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**CAREER AND FAMILY: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
OF WORKING MOTHERS**

by

Barbara Crummer Lincoln

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

University of San Diego

2000

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Career and Family: A Qualitative Study of Working Mothers

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the lives of working mothers. The dramatic increase of mothers in the workforce in the past 40 years has led to an increasingly common lifestyle: women filling the roles of mother and professional concurrently. This dissertation used the personal narrative qualitative methodology to examine the lives of working mothers.

Ten female graduates of the University of San Diego's Law School (JD), Business School (MBA) and Educational Administration Programs were interviewed by the researcher. These women have been in the workplace for an extended period of time, are currently raising at least one child in their home, and live in San Diego County.

The interviews touched on topics such as: the changes parenthood caused in the women's career, the experiences the interviewees had with discrimination, the influences the media portrayal of working mothers had on their chosen lifestyle and any particularly satisfying or regretful decisions the women interviewees made in blending work and family.

Through an analysis of the interviewee's personal narratives, themes were sought out and used as generative guides for finding meaning in the interviews of the working mothers. These themes formed the organizing framework for the study

results. Ten themes emerged from the interviews with the women which then fit into three overarching categories. The three categories are Formative Influences, Making it Work, and Looking Back.

A second analysis of the interview data described the benefits and challenges of the working mother lifestyle, as well as specific balancing strategies used by the women in the study. In addition, the change in identity from a full time professional to a working mother was described by the interviewees.

The findings of the study showed that the 10 working mothers interviewed have created a satisfactory balance between their professional and family lives. They depend upon the support of their spouses and others to meet all the demands of this lifestyle. Several potential areas for future research are reviewed.

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This study would not have been possible without the help, assistance, and support of a number of people. The 10 working mothers who participated in the study provided invaluable insights into their lives. Their stories are the essence of this study. My thanks and heartfelt gratitude goes to them all.

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Through the doctorate program at the University of San Diego, I had the good fortune to get to know several students who became my friends. As a group, we supported and cheered one another on as we worked our way through the course work, comprehensive examinations, and the dissertation process. I was the final one of our group to complete my dissertation. I want to acknowledge and thank each and every one of these special people for their assistance, advice, resources (I will return those books!), and support throughout the 5 years we studied, wrote, presented, learned,

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Introduction

Working parents face many challenges each day: caring for a sick child, getting involved with their children's school lives while meeting career demands and insuring that their children have safe, enriching day care experiences. Dual career couples also experience the joy and satisfaction of raising children and participating in fulfilling roles in the workplace. The need to achieve a satisfactory balance between one's work and family life is essential to effective functioning in each of these realms.

The number of dual career families has grown exponentially in the past 20 years. Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1997) found that 46% of employees are also parents. In 1976, there were 17 million dual-earner couples and in 1996 that number has grown to 27.8 million, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Catalyst, 1998). With close to half of the mothers and fathers of children under the age of 18 in the workforce, parents are striving to maintain a balance between work and family life in ever increasing numbers.

While only 49% of married male employees with children less than 18 years old had employed partners in 1977, 67% do today (Bond et al., 1997). In the late 1970s, only about half of women ages 20-50 worked outside the home, whereas in the late

1990s, 75 % of women do so (Nickels & Ashcraft, as cited in Edmonds, 1998). In 1965, 25 % of mothers with children less than 5 years old were employed; in 1994, that figure had reached 63 % (Fuligni, Galinsky, & Poris, 1995).

Even more dramatic has been the rise in labor force participation for mothers of infants and toddlers. In 1965, 21 % of mothers of infants and toddlers were employed; by 1994, that number had increased to 59%. In 1999, nearly a third of the employed women in the U.S. workforce had children under age 13; 38 % had children under age 18 (Hickey, 1999). According to the Work and Families Institute, only 17% of families reflect the “traditional” stay-at-home mother and wage-earning father (Bond et al., 1997).

The tremendous growth in the working mothers’ population represents a profound social shift in our country (Chira, 1998; Edmonds, 1998; Hochschild, 1988). Though both working parents are impacted by the issues arising out of this complex way of life, more frequently, the mother is the one on whom the scheduling, child care, meal preparation, and household maintenance responsibilities fall (Bond et al., 1997; Crosby, 1991; Hochschild, 1988; Ozer, 1995).

Women now lead dramatically different lives than any generation before them. As Sheila W. Wellington, the president of Catalyst, a nonprofit research organization dedicated to the advancement of women in the workplace, puts it: “They have more money, more independence, more influence — and that has made their lives more satisfying” (Wellington, as cited in Hickey, 1999, p. 60). Employed mothers are more likely to assume primary responsibility for the care of their children than employed

fathers (71 % vs. 5%) (Fuligni et al., 1995; Ozer, 1995). Several researchers have found, however, that fathers are increasing the amount of time they spend with their children on both work and nonwork days (Bond et al., 1997; Pleck, 1985).

Working women are doing the majority of the work in the home and have always typically managed the day-to-day tasks of running a household (Crosby, 1991; Ozer, 1995). A distinction has been made between participation in domestic activities and responsibility for them (Moen, 1982). When both spouses work, husbands may share in completing the household duties, but the wife retains the primary responsibility for the family domestic life (Moen, 1982; Pleck, 1985).

Pleck (1985) found:

Overall, the preponderance of evidence is that men's time in the family is increasing while women's is decreasing. Men and women are moving toward convergence in their family time, though it will be a long time — if ever — before they reach parity. More of the convergence is due to women's decrease than to men's increase, though men's increase is not trivial. (pp. 146-147)

Pleck (1985) cites an overall societal trend toward less time spent by all adults engaging in child care and household duties. He says that women's decreasing family and household time is a result of the trend toward fewer children in the family (decreasing total child care and household time since children generate much of the need for housework). The increase in men's family time has occurred despite relatively smaller family sizes (Pleck, 1985). One study found that employed fathers are more involved in the care of children than any other aspect of family work, except doing repairs (Fuligni et al., 1995).

Hochschild (1988) coined the term “second shift” (p. 4) to characterize the work most women do at home (housework and child care) after they return from their paid employment. Figures vary between 55.7% (Bond et al., 1997) and 84% (Thurer, 1994) of the household chores being done by working women. According to some estimates, women spend as much aggregate time on housework as did their grandmothers yet, 70% of educated mothers with young children are in the workforce today, most of them full time (Thurer, 1994).

Hochschild (1988) averaged estimates from previous studies done on time use of working mothers and fathers and concluded that, in the course of a year, women worked an extra month of twenty 4-hour days a year doing housework and child care. She went on to calculate that a dozen years of this housework and child care work load would total an extra year of 24-hour days.

In a study examining the division of child care between husbands and wives with equal income and job prestige, Ozer (1995) found that women’s contribution of equal (or greater) economic resources to the family does not necessarily result in equality within couples when it comes to negotiating work and family responsibilities. Ozer interviewed 42 professional women who were also mothers and found that they typically assumed full responsibility for childcare, though there was some variance in how well they managed the dual roles of work and family. Belief in their ability to cope with the demands of occupational and familial roles acted to mediate the psychological distress caused by juggling work and family duties. If a woman believed

she could enlist the assistance of her spouse, she would demonstrate an increase in well being and reduced distress (Ozer, 1995).

Hochschild (1988) discusses the fast, condensed pace at which families must complete all their responsibilities. For the family with two working parents, there is no more time in the day, but there is twice as much to get done as when families had only one breadwinner working outside the home. Women absorb most of this “speed-up” due to the requirement that the duties most typically performed by women must be done daily, e.g., child care and meal preparation. Men typically make contributions to the family chores with such tasks as changing the oil in the car and repairing the appliances; however, due to the infrequent or at-will timing of these chores, men have more control over when they make these contributions than women (Hochschild, 1988).

Women have been in the workforce in large numbers for a generation. The first full-fledged generation of women in the professions did not talk about their overbooked agenda or the toll it took on them and their families (Swiss & Walker, 1993). They knew that their position in the office was tenuous. With no choice in the matter, and, given their achievement-orientation, these working women adopted the traditional notion of success in the workplace. Most often, this work place success was achieved at the high cost of giving up an involved family life (Swiss & Walker, 1993).

Working mothers are expected to be involved parents and efficient homemakers with little recognition in the workplace that they have other significant life roles outside the office. In a study by the Families and Work Institute (Fuligni et al., 1995), employed mothers report that even though they are more likely than employed fathers

to work fewer hours per week (42.2 vs. 48.2), they would prefer to work even less. Their preference would be to work 32.5 hours per week (5.8 hours less than their actual hours), whereas fathers in this study would prefer to work 41.2 hours per week (6.7 hours less than their actual hours).

Though some working men and women would like to reduce their work hours in an effort to address the difficulty of combining the roles of involved parent and effective, high-achieving employee (Fuligni et al., 1995), another study found that 65% of dual career parents say they would continue working even if they could survive on one income (Catalyst, 1998). This same study also found evidence of such concepts as the “glass ceiling,” “maternal wall,” and “mommy track” as working mothers were more likely to scale back their career goals compared to working women (52% vs. 32%). There is ample evidence that employment outside the home has positive psychological effects for women (Barnett & Baruch, 1985); nonetheless, many working mothers have personal stories to illustrate the concepts of workplace discrimination noted above (Catalyst, 1998; Crosby, 1991; Swiss & Walker, 1993).

Statement of the Problem

As reported in the National Study of the Changing Workforce (Bond et al., 1997), the U.S. wage and salaried labor force has become more balanced with respect to gender from 1977 to 1997. The percentage of female workers has increased from 42% to 48%. While only 49% of married male employees with children less than 18 years of age had employed partners in 1977, 67% do in 1998. This trend is expected to continue (Bond et al., 1997; Chira, 1998; Hochschild, 1998).

Thus, it appears likely that the majority of mothers will be spending some time during their lives as employees. It is incumbent on us to explore how the roles of mother and employee are experienced by the women filling them. This study explored the experiences of working mothers in professional occupations. Female graduates of the University of San Diego's Law school (JD), Business school (MBA) and Educational Administration (Administrative Credential) programs who were currently working outside the home and raising children were interviewed to gain insight into their experiences combining the roles of mother and employee. As graduates of one of these three programs, the women in this study were working as high level professionals, as well as mothers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of mothers who are also working as professionals. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study so that various aspects of the working mother's life could be explored and examined in an unencumbered and free-flowing manner. Further research may be suggested as a result of the discovery of unexplored areas through the use of a qualitative interview format. This study is unique because it uses the qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10

high-achieving, professional working mothers. The vast majority of studies about working mothers have used a quantitative methodology.

The potential benefits of the proposed study include increasing understanding of the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, workplace and home-based supports and hindrances which exist in the lives of working mothers, and learning about the multiple roles and the positive and negative aspects of the lives of working mothers. Increasing understanding in this area is important. There are many studies and books which provide both descriptive and prescriptive advice for working mothers. It was insightful to view the world directly through the experiences of these women rather than through statistics and anecdotes.

Research Questions

The broad, overarching question addressed in this study was: What is the experience of working mothers?

In order to understand working mothers experiences, the following questions were asked of the study participants in an interview format:

1. What influence has becoming a parent had on your career?
2. What influence has being a professional had on your becoming/being a parent?
3. What influence did your upbringing and childhood have on your expectations to combine motherhood and a profession?
4. What brought you to the University of San Diego to obtain a graduate degree (JD, MBA, Educational Administrative Credential)?

5. Describe your typical work day.
6. How do you balance your roles as mother and employee?
— Does your husband use the same strategies?
7. Describe your experience with role conflict.
8. What supports (at work and at home) exist in your life and what supports do you wish were there?
9. Imagine you have been asked to construct a family-friendly workplace. Describe this workplace.
10. Comment on your experiences with the “glass ceiling,” the “maternal wall,” “mommy track,” and the “second shift.”
11. What advice would you give a working woman considering motherhood?
12. What influence has the popular media’s portrayal of working mothers had on you and/or your decisions about combining motherhood and a profession?
13. Describe any particularly regretful or particularly satisfying choices you have made as a working mother.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used for the purposes of this study:

Working mother: A mother of one or more children who have primary responsibility for that child (children) and is gainfully employed full or part time outside the home (author’s definition).

Career: The individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the persons life (Hall, as cited in Hunsaker & Hunsaker, 1991).

Glass ceiling: A transparent barrier that keeps women from rising above a certain level in corporations.

Women in management have carried an enormous load. Many women have paid their dues, even a premium, for a chance at the top job, only to find a glass ceiling between them and their goal. The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person's inability to handle a higher level; it applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women. (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1987, p. 124)

Maternal wall: A transparent barrier that significantly hinders a mother's ability to successfully balance work and family. This barrier begins at pregnancy when superiors and co-workers in the workplace question the woman's professional commitment and ability to sustain her high productivity and performance. Women who wait to have children until their careers are well established may experience the penalties imposed by the maternal wall in the same way younger women with less well-established careers do. The biases imposed by the maternal wall follow women all the way up the corporate ladder (Swiss & Walker, 1993).

Mommy track: This concept was first described by Felice Schwartz, founder and then president of Catalyst, a research and advisory firm. This term divides working women into two groups: the career and family women and the career primary women (Schwartz, 1989). The career and family women are characterized by a "willingness to trade off the pressures and demands that go with promotion for the freedom to spend more time with her children" (Schwartz, 1989, p. 71). The second group of

women is those who are serious about their careers, the career primary women. They are ready to “make the same tradeoffs traditionally made by the men who seek leadership positions” (Schwartz, 1989, p. 69) including extra hours, sacrificing their personal lives and taking advantage of every opportunity for professional development and advancement. These career primary women must remain single and/or childless or, if they have children, “be satisfied to have others raise them” (Schwartz, 1989, p. 69). Critics of the “mommy track,” as the career and family choice came to be called, said Schwartz was giving employers an excuse to discriminate against women in the workplace. The concept was said to deny women choices and/or dead ends their career due to their status as parents (Shellenbarger, 1995). Schwartz disagrees with that charge and continues to advocate for family friendly policies in the workplace without penalties to those who choose to use them.

Second shift: This term was coined by Arlie Russell Hochschild as a finding of her naturalistic study completed in 1988. Hochschild (1988) and Anne Machung interviewed 145 people; 100 husbands and wives (50 dual career couples) and 45 other people who worked as babysitters, day care workers, school teachers, traditional couples with small children and divorcees who had been in dual career couples. Hochschild observed 12 families in depth, serving as prototypes of the 50 couples in the larger sample. A demographic and lifestyles questionnaire was also completed by the 50 couples as part of her study. Her findings included the observation that most women, with or without children, spend much more time than men on housework. With children, working women devote even more time to housework and child care.

“You’re on duty at work. You come home, and you’re on duty. Then you go back to work and you’re on duty” (Hochschild, 1988, p. 7). Thus, the time spent on housework and child care at home is conceived of as a “second shift” after the paid shift at the workplace has ended.

Family-Friendly/Work-Life Focus: The movement in the business community in which employers seek to address a range of family and personal life issues through company policies. Examples of such policies include: part-time employment options, on-site child care for employees, parental/family leaves, flexible schedules, telecommuting, and supervisors who support the use of family friendly company benefits (Galinsky & Johnson, 1998).

Summary

This study examined the lives of mothers working in professional settings. These women were graduates of programs in law (JD), business (MBA) or education (Administrative Credential). Chapter II consists of a review of the literature on mothers in the paid workforce. Specifically, a historical perspective on working mothers, the debate surrounding mothers in the workforce and their impact on family life, studies addressing the multiple roles filled by working mothers, and finally, large-scale surveys having to do with the lives and lifestyles of working mothers are outlined.

The research methods used to examine working mothers’ lives in this study follow in Chapter III. The specific qualitative methodology used in this study is reviewed as well as the steps taken to obtain volunteers, conduct the interviews, and

analyze the interview data. The assumptions and limitations of the study are addressed in detail in this chapter.

The data obtained from the interviews with working mothers working are reviewed in detail in Chapter IV. The themes emerging from the interviews are outlined and discussed. Chapter V includes a different analysis of the information emerging from the interviews with the 10 working mothers. Several specific areas of interest are discussed in this chapter. The interview data are interpreted in a different manner to address these areas of interest. Chapter VI includes a discussion of the study findings and areas for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of mothers who are also working as professionals. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study so that various aspects of the working mother's life could be explored and examined in an unencumbered and free-flowing manner. The study volunteers were encouraged to discuss their lifestyle as a working mother which may have led to new and/or unexplored areas of inquiry. Further research was suggested as a result of the qualitative interview format and the information emerging from the interviews. This study was unique because it used the qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10 high-achieving, professional working mothers. The vast majority of studies about working mothers have used a quantitative methodology.

The benefits of the proposed study included increasing understanding of the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, the day-to-day

lives of working mothers, workplace and home-based supports and hindrances which occur in the lives of working mothers and learning about the multiple roles and the positive and negative aspects of the lives of working mothers. Increasing understanding in this area is important. There are many studies and books which provide both descriptive and prescriptive advice for working mothers. It was insightful to view the world directly through the experiences of these women rather than through statistics and anecdotes.

The topic of working mothers has been studied extensively since women began entering the workforce in large numbers, approximately 1970. Research studies, books and articles in the popular press continue to be written on this topic. Daily or weekly columns appear in newspapers delineating the issues faced by working mothers. Women who have achieved success in the world of work and at home are often described in these writings (for example, the *Wall Street Journal* column, "Work & Family"). New "how to" books appear frequently on bookstore shelves, often including tips for working mothers to better manage their hectic lives. Various websites on the Internet offer women advice on strategies for balancing home and family.

The specific research areas which were included in this review of the literature include: a historical perspective of working mothers, the debate over working mothers, research regarding the multiple roles filled by working mothers and large-scale surveys about various aspects of working mothers' lifestyle.

Historical Perspective of Working Mothers

The topic of working mothers is a relatively new one. Mothers have been in the workforce in significant numbers only recently, since about 1970. Attitudes about employed mothers have changed concurrent with cultural and political changes in American society. Before the industrial revolution, all family members worked “together in family enterprises; there was no separation between the workplace and the family. The household was the economic site, although women, men and children might have different work assignments based on gender” (Keller, 1994, p. 3).

Since the industrial revolution, the economic functions of the family have separated. Men left home to earn the family’s income. Their previous day-to-day involvement with their wife and children dramatically decreased (Keller, 1994). Women, on the other hand, lost their economic status as women’s household labor, though needed by the family, could not be exchanged for goods. Concurrently, an increased emphasis on the rearing and the education of children occurred (Keller).

At the turn of the century, paid employment for women was rare. Those women who did spend time in the workforce did so primarily before marriage and before they had children. A small percentage of women worked throughout their lives, husbandless women: widows and spinsters (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). “Prior to the 1940s, wage work for women was invisible: the labor force participation of working-class and minority women was ignored, while middle class women earned money in ways that were concealed from the economy, such as taking in boarders” (Bose, as cited in Walker & Thompson, 1989, p. 850).

This employment pattern remained fairly stable until the World War II years, from 1940 on. A dramatic influx of women into the labor force occurred to fill jobs vacated by those serving in the military. Social views of women as helpless and delicate were suspended for a time while women ably filled physically demanding and dangerous jobs such as explosives manufacturing and construction. Rosie the Riveter is the prime example of this new characterization of women (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). The trend of women working outside the home continued after the war. However, the social acceptance of women in the workforce changed in the 1950s (Betz & Fitzgerald).

The post-World War II period saw a resurgence of domesticity for women. The labor force participation of women dropped dramatically immediately after the war. It did not reach wartime levels again until the mid-1960s (Gerson, 1985). Social expectations dictated that mothers spend their time tending their children and their home.

During the 1950s,

The domestic, nuclear household whose cornerstone was the housewife mother captured the imagination as an ideal, if not always the reality. The economic prosperity of the immediate World War II era finally enabled large numbers of middle class and working class women to attain this domestic ideal. This period spawned the baby boom, promoted the child-centered household, and raised the housewife mother to a predominant place in American culture. (Gerson, 1985, pp. 4-5)

Several social phenomenon and legal changes altered this traditional expectation of mothers. In the 1960s and 1970s, feminism and the women's movement opened career options to women through consciousness raising, delaying the child bearing age, and causing a decrease in the average family size (Cassidy, 1999; Chira, 1998; Crosby, 1991; Hochschild, 1988; Moen, 1982) (see Table 1).

Table 1

A Snapshot of Women Who Entered the Workforce in the Past Four Decades

Variable	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s
% employed mothers	27.6	39.7	54.1	71.1
% women college students	35.3	45.3	50.5	55.4
Women's to men's pay	\$.58/\$1.00	\$.60/\$1.00	\$.65/\$1.00	\$.74/\$1.00
Median age (in years) when first married	20.6	21.6	23.6	25.0
Average number of children	2.28	1.91	1.83	1.84
Divorce rate per 1,000	2.5	5.2	4.7	4.3

Note. From "Profiles in Power," by A. Cassidy, June 1999, *Working Mother*, pp. 20, 24, 26, 30.

The founding of the National Organization of Women (NOW) in 1966 brought attention to issues involving women's equality. Through efforts of NOW and others, birth control became more readily available and abortion rights were exercised (NOW, 1998, Home Page). These factors added to the trend toward smaller families. Voluntary childlessness continued to increase in frequency throughout the 1970s (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). The Pregnancy Discrimination Act became law in 1978, preventing employers from discriminating against women who were or who became pregnant while in their employ (Cassidy, 1999).

McLaughlin, Cormier, and Cormier (1988, as cited in Avoli & Kaplan, 1992) attribute the increase in married women's employment to economic, technological, and cultural developments surrounding the maturation of the baby boom generation which

led to a decline in the primary importance of the family and marriage. These changes have allowed women to gain greater control over their lives. “The rise in the independence of women serves to explain and integrate seemingly disparate changes in education, employment, marriage and childbearing” (McLaughlin et al., as cited in Avoli & Kaplan, 1991, p. 229). Whereas in the 1950s, the majority of middle class women participated in a sequence of life roles, these same middle class married women in the 1970s and beyond were inclined to participate in these life roles simultaneously (Avoli & Kaplan, 1992).

An increase in the number of young women attending college and graduate school has occurred corresponding to women’s increased options (Cassidy, 1999; Gerson, 1985). Going to college no longer meant earning a “Mrs.” degree; higher education was intended to train women for occupations in which they would work and advance for a lifetime (Gilbert, 1988). Most young women express a desire to combine career and family roles in their adult lives (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Willetts-Bloom & Nock, 1994).

A number of researchers have found that college females intend to delay child rearing until they are established in their careers and to continue working while their children are young (Baber & Monaghan, 1988; Machung, 1989). However, these women are rather unrealistic in their estimates of how long it will take to become established in a career. They also perceive few, if any, negative effects on their careers caused by an absence from work for childbearing and/or child rearing (Machung, 1989). These studies also found young women to be unconcerned about the need to

juggle competing responsibilities of mother and professional and seemed overly optimistic about the assistance they will receive from spouses and employers (Baber & Monaghan, 1988).

The dramatic increase in the rate of divorce over the past 20 years has been a major factor causing women to enter the workforce primarily for financial reasons (Cassidy, 1999; Galinsky, 1987; Hewlett, 1991; Hochschild, 1988). The divorce rate doubled between 1960 and 1970 and has decreased somewhat since that time (see Table 1). A revision in the divorce laws in the 1970s changed the process by which a divorce could be obtained through the courts. Under these new laws, the term “divorce” was replaced with the term “dissolution” and couples need only agree that they have “irreconcilable differences” to be granted a dissolution of marriage (Hewlett, 1991; Neft & Levine, 1997; Warner & Ihara, 1979).

This easing of the divorce laws has been pointed to as the cause of the dramatic increase of the number of single mothers and children now living in low income households (Hewlett, 1991). “Women’s standard of living drops, on average, 30% in the 5 years after divorce, while men’s rises 8%. The drop is sharpest for women and children in families that were relatively well off before divorce” (Hewlett, 1991, p. 90). The need for divorced mothers to enter and stay in the workforce is evident based on these trends.

The Debate Over Working Women

In the wider social culture, there exists a debate over the presence of women and mothers in the paid workforce. This public debate has been going on since women

began entering the workforce in large numbers in the 1970s. It revolves around the impact women in the workplace have on the traditional family structure (a married couple with the man as the sole breadwinner), the workplace (which had previously been male dominated), and on their children (who now were often in day care situations rather than at home with their mother).

Galinsky (1999) points to the cyclical nature of the public debate about working women saying,

A controversial or tragic occurrence — a school shooting, a study, a book, a television show, a custody case, a trial — will arise that captures the public's attention because it presents a topic about which we are unsure or strongly divided. This topic will be widely discussed — at gatherings at work, around our kitchen tables, at parties with our friends and neighbors. One can almost chart the course of evolving public opinion by looking at these incidents. (Galinsky, 1999, p. 2)

On one side of the debate are the proponents of fully egalitarian roles for men and women. This group would be considered feminists and are represented by groups such as the National Organization for Women (NOW). This faction believes that women should be provided the same educational and employment opportunities and conditions as men. Families are seen as an option; however, women should be unencumbered by workplace constraints to pursue and achieve professional advancement. NOW states that the purpose of the organization is to “take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men” (National Organization of Women [NOW], 1999, Home Page).

The official priorities of the organization include:

Pressing for an amendment of the U.S. Constitution that will guarantee equal rights for women; achieving economic equality for women; championing abortion rights, reproductive freedom and other women's health issues; supporting civil rights for all and opposing racism; opposing bigotry against lesbians and gays; and ending violence against women. (NOW, 1999, Home Page)

The perspective represented by NOW advocates that women with children not necessarily or automatically be assigned to Schwartz's (1989) "career and family" category (also known in the popular literature as the "mommy track") (Shellenbarger, 1995), but should have the opportunity to choose the "career primary" option if they so desire.

Holcomb (1998), in her book "Not Guilty, the Good News About Working Mothers," takes the position that the negative image of working mothers is simply wrong. She believes there exists a "powerful bias that hurts both women and their families" (p. 24). She goes on to say that the assumptions about working mothers, that they are damaging their children by not being home to care for them and that they are selfish for wanting to work after they have children, have not been borne out by research. Holcomb (1998) says that many mothers who both want and need to work outside the home "find their choices scrutinized, their motivation under attack, the well being of their children constantly called into question" (p. 22). Her book is intended to challenge this fairly recent collective "change of heart about women's expanded roles" (p. 23) which has been covered extensively in the media. Holcomb's book outlines the most "destructive myths about employed mothers, tracks their origin, and dispels their harmful power. Above all, it's time to reassure moms who both need and want to work that they are doing the right thing for themselves and their families" (p. 23).

A hotly debated topic is the “women’s wage”: a comparison of women and men’s earnings in the American workforce. The National Organization for Women supports a set of figures compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau whereas *Women’s Figures*, a publication of the Independent Women’s Forum (IWF) and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), supports the figures compiled from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. *Women’s Figures* compares the wages of “men and women of similar experience and life situations” (Independent Women’s Forum [IWF], 1999, Home Page). For the year 1996, NOW says women earn \$.74 to every \$1.00 earned by men. For the year 1998, IWF says women earn \$.98 to every \$1.00 earned by men when the sometimes transient nature of women’s labor force participation is taken into account.

A traditional, or anti-feminist, perspective, is represented by the IWF, among others. A publication of the IWF, *ex-Femina* (McClure, 1999) promoted a book published by their organization in conjunction with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) which provides an analysis of women’s earnings as compared to men’s. The authors “shatter the sacred myths of the wage gap and glass ceiling by documenting the real and very positive story of women’s economic gains over the past century” (p. 11).

The newsletter quotes a review of the book by syndicated columnist Linda Chavez who wrote the following:

For years, feminists have been misusing statistics to demonstrate broad scale economic discrimination against women, and the press and a great many politicians have been happily regurgitating their propaganda. Rarely, outside of academic economics journals have the feminists data engendered much skepticism. Now comes “Women’s Figures” published by the establishment

American Enterprise Institute and the feisty IWF to debunk much of the feminist's voodoo economics. (ex-Femina, 1999, p. 12)

As a founding member of IWF, Crittenden (1999) counters the societal value put on work over full time motherhood in her book *What our Mother's Didn't Tell Us*.

She stated that we have become

a society in which the virtues of work have been so inflated that we can no longer appreciate anything that's not accompanied by a paycheck. When feminists elevated the status of work women did outside the home over what they did inside it, it was hard for mothers to answer back — as it is still hard for them to answer back. (Crittenden, 1999, p. 137)

What has replaced the workplace discrimination of women in the 1960s and 1970s, is a discrimination against women who choose to stay home with their children, or as Crittenden (1999) puts it, “women who wish to have children without neglecting them (as exemplified by Hillary Clinton's remark ‘I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies’)” (p. 137). Crittenden believes that societal attitudes have made it difficult for women to participate as full time workers or full time mothers and homemakers without extreme guilt or extreme insecurity about their chosen role.

As stated in the quarterly newsletter of the IWF, the purpose of the group is to “promote individual responsibility, strong families, limited government, and opportunity-policies that help all Americans . . . the IWF publishes ‘The Women's Quarterly’ — an intellectual antidote to ‘Ms’”(Hays, 1999, p. 32). The quarterly newsletter is said to “offer an intelligent refutation of the leading feminist nonsense that is swallowed so uncritically by the mainstream press” (Hays, 1999, p. 32).

The anti-feminist sentiment of the IWF is echoed in the policies advanced by the religious right who claim a “biblical rationale for keeping women home” (Chira, 1998,

p. 193). This sentiment was echoed in the national election of 1996 by the mainstream political right. They argue that the family can be preserved only when men and women adhere to the traditional roles that God and nature assigned them, with mothers at home personally overseeing their children's moral development.

Hunter (1998) addresses the issue of child care in the Focus on the Family magazine by stating,

If the Clinton White House has its way, we will move rapidly toward increased government intervention in rearing children, dramatically weakening family bonds. We are already seeing the societal fall out from decades of emotional neglect: a bumper crop of kids without conscience and an upsurge in juvenile crime and violence. And the worst is yet to come. As today's young children reach the ages of 14 to 17 in 2005, we will usher the most heavily armed generation in American history into adolescence. (Hunter, 1999, Focus on the Family, Home Page)

This alarming prediction goes on to recommend that, based on "abundant survey data showing that what parents want is more time with their children, not less," universal child care as advocated by the Clinton White House should be abandoned and replaced with policies "making it easier for mothers to work flextime, engage in job-sharing" and "creating a tax structure that lets mothers stay home with their very young children and be present when the school bus rolls down the street" (Hunter, 1998, Focus on the Family, Home Page).

Telecommuting is seen as a viable option for working mothers as noted by Morse (1998) in "Babies in the Boardroom: You Can Have it All" (Boundless Webzine, Home Page). She cites the Bible, Proverbs 31, as describing a working mother with a lifestyle and goals similar to one who telecommutes and raises children in her home today. Morse says that "because you actually have those babies, you'll find that

they can't be fitted around a career, like a hobby, or put on your after hours 'to do' list. Raising up children who will honor and serve God will become the most important activity you'll ever undertake" (Morse, 1998, Boundless Webzine, Home Page).

Morse (1998) also chastises the feminists as sending an "anti-mothering message" in which children are depicted as "perfectly happy spending 10 hours a day in paid care while their mothers pursue their careers. Cheaper and better day care, feminists assert, is the answer to the child care dilemma" (Morse, 1998, Boundless Webzine, Home Page).

The public debate about the "shoulds" of women and mothers in the workplace has generated numerous studies assessing attitudes toward working mothers by various segments of the population. These attitudes vary depending on the time frame and the group providing the perspective.

A study found that when 200 college students (100 female and 109 male) were asked about their perceptions of different maternal employment and child rearing patterns, the mother who interrupted her employment until her child was entering elementary school was seen in the most favorable light (Bridges & Orza, 1993). The students indicated that interrupted or part time employment is preferable during a child's preschool years, not due to the difficulty of combining the two roles (parent and employee), but due to "a belief that maternal absence may be detrimental to their children" (Bridges & Orza, 1993, p. 115). This study is limited in its generalizability due to the characteristics of its sample population; college juniors and seniors who are on the threshold of making decisions about work and family roles. College students'

perceptions of these roles are based on assumptions rather than on first hand experience.

In a study in which 111 males and 131 females were asked about their approval of mothers working outside the home, the respondent's age when his or her mother began working was significant (Willetts-Bloom & Nock, 1994). Those whose mothers worked when their children were young were the most supportive of such practices overall, perhaps reflecting the positive effect (or lack of negative effect) such employment had on them or their families. Those whose mothers entered the labor force when they were older had fewer years to experience or adjust to this new family structure. The later entry into paid work of these mothers could also have caused greater family stress and complications for these individuals. This study reported that as attitudes regarding the perceived benefits to children of maternal employment increased, the child's age at which maternal employment was believed to be acceptable decreased (Willetts-Bloom & Nock, 1994). Females in the study consistently expressed more liberal gender role attitudes on all measures though males also advocated nontraditional attitudes. The limitations of this study include the lack of examination of family background variables and the unique characteristics of the study population (500 undergraduate college students from a public university in the eastern United States).

Another study used the Beliefs About Consequences of Maternal Employment (BACME) scale with 570 pregnant women and 550 of their husbands/partners (Hyde & McKinley, 1993). The findings implied that although beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children might have been conceptualized as one dimensional,

with one pole labeled costs and the other benefits, beliefs in costs and beliefs in benefits of maternal employment emerged as two distinct dimensions. Thus, individuals may believe strongly that there are costs to children of maternal employment while also believing strongly that there are benefits (Hyde & McKinley). A limitation of this study is the difficulty in determining whether the attitude or the lifestyle of the full time homemakers or full time workers came first.

A strong association was also found between work status and beliefs about the consequences of maternal employment for children. Women who worked for pay, and especially those who worked full time, believed that there are increased benefits and fewer costs to maternal employment than did women who were full time homemakers. The BACME was found to discriminate between the two groups in expected ways. Homemakers believed that there are more costs to maternal employment and fewer benefits than employed women did (Hyde & McKinley, 1993).

