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The Influence of Family Background and Other Experiences  
on the Sex Role Related Attitudes of Male and Female  
Late Adolescents and Young Adults

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In recent years a number of authors (e.g. Osmond and Martin, 1975; Steinmann and Fox, 1970) have compared the attitudes of men and women toward the nature of appropriate sex roles. A few studies have also examined the association of traditional and non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women with various family related and demographic variables. However, there have been few systematic attempts to compare the influence of various background and experiential variables on the development of sex role related attitudes of both males and females. Such an analysis is necessary if we are to begin to understand how people develop less stereotyped or more equalitarian attitudes toward the roles of women. Significant social change cannot occur if we only examine the development of women's attitudes, and so, in this paper, we explore influences on the sex role related attitudes of both men and women.

Previous Work

Relatively few studies have systematically explored influences on young men and women's attitudes toward sex roles. More studies have focused on influences on women's choice of traditional and non-traditional career and family roles and on the psychological dimensions of "masculinity" and "femininity." Virtually all

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of the studies have been surveys, and very few have employed sophisticated analytical techniques. Many of the studies are not comparable, for they use slightly different measures and samples. Understandably then, some of the results conflict with each other. We can, however, delineate several important types of variables that have been found to influence the development of sex roles.

Generally, previous studies suggest that children from higher status homes are less threatened by the prospect of women working (King, et al, 1968: 633-5), and hold more equalitarian views of marriage roles (Sterrett and Bollman, 1970), although Meier (1972) found no association between college students' attitudes toward the role of women and their father's educational level.

Having a working mother also appears to contribute to more egalitarian attitudes (King, et al, 1968, Sterrett and Bollman, 1970), although Lipman-Blumen (1972) found no relation between a mother working and a daughter's sex role ideology. Other writers have focussed on the prestige of the mother's job. Meier (1972) reported that children of mothers in more prestigious occupations had more egalitarian sex role related attitudes, and both Almquist and Angrist (1970) and Tangri (1972) reported that young women with mothers in higher prestige jobs were more likely to want and to approve more non-traditional careers for women.

Although the variable is rarely measured in the same way, at least two studies suggest that children from families with more egalitarian division of labor and decision making patterns are more likely to develop non-traditional attitudes related to sex roles (King, et al, 1968; Lipman-Blumen, 1972). Although Meier (1972) found no association between parental balance of authority and the attitudes of the young men and women in his sample, he did report that the students reported their most egalitarian attitudes when the mother had a college education and the father had less than a high school education.

The attitudes and encouragement of the parents are also important in developing non-traditional sex roles. Lipman-Blumen (1972) stressed that parental encouragement,

especially that of the mother, was associated with the development of a contemporary sex role ideology. Ann Steinmann (1970) suggested that the attitudes that young women express reflect both the views and the actions of their parents. In this sense both the parents' attitudes toward their own life and their expectations for the child may influence the child's developing attitudes.

In general, then, although there is conflicting evidence, previous work in this area does suggest that higher educational and occupational status of the parents, a mother's working outside the home, a more egalitarian parental division of power in the family, greater parental encouragement, and the parents' attitudes toward their own lives and toward the role of women all may influence young people's developing more equalitarian sex role related attitudes. These variables have also been found to influence women's sex role related choices in careers and life styles (very little research has dealt with this question for men)<sup>1</sup> and, in some cases, more masculine or "androgynous" personality orientations.

Two other categories of variables have been found to influence the nature of sex role related choices and personality traits: experiences outside the family and the nature of the parent-child relationship. These variables have generally not been used in the studies of attitudes cited above.

Almquist and Angrist (1970), Cutright (1972), and Anastasi and Schaefer (1969) suggest that young women who choose creative and non-traditional careers tend to have more enriching experiences and interests than do more traditional women. To the extent that non-traditional career choice is associated with more non-traditional sex role attitudes, at least for women (See Stockard, 1974), we should also consider the influence of experiences and interests in analyzing the development of sex role related attitudes.

A number of writers have noted the special influence of relationships with the father on the sex role development of males and females. With females, close associations with the father are associated with more traditionally feminine



orientations in life style. and/or personality orientation (see especially Johnson, 1963, 1975; also White, 1959; Leonard, 1966; Mussen and Rutherford, 1963; Nuzum, 1970; Lynn, 1976). The relationship of the daughter with her mother generally has no influence. Similarly, with young males, greater nurturance and warmth from the father has been found to facilitate a traditional masculine orientation (Payne and Mussen, 1956; Mussen and Distler, 1960; Mussen and Distler, 1959; Biller, 1969; Freedheim, 1960; Kaplar, 1970).

Other studies emphasize how women who are more career oriented or who choose more non-traditional occupations are more closely identified with or feel more similar to their fathers than to their mothers (Fogarty, et al, 1971; Heilbrun, 1962; Lovett, 1968; Helson, 1967). Still other works discuss the usual negative quality of relations between career oriented or more non-traditional women and their parents (Almquist and Angrist, 1970; Lipman-Blumen, 1972; Rushing, 1964; Ellis, 1952; Rose, 1956). At first glance the findings with the females may seem contradictory. Women with close relations with their fathers may be more feminine, yet career oriented women may be more "closely identified" with their fathers and/or report negative relations with both parents. We will return to this issue in discussing the results of our analysis.

In any case, the results of these studies suggest that we also need to consider experiences outside the family, the quality of the parent-child relationship, and the youth's felt similarity to the parents as influences on the development of sex role related attitudes.

#### A Model to be Tested

Although the development of attitudes is a constant process as people continually formulate their views, we must break into and study attitude development at certain points in time if we are to assess the impact of structural, situational, and emotional variables. In this paper, then, we do not deal with the actual content of interpersonal communications and individual interpretations that must occur as

people develop their sex role related attitudes. Instead, we are concerned with structural, situational, and emotional variables that have influenced the attitudes that young men and women express at a given point in time.

The causal model in Figure One purports to do this by seeing young people's attitudes toward the role of women as influenced by A) the social and economic status of their parental family, the work status of

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Figure One About Here

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the mother, the parents' division of power within the home, the parents' attitudes toward their own lives and toward the role of women, and the parents' encouragement of their children; B) the quality of the children's relationship with their parents; C) the children's felt similarity to their parents and frequency of association with them; and D) work experiences outside the family.

We see the variables listed above under A as independent variables. We suggest that those listed under B and C may intervene in the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. For instance, the children's relationships with their parents are very likely influenced by the parents' attitudes toward life and their encouragement of their children as well perhaps by family status variables. Similarly, the young people's felt similarity to and frequency of association with the parents can very well be influenced by and intervene in the influence of the relationship with the parents and the family status variables on sex role related attitudes. The variables in D involving outside experiences and interests are seen as influencing attitudes generally apart from the influence of family related variables, but are placed in the right of the model to indicate that they only affect children later in adolescence and young adulthood after intensive parent-child contact has occurred.<sup>2</sup>

In general, based on the preponderance of previous research, we hypothesized

that young people from higher status families, from families where the parents are more satisfied with their own lives and have more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women will have more non-traditional attitudes themselves. We also hypothesized that young people with more varied experiences outside the home will develop more non-traditional attitudes. Finally, we expected that young people with closer relations with their fathers would be more traditional, but that, women (although not necessarily men) who rate themselves as more similar to their father would be more non-traditional. Because very little of the previous work involved multivariate analyses, we also expected that some of these associations would appear with only zero-level correlations and will have no direct impact on the dependent variables.

