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WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY
AS STRUCTURES OF RULES FOR BEHAVIOR

A Dissertation Presented

By

MARY L. BLANKENSHIP

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1983

Education

Mary L. Blankenship

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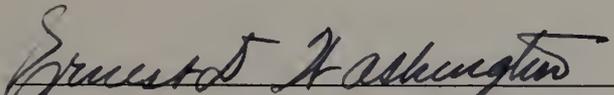
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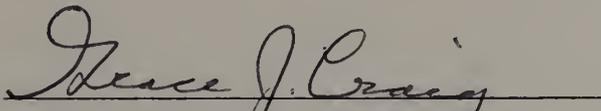
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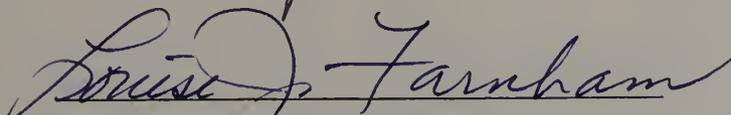
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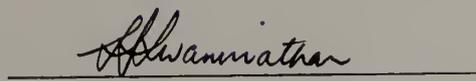
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Dedicated to

LAUREN

my daughter

with the hope that awareness
and understanding will make
the choices easier for her

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In any undertaking of this size, there are always people who, through their support or direct assistance, have played an important part in the process.

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assistance, intellectual expertise, and the difficult questions when needed, he also shared a vision of the world and helped me find the door to the future. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

Women's Perceptions of Femininity and Masculinity

As Structures of Rules for Behavior

(September 1983)

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This study was designed to begin to define masculinity and femininity as structures of rules for behavior. A contrast was presented between the traditional psychometric approaches to defining femininity and masculinity and a sex-roles-as-rules model, based on a phenomenological approach. The study sought to compile a list of rules for both women and men based on gender (the social norm), a comparison of personal norms to the social norms identified in the study, an identification of the rules that are perceived to be unbreakable, and the costs to the individual of choosing not to obey a rule.

The sample for this study was made up of 48 women in the Amherst, Massachusetts, area, divided into four age groups of 12 each (junior high, high school, college seniors, 35-40 year old women). Data consisted of interviews with each subject to identify from their own experiences the rules that defined masculine and feminine behavior.

The interviews resulted in a list of 94 rules describing the expected behavior of both men and women in the dimensions of professional

behavior, social behavior, physical appearance, family relationships, intellectual and academic behavior, and personality characteristics.

The similarities across the age groups were more compelling than the differences. There was a high level of agreement across all the age groups as to the content of the rules. The age differences reflected the realities of the settings in which each group was involved. It was found that the rules for behavior defined by gender concerned the minutiae of day-to-day life, the small facts of each person's reality, and tended to describe the role for women in particular in negative terms, rules that restrict rather than allow.

It was concluded that in describing the changes across ages in the perceptions of the social world, the context of the behavior should be carefully considered. It is suggested that development is an interaction between age/stage changes and contextual changes.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

That men and women are different from each other is an indisputable fact. There is no culture anywhere in the world that does not believe in major differences nor is there one that has not institutionalized sex roles. In the division of labor, in dress, manners, in social and religious functions, differentiation occurs and both sexes are expected to conform to the assigned role (Mead, 1963). No culture has said that male and female behavior is merely human behavior. Just exactly what the differences are and how they originate, however, have been the source of considerable controversy.

Once past the biological fact of gender, any clear understanding of masculinity and femininity, of the personalities and behavior that differentiate the male and female roles, becomes much more difficult. Freud expressed this difficulty in Three Essays on Sexuality:

It is essential to understand clearly that the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine', whose meaning seem so unambiguous to ordinary people, are among the most confused that occur in science. It is possible to distinguish at least three uses. 'Masculine' and 'feminine' are used sometimes in the sense of activity and passivity, sometimes in a biological, and sometimes in a sociological

sense. ... The third, or sociological, meaning receives connotation from the observation of actually existing masculine and feminine individuals. (1905/1974(b), p. 219-220)

It is this third meaning, the sociological one, that social scientists since Freud have attempted to explain. The lack of success at arriving at any clear definition is described some seventy years later by Constantinople: "We are dealing with an abstract concept that seems to summarize some dimension of reality important to many people, but we are hard pressed to come up with any clear definition of the concept or indeed any unexceptionable criteria for its measurement." (1973, p. 390)

Perhaps one difficulty in attempting to describe masculinity and femininity stems from the theoretical bases on which most measures are founded. Cowan and Stewart (1977) found that "the perception of the stereotypic male and female appear to be determined to a large extent by the instrument used to structure that expressed perception." (p. 214) All such attempts at operationally defining masculinity and/or femininity appear to be limited by the instrument used, the choice of which reflects directly the theoretical perspective of the researcher/definer.

The most widely used approach to a definition of masculinity and femininity has emphasized a psychometric approach, one traditionally based on a concept of M-F as a single, bipolar trait. An alternative to this approach is a phenomenological one, the concept of sex-roles

as structures of rules for both behavior and personality traits, a conceptualization that owes its perspective to both sociology's role theory and to the philosophical perspective of rules governing man's behavior. Each of these approaches will be discussed briefly here and more thoroughly in chapter two.

Traditionally, psychological masculinity and femininity have been defined as a single psychological trait, unidimensional in nature and bi-polar in operation. The bipolarity of masculinity and femininity is reflected in the psychometric organization of traits, attitudes and interests along sex-typed lines that underlies most measures of masculinity-femininity (M-F). Accompanying this theoretical perspective is the view of sex-role development, the development of masculinity and femininity, as appropriate sex role identification, with the aim of development being an increased learning of the attitudes and behaviors typed by the culture as sex-appropriate. Adjustment is therefore seen as directly related to an adherence to the assigned role.

Pleck (1975) has described the disenchantment of both researchers and psychometricians with this perspective and the instruments that come from it. He identifies psychometric criticism as coming from such points as a lack of convergent validity of the available M-F scales and the failure of factor analysis between test items to produce even a single common factor.

Constantinople (1973) describes this problem as resulting from the fact that different investigators have chosen to emphasize different dimensions of masculinity/femininity. Pleck's critique points out that to view M-F as a psychological trait is to ignore the variability of M-F scores by social class and education. The culture-bound nature of masculinity and femininity has been emphasized particularly by social scientists who study sex roles in the black community. (Hannerz, 1970; Hare, 1971; Vontress, 1971) These same issues are still unresolved, either theoretically or empirically.

Pleck (1975) emphasizes the development of sex roles, but the paradigm he offers for sex role development indicates an alternative theoretical perspective for viewing the construct of masculinity and femininity. It does not view M-F as a single trait nor does it make predictions about the relationship between sex-typed behavior and adjustment.

Pleck suggests a paradigm for explaining the development of masculinity/femininity which he describes as a symbol-learning process likened to theories of language acquisition. He describes sex role differentiation as a highly symbolic system which groups behaviors into categories with rules for their combination (p. 174). He suggests a sex role learning device similar to Chomsky's language acquisition apparatus to explain how a child takes the myriad of information constantly being presented to him and constructs a "syntax" of sex role, a system of rules that explain appropriate behavior.

Constantinople (1979) has further suggested an expansion of Pleck's paradigm from rules comparable to language rule learning to rules in general with the advantage that the process would depend on inborn cognitive capabilities but would also allow for affective learning.

Both Pleck and Constantinople emphasize acquisition - how the individual child learns the role that accompanies being male or female. Constantinople, in particular, focuses on the early years, even though she does give credence to the concept of life-span development. However, the model of sex-roles as a structure of rules can be expanded to go beyond early acquisition to provide a better description of masculinity and femininity than is currently possible with other paradigms.

Both Pleck and Constantinople describe the advantages of the sex-roles-as-rules model for explaining sex role acquisition. Much the same can be said for the advantages to using this model to redefine the concepts of masculinity and femininity. It allows for cultural differences in role behavior not allowed by current M-F scales. It places the child/individual at the center of the process as the constructor of the rules, providing for individual variations in both performance of the role behaviors and the rate of learning. It also allows for the situation-specific nature of much sex-role behavior. The conception of sex-roles-as-rules can explain what Pleck calls "sex role drift", the change over time in the expected role

behavior. By emphasizing the rule learning nature of sex roles, development can also be viewed not as a product with an end-point, but as a life-span sequence of learning and reassessment.

To look at sex roles as rules provides a further advantage. It allows for a separation of the individual's own attitudes towards role behavior, what Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) have called personal norms, from the role expectations of the culture at large, or the social norms. It also makes possible an analysis of the methods by which society maintains the role, particularly in adults.

Statement of the Problem

The basic aim of this study was to begin to operationalize the concept of sex-roles-as-rules, to identify the rules that underlie the constructs of masculinity and femininity.

The primary question therefore was:

1. What are the rules for being a woman? What are the rules for being a man?

The emphasis in this study is on the feminine role. All subjects were female. However, since the enactment of one person's role affects the roles of all others around him/her, a second question eliciting the rules for men also defines the masculine role as it is perceived by women. This question defines the social norms, the cultural expectations for behavior in the individual based on his/her gender.

Once this initial question was clarified, other questions were examined.

2. Do personal norms agree with the social norms identified? That is, does the individual perceive the cultural rules as important to her?

3. What are the rules that cannot be broken? (Where is the line drawn for allowable non-conformity?)

4. What are the costs of breaking the rule? This question explores the results of a choice not to conform to the social norm.

5. How does the perception of both the social norms and the need for conformity change with age?

C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The review of the literature in this chapter will be in two parts. Part I will trace the construct of masculinity/femininity from a single, unidimensional trait and its corresponding attempts at measurement and description through to the concept of sex role transcendence, described by Hefner, et al. Part II will discuss the theoretical framework of roles-as-rules described in Chapter I and will include pertinent literature in role theory as well as an explanation of the concept of rules as it applies to role theory.

M-F as a Single, Bipolar Psychological Trait

The earliest measures of masculinity and femininity (M-F) were based on three assumptions: (1) that M-F is best defined in terms of sex differences in item response; (2) that it is a single bipolar dimension ranging from extreme masculinity at one end to extreme femininity at the other; and (3) that it is unidimensional in nature and can be measured by a single score. (Constantinople, 1973) In what appears to be a pivotal article, Constantinople reviewed the measures in major use at that time, emphasizing particularly the theoretical perspective of bipolarity. She reviewed the Termen and Miles Attitude - Interest Test (M-F Test), the Strong Masculinity - Femininity (M-F) Scale of the Vocational Interest Blank, the Minnesota

Multiphasic Personality Inventory Masculinity-Femininity Scale, Gough's Femininity Scale and Guilford's Masculinity Scale. In each of these measures, a dichotomous variable, sex, is used to validate a continuous one, masculinity - femininity. Also apparent in these measures is the tendency to define M as not - F and not - M as F. This bipolarity is apparent in most sex role research, even though attempts have been made by researchers since 1973 to define masculinity - femininity in other ways.

Weaknesses in this bipolar conception are obvious. Polarities in a continuous variable represent a value - a positive (valued) pole and a negative (non-valued, or lesser valued at best) pole. It is consistently masculinity that is synonymous with the positive attributes and femininity with the negative attributes. This is strikingly obvious when you look carefully at the scoring of measures of masculinity-femininity where a score of plus is given to a traditionally masculine response and a score of minus to a traditionally feminine response (see Terman and Miles: Attitude Interest Analysis Test and the later Bem Sex Role Inventory, 1974, for examples).

This bipolarity of the concept of masculinity - femininity in scientific research reflects a tendency in the general public to define as well as value the roles in the same manner. Foushee, Helmreich and Spence (1979), in an empirical study designed to assess whether the attributes of M - F are viewed as bipolar (end points of a single dimension) or dualistic (separate dimensions that vary

across individuals relatively independent of each other) found that essentially there is a prevalent belief that masculine and feminine attributes are negatively correlated. If an individual were asked about the absence of attributes, he or she assumed the presence of reciprocal attributes.