Glass (1992) found that housewives were more likely to hold traditional attitudes regarding marital roles and mothers' employment outside the home as compared to wives working full- and part-time. These attitudes were assessed at two points in time, 1976 and 1986. Most of the attitude gap occurred between housewives and wives employed full time. Those employed part time were more similar to housewives on both demographic and attitudinal measures. Some of this divergence in attitude may be explained by the aging of the population of housewives. On items related to the effect of mothers' employment on children, however, divergence occurs even after age, education, family size, and income were controlled. Glass clearly distinguishes

between the direction of change indicated by the study and the cause of the change.

The cause of the change is more difficult to determine though she cites several possible explanations.

Should this trend continue, Glass warns of demographic and political polarization. A widening fertility differential between housewives and employed wives (housewives having more children) may cause an increased concentration of child rearing in fewer but less affluent and more traditional households. The lack of consensus regarding social roles and obligations between these two groups (housewives and women working part time versus women working full time) may slow action on public policies aimed at providing women equal access and reward in the labor force, warns Glass.

Galinsky (1999) interviewed children of working mothers in an effort to hear both the children's and parent's views on their work and family lives. Galinsky is co-founder and president of the Families and Work Institute which regularly conducts studies and produces reports on work and family life issues. In June of 1998, 605 employed parents with children 18 years old or younger were surveyed by phone by a professional polling company for Galinsky's "Ask the Children" study. A nationally representative sample of 1,023 children in the third through twelfth grade were given a self-administered questionnaire during their English classes in April-May 1998 for this study.

Galinsky summarized the results of the children's survey into 10 messages children are telling their working parents. She advocates moving the debate about

working mothers from the question “should she/shouldn’t she work” to looking at how mothers work (p. xiv). The messages from the children in her study reinforce the need to redefine the debate and suggest the phrase “navigating work and family life” to depict the “flow between work and home, a dynamic interrelationship in which positive-or negative-aspects of one area can spillover, enhancing or impairing the other” (p. xvi). Galinsky has created a model of work and family life which work and family are thought of as

forming a circle of moving water — a stream with currents that diverge and converge as the water circulates. Think of the supports we have in our lives — our families, our friends at home and at work, and our communities — as forming the stream bed, shaping the flow for better or for worse. At times the water moves smoothly; at times it is turbulent, broken by rocks that jut out. Let’s think of ourselves as navigating the stream. To steer through these waters, we need to understand the many outside forces affecting our passage — some of which are beyond our control; others of which are not. And we need to know ourselves; our life priorities and where we really want to go. We are at the helm, with at least some control over the course of our voyage. (Galinsky, 1999, pp. 204-205)

Our society has given women conflicting and contradictory messages about their proper place. Women have been encouraged to achieve academically and professionally on an equal footing with men. They have also been told that, as mothers, they should be responsible for the care and nurturing of their children. Does this dual, often conflicting message cause increased stress and pressure for working mothers? They attempt to fill multiple roles simultaneously, rather than concurrently as in their mother’s generation. The next section of this review of the literature examines research studies which consider the multiple roles filled by working mothers and the impact on their lives.

Multiple Roles of Working Mothers

Many studies and reports have noted the increase in role number and complexity that has accompanied women's entrance into the paid workforce. Researchers as well as business and nonprofit organizations have examined these multiple roles in an attempt to assess their impact on working mothers' ability to function in the work and home realms. Studies on the multiple roles of working mothers have looked at both couples and individuals as sample populations. Studies using couples as their sample population allow a comparison of each of the family wage earner's perceptions as well as the examination of relationship issues. Studies using individual women as their sample population do not permit this dual perspective. Both types of studies will be reviewed in this section, beginning with studies using dual earner couples as their sample population.

Catalyst (1998) is a nonprofit research and advisory organization that works with private sector business to advance women in the workplace. Its dual mission "is to enable professional women to achieve their maximum potential and to help employers capitalize on the talents of their female employees" (Catalyst, 1998, p. 6). In the study entitled "Two Careers, One Marriage: Making it Work in the Workplace" (1998), Catalyst conducted informal, in depth interviews with both members of 25 dual career couples. The couples selected were intended to "achieve a fairly even distribution across age, geographic location and presence of children" (Catalyst, 1998, p. 7). The second part of Catalyst's information gathering process for this study consisted of a

formal survey of 802 randomly selected members of dual career marriages. A professional polling company conducted this portion of the study.

The study found that “lack of time” and “role overload” were the biggest challenges to being part of a dual career marriage (Catalyst, 1998, p. 23). Over half the interview participants with children concluded that “having children forces a professional tradeoff of some kind” (p. 24). The mothers and fathers in this study said that they are “more likely to scale back career goals” and to “step off the fast track” (p. 24) than those men and women without children. The mothers in the study were more likely than the fathers to make these statements regarding their careers.

Despite the problems of role overload or lack of time, Catalyst found that a majority of survey respondents were “extremely satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their ability to balance work and home responsibilities. The tug between work and home duties occurs on a day-to-day and often minute-to-minute basis for the two career couples in the Catalyst study. To manage, the couples in the study reported the need for a degree of control over their work and personal lives. This control is more readily available in some workplaces than in others. The Catalyst study recommends that employers consider this finding when structuring their company policies.

A study conducted by Perry-Jenkins, Seery, and Crouter (1992) examined the extent to which the meanings women attach to their provider-role responsibilities are differentially related to their psychological well-being and family relationships and to the division of labor in the home. The sample included 43 dual earner and 50 single earner families. In home interviews, wives reported on role overload, depression,

satisfaction with the marriage, and attitudes regarding men and women's roles. Their children completed two measures assessing daily hassles and their relationship with their mother. Reports of daily involvement in household work were obtained from wives and husbands during four telephone interviews.

Through analysis of these data, the researchers separated the women into four different provider groups: (a) a main/secondary provider in which the wife's income is considered secondary and not vital to the family's economic well-being, (b) ambivalent co-provider in which the families were dependent on the wife's income but were uncomfortable with the reality of shared economic responsibility, (c) co-provider in which the importance of the wife's income is recognized and the provider role is seen as equally shared between wife and husband, and (d) homemaker in which the wife is not in the paid workforce. Wives who were ambivalent about their provider responsibilities tended to report higher levels of depression and overload and significantly lower marital satisfaction.

The central finding of this research is that the symbolic meaning that women attach to their work, as understood through the four provider-role attitudes noted above, is related to differences in their own well-being, their marital and mother-child relationships, and in the family division of labor. Wives who saw their employment as secondary to that of their husbands reported relatively higher levels of depression and overload but also the highest level of marital satisfaction (Perry-Jenkins et al., 1992).

In terms of psychological well-being, the main/secondary wives and the ambivalent wives tended to report the most role overload and depression, whereas the

co-provider wives were less depressed and relatively less overloaded. The ambivalent wives are the group that reported the lowest levels of marital satisfaction, and this variable was central to the accuracy of prediction for this group. These women who are supporting the family financially, but feel very ambivalent about doing so, may vent their depression and feelings of overload onto their spouses. Linkage between wives' provider role attitudes and the quality of mother-child relationships was far from conclusive (Perry-Jenkins et al., 1992).

The limitations of this study include: (a) the small sample size limits the generalizability to the wider population; (b) because the study was based on cross sectional, rather than longitudinal data, it depicts a static view of employment when research indicates that women tend to move into and out of the workforce more frequently (Moen, 1982; VandenHeuvel, 1997); and (c) this research focused only on women's attitudes toward their provider role as related to their psychological well-being, family relationships and the division of labor in the family.

As Thomson and Walker (1989) point out, many women and men collaborate together in maintaining gender-specific roles. The relational conditions whereby men and women create gender and role specialization was not examined in this study (Perry-Jenkins et al., 1992).

A study examining two earner married couples and stress found that women report significantly more stressors than men and employment arrangement had no effect on stress level (Anderson & Leslie, 1991). A structured questionnaire was used as well as The Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson,

as cited in Anderson & Leslie, 1991) with 82 couples recruited from diverse employment settings and situations. Marital adjustment was assessed with Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (as cited in Anderson & Leslie, 1991). All couples seem to benefit by reframing problems to make them more manageable. Perceptual changes made by the families to cope with stressors caused by external factors (such as inflexible work hours and/or lack of adequate child care) over which they have less control are recommended (Anderson & Leslie, 1991).

Coming to terms with the fact that stress may be more a factor of their lifestyle rather than a fault of the couple helped to provide a greater sense of control and therefore decreased personal blame and guilt (Anderson & Leslie, 1991). This is consistent with the findings of McLaughlin et al. (1988), who found that women in multiple roles often coped by lowering their standards for housework and accepting that they were not perfect in all the roles they had to fill. Husbands and wives were looked at separately in this study and, as noted, the wives scores on the stress scale were higher than their husbands. This is consistent with a body of literature suggesting that role overload is more of a problem for women than for men (Pleck, 1985). The limitations of the study by Anderson and Leslie (1991) include the relatively small sample size (82 couples) and the specifically defined criteria for participation in the study. These factors may limit the generalizability of the study results.

Another study conducted with married couples assessed the existence of two types of role stress contagion: spillover, in which the stresses experienced in either the work or home domain lead to stresses in the other domain; and crossover, in which the

stresses experienced by one's spouse at work leads to stresses on the other partner at home (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989). This study used a quantitative data analysis of data from a short questionnaire completed daily, a diary of sorts, to seek the causes of stress across work and home domains in 166 married couples.

Contrary to previous findings, husbands were more likely than wives to bring their home stresses into the workplace. Stress from work to home was demonstrated for both husbands and wives. Work stress in the home seems to set in motion an adjustment process in which individuals, particularly wives, modify their housework efforts to compensate for the work stresses of their spouses. Men and women reduce their involvements in stressful home situations following a stressful day at work (Bolger et al., 1989). This study was dependent upon couples completing a diary at several points during the course of their daily activities. The couples may or may not have complied with this requirement; however, the authors do not believe that this possible inconsistency of data collection affected the conclusions of their study.

A crossover effect was also seen in which the spouses of people who had hectic days at work increase their involvement at home in response to the decreased involvement of their spouse. This kind of reaction was more prevalent in the women in the study than the men (Bolger et al., 1989).

In looking at studies using individual women subjects rather than couples, it has been found that the quality of the work and/or the maternal role may affect the women's mental processes as well as their parenting behavior (Baruch, Biener, &

Barnett, 1987; Helson, Elliott, & Leigh, 1990; Kibra, Barnett, Baruch, Marshall, & Pleck, 1990; MacEwen & Barling, 1991; Wethington & Kessler, 1989).

Wethington and Kessler (1989) found that women who significantly increase their labor force participation report a lower level of psychological distress over the study period than women who decrease their labor force participation. Seven hundred and forty-five married women were interviewed for this study at two different points in time: 1985 and 1988. The transition to parenting and increased parental responsibilities are indirectly related to increased psychological distress insofar as they result in decreased labor force participation.

Two types of role changes were examined in this study: changes in employment status and changes in parenting status. Employment status changes from time one (1985) to time two (1988), homemaker status to employment status at the two time frames, and a change from full time employment to part time employment or homemaker status at times one and two were assessed. The parenting role changes which were examined included: the effect on time two mental health of having a child since time one and the departure of all children (empty nest) at time two. Psychological distress is represented by the depression subscale from the revised SCL-90 assessment tool (Wethington & Kessler, 1989).

The results suggested that the positive effects of the psychological and social mechanisms, which impact the relationship of social roles and mental health, are more salient when participation is more intense. The study results also implied that not all changes in social roles have equal effects on psychological distress. Employment was

found to clearly benefit women emotionally though in accordance with Baruch, Biener, and Barnett (1987) and Baruch and Barnett (1986), not all employment is equally beneficial. Only large changes in labor force participation, from homemaker to full time worker or from full time work to homemaker, are associated with significant changes in psychological distress over time (Wethington & Kessler, 1989).

Two perspectives are discussed to explain these findings (Wethington & Kessler, 1989). One is that low hour, part time employment may provide the escape from social isolation and access to structured daily activities that would be expected to improve mental health, but it is also associated with stresses that may negate these benefits. Women who work part time may try to retain full responsibility for child care and homemaking and, as a result, may actually experience more role overload and role conflict than women employed full time (Hochschild, 1988). The study data support this interpretation.

The second perspective is that full time work is more rewarding than part time work and thus is associated with better mental health among women making the transition from life as a homemaker. The study found lower pay and complexity for part time employment versus full time employment and a lower participation rate for part time workers in social relationships with co-workers (Wethington & Kessler, 1989). The author's findings were discrepant from earlier surveys in that they found no evidence that parenting exerts a negative effect on mental health. The authors believe that comparative analyses of trend surveys in the same population over time are needed to address this discrepancy.

In a study of 403 women, ages 25-55, who were employed as social workers or licenced practical nurses, Kibra et al. (1990) found that positive homemaking role experience was associated with increased psychological well-being and lowered psychological distress. (The homemaking role is defined as the activities and responsibilities of taking care of the home.) Those associations were affected by the quality of the women's experience in the paid work role (spillover, as described by Bolger et al., 1989) (Kibra et al., 1990). The favorable association of positive homemaking role quality with psychological well-being was enhanced by positive paid work quality. This finding suggested that the relationship of homemaking role quality to psychological outcomes is influenced by the effects of paid work role quality on psychological well-being and distress (Kibra et al., 1990).

The study did not support the expectation that the impact of homemaking on the psychological measures would vary for different subgroups of women specifically those of lower socioeconomic status, different ethnic and racial groups, and/or women with husbands and/or children (Kibra et al., 1990).

One limitation of the study was the restricted socioeconomic range of the sample and the lack of information on the women's relationship with their partner — especially the extent of his participation in care of the home. This factor may be a variable of more significance than the study allowed (Pleck, 1985). Another limitation was that the sample was confined to women employed at least half time. The special nature of the sample as drawn from two traditional female occupations (nursing and social work)

may have inadvertently chosen women who place a greater emphasis on homemaking activities than women drawn to other professions (Kibra et al., 1990).

Research on multiple roles suggests that it is possible to trade off or compensate for negative aspects of one role by turning to another role for gratification and satisfaction. Kibra et al. (1990) found that paid work quality moderates the psychological consequences of homemaking role quality so that a poor homemaking role may be offset or reduced by a favorable employment experience. Research on multiple roles has shown women's involvement in paid work and family roles combined to be favorable and the authors hypothesize that this dual involvement has positive consequences for women (Kibra et al., 1990).

A study by Helson, Elliott, and Leigh (1990) used longitudinal data to test the number and quality of roles associated with health and self-enhancement in 100 privileged mid-life women. The number of roles (parent, worker, and partner) was not related to autonomy, individuality, and complexity as was previously hypothesized, but rather to respect for norms, being well organized and considering oneself like other people. Though women with one role were lower in well-being than women with more than one role, statistical analysis showed no advantage to the number of roles after mental health at age 21 was taken into consideration.

The factor found to be associated with contentment and effective functioning was the quality of the role as assessed by marital satisfaction and status level in work (Helson et al., 1990). Particular roles were associated with particular advantages: independence for women who worked, contentment for women with partners, roots,

and generativity for women with children. The generalizability of these findings to other populations is limited due to the unique characteristics of the sample (Helson et al., 1990).

Another study examined mother's interrole conflict and satisfaction with the role of employed mother and how this affected children's behavior (MacEwen & Barling, 1991). In a sample of 147 employed mothers, a model developed by the researchers provided a good fit with the data. The relationship between maternal employment role experiences (interrole conflict and satisfaction with maternal employment) and children's behavior (attention, immaturity, conduct disorder, and anxiety/withdrawal) was mediated by personal strain (cognitive difficulties and negative moods) and parenting behavior (punishment and rejection).

Baruch and Barnett, (1986) studied 238 Caucasian women, ages 35 to 55, and their social roles of paid worker, wife and mother and the quality of this experience in relation to psychological well-being. The researchers demonstrated that mothers who are dissatisfied with their employment status are at a greater risk for experiencing negative effects than mothers whose employment status is congruent with their employment preference (Baruch & Barnett, 1986). The quality of the employment and/or maternal role was found to be a significant predictor of women's psychological well-being, or lack thereof. Both suffering and gratification were experienced by women who participated. Neither the scarcity nor the enhancement hypotheses explained women's experiences in their social role in relation to well being, in part because both

hypotheses focus on the quantity of roles. The need for a qualitative rather than quantitative studies of women's role experience is noted by Baruch and Barnett (1996).

MacEwen and Barling (1991) caution that path analysis and self report measures may not be appropriate research methods to demonstrate findings related to maternal well-being and its impact on their family. Dissatisfaction with being an employed mother may indirectly affect children's behavior through a number of intermediary links such as personal strain and parenting behavior. It is possible that negative experiences outside the employment domain exert similar effects on children's behavior such as marital conflict and satisfaction not measured in the study.

In a comparative study of 1976 women college graduates and 1996 women law school graduates, Slotkin (1996) found a trend of reduced role conflict among working mothers. Through the two populations, Slotkin administered the same inventory, The Inventory of Feminine Values, Forms A and B, to these two populations. Through the inventory, women in the study described their actual and their ideal woman. The degree of difference between these two measures was considered the degree of role conflict experienced by the women. The 1996 population was experiencing significantly less role conflict than the 1976 population.

Slotkin (1996) concludes her study by saying that her prediction in 1976, that women would become successful professionals combining work with marriage and family with no role conflict, has become more of a reality. The statistics and demographic comparisons from her research support this prediction. There is still role conflict among working women and working mothers, but significantly less than

20 years ago. She concluded that personal fulfillment is possible both professionally and personally.

A limitation of this study is the demographic differences between the 1976 and 1996 populations. These differences may have had an impact on the comparability of the two populations. These demographic differences include: the number of respondents, the age, marital status, religion, level of schooling and academic specialization and number of children.

Work and Family Surveys

Numerous large scale surveys have been completed by various organizations since women and mothers began entering the paid workforce. The purpose of these surveys is, most often, to understand how working women and their families are faring with this relatively new lifestyle.

The National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) is a research program of the Families and Work Institute that surveys representative samples of the nation's labor force every 5 years (Bond et al., 1997). The Families and Work Institute is a Manhattan-based nonprofit center for research on the changing family, workplace, and community. It is sponsored in large part by private industry donations. The 1997 report focuses on findings from the survey conducted in 1997 and compares them to survey data collected in 1992. Data for wage and salaried workers who are 18 years or older are considered in the study. The sample size for the 1997 study was 2,877 employees. Workforce trends were noted in the comparison of these two surveys as well as the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey. These three surveys had similarities

and differences. The extent to which they were different, in sample population and methodology, is the extent to which the comparisons made in the NSCW are weakened.

This study found that 41 % of employees believe it is better if men are the sole breadwinners and women care for the children and home (Bond et al., 1997). These findings also indicate that about one-third of the employees believe that an employed woman cannot have as good a relationship with her children as a woman who is not employed.

Bond et al. (1997) found that in dual-earner couples, 50% of the employed mothers agree with the statement that “it’s better for everyone involved if the man earns the money and the woman takes care of the home and children” (p. 67). These women also have more negative spillover from their jobs into their personal lives than employed mothers who disagree with this statement (Bond et al., 1997, p. 67). This apparent ambivalence of employed mothers about their roles may be rooted in traditional cultural values or their first hand experiences juggling work and family responsibilities.

The study examined the job performance, job satisfaction, and retention factors for the employees in the survey and made specific recommendations to employers to enhance employee satisfaction. Job quality and workplace support were found to be most predictive of employee retention; far more than earnings and access to benefits and job demands. A model explaining the concept of spillover, either from home to job and job to home, was advanced (Bond et al., 1997).

Swiss and Walker (1993) sent a 6-page questionnaire to 1,644 women graduates of Harvard's Business, Medical, and Law schools. Graduates from the classes of 1971-1981 were surveyed. The authors purposely surveyed women who, as "delayed child bearers" (p. 8), would be in their prime childbearing years. The response rate to the survey was 55%; 66% of the respondents were mothers. The authors interviewed 52 of the survey respondents in depth about their lives as working women and working mothers. The goal of their research was to "define in honest and realistic terms how working mothers are leading their lives today" (p. viii).

Swiss and Walker (1993) concluded that every working mother seeks an individual solution to her own dilemma of balancing multiple and often competing roles. Their study strongly suggested that there is no logical or business rationale for the continued existence of the old rules of the workplace which ignore the realities of daily life for dual career couples and single parents. They also concluded that the unyielding corporate mentality places unnecessary stress on working mothers. No matter what level of employment they fulfill, when possible, women are leaving one employer for another more family-friendly workplace or they may leave the workplace entirely because of an inability to negotiate an alternate work schedule or an adequate part time position (Swiss & Walker, 1993).

In addition, Swiss and Walker (1993) found that, for many women, economic realities limit the range of options from which they may choose so they continue to absorb the inherent stress between work and family. The authors determined that there exists both a "glass ceiling" (p. viii) for women who hope to achieve at the highest

level in the work place and a “maternal wall” (p. viii) preventing mothers, regardless of their goals, to achieve at the highest levels in the workplace. The primary difference between these two types of workplace discrimination is that the glass ceiling may be experienced by all women whereas the maternal wall is experienced only by working mothers.

Among Swiss and Walker’s (1993) survey respondents, there existed a high degree of frustration and isolation in the women’s efforts to maintain an adequate, though never perfect, balance between family and career. The extremely high level of energy, structure, and organization required to maintain such a balance often left these women exhausted with little or no time to meet their own physical and/or mental health needs. On the positive side, Swiss and Walker found that 85% of their survey respondents believe they have been successful at combining career and family. The unique characteristics of the study population, female Harvard graduates from the early 1970s, may limit the generalizability of the study results to a broader demographic population.

Several studies have used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to examine maternal employment and its impact on children. This survey is a national probability sample of 12,686 men and women who were aged 14 to 22 in 1979 and who have been interviewed annually since that time. Included in this sample is an over-sample of black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged non-black, non-Hispanic youths. This economically disadvantaged cohort was dropped in 1990 due to financial reasons (Harvey, 1999).

The annual interviews of the NLSY have generated a wealth of information on employment, educational, and family-related experiences. The retention rate for this panel has been 92% as of 1986 with little variation across subgroups (Baker & Mott, as cited in Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991). Beginning in 1986, the children of the women in the original sample were also assessed. In 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, and 1994 the survey conducted child assessments on offspring of the female participants (Harvey, 1999).

The use of NLSY data has the benefit of a longitudinal perspective as data collected since the mother's adolescence and young adulthood was used in the analysis. However, there are limitations of this data base. One such limitation is that the NLSY employed mothers are not representative of the entire population of employed mothers with young children. Specifically, mothers who have delayed child bearing to their late twenties and early thirties would not be represented in studies using these data. This limits the generalizability of the findings to those women who are relatively early child bearers (Menaghan & Parcel, 1991).

Wenk and Garrett (1992) used the 1986 merged child/mother file of the NLSY to test the influence of personal job and family status characteristics on maternal employment. They examined data for 5,226 children born between 1979 and 1986 to 2,918 mothers aged 14-29 at the birth of the child. Blacks, Hispanics, and low income whites are oversampled. The NLSY provided detailed personal and household characteristics of the mother at the time, or very near the time of each child's birth,

before and after, as well as a weekly description of the mother's employment history. This enabled a longitudinal analysis to be conducted (Wenk & Garrett, 1992).

The findings of Wenk and Garrett (1992) are as follows: mothers contributing more to the total family income were more likely to remain employed, exit more slowly, return more quickly, and be employed 1 year after childbirth. Women most likely to have been employed throughout the child bearing period fit O'Connell and Bloom's (as cited in Wenk & Garrett, 1992) description of the delayed child bearer: a married white woman whose first child was born after age 24 and who completed some years of college. Less likely to have been employed was the young minority mother with a high school education or less. Not all the women in the study fit these profiles, however. This study addressed some of the relationships among variables measuring human capital, job characteristics, and household composition. Family status and household characteristics were also extremely important in determining work status.

Wenk and Garrett (1992) combined the human capital approach and the family status approach to explain the labor force participation of the women in their study. The human capital approach examined the relative returns to education, training, and experience on labor force continuity and predicted that women with the greatest investment in job related skills are the least likely to exit the labor force and are likely to leave for the shortest period. The family status approach suggested that the mother's living arrangement at the time of the birth influenced her employment. Though these factors have changed over time, it appears that being married is less likely to inhibit employment in the 1980s than it did previously (Wenk & Garrett, 1992).

Belsky and Eggebeen (1991) used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth to assess the effects of early and extensive maternal employment on the socioemotional development of children ages 4 to 6 years old. Families and children were compared as a function of mother's employment across the child's first 3 years of life. After differences that existed at the time of the children's births were controlled, it was found that children whose mothers were employed full time beginning in their first or second year of life scored more poorly in a composite measure of adjustment than did children whose mothers were not employed during their first 3 years.

Further analysis demonstrated that this effect was restricted to the compliance component of the composite adjustment measure and that the children with early and extensive maternal employment experience were significantly more noncompliant than agemates without such early experiences (Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991).

Belsky and Eggebeen (1991) concluded that the results of this single study do not indicate that

early and extensive maternal employment as it is routinely experienced in the United States has a dramatic and devastating effects on the socioemotional development of young children but rather that Belsky's (1990a as cited in Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991) risk factor conclusion remains valid. Still to be determined are the processes by which such early experience becomes related to the developmental outcomes with which we have found them to be associated. (Belsky & Eggebeen, 1991, p. 1097)

In 1988, Belsky reviewed the evidence concerning the developmental correlates of nonmaternal care in the first year of life related to the infant mother attachment and subsequent social development. He concluded that "even though the evidence is somewhat inconsistent, a circumstantial case remarkably consistent with attachment theory

can be made that extensive infant day care experience is associated with insecure attachment during infancy and aggressiveness and non-compliance during the pre-school and early school age years" (Belsky, 1988, p. 235).

Belsky (1988) indicates that some studies suggest that these consequences of nonmaternal care in the first year may dissipate over time; it is not evident that such dissipation always occurs. He concludes that some non-maternal care arrangements in the first year of life for an excess of 20 hours per week may be a risk factor in the emergence of developmental difficulties and "that the ultimate consequence of such risk are best understood in the context of characteristics of the child, the family, and the care giving milieu. It is emphasized that his reading of the literature carries with it no inevitable implications for public policy" (Belsky, 1988, p. 235).

Galinsky (1999) reported that news coverage of the studies by Belsky caused great public alarm regarding the ill effects working mothers may have on their children. Researchers lined up on both sides of the issue armed with studies both supporting and refuting Belsky's (1991) findings. The National Academy of Sciences brought these groups together and it was agreed that a longitudinal study would be done to try to answer the questions about the effects working mother's lifestyles have on their children. This study looked at 1,153 children from 10 communities by 10 teams of researchers funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

The purpose of the NICHD study was to determine whether child care by itself constitutes a risk or a benefit for the development of the infant-mother relationship as

measured in the Strange Situation (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD], 1997). Mothers were interviewed, given questionnaires, and observed in play and in the home when their infants were from 1 to 15 months of age. The study concluded that infants with extensive child-care experience did not differ from infants without child care experience in the distress they demonstrated during separations from their mother in the Strange Situation or in the confidence with which trained coders assigned them attachment classifications.

There were no significant main effects of child-care experience in the areas of quality, amount, age of entry, stability, or type of care in the study. Effects were demonstrated, however, related to maternal sensitivity and responsiveness. Infants were less likely to be secure when low maternal sensitivity/responsiveness was combined with poor quality child care, more than minimal amounts of child care, or more than one care arrangement. This finding suggests that the effects of child care on the attachment relationship itself, depend primarily on the nature of ongoing interactions between mother and child (Ainsworth, as cited in NICHD, 1997; Sroufe, as cited in NICHD, 1997).

In addition, boys who experienced many hours in child care and girls who experienced minimal amounts of child care were somewhat less likely to be securely attached to their mothers (NICHD, 1997). The researchers conclude that the meaning of the findings of this large scale study will not be known until more is learned about the development of the children participating in the study.

Menaghan and Parcel (1991) used the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) to assess the home environments of children whose mothers are employed outside the home. This study used the 1986 Mother-Child Supplement of the NLSY as its data base in which 795 employed mothers were interviewed.

This study found that the occupational complexity of the mother's work positively affected the home environment which the mother's provided for their children. In addition, larger family size was found to produce less optimal child environments. The personal resources that the mother brought to child rearing also had a significant impact on the home environment. These resources included: self-esteem, locus of control, educational attainment, and age (Menaghan & Parcel, 1991).

VandenHeuvel (1997) used the NLSY data to categorize women into two groups: labor force participants and nonparticipants. The NLSY's High School Class of 1972 was used for this study enabling the researcher to capture employment, schooling, and fertility histories for women born in the early 1950s. Data were first collected from this group in 1972; five follow-ups have occurred since that time, the most recent in 1986. The sample size was 3,001 white mothers and 592 black mothers.

The employment sequence of the women were examined for 2 to 10 years following the birth of their first child. The data indicated that a division of women's employment patterns into two groups fails to include a large proportion of mothers who worked part time and/or intermittent schedules. In addition, the study found important differences by race and in the role sequences followed by women. Black mothers were more likely than white mothers to have been in the labor force continuously over the

first 10 post birth years and less likely to have been in roles outside of the labor force continuously. Yearly intervals were used rather than birth intervals as sampling time frames for employment status (VandenHeuvel, 1997). This allowed for events other than childbirth which may affect the women's entry or exit from the labor force to be considered such as poor working conditions (Glass, 1992).

Three implications of this study were noted by VandenHeuvel (1997): (a) most mothers of young children do not lack commitment to the labor force or display erratic patterns of participation, (b) the need to recognize "the mosaic of role sequences that most mothers follow" (p. 365), and (c) assignment of employed women into either a career or a family path where the path would determine accessibility to such things as promotion and training is not warranted.

In order to examine and attempt to overcome the previously noted shortcomings of the use of the NLSY data to assess the impact of maternal employment on children, Harvey (1999) conducted a re-analysis using an updated version of the NLSY that contained a much larger and more representative sample. She critiques the outcomes described by Belsky (1988), Belsky and Eggebeen (1991), and Menaghan and Parcel (1991) in her review as somewhat sample and method specific. When methodological limitations were addressed in Harvey's study, few of the previous findings were replicated, and no consistent evidence of substantial effects of early parental employment on children's later development was found (Harvey, 1999).

Summary

The overarching picture presented by the studies of working mothers reviewed is informative, and, at times, ambiguous and contradictory. Several trends do appear, though, including:

- Women find satisfaction in and/or have a financial need for employment outside the home. Overall, working outside the home has positive effects for women. They will continue to be a presence in the workforce on a permanent basis.
- Child care alone has not been shown to cause children irrevokable harm, even in the first year of life.
- The roles of working mothers at home and in the workplace continues to be a much discussed and debated topic, despite the longevity of this trend.
- Attitudes about mothers who work vary, based on personal experiences and historical time frame.

It is against this historical, social and research backdrop that a qualitative study of working mothers, graduates of a local university, were interviewed about their experiences with this lifestyle. A qualitative research methodology was used in this study, as opposed to the quantitative methods used in the studies described in the previous section, Work and Family Surveys. A qualitative methodology allowed an in depth look at the lives of 10 working mothers. The researcher found this format preferable to a structured survey which found evidence for a correlation among specific aspects of working mother's lives.

Chapter III will review the qualitative methodology to be used in this study, personal narrative. It consists of the following sections: (a) **Methods and Procedures**, (b) **Research Design**, (c) **Participant Selection**, (d) **Data Collection**, (e) **Data Analysis**, and (f) **Researcher as Data Collection Instrument**. In addition, information on the procedures followed for the protection of human subjects are delineated as well as the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Chapter IV reviews the interview data in the context of overarching categories and emergent themes. These themes and categories are the structure used to provide meaning to the experiences of the working mothers which was discussed in the interviews.

Chapter V includes a different analysis of the information emerging from the interviews with the 10 working mothers. Several specific areas of interest are discussed in this chapter. The interview data are interpreted in a different manner to address these areas of interest. **Chapter VI** includes a discussion of the study findings and areas for future research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of mothers who are also working as professionals. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study so that various aspects of the working mother's life may be explored and examined in an unencumbered and free-flowing manner. The study volunteers were encouraged to discuss their lifestyle as a working mother which led to an insightful discussion of the experiences of these women. Further research was suggested as a result of the qualitative interview format and the information emerging from the interviews. This study was unique because it uses the qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10 high-achieving, professional working mothers. The majority of studies about working mothers have used a quantitative methodology.

The potential benefits of the proposed study include increasing understanding of the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, workplace and

home based supports and hindrances which exist in the lives of working mothers, and learning about the multiple roles and the positive and negative aspects of the lives of working mothers. Increasing understanding in this area is important. There are many studies and books which provide both descriptive and prescriptive advice for working mothers. It was insightful to view the world directly through the experiences of these women rather than through statistics and anecdotes.

This chapter consists of several sections which address the specific research design and methodology used in examining the lives of working mothers. The sections which follow include: (a) Methods and Procedures, (b) Research Design, (c) Participant Selection, (d) Data Collection, (e) Data Analysis, and (f) Researcher as Data Collection Instrument. In addition, information on the procedures followed for the protection of human subjects are delineated as well as the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Methods and Procedures

A qualitative methodology was used in this study to gain an understanding of the experiences of working mothers. The basic assumptions of qualitative research include the following: (a) qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products, (b) qualitative researchers are interested in meaning — how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world, and (c) the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines (Merriam, 1988).