#### Measures and Methodology

The data to test this model came from a large survey of undergraduate students at four western colleges and universities in 1973. All the students responding to the questionnaire were undergraduates in introductory social science courses (see Stockard, 1974, for details). The students were overwhelmingly white and were predominantly from middle class backgrounds. Most parents were well educated with the parents of the young women having slightly higher educational levels than the parents of the young men. In over forty per cent of the females' families both the mother and the father had attended college; with the males over thirty five per cent had done so. Slightly less than one-half of the students' mothers did not work outside the home. Working mothers held generally traditionally female positions such as secretary, teaching or nursing work. Because students who did not provide answers to all the items used in the analysis were excluded, 90% of the females and 94% of the males lived with both their natural mother and father during high school. Responses from 253 females and 249 males were used in the analysis.

The respondents used in this analysis were limited to an age range of seventeen to twenty-five years. The median age of the females was 18.6 years ( $\bar{X}$ =18.9,  $s$ =1.2), while the median age of the males was 19.1 ( $\bar{X}$ =19.5,  $s$ =1.8). Thus, most of the students were near the start of their college career and could likely remember a great deal about their experiences in high school when they were still living with their parents. However, it is important to remember that many of the variables used measure the respondents' perception and/or the memory of their family life.

Table One gives the frequency distributions on key variables used in the analysis. The dependent measure of attitudes toward the role of women was adapted

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Table One About Here  
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from a Feminism Scale developed by Acker, et al, (1974). Responses to each item could vary from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a five point scale. The seven items used in this analysis were chosen for their high inter-item correlation among both males and females.<sup>3</sup> Responses were recoded and summed so that a higher score indicates a more feminist or non-traditional response. The females tended to give more non-traditional responses than the males ( $t$ =5.98,  $df$ =500,  $\alpha$ =.001).

The measure of the relative power of the mother and the father in the home came from the students' responses to the items "When I was in high school my mother (father) made most of the big decisions in our family." Responses ranged from "very true" to "very untrue." The young men were much less likely than the young women to rate their mother as having a significant input into family decisions ( $t$ =5.87,  $df$ =500,  $\alpha$ <.001).

Measures of the parents' perceived attitudes toward their own lives and their attitudes toward the role of women were simple one-question responses. The young

women tended to rate both their mother and father as having more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women than the men did ( $t=2.48$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.01$  for the mother question and  $t=4.97$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.001$  for the father question), while the young men and women perceived their parents' satisfaction with life in pretty much the same way.

Measures of relationships with the parents involved the combination of several questions asked in a Likert-type scale. Responses involving the mother and the father were kept separate so that we could ascertain the independent and separate influence of each parent on the young person's attitudes. The young women were much more likely than the young men to rate their mothers as encouraging them in general competence ( $t=10.88$ ,  $df=497$ ,  $\alpha<.001$ ), and were not more likely than the men to rate their fathers as encouraging them more in general competence ( $t=1.04$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.5$ ). In contrast, the young men saw both their fathers and their mothers as encouraging their competition more than the young women did ( $t=3.99$ ,  $df=495$ ,  $\alpha<.001$  for fathers and  $t=4.31$ ,  $df=490$ ,  $\alpha<.001$  for mothers).

Although both the males and females reported good overall relations with their parents, the young women rated themselves as having slightly better relations with their mothers than the young men did ( $t=1.92$ ,  $df=498$ ,  $\alpha<.1$  for mother measure,  $t=1.18$ ,  $df=497$ ,  $\alpha<.5$  for the father measure).

The young women rated themselves as much more similar to their mothers than the young men did ( $t=3.27$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.001$ ), while the young men had only a slight tendency to rate themselves as more similar to their fathers than the women did ( $t=1.67$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.1$ ). Similarly, the women reported a much higher frequency of associations with their mother than the men did ( $t=10.46$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.001$ ) and the men reported slightly more associations with the father than the women reported ( $t=2.12$ ,  $df=500$ ,  $\alpha<.05$ ).

To measure experiences outside the family we asked the students about their work history. They listed the various summer and after school jobs they had held. The total number of jobs listed was coded and the types of jobs held were categorized

as mechanical in nature, clerical, involving restaurant work, sales work; outdoor work, being in a medical related field, involving work with people, or in art or professional related fields. No single job appeared in more than one category, but a student could have held several different jobs appearing in more than one category. Boys and girls reported holding a similar number of jobs, but the boys were more likely to hold mechanical or outdoor jobs while the young women were more likely to hold clerical or medical jobs. They held a similar proportion of the art-related or semi-professional jobs.

To analyze the model presented in Figure One we used multiple regression and path analysis. Path analysis is a way of using multiple regression to examine the direct and indirect influences of a number of variables on a dependent variable in causal models.<sup>4</sup> The analysis procedure involved several steps aimed toward developing the most concise and simple model that would explain influences on young men's and women's attitudes toward the role of women. To simplify interpretations the data were analyzed separately for males and for females. All the variables hypothesized to influence the dependent variable were included in the first analysis of the model. Variables that failed to show either an important direct or indirect influence on the dependent variable were then eliminated from the model to produce the final results presented in the next section.<sup>5</sup>

## Results

The final models of influences on the sex role related attitudes of the males and females in the sample are shown in Figures 2 and 3. The intercorrelations of variables in the models are given in Tables 2 and 4.

Influences on Young Women's Attitudes -- From Table 2 it is apparent that a number of variables from each of the areas of the proposed model show a moderate level of correlation with the young women's sex role related attitudes. Although

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Table Two About Here  
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the mother's work status, the status of the father's occupation, and parental encouragement of competition did not appear in the final model, indicating that these variables had no impact on the dependent variable, the women with more non-traditional sex role related attitudes were more likely to have fathers who had gone to college, saw their mother as making more decisions within the home, perceived both their mother and father as being less satisfied with their lives, reported that their mothers and fathers also held more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women, and reported receiving less encouragement from their mother for general competence than the other young women in the example. They also rated themselves as not getting along all that well with either their father or mother, rated themselves as less similar to their mother and father, had less frequent associations with their parents, held fewer jobs all together, had held an art-related or semi-professional job, and had not held a medical job. Table 2 also gives the intercorrelations among the causal variables in the model. These intercorrelations are important in our interpretations of the indirect effects in the path analysis shown in Figure 2 and Table 3.

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Figure Two and Table Three About Here  
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The Multiple regression indicated that one-fifth of the variation in the young women's attitudes toward the role of women can be explained by variables included in the model. The analysis also revealed that some of the independent variables with a moderate zero-order correlation with the young women's attitudes actually had no direct effect on the dependent variable when the intervening and other independent variables were taken into account.<sup>6</sup> Some variables retained only a slight direct effect on the dependent variable, sending most of their influence



through other independent variables. Finally, a number of variables retained an important direct influence on the young women's attitudes. We discuss each of these groups of variables in the order in which they appear in the model.