The cultural value placed on masculinity is apparent in so seemingly insignificant a matter as the dictionary definition of masculine and feminine. The Oxford English Dictionary, in defining masculine, gives as a fifth definition "having the appropriate excellence of the male sex; manly, virile; vigorous, powerful" and, as a sixth: "Of a woman...having the capacities, manners, appearances, or taste appropriate to the male sex." (p. 198) The equivalent definitions of feminine are: "characteristic of, peculiar or proper to women, such as a woman is capable of" and "depreciately: Womanish, effeminate." (p. 152) Nowhere is there a corresponding definition of masculine that reflects the valuing of the verb form of feminine: "to make womanly, weaken (emphasis mine)." The point is, although science would remain free of obvious cultural bias, to define masculinity and femininity as a plus - minus scaling of attributes fails to avoid such valuing.

What exactly is being measured? Are the results obtained from such measures a true picture of the concepts of masculinity and femininity?

Constantinople (1973) suggests that it is only the sex differences in response that are actually being measured, and that the theoretical explication that would tie sex differences to the concept of masculinity and femininity is absent.

Her further suggestion that masculinity and femininity should be considered, not as bipolar attributes but as independent dimensions, was accompanied by an outpouring of attempts by researchers to re-define masculinity and femininity along these lines. This dualistic conception, that masculinity and femininity are separate dimensions that vary across individuals relatively independently of each other, was based on earlier theoretical positions of Bakan (1966) and Parsons and Bales (1955). Bakan's perspective was that men are basically agentic in nature, characterized as assertive and independent, while women are basically communal in nature, exemplified by their tendency to identify with others. Parsons and Bales' delineation of males and females as instrumental and expressive corresponds to the agentic and communal perspective of Bakan. Both theorists describe masculinity and femininity as separate and independent constructs. The self-report instruments developed after 1973 supported this contention (Bem Sex Role Inventory, Bem, 1974; Personal Attributes Questionnaire, Spence, et al., 1974).

Development of Concept of Androgyny

Redefinition of masculinity and femininity took the direction of the conceptualization of androgyny, first operationalized (1974) by Bem and further developed by Block (1973), Heilbrun (1976), Spence and Helmreich (1978), and Berzins and Welling (1974). Psychological androgyny presupposes that masculinity and femininity are two orthogonal, unipolar dimensions. Bem (1974) asserted that the dimensions of masculinity and femininity are empirically as well as logically independent, and that the androgynous individual has a combination of masculine and feminine qualities. Central to the construct of androgyny is that it is associated with better psychological adjustment than is possible if an individual is strongly sex-typed, sex-reversed, or undifferentiated.

Bem's original instrument, The Bem Sex Role Inventory [BSRI], has undergone change more in the method used for statistically determining androgyny than in its theoretical base. As originally operationalized, psychological androgyny was defined as the statistically significant difference between masculine and feminine scale scores, tested by use of a t test, and rating the individual as androgynous, masculine, feminine, or undifferentiated (Bem, 1974). The inventory consists of a self-rated, 7 - point scaled (1, never to almost never, to 7, always or almost always true) response to 20 items judged to be more desirable for a man than for a woman, and 20 items judged to be more

desirable for a woman than a man. Strahan (1975) challenged the statistical validity of the BSRI's use of the t test and, following this critique and similar criticism by Spence and the publication of the Spence Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, et al., 1974), Bem redefined androgyny to include only those rating high on both the masculine and feminine scales and to statistically classify differing responses as significant by means of a multiple regression technique, rather than a t test.

Other androgyny scales, the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence, et al., 1974), the Personality Research Form ANDRO Scale (Berzins, et al., 1978), and the Adjective Check-List M - F Scale (Heilbrun, 1976) are similar in their assessment of androgynous individuals as high masculine and high feminine and their emphasis on the independence of the constructs of masculinity and femininity.

Early research supported the contention that the androgynous individual was psychologically more flexible and more ready to meet the demands of society (Bem, 1975; Bem and Lenney, 1976; Bem, Martyna, and Watson, 1976). However, later research failed to replicate these findings. Heilbrun and Pittman (1979) found that androgyny was good for females but not males in lab situations, for males but not females in self-ratings. Other studies found superior adjustment associated with androgynous versus traditional sex-typing only among women, not men (Silvern and Ryan, 1979). It is masculinity that is associated with adjustment, whether in males or females. Other

studies support this finding (Deutsch and Gilbert, 1976; Heilbrun, 1976; Jones, Chernovetz, and Hansson, 1978; Ginn, 1975). Kenworthy (1979) states that masculine characteristics contribute more to measures of self-esteem, indicating again that masculinity has more functional value. Gauthier and Kjervik (1982) echoed this conclusion in the most recent research to date. "Thus, the most important issue becomes not whether one has internalized the traits and behaviors appropriate to one's own gender, but the extent to which one has assimilated the tendencies most highly valued by society" (Jones, Chernovetz, and Hansson, 1978, p. 311).

Guillet (1980) summed up the research in androgyny by stating: "To date, the construct of psychological androgyny has not been clearly established to be a more powerful, predictive tool than the more fully validated construct of masculinity-femininity, nor has its relationship to other psychological constructs describing adaptive social functioning been clarified" (p. 407). She goes on to suggest that the Bem SRI in particular lacks the requisite psychometric properties to serve as a reliable quantitative gauge of sex role attributes. Downing (1979) and Murray (1976) support this conclusion.

Other than the problems with validity discussed above, it must also be noted that all the androgyny scales depend upon stereotypic statements about male and female behavior for their definition, not on any actual differences. Therefore, it is obvious that the concept of androgyny, although philosophically attractive, is no solution

to the empirical problems currently inherent in all other M - F scales.

Sex Role Transcendence

The latest theoretical construct related to the definition of masculinity and femininity is that of sex role transcendence. Hefner, Rebecca and Oleshansky (1975) argue that the ideal state in sex role development is not the combination of traits seen in androgyny, but a stage in which masculinity and femininity are "transcended" as ways of organizing and experiencing psychological traits. They suggest that sex role development consists of three stages:

Stage I: an undifferentiated conception of sex-roles

Stage II: a polarized, oppositional view of sex-roles

Stage III: a dynamic transcendence in which behaviors and life-styles are selected that are appropriate and adaptive in that situation.

The authors suggest that Stage II is the stage at which most people [and, it might be noted, most instruments defining sex roles] operate, with Stage III the desired goal. They see transcendence as implying flexibility, plurality, personal choice and the development of new possibilities.

Sex role transcendence is a concept that has not yet been tested empirically. Whether or not it is possible to operationalize transcendence so that it can be tested and proven to be both possible and

more desirable than the standard definitions of masculinity and femininity is yet to be seen. Current research already cited does not suggest a positive future for research on transcendence. Theoretically, the idea of individuals transcending traditional roles sounds only as good as the original rhetoric of androgyny.

To return to the statement by Freud on the concepts of masculine and feminine in the introductory chapter:

The third, or sociological meaning receives its connotation from the observation of actually existing masculine and feminine individuals. Such observation shows that in human beings pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found in a psychological or a biological sense. Every individual, on the contrary, displays a mixture of the characteristics belonging to his own and to the opposite sex; and he shows a combination of activity and passivity whether or not these last character traits tally with his biological one (1905/1974(b), p. 219-220).

Why did it take so long in sex-role research to understand this? And why is it that we have not yet come to any understanding of what is actually meant by masculinity and femininity? Quite possibly the fault lies with the method used to assess masculinity and femininity. As pointed out in the opening paragraphs, the method and instrument reflect the theoretical bias of the researcher; it is therefore with theory that any new assessment of masculinity and femininity must begin.

Sex Roles as Rules

At the moment of birth, a child acquires the gender label of male or female that immediately establishes the framework within which she will be perceived. By this initial labeling she also acquires a given position in the social structure and inherits a vast spectrum of rules that accompany that position.

However, being born male or female does not guarantee an acceptance of these rules nor an automatic development as masculine or feminine. A child is categorized as male or female by knowledge of his or her genital makeup. This categorization is the basis for the child's gender identity and is, except in very rare cases, irreversible. Masculinity and femininity, the individual's sex role, is, on the other hand, judged in terms of a set of cultural norms and standards. Linton (1936) was the first to identify role as a segment of culture. This fact of the culture-bound nature of sex roles has often been overlooked. Masculinity and femininity, being culturally defined, are therefore not fixed and arbitrary states but are variable and can be functional at many different levels.

Becoming masculine or feminine is accepting the status imposed by virtue of gender label and acquiring the attributes of the role that accompanies it. A role is a structured set of rules for behavior that accompany a given position in a social structure. Thomlinson (1965) defines this position as a status and a role as the functional

aspect of status, or what a person is expected to do. Both definitions establish the criteria for understanding the meaning of sex role. A sex role is the core of expectations of a person based on her gender and established as appropriate for her by her own culture, given structure by the individual and organized into rules for both overt behavior and personality characteristics. Therefore the construct of sex-role encompasses two elements, expectations of behavior and the enactment of the role, or the behavior itself. Role expectations may be actions or qualities (Sarbin, 1968), expectations for either behavior or personality.

Roles as such serve a function for the individual and for the society or they would not be maintained. Interpersonal relationships within a social structure are controlled and directed by the use of norms implicit in role definition. Sex roles therefore serve to define a person's place in the social order. In order to function within any society, an individual must have some knowledge of what the society defines as appropriate for her sex. A person cannot enact a role without the necessary rules, the script that establishes the limits of her society's expectations. If masculinity and femininity are defined as a continuum describing the limits of acceptable behaviors to be tolerated by the society, then there would be an overlap at certain times and in certain situations where acceptable behavior would be identical for both male and female.

Expectations for behavior would, therefore, be situation specific. That is, the degree of exhibition of a single trait would be relative to the particular situation. An example of this would be Freud's categorization of passivity as feminine. A female is expected to show more passivity in a social situation with males than in an academic setting where aggressiveness is expected and encouraged for developing competence.

Role-related behavior never exists in isolation but is always in interaction with the behaviors of other people who are fulfilling their own roles, as well as in interaction with other roles of the actor. Society's structuring of one person's role necessitates the structuring of the opposite role, by relationship if nothing else. Any change in the enactment of one person's role therefore affects the roles of those around her.

Roles tend to stabilize over time as actors agree on behaviors. There is then a tendency for "stabilized roles to be assigned the character of legitimate expectations, implying that deviation is a break of rules or a violation of trust" (Turner, 1968, p. 554). Once stabilized, role structure tends to persist, even with a change of actors.

The development of personality and the construction of rules for behavior is at all times a distinctly personal and individual process. Therefore the rules themselves may vary from one individual to another, based on that person's organization of her own unique experience. It

is not consensual beliefs, or aggregate responses that are the most important in determining individual behavior, but the individual's perception of the rules themselves. In this way the structure of rules by which one operates must be viewed as a cognitive construct, with the individual actively involved in the construction of the rules. This construction begins from the moment the child is able to see herself as female and to begin accepting the label and the identity that accompanies it.

As an active constructor, the child is involved in an act of creation. She must create a system of rules that will allow her to function meaningfully in a social context. Therefore she observes her social and physical world and interacts with it to determine what the basis for the rules are. While doing so she searches for the pattern behind human behavior and seeks to bring order to the myriad of input she receives. Motivation for role construction is the need in the child for structure and organization of this input as a prerequisite for competence.

This interactional framework is seen by Sarbin (1954) as congruent with role theory because the actor is at all times reading cues from the "audience" as well as the other players due to the fact that any judgment as to a role's effectiveness is only a "probabilistic inference".

It is this concept of sex roles as rules and the individual as central to the process that provides a framework for defining

masculinity and femininity. Von Wright (1971) describes rules as of two main types, definitive rules which define a practice, and prescriptive rules, which order, enjoin, or permit. It is this latter that identifies the rules with which we are concerned. These are the rules that regulate conduct, that tell us how things ought to be done.