There are many different kinds of qualitative methodologies which meet the criteria as outlined by Merriam (1988). The specific type of qualitative methodology used in this study to examine the experiences of women in their roles as mother and professional is the personal narrative. As Riessman (1993) states, the purpose of the narrative methodology is to “see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives” (p. 2). Riessman goes on to say that narratives structure the experience of others, help to organize memory and “segment and purpose-build the very events of a life” (Bruner, as cited in Riessman, 1993, p. 2).

Riessman says that most scholars in the field of qualitative methodology treat narratives as discrete events, with a defined beginning and an end, which may be detached from the surrounding discourse. She reviews three types of narratives: chronological narratives in which events move in a linear way through time, consequential sequencing in which one event causes another in the narrative, though the links may not always be chronological and, finally, thematic sequencing in which a narrative is stitched together by theme rather than by time.

Anderson (as cited in Errante, 2000) says that all narratives are “narratives of identity” in that they are representations of reality in which respondents communicate how they see themselves and how they would like others to see them. The definition of the personal narrative provided by Riessman appears to capture the essence of the interview process to be used in this study. That definition is “talk organized around consequential events. A teller in a conversation takes a listener into a past time or

‘world’ and recapitulates what happened then to make a point, often a moral one. . . .

Respondents narrativize particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between ideal and real, self and society” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3).

The experiences of working mothers, occurring in a society which both encourages and discourages mothers from pursuing professions outside the home, is well suited to understanding through the personal narrative. The personal narrative structure allows the women in the study to freely discuss the process and influences which impacted their decision to choose the lifestyle of a working mother. The women address the societal, personal and family pressures which led them to combine work and motherhood using the narrative format. With the interview questions as prompts, the women organize their experiences and thought processes which caused them to choose one life path over another. The breach referred to by Riessman (1993) between ideal and real self and society may have come in their active pursuit of a lifestyle which is different from that of their own mothers.

As the authors of *Interpreting Women’s Lives* (Personal Narratives Group, 1989)

note:

Narratives present and interpret women’s life experiences. . . These personal narratives illuminate the course of a life over time and allow for its interpretation in its historical and cultural context. The very act of giving form to a whole life — or a considerable portion of it — requires, at least implicitly, considering the meaning of the individual and social dynamics which have been most significant in shaping the life. (p. 4)

The authors go on to say that the narrative form of qualitative research is particularly appropriate for examining the interaction between gender and society. The issue of “voice” is addressed by the Personal Narratives Group and others (Marshall &

Rossman, 1999) which refers to the opportunity for the narrator to speak in their own words. This is possible because “narrative analysis values the signs, symbols, and expression of feelings in language, validating how the narrator constructs meaning. It has been particularly useful in developing feminist and critical theory” (Eisner, 1988; Grumet, 1988; Riessman, 1993; as cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 123).

In the case of working mothers, it is impossible to understand the experiences of these women independent of societal influences. These influences include messages and role models they encountered growing up about women’s proper place in society, the media portrayal of working mothers, the bias they may experience in the workplace and/or the positive or negative messages they receive about the impact of mothers’ careers and child care arrangements on children’s development. The pros and cons of mother’s in the workplace has been a topic of public debate for the past 30 years, at times a quite contentious and prescriptive debate. The public debate surrounding personal life choices precipitates an interaction between the individual and society making the narrative form of research particularly appropriate for the study of working mothers. Through the use of the narrative, the women in the study were encouraged to tell their story of how they chose to combine a profession and motherhood, how they manage their multiple roles and their thoughts, in hindsight, about their chosen lifestyle.

The goal of this study is to obtain a subjective and interpretive understanding of the lives of working women as they attempt to fulfill multiple, possibly conflicting, roles each day as mothers and as professionals. The study of the experiences of

working mothers through a qualitative method “means re-learning to look at the world by re-awakening the basic experience of the world” (Merleau-Ponty, as cited in Van Manen, 1990).

There is a tension, described by Riessman (1993) in narrative studies between generalization on the one hand and the detailed process of interpretation of speech to meaning that is required of narrative analysis on the other. Riessman says, “Our ultimate goals as social scientists are to learn about substance, make theoretical claims through method, and learn about the general from the particular. Individual action and biography must be the starting point of analysis, not the end” (p. 70). The case of Piaget’s children is cited as one example in which the limitation of narrative methodology as close observation of a few individuals generated “eloquent and enduring theories” (p. 70). Riessman believes that there is a long tradition in science of building inferences from cases and that “any methodological standpoint is, by definition, partial, incomplete, and historically contingent” (p. 70). The ultimate goal of narrative analysis is the systematic study of personal experience and meaning (Riessman, 1993).

Research Design

The interview is the focus of the research design used in this study. The researcher used the interview format to probe for meaning in the lives of the women interviewees. The interviewer acts as a “creative listener” allowing him or her to play an interactive role, ideally causing the interviewee to delve deeper into her experiences for meaning (Wolcott, 1995). The interviewer and the interviewee act as co-explorers

to examine the complexity and the fullness of the experiences reported by the women in the study and to develop meaning together (Riessman, 1993).

Van Manen (1990) asks and then answers the question, “Why do we need to collect the ‘data’ of other people’s experiences? We gather other people’s experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 62). Thus, through the use of the personal narrative, working mothers revealed their experiences to the researcher. The researcher and the readers of the research report will become richer and more experienced by learning about the lives of the working mothers in this study.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe the qualitative in-depth interview as more like a conversation than a

formal event with predetermined response categories. The researcher explores a few general topics to uncover the participant’s views but otherwise respects how the participant frames and structures the responses. . . . The participant’s perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it. (p. 108)

Marshall and Rossman (1990) go on to say that some degree of systematization is required to structure the qualitative interview. They state that the most important feature of this type of interview is that the interviewer clearly convey the attitude that the study volunteer’s views are valuable and useful.

This type of interaction requires that considerable freedom be given to both the researcher and the interviewee. Van Manen (1990) warns that it is important to define the topic of the research well and to maintain that topic as the focus of the research, otherwise it is easy to get lost in the “sheer expanse and depth of one’s question”

(p. 167). Riessman (1993) recommends that the researcher develop five to seven broad, open-ended questions about the topic of inquiry, supplemented by probe questions in case the interviewee has some difficulty getting started.

The first two interviews in this study were expected to be pilot interviews. As Weiss (1994) states:

Pilot interviews are highly desirable. . . . Areas asked about can turn out to be dull and unproductive while areas not included in the guide turn out to be critical. The interviewer, especially in the first pilot interview, may experience bad patches, where it is hard to make connection with the respondent and hard to know how to proceed. However, after only a first or second interview, the way things are begins to fall into place. Eventually, it will be obvious what is important; initially, it rarely is. (p. 52)

Weiss advocates pilot studies for a second reason; “to clarify the aims and frame of the study before interviewing its primary respondents” (p. 15). He goes on to say that even when pilot interviewing occurs, the “boundaries of the study’s frame are likely to shift as more is learned, although as the study proceeds they should shift less and less” (p. 16).

Despite the original intention of the researcher to use the first two interviews with working mothers as pilot interviews, this was not done. Rather than considering the first two interviews as pilot interviews, all 10 interviews and their corresponding transcripts were analyzed. The data collection and analysis process was completed concurrently in this study. As the transcripts of the first two interviews were read for content, they were found to contain rich descriptions of the working mothers experiences. Themes were present which coincided with those which subsequently emerged in the other eight interviews. Minor changes were made to the interview process when

each of the working mothers in the study was interviewed. The researcher adjusted her style to the unique stories being shared by each woman. However, the first two interviews were not substantially different from the subsequent eight, so they were included in the full study. Thus, there were no pilot interviews in this study.

Weiss (1994) notes that even after the formal interviewing begins, the interview guide should be considered flexible. He suggests that the interview guide be “seen as provisional and likely to change as more is learned” (p. 52). In addition to the likely change in the interview questions, the focus of the study may become more defined as the interviews progress. Findings and problems may emerge as the interview data also emerge. “There must be some aim for the study to begin, but sometimes it is only toward the end of a study that its focus becomes well defined” (Weiss, 1994, p. 53).

The questions noted previously served as the interview guide for this study (see Appendix A). These questions are:

1. What influence has becoming a parent had on your career?
2. What influence has being a professional had on your becoming/being a parent?
3. What influence did your upbringing and childhood have on your expectations to combine motherhood and a profession?
4. What brought you to the University of San Diego to obtain a graduate degree (JD, MBA, Educational Administrative Credential)?
5. Describe your typical work day.
6. How do you balance your roles as mother and employee?

— Does your husband use the same strategies?

7. Describe your experience with role conflict.
8. What supports (at work and at home) exist in your life and what supports do you wish were there?
9. Imagine you have been asked to construct a family-friendly workplace. Describe this workplace.
10. Comment on your experiences with the “glass ceiling,” the “maternal wall,” “mommy track,” and the “second shift.”
11. What advice would you give a working woman considering motherhood?
12. What influence has the popular media’s portrayal of working mothers had on you and/or your decisions about combining motherhood and a profession?
13. Describe any particularly regretful or particularly satisfying choices you have made as a working mother.

Participant Selection

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of working mothers. Women who entered graduate school and established professional careers in occupational areas at a time when women were in the minority were interviewed for this study. This was a purposive sample, one chosen not at random but from a specific target population (Chein, as cited in Merriam, 1988). Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to “discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most” (Merriam, 1988, p. 48).

Women alumni from the three areas noted were selected as study participants for a number of reasons. They chose an area of study and work which, at the time they entered graduate school, was predominately male. This made them somewhat nontraditional in terms of career choice. In addition, the fact that these women had completed their Bachelor's Degree and a graduate degree signals a high academic and professional achievement motivation, a level greater than the average person. These three degrees, JD, MBA, and Administrative Credential, are generally pursued in an effort to prepare to enter or advance in a profession. How these women combined motherhood with this implied professional achievement motivation was of interest in this study. This was the rationale for selecting graduate school alumni from law, business, and education as the sample population for this study. In addition, researchers have identified several variables which act as facilitators of and barriers to women's career development.

Through a review of the literature in the area of women in the workplace, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) identified a number of variables which are associated with women's career development. Four categories of variables are described by the authors: individual, background, educational and adult lifestyle variables. They emphasize that these are factors "generally found to enhance the quality of women's career choices and the extent of their career achievement" (p. 143). They also warn that the research findings describe groups of women and do not necessarily describe the factors which have influenced any particular woman. Finally, it is difficult to determine how these factors interact to affect a woman's career development and the relative

importance of one variable over another. These factors, most likely, occur “concurrently and in interaction with one another” (p. 143).

The factors which Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) identified as associated with women’s career development are as follows:

- *Individual Variables*: high ability, liberated sex role values, instrumentality, androgynous personality, high self-esteem, and strong academic self-concept
- *Background Variables*: working mother, supportive father, highly educated parents, female role models, work experience as an adolescent, androgynous upbringing
- *Educational Variables*: higher education, continuation in mathematics, girls’ schools and women’s colleges
- *Adult Lifestyle Variables*: late marriage or single, no or few children.

Though it is difficult to predict the specific characteristics of the study participants, the population from which the study sample was drawn would most likely possess a number of the variables noted by Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) as they are associated with women who are motivated to achieve in the workplace. The women from which the study sample was drawn were all graduates of advanced degree programs leading to employment in non-traditional occupational areas. As such, one can hypothesize that they possess a number of the following variables noted above including: high ability, liberated sex role values, and strong academic self-concept and completion of higher education. Many more of the variables noted above were in fact present in the lives of the women interviewed however, before the researcher met them,

the possession of additional variables described by Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) could not be ascertained.

Participants for this study were selected from among the University of San Diego graduates in Law (Juris Doctor degree, JD), Business school (Master's in Business Administration, MBA) and Educational Administration program (Administrative Credential). The University of San Diego is a private, Roman Catholic university offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees. The university has a solid academic reputation in the San Diego community and on a national level.

Women from the University of San Diego's graduating classes of 1980 and 1981 were invited to participate in this study from the Law and Business schools (those completing their JD and MBA, respectively). In addition, women who completed their Educational Administration credentials from 1991 to 1999 were invited to participate. The University of San Diego School of Education has no address records for graduates of the Educational Administration program prior to 1991 so the study necessarily limited those invited to participate from this program. Overall, these women were younger than the women completing their law or business degrees in 1980 or 1981, the balance of the pool of volunteers.

Completion of the Educational Administration credential is required for all elementary and secondary principals, vice-principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents and other administrative positions within a public school district. Those who enter the Educational Administration program must meet requirements for certification prescribed by the state of California. These requirements include a current elementary

or secondary teaching credential, a minimum of 2 years of teaching experience and letters of recommendations from professional colleagues.

These pre-enrollment requirements take at a minimum 3 years beyond the four year bachelor's degree to complete. The Educational Administration program may be completed in 1 to 3 years depending on the full or part time status of the student. Thus, the average age of those completing this credential may be higher at graduation than those completing a JD or MBA degree. The later year of degree completion (1990-1999 versus 1980-1981 for the law and business graduates), however, may still cause this pool of volunteers to be younger.

It is assumed that the women who completed JD and MBA degrees in 1980 and 1981 will be of child bearing and/or child rearing ages. Women who complete the Educational Administration program have already spent a number of years as teachers as a requirement for the credential. The graduates of the Educational Administration program are estimated to be, on average, 30 or more years old by the credentialing staff at the University of San Diego. Thus, they too would be of child bearing and/or child rearing ages.

As noted in Table 2, the percentage of women graduates from the JD program in 1980 and 1981 is 29% and 32%, respectively. The percentage of women graduates from the MBA program in 1980 and 1981 is 15% and 19%, respectively. Both of these fields of study were dominated by males in the 2 years being considered — 1980 and 1981.

Table 2

University of San Diego Graduates With Advanced Degrees by Year of Graduation

Year	Males	Females (%)	Total
Business School graduates (MBA)			
1980	28	5 (15%)	33
1981	25	6 (19%)	31
Total	53	11 (17%)	64
Law School graduates (JD)			
1980	205	85 (29%)	290
1981	181	86 (32%)	267
Total	386	171 (30%)	557
Graduates in Educational Administration			
1991-1999	5	17 (77%)	22

The percentage of women present in the data base maintained by the School of Education at the University of San Diego for those completing their Educational Administrative credential is 77%. Primarily female students completed this program during the years available for study (1991-1999). This is also the case at San Diego State University, where 64% (99 of 154) of the graduates of the Educational Administration program were female in the year 1997-98 (Administration, Rehabilitation and Professional Education [ARPE], 1997-98).

Despite the larger percentage of women versus men completing the Educational Administration credential at the University of San Diego, this occupational field was, and is, dominated by males in the workforce. Shakeshaft (1998) notes that, currently, women are underrepresented in the jobs to which the Educational Administration

program leads, primarily to secondary principalships and superintendencies. Women constitute 26% of the secondary principals and 7% of the superintendent positions, as opposed to representing 51% of the total public school population (Shakeshaft, 1998).

The goal of this study was to describe the experience of working mothers. In order to capture this experience, women who have demonstrated a high degree of motivation to achieve in the workplace and have raised children concurrently were interviewed. The researcher also believed that it was important for the women selected for the study have a sufficient amount of time with these multiple roles to assess and reflect upon their experiences. They were currently living the lifestyle of a working mother so that, for the most part, they had recent experience with the challenges and joys shared by working mothers.

The criteria established for participation in this study reflects the desire to select women who possess the characteristics noted above. These criteria include (a) graduated from the University of San Diego with a JD or MBA degree or a credential in Educational Administration, (b) raising at least one minor child in the home currently, (c) worked outside the home for at least 10 years, (d) currently in the workforce full or part time, and (e) live locally (within San Diego County). Table 2 delineates the number of women who graduated from each program and class.

The Alumni Relations office at the University of San Diego provided mailing lists of the Law School graduates and Business School graduates who live in San Diego County. There were a total of 68 Law School graduates and 4 Business School graduates who lived in San Diego County. All of the 17 women who completed their

credential in Educational Administration live in San Diego County. This brings the potential pool of study participants to 89 (68 + 4 + 17).

The lists of potential volunteers obtained from the University of San Diego were coded by graduate program (i.e., JD, MBA, or Administrative Credential) and each was assigned a number. These graduate program codes and numbers were noted on the response letters enclosed in the letter of invitation. This allowed easy tracking of response letters if the written information on the form was illegible when it was returned.

The number of women who would respond to the letter of invitation to participate was difficult to predict. Weiss (1994) recommends several techniques to increase the number of respondents. He recommends sponsorship by a group such as educational institution or government agency which may be "viewed as a testimony to legitimacy" (p. 34) by the respondents. The association which this study has with the University of San Diego served this legitimacy function.

Weiss recommends that the researcher conduct a concerted sales effort where it is especially important to obtain an interview with a particular respondent or group of respondents. In his studies, Weiss has obtained a 30-80% response rate depending on factors such as the availability and quality of respondent contact information and the aggressiveness of his sales effort.

In this study of working mothers, the pool of eligible participants was 89. Four women were eliminated from the pool because they were acquainted with the researcher. Merriam (1988) describes the interviewer-respondent interaction by saying

that neutrality is essential in qualitative interviewing. A good interviewer is sensitive, acts as a reflective listener and learns from the respondent. Merriam recommends that the interviewer may start with someone considered knowledgeable by others and then ask for referrals. The bias of the researcher is inherent in this process. In order to maintain the neutrality referred to by Merriam, and to minimize the researcher bias, the four women who were known to the researcher were eliminated from the pool of potential study volunteers.

The total number of women who were invited to participate in this study of working mothers was 85 (89-4). All 85 women were sent letters of invitation (Appendix B) which had a self-addressed response letter enclosed (Appendix C). Three letters were returned as undeliverable. Forty-four women returned their response letters and of those, 31 (38%) declined or were ineligible for participation and 13 (15%) agreed to participate in the study.

Two mailings of the letters or invitation were done. The first mailing was sent to all 85 potential volunteers. Thirty-one total responses occurred in response to that mailing (21 no, 8 yes, 2 undeliverable). A second mailing occurred approximately 1 month later to the women who had not replied to the first mailing. Fifty-four letters were mailed. Ten women responded negatively, 5 responded positively and 1 letter was returned as undeliverable. The overall response rate for this study was 51.76% (52%).

The overall response rate, as well as the response rate by graduate program, is outlined in Appendix F. The response rate for this study was in the center of Wiess' range (30-80%). The factors which helped to increase the response rate include:

- two mailings were completed within a relatively short time frame (1 month)
- the researcher followed up immediately to schedule interviews for those responding positively
- a high level of interest on the part of the respondents in the research topic
- the association with the University of San Diego added legitimacy and credibility to the study (Wiess, 1994).

A self-addressed response letter (see Appendix C) was enclosed in the letter of invitation to participate. The women either volunteered, declined participation, or requested further information on the response letter. The response letter was self-addressed to the researcher and the postage was pre-paid. The researcher's name, phone number and e-mail address appeared on the letter of invitation, as well as on the response letter. Volunteers were encouraged to contact the researcher with questions about the study prior to or concurrent with their participation.

Eight of the 10 interviewees met all five of the criteria for participation in the study. In one case, the woman had retired from the workforce a year prior; in a second case, the woman's children had been living out of the home for less than 1 year and were not minors (they were both over 18 years of age). Even though these two women did not technically possess all of the characteristics outlined in the selection criteria, the researcher included them in the study. Both of these women had valuable and

unique perspectives to contribute to the interview data. The demographic characteristics of the women who participated in the study and their families are noted in Appendix G.

Of the 44 women who responded to the letter of invitation to participate in the study, a number of them did not meet several of the criteria for selection or were unable to participate for other reasons. A total of 10 women were selected for interviews. These 10 women were selected based on the following: they met most or all of the criteria noted for participation, they were available during the study interview time frame (June of 1999 through September of 1999), and they responded in a timely manner to the letter of invitation. An effort was made to include participants from each of the three graduate programs being included in the study: Juris Doctor, Masters of Business Administration and Educational Administration. However, no specific number of participants from each program area were established.

As volunteers were identified, interviews were scheduled. Interviews took place at a location convenient for the volunteer; preferably her office or home. This allowed the researcher to gain additional insight into her "world." The interview location was determined by the respondent. The location had to be a quiet area in which the researcher and the respondent were not disturbed for the duration of the interview.

Thirteen working mothers volunteered for the study. Ten of those 13 were interviewed. The three women who volunteered but were not interviewed were unable to schedule interview times with the researcher. It was anticipated that the sample size for this study would be 10. Rubin and Rubin (1995) review two principles of

qualitative sampling (1995). The first principle, completeness, requires that the individuals who are chosen to participate as subjects are knowledgeable about the topic of the study. The second principle, saturation, requires that interviews, or other types of data collection, continue until the same events and/or information is relayed by study volunteers.

The women in this study met the criteria outlined by Rubin and Rubin (1995), completeness and saturation. They were quite knowledgeable about the study topic as they were currently living the life of a working mother and as such were intimately familiar with that lifestyle. Saturation, the point at which information begins to be repeated, was expected to occur at around 10 interviews. In this study of working mothers, saturation did occur at the tenth interview. The transcripts had been read and re-read as subsequent interviews were completed. The themes which had emerged in the earlier interviews were repeated in subsequent ones. The researcher was hearing similar information from the working mothers in the ninth and tenth interviews that had been present in the interviews one through eight.

The original estimate of saturation occurring at or around the tenth interview was based on the experiences of other researchers using qualitative interview techniques similar to those used in this study. If the themes and information shared by the ninth and tenth interviewees been quite dissimilar from that of the first eight interviews, additional interviews would have been completed. Should saturation not have occurred at this point, the researcher was prepared to amend the number of interviews.

Data Collection

The interview sessions with the working mothers lasted between 1 hour and 2 hours. A flexible approach was taken as to the time frame of the interview; attempting to obtain as much information as possible about the woman's life as a working mother within the pre-established time limitations. The interviews were conducted either at the woman's place of work, her home or, in two cases, a restaurant during the volunteer's lunch hour.

The time frame of a qualitative interview can vary from ½ hour to 8 hours (Weiss, 1994). Weiss recommends that if the researcher doesn't "know what to anticipate, you might ask respondents to plan an hour and a half, with the option of ending earlier or going on for a bit" (p. 56). He goes on to say that if the respondent is willing and able to continue the interview past the time planned by the researcher, it is "good policy to support the fullest report a respondent can give and to continue an interview as long as it is productive" (p. 57). This flexible approach was used for the interviews of working mothers in this study.

The interviews conducted in this study were tape recorded. The decision as to whether or not to tape record respondent interviews was addressed extensively by Weiss (1994). He notes both the positive and negative aspects of the tape recording process. On the negative side, tape recording reminds participants that "there will be a record of what they say. Even when people seem to have stopped attending to the tape recorder they can feel constrained by its presence" (p. 53). On the other hand, if the researcher does not tape record and depends on hand written notes instead, the notes

often do not capture what was said. Also, “note taking tends to simplify and flatten respondents’ speech patterns. . . . The vividness of speech disappears” (p. 54).

Weiss recommends tape recording if the researcher intends to quote respondent’s comments in the report, even if editing will occur at a later time. Tape recording allows the researcher to focus more on the essence and meaning of what the respondent is saying as the recorder can be depended on to capture the actual words being spoken. Riessman (1993) says that “taping and transcribing are absolutely essential to narrative analysis” (p. 56). It is for the reasons noted here that the interviews with 10 working mothers in this study were tape recorded. The tape recordings were then transcribed for analysis. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriptionist in this study.

Several demographic questions were asked of the working mothers participating in this study (see Appendix D). These questions include the educational level of the interviewee, her family income level, and her age. This information was collected for the woman and her husband and, in one case, an ex-husband. The demographic information helped to characterize the women as a group for the research report. They also serve as a “basis for further qualitative exploration” and “help anchor a qualitative discussion” (Weiss, 1994, pp. 50-51).

As recommended by Weiss, these demographic questions were not asked at the beginning of the interview as they “set the wrong tone” (p. 51). They were asked at the end of the interview session. “When the interview is over, it doesn’t hurt to ask for

whatever census data you think might prove useful. It is then natural to say, 'Could I ask a few more questions, about your age and the like?'" (p. 51).

The sequence of the interviews in this study were all similar. First, the researcher and the interviewee met and greeted one another. The interview procedure was briefly reviewed by the researcher. The Consent Form was discussed with the volunteer, especially the section regarding the tape recording of the interview and her choice of identification for purposes of the research report. All the interviewees requested anonymity. The researcher indicated that a copy of the signed Consent Form would be provided to the interviewee at a later time. The Consent Form was then signed by the volunteer, the tape recorder was turned on, and the interview began. The questions from the interview guide were then asked, usually in sequence, as noted on Appendix A.

The interview questions may not have been asked in sequence if the interviewee was answering questions to come later in the interview in her responses to earlier questions, or if, logically, a question was more appropriately asked at a different time in the interview. Questions may have been omitted if the responses had already been covered by the interviewee in her response to a different question.

After the questions from the interview guide were asked, the researcher asked the volunteer if she would be willing to answer a few demographic questions. The volunteers all agreed to do so and those questions were then answered by each woman in the study, after the tape recorder had been turned off. The researcher also indicated that, as indicated on the Consent Form, a summary of the research findings would be

provided to the volunteer for her review at a later date. The researcher then thanked the volunteer for participating in the interview and left. A week or so after the interview had taken place, a thank you note and a copy of the volunteer's signed Consent Form was sent to each study volunteer.

The full interviews of the 10 working women in this study were transcribed and analyzed. A professional transcriptionist completed the transcripts for all the interviews. There was approximately a 1 week turn around from the time the interview tapes were provided to her and the time the transcripts were picked up by the researcher. In two cases, the tape recorder malfunctioned and portions of the working mother's interview was not recorded. In these cases, the researcher became aware of the problem during the interview and summarized and tape recorded what had been missed on the tape. This summary was transcribed by the transcriptionist and included as part of that volunteer's interview transcript.

The completed study findings were sent to the interviewees in January, 2000. They were given the opportunity to review the research report and edit the information which was included relating to their interview. In March 2000, the sections of the study which described the study volunteers as well as the demographic chart to be included in the study (Appendix F) was sent to the 10 women who were interviewed for the study. They were again given the opportunity to edit this information and asked to give special attention to the protection of their anonymity.

Data Analysis

The decision as to how much of the interview to transcribe is also addressed by Weiss (1994). He describes an approach in which the entire interview is transcribed and then considered “a set of materials to be mined” (p. 55). No material is lost and the entire context of the interview is preserved for future analysis. Riessman (1993) recommends that the researcher begin with a rough, total transcription of the interview which allows for all the “words and striking features of the conversation on paper (e.g., crying, laughing, very long pauses). Then go back and retranscribe selected portions for detailed analysis” (p. 56).

In keeping with the recommendations of Weiss (1994) and Riessman (1993), the entire interviews with the working mothers in this study were transcribed. In the current study, the entire interview served as each woman’s narrative of her life as a working mother. Interpretive categories which emerge from the transcript and the context or oral record of the respondents experience “provide clues about meaning” (Riessman, 1993, p. 58). These categories were identified through reading and re-reading the interview transcript. They were then noted in the right hand margin of the interview transcript.

This conception of the entire interview as a personal narrative coincides with Riessman’s (1993) description of several types of narrative forms. She says that “there is no single method of narrative analysis but a spectrum of approaches to texts that take narrative form. Whatever their differences . . . the examples show that there are ways to analyze individuals’ recollections of the past systematically, informed by narrative

theory” (p. 25). She describes a study conducted by Ginsberg in which the entire interview was considered a narrative. When Riessman generalizes from Ginsberg’s method, she describes it as a comparison of plot lines across a series of first person accounts determining the causal sequence of events in the narrator’s account, especially those which signaled a break between the ideal and the real. The approach used in this study is similar to that described by Ginsberg; however, rather than seeking out causal sequences, the researcher was seeking themes.

A concurrent process of analysis and transcription occurs with personal narrative analysis, as with most qualitative interviewing. As Mishler (as cited in Riessman, 1993) noted, “How we arrange and rearrange the [interview] text in light of our discoveries is a process of testing, clarifying and deepening our understanding of what is happening in the discourse” (p. 277). Close, intent and repeated listenings of the interview tapes are necessary to gain insights that will help determine how the interview narrative will appear in the research report.

As the transcripts were read, themes were sought out. Emerging themes discovered through the interview process were used as generative guides for writing the research report. The main body of the study was divided into sections which elaborate on an essential aspect of the phenomenon as described in Van Manen (1990). With themes used as an organizing framework then “the challenge becomes how to treat each of the themes systematically, even though one of them always implicates the meaning dimensions of other themes” (p. 168).

Van Manen (1990) goes on to state:

It may be less important to write a detailed methodological excursus of the study until after the actual study has been completed. A certain openness is required in human science research that allows for choosing directions and exploring techniques, procedures and sources that are not always foreseeable at the outset of a research project. (p. 161)

Though consideration was given as to how to analyze the transcripts produced from the interviews of working mothers prior to conducting this study, the openness advised by Van Manen (1990) was also maintained. The goal of this study was to discover meaning and deepen understanding of the lives of working mothers. “Ultimately, of course, the features of an informant’s narrative account an investigator chooses to write about are linked to the evolving research question, theoretical/epistemological positions the investigator values, and, more often than not, her personal biography” (Riessman, 1993, p. 61).

Each of the interviews of the working mothers in this study constitute a narrative of their lives. The questions asked during the interviews were used as prompts for the women to view their lives from several different perspectives. They were asked to describe the formative influences leading to their current lifestyle, the actual day-to-day experience of their lives as working mothers and to reflect upon their lives as working mothers. The interviews are thus a picture of the lives of these women in their role as a working mother and, taken as a whole, constitute a narrative.

The steps which were followed to analyze the narratives of the working mothers in this study are noted below in sequential order. These steps are similar to those outlined in Marshall and Rossman (1999).

1. Read and re-read transcripts several times to become familiar with the data.

A “heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data, and an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 154) are necessary in this process.

2. Themes were generated through this reading and re-reading process through noting patterns which were similar in the transcripts of the interviews. These themes were noted in the right hand margin of transcripts as the researcher continued reviewing them. A separate sheet noting the name and definition of the theme was also generated. Codes were devised for each of the 14 themes by the researcher and, as new examples of each theme was discovered in the narrative, the code for that theme was noted in the right hand side of the transcript.

Guba describes this process (1978, as cited in Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 154) saying that as categories of meaning emerge, the researcher searches for those that have internal convergence and external convergence. That is, the categories should be internally consistent but distinct from one another. The salient, grounded categories of meaning held by the study volunteers are identified. In the study of working mothers, 14 initial categories were identified. These 14 themes were merged into a final list of 10 which were included in the research report. These 10 themes emerging from the narratives of the working mothers were then organized under three overarching categories.

3. Marshall and Rossman (1999) review a process of evaluating the data for their usefulness and centrality. They recommend that the researcher determine how

useful the emergent themes and accompanying structure are in illuminating the research question. In this study of working mothers, the research question was, "What is the experience of working mothers?" In assessing the themes and overarching categories which emerged from the narratives of the working mothers, they seemed to be an accurate and meaningful response to the research question. In fact, the question was actually answered from several different temporal perspectives: past, present, and reflective.

There are several approaches or levels to the interpretation of qualitative research data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) review three levels of interpretation. They say that some researchers believe that data should not be analyzed but rather that the researcher's task is to gather the data and present them in such a manner that the interviewees are essentially speaking for themselves. The goal of this type of research report is to give an honest account with "little or no interpretation of interference with those spoken words" (p. 21). The approach is somewhat similar to that taken by a journalist.

The second type of data analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is that of an accurate description. "Because the investigator cannot possibly present all the data en toto to the readers, it is necessary to reduce these data. The principal here is to present an accurate description of what is being studied, though not necessarily all of the data that have been studied" (p. 22). Reducing and ordering material does represent a type of selection and interpretation on the part of the researcher however.

The authors point out that the interpretations made of the descriptive material may vary in their level of abstraction and that different levels of interpretation and abstraction may be presented within the same publication. A third level of interpretation is also discussed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) in which the generation of a theory explains the phenomenon under study.

In this study of working mothers, the second level of interpretation, that of highlighting specific aspects of the interview transcripts as represented by emergent themes, was used. Chapter IV consists of descriptive themes and corresponding overarching categories which emerged from the interviews of the 10 working mothers. Little interpretation on the part of the researcher was involved. The researcher chose to use this level of interpretation to remain consistent with the goal of the study: exploring the experiences of working mothers. Reporting those experiences in the words of the interviewees was important to achieving this goal, to the extent it was feasible.

Chapter V consists of a different view of the descriptive data provided in Chapter IV. A different type of interpretation of the descriptive material from the interviews of working mothers, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) above, is utilized in this chapter. Specific information from the interview transcripts is sought. Another way to conceptualize the presentation of data obtained from a narrative interview is described by Rubin and Rubin (1995).

Rubin and Rubin (1995) review two approaches to qualitative interviewing and report writing: cultural and topical. The difference between these two types of interviews is the "ownership" of the resulting report. They describe a cultural report as one

in which the researcher reports the ideas, expressions, and understandings that they heard in the interview as belonging to the interviewee. They go on to say that the report is presented in the words of the interviewees, rather than those of the researcher. The researcher is characterized as a photographer, “making choices about what to frame within the picture, but reproducing exactly what was there” (p. 30). A cultural research report is thus largely descriptive.

A topical interview and research report is based on a level interpretation of the researcher. The researcher may sort out and balance what different people say and then create a report based on this analysis. The resulting narrative can be as simple as a summary phrases such as “the program works” or as complicated as the “minute details of how environmentalists brought together coalitions to prevail over land developers” (p. 30). The words and evidence which provide the basis for the interpretation are those of the interviewees. The resulting summary of these interpretations, however, are those of the researcher. Rubin and Rubin compare the topical research report to the work of a “skilled painter” in that the “events portrayed did occur and were learned about through the interviews; the information is still grounded in the interviewees’ lives and stories. But the narrative is the truth as heard and interpreted by the researcher. It is an artist’s rendition” (p. 30).