In the final analysis, the only independent variables in column A that retained an important direct effect on the young women's attitudes were the father's educational level, and the sex role related attitudes of both the father and mother. The influence of the other variables was largely indirect. Quite independently of the other variables in the model the father's higher educational level influenced more non-traditional attitudes.

While the zero-order correlations supported the hypothesis that greater input of the mother into decisions in the home influences more equalitarian attitudes, in the multiple regression, the direct effect of this variable fell dramatically although the direction of the association remained. From Table 2 we see that in homes where the mother makes more decisions, there tends to be a worse father-daughter relationship. The multivariate analysis shows that the influence of the power division is largely directed through the quality of the father-daughter relationship. Some slight indirect influence also goes through the association of the mother's greater power with her own more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women and her rated lower satisfaction with life.

In the final model the influence of the father's rated satisfaction with life was only indirect, and the influence of the mother's satisfaction dropped dramatically. The indirect influence of the father's satisfaction was through the mother's satisfaction with life, through the father's encouragement of the daughter in general competence, and through the quality of his relationship with his daughter. Most of the influence of the mother's satisfaction with life was channeled through the quality of the father-daughter relationship. When the mother was less satisfied with her own life, the father-daughter relationship also tended to be less good, and controlling for this relationship lowered the influence of the mother's



satisfaction on the daughter's attitudes.

The attitudes of both the mother and father toward the role of women remained influential on the daughter's attitudes in the final model. The two influences are largely independent of each other and in the same direction with daughters who report that their parents hold more non-traditional attitudes reporting than they themselves have more non-traditional views.

The influence of the father and mother's encouragement of competence was totally accounted for by the intervening variables in the model. The influence of the father's encouragement was largely accounted for by the quality of the relationship with the father and to some extent by reported similarity to the father and frequency of associations with him and the reported satisfaction of the mother with her life. The influence of the mother's encouragement of competence was largely accounted for by the association of that variable with the rated similarity to the mother, the frequency of associations with the mother, the quality of the daughter's relationship with her father and mother, and the father's encouragement of competence.

As would be expected from the preceding discussion of indirect effects, the impact of the quality of the relationship with the father remained high in the final analysis. Having a better relationship with the father while in high school influenced a daughter's reporting more traditional attitudes toward the role of women. This influence was enhanced by the indirect impact of the father and mother's satisfaction with life, the parent's encouragement of competence and the reported similarity to and frequency of associations of the daughter with her father. In contrast the quality of the daughter's relationship with the mother did not have a direct effect on the daughter's attitudes in the final model. The intervening variables of the daughter's felt similarity to her mother and the frequency of the mother-daughter associations largely accounted for this association.

Although with the zero-order correlations the rated greater similarity to the father was associated with more traditional attitudes, when the influence of

the other variables was controlled the direction of this association changed, although the magnitude of the association was not overwhelmingly high. By examining the intercorrelations and patterns of indirect effects, it appears that the shift in sign comes from the association of felt similarity to the father with the quality of the relationship with the father. Students who reported feeling less similar also reported having poorer relationships. When the quality of the relationship was controlled, the association between attitudes and felt similarity shifted, with daughters reporting more similarity to the father having more non-traditional attitudes. Similarly, the sign of the association between frequency of contacts with the father and the daughter's attitudes shifted in the multiple regression analysis with the shift in sign coming from the indirect influence through the quality of the relationship with the father. In the multivariate analysis this association switched direction so that the daughters who reported doing more things with their fathers were slightly more likely to have more non-traditional attitudes.

In contrast, the association of less reported similarity to the mother with more non-traditional attitudes remained, although at a slightly lower level. Some of the total effect of this variable had an indirect influence through its association with the frequency of associations with the mother and the quality of the relationship with the father. Similarly, the influence of less reported associations with the mother on more non-traditional attitudes remained in the final analysis (although at a slightly lower level) with some of the indirect effects going through the reported quality of the daughter's relationship with the father.

Three of the variables related to work experiences retained an important influence in the final model. Although students who had fewer jobs overall were more likely to report non-traditional attitudes, having either a mechanical or an art-related or semi-professional job enhanced the probability of having non-traditional attitudes. Due to the positive association between the total number of jobs a student had and having had a medical job, the slight influence of holding a medical related job on more traditional attitudes was lowered when the influence

of the total number of jobs the student held was taken into account.

Comparing these results to our hypothesized model in Figure One, we see that the various intervening and other independent variables accounted totally for the influence of the father's attitude toward his own life, the parents' encouragement of competence, and the quality of the mother-child relationship on the daughter's attitudes. These four variables then had no direct effect on the dependent variable. In general, the parents' division of power, the mother's satisfaction with life, the daughter's felt similarity to and frequency of associations with the father, and the daughter's having a medical related job had only a small direct influence on the daughter's attitudes. Variables which retained important independent and direct influences on the daughter's more non-traditional attitudes in the final model were having a father with a college education, both the mother and the father having more non-traditional sex role related attitudes, worse reported relations of the daughter with her father, less reported similarity and less frequent associations with the mother, having fewer jobs altogether, and having art-related, semi-professional, or mechanical jobs.

Influences on Young Men's Attitudes -- The correlations among variables in the final model of influences on the young men's attitudes toward the role of women are given in Table 4. The model for the males (see Figure Three) is much simpler than that for the females. No variables related to experiences outside the family

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Table Four and Figure Three About Here  
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were retained in the final model, nor was the measure of the father's education, the father's reported satisfaction with life, the mother's encouragement of competence or competition, the quality of relationships with the parents, or the frequency of associations with the parents. From examining the zero-order correlations

in Table 4 it appears that the following associations hold: Young men with more non-traditional attitudes were more likely to have a father in a higher status job, a mother working outside the home, a mother with greater decision making power in the family, a mother who was less satisfied with her own life, both a father and mother with more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women, a father who did not encourage competition but did encourage general competence, and to report less felt similarity to both the father and mother.

In the path analysis shown in Figure 3 all of these variables retained some direct effect on the dependent variable although the magnitude was greatly decreased in some cases, enhanced in others, and generally unaffected in some. Fifteen per cent of the total variation in the young men's attitudes was explained by variables in the model.

The influence of family status remained as an independent and direct effect with a magnitude similar to that found in the zero-order correlation. Young men from families with fathers in higher status occupations were more likely to have non-traditional views. The influence of having a mother who worked outside the home on more non-traditional attitudes also remained intact.

The most dramatic drop in direct influence came in the effect of the division of power between the parents. In the multiple regression it is apparent that most of this effect is indirect through the association of the greater decision making power of the mother with her lower rated satisfaction with life and with the son's rated lower similarity to the father.

The influence of the mother's satisfaction with life rose in the multivariate analysis, generally from the indirect influence of the father's encouragement of competence and to some extent from the indirect influence of the son's felt similarity to the mother.

While the influence of the father's more non-traditional attitudes on his son expressing more non-traditional views largely remained in the path analysis, the influence of the mother's views dropped. The mother's attitudes generally only indirectly affected the son's views through the correlation of the mother's attitudes with the father's reported views. Some of the indirect effect also went through the association of the mother's more non-traditional attitudes with her work status and with less felt similarity of the son to his father.