It is important to note that rules do not necessarily restrict. They also allow. Knowledge of the rules allows an individual to be socially adept and to improve one's position in any social structure.

These rules are the norms for behavior, both personal and social norms. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) have differentiated between personal and social norms in their research on intentions: the intention to perform any given act is a joint function of an attitude toward performing the act (personal norms) and of beliefs about what others expect him or her to do in that situation (social norms).

Steven Davis further explains rules and the possibility of identification of the rules (norms): "... a necessary condition for someone to know the rules which govern some activity is that he must be able to say or show us what the rules are ... we can say that someone follows a rule only if he knows what the rule is and can tell us what it is ..." (78-80). Rules can be identified and clarified even if not complied with by the individual. It thus becomes possible to identify the rules that regulate conduct, in this case the rules that define the roles as masculine or feminine, by asking individuals to verbally identify the rules that govern their behavior as men and women.

Sarbin and Jones (1955) talk of the investigation of role expectations as being typically role inventories to name actions and adjective check lists and rating scales, designed to identify qualities expected. The majority of sex role research is still based on these same check lists. (See the Bem Sex Role Inventory, Bem, 1974, and Broverman's Sex Role Questionnaire, Broverman, et al., 1981, for examples.) None of the currently available sex role inventories can begin to assess masculinity and/or femininity from the above conceptualization of sex-roles-as-rules.

Summary and Nature of the Problem Addressed

The review of the literature above points to limitations in the way masculinity and femininity have been conceptualized and operationalized. The sex-roles-as-rules model suggests an alternative to the traditional paradigms for both describing sex-role development and defining masculinity and femininity.

It is femininity in particular that has consistently been the most difficult to define. Recent research on sex-role stereotyping (Ashmore, 1981) concluded that the question "What is a female?" was extremely difficult for college students to answer. Identifying masculine traits and behavior, on the other hand, was apparently easy, and agreement was high.

This difficulty is partly due to the fact that theories of development are consistently masculine. Piaget equated male development

with human development. Kohlberg (1966) made the same mistake. He acknowledged the fact that his theory of sex role development broke down when it was used to describe females, but dismissed this problem lightly, and went on to describe males only. Kohlberg and Ullian's (1974) report on the stages of conceptualization of sex roles based theoretically on Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory and empirically on Ullian's research even ignored the female data in defining the stages supposedly descriptive of both sexes. Erikson's theory of development charts only male development, although he acknowledges the discrepancy.

Even Freud admits that his theory of development is masculine. In describing the feminine as masochistic, vain, jealous, passive, with a limited sense of justice, he goes on to say:

That is all I had to say to you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. ... If you want to know more about femininity, inquire from your own experiences of life, or turn to the poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information (1905/1974(a), p. 135).

It is therefore to women themselves that research should turn to ask them to define femininity (and masculinity) in terms of the sex-roles-as-rules model described above. Freud's suggestion is appropriate at this stage in sex role research: to inquire from women's

experience of life to systematically provide "deeper and more coherent information" as to the nature of the feminine role.

This study began to explore the concept of social rules that define sex roles. Because there has been no previous research on this model and the model itself, until now, has only been tentatively conceptualized, there is no indication from the literature that points to specific hypotheses. This study was, of necessity, both exploratory and descriptive. The research questions were:

1. What are the rules that define the roles of male and female?

This question defines the social norms, the perceived cultural expectations for behavior based on gender.

2. Do personal norms agree with the social norms identified?
3. What are the rules that cannot be broken?
4. What are the costs of breaking the rules?
5. How does the perception of both the social norms and the need for conformity change with age?

C H A P T E R I I I

METHODOLOGY

Design of the Study

The theoretical basis for the study and the questions outlined above indicate the need for a phenomenological study, one that has as its direction a search for the reality of people's lives. It is the actual rules within which women perceive themselves to be operating that become important. Since the literature reports no recent research that explicitly defines sex roles as structures of rules, the study is both exploratory and descriptive in nature.

The Sample

Subjects for this study were all females, 48 in number, divided equally among the following age groups:

1. 12 Junior High students (12 - 13 years old)
2. 12 Senior High students (15 - 16 years old)
3. 12 Senior college students (21 - 22 years old)
4. 12 adult women (35 - 40 years old)

These age groups were selected because each represents a transition period. Groups I and II represent, respectively, the early years in Junior High and Senior High Schools. The senior year in college is a transition year because it requires a woman to consider the potential that is or is not available to her as she moves (or chooses not

to move) into the occupation for which she has prepared. The age 35 - 40 was selected to represent the age in a woman's development at which most women begin to look carefully at the choices they have made and decide what future course they would like to plot. It is the researcher's belief that transition periods involve a time of stress that requires an individual to be able to identify the rules and adapt their structure of rules to reflect the new situation.

Pleck (1975) suggests that rule learning and adherence to the rules is important in phase two of a three phase theory of role development. Although he does not speculate as to the age this occurs, Ullian's developmental research (1976) identifies age 12 as the point at which the child recognizes that masculinity and femininity are not of biological necessity but result from social convention. Turiel (1978) has also identified age 11 as the beginning of the conception of these social conventions as part of a rule system. Therefore, no one younger than twelve was included for this study. Limitations of time prevented including other groups.

Other than age, variables controlled for were race, social class, marital status of the individual or, in the case of the first two groups, the marital status of the parents. That is, subjects were white, middle class females residing in the Amherst, Massachusetts, area whose permanent residence is with the natural parents or, in the case of the oldest group, married to and living with the first husband.

Other demographic factors were identified in a personal information questionnaire (for form, see Appendix 4).

Each of the above factors was included to control as far as possible for cultural differences. Prior research has shown that ratings of masculinity and femininity vary by race and social class. All of the subjects in groups I and II were born in New England; the remainder had all spent major portions of their lives in New England. This helped to control for regional/cultural differences that might otherwise affect rule formation.

The majority of the mothers of the first three age groups (those not married and still living with their parents) were employed. Only one of the junior high and two of the high school students had the traditional pattern of mother/housewife. The college seniors reflected a range of majors. Other than education and/or psychology majors, there were subjects whose major was social thought and political economy, music, physiology, biochemistry and movement therapy. The 35 - 40 year old group was all employed with the exception of one who was a full-time student (in geophysics).

All subjects were volunteers and were sought through recommendations by personal contacts of the researcher in the Amherst area.

Protection of the Subjects

Each subject was given a copy of the consent form (see Appendix 1) that explained the rights and responsibilities of both researcher and

subject. Any questions that arose were answered before signing. Parents' signatures were sought for all subjects in groups 1 and 2 (pre-college) giving permission for their daughter to participate. This form guaranteed anonymity to each participant.

Other than this form, all material was coded for identification purposes. Tapes, personal data questionnaires, and transcripts of tapes were coded with a number that denoted the group of which that subject was a member and a personal identification number. (Example: the first 12 year old was given the number 101, one to represent the first age group, and 01 to represent that particular subject. Therefore identification numbers went from 101 to 412.) This identification number was also placed on the permission sheet to insure no loss or confusion of data and permission slips were filed separately. After transcription, all tapes were erased. Permission slips were filed separately from all other data. This process guaranteed anonymity for each subject involved in the research.

Procedure

The research consisted of one interview with each subject, approximately two hours long. The interviews were taped and transcribed for later analysis. Each subject was introduced to the idea of sex-roles as a structure of rules by the researcher. A brief explanation was found to be necessary during initial piloting to prevent confusion on the part of the subject. The researcher discussed the

idea that there are certain rules for both behavior and personality that are based on sex, that there are rules for being a girl or a woman. It was explained that some rules are stated explicitly, while others must be inferred from the behavior of people around you. An example of an explicitly stated rule was given from the researcher's own experience: "Girls don't spit." In the attempt not to prejudice results, no other examples were given.

An interview guide was then used to structure the interviews of which the first three questions and instructions are listed below. (The complete list of questions asked during the interview can be found in the appendix.)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Procedure for initial questions: Answers to question 1 will be recorded by the interviewer on the accompanying sheet(s). After approval as to accuracy and any needed clarification by the subject, S will use these sheets to respond to question 2.

1. What are the rules for being a girl(woman)? What are the rules for being a boy(man)?
2. Using the response sheet, rate each of the rules you stated as to their importance. (1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not so important)
3. What are the rules that you can't break? What happens to you if you break those rules? (Specific rules from the first part of this question.)

It will be noted that question one has two parts. Once the rules for women were identified, the researcher explained that one way of

describing any role is to describe a complementary role for no one operates in isolation. Part two, what are the rules for being a man, was then asked. It was stressed that the rules to be identified were the social roles, not their own opinions about what should be. Subjects were told they would be given a second question that would ask them for their own opinions as to the importance of the particular rules they listed. This was found during piloting to prevent confusion and to assure the subjects that this opportunity would be available.

A response sheet was provided for questions 1, 2, and 3. A portion of the sheet is shown below. A fully copy of the response sheet can be found in the appendix. This sheet was found in the pilot interviews to facilitate the process, providing a needed structure for this part of the interview.

RESPONSE SHEET

Questions 1 and 2: What are the rules for being a girl/boy/woman/man? (Circle appropriate question.) Rate each rule on a scale of 1 to 3: 1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not so important.

	1 very important	2 important	3 not so important
1. _____ _____	1	2	3
2. _____ _____	1	2	3

The researcher recorded a brief statement of each rule as it was identified by the individual subject, using as many sheets as were necessary to complete the list. The category of the rules was identified by circling man/woman on the sheet.

After the answers were complete and checked for accuracy by the subject, the subject was given the sheets and asked to respond to question 2. ("Using the response sheet, rate each of the rules you stated as to their importance. 1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not so important.") At this point it was stressed that question 2 was asking for their own personal beliefs as to that social rule's importance in defining masculinity and femininity. The first response reflects social norms, the rating of importance, personal norm.

Question 3 is the explication of allowable non-conformity. ("What are the rules that you can't break? What happens to you if you break those rules?") Question 3 was discussed by the researcher prior to being asked. Each subject was told that some rules were breakable, that although they were operable, breaking the rule would cause only minor problems. Other rules could be considered unbreakable. These are the rules that, if not obeyed, result in definite consequences for the individual who chooses not to obey the rule. The subject was asked to respond to the first part by placing a check to the left of the rule. Part two of the question (What happens to you if you break the rule?) was taped and transcribed after the interview.

Questions 1, 2, and 3 comprised the bulk of the interview. Questions 4 - 15 took approximately 20 minutes to answer and were also taped for later transcription. Because of the monumental amount of data that resulted from the completed interviews, only questions 1, 2, and 3 were analyzed for this study.

Analysis of Data

In qualitative research of this type, the researcher begins with the specific and moves to the general; that is, data must be collected before specific hypotheses can be drawn. It is an examination of data to identify the patterns that is important (Denzin, 1970), in this case the patterns that exist in the individual perception of the rules and between individuals. Patton (1980) describes the role of the researcher as one of bringing order to the data, sorting it into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. This direction is particularly appropriate in an exploratory study of this nature. The process of data analysis followed that outlined by Bogdan and Taylor (1975).

Analysis took the following steps:

Step 1: Once the data were collected, analysis was begun with the response sheets for question 1. Response sheets were separated into individual responses and sorted into categories.

Step 2: Each response was listed separately and checked for frequency. Responses that, although stated differently, said the

same thing were combined to become one item.

Step 3: The list was then reduced by eliminating any response not appearing a minimum of five times. Any item appearing less than 5 times out of a possible 48 times was considered to be personal beliefs only. Many of these responses reflected very individual circumstances. For example, several of the subjects in group II were involved with school music programs. They listed rules for the behavior of both males and females in musical activity. This same interest and involvement in music was not apparent in the responses of the majority of the subjects. None of the individual rules for behavior pertaining to musical activities appeared with enough frequency to be included on the final list of rules.