Rubin and Rubin (1995) distinguish between these two types of interviewing and the characteristics of the resulting research reports; however, they point out that, in practice, both the cultural and topical styles are often mixed in a single interview. In situations in which both types of interviewing and reporting occur, the “researcher may

alternate between listening for nuanced cultural meanings and asking about events. You can mix topical and cultural interviewing because they share the underlying assumptions that guide all qualitative interviewing” (p. 31). These underlying assumptions include the relativism of culture, the active participation of the interviewer and the importance of giving the interviewee voice.

In Chapter V, the interview data was reported using a topical structure rather than a cultural structure, which characterizes the findings reported in Chapter IV. The information reported in Chapter V provided details about specific aspects of the working mother lifestyle. The data was organized into four areas. Each of these areas highlights and summarizes information which was brought out in the themes and overarching categories in Chapter Four.

The goal of Chapter Five was to further examine, in a more interpretive manner, the narratives provided by the working mothers in the study in specific areas which may be of practical interest to the readers of this study. The areas reviewed in Chapter V include (1) The Rewards of the Working Mother Lifestyle, (2) The Challenges of the Working Mother Lifestyle (3) The Balancing Strategies of Working Mothers, and (4) The Identity Shift from Full Time Professional to Working Mother.

These areas were chosen by the researcher, acting as the “skilled artist” in Rubin and Rubin’s (1995) characterization, for primarily practical reasons. Women who are considering combining motherhood and a profession may get a glimpse of both the benefits of choosing this lifestyle as well as the challenges it presents. In addition, women currently living the lifestyle of a dual career couple may find the strategies used

by those in the study useful and, perhaps, may be able to apply them to their own lives. Finally, a number of women discussed a re-prioritization of values which occurred when they became mothers. This identity shift is not often verbalized and seemed to come as a surprise to the women in the study. It may be helpful to share this experience with other women working in a profession who are considering starting a family.

In the qualitative research methodology, the researcher is the instrument of data collection and as such must consider and reveal values and experiences which have the potential to cause a bias. Marshall and Rossman (1999) say that in qualitative studies, the researcher's presence is fundamental to the paradigm. The researcher enters the lives of the participants to varying degrees depending on the type of qualitative study undertaken. The interviewer is not neutral but, as advocated by feminist researchers, develops a relationship with the interviewee. The interviewer must be aware of her own emotions and reactions to the topic being discussed with the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In an effort to address this need for personal awareness on the part of the qualitative interviewer, the experiences and values of the researcher in this study are discussed in the following section.

Researcher as Data Collection Instrument

As the researcher for this study, my values and experiences may be relevant to the process and content of the interviews which were used to collect the data from the working mothers in this study. McMillan (1996) indicates that the researcher's background, interests, and possible bias should be made clear in qualitative studies. He says that since a qualitative study is greatly influenced by the perspective of the

researcher, it is necessary to know the researcher's background-previous experiences, motivations for the research and characteristics that may effect the recording or interpretation of data (McMillan, 1996). It is in an attempt to address this aspect of qualitative research that the following information is shared.

As an undergraduate student in the late 1970s, I was influenced by the women's movement. I believed that there were no limits on what I could accomplish academically and in the workplace. I married my high school sweetheart in 1974 and we graduated from college in 1977. He went directly to law school and then into the legal profession. I went to work in education, as a teacher's assistant for a job training program. I was hired as an intake worker, interviewing youth and adults who wanted to find out which career areas were appropriate for them based on their aptitudes and interests. In 1977, I went back to school for my secondary teaching credential and my Master's Degree while working full time. After wrestling with the decision for some time, I gave birth to our first child in 1982.

I worked in intake for 9 years, gaining extensive interviewing and career guidance experience. I then worked as the Director of a job training center. I was offered the position of Director a few days after I found that I was pregnant with our second child, in 1986. I accepted the position and continued to work full time. My husband continued to work full time as an attorney.

As the director of the center, I wrote grants, operated and managed programs, hired and supervised up to 60 staff members, and coordinated services among five agencies in the East San Diego County region. I loved my work and had a wonderful

working relationship with my colleagues at the school district and the center. All along, I was fulfilling my personal goal to achieve in the workplace and to maintain a satisfying family life. I found my work fulfilling, however I also felt physically exhausted at times and unable to give as much energy as I would have liked to my family.

Our third child arrived in 1992. For the first time in our lives as a dual career couple, my husband and I felt overwhelmed. We had too many responsibilities and not enough time to fill them all. After much soul-searching, discussion and financial planning with my husband and children, I requested and was granted a part time schedule as Director of the center.

As a working mother, I experienced the role conflict and high energy level necessary to sustain such a lifestyle. This role conflict increased for me as our family size increased. I found the lifestyle of a working mother to be exhilarating, rewarding, complicated, and frustrating, all at the same time! I had been given the opportunity to work part time, which was a controversial and unprecedented option made available to me only because of my many years of experience and the desire on the part of my supervisor to maintain continuity in the center administration.

After 2 years of working part time, my supervisor at the school district felt that the position demanded a full time commitment. I did go back to work full time for a few months and then gave notice that I was planning to leave at the end of the fiscal year — in 6 months. This decision was reached more easily than was the decision to go part time. I felt as if I was “selling out” working mothers when I gave up my full time

position and then when I left the paid work force altogether. I had difficulty reconciling my ambition and my motivation to keep "moving up" the career ladder with my desire to fulfill my family's needs. I had never seen myself as a stay-at-home mom, but I knew that our hectic, fast-paced life could be simplified, and I wanted to try to achieve that goal. I had the self confidence to believe that I could reenter the paid work force when I was ready to do so; something that may have held me back earlier in my career. Concurrent with leaving my position, I entered the doctoral program at the University of San Diego.

Because of my personal experience as a working mother and a nonworking mother I have a great interest in this topic. Until I became a mother, I had no idea how parenthood can complicate and enrich one's life. Having lived the lives of a mother working full time, part time and, most recently, not working at all, I am able to empathize and relate well to all working mothers. I have grown to appreciate my lifestyle as a nonworking mother, but it has taken some time and some personal redefinition.

In addition, I am one of a group of women who have an alternate means of support, making the lifestyle of a full time mother financially possible. My spouse is gainfully employed which allows me to enter or leave the labor market to meet our family's needs. I have the option of selecting the optimum working arrangement for our family, based on the needs of my spouse, myself, and our three children.

My values have evolved over the course of my life as a working mother. I appreciated and was reinforced personally by the satisfaction of achieving in the workplace and was hesitant, at times almost militantly opposed, to giving up that source of

self-definition and personal pride. As my children have grown, I have come to appreciate our time as a family more and more. Rather than feeling that my home life took something away from my profession, I began to feel the opposite pull; that my professional life was interfering with my family life. Thus, my values became more family-centered and less focused on the personal achievement and ambition which was more of a priority before I had children and in my early years as a working mother.

I strongly believe that my experiences in the workforce were essential to my personal self-definition. Working provided me with a formative, challenging, and confidence-building experience. The lessons I learned through working, and through working as a mother, had a tremendous impact on my personal character. I cannot imagine having done without these experiences.

In considering the topic of working mothers as the subject of this study, I was initially drawn to a quantitative methodology. I had worked extensively with statistics in my position as the center director and was interested in conducting a survey of working mothers. However, when I began to seriously ponder what I most wanted to know about working mothers, I realized that I was most interested in their stories; how they manage their lives, what influences lead them to their current position and lifestyle, and what advice they may have for others who may be considering following in their footsteps.

These questions of mine could not be answered with a survey form. They were not quantitative questions. I researched the various types of qualitative methodologies, seeking one that would provide the women interviewees with the chance to discuss their

lives as working mothers. The personal narrative seemed to best suit the goals I had now defined for the study. Using the interview questions as guides, the women would have the opportunity to discuss the past and present influences on their lives as working mothers. Thus, I decided to structure the study as an in-depth interview using the personal narrative methodology. The process I chose to analyze the data also stayed true to my goal. I chose to report the experiences of the women in the study using their own words.

The methodology I chose for collecting and analyzing the experiences of working mothers is in line with that advocated by feminist researchers. The essence of the feminist approach is that the heritage of groups which had been marginalized or been in a minority position in our culture were not represented in the objective, positivist view of the world created by the members of the research community. Typically, these researchers have been white and male. What was once accepted as normative was recognized as being the limited and limiting perspective of a particular gender, class, and race. Feminist research is invested in the recovery and the interpretation of women's lives. "Listening to women's voices, studying women's writings, and learning from women's experiences have been critical to the feminist reconstruction of our understanding of the world" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 4). I support and agree with the position advocated by the feminist perspective and believe that the personal narrative is particularly appropriate for addressing the priorities of this type of research.

In my 17 years working at the job training center, I conducted many client and employment interviews allowing me to gain valuable experience which assisted me with this study. I felt very comfortable in the interviews of the working mothers and I believe that my interview experience and skills assisted me in creating an atmosphere in which the working mothers in the study felt comfortable.

My experiences as a working and a nonworking mother create a potential personal bias. In order to mediate the effects of my potential personal bias, I maintained an awareness of my experiences during the interviews with working mothers. I made every effort to focus on the personal experiences of the interviewees, rather than any personal bias I may have regarding this lifestyle while interviewing the 10 working mothers in this study.

Protection of Human Subjects

Potential Risks

There were minimal potential risks to the participants in this study. There was the possibility of minor fatigue as a result of the interview process and a slight chance of emotionality surrounding the discussion of the respondent's life as a working mother. The University of San Diego's Protection of Human Subjects Guidelines were strictly adhered to. The population of respondents (working mothers), the facilities where the interviews occurred (a quiet, undisturbed location of the participant's choice), and a list of sample questions were all in compliance with the Human Subjects Guidelines and suggested that there was minimal risk to the participants.

A Consent Form was reviewed and approved by the University of San Diego Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (see Appendix E). This form reviews the nature of the study, the time commitment involved, and the questions to be asked in the interview. This form was discussed with each participant and signed by them prior to the commencement of the interview process. The researcher's name, mailing address, E-mail address, and phone number were included on the form. The study respondents were informed, both verbally and in writing on the Consent Form, that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without risk or penalty.

The Consent Form outlined the guidelines to be used to assure the confidentiality of the participants. Specifically, participants could choose to use their real names, choose a pseudonym, or choose to have the researcher delete names completely when preparing the research report. The option chosen by each participant was honored.

A professional transcriptionist was responsible for transcribing the interview tapes. The transcriptionist who assisted with the preparation of the interview transcripts was bound to confidentiality, so that neither the respondent's name nor the name of anyone mentioned by the respondent in the course of the interview would be disclosed.

All interview tapes and transcribed interviews will be kept in a locked file cabinet for a period of 5 years. They will be available only to the investigator and her faculty dissertation committee. All data will be destroyed 5 years after the study has been completed.

Respondents were given the opportunity to review the transcript of their interview and received a summary of the study finding prior to the preparation of the final research report.

Potential Benefits

The potential benefits of the proposed study include increasing understanding of the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, the day-to-day lives of working mothers, workplace and home based supports and hindrances which occur in the lives of working mothers, and learning about the multiple roles and the positive and negative aspects of the lives of working mothers. Increasing understanding in this area is important. There are many studies and books which provide both descriptive and prescriptive advice for working mothers. It will be insightful to view the world directly through the experiences of these women rather than through statistics and anecdotes.

In addition, the opportunity for working mothers to discuss their lives in a non-judgmental, open, and neutral environment such as the interview environment proved personally enlightening for them. It provided a chance for participants to clarify some of their own feelings, goals, and operating values in a neutral and confidential setting.

Risk/Benefit Ratio

While there was some minimal potential of negative or uncomfortable feelings surfacing in the interview, the potential benefits of the research exceeded this risk. In one case, a woman had recently lost her father and experienced a moment in which she

was overwhelmed by emotion during the interview. The benefits of this research include:

1. The contribution which was made by the working mothers to the literature describing and reflecting upon their lifestyle will assist in the understanding of this frequent topic of inquiry. Though there are a considerable number of quantitative studies and brief interviews of working mothers, there are few which seek to understand, in depth, the day-to-day experiences of working mothers.

2. The interview served as an opportunity for values clarification and inspiration as the working mothers detailed their experiences, the decisions they made along the way, and the supports that may or may not have existed in their lives.

Expenses to the Participant

There was no monetary compensation given to the study respondents.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in the following ways:

1. The researcher's format dictated that the participants not be chosen at random but be selected from a specific group of women with specific characteristics as a purposive sample. The small, specialized sample used for this study limited the generalizability of any findings from the study to a broader, more heterogeneous population. Specifically, the population from which the sample was selected for this study are female from middle- to upper-class backgrounds, graduates with an advanced degree from a small, private Roman Catholic university in southern California.

The size of the school and its expense limited the number and the socio-economic status of the student population at the school. The religious affiliation of the school may have also limited the number and nature of the applicants to the school; however, there was no mandatory religious course work for graduate students. The location of the school in southern California also limited the student population to those who resided in the area or those who may have chosen to move to the area to attend the university. Clearly, a small minority of the overall population are able and/or willing to attend the University of San Diego.

2. The study was limited to, at a maximum, two interview sessions. The average time of the interview(s) was 1½ hours. This time restriction may have limited the amount, and perhaps the type, of information and experiences shared by the women in the study.

3. There are several limitations of the use of in-depth interviews as the primary, or only data collection procedure (as was the case in this study). Marshall and Rossman (1999) describe five limitations of the interview as a data collection procedure: (a) Interviews depend upon personal interaction; cooperation is essential. The interviewee may be unwilling or uncomfortable sharing all that the researcher hopes to explore. (b) The interviewer may not ask questions that evoke long narratives by participants either because of a lack of expertise or a lack of familiarity with the specific language of those she is interviewing. This may also occur due to lack of interview skills. (c) It is possible that the interviewer may not properly comprehend interviewee responses or specific elements of the conversation. (d) Interviewers need

excellent listening skills and must be experts at personal interaction, question framing and probing for clarification and elaboration. (e) When the researcher is using the interview as the sole way of gathering data, she should have demonstrated that the purpose of the study was to uncover and describe the participants subjective perspective on the topic of inquiry. Studies making more objectivist assumptions should triangulate interview data with other data collection procedures.

4. Several specific limitations are noted by Marshall and Rossman (1999) regarding the personal narrative methodology. The personal narrative methodology is criticized for its focus on the individual rather than on the social context. It seeks to understand sociological questions about groups, communities and contexts through individuals' lived experiences. Marshall and Rossman (1999) go on to say that narrative may suffer from selective recall, a focus on subsets of experience, filling in memory gaps through inference, and reinterpretation of the past. Others warn against ascribing causality to the narrator's story. Finally, the process of narrative inquiry is time-consuming and laborious and may require some specialized training (p. 123).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this study:

1. The women volunteers in the study willingly committed to the time frame of the interview (a maximum of two sessions, an average time frame of 1½ hours). They openly and honestly shared their experiences as working mothers.

2. The women participating in this study chose to pursue a graduate degree in law, business, or education because they considered themselves serious professionals. They intended to use their degree in their chosen career for an extended period of time.

3. My personal experience as a working and nonworking mother assisted in creating a rapport and a common bond with the women in the interview process. This personal experience also had the potential to create a researcher bias, as noted previously. My experience working as an interviewer of those seeking to acquire or change employment assisted in my ability to interview the 10 working mothers in this study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the personal narrative qualitative methodology used in this study of working mothers. The interview sequence and the questions asked of the women in the study were reviewed. The process used to analyze the interview data was discussed. The researcher's perspective and experiences were reviewed as she was the instrument for data collection in this study. The study limitations, assumptions, and procedures for the protection of human subjects were also outlined.

Chapter IV reviews the interview data in the context of overarching categories and emergent themes. These descriptive themes and categories are the structure used to provide meaning to the experiences of the working mothers which was discussed in the interviews.

Chapter V includes a different analysis of the information emerging from the interviews with the 10 working mothers. Several specific areas of interest are discussed in this chapter. The interview data are interpreted in a different manner to address

these areas of interest. Chapter VI includes a discussion of the study findings and areas for future research.

CHAPTER IV

CONTENT ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of working mothers. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

A qualitative methodology was used in this study. The in-depth interview used in this study allowed various aspects of the working mother's life to be explored and examined. Themes were discovered in the narratives of the lives of the working mothers which formed the basis for the data analysis conducted in this study. Areas of future research may be suggested as a result of the interview format and the information which emerged from these interviews.

This study was unique because it uses the qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10 high-achieving, professional working mothers. Most studies about working mothers have used a quantitative methodology. The potential benefits of this study include discovering the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, and the workplace and home based supports and hindrances which

exist in their lives and finally, learning about the multiple, concurrent roles filled by working mothers.

Increasing understanding in this area is important. There are many studies and books which provide both descriptive and prescriptive advice for working mothers. It was enlightening to view the world directly through the experiences of these women rather than through statistics and anecdotes.

This chapter will consist of three sections. The first section will introduce the 10 working mothers who participated in the study. The second section will review the content analysis carried out in this study to find meaning in the interview transcripts. The process used to discover themes in the transcripts and the structure of those themes will be reviewed. The third section will outline and explain in detail the themes which emerged from the analysis of the interviews of working mothers. A summary is included at the end of this chapter.

Several aspects of the data collection process are worthy of note. First, of the 44 negative and positive responses which were returned to the researcher, the majority of them included notes of encouragement for the researcher and/or interest expressed in the topic. Even if the potential study participant did not meet the criteria for involvement in the study, there was often an explanation as to why she could not participate and a wish of "good luck" on the response form.

Secondly, those who did participate in the study did so with great interest and enthusiasm. All of them remarked that it was "fun" to talk about their lives as working mothers and that they enjoyed the interview process. Two volunteers offered

supplemental documents which reviewed the issues of working women in their specific profession. Several women were interested in participating in an interview; however, they could not find the time to do so. One woman noted that this study focuses on a segment of the population who probably has the least free or unstructured time available: working mothers!

The Study Volunteers

The 10 study volunteers are described below. As a group, the women and their husbands are highly educated, and are all middle- to upper-class. All of the volunteers requested anonymity. To honor this request, pseudonyms have been used to identify them. Pseudonyms are also used for their children when they are referred to by name by the interviewee. In addition, specific locations mentioned by the interviewees have also been changed to prevent the possible identification of any individual woman.

The first study volunteer, Anne, received her MBA from the University of San Diego in 1980. Anne is a slim, athletic-looking woman of age 52. She has been married for 26 years and has one 17 year-old daughter. The interview for the study took place at Anne's home, a classic Spanish-style stucco house which Anne and her husband are in the process of renovating, inside and out. Anne was 34 years old when her daughter was born, soon after she had completed her MBA. She works as a programmer. Her husband worked full time before and after their daughter's birth as a consulting manager for an electronic test company. He is 56 years old.

The second volunteer, Beth, completed her JD at the University of San Diego in 1981. She is an energetic, enthusiastic 45 year-old woman. The interview took place

in Beth's new, traditional, spacious home located in a suburb of San Diego. Beth has three children ages 12, 9, and 6. She works as a lawyer and has since her graduation from law school. Her oldest son was born when she was 32 years-old. Beth has been married for 15 years. Her husband is also an attorney, although he practices a different type of law than she does. They met in law school at the University of San Diego.

The third volunteer, Carrie, graduated from the University of San Diego with her JD in 1979. She is a gracious, intense woman of slight build. Carrie is 43 years old and currently works full time as a partner in a large law firm. The interview took place in Carrie's law offices. We met in a large, glass-walled conference room overlooking downtown San Diego. Carrie has been married for 18 years and has two children, ages 17 and 15. She was 27 when her first child was born. Carrie's husband also has his JD and works full time as a professor. He is 53 years old.

The fourth study volunteer, Diane, completed her Administrative Credential and Doctorate (EdD) at the University of San Diego in 1998. She is a vivacious, energetic woman of age 51. The interview took place in Diane's office, a comfortable room with a full bookcase along one wall and a desk, computer, and window along another wall. Diane is currently working as an educational program coordinator and has a 9 year-old daughter. She was 42 years old when her daughter came to her (she was adopted). Her daughter arrived on her 20th wedding anniversary. Diane and her husband have been married for 29 years. Diane's husband works as an insurance adjuster. He is 50 years old and holds a bachelor's degree.

The fifth study volunteer, Ellen, is a 44 year-old lawyer, a graduate of the class of 1980 at the University of San Diego. She is a petite woman with a magnetic smile and sparkling blue eyes. The interview took place in Ellen's personal office at her law firm. The offices are furnished with a large wooden desk and two wood and fabric arm chairs facing the desk, which we used for the interview. Ellen has two children, ages 10 and 6. She was 34 when her first child was born. She has been married for 12 years, although she and her husband have been together for 20 years. Ellen's husband is 43 years old and is also a graduate of the law program at the University of San Diego. He works in his own legal practice.

The sixth study volunteer, Frances, graduated from the University of San Diego in 1994 with her Master's Degree in Education as well as her Administrative Credential. She is a warm, personable woman of slight build with a professional demeanor. She has been married for 4 years and has a 16-month-old son. Frances is 33 years old and was 31 when her son was born. She currently works as an educational program coordinator for a local school district. The interview for this study was held at her office on the campus of an elementary school. She shares a classroom-sized room with three other program coordinators. Frances has a desk, table, and chairs in her area of the room. We sat across from one another at the table during the interview. Her office area is neat and appears to meet her needs. Frances' husband works as a manufacturing supervisor. He has his bachelor's degree and is 33 years old.

The seventh study volunteer, Ginny, completed her JD at the University of San Diego in 1980. She is a small woman with an unassuming, yet warm, friendly

demeanor. The interview for this study was conducted at a restaurant near her place of employment in downtown San Diego. She has been married for 13 years and has two sons ages 12 and 9. Ginny was 31 when her first child was born and she is now 43 years old. She works as an entry level attorney and has worked since she had her children, though not always practicing law. Her husband is currently unemployed though he has worked most of their married life as an editor. He has his Master's Degree in Library Science and is 50 years old.

Volunteer number eight, Helen, is 50 years old and a member of the University of San Diego's law school graduating class of 1981. She is a personable, professional woman with a small build. The interview for this study took place in Helen's law offices. We met in her personal office which consists of a large desk looking out over a view of downtown San Diego with two arm chairs facing the desk. Helen has been married for 15 years and has one biological child, aged 13, and two stepchildren ages 15 and 20. She was 36 years old when her daughter was born. Helen is a partner in a law firm. Her husband is also an attorney working approximately 20 to 30 hours per week. He is 52 years old.

Volunteer number nine, Isabel, completed her Master's Degree in Education and her Administrative Credential from the University of San Diego in 1982. She is a relaxed, warm woman who is clearly comfortable with herself. The interview took place in her home; a large, new-looking house with forest green carpeting and lots of wood. Isabel has four children, ages 30, 29, 25, and 17. Her 17 year-old daughter is the only child left at home. Isabel has been married for 31 years and is 57 years old.

She was 26 when her first child was born. Isabel and her husband are retired. She spent over 20 years in education, teaching at private and public schools. Her husband worked in business and finance for many years. He holds a bachelor's degree and is 55 years old. Isabel spends 25 hours per week in volunteer activities at her daughter's school and with other organizations.

The final volunteer, Jackie, graduated in 1980 with her MBA from the University of San Diego. She is an enthusiastic, warm woman. Jackie is tall and articulate and was born with one hand. The interview took place in the cafeteria of her place of employment, a large information systems company in San Diego. Jackie has two children, ages 22 and 24. Both children have now graduated from college and no longer live at home. Her first child was born when she was 32 years old. She is 56 years old and was divorced 20 years ago, after being married for 8 years to her children's father. Jackie's ex-husband lives out of state. He has stayed in close contact with the children since their divorce. He is 57 years old, works as an engineer, and holds a PhD.

Content Analysis

The goal of this study was to explore the lives of working mothers. The researcher was interested in learning about the 10 volunteers and reporting their experiences in their own words, to the extent that was possible. The method of data analysis which best suited that goal was the second level of analysis described by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The aim of this level of analysis is to "present an accurate description of what is being studied, though not necessarily all of what has been studied" (p. 22).

This type of analysis is described by Rubin and Rubin (1995) as “cultural” (p. 30) analysis in which the researcher reports the ideas, expressions, and understandings that they heard in the interview as belonging to the interviewee. The “ownership” of the resulting report is thus the interviewees rather than the researcher (p. 30). In this type of data analysis, the researcher is a “photographer, making choices about what to frame within the picture, but reproducing exactly what was there” (p. 30).

In order to find meaning in the transcripts of interviews of the 10 working mothers, they were read through completely twice. On the third reading, themes which had repeated themselves in more than one interview were noted in the right-hand margin in pencil. When the theme was noted in one transcript, it was recorded on a master list of emergent themes along with a description of the theme and a code. The codes were then used to note additional examples of the theme in the right-hand margin of subsequent transcripts. Themes which had been recorded, defined, and coded, as well as any new themes, were sought while reading through the transcripts for a third, fourth, and fifth time.

A total of 14 themes emerged through this reading, recording, and coding process. These themes and their definitions are as follows:

1. Career Goals, Undergraduate and Graduate: A wide range of career direction and motivation existed among the interviewees upon entering undergraduate and graduate school. Several women had decided upon their future career at a very young age whereas others were led more by circumstance than design or desire.

2. Parental Influence on Career Goals: Most of the mothers of the study volunteers did not work outside the home while they were growing up but were very supportive of their daughters educational and career pursuits. Most of the fathers of the interviewees worked in a professional occupation and strongly encouraged their daughters to pursue college and a career.

3. Timing of Parenthood: Most of the women interviewed spent a number of years in the workplace before they had their children. When this was the case, the timing of their parenthood was deliberate, giving them more leverage to determine the structure of their work environment.

4. The Influence of Family on Career Decisions: The career decisions of the women in the study were strongly influenced by considerations for their family, once they had children. The volunteers made changes in their career goals, expectations, and work schedules, regardless of their potential negative impact on their careers, once they became parents. In some cases, the husbands of the women in the study increased the flexibility of their work schedule.

5. Balancing Strategies: Mothers and Fathers: Working mother's and working father's balancing strategies often differed. The strategies and/or operating philosophy used to balance work and family by the husband of the women interviewed were often reported as different from their own.

6. The Second Shift: The second shift, the family work required once the paid work day is over, was most often shared between the working mothers in the study and their spouses and/or hired help. Each family worked out a way to take care of these

chores so that their household functioned. Overall, the second shift was not seen as an overwhelming burden for the majority of the working mothers interviewed.

7. **Discrimination:** A few of the women interviewed had experiences with discrimination in the workplace and/or in graduate school due to their gender and/or their status as mothers. Their reactions to this experience ranged from annoyance to outrage.

8. **Family Friendly Workplace:** Most of the women interviewed perceived their workplace as family friendly. There were few recommendations for workplace changes as most of the women had either found or structured a workplace which met their dual role needs.

9. **The Influence of the Media:** The media portrayal of working mothers had little or no conscious influence on the lifestyle decisions made by the majority of the women interviewed. None of the women in the study said that they had made any decisions to combine or not to combine parenthood and a profession based on the popular media's portrayal of working mothers. They made these decisions in the context of their individual families.

10. **Advice for Working Mothers Considering Parenthood:** The working mothers in the study advise working women considering parenthood to do it, with a few cautions. Those cautions included: expect to feel differently about your work and your family life, there is never a perfect time to have children and two parents are better than one.

11. Satisfying and Regretful Aspects of Working Mothers Lives: Few or no regrets were expressed by the working mothers about the lifestyle they had chosen. None of the women regretted having children, in fact, most relished that decision, nor did they regret the professional concessions they had made which most often allowed them more time with their family. A few wondered about the impact different educational or career paths may have had on their current work situation.

12. Work Schedule: Most of the women interviewed had part time and/or flexible work schedules allowing them greater flexibility than the traditional 9:00 am to 5:00 pm work day provides. These work arrangements allowed them to participate more fully in their children's activities.

13. Decision to Attend the University of San Diego (USD) for Graduate School: USD was chosen as their graduate school by the women interviewees for a wide variety of reasons ranging from a convenient location to the entrance requirements for the graduate program in which they enrolled.

14. Responsibility Towards Other Working Women: Several women noted that they felt they were trail blazers for women in their profession. They felt pressured to continue progressing up the career ladder within their profession so that other women may be more likely to be provided with that opportunity in the future.

The 14 themes fell into three larger, overarching categories. These categories provided additional structure and meaning to the analysis of the transcripts. The information provided by the working mothers in the interviews could be seen more clearly as a narrative of their lives through the use of these three overarching

categories. The categories, their definitions, and the themes which they subsume are noted below:

Formative Influences: This category includes those themes in which the women in the study reflect upon the influences contributing to their choice of the working mother lifestyle. Influences from their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood are discussed as they relate to the interviewees' educational and career decisions. The themes which are included in this category are: Influences on Career Goals, Timing of Parenthood, Experiences of Discrimination, and The Influence of the Media.

Making It Work: This category includes those themes in which the women in the study delineate the adjustments, accommodations, and planned and unplanned changes they, and their spouses, have made as a result of combining the roles of parent and professional. The themes which are included in this category are: The Influence of Family on Career Decisions, Balancing Strategies, Mothers and Fathers, The Second Shift, and The Workplace: Family Friendly Environments.

Looking Back: This category includes those themes in which the working mothers are asked to reflect upon their chosen lifestyle. They were asked to contemplate their lives as working mothers from a number of perspectives and to assess various influences on their lives. The themes included in this category are: Advice for Working Mothers Considering Parenthood, and Satisfying and Regretful Aspects of Working Mothers Lives.

The final three themes noted above, Work Schedule, Decision to Attend the University of San Diego, and Responsibility Towards Other Working Women are not

reported as separate themes in this study. The information shared by the interviewees related to the themes of Work Schedule and Responsibility Towards Other Working Women are subsumed in the themes of Influence of Family on Career Decisions and Advice for Working Mothers Considering Parenthood, respectively. The theme Decision to Attend the University of San Diego is reported for some interviewees under the theme Career Goals, Undergraduate and Graduate but is not reviewed as a separate theme. In considering the focus of this study, understanding the lives of working mothers, the decision to attend a specific university was not directly relevant, though some valuable information was obtained when the interviewees answered the question. This information was reported under different, more relevant, thematic concepts.

The two themes, Career Goals Undergraduate and Graduate, and Parental Influence on Career Goals were combined as they both address similar aspects of the women's lives; their path to the current profession and role combination. The combined theme is entitled Influences on Career Goals.

The three overarching categories and the 10 themes which emerged from the transcripts and were included in the findings of the study are outlined in Table 3.

Emergent Themes

Three overarching categories and 10 themes emerged from the interviews of the 10 working women in this study. The information contained in this section is primarily descriptive as reviewed in the section entitled Content Analysis. The three categories are noted below along with the themes which relate to them. Under each category and theme are examples and explications of the thematic concepts as expressed by the

interviewees, in their own words. No two interviewee's comments and responses are exactly alike, although there are common elements among the 10 volunteers on different themes as noted below.

Table 3

Overarching Categories and Emergent Themes From Interviews of Working Mothers

Categories	Themes
Formative Influences	Influences on Career Goals Timing of Parenthood Experiences of Discrimination The Influence of the Media
Making It Work	The Influence of Family on Career Decisions Balancing Strategies — Mothers and Fathers The Second Shift The Workplace: Family Friendly Environments
Looking Back	Advice for Working Women Considering Parenthood Satisfying and Regretful Aspects of Working Mothers' Lifestyle

Formative Influences

The first category, Formative Influences, includes those themes in which the women in the study reflect upon the influences contributing to their choice of the working mother lifestyle. Influences from their childhood, adolescence, and adulthood are discussed as they relate to the interviewees educational and career decisions.

Influences on Career Goals. A wide variety of career direction and motivational levels existed among the interviewees upon entering undergraduate and graduate

school. Several women had decided upon their future career at a very young age, whereas others were led more by circumstance than clearly defined goals.

The two women who completed the MBA program at the University of San Diego, Anne and Jackie worked very hard to complete their degrees. They both received their bachelor's degrees in areas other than business. Anne's bachelor's degree is in Mathematics. Jackie's bachelor's degree is in International Relations. Jackie earned an MS in Library Science before she entered the MBA program at the University of San Diego. Both Anne and Jackie were led to the MBA program with the hope of changing careers.

Anne grew up in New York and was given the clear message that she and her brother would go to college. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Mathematics in 1969. At that time, computers were a new phenomenon. She says, "I just started looking for math jobs and I ended up at IBM . . . and they taught me the program." She worked at IBM for awhile "but I knew I didn't want to do it forever. I had a friend who felt the same way and she was a year ahead of me and she was going for the MBA. I thought that's pretty neat." Anne worked on her degree in New York and in Northern California before finishing her MBA at the University of San Diego.

Anne was hopeful that her degree would allow her to change careers, from programming to business. Unfortunately, she did not get much assistance from her professors, though they were very encouraging while she was in the program. After obtaining a position in a technical division of a company, Anne found that as one of the few women in that aspect of the company's operation, advancement was not possible.

She went back to programming when that was offered to her and she and her husband started their family.

Jackie had obtained her bachelor's degree because, as a child, she was told by her parents that she would need to find work using her mind. "I guess I always knew that I would work even if I had children. College was definitely an expectation, because I have one hand there was an expectation that I would do something where I could use my mind; I probably wasn't going to be hired as a waitress or a secretary or something like that."

Jackie finished her MBA while her children were small. She and her husband divorced at about that same time. "I finished my MBA after moving back here and I had two children at that time and I was going to school and I got a part time job and was working on my degree and my husband left in the middle of all that."

She was hoping to move into a different area of business operations. She had been working as a research librarian and was considering a move to some other aspect of business for which her MBA prepared her. Jackie did not make this move. She sees both positive and negative aspects to her staying in the library field. "I got my degree and it wasn't particularly good economic times and I had already gotten a job as a librarian so I stuck with that . . . I had to put food on the table . . . so I probably didn't pursue some things that I would have done. I had a passion for doing research so it worked out . . . and I use the knowledge I gained [in graduate school] in working in business [as a librarian]."