Although with the zero-order correlations there was only a slight influence of the father's greater encouragement of competence on the son's more non-traditional attitudes, this influence was greatly increased with the multivariate analysis. This increase generally came from the indirect influence of the mother's lower rated satisfaction with life and the son's felt similarity to the father.

The influence of the father's failure to encourage competition on more non-traditional attitudes dropped slightly in the multivariate analysis. This comes from the association of less encouragement of competition with more non-traditional attitudes of the father and less reported similarity of the son to the father.

The influence of a son expressing less similarity to the father on his voicing more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women remained strong in the final analysis. However, the moderate influence of less rated similarity to the mother on more non-traditional attitudes of the son dropped in the multivariate analysis. Most of the drop came from the indirect influence of this variable on the son's attitude through its association with the reported similarity to the father.

In comparing the results obtained with the young men with the model given

in Figure One, it is apparent that only a portion of that model holds. No intervening influences were found to be significant. Measures of the father's educational level, the father's reported satisfaction with life, the mother's encouragement of competence or competition, the quality of relations with the parents, the frequency of association with the parents, and experiences outside the home did not enter the final model. The parent's division of decision making power, the mother's sex role related attitudes, the father's encouragement of competition, and the son's rated similarity to his mother had only slight influences in the final model. Variables which retained important and independent direct effects in the final analysis were the status of the father's occupation, the mother's work status, the mother's satisfaction with life, the father's sex role related attitudes, the father's encouraging general competence, and the son's felt similarity to his father.

#### Discussion and Summary

In the model in Figure One we hypothesized that students' sex role related attitudes would be influenced by A) the status of the parental family, the mother's work status, the parents' division of power, the parents' attitudes toward their own lives, their sex role related attitudes and their encouragement of their children; B) the quality of the child's relationship with its mother and father; C) the felt similarity to and frequency of associations with the parents; and D) experiences outside the parental family. Variables in Column C were hypothesized as intervening in the influence of variables in columns A and B on the dependent variable, and variables in Column B were seen as intervening to those in column A.

With both the males and the females, coming from a higher status family influenced more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women. For females,

the father's educational level entered the model; for males, the father's occupational status was the important variable. The influence of the father's status on more non-traditional views was largely independent of the other variables in the model, and likely reflects a middle class tradition of more liberal attitudes toward sex roles.

The mother's work status only entered into the model of influences on the young men's attitudes toward the role of women, where it had an important direct effect on the son's attitudes. Young men with mothers who worked outside the home were more likely to report more non-traditional attitudes. While our previous work (Stockard, 1974) suggests that the mother's work status may influence areas of sex role related choices other than the daughter's attitudes, such as her own work plans, this analysis suggests that the mother's working influences the more non-traditional attitudes of only the young men.

Although the measure of the parent's division of decision making power entered the final models for both the males and females, it had only a minimal direct effect on the dependent variable. With the females, the indirect effect was largely channeled through the measure of the quality of the father-daughter relationship. With the males, the indirect effect was channeled through the rated similarity of the young men to their father and their reports of their mother's satisfaction with life. This variable likely then reflects other areas of family life and interaction than just decision making power.

The reported satisfaction with life of both the mother and father entered the model of influences on the female's attitudes, and the reported satisfaction of the mother entered the male's model. However, with the females, the influence of the father's life satisfaction was largely accounted for by the intervening and other independent variables and it had no direct effect on the daughter's



attitudes. The direct effect of the mother's satisfaction on the daughter's attitudes dropped dramatically in the final analysis with most of the indirect effect channeled through the quality of the father-daughter relationship. In contrast, with the males, the influence of the mother's satisfaction with life rose in the final analysis, enhanced by the indirect influence of the father's encouraging competence and, to some extent, by the indirect influence of the rated similarity to the mother. In the final models, then, the daughter's report of her parent's satisfaction with life had little effect on her sex role related attitudes, while with the sons, less reported satisfaction of the mother influenced more non-traditional sex role related attitudes. This may indicate that sons who perceived that their mothers were unhappy were more apt to consider arrangements other than the traditional female roles, while with the daughters a mother's lower satisfaction was largely related to other aspects of family life, especially those involving the father.

The parent's attitudes toward the role of women retained important influences on their children's attitudes in the final model. For the females having both a father and a mother with more non-traditional attitudes influenced her giving more non-traditional responses. For the males, the primary influence came from the father's attitudes, with more non-traditional views of the father influencing the son's more non-traditional views, while the influence of the mother was largely indirect. Certainly, parents, and especially the father for males, legitimating more non-traditional female roles through their own attitudes had an important effect on the attitudes of their children.

Measures of how much the parents encouraged their children in general competence and in competition were included in the analysis. The measures of encouragement of competition did not enter at all into the models for the females,



and the influence of the measures of encouragement of competence were totally accounted for by the intervening variables of the quality of relationship with the parents, the daughter's similarity to her parents and the frequency of associations with them. In the model for the young men, the measures of the mother's encouragement of competence or competition did not enter the model. However, both measures for the father did have an influence. The influence of the father's less encouragement of competition on more non-traditional attitudes declined in the final analysis while the father's encouragement of competence became more important with the father's encouraging more general competence increasing the probability of the son giving more non-traditional responses to the questions on the roles of women. Perhaps the father encouraging the son in overall competence as distinct from a competitive orientation helps the son be more flexible and thus more accepting of non-traditional and changing sex roles.

The measures of the young people's quality of relationship with their parents only entered the models for the women. The mother-daughter relationship had no direct influence on the dependent variable, its influence being entirely accounted for by the intervening variables of the felt similarity with the mother and the frequency of associations with the mother. In contrast, the quality of the father-daughter relationship retained an important impact on the daughter's attitudes with the influence of several other family related variables channeled through it. Reporting a closer relationship with their fathers influenced more traditional attitudes. This lends support to theories such as that of Miriam Johnson (1963, 1975) that it is the quality of the father-daughter relationship rather than the mother-daughter relationship that reinforces traditional sex-typing. Although similar claims are made in the literature for influences on sex-typing of males, we did not find this association. Attitudes toward the role of women

may not be as critical to male's definition of their own masculinity as they are to female's definition of their femininity, and so we cannot dismiss the possibility that the father-son relationship may also influence aspects of male sex-role development.

The measure of the felt similarity of the students to their parents appeared in both the models for the males and the females. For the males, the influence of the rated similarity to the mother in the final model was only indirect, going through the influence of the son's rated similarity to the father. However, the son's rated similarity to the father retained an important direct influence in the final model, with less reported similarity influencing more non-traditional attitudes toward the role of women, perhaps indicating that the more non-traditional young men have not taken their fathers as "models" or at least do not see themselves as similar to their fathers.

Different patterns occurred in the model for the young women. The influence of reported similarity to the mother on the daughter's attitudes remained in the final model with less reported similarity influencing more non-traditional attitudes, suggesting that more non-traditional women tend to not take their mothers as models. This parallels the finding that the more non-traditional young men rated themselves as less similar to their parent of like sex, the father. Although the zero-order correlation between the daughter's attitudes and her rated similarity to the father was in the same direction, a shift occurred in the multivariate analysis. Largely because of indirect influences through the quality of the relationship with the father, in the final analysis this association shifted so that there was a slight tendency for greater rated similarity to the father to influence the reporting of more non-traditional attitudes. The findings using the measure of reported frequency of associations with the parents parallel this finding.