Step 4: This reduction of items resulted in a list of 94 rules, 56 for women and 38 for men, divided into six categories each; i.e., rules for (1) professional behavior, (2) social behavior, (3) physical appearance, (4) family relationships, (5) intellectual and academic behavior, and (6) personality characteristics. It must be stressed that both the categories and the rules themselves were empirically driven. That is, they came from the raw data themselves, and were not presented to the subjects for consideration in this form. It was found in the process of sorting and classification that these categories would include all the rules. This classification system and the reduction of data were

carefully checked by a second person not involved in the research.

Step 5: This list of 94 rules was then taken back to the original data and each subject was scored as to whether or not she had included that rule in her own list. Any rules not on the reduced list were not scored and are therefore not included in the data discussed in Chapter IV. If a single individual listed the same rule from the final list more than one time, only one rule was counted. This method of scoring meant that 1,335 of the 1,902 original responses were included in the final list of 94 rules. That is, 70% of the total number of responses were consensual beliefs of this group of subjects on the social norms within which they perceived themselves to be operating. Each age group was approximately equally represented in the final list. That is, each group has approximately the same percentage of its responses included in the final list. (Group I, 70%; Group II, 72%; Group III, 70%; Group IV, 70%.)

Step 6: After being scored for response, the raw data were analyzed to include a score for each individual on the rating of each rule (Question 2) and as to whether or not each subject perceived the rule as breakable or unbreakable. Part two of question 3 was not converted to a score because of the difficulty in quantifying the responses.

This coding process was an attempt to quantify, wherever possible, qualitative data. Because all of the analysis was done by the researcher, a reliability check was carried out with an outside coder. Reliability was found to be a function of the complexity of each individual's responses. The researcher had the benefit of having interviewed each subject and had at hand the typescript of each subject's interview. If there was any uncertainty as to exactly what that subject had meant by any individual statement, the researcher could pull from this supporting information. The second coder was given only the response sheets to work from. The individuality of the responses meant that subjective judgments had to be made. The average score of reliability was 81%. The highest reliability was 94%, lowest 72%.

Step 7: Parametric statistics could not be used for analysis due to the nature of the data. The open-ended nature of the interview suggests instead a descriptive analysis. The total number of responses was obtained for each rule, the rating of each rule, and the perception of its breakability. Summary tables were then derived for each rule by group (Question 1), for the rating of each rule by group (Question 2), and the perception of whether that rule was unbreakable by group (Question 3). Tables were also prepared to group rules by categories. All other data were used as supplementary to the final list of rules.

C H A P T E R I V
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to begin to identify the rules that underlie the constructs of femininity and masculinity. It must be remembered that the structure of the interview elicited first social norms, beliefs about what society expects of both women and men in given situations (question 1), tempered by personal norms, the individual's attitude toward the expected behavior (question 2). It must also be remembered that the subjects were all female, so that it is both the male and female roles as they are perceived by women that is considered.

The research questions were:

1. What are the rules for being a woman (a man)?
2. Do personal norms agree with the social norms identified?
3. What are the rules that cannot be broken (where is the line drawn for allowable non-conformity)?
4. What are the costs of not conforming to the rules?
5. How does the perception of both the social norms (the rules) and the need for conformity to the norms change with age?

This chapter will discuss each question separately. Question number 5, the differences by age, will first be included as they pertain to the previous questions, then summarized by age/group.

Identification of the Rules

The method described in Chapter III resulted in a listing of 94 rules, 56 for women and 38 for men, which were divided into 6 categories or dimensions each, i.e., rules for (1) professional behavior, (2) social behavior, (3) physical appearance, (4) family relationships, (5) intellectual and academic behavior, and (6) personality characteristics. For the sake of clarity, the list for women will be discussed separately from the list for men.

Rules for Women

When asked to identify the rules for women, many of the subjects expressed the belief that the rules were changing, that the role they were expected to fill was very different from that of their mothers. This change was not, however, seen to be always a positive aspect. This conflict is perhaps best exemplified in the words of one of the women interviewed:

"The thing about it is, you have to figure out what the game is before you can play it. It's changing now. That's what really annoys me. The way my mom grew up. The things she got. A lot of them she gave to me. And only half of them are applicable now. I'm trying. You can do your own trying folks. I have to try my own way. Don't tell me I'm not feminine. ... It's a struggle." (305)

Despite this conflict, a listing of the rules that represents the consensual beliefs of these women as to the societal expectations was not only possible but reflects a high level of agreement across all the age groups. Table 4.1 lists the rules for women identified by dimensions.

TABLE 4.1

Rules for women

Dimension I: Rules for professional behavior

1. Don't select a male-dominated profession.
2. Acceptance can come only after proving your capabilities in the job market.
3. Home and family should take precedence over job.
4. Juggle being feminine/family responsibilities/career competently.
5. Keep your place at work.
6. Don't be the "boss".
7. Don't make more money than a man does.
8. Don't have a job outside of the home.

Dimension II: Rules for social behavior

9. Don't argue or fight.
10. Don't swear.
11. Don't go to bars.
12. Demonstrate good manners.

13. Be happy with your lot in life.
14. Don't be competent outside traditionally feminine activity.
15. Don't be good at team sports.
16. Don't be as good at sports as males.
17. Social activities should be "feminine".
18. Don't state your opinions.
19. Don't be interested in sex.
20. Don't be involved in several sexual relationships at once.
21. Don't take the initiative in male/female relationships.
22. Acquiesce to the male.
23. Be responsible for the male/female relationship, its quality and direction.
24. Friendships should be with women.

Dimension III:

25. Be concerned about your appearance.
26. Dress well in feminine clothes.
27. Be fashionable.
28. Be attractive physically: thin and well groomed.

Dimension IV: Rules for family relationships

29. Get married.
30. Have children.

31. Take the primary responsibility for child care.
32. Be responsible for the day-to-day running of the household and family.
33. Be responsible for the domestic chores.
34. Put the family's needs before your own.
35. Outside interests (or responsibilities) come second to the home and family.
36. Acquiesce to the male.

Dimension V: Rules for intellectual and academic behavior

37. Be a good student.
38. Do better in school than the boys do.
39. Don't be smarter than the males.
40. If you are smarter than a man is, don't let him know it.
41. Don't be better educated than men.
42. Don't be good at math/science but in verbal or creative areas.

Dimension VI: Rules for personality characteristics

43. Be submissive.
44. Do not be aggressive.
45. Be nurturing.
46. Be weak.
47. Be quiet.
48. Be understanding.

49. Be neat and clean.
50. Be responsible.
51. Be accommodating.
52. Be emotional.
53. Be socially adept.
54. Be obedient.
55. Be sensitive to others.
56. Be sweet.

Discussion. It will be noted that the same statement appears twice, once as number 22 under social behavior, once as number 36 under family behavior. This rule for acquiescence in social behavior identifies such statements as: "Change to please the male", "Be willing to compromise views for the sake of the man", "Make the man believe he is better than you even if he isn't". The best way to define the meaning expressed by these statements seemed to be the use of the term "acquiesce", even though it also appears under family relationships.

This same acquiescence appears as an overall pattern of expected behavior. The social norm is for the woman to defer to the man, professionally, socially, and in the family, and to demonstrate this deference by submissiveness and accommodation in all areas.

Society expects women to defer to the man, her father, her husband. So being subordinate when you have a man

with you. Even going to the machanic's, and even if your husband doesn't know a carburetor from a starter, the mechanic will talk to him, even if he then talks to you. (409)

She's supposed to wait on her husband. Bring him beers. Cook his supper. While he just lies around and watches TV. (110)

Men can be very intimidated, even by different vocabulary. And it can make you feel like you shouldn't talk that way because it might make them feel inferior. It's okay for a woman to feel inferior but a man shouldn't. So you don't want to create an uncomfortable situation for a man so you take the brunt of it instead. And that's a hard one to fight. (301)

This pattern of acquiescence includes an agreement that the male is always to achieve more, to be smarter, better educated, and make more money. This is reflected in the responses of every age group, but it is most obvious at the college level.

I don't think women can have opinions. I think they can't have wants and needs because somebody in the relationship has to give, you know. I think women have always been the ones who have been just nothing, I

mean they're just anything that the man wanted. (302)

Maybe women are expected to be more gracious. In fact I'm sure of that. I get so much reinforcement for being nice. Girls are always told to "be nice". And being nice, the connotation I have of that is to be -- I don't know what the word is. To acquiesce to someone else, not to "make waves". (301)

This is a big one. As a woman you're never supposed to be smarter than men. And if you are you're never supposed to let him know it. If you're successful you're never supposed to be delightful in that. Or in any way threatening because you're successful. (406)

The expectation that women will be acquiescent, that they will defer to all men, is learned early and is not affected by the woman's competence.

I do a lot of sports. But I just think -- when I'm with girls I think I can be as good as I want to be. But when I'm with boys I have to hold back. ... I guess just because you're not supposed to be as good as boys. (212)

You're supposed to let them do everything. You're supposed to be the little person - the weak one. That's always how they see you - a weak little girl. (102)

I think women have made breakthroughs but I think it's still a struggle. There's a lot more media hype than actuality about what's going on out there. I think when women get to the top particularly they have to do twice as well as men. I think it's a real struggle for women, even if they're intellectually superior. I think they're constantly proving they're competent. It's still a pat-you-on-the-head type of attitude. (411)

Other overall patterns in the rules point to a traditionally stereotyped norm for women's behavior - an emphasis on the domestic responsibilities, an acceptance of the position of second place, an emphasis on attractiveness and social behavior.

The things that come to my mind first are adjectives. Like loving. Warm. Organized. Efficient. Helpful. Or helping. Then I come up with cook. Yeah. Cooking. The whole thing. Keeping the house together. That's the woman's job as I see it. Supportive. (402)

Housework. The cooking. Well she's --- Sometimes, depending on the household the mother is supposed to be home when the kids get home from school so she can say, "What do you want for snack?" (102)

The expectation is that women will willingly accept this, that women will be happy with their lot in life (rule number 13). Dissatisfaction with this norm is not seen as accepted or understood. As one high-school woman describes it: "You've got to always be very happy." (208)

This acceptance of subservience applies to both family and professional behavior. A woman should be:

Happy with her husband. Content with your life together.

Happy you're married. (210)

Professionally, acceptance of second place is seen in not expecting to rise to positions of authority, not being ambitious.

I think in general women should do their job and no more. Not climbing. It's hard for a woman to become a supervisor because everyone at the bottom, male or female, will give her hell. (403)

The world expects a woman to be very submissive. She can't be strong. She can't be outgoing. She's a bitch if she's aggressive. A woman cannot be ambitious. I'm

always surprised that it's always true with other women, that a woman can't be ambitious. I think that if you're just laid back and have no real thoughts of your own then you're an okay woman. (406)

However, subservience also means powerlessness:

The thing I fear is just the fact that you can't - there's nothing that's yours, you know? Really nothing. It's all --- It's only what they will let you have. (302)

The major contradiction to this image of subservience comes in rule number 4, "be able to juggle being feminine/family responsibilities/career competently". At all age levels these women talk of the necessity of doing more than "just being a housewife" and, in the process, the expectation that you will continue with the traditional female responsibilities.

The role is much bigger now. It was easy in some ways when you were told, okay, this is your place. Stay in it. You can't do that at all. The whole super-woman image. In charge of rearing the next generation, being whatever it is your husband wants, trying to figure whatever it is you want as well. And at the same time going out to contribute your half of the support. (405)

This acceptance of woman's position as an active participant is seen as financially based, the need for more money in harder times to support the family. It is not seen as representing any major change in women's roles.