Beth and Ellen knew from a very young age that they would be lawyers. They picked their careers at ages 12 and 6, respectively, and discussed their decision with their families at the time.

Beth talked about the influence the small town environment in which she was raised had on her decision to become a lawyer. "I had always intended, from like 12 years old on, to be both a lawyer and a mom. Our neighbor was a federal district judge and he was a male. There were no female lawyers in my view, I don't remember ever meeting a female lawyer or a female judge. So I didn't look to them for models. I remember in the 60s being aware of two factors. One was that traditional female jobs were teachers Teachers also went off and got master's and graduated in 3 (now it's 4) years and were salaried very poorly. And traditional male jobs were salaried very well for doing the same number of hours of work."

Beth continues by saying, "When I went into law school, women were welcome in law school. There was no problem being admitted to law school, it wasn't a problem being in the class. I was an undergrad in political science. I was used to being in a classroom with one other female so in law school there were actually a few more women."

The second factor Beth mentioned as having an influence on her decision to become a lawyer was also related to her upbringing. "I saw growing up . . . husbands that were not faithful spouses, that had girlfriends, and that women made the choice of staying in the marriage in order to maintain the lifestyle or leaving the marriage at which point they didn't seem to fit the community anymore."

Ellen was influenced by her brother who was born with multiple birth defects. She says, "I spent a lot of my childhood fighting with people who would make fun of him so I couldn't handle it. He could handle it but I couldn't, and that was one of the reasons I decided to become a lawyer for people only, because that's what motivates me." In further describing how her career choice was made, Ellen says, "I was about 6 years old when I just decided I wanted to do it and I didn't know any lawyers but I started reading very early. I was about three, I guess, when I learned how to read and I started reading biographies of people. . . . I was very interested in presidents, and most of them were lawyers. That was sort of my role model and my fantasy about what I wanted to do. I wanted to help people. I wanted to promote justice, and I just felt that, at the same point in my life I was called to do that."

Diane, Helen, and Ginny were motivated to pursue careers by what they saw as their mother's unhappiness and/or lack of options by not having a career. Diane says "I knew very few women who worked full time with children. On the other hand, my parents were on the verge of divorce from sometime around the time I graduated from high school until I graduated from college. Actually, they did divorce about 3 or 4, 5 years later." Diane goes on to say that her mother stayed in the marriage as long as she did because she felt economically dependent on her father. Diane says, "I made a conscious decision never to be in a position I couldn't walk [away from a marriage] if I needed to."

Ginny saw her mother as unhappy in her role as a full time homemaker. She says, "She was doing a good job. We got fed and she was PTA president, but I

couldn't say she was real happy, and it could be other things too, but I think not. I think I reacted a lot to that." On the other hand, Ginny's father provided an upbeat image of the work world. She says, "He was very positive that working was [a] fun, positive thing to do. So it made a counterbalance . . . those things combined made me come to the conclusion that there's no right answer." She says that "my parents were really supportive of anything but in the sense they almost put no expectations on me to do anything. I almost wish they would have said you're going to do that, you're going to do this, because I feel like I've really hurt myself by not having, at a young age, probably high school, sort of a clear image of where I was going to be in 10 years, or even 1 year."

Helen remembers her father forbidding her mother from working. In addition, her mother's father, her grandfather, did not support her mother becoming a nurse. Helen describes her father as very traditional even though he was supportive of her going to college and, later, law school. She says, "He never expected us [her and her sister] to be stay-at-home people."

Carrie ended up in law school after considering and abandoning a career in ballet. She created her own major at a college in California and took advantage of the school's program to study abroad a year before graduating. When she was considering her future after college, she decided that she wanted "either to teach or be a creative writing person and I knew nothing about law. My father suggested that I consider law and I thought, I don't know anything about it. I don't know any lawyers. It impacts your life no matter what you do, so I'd better learn about it."

Frances was influenced by the role model her mother and older sister provided when deciding about entering the field of education. Her family has expressed a strong belief and pride in her abilities which motivated her to achieve academically and in the workplace. She says, "They were proud of me and they were telling the whole world: here's my baby sister and she's got this job and that kind of thing. Just knowing that they cared about me was more than enough. That was where I got my energy, my wanting to do this well." Frances' mom and dad worked throughout her childhood but her older sister was there to "take care of me and send me off to school." There are seven girls and two boys in Frances' family. Her parents provided her with a role model of a "strong, healthy, dedicated kind of mom" and a father who was "hard-working and dedicated to his job."

Isabel received little career direction at home. She says "my parents pretty much didn't tell me what to get educated in, and in school I had no clue what I wanted to do, but I liked children. I liked child development so that's what I graduated in, which, without a master's degree, is no field at all." Both of Isabel's parents went to college, "so I assumed that's what I would do. And in those days, it wasn't as hard to get into college as it is now. In fact right now, I don't know if I could have, the grades I had, whether I would actually have gotten into college because it was just something . . . my friends were going so I went. It wasn't a career thought. I didn't even have a clue until after my second year what I might do."

The parents of the women in the study often had an influence on their decision to combine a profession with motherhood. Many of the working mothers interviewed

described both their mothers and their fathers as supportive of their educational and professional endeavors. Some say their fathers were especially encouraging. Their mothers, however, often did not model the lifestyle they were promoting for their daughters. Most of the mothers of the interviewees did not attend college or work outside the home while their daughters were growing up. Most of the fathers of the interviewees were professionals. The home environment from which the interviewees came often had an influence on the women's decision to combine motherhood and a profession.

Anne did not really think there was a connection between her lifestyle as a working mother and her parents messages to her growing up. "My dad was self-employed and my mom was a secretary out of the house . . . they were nice people and smart. My dad especially, and my brother and I were the first in my family to go to college. I am from a real small town and I didn't think there was any influence in my [upbringing] that influenced my decision as a parent."

Carrie's parents were also very supportive of her educational pursuits but she says "in that way directly, I don't think that combination [motherhood and a profession] was addressed in a way that I was influenced. And my father and my mom, my dad especially, always made me feel that I was capable of doing whatever I wanted to do or of achieving those things [I wanted to achieve]." Carrie says her dedication to ballet as well as her waiting to enter a serious relationship caused her to be focused. "I wasn't distracted by that and maybe because I got married a little bit older, my husband is 10 years older than I am, so he was in a different place too. I never really thought about

combining the two [motherhood and a profession]. I never didn't want to have children but I didn't feel compelled to have them."

Beth, Diane, and Helen also had supportive mothers and very encouraging fathers. Beth says, "I remember my dad asked me what I wanted to do and I was really a little apprehensive because girls still did girl-type things. I said, I'd like to be a lawyer, dad. I was afraid. And he said, well that sounds great! Instead of saying, well, we're not going to send you to that many years of college. It was just . . . that sounds good, okay, if that's what you want to do." Beth's mother encouraged education for her daughters and her son. She says, "We didn't grow up in a house where the boys were treated differently than the girls, even though that was all around us."

Diane says that combining motherhood and a profession "wasn't even in the picture when I was growing up." Diane's mother "substituted in elementary school occasionally but never with any consistency during the time I was growing up. She had her teaching credential and my options were to be a secretary, a teacher, a nurse, or a mother. They were mutually exclusive roles. I knew very few women who worked full time with children." Diane made the decision, however, that she would never be in an economically dependent position due to her parents subsequent divorce. She says that "it was a very conscious decision that ran headlong into the other expectation that you can't live alone and you need to be married and that you should be a mother. So there was a lot of conflict in figuring out how these two roles play out and trying to figure out how to balance these two roles."

Diane's father, who passed away quite recently, gave her great confidence in her abilities. She says, "He believed that it was possible for me to be anything. He trained me to be a writer and a public speaker. He trained me to be a decision maker, to be a curious learner. He trained me to take a lead role."

Helen's mother was a stay-at-home mom but had spent some time working in a production plant during the war. With pride, Helen asserts, "She advanced pretty far. My grandfather was there [at the same production plant] at the time and she was making more money than my grandfather. But then the war was over and the men came back, she met my dad. My dad is very traditional with respect to my mother and didn't want her to work, so she never worked. She was always home for us." Helen's father encouraged her and her sister to do well in school and took pride in their accomplishments. For Helen and her sister there was no question but that they would have a career.

Ellen used her father's skepticism about her ability to make it as a lawyer as a challenge to succeed in this traditionally male field. The message growing up was "you're just a girl. I don't expect you to become this. I'm worried about you thinking that you can be a lawyer because, of course, you can't. It wasn't like he said you're not capable of it, but I think he believed I wasn't capable of it and just felt like he didn't want me to be disappointed. So at every stage he would say something like well, you know it is very hard for girls to get into law school. Then when I got into law school, he would send me all these articles about how difficult it was to pass the bar. Then when I passed the bar, he sent me all these articles about how much

discrimination there was in the legal profession. Just not to get my hopes up because I might be disappointed. I saw it as more of a challenge.”

Because of Ellen’s brother’s handicaps, it was necessary for him to undergo multiple surgeries — primarily in the summer months. Ellen spent these summers with her aunt who encouraged her to pursue law. “I used to sit down every afternoon and watch Perry Mason and she would say things like you’re really smart. You’re a really good talker. I bet you’d be a really good lawyer.” Ellen’s mother “is really smart. She’s a medical technologist, and my father threw a fit when she wanted to go back to work, and she said, I’m going to kill myself if I vacuum this floor one more time. I can’t take it. I’ve got nothing to do, the kids are in school all day, I feel like I’m wasting my time here.” Ellen used this experience of her mother’s, in addition to her father’s skepticism to achieve her goal of becoming a “people’s lawyer” and a mother of two.

Frances’ parents both provided her with role models for combining work and family. Her mother is now 79 years old but still “on the go.” Frances says her mom “has been such a strong person, has always been there for us. Although she had to work because when she came here, mom and dad had to work to support all of us. She worked outside the home. And even back in Mexico she would work, although not outside the home, but she did a lot of sewing and raising animals to sell and that kind of thing.”

Frances’ six sisters and two brothers influenced her decisions regarding her future lifestyle. “I just saw them, the commitment that they have to making it better for

them, working outside the home.” She learned from her older sister that “you don’t have to be there 24 hours a day, but the kids know you are truly there regardless of how many hours you are there and seeing the product.”

Frances’ father “was quite a different man. He loved us in his own way but, again, he taught us the importance of if you want to achieve this you are only going to be able to do it with hard work and being dedicated. And that was him. He was hard working and dedicated to his job.” He believed that “you can overcome all these barriers of being in a foreign country . . . if you put your mind to it and work hard at it.”

Ginny had very little, if any, guidance from her parents regarding her future career and/or family. She regrets the lack of expectations to some degree but also says it was “freeing.” The role model of her mother, who she perceived to be “stressed out so much,” and her father, who appeared to enjoy working outside the home, “made me come to the conclusion that there is no right answer, and because of that the best right answer for your child is to see you happy and that you have made your own personal choice” about combining career and family.

Isabel’s parents did not give her much guidance either regarding combining career and family. She was the oldest in her family and went to college because her parents “both did it so I assumed that’s what I would do.” She met her husband in college and got married soon thereafter.

Jackie’s mother had “been a corporate executive in the early 40s so I knew it was possible. My mother stopped working when I was 2 years old. I knew that she

had liked working and being in that setting.” Her parents ran a family business together. Jackie says she always knew she would work even if she had children. “I am like my father; I kept going to school and my brother is not a student at all. My dad kept getting degrees; he thought he might go to law school when he retired but he didn’t do it because he didn’t retire until he was 80. He just passed away at age 95. We took him to his 70th reunion of the Harvard Business School last year.”

Timing of Parenthood. Most of the women interviewed had spent a considerable amount of time in the workplace before they had their children. When this was the case, the timing of their parenthood was deliberate, giving them more leverage to determine the structure of their work situation. For others, children came with little or no planning involved.

Anne and her husband planned their daughter’s arrival. Anne had worked as a programmer and took time off to complete her MBA. When she couldn’t find satisfactory employment using her degree, she returned to a part time programming position. It was at this point in her career that she and her husband felt ready for children.

Anne says, “I got my MBA when I was 33. . . . It’s a biological clock thing, but I didn’t want to become a mom right then.” She said that after she began the part time programming job “my husband and I thought well, this is a good time to have children. I would still be able to work doing what I was doing after I gave birth.” Anne said that at the time, she thought “okay, I’ll be a mom and then I’ll see what happens. It worked out so well with what I was doing and I never decided to go back to work full time. I enjoyed doing what I’m doing now.”

Ellen and Beth had children soon after they were married, at ages 32 and 33, respectively. Both felt that their legal careers were fairly well established and that they wanted to begin trying to have children. Beth says, "Fortunately, babies came. We were just blessed that we were into our careers, established in the house when we had children. I always intended, from like 12 years old, to be both a lawyer and a mom."

Ellen says that "I was getting sort of the word from my doctors that if I was going to have children, I needed to have children. My husband would have put it off even longer. . . . We felt it was really important to have a good financial base to be able to raise children in a way we felt was proper and also that would still allow us to have some sort of life and not be chained to the house and housework and things like that. So part of it was a financial decision, I guess, though you can never be totally ready for that. I had ideas when I started out as a lawyer that I wasn't going to have children. I just couldn't envision myself having children and being a lawyer the way I wanted to be a lawyer."

The two women who are currently working as partners in law firms, Carrie and Helen, were both surprised to find out they were pregnant. Neither of them were planning to have children, at least not at the time they became pregnant, but now are thankful that their children arrived when they did.

Carrie had been hired for a new position. She was leaving one position but was waiting for a security clearance before she could begin the new one. By the time she reported for work at her new job, her marital status had changed. She says, "I was quite surprised. I had agreed to take on a new job so when I had interviewed for the

job, I was single and by the time the security check had been completed and I arrived to start the job, I was already married and pregnant. At that time, professional women were not having children. It was viewed as unprofessional . . . are you serious about your career, or are you going to be a mom?"

Helen "had worked really hard . . . I worked long hours and weekends. It was a pretty demanding requirement from the . . . law firm, but I liked it so it wasn't really an issue. I didn't really have to prioritize things. I had all the time in the world. So when I had [my daughter] I took four months off and then I came back and I still worked full time, but it was much too difficult. I had never planned on having any kids period. Then I met my husband and we got married and like 3 or 4 months later I was pregnant. It was pretty amazing, it was not planned. . . . Then I had her and I can't think of why I didn't before, but until you do it, but I didn't really plan it."

Diane was 42 years old and quite well established in her full-time, all-consuming career in educational administration when she took a course which opened her mind up to previously unthinkable possibilities. She learned a completely new way of reading which, in turn, made her think that other things she had dismissed as impossible were possible, like combining parenthood with her career. After being unable to have children of their own, Diane and her husband had almost given up. This mind-opening experience caused her to turn to adoption as an option. She says, "I realized that there was a child in San Diego County waiting for a home. It became very clear . . . there were no more 'what ifs'. . . no more questions and we started a search the following weekend and 5 months to the day I had my daughter in my arms, [a]

brand new, newborn [and I had] coached the birth mother in her labor and delivery. It was awesome.”

Frances, the educational program coordinator, and former High School Assistant Principal said she consciously waited until a certain point in her career to have her son. She says, “I wanted to try it [a full time professional career], I wanted to see what it was like. I wanted to do the travel, I wanted to do this and that, which I did. I got that out of the way, enjoyed my life, now I’m ready.” She said that “I’m the type of person that I have to do it right, otherwise I’m not satisfied, and I felt that I wasn’t doing either of them well enough doing the Assistant Principal job and doing the mommy job was not what I had in mind. So I tried it for a year. If things didn’t work out then you go to plan B. What’s plan B? Well, maybe you need to change one of the two. I can’t change not being at home so we have to change the career thing and know that the opportunities are always going to be there in education.”

Isabel and Jackie had their children without regard to their careers. Isabel has four children and always worked her teaching positions around their schedules. She said, “I had my children and then I said I really enjoy working. I like to work. So I found a job, actually it was just kind of offered to me, and I happened to have friends in education . . . and things just kind of evolved from there.”

Jackie was motivated to begin a family by her biological clock. She said, “It was circumstance. . . . I didn’t marry until my late twenties and had children in my early thirties and was more concerned about time than being at a certain point in my career.”

Experiences of Discrimination. The experience of discrimination was uncommon among the interviewees. A few of the women in the study experienced workplace discrimination due to their gender or parenthood status in the workplace or in graduate school. For those who did experience discrimination, it had a definite negative impact on their attitude about the environment in which the experience occurred. Thus, this theme is included under the overarching category of Formative Influences.

Though Anne majored in Mathematics as an undergraduate because she liked it in high school, she had “no idea what I was going to do with it.” When she received her MBA she says, “I had ambition, that’s why I got it. That was 20 years ago now and my background is programming so when I looked for a job, I looked for a job in technical companies. I was hoping to go into marketing at the firm I worked for (which I don’t think is around anymore). But I was an applications engineer and there were a lot of good things I liked about the job. I would help customers who called, I would help with the phones, and we helped the sales people present solutions to problems that customers want. . . . I went to a couple of trade shows and represented the company there but still here I was, a woman in a technical area, and it was still a man’s world.”

Anne didn’t want to use the word “discrimination” to describe her experience but rather says that “I could see that the guys are treated differently than ourselves and given more credit than I was, and, more opportunity. And it was so frustrating that I remember sitting there and thinking to myself, there has to be more than this. I was a straight A student at the University of San Diego so I had the brain and I knew I could do it.”

Anne's professors told her that she should have no problem getting a job once she completed her MBA; however, they were not able to provide her with concrete assistance. She says, "I spend thousands of dollars and all this time and energy and I'm going to go back doing the time same thing I was doing before I had the degree. I don't know if I'd have an easier time today in the workplace. I've been out of it for so long. My husband works with a lot of women. I was a little bit too early."

Anne says her MBA classes were "mostly guys. I was ambitious and I wanted to make my mark but things were not working out. I think I gave up." That is when Anne and her husband decided the time might be right to start their family.

Anne had two other experiences in which she saw others getting promoted over her. One superior told her "no company in their right mind is going to promote a nice looking young woman of childbearing age. You can't say that today, that was in 1973." At another job, Anne "shared an office with someone who didn't have as much experience as I had, who was a rank above me, who was no better than I was. It infuriated me, and so I complained. Finally, they promoted me but they promoted everyone else too. [I thought] I'm going back to school and get my MBA." Anne believed that additional education would make her qualified for higher level jobs, but she says even that didn't work. "I was just banging my head against the wall and I gave up."

Beth had extensive experience with the maternal wall, in which her options were limited due to her status as a mother. When she was pregnant with her second child, she was ordered by her doctor to go to a 4 day a week schedule. This was not

acceptable to her supervisor at the time and she was pulled off the promotion track.

Beth thought long and hard about what to do about this situation “and I filed a charge of discrimination with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing not without trepidation because, nothing like going and filing a charge against your employer when you haven’t quit working yet, but I went home and I considered it and I thought if an attorney doesn’t file a charge of discrimination, how were we going to say to a court reporter or court clerk that they ought to file charges if an attorney doesn’t do so. And [my supervisor] fired me which brought another charge of discrimination.”

Beth spent 2 years litigating her case and the courts upheld the preliminary law and motion evaluation of the claim of discrimination. Beth settled the law suit before trial. When Beth was pregnant for a third time and indicated her readiness to return to work after 6 weeks of maternity leave, she found that she no longer had a job. Her employer told her there wasn’t enough work to support her position. She says, “I knew [her employer] was going to say that, so I wasn’t devastated. I had already made up my mind so [her employer] was off the hook. He [employer] was so far back in time, the laws moved faster than he did . . . I told him economics are economics and you can’t hire employees if you can’t support them.”

Ellen had some experiences both in law school and as a practicing attorney that she discussed related to gender discrimination. As a law student at a school in the south, a professor told the class “I see there are a few young women here and I’m going to tell you right now that the law is not profession for a woman . . . that was 1977 or 1978. I was astonished, this man was a professor!” When Ellen confronted

him on his attitude and behavior he defended himself by saying, "Lawyers are supposed to be rude, honey." Ellen did get through to him however and "he changed his attitude after that which was really amazing, because I think he was afraid that I was going to come after him [legally]."

Ellen then transferred to the University of San Diego and "found such a relaxed, tolerant attitude. People helped each other . . . I found it to be just delightful." She decided, upon graduating from law school, based on her original desires to help people with her legal training, that she did not want to work for a large law firm. "I'm going to do it myself, and I started out right out of law school in my own practice. . . It's hard and it was hard financially, but I thought, well, I'm already used to living on \$200.00 per month. It's better to starve now when I'm used to it than later on; and I had very strong moral convictions about what I do and who I wanted to work for, and I wanted to do trials. I knew that if I worked for some big firm I would get stuck doing research for a long time, because I knew that there was a lot of discrimination at that time. It was just a constant battle, and a lot of women had cleared the way for me. . . . I just decided I simply was not going to put myself through that kind of situation where somebody was going to be saying you're less because you're a woman. I just thought I'm going to have to go prove it just like I always have, so that's what I did."

Ellen said, "When I just started out, I got a lot of discrimination. People would call me "honey." There were all these judges on the bench that were holdovers that would say, oh, sweetie, and I'd come home and I would be livid." Ellen's husband advised her to use the notice the judges provided her to her advantage. She said she

was able to do that but added “of course you have to be good [as a lawyer] because more is expected of you to overcome this cuteness, sweetness thing.” Ellen goes on to say, “As I got older, and as I was able to basically claw my way up on my own merit, I didn’t get taken like that any more. I understand what the glass ceiling and the mommy track are. I personally have not experienced it because I refused to put myself in the position to have to take that.”

Frances, Isabel, and Diane, the women interviewees who worked in education, had little or no experience with any type of discrimination in the workplace or throughout graduate school. Frances says she had no experience with the glass ceiling or mommy track and, in fact, jobs came to her. “Maybe because I’ve been in the district where all the movement has been within. People know me and I don’t have to establish myself. Maybe it would have been different going to the outside but you build up that reputation and you know who to contact and they know you and they either respect you or they don’t.” Her first teaching job and her current educational coordinator positions were offered to her unsolicited, by her colleagues in education.

Isabel says that when she got her master’s in education and her administrative credential, “there is very little places to go, very little, because they don’t have vice principals [in elementary education] and to move into a principal’s position, there are very few jobs [in which] that you can do administration now because of the legend that you don’t go upstairs and work in the district level very much because of the district cuts. That was the time I was in. So pretty much there was no place for me to go after I got my [degree].”

Isabel noticed that “there were a lot more males getting positions . . . I didn’t feel I was more qualified than they were because I didn’t have the experience nor did I have the ability to get the experience.”

Diane says, “I have never had a feeling [of] having barriers put on me [in education] because I was a woman at all. . . . I wasn’t challenging the standard positions either. I created my own position There was a job similar to this and I kind of created my own position here and I created my own position in [school district] so . . . I haven’t been challenging positions that were [traditionally] held by men.”

Diane worked as a high school assistant principal for a couple of years which is a position in which there are more males than females but “they were just grateful to have somebody in it.” When she worked as an assistant principal, Diane says “it was a huge job and I was the only working mother in the role.” She made it work due to the proximity of the high school to her home. She says, “My husband could bring [their daughter] down and we’d have dinner between events, after school and before I started the dance or whatever, while kids were decorating for something and . . . I carried her in a backpack to football games.”

Helen talks about her decision to forgo making the partner level in her law firm so that she could work a part time schedule. She says, “I just made the decision that I didn’t care about making partner because I wasn’t able to do what I perceived I had to in order to make it, and then it just happened. That was a conscious decision on my part and I was happy to make that decision. At some level, there is a large percentage of ego involved in making partner. There is money too, but we had sufficient money in

the house and the money didn't really matter to me, but I was compensated very well. So then it was a matter of do I feel bad if I will be an associate? And I didn't. I haven't had any negative comments from anybody at any firm about the part time [schedule I work]."

Carrie believes having a maternity leave policy is important so that working mothers are not made to feel that they must choose between work and home, as she did when she had her children. She is a strong advocate for women in the legal profession, especially at the partner level. She was the only female partner in her firm for 9 years before other women joined at that level "and they don't have kids. And I talked to my male partners about this because many of them have daughters. I just said I believe you think that your daughters will be able to do whatever they want to do. They are wonderful and you support them [their daughters] and all that, but look what you're doing here. What message is being communicated? Are you only going to be considered as a serious professional if you don't have kids, especially if you practice in an area that is predominantly male dominated? If you're not in government, it's [the legal profession] pretty male dominated."

Carrie goes on to describe the dilemma in which many female lawyers find themselves. She says, "When you get into the hierarchy of some law firms, the time that it takes to become a partner in a traditional law firm, is about the same time young women might be thinking of having children and taking maternity leave or whatever. This may not get them off [the partnership] track, but mentally it can get them off track in the eyes of people that they work with when they're not there, depending on what the

partner's needs are. Or maybe not after the first child, but after the second child [a partner's schedule] can seem completely unmanageable in terms of what a partner is expected to do — marketing the business and being available to work long hours.”

The Influence of the Media. The 10 women in the study reported that, overall, the media portrayal of working mothers had little or no effect on them. They stated that they did not make any decisions to combine or not to combine career and motherhood based on the popular media's portrayal of working mothers. Even though many of the women in the study were clearly influenced by feminism and the women's movement during and after their college years, they did not think of this popularized social movement when asked the question about the influence of the media on their lifestyle choice. They considered it a question about the present and answered it that way. Several women avoided the messages which were critical of working mother's lifestyle. The women in the study reported that they made their decisions as to their lifestyle in the context of their individual families rather than taking into consideration the messages the media conveyed.

Jackie says that the media had no influence on her decision to combine working and motherhood. She says, “My husband decided to leave and I had to work. I had to put all that stuff out of my mind or it would have driven me crazy. I was going to the library or buying books on this or that and I stopped doing that because every book contradicted the last one, so I stopped so I would not go stark raving mad. I couldn't be bothered . . . well, I just couldn't let that interfere, hey I needed my job and I needed to be the best parent I could be.”

Isabel believes that “family values are extremely important and I do feel that there has been a decline of the family, because people felt that . . . both people [must] work and financially maybe it is because it is hard, and the children come home and there’s nobody there until 5:00 or 6:00 at night and having the TV as their mom. So I think that the media, what was being announced to me in the media; the amount of child abuse and child crime — crimes the children being left unattended committed, I do feel that there’s a problem.” Isabel goes on to say that she’s “seen children that don’t have [parents at home] . . . walk around the neighborhood, [when] both parents are working. They don’t really have any place to go and if I’m home, they’ll come over with my daughter and hang out.”

Ginny wasn’t influenced as much by the media as by the belief that “for me, and I guess for everyone, you’ve got to do what you’re comfortable with and if your kids see that you’re unhappy, that you hate what you are doing and you really wish you had gone back to work, that you don’t enjoy them because they are stressful . . . which is sort of what happened to my mom.”

Frances “listens to it [the media’s portrayal of working mothers] because as you are watching TV those things come up. But I think if you have your set of values and your morals and they are all in synch with everything else, I think that was more what influenced me in deciding whether to stay home or not. And the role models that I shared with you — my mother and my sisters. They are my immediate feedback to see how things had turned out with them. But I don’t think I really paid much attention to that. I would listen to it and see what they had to say and ponder it a little bit.” She

goes on to say that “I don’t think it played a role at all. I know what I want and how to get there.”

Ellen says that overall, the media has had no effect on her decisions; however, she does have some concerns. She says “there are some movies . . . I took my kids to see that movie, *Beethoven*, about the big St. Bernard, and I got irritated by what I felt was a subliminal message that was anti-working mom. . . . I think there is almost a backlash now. I see these young women who are taking the strides that we’ve made for granted, and that bothers me because we’re not there yet. I’m not a feminist [they say]. Why not? Why is that a dirty word? I worry about that because I think if they take that for granted, and a lot of them are going back to the traditional ways and taking their husband’s name, which to me is more symbolic than anything else. Not that there is anything wrong with that. It’s just that I see it as a sort of a retrenching of the old ways and I don’t like the way it is going. To put women in their place. I think that is a bad message. I think the message should be, you have more options. . . . You can do what you are best at doing as a human being, a person, and I think that to the extent that that is being eroded, that’s not good.”

Ellen worries that “with the younger generation they feel like well, that’s always going to be there. My mom worked, I’m going to stay home. I’m going to do what grandma did. Well, that’s fine, but understand that the reason you have that choice is because of people that have gone out and broken through the barriers and you can’t get complacent about it. I value that choice . . . I just worry about people saying, well being a working mother is bad for your kids or something. I don’t believe that.”

Ellen believes that the “kids are happy if the mom is happy.” Another point Ellen makes related to the influence of the media is the social pressure which is put on mothers. She says, “If anything goes wrong, if the children become axe murderers, they're not going to blame him [her husband]. They're going to blame me, [saying] my mother, she worked and that's why these kids are rotten to the core. It's just a different kind of pressure. It's cultural completely and he [her husband] doesn't understand why I get all upset about it.”

Diane says that being an older mother, “my values are clear about what I wanted. I think I raised her differently than I would have if I were 20 or 30. I don't think I'm doing it perfectly but I'm making different decisions than I would have early on, including making decisions based on my own judgement about me and about her and about my husband.”

Carrie said that she reads the articles regarding working mothers and “they annoy me sometimes. . . . From my point of view, I think whatever decision a person makes about how she, or a couple, or whatever, decides to raise their children . . . she had a job and quit [the] job and stay home, I can understand it. Conversely, I understand working and trying to raise children at the same time. I have a difficult time [with] feelings that I have experienced from some women who do not work trying to make me feel bad, and men too. That's their own thing . . . I didn't change my last name either so people had feelings about that too, when I got married.”

Carrie remembers that when her grandparents were still alive, “there was an article written about how damaged the child could be or how many months you should

stay home with your kid — they sent the article to me. . . . And then there is the other side that say children don't seem to be negatively affected by a working mother, and maybe they become more independent or more secure by having their mother work. I think it's just all over the place. So if I get sucked into all those arguments instead of thinking about what is appropriate for me and for me and my husband, my relationship with my kids or how they're doing, I've lost control of my life."

Beth and Anne both say the media's portrayal of working mother had no influence on their decision to combine these two roles. Beth says, however, that her initial intention to continue to climb the traditional legal ladder of success after her first child was born was influenced somewhat by the media. She says "as a group, we just started to get into law school and just started to be considered for jobs and there was an incredible fear that we had to prove that being pregnant and having babies won't interfere in any way; that you are going to lose your career track."

Making It Work

The second overarching theme emerging from the interviews of the working mothers is: Making It Work. This section includes the adjustments, accommodations, and planned and unplanned changes made by the women in the study, as well as their spouses, as a result of combining the roles of parent and professional.

The Influence of Family on Career Decisions. In almost all cases, the career decisions of the interviewees were strongly influenced by family considerations once their children arrived. Women often made changes in their career goals, professional

expectations and work schedules, regardless of the potential negative career consequences, once they became parents. In most cases, their spouses continued in their careers without any major changes.

A number of the working mothers interviewed changed their work schedules dramatically once their children arrived. Others sought out a more flexible work environment over which they had more control. None of the women interviewed changed career fields after they had children. They all continued to work in their current profession. They had their children, for the most part, after they had chosen their occupational area and had spent time in the work force establishing themselves.

Anne was already working part time and continues her flexible, 20 hour per week schedule as a programmer to this day as it allows her to work around her 17-year-old daughter's school schedule. "It worked out so well with what I was doing I never decided to go back to work full time. I enjoyed doing what I'm doing. My daughter and I are really close. It makes me happy."

Beth has been carrying a part time case load since her second child was born. "I think I'm a happier person having a balance of joys of parenting to balance against what I would call sometimes the aggravation of litigation. . . . When I was pregnant with Drew I thought I was going to be this supermom, I worked up to when I was actually in labor . . . then I held this beautiful child in my arms and said that was really foolish. I didn't have to be this supermom. This child is more important."

Beth did go back to work full time until she got pregnant with her second child. During her pregnancy, and thereafter, she worked a part time schedule. She has

recently moved her practice into her home. She said, "I am hearing more and more of our colleagues who feel that life should be lived for themselves and not someone else; so many years back people were terrified; you can't take a practice home!"

When Carrie had her children, her place of employment at that time had no maternity leave policy. She was scheduled to move to another division of the office of which she was a part "but the supervisor of that division didn't want me to change until he was convinced that I would come back to work after I had my first child."

The choices Carrie made "might have been made differently now, than I did then. At that time there was no maternity leave policy so the only leave that one had was the leave that had been earned (i.e., sick leave)." She had only worked at the position for 9 months so she had not earned very much sick leave. "I didn't have state disability because I was working for the Federal Government, so I took 2 weeks off, which is about what I had earned, and then I came back part time for 3½ weeks, and then I came back full time. That was my first child. [With] my second child, I had a supervisor that did not like children . . . so I came back after about 10 days after the birth of my second child to show I was serious about my career. In retrospect, I don't think I would do that again, and that is certainly not how I counsel the younger women who are coming up and having children."

Carrie now works at a large, private law firm. She says, "When I came into this firm, there was not a maternity leave policy . . . now there is one. I felt very strongly about having what I thought was important to me when I was in that situation." Carrie believes that without such a policy in place, women were forced to

answer the question, "Am I a mother or am I a professional. Which one was it?" She wants female lawyers to be able to see themselves as both mothers and professionals. That is why she has worked to ensure that there is a maternity leave policy in place at her firm.