These results help clarify seemingly conflicting findings in earlier literature. While some studies have noted that more non-traditional women may

have less warm relationships with their father, others have found that more non-traditional women "identify" more closely with or see themselves as more similar to their fathers. We suggest that the apparent contradictions come from a failure to adequately distinguish the variables involved. The warmth of the father-daughter relationship may contribute directly to sex role development and identification, essentially the learning of sex role differentiated personality traits after the period of early infancy. Parental identification may be seen as the extent to which an individual sees his or her actions, beliefs, and attitudes as similar to those of his or her parents; while sex role identification may be seen as the identification of an individual with the usual or normative behaviors or attitudes appropriate to her or his sex group. It could well happen that a woman who did not have a solidary role relationship with her father and later was less "feminine" than other women would come to see her personality traits as more like the qualities of her father than those of her mother. Or, conceivably seeing both parents as representing traditional life-styles and attitudes, the woman would reject both parents as not worthy of her admiration. Some support for this interpretation may come from Tangri's finding (1972:182-3) that more non-traditional women in terms of career choices may have warmer relationships with their mother than their father, yet feel they are similar to their father, but have cognitive distance from and an autonomous relationship with both parents.

Our results lend some support to this interpretation. In the multivariate analysis, controlling for the impact of other variables in the model, we found that having a less warm relationship with the father influenced more non-traditional attitudes. Independent of this influence, young women who rated themselves as more similar to their fathers and less similar to their mothers were more likely to report non-traditional views. Each of these influences, though not overwhelmingly large, operated independently of the others.

Finally, we hypothesized that experiences outside the parental family would

influence the sex role related attitudes of the young people. This was only true for the women, where having either an art-related or semi-professional job or a job in a mechanics related field influenced having more non-traditional attitudes. These findings were quite important given that having fewer jobs overall tended to also influence more non-traditional attitudes. Perhaps participating in more non-traditional fields increased the young women's awareness of the possible roles for women and barriers they face, and consequently influenced their attitudes. There was only a slight tendency for experience in medical related fields to promote more traditional attitudes. The jobs that the young women held in this category tended to be within traditionally helping and serving roles, and would not be likely to challenge traditional views of sex roles. The finding that these extra-familial activities do not affect males' attitudes could suggest either that male's job experiences tend to be in such sex segregated or stereotyped areas that they provide little challenge to their conceptions of appropriate sex roles, or that male's views are so entrenched that experiences do little to change their attitudes.

We feel this analysis has three implications for future work in this area. First, careful multivariate analysis of influences on sex role related measures should be encouraged. Many of the studies reviewed earlier in this paper used only the most elementary analytical techniques, which likely contributed to many of the contradictory findings that were cited. Second, it is important to analyze influences on both the sex role related attitudes of men and those of women.<sup>7</sup> Some of the findings found here for women were not replicated with the data for the men, and at times the results were even reversed. Finally, it must be remembered that the dependent variable in this analysis was the young people's attitudes toward the role of women. Our earlier research (Stockard, 1974) has indicated that strikingly different patterns of influence will be found on different measures of sex role related variables. Some of the earlier writings in this field were

often imprecise in defining the nature of the dependent variable. Greater precision can only aid in more adequate formulation of the nature of influences on the development of sex role related attitudes and other related variables, and similar analyses are needed to explore influences on other areas of sex roles.

## FOOTNOTES

1. We are currently engaged in research dealing with this question.
2. While some researchers may object to reducing such a complex process as the development of sex role related attitudes to a simple causal model, we feel such a step does not deny the complex nature of sex role development and is necessary if researchers in this field are to develop better explanatory models. We do not deny that a complete model of sex role development would require numerous feed-back loops indicating that, for instance, a young person's attitudes could influence the nature of his or her relationship with a parent. We have eliminated such feedback loops from this model simply to aid in analysis. Certainly the total formulation of this process will eventually require detailed examination of such feedback. We contend that it is important now to examine how each of the variables in the model influence the nature of young people's sex role related attitudes. Moreover, most of the research cited in the first section of this paper failed to involve any kind of multivariate analysis that controlled for possible intercorrelations among the causal variables. Such an analysis is essential if we are to begin to develop theoretical explanations that can integrate the sometimes conflicting empirical findings.
3. Although nine items were originally used in this scale, two items did not correlate highly with the others for the men and were thus eliminated from the model. These items were "The joys of motherhood do not make up for the sacrifices," and "Jokes about women are made in good humor and aren't really insults to women."

4. In analyzing the nature of the direct and indirect effects we used the general theorem of path analysis (See Land, 1969 and Duncan, 1966). In general this theorem says that  $r_{ij} = \sum P_{ik} r_{kj}$  (where k runs over all independent variables) and that a correlation between an independent and dependent variable may be broken into the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable that is direct (represented by the path coefficient or the standardized multiple regression coefficient) and that which is indirect (the difference between the correlation and the path coefficient, which in turn can be broken into the influence directed through each of the other independent variables in the model using the general theorem of path analysis).

5. As the first step in analyzing the model, all the variables theorized as influencing the dependent variable were entered into the regression equation. Variables whose multiple regression coefficient was not large enough to yield an F-ratio greater than .5 were then eliminated from the model. The only exceptions to this rule were variables where there was a difference between the zero-order correlation and the standardized multiple regression coefficient that was large enough to indicate there was an important indirect influence on the dependent variable (a difference of about .07 was used as the cut-off point). This procedure was then repeated to winnow the model to its most concise form.

6. It is important to emphasize that if we had arranged the sequence of variables in the model in a different order we could have found that variables other than those noted below had no direct effects.

7. Future work must also deal explicitly with attitudes toward the appropriate sex roles for men.

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Figure One  
 The Theoretical Model  
 Influences on the Sex Role Related Attitudes of Young Men and Women

