about participating in the guild compared to other leisure activities? (appropriateness, entitlement, domestic demands)

Now I’d like to ask you some questions about the friendships that you have in the guild.

First of all, what is your definition of friendship?

Describe for me your friendships within the guild. (close?, same age?, across age groups?)

Were you friends with any of these people before you joined the guild?

IF YES Has membership in the guild changed those friendships?

Has membership in the guild created any new friendships?

What do you do with your guild friends within the guild setting?

What do you do with your guild friends outside the guild setting?

Do you have a number of close friends outside of the guild?
IF YES What kind of activities do you do with your “outside guild” friends?

What do you see as the differences between your guild and other close friends? (behavior?, activities?, social support?)

In the final set of questions I would like to know how you have used your textile skills, and possibly the guild, to share information about yourself and the craft with others.

Do you have textile craft skills you wish to share with others?

Do you ever feel that through the textile craft you are carrying on a particular cultural, historic, or ethnic tradition?

Describe your experiences with sharing these textile crafts or skills.

Tell me about the younger members in the guild.

Do you feel you have a responsibility to the younger members? What are they?

What do you think the younger members receive from you during your interactions?
APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER
Introduction of Research Project for Personal Interviews

Dear Participant,

For many women, textiles play an important role in their lives. I am conducting a research project to learn about the friendships formed, and the information transferred, by women during participation in textile handcraft guilds. I invite you to participate in the study by sharing your experiences within the handcraft guild, of which you are a member. Your participation will help me to fulfill my research goals, which are: (a) to explore the experiences of women involved in the learning, sharing, and teaching of textile handcrafts; and (b) to understand how individuals perceive the friendships formed in the guilds relate to their life satisfaction. The research will contribute to my research as a graduate student in the Textiles and Clothing Department of Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

Because accuracy is of critical importance, I would like to tape record our interview which is likely to last from one to one and a half hours. The information you provide is more valuable to me if I am able to capture your own words and inflections. No one but me, the transcriptionist, and my faculty advisor, will hear this tape. Any references to people or guilds will be deleted from the transcription of the tape. All information you share with me will be identified by number only. No names will appear on any information. After my research results are complete, all of the tapes will be destroyed. Information provided from the interviews will be used to write a doctoral dissertation and research articles, however, any publications from this research will be written without the identification of names, guilds, cities, or people.

In addition to the interview questions, I would also be interested in a textile item that has some importance to you. If you have a special textile craft that you have made, or that was given to you, I was wondering if you would be willing to share the experience by showing me the item and telling me about how it has become important in your life.

As the researcher, I promise to honor your words and meanings in my work. I will keep complete records, so that all the thoughts, when woven together, are pieces of a greater whole. In addition, I promise to do my best in writing a concise and useful manuscript, that enables others to share our experiences. Your participation in this study is voluntary, you may
withdraw at any time. If you have any questions prior to the interview, please feel free to call.

We have scheduled the interview time for ________, on ________.

Sincerely,

Sherry Schofield-Tomschin
(address and telephone)
APPENDIX D: CODING GUIDE
| (1) | Experiences with Textiles/Knowledge/How Learned |
| (1 1) | Experiences with Textiles/Knowledge/Why Learned |
| (1 1 1) | Experiences with Textiles/Knowledge/When Learned |
| (1 2) | Experiences with Textiles/Past Experiences/Family Influences |
| (1 2 1) | Experiences with Textiles/Past Experiences/Skill Appreciation |
| (1 2 2) | Experiences with Textiles/Past Experiences/Occasions |
| (1 3) | Experiences with Textiles/Aesthetic Moments |
| (2) | Craft |
| (2 1) | Craft/Process/Identity |
| (2 1 1) | Craft/Process/Identity/Notoriety |
| (2 1 2) | Craft/Process/Identity/Gifts |
| (2 1 3) | Craft/Process/Identity/Shows Others Your Interests |
| (2 1 4) | Craft/Process/Identity/Admiration of Others |
| (2 2) | Craft/Product/Art/Notoriety |
| (2 2 1) | Craft/Product/Art/Gifts |
| (2 2 2) | Craft/Product/Art/Shows Others Your Interests |
| (2 2 3) | Craft/Product/Art/Admiration of Others |
| (2 3) | Craft/Continuation |
| (2 3 1) | Craft/Continuation/Object Transfer |
| (2 3 2) | Craft/Continuation/Knowledge Transfer |
| (2 3 3) | Craft/Continuation/Identity Transfer |
| (3) | Guild |
| (3 1) | Guild/For Self/Self-Directed Learning |
| (3 1 1) | Guild/For Self/Creative Inspiration |
| (3 1 2) | Guild/For Self/Energy to Continue |
| (3 1 3) | Guild/For Self/Contact Around Craft |
| (3 2) | Guild/For Others/Interactions |
| (3 2 1) | Guild/For Others/Identity |
| (3 2 2) | Guild/For Others/Friendships |
| (3 2 3) | Guild/For Others/Friendships/General |
| (3 2 4) | Guild/For Others/Friendships/Focused |
| (3 2 5) | Guild/For Others/Support of Craftsman/Show and Tell |
| (3 2 6) | Guild/For Others/Mentoring |
| (3 2 7) | Guild/For Others/Larger Associations |
| (3 2 8) | Guild/For Others/Feelings of Responsibility |
APPENDIX E: THEME DEVELOPMENT
Theme Development