Carrie has been working as a partner for a number of years in a large law firm. She sees partnership as an option for women and for mothers but says there is a requirement that a large number of hours be put in to meet firm expenses and to make a profit. "Because if you're not working you don't bring in the work and you don't collect it." Carrie has seen proportionally fewer women partners "because many of those who have decided to have children, if they have more than one child, they just decide it's too much. It may be they have found themselves or their spouse in a . . . situation where they're able to do that [financially]." Carrie's perception is that "many of the women that have stayed in the upper levels [of law] don't have kids."

Ellen is a self-described "workaholic lawyer." She says that "having children meant forcing myself not to work all the time because I had other responsibilities. The minute you walk in the door, the kids then demand all of your time and 100% of your attention so it forces you to take a break from that constant kind of stress of the work, and so it balances my life a little bit more. It has been frustrating in some ways, too, because sometimes I wish that I could spend more time with the kids but because of my commitment at work, I can't. So it's difficult in some ways. It's something that I wouldn't have traded, and I'm really, really happy that I decided to have children.

That's the best thing I ever did, but combining it with this particular type of career, trial work, is tough."

When Ellen started out in law, she "wasn't going to have children." Ellen has continued to work more or less full time since her children were born but has sought out work environments which provide her with flexibility and autonomy.

Helen had a similar experience to Ellen in that she initially did not plan on having children. She had worked for a number of years as an attorney and, after her daughter was born, took 4 months off and went back to work full time "but it was much too difficult. I just couldn't really do it. I found that I would see her in the morning but a lot of times she probably would go to bed maybe an hour or so after I got home. So sometime before her first birthday I started working part time. And I agreed that I would not be on partner track."

Helen's daughter was "born in '85 so it was not exactly a time when they were looking favorably on part time work for anybody." She continued part time, working 3 days a week with the understanding that she was off the partnership track. To her surprise, Helen was made a partner of her firm despite her part time status. She attributes this to her reputation as a dedicated worker, willing to do whatever was needed to get the job done, including travel and weekend work.

The other law school graduate among the interviewees, Ginny, did not begin practicing law until last year. She worked previously as a legal publication editor. In this job she "was perfectly happy. I didn't need to pass the bar. For me it was the perfect fit. It wasn't time consuming or too mentally taxing, so it was great to have

kids and have a job like that but I never felt like I was challenged.” Ginny worked as an editor in the field of legal publication for a number of years while her children were small and says that “I think for me, and I guess for everyone, you’ve got to do what you’re comfortable with and if your kids see that, they’ll be happy too.” Ginny is now pursuing a more traditional legal career after passing the bar. She has concluded that she is happiest working. She says “it’s a real image issue for me, and also combined with maybe a fear of permanent child rearing not being an easy job and needing a break from that. I like working and for me I sort of made a niche for myself and my goal for myself is to try to keep steering myself in the direction of legal practice more and more. I have fun, I like it.”

It has been helpful, if not essential, for Ginny that her husband has always had considerable flexibility in his jobs and is currently not working. Ginny has always “gotten to trade off with my husband” regarding staying home with the children when they are sick. She says she could not have done it without him and his enjoyment of cooking and working with the children on their homework.

Diane’s career has been dramatically influenced by her becoming a parent. Diane describes herself as a “pencil sketch before Brittany arrived and afterwards, I was animated and in living color. She just absolutely transformed the way I saw the world and what was important. Ever since then, I’ve been looking around at my colleagues who were moving up and taking on additional responsibilities, higher titles, and I was definitely on a career track that was designed to help me become a principal and a superintendent. . . . That stopped when she [her daughter] came along. It was

like I didn't care anymore." When Diane was asked to apply for a higher level position after her daughter's arrival, she said, "I waited and decided that my life was too short, my time [is] too short to do that."

Diane made a conscious decision to "stay in a coordinator's position. I made enough money to be comfortable and to do the things we like to do, and I don't want to work longer. I don't want to work any harder." Diane is in her seventh year of the coordinator position which carries with it a somewhat reduced work year and the flexibility to be with her daughter during her time off school.

Diane feels that, as a working mother, "there is never enough time to do what you think you ought to be doing and there are lots of things that run around in your head." She describes the experience of having to say no to or put off those who request her help in her coordinator role while "trying to keep my daughter in Girl Scouts, piano lessons and the flute and get all the practices done every day [and] get the homework done." Diane says, "I'm always aware of the fine line I walk by the choices I make. . . . When I walk [leave work], I walk, and I don't call into the office on weekends . . . when I leave, I leave. Those are all the choices I make."

Frances moved into a support role rather than maintain her full-time administrative position after she became a mother. She was off for 4 months after her son was born then "I went back to work full time. As a principal, you can't do it part time. Although one of the good things about that position is that there are three assistant principals, one per track. So every 2 months, when the kids go off track, you also go off track. So every 2 months, I had a month off with my child. There are always

meetings . . . that you have to attend but that was one of the prices. But I think my biggest frustration was just the hours, where with this job, I have the flexibility of starting at 8:00 am and being done by 3:30 pm.”

Frances says that “once you make a conscious decision to become a parent, and you have that type of orientation, a goal-oriented person within your profession, then you must expect that things are going to change and to be able to accept those changes that you are going to have to make, put things on hold for a certain amount of time, to be able to . . . juggle all the things around and for you to maintain your standards and your health. And I’ll be honest with you, those 5 years being a principal were the years I had the poorest health. Because I wanted everything perfect and in that job nobody is [perfect].”

Frances says the change from administrative work to program coordination work has been a thoroughly positive one. “I work with a nice group of people. We all work in the district and we know each other well. . . . I think in the long run I would have regretted it if I didn’t make that change. I’m Catholic and I do pray a lot so I think for them to come back and ask me if I would be interested in this job again once I’d turned it down meant something and God is telling me something.”

Isabel’s career was greatly influenced by her family. She worked as a teacher for 6 years and then started to work on a Master’s Degree in educational technology before her fourth child was born. “Then I surprisingly got pregnant. I wasn’t expecting it so I couldn’t do educational technology because it’s a very demanding field. You basically go job shop. You go from corporation to corporation, you work long hours

on one job, then you don't . . . so being pregnant, I dropped out of that and decided to get my clear California Credential because I had never gotten a California Credential, being in private schools and I didn't really want full time work, I thought, but to actually work in the public schools you needed a credential."

When Isabel's youngest child was 3 years old, she began teaching at the private school her older children attended. She worked there for 5 years and then decided to get her Master's Degree. "I started teaching when my baby was 3 years old. She is an extremely social child and didn't like being left home, when she might be home and there were no children at home anymore so I put her in preschool 3 days a week and then those 3 days I substituted."

Isabel taught for another 5 years in private school then began the Master in Education and Administrative Credential program at the University of San Diego. When she completed that degree she began teaching in public school. "After I got there [public school] I found out I did not want to be in administration in public school. There is just too much politics and too much paperwork. It wasn't something I wanted to spend the time on because I had four kids at home. So I just taught and basically had that preliminary administrative credential."

When Jackie got her degree, the economy was not in particularly good shape and her priority was providing for her children. Jackie continued working in libraries within businesses as it met her needs and provided her with considerable flexibility. She has worked as a research analyst for private business but, while her children were

at home, she maintained positions which allowed her to participate more fully in their lives.

Jackie said that she “probably did not use my MBA like I would have had I not had children.” She says that now, her MBA is less valuable because “I didn’t go into finance or make the switch to marketing or . . . and I might have been able to do that but, I had a boss that kind of took me under her wing but she got ill and was kind of in and out. In some ways, I was my own worst enemy. I had a good job and was well paid and had two children at home. The prudent thing to do seemed to be to stay put.” Now that her children are out of the home, Jackie thinks about changing careers but “it is harder and my age works against me. It is not over yet, though, and there is always the lottery!”

Balancing Strategies of Working Mothers Versus Working Fathers. Working mothers and fathers both used a variety of tools and techniques to help them balance their multiple roles. Each woman in the study provided several examples of these tools and techniques. They also shared strategies which their husbands used if they were aware of them. The strategies and/or philosophy used to balance work and family by the husbands of the women interviewed were often reported as being different from their own.

Helen and Anne say their strategy for balancing motherhood and their profession is simple; their daughters come first. Anne says, “Because my boss is so flexible, I don’t have those pressures that I know other women have about being late to work or having to leave early or take a day off because someone is sick. That’s why I’ve got it

so good. I don't have those outside forces that might cause me to make some decision that would cause guilt; I don't have those problems."

Anne's husband "travels a lot. He tries to minimize it as much as he can if there is something important going on with our daughter that he feels he needs to be there to make her feel good, he'll arrange his schedule. That's one of the things, he can arrange his schedule. He's not told when to go. It's mainly for meetings or something. He's a real good dad and they get along real well, but I think I'm the one that kind of holds it together, day-to-day routines, scheduler, planner."

Helen's philosophy is "I always put my work second. . . . If there is something that has to be done in the family, then I just do that first. It just always manages to work out. I never really had a problem. Sometimes I have a time conflict." She goes on to say that "I don't really have a strategy. I make sure everybody at home is taken care of and this manages to get done. I think it's easier if you're a partner [in a law firm versus an associate] because I can get someone else to do it."

Helen's husband "is pretty flexible. He's a lawyer but he doesn't practice. He does a little bit. . . . He kind of makes his own schedule so that makes it easy for me, too."

Helen goes on to describe how she exercises her philosophy in the workplace saying, "You know I think maybe because I was older [when I became a mother], but I just never let people intimidate me in the workplace. That's really what happens, is they make you feel guilty or you are incapable of standing up to somebody . . . having

worked for a number of years with the same person who I developed a relationship of respect with and they were just respectful of what I wanted to do.”

Beth, Carrie, Diane, Ellen, and Frances all mentioned similar aspects to those noted by Anne and Helen in the strategies they and their husbands use to balance their roles as parents and professional. All five of them have primary responsibility for the day-to-day routines, scheduling, and planning but have very involved husbands who want to participate as much as possible in their children’s lives.

Beth says she has a specific way of approaching her responsibilities at work. She says, “I don’t work on things based on what I am most interested in but what is due next. I look at deadlines and even though it may be 2 weeks off, if that is the next item, the next deadline out, that’s what I work on. . . . The reason I approach it that way is I have more control and I never know when somebody is going to get the chickenpox, I never know when someone will have a temperature.”

A second strategy Beth uses is “only do what is necessary. I no longer feel guilty as time has gone by. There are things around the home that I have tried to give up.” The examples she provides are sending out holiday greeting cards and wrapping gifts perfectly. Her husband’s balancing strategies are “very different. In fairness to him, he has a lawyer’s life. . . . I think he doesn’t prioritize as I do; he prepares for the closest trial, depending on dates. He doesn’t worry that he won’t be able to finish it due to child care issues. I don’t think there is necessarily gender differences.”

Carrie’s balancing strategy is “all the time I’m not working I spend with my kids. And my husband also has been more flexible and my parents are here. It’s a ‘it

takes a village' mind set. I don't know [what would happen] if my husband had a traditional job, like you described as 9:00 to 5:00, or more, as a lawyer, and if my parents weren't here. I don't like to ask people for help. That would have been really difficult for me." Now that Carrie's children are teenagers, she says, "I think teenagers need a whole bunch of supervision. Having a driver's licence and staying out late at night and all that. I feel tired most of the time. I don't know if you had this experience but there is a feeling sometimes that you are never really doing either of your jobs as well as you could because you constantly shift around."

Carrie describes this shifting around as a "time conflict, and expectations of others. Even if we work things out in our own house about how things are going to be, I think there are societal expectations that push you to do certain things." Examples of these expectations provided by Carrie included: which spouse gets calls from school and which spouse gets calls from the doctor.

Carrie's husband takes care of the majority of the home responsibilities and she "spends a lot of time focused on the kids and worrying about the kids, or trying to monitor what they're doing." They have worked out this division of labor based on personality, the balancing strategies reflect what they most like to spend time doing as individuals.

Diane has specific strategies she uses to help her balance motherhood and her profession. She has an elaborate calendar. "I plan out my year calendar ahead of time, which is what I have to do for work anyway." Her daughter is in year round school because "I really thought the year round schedule would make more time." She picks

up or drops off her daughter a minimum of 3 days a week. She says, "I couldn't do this job at all if my husband didn't have his job. He is an automobile claims adjuster in his car so if there is an emergency he could be there at the school in 10-15 minutes if I can't get there for some reason."

A second work-related strategy Diane uses is to keep track of her "comp time" and use it when she can be with her daughter. Her husband keeps his schedule in his head rather than on paper. He picks up their daughter from school each day that Diane can't be there. He has the flexibility to work from home so he does that in the afternoons after he has picked up their daughter. Though it is difficult to manage their schedules, Diane says it is important and necessary financially for them both to work — even though her husband complains at times. She says, "His mother sold Avon around the school day, and then she worked in a factory but even that was around the school day. So his expectation all along has been that I would stay home and do things, yet I make more money than he does and he really doesn't want the other responsibility."

Another aspect of balancing for Diane has been caring for her stepfather who has been ill for 9 years. She relieves her mother who cares for him 24 hours a day in Los Angeles. She also cared for her father in Utah before he passed away recently and says she is part of the "sandwich generation." She says, "So it's keeping our own financial house in order and the laundry done and those pieces as well as those other things."

For Ellen, balancing her roles as mother and professional is a constant challenge. She says, "I go from strategy to strategy. I've tried them all." She described

the nanny they used when the children were small: “When they were really small, I had a nanny for awhile that I shared with another couple because we didn’t have room for a live-in and we couldn’t really afford a full time nanny by ourselves. Then when they got a little older I had different strategies. For a long time we had them in a school downtown that was a private school and was pretty reasonable tuition and they were close enough that I could just jet over there for a program in the morning or in the afternoon or whatever and get back to work.” She says, “It’s just a lot to do and there isn’t enough time in the day.” Her husband “seems less stressed about it He has much more patience with the children, and their homework issues, their math stuff. He doesn’t have the standards that I guess I have for how things should be.”

Isabel’s children were older when she was working and going to school. Her balancing strategies included doing homework with her children “so at that time, I was just like they were. My husband had dinners at night. When I was taking 19 units, there was no time for me to do that [make dinner], so we just whipped up and took care of business. . . . So it wasn’t how did I make it work, it was just pretty much they were old enough to take care of themselves. They knew how to get to school. The baby could be taken care of by the other kids or go places and her dad started taking care of her too.”

Isabel’s husband’s strategy changed at this time. “It was kind of hard on him because I had been the person doing all the work up to that point. He was in kind of a transition period, too, though. He was thinking about changing his lifestyle as far as work goes and doing new things, and my philosophy was I’ve done this for 20 years

and if you want dinner, I'm not hungry, cook it yourself. And that took a couple of years but it has all worked out. Now it works out much better because we're both retired and the two of us need to do it together because we're both in the same situation." Isabel goes on to say that her husband never begrudged her spending the time she did in school and work. She says that "probably the personality of your husband makes a big difference too on your attitude."

Jackie worked as a single parent for most of her children's life. She used a number of strategies to keep their lives in balance. Sunday dinners were a priority "even when they were working as teenagers" and she put some limits on the number of activities in which they could participate outside of school. She also says that her job as a librarian allowed her to compartmentalize. She says, "When I went home at night I was a parent. Especially when they were little. I think I felt more conflict at school [kid's school] because I don't think people in education are very sensitive toward and criticize working mothers."

Jackie tried to help out as much as she could with her children's activities; both at school and outside of school. She volunteered to help teachers with telephoning, or other tasks that could be done at home, she served as the public relations person for her son's boy scout troop. She says, "I would bargain with people . . . if someone would pick up my child for soccer, then I would bring them home."

The children's father moved out of state but "he probably talked to them five to seven nights a week so they would be on the phone doing math and he would come and go on the boy scouts camping trip. He divorced me but he never divorced his kids. He

was there for all the major events: graduations and different kinds of things.” Jackie goes on to say that her ex-husband spends Christmas with them too. “I have had a lot of good support in my life even from people who weren’t supposed to like me.”

The Second Shift. The next theme, The Second Shift, refers to the family work which must get done after parents complete their day of paid employment. Homework with children, kid’s extracurricular activities (including sports, scouts, religious activities), food shopping and preparation, laundry, housekeeping, and yard work are all waiting when the work day ends. For the working mothers in this study, the second shift was shared with their spouse and, often, with hired help. Each family seemed to work out a way to take care of these responsibilities so that their household functioned, if not perfectly, at least adequately!

Jackie managed the second shift alone as she was a single parent from the time her children were 2 and 4 years old. “Most of the time I had someone clean my house. I did most of my own yard work. Taking care of little tiny babies is not fun for me but my friends who had older children told me no, it doesn’t get any better, it just gets different. And I found that to be true. I felt more obliged to be home when they were teenagers than when they were little . . . no one babysits teenagers!”

Jackie’s ex-husband and the children had regular visits even though he lived out of state. “Half of the time when David went to visit, he needed a hair cut and I thought that was a good dad and son thing to do, go to the barber shop. If someone needed a pair of shoes, he would get them for them.”

Jackie was among three working mothers who complained of a lack of flexibility and understanding on the part of school personnel towards her situation. "I think I felt more conflict at school because I don't think people in education are very sensitive toward, and criticize, working mothers." She gave an example of several situations in which her son was called into the principal's office and the principal showed a lack of support and understanding towards Jackie's need to work full time.

Isabel notes that the changes she and her husband made as a couple when she was working and in graduate school have served them well now that they are both retired. She says, "I think it was good that I did go back to work because it helped the relationship and the expectations became different . . . 'the wife's job is to do this and the husband's job is to do that' stops. Working is advantageous to a couple after retirement if they both worked because the expectation is totally different. I know it was when I started working. Of course, maybe it's because I said the expectations are different, we're now sharing the workload. He may have been making a heck of a lot of more money than I was but I'm spending just as much time."

Isabel found it difficult to manage a part time work schedule and deal with the second shift. "If you are only doing it part time, I think it's harder because you are only part time. Nobody realizes how much work you put into it. When I was working part time and teaching art, I was still doing the full-fledged mom thing, cooking dinner, going to do the shopping, and I only had 2 hours and my husband was working full time. He worked his share so that was difficult, but the kids were younger and the only thing we had was soccer to run for. I never really think I had a terrible experience at

that time but it is harder working part time than full time. Full time you are in a different situation. You have more ammunition, say I could be doing this or that, and you tell the kids, I'm not doing the laundry today because I'm working full time. So all the kids knew they had to do their laundry if it was going to get done, and they were older."

Isabel goes on to describe the way she and her husband worked out their duties. "I just think that if I had a different kind of husband it might have been real bad because he pretty much understood, okay, that sounds fair. Some things just didn't get done and other priorities did. The kids got taken care of when they got home, their games, doing all the things that we needed to do and ended up getting a housekeeper because that's important. . . . You need to have things running [because] when things are not running smoothly at home then things don't run very smoothly at work because you are concerned."

The mothers who work part time schedules seemed to manage the second shift well. They divided up the family work with the largest share going to the part time employee, the working mother, and the husband retained a full time work schedule and was responsible for fewer duties from the second shift. Helen, Beth, and Anne were in this situation.

Helen says that she is happy she works a part time schedule because, if she didn't, she would have "no personal time, none, because by the time you get home and do whatever you have to do, cook, help with homework, and then you go to bed,

there's very little time left to have time with your spouse or to have time for yourself. So then you stay up really late, which is what I don't do."

Helen was glad to have a part-time schedule as her stepdaughter moved in with them when their biological daughter was in elementary school. Helen describes her 21-year-old stepdaughter as independent. She lived with Helen and her husband during high school but has been away at college for 3 years. Helen says she "would have felt bad in that instance working full time" [when her stepdaughter was living with them]. Now that her biological daughter is 13 years old and goes to school longer hours, Helen says that she has some free time. "She goes to school, she doesn't get out until 5:00 pm, so from 8:00 to 5:00 it's my time on my days off."

Anne handles the majority of the household responsibilities for her family. She acts as the "scheduler and planner" for the three of them. She is acting as the general contractor currently for the renovation of their home "so I have another job. I line up the painter and I line up the workers, so I put a lot of time on the phone checking with people. I spend a lot of time on the house. But during the school year, I work a little bit more. I wasn't putting in as many hours this year as I have in past years. I work by the hour. I keep track of my hours and I turn them in once a month. I'm not an employee. I'm a contract worker." This work arrangement gives Anne the flexibility to do whatever needs to be done around the house, including the renovation project, and allows her husband to relax when he comes home from work. This is their strategy to manage the second shift.

Beth says she and her husband have divided up their household responsibilities.

“I do the inside of the house and he does the outside. It has evolved that way. We decorated our first house . . . he had no real interest in fabrics, etc. . . . Our talents and interests are different and over the years he has learned about the sprinkler systems, etc.” Beth also has had a housekeeper help with household chores and child care, since the children were born.

Beth says her husband “is conscientious about attending the children’s events . . . he couldn’t possibly attend them all . . . so many of them are during the work day which is why I have worked part time.” Beth complains that even with her part time schedule, there are often conflicts among the school events of her three children. She says, “I usually go with the little one. I apologize to the older ones saying I went with you when you were younger.” Beth’s parents also helped out when they were more mobile, especially her father. “He can’t do that now at age 71.”

Carrie and Ginny have worked full time since their children were born. Their husbands have assumed a large percentage, more than half they both estimate, of the family workload. Carrie says, “I’m a terrible cook so I’m not responsible for making meals. I’m irresponsible for making meals and we are good at dividing home responsibilities like grocery shopping or doing the laundry or something. My husband would probably say he bears most of that responsibility and that would be a fair statement. It would be wrong for me to say we share it equally. So a lot of those studies when you really talk about the second shift, the women are coming home and they have to make meals and they have to clean house. I couldn’t do it, probably. . . . My

personality tends to spend a lot of time focused on the kids and worrying about my kids, or trying to monitor what they are doing and I spend a lot of time doing that, or just sitting down and talking with them or helping them with their homework or taking them shopping to buy clothes.” Carrie says that she is “thankful that I’m in a situation where I’m not raising them alone.”

Ginny says that her husband does a lot of the second shift work. “I think he’s pretty unusual based on discussions that I was in a women’s group and we talked about issues like those. As far as the balancing goes, I don’t know if he’s just like me or if we just came to some kind of mutual understanding about a certain division of labor. So he is pretty much where I am regarding that, just from practically speaking. He cooks most of the meals and I do most of the cleaning and I do most of the shopping and then he does a lot of the . . . well, I guess the cooking would be his main responsibility but it’s a huge, huge chunk of the second shift work, to figure out what your meal is going to be.”

She says her husband does some of the grocery shopping also and she does “almost all the other clothes shopping and furniture.” Ginny says that she and her husband “share 50/50 help with their children’s homework and it’s a huge issue in our family. For instance, especially day care kids, where the day care does it so the homework is all done after dinner and it’s a window between 7:30 and 9:30 pm. And a kid doesn’t like doing homework, it makes it even more stressful. . . . Actually, it is probably more [stressful] than even housework, a bigger issue for us as far as trying to get it [homework] done and practicing [music] with the kids.”

Ginny summarizes their approach to the second shift by saying, "We do things pretty much alike and work together and it hasn't been a . . . big problem for us managing that."

Diane and her husband work together to get all the family work done. Her husband picks up their daughter from school daily. He works nearer to her school than Diane does so he is more available to get to school should there be a need. As an insurance adjuster, his hours are somewhat more variable than Diane's. Their daughter is involved in numerous after school activities to which Diane and her husband drive and supervise her.

Both Ellen and Frances work full time, as do their husbands. The second shift weighs heavily on them both. Ellen has little control over her work schedule as a litigator. If there is a trial coming up, she has no choice but to prepare for it and put on her case should the trial not resolve itself. Ellen complains about the lack of understanding of the school system when it comes to working mothers.

She says, "By the time they go to bed you are just so completely worn out and exhausted to decompress — I sit down and read through all the bulletins and notices and stuff from school and I got kind of irritated because I got this four-page newsletter from my son's first grade teacher saying, these are things that you should do with your children at home, and giving me homework. And I thought, the last thing I need is more work to do from somebody else. Now I've got to do her job too when I come home. I'm already doing at least three full time jobs being a mother and a wife and a lawyer, now I'm going to be a teacher which I am ill-equipped to do. I'm looking at

this and feeling completely inadequate, because there are 20 projects on here they suggest you do with you child. I am looking and each one of those is going to take at least an hour. No, and I don't have time and then reading at the same time this newsletter from the school PTA talking about our entire schedule of PTA meetings, which rubbed me the wrong way, looking at it. Maybe one of these I can make, unless I completely build my entire day around it when I may not be able to do that because I'll be in trial or in Los Angeles or something. So I don't know, it varies."

Ellen found that by moving into a larger house, some of the time crunch of the mornings was relieved for their family. Their former home had only one bathroom and Ellen said that each morning, "we're all trying to get ready and take a shower [at the same time]." She says, "When we moved out to [area where they now live] where they have decent schools and we were able to get a lot more square footage, I didn't find my mornings as stressful anymore. Now that they're older, they are a lot more independent, getting themselves dressed and getting themselves ready." Though she still feels as if "my day is scheduled to the hilt every day, and if I have one time when I don't do the one thing on the schedule, everything gets screwed up for 2 weeks."

Ellen's husband "does a lot of stuff too. He keeps up his end. I'm not saying he doesn't. It's just a lot to do and there isn't enough time in the day. If I had a 37 or 38 hour day I could probably manage it. But there are only 24. I'm short about 10 hours every day."

After attending a month long workshop away from her family, Ellen realized that "my biggest problem is I don't have any time for myself at all. I'm the one who

gets short-changed because I make sure that everybody else gets what they need. That is my clients, my business partners, my husband, my children. . . . There are only 24 hours in a day and you don't get any of it. So that's why I've sort of instituted taking Wednesday mornings off for whatever that's worth and that's sacred. I've told my secretary, don't schedule anything, I'm not seeing anybody, and that's it. But if I have to go to court or something, . . . that's going to be gone."

Ellen has her own standards for the level of work that's done around the house. She says, "I felt if I have to do something I'm going to do it well. My father calls me Martha Stewart, which I am not Martha Stewart, but I just have very high standards for myself. I have to be able to do it all and I sometimes will say its okay to get a B minus or a C plus in laundry or whatever. Some days are better than others."

In talking to other working moms, Ellen's circle of friends, she finds that "everybody has these issues to one degree or another. . . . Most problems can be solved with money but if you don't have the money then you have to either let the thing go or deal with it yourself some other way."

Frances says that she and her husband work together to get the child care and household chores done and still enjoy their son. She says, "I'm comfortable with him in the second shift spending time with the baby instead of me being upset at him for not doing certain things that I would just rather do because they have been my thing. I don't remember if I really verbalized it or not but I think it just sort of happens when he comes home he throws himself on the rug and plays with little Ben and then I throw in a load of laundry, pick things up and that kind of thing. Then he takes the baby outside

to do his little gardening and then we spend a good 2 or 3 hours just playing and that kind of thing. I don't think we talked about it. It just sort of developed."

The Workplace: Family Friendly Environments. Most of the women interviewed perceived their workplace as family friendly. There were few recommendations for workplace changes as most of the working mothers interviewed had found, or structured, a workplace which met their dual role needs. The specific recommendation most mentioned was the availability of child care at work sites.

Beth, having tried full time, part time and home-based work schedules has sought out work environments that allow her sufficient time with her children. She says, "I sought out noncompetitive situations . . . [one which] wasn't a competitive, billable hours, situation."

Carrie discussed how attorneys who desire balance in their work and family lives can now fit in a large firm. She says, "[Do you try to recognize] needs, to recognize that people have other things that impact their lives and that if you accommodate that, the likelihood of them being very effective at work, to me, is going to be higher because people will feel loyal to a person or place that understands their situation. . . . Some places view that as the only way they believe you are working is if you are seen at work. I work a lot at night, especially when the kids were little . . . everybody would go to bed, and I would work for hours. If I maybe took 3 hours and worked at their cooperative preschool in the morning, I would make up for it later in the day. I wanted to work somewhere where I was treated as being responsible enough

and professional enough so that as long as my work got done, I would be viewed as competent. So I tried to pick a place with that in mind that would accommodate that."

Carrie goes on to say, "I think as a new person [associate] (or a younger person) who has a straight career path of doing it the traditional way . . . going to a firm and trying to get experience and trying to get started and all of those things at the same time, it's more difficult." Carrie says that there are certain types of legal practice that carry with them a "more manageable schedule. Not completely with trial work. I think that carries its own stress and own schedule. There are other areas where maybe they don't have to market to get clients or they will not have billable hourly clients." Carrie sees the mind set in firms as one which says [associates] "we spend so much money on the person, training this young lawyer and bringing this person up to speed. But, to me, you also have to expect that someone may decide, or a woman may decide, after she has a child that she doesn't want to work anymore, and that's okay too. [You] don't have to think 'what an ingrate' this person was. It's part of life."

Carrie said her firm is now more open minded to flex time than it was before, and will seriously consider proposals that are advanced by employees for alternate schedules.

Diane says child care, either on site or more available near a work site, would be a great benefit to employees. The other option she would like to see implemented more widely is flex time. "I think that flexibility to be able to do what you need; I think part of . . . a family-friendly workplace is a place that values the fact that you're a better employee because you have another life. I think that oftentimes this workaholic

mind set that we struggle with here [her current place of employment] and struggle with at [school district] and I hear industry is the same. I heard the other day a third of the workers work 45 hour weeks and going up. It allows you no time. I think some of the things we've done recently . . . saying parents should be able to take off a couple of days a year to spend at their child's school [for example] is good, but I think that it needs to go further. Maybe a workplace needs to say, we can accommodate an afternoon or a 2-hour block a week if you want to spend [time] volunteering in your child's classroom."

Ellen says that "I think that the younger generation of men [are] more understanding because they've got working wives and they want their wives to keep working because then they don't have to work so hard. . . . I can't speak for some of these bigger, more established law firms but I think things are changing as the hierarchy gets turned over to younger people that have children and have been through those problems before. I think as more women get out there they're going to be able to make more demands."

Frances recommends on-site child care to increase the desirability of a workplace. One of the campuses at which she has worked had a child care center on campus. She says, "I think we would have teachers that would be more focused [on] teaching if they knew their kids would be well taken care of. . . . I think having your kids close to your work, for obvious reasons, just makes you feel a lot better about their safety and that they are being taken care of well. I think that really frees you to be more productive in the classroom." Frances also recommends "if you have kids that

need the enrichment kinds of things, maybe offering things on site for those kinds of kids to get the help or get the challenge and bring in community members.”

Ginny says, “I’ve pretty much always worked in what I guess I would consider [a] family friendly work environment. I guess at one point . . . when I wanted to stay home with a sick child, I had to say I was sick. But most of the jobs, the policy changed [so] that you could pretty much take a sick day on behalf of a child.” When her children were small, Ginny found “a day care that was . . . five blocks from the house.” She didn’t have difficulty finding a fairly broad selection of day care providers near her home. She says that “the big factor was the nursing when they were teeny weeny, and I nursed my kids until I went back to work. And I know people that want to nurse their kid 2 and 3 years or longer, that’s a big issue.”

Helen believes part time options ought to be more available in law firms. She says “if you want the person badly enough then let them be part time.” She also believes that “flexibility allowing you to leave to attend certain events” at the children’s school is important.

Isabel mentioned child care as “the biggest problem if you are a working mother and the most friendly situation is if you have your kids close by, especially if they’re younger. So having a preschool or having on-site day care or close by daycare that is reasonable, because day care got to a point where you were paying 50% of your salary out in daycare. . . . I never really put them [her children] in a daycare situation. But if I had to work, if it was not an option [and] I didn’t have the ability to say I’m only going to work part time . . . I hated the daycare [so that] would have been my biggest

problem.” She says that her husband’s former employer was a “family friendly environment, it was kind of fun with my husband’s job. They would have family picnics and they had wonderful Easter egg hunts which the kids loved.”

Looking Back

The final overarching category from the interviews of working mothers consists of themes in which they reflect upon their lives. The interviewees were asked to contemplate their lives as working mothers from a number of perspectives and to assess various influences on their lives. Advice they might give a female colleague who is considering motherhood and, in hindsight, any particularly satisfying and/or regretful aspects of their lives as working mothers are included as the two themes in this final section.

Advice for Working Women Considering Parenthood. Working mothers advise working women considering parenthood to “do it,” with a few cautions. The cautions noted by the working mothers include: two parents are better than one, expect to feel differently about your work and family life and, there is never a perfect time to have children.

Anne says that she would hesitate to prescribe whether or not another woman should have children or when she should do so, so she did not offer any advice.

Beth doesn’t have any specific advice except to say that she knows a number of female lawyers who waited until they had made partner to start their families and are now having great difficulty conceiving.

As one of the few female partners in her firm, Carrie regularly counsels young women new to the legal profession. She tells them “you have to make choices and you can’t expect everything to be the same. I ask them: what do you think will happen and what is your goal?”

Diane’s advice to women considering motherhood is “Do it. Just do it.” She goes on to say that “I think the biggest piece is you just have to bite the bullet and do it and then the rest makes sense. What I know is that I couldn’t be a stay-at-home mom, even though I was home for 6 weeks after Brittany was born and I couldn’t figure out how people do that, because I was overwhelmed by the things I needed to figure out how to do. And I didn’t look for day care or child care until 4 or 5 weeks into it.” Diane developed very specific criteria for the child care situation she wanted for her daughter and recommends others do the same. “Critical, clearly defined, just like I clearly defined the parameters for graduate school. I clearly defined the parameters and wanted multi-age children, no older than 5 years old. I wanted a reasonably successful family already that was taking her in and I wanted a lot of interaction, a lot of opportunity for different kinds of activities.”

Ellen had lots of advice for working women considering parenthood. She says “I would advise her to make sure she had some stream of income or some reserves of money for several months because, at least when I had my daughter, I really didn’t feel like going back to work as soon as I thought I would in [my] mind before I actually had the child, so I ended up taking 4 months off after I had her and nursing her that whole time and just being mom and transitioning myself into the idea of being a parent.”