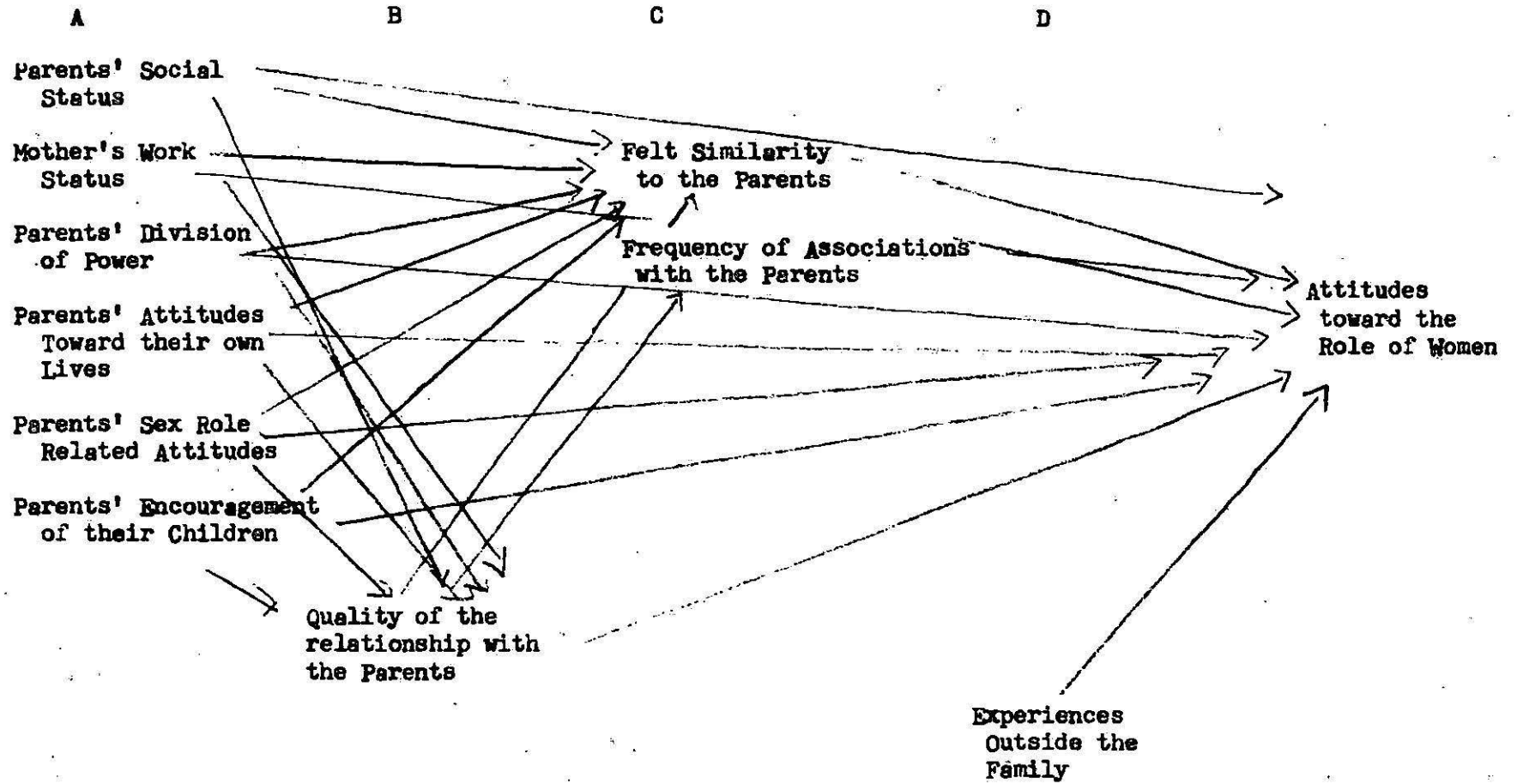


Figure Two

Final Model of Influences on the Sex Role Related Attitudes of Young Women

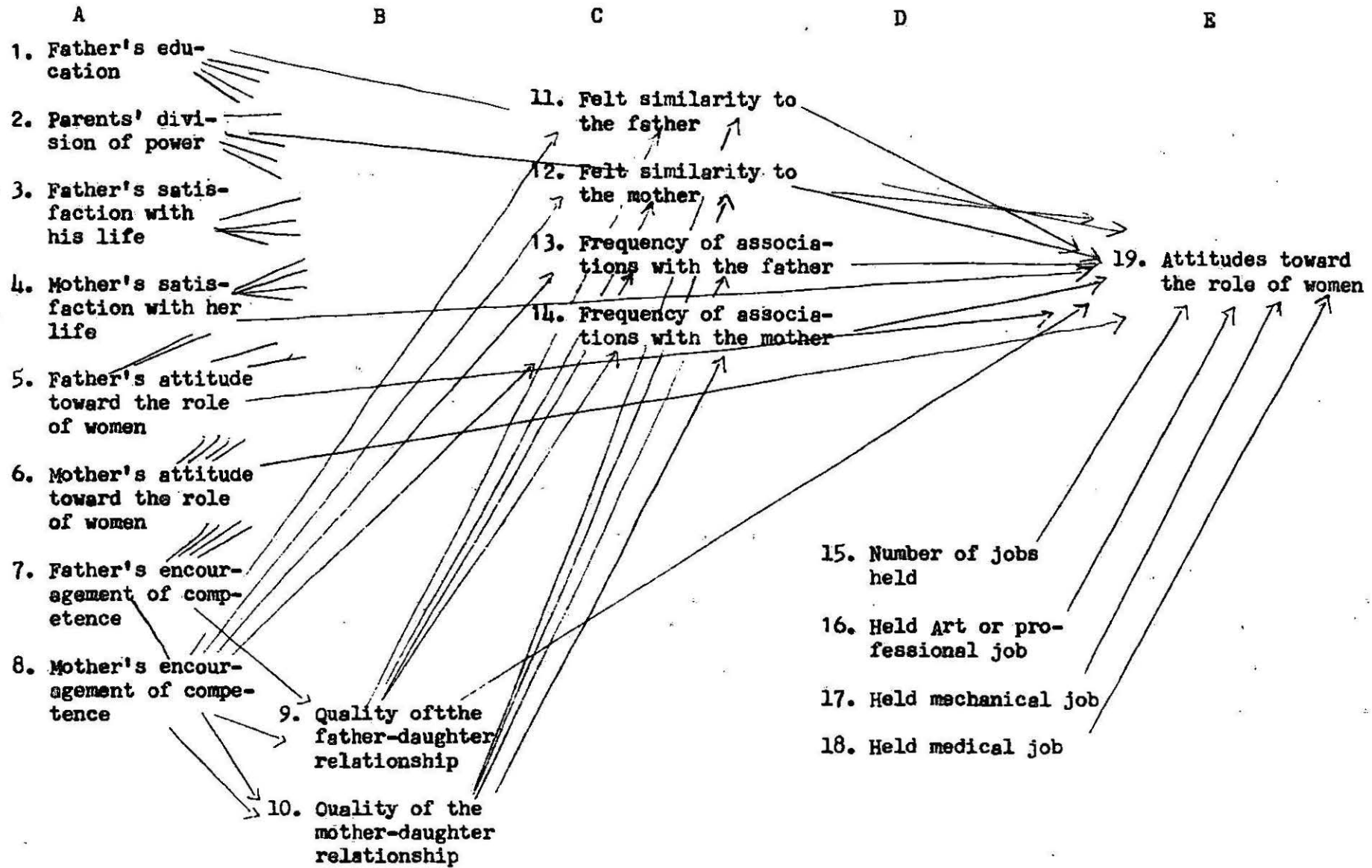
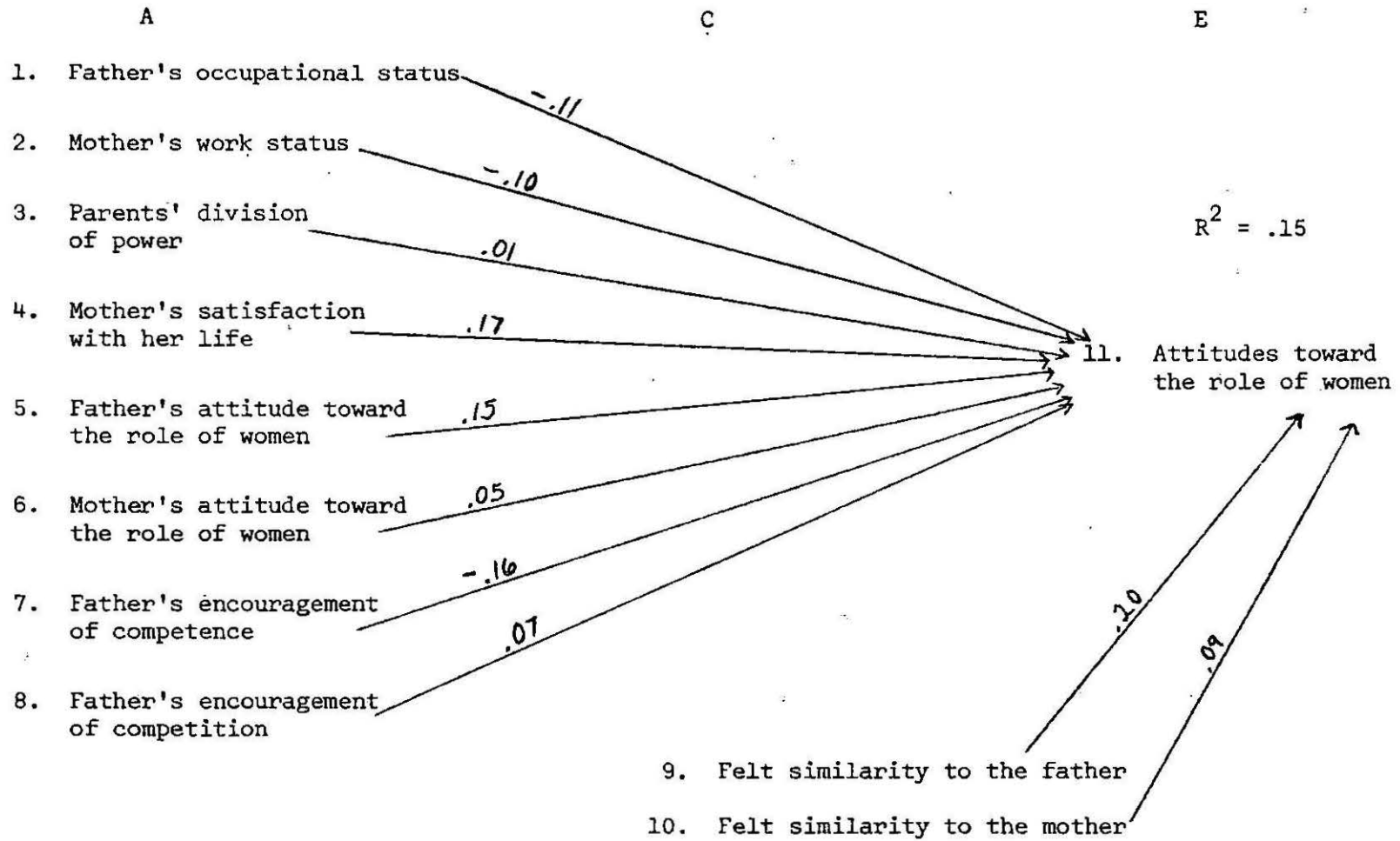