The role is the same but the way you're supposed to fill it has changed. It seems that there's this great female revolution going on. That women are really coming up in the world and you're getting all the competition and the opportunities. But it's not true. Sure there are some areas where women are more competitive now. But it's the same with blacks. Blacks have the same rights as whites because they're allowed to compete in a few carefully chosen ways? Sure! Tell me about it! So we have one female justice. So big deal! What does it mean? Nothing. Have we changed the power structure at all? No way! (305)

Domesticity is still considered the norm. Women are expected to do the household chores, the rule listed most often and consistently high across ages. Responsibility for child care was the second most often listed rule (23 of 48 subjects listed rule number 31). The norm for marriage and motherhood is also high (21 for marriage, 24 for having children).

The expectation is that you will have a family. After a while they stop asking but they do expect it. To get married and have children. My sister, bless her heart, when she was 28 she had a child. My mother breathed a sigh of relief. She had no idea how much she had been holding her breath. (409)

Age/Group Differences in Rules for Women

There are patterns to the responses when they are compared by age groups. Table 4.2 lists the number of rule responses that fall into each dimension separated by the four groups, junior high school, senior high school, college and adult (35-40) women. As stated in Chapter III, the nature of the data did not allow for statistical tests of significance. It is patterns of differences only that are discussed.

An analysis of this data shows an increase in the number of rules that were listed for family relationships by age, even with the fluctuation between groups II and III. A similar emphasis on professional behavior and the steady rise of the number of rules listed up to the college age group reflects the current status of these women. All of the women in the oldest group had at least a part time job and all had worked for several years. All of the women in the college age group planned to be employed. The growing emphasis on family relationships also reflects the older women's responsibility for home & family.

TABLE 4.2

NUMBER OF RULES REPORTED BY EACH GROUP FOR EACH DIMENSION

Women's rules

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Professional Behavior	10	17	21	21
Social Behavior	51	37	37	26
Physical Appearance	24	15	10	11
Family Relationships	26	41	38	48
Intellectual Behavior	10	21	18	10
Personality Characteristics	28	18	43	31

It should be noted that the rules for family relationships had a consistently high level of agreement across age groups. Rule number 33, "be responsible for the domestic chores", the one rule listed the most often, was listed by more than half of the subjects at each age level.

A decrease with age in the number of rules stated is found in the dimensions of social behavior and physical appearance. This is most apparent in rule number 9, "don't argue or fight", where 7 of the 11 responses were given by group I, rule number 17, "social activities should be feminine", 8 of the 9 responses in group I, and rule number 19, "don't be interested in sex", 3 of the 5 coming from group I.

And, uh, like there's books. I mean, regular books, and then there are books -- you know, trashy books. And they expect us not to be interested. You know, maybe the anatomy of the human body or something. While they expect it from boys. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ANATOMY OR SEX? Sex. They expect boys to be interested. But not girls. (102)

In the dimension of physical appearance, both the need to be fashionable and the need to dress well and femininely (rules number 27 and 26, respectively) is seen to decrease with age.

The emphasis in the youngest groups on dress extends to particular styles of dress, as well as the need to dress in traditionally

feminine clothes, at least occasionally.

Wear a dress every so often. Not every day but a girl should wear a dress sometimes. And when you don't you should still dress nicely. Not be a slob and just wear T shirts all the time. (104)

You're expected to be preppy. You can't just wear regular clothes like I have on now. Like collars up, like that or something. And Izod sweaters. Pony tails. (103)

The only rules in these two dimensions that increase the number of responses by age are rule number 13, "be happy with your lot in life", and rule number 28, the need to be thin and well groomed.

Rules for Men

In identifying rules for men, it was explained that one way to define any role is to define a complementary role, that no one lives in a vacuum. Thirty-eight rules were identified and separated into the same six dimensions. Table 4.3 lists the rules the women in this study identified as the norms for men's behavior, listed by dimensions.

TABLE 4.3

Rules for Men

Dimension I: Rules for professional behavior

1. Choose a job outside of traditionally feminine occupations.
2. Be financially successful.
3. Have a steady job.
4. Be the "boss", have the higher level job.
5. Make more money than the woman does.
6. Career should come first.

Dimension II: Rules for social behavior

7. Be interested in and do well in sports.
8. Settle disagreements physically (by fighting).
9. Sports played should be "masculine" ones.
10. Be interested in mechanical things (cars, repairs).
11. Be the initiator sexually.
12. Be the dominant one in relationships with females.
13. Be the initiator of the dating relationship.

Dimension III: Rules for physical appearance

14. Be strong physically.
15. Don't be concerned with clothes or appearance.
16. Dress should be conservative and masculine.

Dimension IV: Rules for family relationships

17. Do the outside chores and the heavier work at home.
18. Support the family.
19. Get married.
20. Have children.
21. Make the decisions for the family.
22. Spend time with children in sports or entertainment.
23. Take charge of family finances.
24. Be a part of the family but distant emotionally.

Dimension V: Rules for intellectual and academic behavior

25. Succeed academically.
26. Be more intelligent than the female.
27. Be better at math/science areas.
28. Good grades should not be important.

Dimension VI: Rules for personality characteristics

29. Be strong emotionally.
30. Be always in control.
31. Be aggressive.
32. Be logical.
33. Don't show emotions.
34. Be dominant.
35. Be independent.
36. Be superior to women.

37. Be competent.

38. Be competitive.

Discussion. As with the rules for women, patterns are apparent in the listings of the rules themselves. There is a strong emphasis on success, success financially and academically, as well as the expectation that the man will be the dominant one, again in all areas.

Men are shoved into the role of having to be providers.

Strong. ... I think men are supposed to be - or are looked at - as more significant than women. Their opinions hold more weight. (310)

This "significance" is seen in the expectation that men will be the provider for the family and, in the process, financially successful. These two rules were high in consensus, rule number 18, "support the family", listed by 35 of the 48 women and financial success by 22 of the 48. Agreement was high among all four age groups on both rules. Success in men was seen as most important to the high school group.

The position of dominance in the family is seen as limiting the man's personal contribution to the family and children as well as granting him power as the decision maker.

In the family I think men still assume a dominant role.

That doesn't sound quite right. But they are still the

major breadwinner. They still make the major decisions. They're not expected to do the housework the way a woman is. They do masculine things like take out the trash, do the repair jobs, fix the broken washing machine. (204)

They don't take care of children as much. They're just supposed to support the family but not really guide them, I guess. They're just out there getting the money. (212)

Success professionally also means a need to be constantly striving.

They should be the boss. They should be the man in charge, the person in charge. Men should always strive for more whereas women should be happy with their lot in life. (307)

Strength, both physical and emotional strength, was perceived as the social norm. Rule number 14, "be strong physically", was listed by 31 of the 48 women, emotional strength by 17 of the women.

Emotional strength is also seen in rule number 33, "don't show emotions". The stereotype that men don't cry is still seen to be operable. Twenty-one of the subjects listed this as a rule. The situation-specific nature of the emotions was discussed. Anger was seen as acceptable as long as it was not released in regular outbursts of emotion. Crying, tenderness, and any exhibition of emotionality is

seen as unacceptable, particularly to other men. These women pointed out that women in general were more accepting of emotion in men than were other men, and actually preferred for men to show "feminine" emotions.

Some of the women talked of the inability of the men they knew to express emotion for fear of being thought weak. A corollary of that was the determination they see in men to be independent, to not need other people. As one woman put it:

Men. They're supposed to be satisfied in themselves.
But I don't know. ... Men are funny. They can figure out I'm hungry, I want to eat. But they can't figure out I'm lonely. I want someone to care. (305)

Another pattern is the emphasis on sports. Rule number 7, "be interested in and do well in sports", was listed by 34 of the 48 subjects. This response was consistently high in the first three age groups, dropping slightly in the fourth. Sports were seen as almost a rite of passage. For younger men and boys, success at sports is seen as necessary. For older men, interest in sports and being able to discuss athletics with their peers is seen as essential, even to affecting their job potential.

Age/Group Differences in Rules for Men

Table 4.4 shows the number of rule responses for men listed by age groups and by dimensions.

TABLE 4.4
Number of rules reported by each group
for each dimension
Men's rules

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Professional Behavior	14	29	23	19
Social Behavior	37	26	27	13
Physical Appearance	18	11	10	10
Family Relationships	22	27	28	30
Intellectual Behavior	9	10	10	3
Personality Characteristics	16	18	41	21

The same patterns of age differences are apparent in the listing for men. The number of responses listed for social behavior and physical appearance decrease with age. The number of responses in family relationships increases with age, although the increase is not as dramatic as is the similar increase in the women's rules. It must be remembered that the prominence of the norm for domesticity in women would affect this dimension. The only rule in family relationships for men that shows a strong age difference is rule number 22, spending time with the children in sports or entertainment. This appeared only in groups III and IV.

Other age differences appear in the intellectual dimension where an apparent contradiction between rules number 25 and 28 is explained by a comparison of responses in the different ages. Rule number 25, succeed academically, is strongest in the college group, dropping to only one response in both group I and group IV. Rule number 28, "good grades should not be important", only appears in the youngest group. In junior high the perception is that boys should not yet be interested in academics. The emphasis on academic success was viewed by the high school group in particular with sympathy for the anxiety this creates.

The pressure on the boys is hard. They go bonkers. They have to go to their father's college. Keep it in the family. They can't even consider anything less than an ivy league school. (208)

Personal Norms

Question 2 dealt with personal norms, the individual's attitude towards the rules. Subjects were asked to rate each rule they had listed on a scale of 1 to 3: 1 = very important; 2 = important; 3 = not so important. That is, how important did they consider the rule to be in setting the standards for behavior.

Across all age groups the predominant rating was a 3, not so important. These women, in effect, even though they identified the rule as present and operable, did not agree with the social norm as they perceived it. There was a tendency in the older groups to re-define the rating system because many women stated the belief that "not so important" was not strong enough to reflect how they themselves felt. They used instead terms like "it definitely should not be that way" to express their personal disagreement with the norm.

Overall, the disagreement with the social norm was true for both women's and men's rules. Of all the rules rated, 63% of the women's rules were rated a 3, 64% of the men's rules a 3. There was a slight tendency to rate more of the women's rules as very important than the men's rules, as 14% of the women's rules received a rating of 1, while only 9% of the men's rules were rated a 1.

Table 4.5 shows the breakdown of ratings by age groups, by percentages of the total rules listed. The pattern by age groups can best be seen by looking at the percentages. In both the women's and

TABLE 4.5

Percentage of total number of rules identified by individual age groups as rated 1, 2, or 3

	Rating	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Women's Rules	1	23%	9%	9.5%	14%
	2	31%	26%	18%	17%
	3	46%	65%	72.5%	69%
Men's Rules	1	14%	7%	6%	8%
	2	30%	29%	26%	23%
	3	56%	64%	68%	69%

the men's rules, the rating of 2, or the belief that those rules are important in defining behavior, decreases steadily with age. However, when ratings of 1 and 3 are considered, a more varied picture emerges. Rating 1, a belief that the rule is very important, was used most often by the youngest group, followed by the 35-40 age group. The agreement with the rules in the youngest group appears to be the strongest in women's rules, where 23% of the rules were rated as very important, followed by 14% of the oldest group's ratings.

The rating of 3, or not so important, shows a different pattern. Instead of steadily increasing with age, as might be expected from the results of the rating of important, and which does in fact happen for the men's rules, the 3 rating for the women's rules shows the most disagreement in group III, the college seniors.

Of the individual rules that were listed most often, there were no strong age differences in ratings. In the women's rules, rule number 30, "have children", was given a rating of 1, very important, only by individuals in the oldest group, but the pattern of rating is similar across the age groups. The same is true with child care. Rule number 33, the women's rule that appeared most often, was considered not so important, a 3 rating, by all age groups.

For the men's rules the same holds true. A similar pattern of ratings is seen in all age groups. Rule number 18, support the family, is seen as very important by only two of the oldest group. The need for men to make the decisions, rule number 21, is strongly

rated as not so important, a rating of 3. Rule number 14, be strong physically, is split between being seen as important and being not so important by all four age groups. Financial success, the rule number 2 for men, is seen as very important by only 2 of the high school women. In general, however, the pattern of rating is similar for all the age groups.