Ellen says “you’re going to feel differently. Some people I know just said I want to do this full time now. I didn’t want to go back to work. I did not think that was going to be the case with me and, in fact, it was not. I never just wanted to be a full time mom.”

Frances says that “there is never the right time [to have children] because there is always going to be something in your profession you want to do or achieve. So if you and your partner feel the need to become mommies and daddies, don’t let the outside influences get in your way, because there really is not going to be a good time, especially if you are already at that time in your profession. . . . Once you make a conscious decision to become a parent, you have that type of orientation, a goal-oriented person within your profession, then you [should know] things are going to change and be able to accept those changes that you are going to have to make, put things on hold for a certain amount of time to be able to, again, . . . juggle all [the] things around and for you to maintain your standard and your health.”

Ginny says that in considering the advice she would give a female colleague considering parenthood, she would tell them “I’m totally dependent on my husband to help me out. You can’t give anyone advice to marry but two parent families to me, I really can’t ever imagine even with my low stress childhood, but it is 40 hours a week. No matter how you share it. . . . The trade off is that I don’t have a husband who is working 50,000 hours a week. And now he isn’t working at all, but for most of my life, it’s a little bit of a trade off. But for me, that’s what I needed because I was real nervous about having kids. I’m not a natural mom.”

Helen recommends women who seek to combine parenthood and a profession “get help. That’s easy to say if you can afford it, but I think it’s really critical to have someone do all the [household maintenance]. . . . The worst nightmare is when your kid gets sick and you don’t have . . . what do you do? You don’t have a regular baby-sitter at that point, your spouse can’t take up the slack, what do you do? You have to stay home. I stayed home. That’s what I would do. I would just [say] I’m not coming in, but I don’t think there’s a lot of people that have that flexibility. . . . I guess a facility where they could have some kind of day care would be nice that obviously you would have to pay for.”

Another factor that Helen mentioned as important for working moms is the flexibility to “leave to attend certain events. . . . Having the flexibility to attend to your families needs is probably the most important thing for me.”

Isabel would advise a woman considering motherhood to “go for it, if she truly wanted a child.” She says, “Sure, have it, have a baby definitely because you can always go back to work if you have to make a choice and if she’s got someone to take care of a child during certain time — I don’t know, I really found it difficult with my babies when they were birth to 3 years old because they were so dependent on the family and I really felt guilty. Not because anybody told me to but I wanted to be there with the kids, myself personally. I would tell anybody, sure, you can make it work, how good it is, that’s up to you. I don’t know because I can’t tell her that you can’t do it, it doesn’t work because it has worked for me. . . . That’s the hardest thing. To have a child and to have a job, who is going to care for that child for those first 3 years of

life where all their securities and self-esteem and all those things? But then I grew up in child development, that's what I graduated in, so I felt that was critical" Isabel goes on to say that "if you don't want to spend time with the child, then don't have the child. But if you really want the child then you can make it work."

Jackie, whose children have been out of the home for a while now, gives advice which reflects her current status as an empty nester. She says, "The older I get the better it is [my relationship with my children]; built in friends — as my goal and she [her daughter] is getting there and he [her son] and I are pretty good friends." Jackie goes on to say that "I would suggest to the person that they work out roles; what best you can do; both parties need to be flexible. Give your kids responsibility and remember that you are their parent and you don't have to give them everything. They would rather have your time." She says that the "big things will be handled as they come up, but it is the little things that drive you crazy and get you down and make you tired and then you are tired for your family and your work."

Satisfying and/or Regretful Aspects of Working Mother's Lifestyle. Few regrets were expressed by the interviewees about the path they had chosen. None of the women regretted having children or the professional concessions they made allowing them to spend more time with them. The decision to have children is among the most satisfying and gratifying decisions they noted. A few wonder about the impact different educational or career paths may have had on their current work situation and/or status.

Jackie has thoroughly enjoyed her life as a parent saying “I wouldn’t miss being a parent for anything.” She was hoping however to use her MBA in the workplace, “make a real career shift at the time — I just didn’t do it. My children, in 1980, were ages 5 and 3. On the other hand, I am glad I stuck with my profession as I was able to balance both [career and family] and that was probably a good decision because my job was not real pressured and as I said when I went home, I was there, and when I went to work, I was there. At the time I had no regrets — I was doing what I needed to do.”

Isabel says that she does not regret “going back and getting any of my education, so I think that was good. And actually, the children liked the idea that I was teaching at their school and the fact that I was fairly successful at what I did, it was to their advantage, their mom, that was good for them. . . . I do regret not thinking more carefully and going into depth on what I was getting my Master’s Degree in. That’s truly a regret to me. I had one thing in mind when I started and then it just didn’t evolve. It looked great on paper. . . . It’s not something that was serviceable to me and I could have very easily transferred into counseling or something which I would have enjoyed and could be doing now.”

Isabel says that she “could probably go back again and pick it up but I think I’m past that stage now of full time employment. . . . I’ve pretty much moved out of the full-time work force idea. Probably wouldn’t have [left the workforce] if I had a different kind of credential, I’d probably still be working now because I was a little bit tired. Twenty years in elementary education I would have liked to do something else.”

Helen can't think of any aspect of her life as a working mother that she regrets. She says, "I don't think I have any regrets. I like where I am. I obviously could make more money if I work more time, but that really isn't an important thing for me. So I'm going to say, no regrets. I guess the most fulfilling thing for me was that my abilities were recognized, that when it came to a choice of me or quitting or allowing me to choose the part time schedule and not come to a grinding stop in my career, . . . I advanced. No one treats me any differently. I don't think any differently now than I would if I were here all the time. That's really fulfillment. It's great. So that has really made it all work."

Ginny says that, overall, she enjoys working and wouldn't want to give it up. She says, "I have fun, I like it. I never hate going to work so that's kind of a positive for me. Large issues with the kids haven't come up and there were almost no regrets about the childcare situation, except homework which would be one issue, where one of us was there for school, it would take a huge part of the problem away."

Ginny says that "I think I'm pretty happy with my choice. I don't think I have any regrets besides how much time I've given the kids."

Frances says that her most satisfying decision as a working mother is "changing my pace and work life, and it has been very gratifying. . . . I think in the long run I would have regretted it if I hadn't made that change." Frances talks about the potential benefit to her career long term "if my goal is to end up at the elementary level, [working in a] classroom at the elementary level for a couple of years and [then]

reestablish myself with that population to be able to get back in the highway again [in administration].”

Ellen is really glad she had her children when she did though the type of law she chose to practice and the way she chose to do it was difficult. She says “you can’t expect to go in there and, overnight [think], ‘I’m going to be accepted,’ because you’re not. Like I said, you can choose to do that and work from the inside. I wanted to try cases. I wanted to help people. I wanted to be hands-on and get down in the trenches and see what I could do. As soon as I could. And my road was a hard one. It isn’t necessarily one I would say, oh yeah, sure, get on your horse and follow me. It’s hard and depressing and sometimes you can’t see the end of it, bleak. My God, am I ever going to make any money? But as I look back on it, I don’t regret doing that. I don’t regret anything I’ve done. I just took a different road.”

Diane believes that “daycare was a very positive and satisfying decision along the way. And part of that was due to the fact that I couldn’t provide sibling relationships for her.” Diane says that she and her husband “talked about adopting a second child . . . but the time that was right to do it was when Brittany was about 18 months old to about 3½ years old, I got sent to a high school and I was Assistant Principal in charge of student activities, which meant I worked 200 days and that was horrible. I had to drop out of school for a while. I couldn’t do both, anything else except that job. . . . That was the time we should have adopted another one. Then after that I felt like I was too old. We had gotten too settled in what we were doing and how we were doing

it and realized how much energy it took to find Brittany. [It took] 100% commitment to find her . . . and I couldn't imagine taking that time away from [their daughter].

Diane goes on to say that "I had that little window of time in my life when everything was right to do that [adopt their daughter]. That has a lot to do with it too because I think there are a lot of issues that have to do with how do you and work when you're not going to be there? How do you handle child care when they're sick?"

Diane would definitely say that the arrival of her daughter was a positive. She describes it as a "tremendous, life-changing gift" to her and her husband and that her daughter has "absolutely transformed the world and what was important."

Carrie says that "in hindsight, I wish that we had spent more time with our children when they were first born. I think it would have been better if I spent more time with them, and that if we had used more resources for child care instead of worrying about how much it was going to cost and looking at our budget. We were both really busy then. We were trying to budget in terms of paying for child care. Eventually we realized that we should pay more, a lot more."

Carrie tells of having undependable child care providers "not show up when he [her husband] had to be in court, and then thinking, okay, he has a superior court [appearance] and at 10:00 there is a break and I have an appearance in federal court and literally passing babies across Broadway. . . . By our second child, we had learned that. But I still wonder if we somehow damaged our kids by not having had stable child care. And thankfully, my parents took care of them a lot when we ran into situations when the child care facilities were unavailable and we felt that we had to do it on our own.

We didn't want somebody living in our house because we thought that would make us seem snobby. That's ridiculous. But we had to learn a lot too about being parents and having children."

Carrie reflects further saying "from a career point of view, I don't have any regrets. I'm sorry the judgeship I had been recommended for didn't work out. That was just a personal goal. . . . It would have worked out well for our family. It would have been acceptable to my firm to know that they lost a partner to a judgeship. I think I tried to make smart choices professionally that would accommodate my family. Like I said, our kids went to a cooperative preschool and so when I left the government I wanted it to be very clear that I was going to work in my kids co-op and make up the work somewhere else later in the day. That had to be acceptable, and I tried to make choices like that."

Beth says that she is "very, very glad I had three children. I don't know of any real regrets . . . [except] that had I gone into another type of law, trusts and estates or other nonlitigation fields, I can still do it but . . . I can still learn for example computer languages. . . . I have learned windows recently which made me accept that every time there is something new, I am going to have to learn it. I think I probably would have looked for a nonlitigation legal career . . . due to the deadlines, pretrial activity. I also regret the level of antagonism among opposing lawyers. . . . Because one client is suing another doesn't make me want to be antagonistic toward the opposing counsel. It should be an intellectual evaluation of the legal situation, not a question of how nasty we can get."

Beth has “made a decision not to apply for the bench ever because my children are more important to me.” This comment was made in the context of a discussion with several female colleagues who are not opposed to hiring illegal immigrants to care for their homes and their children, “if they are the best qualified.” This issue has been hotly debated nationally and has been a point of debate and discussion among Beth and other mothers working in the legal profession.

Ellen says she made a conscious decision not to pursue the bench. She says, “In applying for a judge position, and putting yourself in the spotlight, your whole family’s lives become an open book. I wouldn’t want to put my children through that. Besides, I think it would be boring and bad lawyers would drive me crazy!”

Anne has no regrets regarding the decisions she has made as a working mother. She does wonder, however, what might have happened had she chosen to pursue her career full time, either in business or in the computer field. She says that she looks forward to the future as she still has the opportunity to pursue whatever she chooses. Her daughter is graduating from high school this year and will be leaving for college in the fall.

Summary

Through the three overarching categories and the 10 themes which are described in this chapter, the experiences shared by the working mothers in this study become meaningful. Each individual woman has lived a life different from the others. She has had a unique childhood and unique parental influences, career aspirations, and personal relationships. What these women have in common, however, is the desire to achieve in

the workplace and to maintain a home environment in which they and their family may thrive.

This chapter reviewed the experiences and influences which brought each woman to this common goal. It contained a primarily descriptive analysis of the interview data obtained in the interviews of the 10 working mothers. There was very little interpretation of the interview data on the part of the researcher in Chapter IV. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) second level of data analysis, that of highlighting the themes which emerged from the interview data, was used in this chapter. It is considered a "cultural" report of the interview data per Rubin and Rubin's (1995) conception of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher is seen as a "photographer" framing the picture yet reporting as it is stated by the interviewee.

Chapter V provides an analysis different from that completed in Chapter IV. Specific areas of interest are discussed in Chapter V. The interview data are interpreted in a different manner to address these areas of interest. Chapter VI includes a discussion of the study findings and areas for future research.

CHAPTER V

SPECIFIC FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of working mothers. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

The Personal Narrative qualitative methodology was used in this study (Reissman, 1993). This methodology allows various aspects of the working mother's life to be explored. This study used qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10 high-achieving, professional working mothers.

The potential benefits of this study include discovering the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, understanding the benefits and challenges of working mothers in the workplace, and understanding the home-based supports and hindrances which exist in their lives. This chapter consists of three sections. First, a brief review of the method used for data analysis in this chapter is presented. Second, areas of interest regarding the working mother lifestyle are listed and discussed. These areas are: (a) The Rewards of the Working Mother Lifestyle,

(b) The Challenges of the Working Mother Lifestyle, (c) The Balancing Strategies of Working Mothers, and (d) The Identity Shift from Full Time Professional to Working Mother. This chapter concludes with a summary.

Qualitative Data Analysis

There are several approaches or levels to the interpretation of qualitative research data. Strauss and Corbin (1990) review three levels of interpretation. In Chapters IV and V, Strauss and Corbin's second level of interpretation is used. This level of interpretation is that of an accurate description. "Because the investigator cannot possibly present all the data en toto to the readers, it is necessary to reduce these data. The principal here is to present an accurate description of what is being studied, though not necessarily all of the data that have been studied" (p. 22). Reducing and ordering material, however, does represent a type of selection and interpretation on the part of the researcher.

The authors point out that the interpretations made of descriptive material may vary in level of abstraction and that different levels of interpretation and abstraction may be presented within the same publication. This is the case with the study of working mothers. Chapter IV consists of primarily descriptive themes and categories which emerged from the interviews of the 10 working mothers. Little interpretation on the part of the researcher was involved.

Chapter V consists of a different view of the descriptive data provided in Chapter IV. Thus, a different type of interpretation of the descriptive material from the

interviews of working mothers, as described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) above, is outlined in this chapter.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) review two approaches to qualitative interviewing and report writing: cultural and topical. The difference between these two types of interviews is the “ownership” of the resulting report. They describe a cultural report as one in which the researcher reports the ideas, expressions, and understandings that they heard in the interview as belonging to the interviewee. They go on to say that the cultural report is presented in the words of the interviewees, rather than those of the researcher. The researcher is characterized as a photographer, “making choices about what to frame within the picture, but reproducing exactly what was there.” A cultural research report is thus largely descriptive. This is the characterization that best describes the data analysis that was completed in Chapter IV.

A topical interview and research report is based on a level interpretation of the researcher. The researcher may sort out and balance what different people say and then create a research report based on this analysis. The words and evidence which provide the basis for the interpretation are those of the interviewees. The resulting summary of these interpretations, however, are those of the researcher. Rubin and Rubin compare the topical researcher to a “skilled painter” in that the “events portrayed did occur and were learned about through the interviews; the information is still grounded in the interviewees’ lives and stories. . . . It is an artist’s rendition” (p. 30). This is the type of data analysis which occurred in this chapter of the research report.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) distinguish between these two types of interviewing and the characteristics of the resulting research reports; however, they point out that, in practice, both the cultural and topical styles are often mixed in a single interview.

In this chapter, the interview data will be reported using the topical structure rather than the cultural, which characterizes the findings reported in Chapter IV. The information reported in this chapter provides details about specific aspects of the working mother lifestyle. The data will be organized into four areas. Each of these areas highlights and summarize information which was brought out in the themes and overarching categories in Chapter IV. The goal of Chapter V is to further examine, in a more interpretive manner, the narratives provided by the working mothers in the study in specific areas which may be of practical interest to the readers of this study.

Areas of Interest Regarding Working Mother's Lifestyle

The areas reviewed in this chapter include (a) The Rewards of the Working Mother Lifestyle, (b) The Challenges of the Working Mother Lifestyle, (c) The Balancing Strategies of Working Mothers, and (d) The Identity Shift from Full Time Professional to Working Mother.

These areas were chosen by the researcher, as the "skilled artist" in Rubin and Rubin's (1995) characterization, for primarily practical reasons. Women who are considering combining motherhood and a profession may get a glimpse of both the benefits of choosing this lifestyle as well as the challenges it presents. In addition, women and men who are currently living the lifestyle of a dual career couple may find the strategies used by those in the study useful and, perhaps, may be able to apply them

to their own lives. Finally, a number of women discussed a re-prioritization of values which occurred when they became mothers. This identity shift is not often verbalized and seemed to come as a surprise to the women in the study. It may be helpful to share this experience with other women working in a profession who are considering starting a family.

The topics which are addressed under the areas of interest regarding working mother's lifestyle are noted in Table 4.

Rewards of the Working Mother Lifestyle

All of the women in the study discussed several aspects of their lifestyle that they found rewarding. Several aspects of the working mother lifestyle mentioned by the 10 women in the study are described below. A few of the benefits noted may or may not be unique to the working mother lifestyle. They may also be a benefit for all working women. The study sample consisted of working mothers so it is not possible to assess whether or not these benefits also exist in the lives of the broader population of working women.

Children are a Blessing. The women in the study expressed appreciation and pride in their children. In several cases, the women noted that their children forced them to balance their lives. They provided a needed outlet from their day-to-day work environment. Ellen says that her children force her to refocus at the end of a work day because they demand "100% of my attention." Overall, these working mothers were glad that they had their children when they did and that they did not remain childless,

Table 4

Areas of Interest Regarding Working Mother's Lifestyle

Area of interest	Topic
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Children are a Blessing *Pride in Accomplishments *Increasing Control over Work Environment *Partnership with Spouse *Growth Opportunities for Children *Role Model for Women Entering the Profession *Happy Mothers Make Happy Children *Economic Independence *Meeting Parental/Family Expectations
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Fatigue and Little or no Personal Time *Sense of Inadequacy *Frustration with Cultural Expectations of Mothers *Concern About the Effect of Working on Children *Responsibility for the Second Shift *Time Conflict *Put Career On Hold *Involvement with Children's School *Discrimination
Balancing strategies of working mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Part Time Work Schedule *Calendar as Tracking Tool *Prioritize Work Duties *Schedule Personal Time *Work Environment With Independence, Autonomy and Flexibility *Limit or Eliminate Business Travel *Coordinate Children's Activities With Other Moms *Limit or Eliminate Involvement in Professional Organizations *Get Help with the Second Shift *Maintain Priorities in Workplace *Cognitive/Coping Strategies

as a number of them had intended to do. Helen said “I never planned on having kids, period. . . . Then I had her [their daughter] and I can’t think of why I didn’t before.”

A number of women knew of associates or friends who had difficulty getting pregnant because they had waited until they were past age 40. One woman in the study had fertility issues herself. The reality of the biological clock seemed to increase these women’s appreciation for their own children. After a number of years trying to start a family, Diane finally concluded that adoption was an option for her and her husband. When she brought home her daughter, she said that experience “completely transformed the way she saw the world.” Another woman in the study described her children as “truly wonderful.” Anne says she and her daughter are very close and that makes her happy.

Pride in Accomplishments. A number of the women expressed pride in their accomplishments in graduate school and the work world, both before and after having their families. Several of the women noted that their children are proud of them and tell their friends “my mom is a partner in a law firm” at any opportunity. Anne says that she “had ambition” and “wanted to make her mark” in the work world. She “was a straight A student at USD so I had the brain and I knew I could do it.” Ellen has very clear standards about the type of law and the clients she will represent. She is a “peoples lawyer” and uses the law to “promote justice.” Frances says that her family “might not understand the stresses associated with this job [educational administration], but they were proud of me and they were telling the whole world . . . that is where I got my energy, my wanting to do this well.”

Increasing Control Over Work Environment. The women in the study all gained increasing control over their work environment as time went on. In addition, they were afforded increased flexibility at many of their places of employment because they were a working mother and, more frequently, because they had earned a solid reputation in their profession. Diane was able to work a flexible schedule in which she could accrue “comp time” and use it when her daughter’s year-round school was “off track.” She says this would not have been available to her if she hadn’t been a mother as “the people [who] come in on weekends and work long hours . . . are the ones who are the heros” at her place of employment. She says “if I didn’t have children she [her supervisor] would not be as supportive.” A number of women were able to continue in their professional careers but negotiated part time schedules. This option worked well because, as Helen put it, “. . . I was valued enough that I could choose the part time schedule and [I] didn’t come to a grinding stop in my career.” Beth sought out “non-competitive” situations and has recently moved her practice into her home, bringing her client base with her from her last firm.

Partnership With Spouse. A number of women noted that the dual career couple lifestyle fostered a true partnership with their spouse. The wage earner role as well as the duties of the second shift were shared. The couples could share common experiences in the workplace and offer professional advice to one another. This type of sharing was noted most frequently by the women attorneys whose husbands were also in law. (Four of the five women lawyers interviewed for this study were married to attorneys.) The women who did not share a common occupation with their spouse also

commented upon the team approach they and their husbands take toward their dual career lives. Ginny says she couldn't manage her life without her husband and advises other women to, if they can, "not do it alone." She and her husband "do things pretty much alike and work together and it hasn't been a . . . problem for us managing that." Frances says she and her husband are "50/50 . . . I do dinner, he does dishes. If he does dinner, I do dishes."

Growth Opportunities for Children. One woman noted that by having a career, increased opportunities are provided to her children to get involved with their parent's work environment. Carrie involves her teenaged children in mock court training sessions. She says this allows them to learn more about her profession, as well as provide them more family time and common experiences. In addition, several women noted that children have increased responsibilities at home which helps foster their independence. Isabel used to sit at the same table alongside her three oldest children when they were in middle school, and do her own homework while she was working on her master's degree. She says "at that time I was just like they were . . . they were old enough to take care of themselves, they knew how to get to school." Ellen's children are "a lot more independent, getting themselves dressed and getting themselves ready. [Daughter] is even making her own lunch now and she can do that."

Role Model for Women Entering the Profession. A number of the women said they felt responsible to younger women entering the work world, especially in the legal profession. They were aware that they had become a role model for younger

women, having worked and advanced in their profession for a number of years. A number of the women lawyers mentioned that Janet Reno was a positive female role model but regretted that she didn't have any children. Two women said they believed it was important for young women in law to know that they could be lawyers and mothers, too. The women expressed pride in having "made it" as they believed it opened doors to other women, including their own daughters, should they choose their mother's profession. Carrie says she has "a feeling of responsibility because I know what it feels like not to be encouraged or not to have a model of someone that I knew well . . . to know that you could do it." Ellen has worked long and hard to establish herself as a litigator in a legal field which has been dominated by men. She says, "I wanted to do trials. I knew that if I worked for some large firm I would get stuck doing research for a long time, because I knew there was a lot of discrimination at that time. It was just a constant battle, and a lot of women have cleared the way for me. . . . I feel like I am a pioneer and that's my job for my daughter and for the generations to follow me is make a way [to combine work and family]." Beth says, "As a group, we just started getting into law school and just started to be considered for jobs and there was an incredible fear that we had to prove that being pregnant and having babies won't interfere in any way; [a fear that] you are going to lose your career track . . . we all have to stand collectively together; it took so long to get into the profession." Another woman put it this way: "I feel real burdened by . . . my responsibility to the younger women having kids, because I don't want them to think its not possible."

Happy Mothers Make Happy Children. A number of the women in the study expressed the belief that, if they were content with their chosen lifestyle, their children would not suffer negatively, despite the cultural messages portrayed by the media.

Ginny says,

There is no right answer [for everyone], and because of that the best right answer for your child is to see you happy and that you've made your own personal choice. . . . I think for me, and I guess for everyone, you've got to do what you're comfortable with and if your kids see that, that's good. But if you hate what you're doing and you really wish you had gone back to work, and you're cranky around your kids because they're stressful, which is sort of what happened with my mom. . . . I thought, mom, we're just too much for you.

Ellen says:

I think that the kids are happy if mom is happy. . . . If mom ain't happy, ain't nobody happy, and that is right! If you're happy being a homemaker, your kids are going to be fine. If you are happy being in your work, your kids are going to be fine. It's only because if you want to be home and you feel like you have to work, your kids might have problems or vice versa. You want to go to work and your husband is insisting you stay home . . . you're frustrated. That was my mom.

Several of the women in the study said they knew they didn't want to be a stay-at-home mom. They had experienced a taste of this lifestyle during their maternity leave and knew that that lifestyle was not for them. They are happiest as working mothers.

Economic Independence. Several women were strongly influenced by experiences growing up in which they saw women having limited choices because of their economic dependence on men. This experience was shared by Helen, Diane, Beth, Ellen, and Ginny. The mothers of these women were full time homemakers. Several of these women expressed the desire to work outside the home; however, they were prevented from doing so by their husbands. In Diane's case, her mother and father

were on the verge of divorce throughout her high school and college years and they did finally divorce. Diane distinctly remembers her mother staying in her marriage due to her inability to support herself. She vowed never to be in an economically dependent position herself. Having financial independence is a definite benefit for the women in the study who saw their mothers with limited relative power in their marriages due to their economic dependence.

Meeting Parental/Family Expectations. All of the women in the study were expected to attend college after high school. The parents of these women all believed that their daughters should go to college and obtain a bachelor's degree. Beyond that expectation, few women in the study had clearly defined goals, however they were able to determine a path for themselves as they went through college and afterwards. Many of the women noted that their parents were proud of them and their accomplishments. Ellen tells of her father who was outwardly discouraging throughout her attempt to get into law school, pass the bar exam and practice law, but that her dad is "very, very proud of me." He "tells everyone that I'm a lawyer. [He says] I'm the best lawyer in the universe kind of stuff." Helen says her father "never thought we [she and her sister] would be stay-at-home people" even though he would not allow her mother to work outside the home.

Challenges of the Working Mother Lifestyle

All of the women in the study discussed several aspects of their lifestyle that

they found challenging. Those challenges that were noted by one or more of the working mothers are reviewed below.

Fatigue and Little or No Personal Time. Several of the women in the study said they were often “tired” and had little or no time for themselves. One says, “I’m tired all the time so I start looking at other things [professional opportunities] I want to do.” As her children have become teenagers, she says that “they’re not going to be around much longer” and she values the time she has with them. When Ellen went away for a month-long professional workshop, she realized that “my biggest problem is that I don’t have any time for myself at all. I’m the one who gets short changed because I make sure that everybody gets what they need. That is my clients, my business partners, my husband, my children. . . . There are 24 hours in a day and [I] don’t get any of it.” Frances said, “I felt I needed to come home with more energy and spend time with him [her son]. . . . I didn’t become a mom to be all tired and frustrated.” Frances chose to change from administration to program coordination and is now much more comfortable with her ability to balance her roles as employee and mother.

Sense of Inadequacy. A number of women mentioned that they were, at times, unable to meet the standards they set for themselves in their home and/or work lives. This led to a sense of inadequacy. Several women noted that they had lowered their standards for their household work in order to feel that their lives are more in control. It was essential for them to give up their “perfectionist” tendencies in order to get the

essential tasks done in a day. Beth described the holidays as particularly stressful. She says her mother made Christmas a magical time but that she thought of it as a race “from Thanksgiving through Christmas morning.” She has given up sending Christmas cards and wrapping gifts herself. Diane finds it difficult to say no to those who need her help in the work environment. She has worked as an educational consultant for a number of years and has developed personal relationships with many of those with whom she works. She says she often has to say no or put them off several months and “I feel guilty” but she is determined to maintain her less-than-full-time schedule.

Ellen describes her feeling this way: “If I have to do something, I’m going to do it well. My father calls me Martha Stewart. . . . I’m not Martha Stewart, but I just have very high standards for myself. I have to be able to do it all, and I sometimes will say its okay to get a B minus or a C plus in laundry or whatever. Some days are better than others.” Carrie says that she has the feeling sometimes that she “is not doing either one if my jobs as well as I could because I constantly shift around.” Frances says she is “the type of person that I have to do it right, otherwise, I’m not satisfied, and I felt I wasn’t doing either of them well enough, doing the [educational administration] job and doing the mommy job was not what I had in mind. So I tried it for a year.”

Frustration With Cultural Expectations of Mothers. All of the women in the study said that they did not make any decisions regarding the combination of a profession with motherhood based on the popular media’s portrayal of working mothers. Nor did they make any decisions based on research studies they may have heard about

discussing the detrimental effects a mother's employment may have on her children. However, several women expressed frustration at the expectations which were communicated about their roles. Carrie says that "even if we work things out in our own house about how things are going to be, I think there are societal expectations that push you to do certain things." She gives an example of a school assignment her children were given to submit their mom's best recipe. Carrie's husband does most of the cooking for the family so their mom had no recipes. Her children were upset and concerned about how they should complete this assignment. She has also experienced some negative feelings from stay-at-home moms "trying to make me feel bad, and men, too." Several women said they didn't attend to the public debate about the "shoulds" of working mothers because if they did, they would risk losing control over their lives. They had structured their lives in a way that they believed was best for them, their spouse, and their children and they felt that they needed to adhere to that structure without being swayed by the often trendy and capricious public debate about working mothers.

Concern About the Effect of Working on Children. Despite their desire not to engage themselves in the public debate about the negative side effects a mother's career may have on her children, a number of women still expressed a level of concern about the effect their being in the workplace may have on their children. Ellen says, "I just worry about people saying well, being a working mother is bad for your kids or something. I don't believe that." Another woman said she does think about whether her working has had a negative effect on her children. She says, "You have questions

and you do wonder if you are doing the right thing. Your child won't put their socks on unless all the wrinkles are smoothed out. Do you have to say that this is because I'm working? Or would this have happened anyway?" Frances felt concerned about the effect her demanding, full time administrative job was having on her family life. Having worked in public education, she said she had seen the detrimental effects of "neglected kids."

Responsibility for the Second Shift. One woman noted that even though their spouse "helps me, . . . I still have to think of what to do and give him direction to do it. By the time I tell him what to get at the grocery store and exactly what it is I want, I might as well go do it myself." Anne says that "I think I'm the one that kind of holds it all together, day-to-day routines, scheduler, planner."

Time Conflict. When asked about their experience with role conflict, several of the mothers in the study responded by saying, they often had a time conflict rather than a role conflict. One woman said that being a lawyer "defines her as a person" so she didn't think of her dual roles as in conflict with one another. A number of women said there simply was not enough time to get everything done that they are responsible for, both at home and at work. As Helen puts it, "Sometimes I have a time conflict . . . when I have to do something and organize just mundane things, but . . . like last weekend I had to be out of town. If I had focused on it, I would have rearranged, but by the time I did, I couldn't [rearrange the trip]."

Put Career on Hold. A number of women decided to either decline promotions and/or move into less demanding positions. This choice took them off the career track they were on, leading to a higher position within their organization or profession. This was a conscious decision and most of the women believed that they would be able to get back on their previous career path when they were ready. Others decided to make the career change on a more permanent basis. As Helen puts it when she decided to go part time in her position as a lawyer, "I definitely decided to put the career on hold a little bit" when she decided to request a part time position with the understanding that she would not be on "partner track." She says, "I just made the decision that I didn't care about making partner . . . because I wasn't able to do what I perceived I had to do in order to make it and then it just happened." Helen was made a partner, without knowing she was being considered, and was able to maintain her part time schedule.

Two women in education gave up administrative roles for coordinator positions to better accommodate their family lives. One woman intends to return to administration "in 15 or 20 years he [her son] will be gone and I can go back and do [administration]." She says, "They are always going to need principals or assistant principals . . . so, therefore, why don't we put that on hold and . . . give quality to the baby and . . . home life." The second woman who became a program coordinator hopes to stay in that role indefinitely.

Several of the women lawyers had decided consciously not to pursue becoming a judge because they didn't want to put their family through the rigorous review process

required to attain such a position. One woman was nominated for a judgeship but the political process took so long that she gave up the opportunity.

Involvement With Children's School. Several of the mothers in the study expressed frustration with their children's school. Jackie complained that she felt the attitude of the administrators at the school were biased towards working and single mothers. In a meeting with a school administrator she was told that she should "spend more time at school." She told the administrator that she had to "put food on the table just like him." Previously, she had made efforts to stay involved with her children's school by offering to make phone calls after hours or to help with projects at home. She said that her children's teachers never took her up on this offer. Ellen expressed frustration with the number and times of the school meetings saying that she would have to arrange her whole work day to be able to attend one of them. Beth said that even with her part time schedule she was unable to attend all the school events of her three children. She complained that they were often scheduled in conflict with one another.

Discrimination. Several of the women in the study had experiences with discrimination either due to their gender or, in one case, due to their being pregnant. These experiences had differing effects on the women. Anne said she "gave up" and left the business world. She returned to a part time programming job in which she had worked previously. She and her husband decided at this time that they would start their family. Had Anne not had these experiences of discrimination, she wonders what kind

of career she would have now. In Ellen and Beth's case, they simply circumvented the traditional legal hierarchy to avoid what they knew to be discriminatory practices within law firms. In Ellen's case, she said she decided early on that she "wasn't going to be treated differently" and formed her own law firm right out of law school. This was after she had an experience in law school in which she saw women belittled for pursuing a field that was said to be for men only by a law professor. She said she just assumed she would fight her way up like she always did though she says her way was not easy and she would not necessarily recommend others follow in her footsteps. Beth worked in government for awhile and then went to smaller firms after spending 2 years litigating a claim with her former employer over pregnancy discrimination. Her experience caused her to pick her future employers carefully to ascertain that her desire to have a part time case load would be honored. She now has her own firm and is working out of an office in her home. Both Beth and Ellen say that they know other women lawyers who have chosen to work outside the traditional law firm due to the lack of flexibility that continues to exist in those organizations.

Balancing Strategies of Working Mothers

A number of strategies were discussed by the mothers in the study which helped them to manage their lives. The following eight strategies were found to be helpful to one or more of the working mothers interviewed. Though this list covered the strategies mentioned by the women interviewed, one working mother said, "I'm constantly making adjustments and changes and I try things out. Mistakes are seldom fatal."