Figure Three

Final Model of Influences on the Sex Role Related Attitudes of Young Men



Coefficients placed on the arrows are the path coefficients or standardized multiple regression coefficients

Table One

Variables Used in the Models

1. Parents' Education	Males %	Females %
1. Both mother and father had less than college	30.2	33.2
2. Either mother or father had college	34.3	25.7
3. Both mother and father had college	<u>35.5</u> 100.0	<u>41.1</u> 100.0

2. Attitudes of the students toward the Role of Women

Items included in the scale:

A woman has little to gain through participation in the present Women's Liberation Movement.

\*A woman should not sacrifice her work or her career to meet the needs of her family any more than her husband does.

By their very nature, men are more suited for positions of leadership and authority than women.

It would be wrong for a woman to work if her husband didn't want her to, Motherhood and the family provide a woman with all she needs for a happy and productive life.

It is not right for a woman to go into a field of work where she may take a job away from a man who has to support a family.

\*I would be willing to vote for a woman for President of the United States.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
$\bar{X}$	22.30	24.97
s	4.98	5.14
range	7 - 35	10 - 35

A higher score indicates more non-traditional attitudes. Starred items were reversed in making the summated measure.



Table One, Page 2

3. Parents' Division of Power	Males %	Females %
1. Father made most of the important decisions	38.6	26.1
2. Father made more of the important decisions	36.5	26.5
3. Father and Mother made about the same number of important decisions	16.5	30.8
4. Mother made more of the important decisions	<u>8.4</u>	<u>16.6</u>
	100.0	100.0

4. Parent's Attitude toward their own Lives

When I was in high school my father seemed generally satisfied with his life.

	Males %	Females %
1. Very true	38.7	41.9
2. Tends to be true	40.7	34.0
3. Less than true	<u>20.6</u>	<u>24.1</u>
	100.0	100.0

When I was in high school my mother seemed generally satisfied with her life.

	Males %	Females %
1. Very true	32.5	30.4
2. Tends to be true	48.6	45.1
3. Less than true	<u>18.9</u>	<u>24.5</u>
	100.0	100.0

5. Parents' Attitudes toward the Role of Women

When I was in high school my father thought women's place was in the home.

	Males %	Females %
1. Very true	10.8	9.1
2. Tends to be true	36.1	12.6
2.5 Midway to tends to be true and untrue (not a listed category)	2.0	1.6
3. Tends to be untrue	36.5	43.1
4. Very untrue	<u>14.5</u>	<u>33.6</u>
	100.0	100.0

When I was in high school my mother thought women's place was in the home.

	Males %	Females %
1. Very true	10.4	8.3
2. Tends to be true	36.9	21.7
2.5 Midway check	2.8	0.4
3. Tends to be untrue	34.5	47.0
4. Very untrue	<u>15.3</u>	<u>22.5</u>
	100.0	100.0

6. Parental encouragement of competence.

Items included in the scale:

When I was in high school my father (mother)

1. respected my judgment
- \*2. refused to take me seriously
3. encouraged me to do things on my own
4. liked for me to think for myself
5. respected my point of view
6. treated me like an adult
- \*7. thought I was incompetent
- \*8. seemed to think I was helpless

starred items were reversed in constructing the measure

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for fathers		
$\bar{X}$	13.65	13.16
s	4.08	4.47
range	8 - 28	8 - 30
Measure for mothers		
$\bar{X}$	13.41	12.66
s	3.82	4.18
range	8 - 27	8 - 32

A lower score indicates more encouragement of competence.

7. Parents' encouragement of competition

Items included in the scale:

When I was in high school my father (mother)

1. encouraged me to go to the top in the work I chose
2. thought I should push myself to the limit in competition
3. expected a lot from me

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for fathers		
$\bar{X}$	6.00	6.71
s	1.98	1.96
range	3 - 12	3 - 12
Measure for mothers		
$\bar{X}$	5.99	6.74
s	1.96	1.90
range	3 - 12	3 - 12

A lower score indicates more encouragement of competition.