Unbreakable Rules

Question number 3 considered the question of the need for conformity to the rules. Subjects were asked "What are the rules that you can't break?" By identifying these rules, the parameters of acceptable non-conformity can more clearly be seen.

Of the 94 rules, 6 were never identified as unbreakable. For women, these rules were number 17, "social activities should be 'feminine'", number 19, "don't be interested in sex", number 38, "do better in school than the boys do", and number 42, "don't be good in math/science but in verbal or creative areas". The corresponding rule for this last one in the men's list, rule number 27, "be good in math/science areas", was also never listed as unbreakable. The remaining rule never listed as unbreakable was number 24 on the men's list, "be a part of the family but distant emotionally". Although these rules were considered important enough to be listed as rules and received enough of a consensus to be included on the final list of rules, their importance in controlling behavior diminishes because they are seen as

flexible, more easily broken than others.

When the rules are considered overall, the pattern of strict conformity for women becomes one of physical attractiveness, sexual faithfulness, motherhood, and putting the needs of others first. Eighty-six percent of the women listing rule number 20, "don't be involved in several sexual relationships at once", also viewed it as unbreakable. Seventy-three percent of those who listed rule number 25, "be concerned about your appearance", viewed it as unbreakable. Putting the family's needs before your own, rule number 34, and having children, rule number 30, were seen as unbreakable by 62% and 52% respectively of those who listed the rule.

For men, conformity takes the position of work and financial success. "Have a steady job", rule number 3, was seen as unbreakable by 70% of those listing it, "be financially successful", rule number 2, by 55%, and "support the family", rule number 18, by 51% of those who listed it.

When age differences are considered, again patterns emerge. Table 4.6 gives the percentage of the total rules identified by each age group that were seen as unbreakable. Consistently, for the total percentage as well as a breakdown by women's and men's rules, the college seniors viewed more of the rules as unbreakable. It should be noted that this same group, the college seniors, listed more rules originally and also disagreed with more of the rules.

TABLE 4.6

Percentage of rules identified by subjects that were considered to be unbreakable, by age groups

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV
Women's Rules	35%	33%	38%	33%
Men's Rules	28%	39%	42%	27%
Total	32%	34%	40%	31%

The idea of being sure that a man does not feel inferior, described so well by one of the subjects at the beginning of this chapter, appears as an unbreakable rule for the oldest group. Rule number 7, "don't make more money than he does", rule number 39, "don't be smarter than the male", and rule number 40, "if you are smarter than he is, don't let him know it", all are seen as unbreakable by the women in group IV who originally identified the rule.

Costs of Non-conformity

The fourth research question, what are the costs of non-conformity, seeks to describe the ways the rules are enforced, how society insures obedience to the social norm. Each subject was asked to identify the costs of breaking the rules they identified as unbreakable. There were six categories into which all of the costs fell:

1. questions as to sexual orientation
2. social disapproval and/or ridicule
3. withdrawal of affection
4. loss of job or opportunity for financial success
5. negative effects on others
6. internalization of social values

Each of these categories will be discussed separately, with attention paid to the different ways these costs apply to women and to men. It will be noted that the order of presentation reflects the changes in the age/group responses. The junior high subjects responded with costs

that fell most often in categories 1 and 2. Category 6 appeared only in the oldest age group. There were more responses at all age groups in category 2, social disapproval, than any other category.

1. Questions as to sexual orientation. Breaking the rules can lead others to view the individual as not-feminine or not-masculine, or, more extremely, as homosexual. This is described more often by the junior high group but is apparent at all ages. It is also listed as a cost more to men than to women. For women, concerns about homosexuality are seen as a cost of not getting married. For the youngest group, being good at team sports and stating your own opinions can result in this cost.

For men, questions about homosexuality are listed much more often. Not being interested in sports, not fighting, choosing a feminine profession, and dressing less than conservatively can all bring his sexuality into question.

It's an ostracizing thing for men from society. God forbid you should be some sort of flaming gay type. Nobody wants to be seen with you. (407)

Lack of independence, showing emotion, and lack of aggression can also cause doubts in others about a man's sexual orientation, particularly other men.

I think that a man who is not aggressive and assertive comes in for the most flack from aggressive and assertive

men. Because the men immediately point a finger at an unaggressive man and call him gay. (410)

Men can be angry but they can't be tender or show emotion. They're doubted. Just not seen as masculine. (307)

2. Social disapproval and/or ridicule. This is described as the greatest cost and the one that results the most often. It, too, is apparent at all age groups. It also appears as a loss of respect from others for both women and men. It is voiced most often in the youngest group as being talked about. They are also more prone to use terms like "slut" and "slob" as descriptors their culture uses to describe those who break the rules. Women are also seen as "selfish". This term was used by all the age groups to describe those women who were not willing to put others first. So, too, terms like "insensitive" and "cruel" were used for women.

Women's needs coming second to a man. That's like don't make waves. Don't make a man feel inferior. Don't be smarter. It's always the man first. And if you don't do that you're being unfair and insensitive. It's funny. It's not unfair for a man to put himself first. But you're really cold and insensitive and cruel for not being sensitive enough to let a man feel he's better than you. (301)

Men, on the other hand, were not seen in the same terms. For them, the most often used word was "failure", particularly when a man was not financially successful or did not support the family, two of the most important rules listed for men.

If he's not [successful] he's considered a - well, actually, I don't know. Let's say he's not successful. For some reason a man can get ahead. It's just assumed. And if he doesn't it's not because he couldn't. He just didn't try. (206)

Men are seen as failures. And it's hard to be a failure. (203)

The ultimate result of social disapproval for those who choose to break the rule is seen as ostracism and becoming a social outcast.

3. Withdrawal of affection. The loss of affection as a cost to women of breaking the rules is again apparent at every age. With the youngest group, it can be the result of not being "sweet", or even of not being neat and clean. The affection most likely to be lost is male affection. "He won't like you", "he won't date you", and, ultimately, if the rules are strong enough and the infraction great enough, "he will divorce you".

This cost is seen to result, particularly, from a failure to "acquiesce to the male", at both the social and family dimensions. It also is a result of being smarter than he is, making more money than

he does, and of not being an understand person.

He won't like you much if you don't [acquiesce]. (104)

I've heard stories - we were talking about this in one of my classes - how mothers would tell their daughters: "Now make sure he knows he's better than you. Or you won't get married when you're older." That's ridiculous. (306)

My friends talk about this. They see that they're expected to "make their boyfriends feel good." I think that's ridiculous. I guess you'd lose the guy. But if you did he's no good anyway. (210)

They're deserted oftentimes by others. They're left. If people perceive you as a not-understanding person, they won't confide in you. They won't be intimate with you. They would be left alone somehow. (403)

Loss of affection was never listed as a cost to men.

4. Loss of job or an opportunity for financial success. The threat to women of a loss of her job or the failure to get a job comes about through a lack of physical attractiveness, a failure to "keep your place at work", or a failure to be "accommodating" on the job. As in the above cost, this one is first described by the high school group (group II).

There's a lot of costs in terms of going out and meeting people. It's the first thing you see. The first thing that attracts people is your looks. ... It even affects your job. (207)

I think if you're successful you have to be deprecating. At least not rub it in people's noses. I think the costs depend on where you are. If they need you badly enough you'll make it anyway. Otherwise you won't have a job. (406)

Not doing well in school was seen as lowering a woman's chances for financial success later on.

For a man, not being interested in sports was seen as affecting his job potential.

This one is inflexible. ... He loses out on conversations, outside of work. And a lot of those conversations are where men carry on business. ... Men talk about sports a lot. They have a network. A good-old-boy network. (409)

Failure to put his job first also results in a loss of opportunity for a man.

If you don't you'll never make it to the top. You're not real powerful. And society says men should be powerful. (309)

5. Negative effects on others. All the previously discussed costs were things that were perceived to be done to the women or men who failed to obey the rules. This cost reflects the perception of these women that one of the results of breaking the rules is harm to other people.

For women, these effects are seen by the youngest two groups to be danger to the children for whom the woman is responsible. Having a job outside of the home is seen as "unbreakable if you have kids. ... The kids start having problems if she's not there." (108)

Failure to take the responsibility for child care: "Well, you have to. The kids won't like you. And they'd get sick if you didn't." (111) "A child can be very lonely. Can grow up with a terrible life." (207)

Beginning with the high school group (group II), a second effect on others of women's breaking the rules is its effect on the men. There are certain rules that, if broken, are seen to result in intimidation of the men, for which the woman is responsible. All of these rules refer to surpassing the male in some way, physically, academically, or financially.

One of these rules is don't be as good at sports as the males.

I think the guys would feel intimidated. They wouldn't want you to be as good as him. If you are as good as a guy in sports, it would hurt the guy. (212)

Being the boss results in intimidation as well, and elicits the response appearing several times: "It's just not what you do. Men just can't handle it." (210)

An interesting aspect of this cost of intimidating someone else is that it was listed as the cost itself, not the reason for a later withdrawal of affection or any other act against the rule breaker. The implication is that the woman is responsible for other people and their unhappiness, maladjustment, or intimidation is her responsibility. Again, this never appeared as a cost to men.

This cost may well be a forerunner developmentally to the sixth category, the internalization of social values, one that did not appear until the college seniors and was listed only by the last two groups.

6. Internalization of social values. Costs that are described as being completely internal instead of external are listed for both women and men beginning with the college seniors. These are described as a sense of embarrassment, an internal confusion, and a feeling of guilt. These internal sanctions are seen as having an even stronger effect than external ones.

There are social sanctions from other people, but I think the internal confusion is really the strongest. (410)

If you don't [do the housework] you're a slob. I get embarrassed. Even though I know it's impossible for

me to do more. (405)

For men, this internal cost was seen to result from a lack of financial success, particularly when she makes more money than he does.

I'd like to think that the amount of money wouldn't matter. But egowise, most men might have trouble feeling good about themselves. I think it's more how he feels about himself. (410)

That one's hard for men. They seem to think they've failed. It's themselves. I suppose other people may not even know. But they think something is wrong. That they're not competent. Not achieving enough. (307)

Changes With Age

As stated in the opening paragraphs of chapter four, age/group differences were included in the discussion of each of the preceding research questions. However, a summary of those differences is provided here to clarify the changes that were apparent by age. It must be remembered that no statistical tests of significance were possible with the data. Therefore, only patterns of differences can be discussed.

The age groups interviewed were entering junior high, entering high school, seniors in college, and 35-40 year old women. The

agreement across all age groups as to the nature of the rules was high. No single rule was listed in only one age group.

Differences in the responses by age groups can be seen more in the emphasis placed at each age on the different dimensions than in particular rule differences. Group I, the junior high group, emphasized rules for social behavior, with 33% of all the rules they identified for both women and men falling in that dimension. There is an emphasis for women on dress in particular, with rule 26, dress well in feminine clothes, receiving over half of its listings from this age group, and rule number 27 (be fashionable), six of its eight responses. Their emphasis in family relationships is on domestic chores and child care responsibilities for women. This age group perceives boys as not yet interested in academic achievement, although they do state that this will change as the boys get older. They see this as a time when they are expected to be the achievers academically. Their emphasis on social behavior is seen in their description of the costs of breaking the rules, as well as in their listing of the rules themselves. For this age, the costs are described most often as "being talked about" and, for boys, being considered "wimpy", or gay. They were the most likely to use socially derogatory terms like "slut" and "slob" to describe the female who chooses not to conform. The personal norms for group I also agree more with the social norms. That is, they were more likely than any other group to rate the rules

as important or very important to them, particularly the rules for women.