Emergent Theme: Process

Sample data representing process theme:

Sub-theme: Identity

I was thinking about you coming, although one rarely specifies, my chief first responsibility is my husband, my children, this is mine to myself. And I do it for my own peace of mind. To have something of my own. I hate housework. It’s dull, it’s boring, repetitive. And it’s eaten up or dirtied up right away and it just doesn’t interest me. This stuff you have something to show for it. (04)

Right now, that’s all I am doing. Now before I started, before I became so interest in the Norwegian work, I did some outwork, some crewel, I did some needlepoint, and just. And of course as a child we did all the stamped, the tea towels and all of that kind of stuff. But now, right now really all I’m doing is the Norwegian techniques. (21)

Sub-theme: Therapy

Oh, it’s relaxation. (01)

Well, it’s ... You have something to show for what you’re doing, I guess. I’ve always been the kind of person that likes to make things. And it’s really fun for me to do it. It passes the time, it’s something to occupy you hands with when you’re watching TV or if you’re just sitting there bored. You have something to show for it in the end. It’s also really handy for like Christmas gifts and Mother’s Day presents and that kind of thing. Because I know people really enjoy getting tatted things from me. (10)

Sub-theme: Creativity

It’s a handwoven piece, and he bought it for me as kind of inspiration to inspire me to do something. And it’s this scarf right here. He bought it where we used to live. And when we moved here last year, I did a series of scarves. This is the only one I have left. But as you can see, it’s a mixed warp, loose weave. And a conglomeration of fibers, that’s for sure. And I just thought they were my most effective work to date. (12)

But going back to this quilting bit, when we went to that first lesson, we were told to select two prints and one plain fabric that went together; or two plain colors that were complementary and then one print. And we all went home and in one weeks’ time we were suppose to make one little pillow top. It was mind boggling, and that’s when I first realized there’s so much creativity. (13)
Sub-theme: **Enjoyment**

I love, I use to darn socks year ago, I loved anything I could do with my hands I guess. But I also love handmade things. I would rather, and my husband was that type of thing, than all the expensive things you can buy me in a gift shop, you know what I mean? (24)

Sub-theme: **Self Actualization**

Years ago I belong to the, it’s called the Arts Committee of the church. And the whole committee was thinking they would like to have some new paraments. Well, eventually I was asked to do the paraments and they wanted the paraments for the Advent season. So I did meet with the ministers and they told me what they had in mind. And many months later we took the paraments there and they were just delighted with them. And I imagine it’s ten years ago, and the background is blue for the Advent season, and they’ve been very well received and they are used every year. And that is really a very special thing for me to remember. (07)

Well, custom fit, I have a long torso. It’s a way of life. It’s not really a benefit, but it’s like how you get clothes. You don’t think, some people think, “Okay, I’m going to go get a new outfit.” Well, just the mindset is different. So I don’t know if that’s a benefit of if that’s going to be another question. But the benefits are custom fit, custom color, if you can find your fabric, a sense of accomplishment, a sense of self-esteem. (25)

Sub-theme: **Self-Directed Learning**

Oh, I always liked it but I never knew how to do it. There was that one time when I tried, and I tried to take some lesson, but it was really difficult because there wasn’t any place around here to do that. And I had nobody else that knit, that I knew of. I didn’t have grandmother or that. And so I just didn’t learn that. So when the shop was here, and when she had the classes, I started just a little bit before that because I wanted to learn how to do it. Because I wanted a nice sweater and you have to do it if you want it a certain way. (18)

Yes, I worked on the rigid heddle and I had this one little book, which is very, very basic. A lot of projects in it, but projects that wasn’t interested in. Just interested in the basic plain weave. And then I think I had that for nine months and I bought a floor loom. And I struggled with that. Everything was struggle, really struggle. (22)

Sub-theme: **Teaching**

Ya, I have five different two and three day workshops that I offer. One is on bound weaving, one is on double weave, summer and winter, lace weaves, and overshot variations, different things you can do with overshot. And they evolved gradually. I’m toying with the idea of doing some teaching in my home studio now that I have one large enough when I can do that. But I haven’t branched into that yet. (15)
Emergent Theme: Product

Sample data representing product theme:

Like if you make them something. They really appreciate it. I've made for the kids, one time they needed a birthday party present, and although the children aren't always as thrilled, their mothers are delighted when you make them a hat or something. And I enjoy doing that because then it puts the kids immediately out of that competition for who can buy the best birthday present, because somebody else, they're not going to get two probably, so that's really fun. (11)