8. Quality of the parent-child relationship

Items included in the scale:

When I was in high school my father (mother)

- \*1. ignored me unless I disturbed him (her)
- 2. sympathized with me when things were not going well
- \*3. sometimes acted as if I was invisible.
- 4. was genuinely interested in my activities
- 5. was very affectionate toward me
- 6. above all wanted me to be happy

Starred items were reversed in creating the summated scale

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for fathers		
$\bar{X}$	11.25	10.90
s	3.43	4.13
range	6 - 22	6 - 24
Measure for mothers		
$\bar{X}$	9.64	9.07
s	2.88	2.94
range	6 - 20	6 - 21

A lower score indicates better quality of relationship

9. Rated Similarity to the Parents

Items included in the scale:

When I was in high school my father (mother)

- 1. tended to react to things the same way I did
- 2. had life goals that were similar to mine
- 3. had work habits similar to mine

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for fathers		
$\bar{X}$	7.55	7.88
s	1.92	2.14
range	3 - 12	3 - 12

Rated similarity to the parents (continued)

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for mothers		
$\bar{X}$	8.03	7.43
s	1.98	2.09
range	3 - 12	3 - 12

A lower score indicates greater rated similarity.

10. Frequency of associations with the parents

Items included in the scale:

1. When you were in high school, did you and your father (mother) ever do things together, mainly the two of you?
2. When you were in high school, did you and your father (mother) ever talk things over, mainly the two of you?

Responses ranged on a five point scale from "yes, frequently" to "never."

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Measure for fathers		
$\bar{X}$	4.80	5.18
s	1.89	2.29
range	2 - 10	2 - 10

Measure for mothers		
$\bar{X}$	4.92	3.26
s	1.83	1.65
range	2 - 10	2 - 10

A lower score indicates more frequent associations.

11. Number of jobs the student listed that she or he had held after school or in the summer

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
$\bar{X}$	2.74	2.87
s	1.74	1.56
range	0 - 9	0 - 8

12. Type of job the student had held

	<u>Males</u> %	<u>Females</u> %
1. Mechanical type job		
1. had not held the job	49.8	71.9
2. had held the job	50.2	28.1
2. Art related or semi-professional job		
1. had not held the job	83.5	87.7
2. had held the job	16.5	12.3
3. Medical related job		
1. had not held the job	96.8	82.2
2. had held the job	3.2	17.8

Table Two

Intercorrelations of Variables in the Model of Influences  
on the Attitudes of Young Women

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Father's education	-.04	-.21	-.14	.11	.03	-.19	-.05	-.19	-.04	-.14	-.04	-.25	-.12	.08	.11	-.07	-.06	.11
2. Parents' power div.	1.00	.13	.24	.06	.18	.14	-.04	.27	.04	.27	.02	.19	-.04	-.02	.14	-.08	-.12	.17
3. Father's sat. with life	1.00	.53	-.12	-.03	.44	.21	.44	.28	.38	.14	.31	.14	-.01	-.02	.04	.10	.11	
4. Mother's sat. with life		1.00	-.14	-.03	.40	.33	.44	.40	.35	.19	.35	.28	-.02	.10	-.03	-.01	.17	
5. Father's attitude toward women's role	1.00			<u>.43</u>	-.33	-.11	-.26	-.05	-.08	-.01	-.23	.01	.06	-.02	.05	.04	.16	
6. Mother's attitude toward women's role		1.00			1.00	-.13	-.32	-.01	-.12	.19	-.16	.02	-.13	.04	.07	-.03	.05	.16
7. Father's encouraging competence					1.00	.51	.71	.42	.57	.27	.62	.30	-.11	.01	-.01	.01	.08	
8. Mother's encouraging competence						1.00	.30	.66	.18	.45	.28	.50	-.14	-.03	.02	-.07	.14	
9. Quality of father-daughter relationship							1.00	.46	.52	.23	.69	.25	-.11	-.04	-.06	-.03	.15	
10. Quality of mother-daughter relationship								1.00	.26	.50	.33	.60	-.11	-.04	-.01	.04	.15	
11. Similarity to father									1.00	.34	.55	.17	.02	.06	-.09	-.04	.09	
12. Similarity to mother										1.00	.23	.44	-.07	.01	-.01	-.09	.19	
13. Frequency of associations with father											1.00	.35	-.14	-.01	-.03	-.01	.08	
14. Frequency of associations with mother												1.00	-.07	-.04	.05	.06	.17	
15. Number of jobs held													1.00	.19	.22	.17	-.11	
16. Held art or professional job														1.00	-.05	-.08	.18	
17. Held mechanical job															1.00	.08	.04	
18. Held medical job																1.00	-.12	
19. Student's attitudes toward the role of women																		1.00

This correlation is a lot lower than the ones you found. Could this come from the different scales being tapped? ~~When~~ Mother & father may disagree more in the area of my role?

Table Three

Structural Equations for Final Model of Influences  
on the Sex Role Related Attitudes of Young Women

$$X_9 = -.02 X_1 + .13 X_2 + .08 X_3 + .13 X_4 + -.06 X_5 + .06 X_6 \\ + .62 X_7 + -.06 X_8 \quad R^2 = .57$$

$$X_{10} = .03 X_1 + -.002 X_2 + .07 X_3 + .16 X_4 + .02 X_5 + .08 X_6 \\ + .04 X_7 + .60 X_8 \quad R^2 = .48$$

$$X_{11} = -.01 X_1 + .11 X_2 + .10 X_3 + .06 X_4 + .01 X_5 + .21 X_6 \\ + .47 X_7 + -.09 X_8 + .09 X_9 + .05 X_{10} \quad R^2 = .44$$

$$X_{12} = -.02 X_1 + .02 X_2 + -.003 X_3 + -.03 X_4 + .08 X_5 + -.09 X_6 \\ + .06 X_7 + .16 X_8 + -.008 X_9 + .38 X_{10} \quad R^2 = .29$$

$$X_{13} = -.12 X_1 + .007 X_2 + -.06 X_3 + .04 X_4 + -.04 X_5 + .07 X_6 \\ + .25 X_7 + .02 X_8 + .49 X_9 + -.01 X_{10} \quad R^2 = .53$$

$$X_{14} = -.11 X_1 + -.04 X_2 + -.10 X_3 + .10 X_4 + .11 X_5 + -.05 X_6 \\ + .08 X_7 + .13 X_8 + .05 X_9 + .49 X_{10} \quad R^2 = .41$$

$$X_{19} = .12 X_1 + .08 X_2 + .09 X_4 + .13 X_5 + .14 X_6 + .16 X_9 \\ + -.08 X_{11} + .13 X_{12} + -.06 X_{13} + .11 X_{14} + -.14 X_{15} \\ + .18 X_{16} + .10 X_{17} + -.07 X_{18} \quad R^2 = .21$$

The coefficients in the equations are path coefficients or standardized multiple regression coefficients. Numbers with each variable correspond to the listing in Figure Two.