Part Time Work Schedule. Four of the women in the study have spent part or all of their lives as mothers working a part time schedule. In many ways, working part time seemed to provide a perfect balance for these women. They were able to continue in their professions as well as be involved in their children's school and extracurricular activities. The four women who are working part time have the second shift duties built into their family responsibilities. Most of them are able to accommodate this arrangement but Isabel complained that "if you are doing it [working] part time, I think it is harder because you are only part time. Nobody realizes how much work you put into it . . . it is harder working part time."

Calendar as a Tracking Tool. One woman in the study described how she organized her work and family life using a Franklin Planner. She has a job in which she travels throughout the county. In order to get a big picture of the type and duration of her scheduled activities, she color codes them. This way she is able to see, at a glance, what activities are scheduled on each day, week, and/or month. She finds this tool extremely helpful in managing her activities and those of her family.

Prioritize Work Duties. Several women noted that it is almost always the mother who is called by their children's school if their child is ill or if parental permission is needed for an activity. Beth prepares for this inevitability by insuring that items with the closest deadlines are completed first. She says that "I never know when somebody is going to get the chicken pox; I never know when somebody is going to

have a temperature higher than I am comfortable leaving with a Spanish-speaking housekeeper.”

Schedule Personal Time. One woman who works part time said:

I like having my free time. Now it's my free time. She [her daughter] goes off to school, she doesn't get out until 5 o'clock, so from 8:00 to 5:00 it's my time off or my days off. . . . No personal time [is a problem for working mothers] because by the time you get home and do whatever you have to do . . . cook, help with homework, and then they go to bed, there's very little time left to have time with your spouse or to have time for yourself.

Another woman has taken off one day a week from her work schedule and uses that time for herself. She says that time is sacred; however, if she has a court appearance which can't be rescheduled, she has to give it up.

Work Environment With Independence, Autonomy, and Flexibility. One interviewee said she has had “a goal of trying to be as independent a lawyer as possible as soon as possible.” This strategy enabled her to become a partner in a law firm, a position which allows her a high degree of flexibility and autonomy. Two women in education gave up high level administrative roles and moved into program coordinator positions to accommodate their family lives. In these coordinator positions, they are responsible for specific programmatic outcomes and have much more flexibility in their schedules than they did in traditional school administration. The third woman in education taught at a school in which her children were enrolled for a number of years. This arrangement was very positive and allowed her much more time with the three children, with whom she shared a school campus, than would have been possible otherwise.

Limit or Eliminate Business Travel. One woman traveled quite frequently in her position as an attorney. She said, “I used to travel a tremendous amount, because I really liked it, but then I stopped that too . . . [now] if I travel, my husband has a very flexible schedule, too. We pretty much share everything.”

Coordinate Children’s Activities with Other Moms. A number of women mentioned that they work cooperatively with other parents, especially other mothers, to keep their lives in balance. Helen, describing a recent business trip, said, “My neighbor, who is like her [daughter] second mom” helped out. Ellen invites her children’s friends over on the weekends so she can repay other mothers who help her out with driving during the week, when she is least available.

Limit or Eliminate Involvement in Professional Organizations. One woman said some of her colleagues, particularly those without children, had difficulty understanding how she could turn down a board position in a prestigious professional organization. She says that she has declined such invitations because the groups generally meet after work hours and she “just doesn’t want to be out at night.”

Get Help With the Second Shift. Most of the women in the study hired housekeepers and/or nannies to help with the upkeep of their homes. Others mentioned having hired gardeners to help maintain the exterior of their home. As one woman put it, “ You need to have things running [smoothly at home] . . . when things are not running smoothly at home then things don’t run very smoothly at work because you’re all concerned about it.” Another woman says she has a housekeeper come to help her

twice a month, though she would like to have her help more frequently. Financially, twice a month is all she can afford. A number of the parents of the women in the study have helped with their grandchildren in various ways over the years. Beth said her father used to drive on all her son's field trips before he got "too old." Carrie's parents served as her back up child care providers when her children were young. They help out now in other ways. She says she doesn't know what she would have done if they hadn't been available.

Maintain Priorities in Workplace. Two women said they do not apologize or let others intimidate them when they schedule work activities and meetings around their children's activities. They practice and advocate asserting one's priorities in the workplace without apology. One woman described an incident in which she told a judge and opposing council that she was unavailable for an appearance because she was attending a Christmas pageant at her children's school. She said the judge simply rescheduled the court appearance, "no ridicule, nobody dared to say anything and, as my husband pointed out, it would have been harder for a man to say that than me, [as] everybody knows me and there is no way anybody is going to give me any trouble about it."

Another lawyer said:

I think it was maybe because I was older [when I had my child] , but I just never let people intimidate me in the workplace. That's really what happens, is they make you feel guilty or you are incapable of standing up to somebody. You have to do X and they want you to do something that conflicts with that and you just sacrifice X, but I would never do that. I think it was a combination of being older [and], having worked for a number of years with the same person who I developed a relationship of respect with."

Cognitive/Coping Strategies. A number of women noted that they make themselves think a certain way to better balance their lives as working mothers. This may not be a conscious, stated strategy, however it was evident in the interviews of several women. For example, Ellen said that she “sometimes will say its okay to get a B minus or a C plus in laundry or whatever.” She also said that she has tried a number of different balancing strategies in order to feel in control of her life as a working mother. She acknowledges that “mistakes are seldom fatal,” thus allowing herself to try out new ways to balance her life. Frances says that she changed jobs after being in school administration but noted that she felt she had to try it first to see what it was like. After giving up her administrative position she says that she believes “they will always need principals and assistant principals” and that she can re-enter that aspect of education. She has put off her career goals but believes that the opportunity to work in administration is not permanently out of reach.

The Identity Shift From Full Time Professional to Working Mother

A number of the women in the study discussed an identity shift or redefinition which occurred when they became mothers. This change may also be characterized as a values shift or a re-prioritizing of one’s life. The women in the study described this experience in several different ways. Many said that work seemed less important. Those who spoke of this identity shift seemed somewhat surprised that their prior self-concept could be so radically altered by the birth of a child. They often discussed this

values shift in the context of advising other working women what to expect when they became mothers. Several women used the phrase “you are going to feel differently.”

Diane said:

I was a pencil sketch before, and afterwards I was animated and in living color. She [her daughter] just absolutely transformed the way I saw the world and what was important. Ever since then I've been looking around at my colleagues who were moving up and taking on additional responsibility, higher titles, and I was definitely on a career track that was designed to help me become a principal and a superintendent. . . . That stopped when she came along. It was like I didn't care anymore. . . . I chose to stay in a coordinator position. I make enough money to be comfortable and to do the things we like to do, and I don't want to work any longer. I don't want to work any harder.

Frances says that her son became her main focus when he was born and that this occurred “more so because, being in public education, knowing what neglecting kids, the result of what those can possibly be down the road.” She goes on to say that as a goal-oriented person within her profession, she needed to make changes to accommodate her parenting role. She said she “juggled all [these] things around” to maintain her standards and her health as “those 5 years being a principal were the years I had the worst health.”

Ellen said that the experience of having her daughter was “so completely different than anything else I'd ever experienced. I didn't feel like going back to work as soon as I thought I would . . . before I actually had the child, so I ended up taking 4 months off after I had her and nursing her the whole time and just being a mom and transition myself into the idea of being a parent.” This transformation seemed surprising to Ellen as she had described her dedication to the legal profession as a “calling”

and, before she had children, believed that she would not become a mother because “I couldn’t see being the kind of lawyer I wanted to be and having children.”

The depth of this identity shift and values re-prioritization is best captured in the words of the women themselves. Nothing prepared them for this experience and the changes which they would make as a result of being both a mother and a professional.

Summary

This review and interpretation of specific aspects of the interviews with working mothers was intended to provide further insight into their lives. The topical approach to report writing, as described by Rubin and Rubin (1995), was used to draw out the categories of experience reviewed above.

Chapter VI includes a discussion of the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalization as they relate to qualitative research and a discussion of several topics addressed in Chapters IV and V. In addition, several other findings are reviewed as well as areas of future research. The benefits and drawbacks of the use of the personal narrative qualitative research methodology in the study of working mothers is also addressed in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lives of working mothers. The information shared by the women in the study will assist in the understanding of this complex and increasingly common lifestyle. The positive and negative aspects of the lives of mothers working at a professional level will help shed light on the issues, dilemmas, and joys that accompany this role combination.

The Personal Narrative qualitative methodology was used in this study (Reissman, 1993). This methodology allows various aspects of the working mother's life to be explored. This study used qualitative research methodology to examine the lives of 10 high-achieving, professional working mothers.

The potential benefits of this study include discovering the influences leading women to choose the life of a working mother, understanding the benefits and challenges of working mothers in the workplace, and understanding the home-based supports and hindrances which exist in their lives.

This chapter will review the following topics: the concepts of validity, reliability and generalization as they relate to qualitative research, the possible reasons for the

benefits and rewards of the working mother lifestyle reviewed in Chapter V, unexpected findings and areas of future research.

Qualitative Research Methodology to Study Working Mothers

The use of the personal narrative qualitative methodology provided the opportunity for the researcher to learn about the unique lives of each of the 10 women in the study. The interview format was beneficial for discovering the stories behind each of the women's life choices, a window into her past and present life. Through the interview, areas of interest to the researcher and the interviewee could be discussed and explored.

Personally, I found the experience of interviewing the women in the study insightful and enriching. The various paths chosen by these women and the forces which inspired them were, in some cases, quite similar to my own and in other cases, quite different from my life. I felt privileged to have the opportunity to get a glimpse of these women's lives and the influences which shaped them. I believe that I was able to establish a positive, mutually-supportive interviewer-interviewee relationship. The responsiveness of the women to conducting member checks and their support of me personally in this research is evidence of this relationship.

There are several limitations to the use of the interview for data collection as well as with the personal narrative methodology. These limitations include the following five, as noted by Marshall and Rossman (1999):

1. Interviews depend upon personal interaction; cooperation is essential. The interviewee may be unwilling or uncomfortable sharing all that the researcher hopes to explore.

2. The interviewer may not ask questions that evoke long narratives by participants either because of a lack of expertise or a lack of familiarity with the specific language of those she is interviewing. This may also occur due to lack of interview skills.

3. It is possible that the interviewer may not properly comprehend interviewee responses or specific elements of the conversation.

4. Interviewers need excellent listening skills and must be experts at personal interaction, question framing, and probing for clarification and elaboration.

5. When the researcher is using the interview as the sole way of gathering data, she should have demonstrated that the purpose of the study was to uncover and describe the participants subjective perspective on the topic of inquiry.

In this study of working mothers, I believe that the limitations of the in-depth interview and those noted above regarding the personal narrative methodology had little or no effect on the outcome of the study. My personal experience as a working and nonworking mother assisted in creating a rapport and a common bond with the women in the interview process. This personal experience has caused me to adopt a non-judgmental attitude regarding the lives women choose to lead. I was genuinely curious about their lives and the paths they took to arrive at their current lifestyle. I feel strongly that each woman must decide what lifestyle is right for her and her family.

In addition, my prior work experience as an interviewer helped me to conduct what I believed was a very positive interview experience with the working mothers in the study. This perception was reinforced by the comments I received when the women interviewees participated in the member checks. The 10 interviews I conducted definitely met, and in some ways, exceeded my goal of exploring the lives of working mothers.

The specific limitations noted by Marshall and Rossman (1999) regarding the personal narrative methodology are as follows: it focuses on the individual rather than on the social context and it seeks to understand sociological questions about groups, communities, and contexts through individuals' lived experiences. Marshall and Rossman go on to say that narrative may suffer from selective recall, a focus on subsets of experience, filling in memory gaps through inference, and reinterpretation of the past. Others warn against ascribing causality to the narrator's story. Finally, the process of narrative inquiry is time-consuming and laborious and may require some specialized training.

In this study of working mothers, the limitations of the personal narrative as described by Marshall and Rossman (1999) were addressed in the following ways. The focus on individuals to explain group phenomenon is an aspect of the personal narrative; however, the goal of the study was to explore the lives of working mothers; specifically, the 10 working mothers interviewed for this study. This study did not attempt to explain the lives of all working mothers. To the extent that something may

be learned about the lives of women leading this lifestyle, that could be seen as a benefit of the study.

The impact of the issues of selective recall, the use of inference to fill in memory gaps, and reinterpretation of the past on the narratives of the working mothers are not possible to assess by the researcher. The interviewees appeared to be making an honest effort to recall their past and present experiences and recount them to the researcher to the best of their ability. There would appear to be little motivation for the women in the study to consciously reinterpret or change their life story in response to the researcher's questions. In addition, the fact that these women had the opportunity to review the study findings and make any corrections or changes adds to the credibility of their stories. Not only did the interviewees verbalize their experiences, they read about them and had the opportunity to amend them before they were finalized in the research report.

Qualitative research focuses on process and meaning within a limited number of cases chosen by the researcher and because of this, the concepts of validity, reliability, and generalization must be considered in a different way than in a quantitative study.

Qualitative Research and Validity, Reliability, and Generalization

Merriam (1988) states "if understanding is the primary rationale for the investigation, the criteria for trusting the study are going to be different than if discovery of a law or testing a hypothesis is the study's objective" (p. 166). In this study, the primary goal was to understand the experience of working mothers, thus the concepts of

validity, reliability, and generalization have a meaning different from the way they are generally understood in a quantitative study.

Validity deals with the question of whether the findings capture what is really there. It asks, is the researcher observing or measuring what they think they are measuring? Qualitative research assumes that reality is “holistic, multidimensional and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed as measured” (Merriam, 1988, p. 167) so assessing the match between data collection and the reality from which they were derived is not appropriate.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Merriam, 1988) recommend that judging the validity or truth of a study rests upon the researcher showing that “he or she has represented those multiple constructions adequately, that is, that the reconstructions that have been arrived at via the inquiry are credible to the constructors of the original multiple realities” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 168).

Member checks are a particularly good way to insure that the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba are applied. By taking the data and interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived, and asking if the results are plausible, the researcher’s representation of the study participant’s intended meaning may be verified.

Member checks were completed in this study of working mothers. The 10 women who participated in interviews were sent a copy of the study findings and asked to clarify and/or comment upon any aspect of the information. Their comments and/or corrections were incorporated into the study findings. In addition, the textual and demographic descriptions of the women in the study and their family members was sent

to them in a separate mailing. They were asked to review the personal descriptions included in the study to insure that their wish of anonymity had been honored by the researcher. Any changes or deletions requested by the volunteers regarding their identity were made.

The reliability of the study, defined as the extent to which the findings can be replicated, is not applicable to qualitative research. This concept assumes that there is a single reality which, if studied repeatedly, will give the same results. Qualitative research does not assume that there is a single reality. It "seeks to describe and explain the world as those in the world interpret it. Since there are many interpretations of what is happening, there is not a benchmark by which one can take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense" (Merriam, 1988, p. 170).

Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Merriam, 1988) suggest thinking about the dependability or consistency of the results obtained from the data. Rather than using the criteria that other researchers obtain the same study results for reliability to be established, Lincoln and Guba recommend that the results make sense, that they are consistent and dependable. Providing a detailed accounting in the reporting of the steps taken to complete the study is one way to demonstrate a study's dependability and consistency, according to Lincoln and Guba. This study provides a detailed accounting of the steps taken from the initial determination of the pool of working mothers to be interviewed through the data analysis and reporting of findings.

Generalization, or external validity, is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other, similar, situations. Guba and Lincoln

(1981) point out that to even discuss this issue, a study must be internally valid as “there is no point in asking whether meaningless information has any general applicability” (Guba & Lincoln, as cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 168).

On the other hand, it is possible to go too far in controlling for factors that might influence outcomes resulting in findings which can be generalized only to other, highly controlled and artificial situations. In general, qualitative studies have high internal validity, meaning they capture what is really there. However, one often selects a qualitative methodology because one wishes to understand a particular experience in depth, not because one wants to know what is generally true of the many. This was the case in the study of working mothers. The researcher was interested in the experiences of the 10 women interviewees; women working as professionals and also raising children.

The women in the study are unique in several ways. As a group they are middle to upper middle class, came from affluent, professional families, are highly educated, are Caucasian (9) or Hispanic (1), are married (9), attended private college for graduate school in a field which was male-dominated at the time, and they all have a stable, positive, and supportive relationship with their spouse (or, in one case, an ex-husband).

It is possible that the women in the study may have self-selected themselves. They are all successful in their home and work environments, they are physically healthy, their children are doing well and many of them noted that they had been “lucky.” By this they meant that they had, for the most part, had positive child care

arrangements for their children, many sources of support for their lifestyle and, in many cases, been able to arrange part time or flexible work schedules to accommodate their family's needs. As Anne puts it, "That's why I've got it so good . . . I don't have those outside forces that might cause me to make some decision that would cause guilt. I don't have those problems."

Women who have not been as successful as these 10 interviewees, in one realm of their life or another, may not have felt as comfortable or been as open to volunteering for a study in which they discussed their lives. This possibility raises questions regarding the outcome of other studies which may be conducted in which a different selection process is used. In addition, the benefits, challenges, and balancing strategies noted by these women were most likely impacted by their demographic characteristics. Their level of affluence allowed them to hire individuals to assist with the second shift duties such as nannies, housekeepers, and gardeners. Their level of education made it relatively easy to obtain employment offering a high salary. Other working women without the affluence and/or educational level of the women in the study may have found different challenges, benefits, and strategies accompanying the working mother lifestyle. In addition, women who had not chosen to enter occupational areas which were male-dominated at the time they entered their profession may have had different challenges than those noted by the women in the study.

In this study of working mothers, the researcher was interested in gaining insight into the lives of the 10 working mothers selected for participation in the study. These women are unique and their experiences may or may not be similar to other

mothers working in professions. Any attempt to generalize beyond this group of women will be noted with this in mind.

Rewards and Challenges of the Working Mother Lifestyle

The seven rewards of the working mother lifestyle which were brought out in this study — Children are a Blessing, Pride in Accomplishments, Partnership with Spouse, Growth Opportunities for Children, Increasing Control Over Work Environment, Role Model for Women Entering the Profession, Happy Mothers Make Happy Children, Economic Independence, Meeting Parental/Family Expectations — are the benefits pointed out by the women in the study related to their lives as working mothers. They highlight the majority of the positive aspects of the working mother lifestyle as discussed by the 10 women in this study.

The seven challenges which were discussed by the women in the study — Fatigue and Little or No Personal Time, Sense of Inadequacy, Frustration With Cultural Expectations of Mothers, Concern About the Effects of Working on Their Children, Responsibility for the Second Shift, Time Conflict and Putting Career on Hold, Involvement with Children's School, Discrimination — are the challenges pointed out by the women in the study related to their lives as working mothers. They highlight the majority of the difficulties discussed by the working mothers in the interviews.

Overall, the women in the study seemed to have carved out lives for themselves that balanced the challenges and the rewards of the working mother lifestyle. Several women made reference to the fact that “some days are better than others.” One may

interpret this to mean that, as with any lifestyle, the positive and negative aspects do not always perfectly offset one another. The goal of these women is to find an equilibrium between their desire for individual achievement in their workplace and their desire to provide just the right amount of care and nurturing to their family. This equilibrium, a balance between their long-held professional standards and ambition, and their somewhat newer self-definition as a mother seem to be at various stages of evolution within the 10 interviewees. The ages and/or the number of children these women have may have an impact on their evolutionary stage.

Other Findings

There were several aspects of the working mother lifestyle which emerged from the interviews and did not clearly fit into one of the categories previously reviewed. Nonetheless, these aspects of the working mother lifestyle are worthy of note. These were findings which the researcher was somewhat surprised to find emerging from the interviews of the working mothers. These experiences impacted the women who reported them in significant ways. Those who discussed these experiences or insights very clearly pointed out the impact these forces had on their lifestyle as a working mother.

1. The husbands of the women in the study do not want to work any longer or harder than they already do. They appreciate their wives financial contribution to the overall family income. In at least two cases, the wives contribution exceeds that of the husband. As reported by the women in the study, the husbands of the working mothers do not want the increased pressure of being the family's only wage earner. In addition,

several of the women stated that they value their time with their husbands and feel that if he were the only wage earner their time together would be reduced in quantity and quality.

2. A number of the women in the study are mothers of teenagers. They noted the special parenting challenges presented by this age group. Several said that they felt it was more important to be available for their teenagers than when their children were infants and toddlers. One woman noted “no one babysits teenagers!” Another woman noted that she was increasingly aware that her teenaged children would be leaving home permanently in the next few years and wanted to maximize their time together now.

3. Several women in the study discussed their perceptions and experiences within the legal field. Within the broad field of law, several specialty areas are more conducive to a flexible or part time work schedule than others. Consequently, these areas remain more female dominated. Areas such as family law, divorce law, tax and estate planning, and government are examples of specialties in which flexibility and part time schedules are more feasible. Trial lawyers, on the other hand, have very little control over their work schedules as they must respond to the scheduling needs and demands of their opposing council and the courts. Four of the women in the study were trial lawyers and they all noted this particular difficulty. Several wished, in hindsight, that they had chosen a field other than litigation when they were selecting their specialty area in law.

4. One woman noted that her life is complicated by being part of “the sandwich generation.” Within months of her daughter’s birth, her stepfather became quite ill.

He and her mother live approximately 3 hours away and, for the past 9 years, she has been the secondary care giver to her stepfather, second to her 77-year-old mother. In addition, her father passed away the day before our interview occurred, after a 4-month illness. She visited him at his home, 8 hours away, at least once a month before he died. She says, "The second shift is complicated by other expectations. It's keeping our own financial house in order . . . groceries, laundry and those pieces, as well as keeping all of those other things [her father and stepfather's needs] [in perspective]."

Areas of Future Research

Due to the nature of this study, a qualitative interview format with a very small, purposive sample, broad generalizations may not be made about applicability of the information emerging from the interviews of the 10 working mothers in this study. However, the nature of qualitative research is that it may describe and inform in ways that may lead to additional and/or different research directions in the future. This was the case in this study of working mothers.

Despite the limitations imposed by the research methodology used in this study, there are implications for research studies using the current study findings as a basis. Future qualitative studies of working mothers may utilize a purposive sample but select characteristics different from those which were used in this study, for example, women who were less affluent, who did not have children, and/or who had not completed college. Using the same methodology, the emergent themes of these women's narratives may be compared and contrasted to those of the current study sample. This would provide insight into aspects of the working mother lifestyle that may have been unique

to the women in the current study. In addition, the benefits, challenges, and balancing strategies of the women in this study could be compared with a different sample population. A quantitative study could be conducted in which working mothers are surveyed about their use of the balancing strategies noted in this study to gain an understanding of a more heterogeneous group of women working as professionals and raising children. A broader group of women could also be asked, in a survey format, about the benefits and challenges they have experienced as working mothers.

The same research methodology may produce dramatically disparate results with a population who has different educational, socioeconomic, and/or ethnic backgrounds. As noted, the women who participated in the study share many characteristics, including a high degree of success in their lives. The themes of the personal narratives for women who are less affluent, not as highly educated, and/or with different cultural or ethnic backgrounds may be quite different than those of the current study interviewees.

If a study was done in which the volunteers represented only one specific graduate and/or occupational area, different results may be obtained. In addition, information obtained from the study may be more readily usable. Specific occupational trends and/or issues may be discerned which may have practical implications.

The concerns, issues, and/or activities of working mothers are likely to change as a function of the stage of their career. These concerns, issues, and/or activities are also likely to change as a function of the ages and corresponding developmental needs of their children. Studies of working mothers with very young children and/or those

just starting out in their careers may produce a different viewpoint than the one provided by this study.

In addition, the themes which emerged from this study of working mothers raised questions in the following areas:

1. Clearly, the women interviewed for the study were living a life with which they felt a great deal of satisfaction. They had a positive, supportive family life growing up and chose a spouse who was equally supportive. It would be helpful to discover what formative influences were most beneficial to working mothers; especially those influences increasing self-confidence and personal achievement.

2. All the women in the study have carved out a work environment with which they are satisfied. Future research may focus on identifying specific methods or strategies which may be used for working mothers to gain control over their work schedules and/or work environments to better accommodate career and family responsibilities.

3. Several of the working mothers complained about their inability to become involved in some way with their children's school, given their full time work schedule. A question for future research may involve the methods/strategies to be used for working mothers and fathers to become more involved in their children's school activities.

4. The balancing strategies used by the 10 women in this study worked well for them. They may be of interest to other dual career couples. An area to look at in the future may be the means used to identify and share strategies and philosophies of working mothers and fathers which may benefit others living this lifestyle.

Summary

The current study allowed the researcher to obtain a glimpse into the lives of 10 working mothers. It was only a glimpse. Additional time, perhaps over the course of a few months or a few years, would provide a more in-depth picture of the women in the study. However, the time spent with the working mothers allowed a cursory understanding of their life path.

These women benefitted from a number of positive influences in their lives and conscious choices they made throughout their youth and adult years. Supportive parents who had the motivation and the means to send their daughters to college, the opportunity and desire to pursue bachelors' and graduate degrees, adequate income to support themselves and their family comfortably, and supportive partners in marriage all assisted the 10 working mothers in the study to achieve professionally and to enjoy fulfilling family lives.

It is difficult to imagine the women in the study living lives different from those they have chosen; however, had their dreams and desires not been nurtured in their family environment and, if the social culture had advocated economic independence for women, their lives may have been quite different. Also, they were all fortunate to have found a spouse who shared their values and goals. Even Jackie and her ex-husband shared mutual goals for their children though they did not stay together as a couple.

The level of contentment with their decisions and current lifestyle is apparent with most of the women in the study. These are strong women with confidence in themselves and their chosen lifestyle. They would change very little about their past or

present life choices. Such contentment would seem to be a desirable goal for all people.

In summary, the 10 women in the study are remarkable, hard-working, dedicated professionals and mothers. They have demonstrated perseverance, independence, and strength in choosing and holding fast to a lifestyle that has been both celebrated and derided by our culture. These women may serve as role models for those who seek to combine a high level career with the rewards and challenges of motherhood.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What influence has becoming a parent had on your career?
2. What influence has being a professional had on your becoming/being a parent?
3. What influence did your upbringing and childhood have on your expectations to combine motherhood and a profession?
4. What brought you to the University of San Diego to obtain a graduate degree (JD, MBA, Educational Administrative Credential)?
5. Describe your typical work day.
6. How do you balance your roles as mother and employee?
-Does your husband use the same strategies?
7. Describe your experience with role conflict.
8. What supports (at work and at home) exist in your life and what supports do you wish were there?
9. Imagine you have been asked to construct a family-friendly workplace; describe this workplace.
10. Comment on your experiences with the "glass ceiling," the "maternal wall," "mommy track," and the "second shift."
11. What advice would you give a working woman considering motherhood?
12. What influence has the popular media's portrayal of working mothers had on you and/or your decisions about combining motherhood and a profession?
13. Describe any particularly regretful or particularly satisfying choices you have made as a working mother.

APPENDIX B

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Date

Dear USD Graduate,

I am a doctorate student from the Leadership Studies Program at the University of San Diego. My doctoral dissertation study will explore the experiences of working mothers. The purpose of this study is see how mothers are doing with this complex and increasingly common lifestyle.

I am seeking women graduates from the Juris Doctor (JD) program, the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program and the Educational Administration Credential program at USD to be interviewed for this study. The women in the study should possess the following four characteristics: (1) mothers who are currently raising one or more minor child in her home, (2) have used JD, MBA or Credential in Educational Administration in the workplace for a minimum of ten years, (3) currently in the workplace, full or part time, (4) live in San Diego County.

You have been identified as a potential participant in this study. The volunteers in this study will discuss their lives as working mothers with the researcher in an informal interview format. The interview will be scheduled at a location of your choosing and last approximately one and one-half hours.

All study volunteers will be assured complete confidentiality. You will have the opportunity to review any information shared in the interview prior to the completion of the research report. Also, your real name will not be used in the dissertation should you so elect.

I would very much appreciate your perspective on working mother's experiences. Please consider contributing to the research literature on working mothers by participating in this study.

I welcome any questions you may have. I can be reached at the phone number and/or E-mail address noted above. A self-addressed response letter is enclosed on which you may indicate your decision about volunteering as a participant in this important and timely study. The USD faculty director of this dissertation study is listed below. Feel free to contact her with any questions you may have about the study.

Thank you in advance for giving this invitation your serious consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Lincoln
Doctoral Candidate

Dissertation Director:
Dr. Johanna Hunsaker
Professor of Organizational Behavior
University of San Diego, School of Business
260-4858

APPENDIX C

RESPONSE LETTER

RESPONSE LETTER

Volunteer Response

Indicate your decision to volunteer for the study of working mothers below. Please mail back to me by folding to expose address on reverse side. Affix folding side with tape or staple.

I am interested in participating in the study ☐

Name _____

Phone # _____

E-mail address _____

Best day/time to contact _____

Prefer E-mail or phone contact _____

I would like more information before I decide to participate ☐

Name _____

Phone # _____

E-mail address _____

Best day/time to contact _____

Prefer E-mail or phone contact _____

I am not interested in participating in the study ☐

Name _____

Please contact me at (619) 698-0921 or E-mail address FJWF13A@prodigy.com if you have any questions about the study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Barbara C. Lincoln

volunteer code(ie jd/mba/ad cr and# from master list)

APPENDIX D

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Volunteer_____

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age:_____
2. Educational Level:_____
3. Marital Status:_____
4. Number of Years Married:_____
5. Number/Ages of Children:_____
6. Age when First Child Born:_____
7. Combined Annual Family Income:
Under 35,000_____
35,000-60,000_____
60,000-100,000_____
over 100,000_____
8. Number of hours working per week_____
9. Husband's hours per week_____
10. Husband's Occupation_____
11. Husband's Educational Level_____
12. Husband's Age_____
13. Ethnic Group Identification_____

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have been invited to participate in a study of the experiences of working mothers. This research is being conducted by Barbara C. Lincoln, a doctoral student at the University of San Diego.

If I decide to participate, I will be asked some questions about my experiences as a working mother. I may be interviewed up to two times and each interview will last 60-90 minutes. I can stop the interview and/or reschedule it at any time, for any reason. I can refuse to answer any of the questions asked or stop the interview at any time without penalty. If I decide to stop the interview, my tape will be destroyed and no one will see or hear of it.

All of my responses will be kept private. To ensure my privacy, any names, other than mine will be erased from the interview tapes. I will be given the option of allowing the researcher to use my real name, selecting a pseudonym to protect my privacy, or using no name at all in the text of the dissertation. I will be provided a copy of the interview transcript to review prior to the completion of the dissertation. I will have the opportunity to review the dissertation before and after it is published. My participation is completely voluntary.

I may choose the location of the interview. My workplace, home or another quiet location are all options for the interview location.

If I have any questions, I can ask them at this time. Should I think of questions later, I can phone Barbara Lincoln any time at (619) 698-0921 or contact her through email at FJWF13A@prodigy.com.

I will be given a copy of this form.

I am making a decision whether or not to participate in this study. My participation is voluntary; my signature indicates that I have decided to participate, having read the information provided above.

Signature of Participant

Date

Researcher Information

Printed Name _____

Address _____

Signature of Researcher

APPENDIX F

RESPONSES TO INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

RESPONSE RATE FOR LETTERS OF INVITATION

First round of letters — sent 7/15/99		Second round of letters — sent 8/13/99	
Total mailed	85	Total mailed	54
No	21	No	10
Yes	8	Yes	5
Returned as undeliverable	2	Returned as undeliverable	1
Total responses	31 (31/85 = 36.47%)	Total responses	16 (16/54 = 29.62%)

Both mailings	
No	31 (37.64%)
Yes	13 (15.29%)
Returned as undeliverable	3 (3.52%)

Overall response rate (No + Yes) 44/85 = 51.76%

RESPONSE RATE — BREAKDOWN BY GRADUATE PROGRAM

JDs		MBAs	
Total mailed	64	Total mailed	4
No	21	No	1
Yes	8	Yes	2
No response	34	No response	1
Returned as undeliverable	1	Returned as undeliverable	0
Response rate (no + yes)	29/64 = 45.31%	Response rate (no + yes)	3/4 = 75%

Administrative credential	
Total mailed	17
No	9
Yes	3
No response	3
Returned as undeliverable	2
Response rate (no + yes)	12/17 = 70.58%

Number of interviews completed: 10 (2 MBA, 3 Administrative Credential, 5 JD)
2 "yes" response not interviewed (2 JD)

APPENDIX G

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Name	Age	Marital status	# years married	Age at 1 st child	# of children	Ages of children	Annual combined income	Ethnic group	# of work hrs/wk	Age of spouse	Spouse's education	Spouse's occupation	# hrs/ week — spouse
Anne	52	Married	26	34	1	17	\$100,000+	Caucasian	20	56	MS	Consulting manager	40+
Beth	45	Married	15	32	3	6, 9, 12	\$100,000+	Caucasian	20	44	JD	Attorney	40+
Carrie	43	Married	18	27	2	15, 17	\$100,000+	Caucasian	40+	53	JD	University professor	40+
Diane	51	Married	29	42	1	9	\$100,000+	Caucasian	35+	50	BA	Insurance adjuster	35+
Ellen	44	Married	12	34	2	6, 10	\$100,000+	Caucasian	40	43	JD	Attorney	30
Frances	33	Married	4	31	1	1	\$100,000+	Hispanic	37.5	33	BA	Manufacturing supervisor	47.5
Ginny	43	Married	13	31	2	9, 12	\$60,000-100,000	Caucasian	40	50	MLS	Editor/unemployed currently	0
Helen	50	Married	15	36	3	13, 15, 20	\$100,000+	Caucasian	20	52	JD	Attorney	20+
Isabel	57	Married	31	26	4	17, 25, 29, 30	\$100,000+	Caucasian	0	55	BA	Business-finance/retired	0
Jackie	56	Divorced	Mar. 8 Div. 20	32	2	22, 24	\$60-100,000	Caucasian	40	57	PhD	Engineer	20+