Let's see, economic necessity. Having two kids that were small and finding it was probably much easier and much cheaper to stay home and try to make some money doing the things I could do, much in the tradition of my family, my paternal grandmother, than sending them off to day care and getting probably a fairly low paid job, with not very much satisfaction. (17)

I mean you can wear it. And I would tell some people, "I don't have room on our walls," as you can see, "so I have to hang it on myself." (20)

Umm, I haven't gotten project done or like given S____ hers, she wanted it so bad that it was, you know. She claimed it before it was done. And she, "When is it going to be done, when is it going to done. I want it, I want it, I want to sleep under it. (27)

Ya, well, and some of the things that I've created are really. I don't know as I have any one favorite. But this silk and metal picture up here that I took from a seminar class for four days from a Japanese lady, and that's all silk and metal. And I think that's one of my very favorite pieces. But ya, I guess when you're doing it, each piece is your favorite as you go along, and then you pick up another something to make it your favorite. But I guess, technique wise and skill wise and so forth, that's probably by best piece. (29)
Emergent Theme: Continuation

Sample data representing continuation theme:

Let’s see, and then through my patterns is my other way that I’m passing it on. Through my designs, and I hope to keep creating more designs. One of the vendors suggested that I make a book. She thought she could sell books easier than individual patterns, like this. I don’t know if I can stand to hold on to my patterns long enough until I get enough for a book though, that’s what I have to think about. (05)

Ya, I want to see more people knit and I want to see more younger people knit. And also, I want to see that they learn to do something they can pass on, to make something they can pass on. And again we get this heirloom idea. We don’t sit and knit potholders, which is fine you know in a learning stage, and it’s great if you want to learn to do a new stitch or whatever, to do small swatches, make them into potholders. Fine, I’m not downgrading that. But we like to pass in, see what I am, what I have focused on, and kind of specializing on now in this business, is to pass on the way, the traditional way of knitting in Norway. (09)

I also, when I give anything away, I have a little instruction sheet that tells them how to take care of it, because it is, it’s not that you feel they’re not going to take care of it well, but it is wool, it shouldn’t hang in a sunny window, it shouldn’t get wet. Little things like that that you maybe wouldn’t know about unless you get instructions. And I find that really helps. (23)

Right now I’m working on baby samplers. My daughter-in-law is expecting next month, a baby boy. And my daughter in Connecticut is expecting twin the same day and they’re all boys. So I’m desperately working on birth samplers right now. (30)
Emergent Theme: For Self

Sample data representing for self theme:

Just to inspire me to keep learning about it. And she sort of, she belongs to the guild, and she’d been involved in it for a couple of years before I got into it. It’s just fairly newly organized you might say maybe five years at the most. So I just wanted to get involved to continue in doing tatting. (03)

Well you get to see what everybody else is working on. And most of the time you don’t need more ideas but you get them. And just sharing your ideas with them. Sometimes it has nothing to do with quilting though. (14)

Well, I’d say shared interests is the main thing. Something different to talk about than just what your kids are doing in school. And people get so tired of the routine work that goes with home making, that it’s nice to have something that can stand on its own, independently of family members. And yet it can be shared at different level, you know. Just a natural for shared friendships. (16)

Well, I guess it’s the sharing, knowing that you’ve got somebody else that you can talk to if you run into a problem. We have some gals who are really excellent seamstresses. And they’re real good to help you try to figure something out if you’re having trouble with something. And I think that’s good to know. Even though it’s such a diverse age and a big area, there’s a real camaraderie between us. I mean it’s just like we’ve always been friends, even though you don’t see them all that often, it’s just, it’s just a friendship that is developed real quickly. (26)
Emergent Theme: For Self and Others

Sample data representing for self and others theme:

There's a group of spinners, and it's very informal, and you come and go. And usually on Thursday, by the time I get there I just sit and listen and look at everything new she has. But, I've noticed that she'll intervene if someone's spinning is going bad and will help. It's nice to be with another generation of people. Most of the spinners are real young. First meeting I went to, I sold my loom, which was wonderful, to a young spinner. (02)

Well, I think it challenges a person to do more things. And provides friendship and support. I think they're very supportive. And I find that people who do things like this are more apt to be friendly. They have a different outlook on life. I belong to thimble guild in D______, and I count the two groups among my best friends. (06)

At a guild meeting, you still know some people, but not everyone. And so you kind of circulate. Well, of course we have business, and we have a program. But then on your free time you circulate and see the people you know. At the guild meeting last Saturday, I saw a lady who was a member when I first joined. And her mother was a member, so I knew her and her mother, her daughter became a member, and then that woman's daughter was there this time, and I met her. And I remember seeing her as a little girl. So there's a four generation family that we know because of that. (08)

Ya, or they're asked to do it, one or the other. And sometimes, maybe once every, well it kind of depends, maybe every year, year and half, to two years, we do bring in an outside teacher, a more nationally know teacher to teach. Maybe we've seen in the seminar brochures that we get, a class that a lot of our members would like to take or we would like to take from a particular teacher, so that would be outside of our regular meeting. And usually they come in for two day of classes. (28)
REFERENCES