Group II, the senior high group, showed an increase in the number of rules listed for professional behavior. This is the group for whom financial success in men was the most important. Being fashionable is still important, as is the need to deny an interest in sex (neither of which is seen in the last two groups). This group shows the pattern for an increase in rules for family relationships and a decrease in the number of rules for social behavior. Personal norm agreement with the rules is considerably less than in group I and they see the rules for men in particular as being much less flexible. The term "failure" is used often to describe the man who does not conform. This is the group where the perception of men as "intimidated" by women who do not conform and the corresponding need for women to take the responsibility for the feeling of others surfaces.

Group III, the seniors in college, was the group that identified the largest number of rules for both men and women, the one whose personal norms had the most disagreement (showing a rating of 3, not so important, the most of the four groups) and who saw the rules as the most unbreakable. This group shows an increase in the number of rules given for personality characteristics, with almost a third of the rules listed falling in this dimension. There is an emphasis in the dimension of personality characteristics on passivity, nurturance, being weak, emotional, and submissive in women. In the interviews,

this group also expressed feelings of conflict over the need to be and do everything, the perceived expectation that they would balance all aspects of home, family, relationships, and career effectively.

Group IV, the 35-40 year old women, emphasize family relationships and professional behavior, as well as personality characteristics. They list the smallest number of rules for social behavior of any of the four groups. In contrast to the youngest group, there is little attention paid to dress for women but more to physical attraction. The need to have children was listed by eight individuals as compared to only two of the youngest group. Acquiescence is seen as important, as is the need not to outshine the male, either academically or monetarily. A tendency to rate the rules as very important is greater for this group than for groups II and III. However, the rating of 2, important, is given least often by this group. They view the rules as slightly more flexible than the other groups, having the smallest percentage of rules listed as unbreakable, but this tendency is only slight (31% as compared to 32%, 34%, and 40% from the other three groups). The internalization of social values is the cost that is described only by group IV. The emotional cost of non-conformity to the rules is seen as high at this age, too high, many times, to allow for breaking the rules.

The only prior study that considers the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity developmentally (Ullian, 1976) suggests that two things should be true of the comparison of the age/groups in

this study: (1) that the need to conform to the rules becomes more flexible with age and (2) that the rules themselves would be viewed as less conservative by the older groups than the younger.

On the first of these issues, Ullian describes the college students in her study as viewing conformity or non-conformity to the social norm of masculine or feminine behavior as a personal choice, not a social requirement. If this is true, then the college-aged women in this study should identify fewer of the rules as unbreakable. This is not the case. The college group, on the contrary, had the highest percentage of rules identified as unbreakable. The pattern of response on the need for conformity in the oldest group was similar to the two youngest, not more flexible.

On the second of these issues, Ullian describes the development she found at 18 as an end-point in sex role development, in which "an attempt is made to construct a set of ideal standards which have universal validity and which are consistent with principles of equality and human freedom" (p. 44-45). If in fact this is an end-point, then the rules from the two older groups should be described in terms of greater equality. The same conservative emphasis is found at all four age groups. The rules listed tend to agree with stereotypic beliefs about men and women. In a recent study conducted by Ashmore and Tumia described by Ashmore (1980) in an article on sex stereotypes, females were found to describe women as weak, dependent, submissive, nurturant, cautious, honest, and quiet and men as important, critical,

dominating, daring, scientific, and intelligent. These adjectives agree in character and even name with many of the rules for personality traits found in this study, as well as with many of the rules for behavior. Nor are the descriptors of the traits of both men and women very different from those found on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) or on Broverman's Sex Role Questionnaire (Broverman, 1981), both of which use stereotypic terms to describe masculinity and femininity.

Perhaps the major reason for the difference in the findings of this study and Ullian's is the way in which the question was asked. The subjects in the earlier study were asked to identify what they believed should be true of men's and women's behavior, the ideal. This study, by contrast, asked individuals to identify the actual cultural rules for behavior for both men and women. Throughout the interviews, the subjects described the women's rules as the rules they themselves were expected to live by, the men's rules as those placed on their friends and relatives. These rules were seen as realities of their lives, not possibilities.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to begin to define masculinity and femininity as structures of rules for behavior. In chapters I and II, a contrast was presented between the more traditional psychometric approach to defining M-F and the sex-roles-as-rules model, based on a phenomenological approach.

There are several issues that arise in advocating the use of the sex-roles-as-rules model: (1) Does the sex-roles-as-rules model solve the problem of polarities inherent in the more traditional psychometric approach? (2) What advantage, if any, does this model have over the identification of M-F by traits? (3) What are the merits of a phenomenological approach to sex-role definition in contrast to the standard psychometric techniques?

This chapter will briefly discuss each of these issues in turn. The data itself will then be discussed, with the emphasis on the conclusions that can be drawn from this study and the implications for further research.

Advantages to the Use of the Sex-Roles-As-Rules Model

Polarities

The sex-role-as-rules model, as operationalized in this study, does not completely solve the issue of bipolarities in sex-role

definition. It is apparent from the results that the description this group of women gives of both femininity and masculinity still contains the seeds of the bipolarities found in the more traditional measures. This is particularly true in the rules for personality characteristics. Men are expected to be dominant, competent, non-emotional, competitive, and strong, whereas women are expected to be submissive, accommodating, emotional, not-aggressive, and weak. Throughout the list of rules, the belief that masculinity and femininity represent opposites is apparent. The study by Foushee, Helmreich, and Spence (1979) described in chapter II suggests that this would be expected. They found that there was a prevailing tendency to describe male and female behavior in terms of opposites, that to be absent one attribute is to imply the presence of a reciprocal attribute. The belief in opposites appears to be built into the way people think.

This tendency to think in opposites is a reflection of the social structure itself. American society is one of the segregation of opposites: old-young, black-white, man-woman, rich-poor, each with its expectations for appropriate behavior. A child growing up in a world of opposites learns to structure his/her thinking about that world along the same lines. Thinking itself is bound by language itself. When the words a culture uses to describe the roles within it are themselves polarities, then thinking about the roles will be bound by those parameters.

Despite the polarities apparent in the results, the sex-roles-as-rules model does offer an alternative way of thinking about male and female behavior. It allows for an opportunity to emphasize other aspects of behavior.

One fact that is not apparent from the list of rules and the analysis that accompanies it is the contradictions that arose in the responses. Group agreement tended to polarize the roles more than individual perceptions. There were individuals who saw the rule for strength, both emotionally and physically, as just as important for females as for males. There were others who saw the rules for men to be nurturing and emotional as important. These perceptions were not consistent, but were present. It is the group perceptions that are reflected in the rules and it is the group that describes the polarities. This model for research allows for the individual variations, the descriptions of very personal realities not possible with the emphasis on opposites.

Rules for Behavior as Part of Role Definition

The description of femininity and masculinity coming from this study provides a fuller picture of role expectations than is possible with an emphasis on traits alone. The listing of rules for behavior demonstrates the all pervasive aspect of sex-roles, the fact that being masculine or feminine touches every part of an individual's life. This research resulted in a list of rules that describe expected behaviors

in five dimensions of the individuals' lives, professional, social, physical appearance, family relationships, and intellectual and academic behavior, in addition to the rules for personality characteristics. This emphasis allows for the situation-specific nature of the rules for masculine and feminine behavior, the variability that exists in expectations in the different dimensions.

Advantage of a Phenomenological Method

The phenomenological approach used in this study allows for an individual perspective on the realities of being female or male. To ask individuals to give their own list of rules rather than to respond to a forced-choice questionnaire provides an opportunity to them to explore the limits and freedoms in their own cultural setting. It avoids placing a value ahead of time on any single behavior or trait and also avoids drawing the parameters of M-F too narrowly.

It also provides an opportunity to identify the minutiae that make up the day-to-day realities of life, something not possible with the psychometric approach to roles. It is this minutiae, the small facts of life, that prove to be so important in identifying masculine and feminine behavior.

Conclusions from the Data

What does the data from this study tell us about women's perceptions of femininity and masculinity? First, an individual's sex-role

permeates all of his/her life. There are differing rules for behavior for men and women in the family, in academic settings, in professional, business or other occupational settings, in dress, appearance, and social interactions. There appears to be no part of human life that is not accompanied by rules that differentiate masculine/feminine behavior.

Second, the rules for behavior for both men and women govern the small things that make up anyone's reality. There were rules for the facts of day-to-day life: who takes out the garbage, who gets up first in the morning, exactly what household responsibilities are handled by men or women, what clubs you can belong to, what games you play, how you are to dress, whether or not you are talkative or quiet, where you can go alone, and so on. It is the small things that are the most important for defining masculine and feminine behavior.

Third, the rules reflect very personal realities. It must be remembered that the list of rules derived from the data is based on group agreement about M-F, as each rule had to be identified by a minimum of five subjects to appear on the final list. This meant that 30% of the data was not reflective of the group's perceptions, but of individual reality. Many of these were very specific, from wearing a slip with a dress listed by one of the youngest subjects to detailing the exact behavior expected from a woman on a geology expedition.

Fourth, the rules identified by this particular group of women tended to restrict more than to allow, particularly the rules for

women. They were often stated in negative terms: don't go to bars, don't choose a male-dominated profession, don't take the initiative. This choice of negatives reflects directly the statements of the subjects themselves. The emphasis on subservience and acquiescence in women and on dominance and power in men is a pessimistic picture of the comparative roles of men and women. It appears that, even with gains made by both sexes, with more opportunities for women in business and professions and more openness in men to be emotional and nurturing, the rules for the small facts of day-to-day life still separate people rather than bring them together. It is here where the fewest gains toward equality have apparently been made.

Age Differences as Reflection of Change in Context

Much of psychological research that focuses on age differences in any aspect of development describes and explains those differences through the use of stage theory. To design research that includes varying age groups predetermines a need to consider stages as a way of explaining the differences.

Stage theory in sex-role research explains the changes across ages in individuals' descriptions of masculinity or femininity as progressive changes in thought directly connected to cognitive growth and separate from the context in which they are involved. The stages of development in sex role are seen to be universal and due to cognitive transformations in perception. The emphasis is on

"thinking about" masculinity and femininity, and changes with age are viewed as qualitatively different organizations of experience rather than as a reflection of any difference in experience.

The developmental research discussed in chapter IV (Ullian, 1976) describes the changes in conceptualization of masculinity and femininity in these terms. This study suggests that other factors than stages alone should be considered in explaining age differences in perception.

Any changes across age are confounded by the changes in the context of behavior, the environmental changes that re-structure an individual's day-to-day experience. This change of context would affect the way he/she perceives reality.

Each of the age groups represented in this study are members of a different context, participants in a differently structured setting. Junior high, senior high, college and worker/mother are each in their own ways very different settings. As the context for behavior changes, so does the emphasis in the rules for operating within that context.

The changes that were most obvious in this study were changes in emphasis across the age groups. As described in chapter IV, the differences reflected a change in the environment, in the context of the rules, rather than in any major differences in the rules themselves.

The emphasis in this study was not on the ways people thought about the roles, but instead on their perceptions of the social norms

that governed their behavior. The results of this study suggest that the differences in the responses by age groups are due to a more complex interaction of both age/stage changes in thought and the change of context for the behavior that accompanies each age than on stage changes alone.

This one study cannot serve to resolve the issue of stage change in sex-role development, just as one study describing stages cannot establish them as fact. There simply has not yet been enough research conducted to make a definitive statement. Both perspectives need to be very carefully re-considered, particularly as they relate to variations between cultural groups.

Implications for Further Research

To use the rules derived from this study to describe the role of women-in-general or men-in-general would be a fallacy. The rules, at this point, can only be viewed as a reflection of the daily lives of one sample population. As such, they are a statement of culture. To be able to apply these findings to other populations, the same research design needs to be extended to other groups. The advantages discussed above of the sex-roles-as-rules model and of phenomenological research in general for identifying cultural differences makes this model particularly well suited for inquiring in other racial, ethnic, regional, and social class groups as to their perceptions of masculinity and femininity. This extension of research would make it possible to

identify both similarities and differences in the rules that define masculinity and femininity.

The same research needs also to be conducted with men so that their perceptions of the social rules for both men and women can be explored. This is necessary to provide a balanced picture of either role. Once a listing of rules can be derived that represents both sexes and several cultures, a more complete description of sex roles based on this model would be possible.

This study also raises several questions that need to be explored. One is the issue of context discussed above. Do the perceptions of the rules change with age or context? Three of the four groups of women interviewed were students. What are the rules like for women the same age who are not students? Would being a mother at 16 change the perceptions of the roles that men and women enact? All of these women were middle class, as is true of most of the subjects in sex-role research. How would the context of being a coal miner or the wife of a coal miner affect an individual's perception of sex roles? How would the same context at different ages interact to affect the conceptualization of masculinity and femininity? Further developmental research would begin to answer these questions concerning the relationship between stages of role development and the changing contexts of sex roles.

A second question that needs to be explored is how an individual's actual behavior relates to the perceived social norm, the

individual's personal norms, and to the perception of the costs of breaking the rules. Does an individual's adherence to the rules follow her agreement with the rule itself? Does an individual's perception of the costs affect her own behavior? This study did not attempt to look at the actual behavior as it related to the whole structure. One question not yet analyzed touched on the issue but not with enough depth to begin to answer these questions.

Beyond Current Sex-roles as Determinants of Behavior

It has been suggested by other theoreticians and researchers that the goal of sex-role development is the ability to transcend the norms for behavior and select whatever behavior or lifestyle is appropriate in any given situation, to go beyond the rules. This study demonstrates that, at best, transcendence is a struggle that results in serious costs to the individual who attempts to go beyond the norm. The social norm is, however, not without its own cost. As described so well by one of the subjects in this study:

"There ought to be a way to live without giving up our souls. We give up so much of ourselves." (203)

Perhaps there is a way, but change is never easy. Wittgenstein (1953) explains the necessity for agreement in setting the rules themselves. We are not coerced by the rules (of logic, language, or role behavior) but human practice, the behavior itself, establishes what

the rules are. We agree to behave in certain ways, to expect others to behave in certain established ways. We do not agree because we follow the rules but our agreement defines the content of the rules themselves. To change the norm, and the costs to individuals, we must change the agreement that sets the norm. To begin to change that agreement we must first be aware of what we have been agreeing to. Rhetoric about the gains made toward equality camouflage the day-to-day realities of inequality. It is the awareness of that inequality, and the willingness to question that inequality, that is perhaps the step we all must take. Again, in the words of one 16 year old student:

I think it's important for women to question, or at least to look at the values society does provide and ask themselves whether or not they will meet them. Because too many people subject themselves to what society believes and what other people think, and wind up hating themselves for it. (204)

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APPENDIX 1
PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT FORM

1. I agree to participate in a study entitled "An Exploratory Study of Femininity as a Structure of Rules for Behavior", conducted by Mary L. Blankenship as part of her research at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. I understand that the major objective of this study is to identify the rules that define the feminine role. I understand my role in this research involves participation in one taped interview of approximately one and one half to two hours.
2. I understand that information generated from my participation in this study will be used initially to prepare a written dissertation. This same information may also be used at a later date in further written articles.
3. I understand and agree with the following conditions regarding the collection and safeguarding on information collected by this study:
 - a. There are no anticipated risks or discomfort by my participation.
 - b. All information will be recorded anonymously. A code will be used to identify tapes and transcriptions of interviews. No individually identifiable information will be reported.
 - c. My participation in this study is voluntary, and I may withdraw at any point.
 - d. There will be no monetary compensation for my participation.
4. If I have any questions about this study or its procedures, I may obtain more information by calling Mary L. Blankenship at (413) 256-8505.
5. If I am under the age of 18, I understand that my parent's consent will be sought and their signature below represents their consent for me to participate in this study as outlined above.

Signature: _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Procedure for initial questions: Answers to question 1 will be recorded by the interviewer on the accompanying sheet(s). After approval as to accuracy and any needed clarification by the subject, S will use these sheets to respond to question 2.

1. What are the rules for being a girl (woman)? What are the rules for being a boy (man)?
2. Using the response sheet, rate each of the rules you stated as to their importance. (1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not so important)
3. What are the rules that you can't break? What happens to you if you break those rules? (Specific rules from the first part of this question.)
4. How are you different from that? (using appropriate list)
5. What kind of behavior in a man (boy) would be considered feminine? What kind of behavior in a woman (girl) would be considered masculine?
6. Which do you think is better, a man (boy) who behaves in a feminine way or a woman (girl) who behaves in a masculine way? On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you feel about this? Which does society as a whole think is better? On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you feel about this?
7. What kind of work does a woman do? (Not can, but actually does.) What kind of work does a man do?
8. What kind of work do you want to do? (Or - for the oldest group - Are you doing the kind of work you want to do?)
9. Is there anything that will hinder or prevent you from achieving this goal?
10. If a woman were to be a corporate president, could she still be feminine? What do you think the costs would be?
11. For a woman who sets high achievement as a goal, what are the rules for her?

12. What is important to you now as a woman (girl)? [What are your goals at this time?]
13. How will you achieve these goals? (Specific goals from #12)
14. Is there anything that will hinder or prevent you from achieving these goals?
15. Has there ever been a time when you were prevented from achieving something you wanted because you were a woman? Tell me about it. What did you do?

APPENDIX 3
RESPONSE SHEET

RESPONSE SHEET

Questions 1 and 2: What are the rules for being a girl/boy/woman/man? (Circle appropriate question.) Rate each rule on a scale of 1 to 3: 1 - very important, 2 - important, 3 - not so important.

	1 very important	2 important	3 not so important
1. _____	1	2	3
2. _____	1	2	3
3. _____	1	2	3
4. _____	1	2	3
5. _____	1	2	3
6. _____	1	2	3
7. _____	1	2	3
8. _____	1	2	3
9. _____	1	2	3
10. _____	1	2	3
11. _____	1	2	3
12. _____	1	2	3

APPENDIX 4
PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

AGE _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____

RACE OR ETHNIC GROUP _____

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL _____

OCCUPATION _____

COLLEGE MAJOR _____

MOTHER'S OCCUPATION _____

FATHER'S OCCUPATION _____

MARITAL STATUS _____

PARENT'S MARITAL STATUS _____

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION _____

CHILDHOOD RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION _____

APPENDIX 5

LIST OF RULES FOR WOMEN AND MEN, WITH THE
TOTAL NUMBER GIVEN BY EACH AGE GROUP

LIST OF RULES FOR WOMEN AND MEN, WITH THE
TOTAL NUMBER GIVEN BY EACH AGE GROUP

	Groups			
	I	II	III	IV
Rules for women				
Dimension I: Rules for professional behavior:				
1. Don't select a male-dominated profession.	2	5	3	0
2. Acceptance can come only after proving your capabilities in the job market.	0	2	2	1
3. Home and family should take precedence over job	1	1	3	4
4. Juggle being feminine/family responsibilities/career competently.	0	2	2	4
5. Keep your place at work.	1	0	1	3
6. Don't be the "boss".	2	4	5	2
7. Don't make more money than a man does.	1	2	3	4
8. Don't have a job outside of the home.	3	1	2	3
Dimension II: Rules for social behavior:				
9. Don't argue or fight.	7	1	2	1
10. Don't swear.	3	1	2	2
11. Don't go to bars.	3	2	2	1
12. Demonstrate good manners.	4	1	0	2
13. Be happy with your lot in life.	0	2	3	5
14. Don't be competent outside traditionally feminine activity.	1	3	4	2

15. Don't be good at team sports.	5	2	0	0
16. Don't be as good at sports as males.	0	3	3	3
17. Social activities should be "feminine".	8	1	0	0
18. Don't state your opinions.	0	3	3	3
19. Don't be interested in sex.	3	2	0	0
20. Don't be involved in several sexual relationships at once.	3	2	0	0
21. Don't take the initiative in male/female relationships.	5	5	4	0
22. Acquiesce to the male.	2	3	7	5
23. Be responsible for the male/female relationship, its quality and direction.	1	2	3	1
24. Friendships should be with women.	1	5	5	3

Dimension III: Rules for physical appearance:

25. Be concerned about your appearance.	3	4	2	2
26. Dress well in feminine clothes.	11	5	3	2
27. Be fashionable	6	2	0	0
28. Be attractive physically: thin and well groomed.	4	4	5	7

Dimension IV: Rules for family relationships:

29. Get married.	2	7	6	6
30. Have children.	2	9	5	8
31. Take the primary responsibility for child care	7	7	4	5
32. Be responsible for the day-to-day running of the household and family	0	3	5	8

33. Be responsible for the domestic chores.	10	8	6	9
34. Put the family's needs before your own.	1	1	6	5
35. Outside interests (or responsibilities) come second to the home and family.	2	2	3	3
36. Acquiesce to the male.	2	4	3	4

Dimension V: Rules for intellectual and academic behavior:

37. Be a good student.	8	3	0	2
38. Do better in school than the boys do.	3	5	0	0
39. Don't be smarter than the males.	1	5	7	4
40. If you are smarter than a man is, don't let him know it.	0	0	3	3
41. Don't be better educated than men.	0	2	4	0
42. Don't be good at math/science but in verbal or creative areas.	0	6	4	1

Dimension VI: Rules for personality characteristics:

43. Be submissive.	1	0	4	3
44. Do not be aggressive.	1	4	6	0
45. Be nurturing.	0	1	5	5
46. Be weak.	3	3	5	0
47. Be quiet.	3	1	3	4
48. Be understanding.	0	0	3	2
49. Be neat and clean.	6	1	1	2
50. Be responsible.	4	0	1	0
51. Be accommodating.	0	0	3	6

52. Be emotional.	0	3	5	0
53. Be socially adept.	2	2	3	3
54. Be obedient.	3	0	1	2
55. Be sensitive to others.	2	2	2	4
56. Be sweet.	3	1	1	0

Rules for men

Dimension I: Rules for professional behavior:

1. Choose a job outside of traditionally feminine occupations.	3	3	5	2
2. Be financially successful.	3	9	6	4
3. Have a steady job.	3	5	2	3
4. Be the "boss", have the higher level job.	3	8	4	3
5. Make more money than the woman does.	1	3	3	2
6. Career should come first.	1	1	3	5

Dimension II: Rules for social behavior:

7. Be interested in and do well in sports.	10	9	10	5
8. Settle disagreements physically (by fighting).	3	1	1	1
9. Sports played should be "masculine" ones.	4	2	2	0
10. Be interested in mechanical things (cars, repairs).	4	3	5	3
11. Be the initiator sexually.	5	2	1	2
12. Be the dominant one in relationships with females.	5	4	5	2

13. Be the initiator of the dating relationship. 6 5 3 0

Dimension III: Rules for physical appearance:

14. Be strong physically. 7 7 9 8

15. Don't be concerned with clothes or appearance. 7 2 1 0

16. Dress should be conservative and masculine. 4 2 0 2

Dimension IV: Rules for family relationships:

17. Do the outside chores and the heavier work at home. 5 6 2 3

18. Support the family. 8 8 7 10

19. Get married. 0 1 5 2

20. Have children. 0 2 2 2

21. Make the decisions for the family. 5 5 7 6

22. Spend time with children in sports or entertainment. 0 0 2 4

23. Take charge of family finances. 2 2 0 2

24. Be a part of the family but distant emotionally. 2 3 3 1

Dimension V: Rules for intellectual and academic behavior:

25. Succeed academically. 1 2 4 1

26. Be more intelligent than the female. 2 3 4 2

27. Be better at math/science areas. 0 4 2 0

28. Good grades should not be important. 6 1 0 0

Dimension VI: Rules for personality characteristics:

29. Be strong emotionally.	2	4	8	3
30. Be always in control.	1	2	3	4
31. Be aggressive.	2	2	5	3
32. Be logical.	0	2	3	0
33. Don't show emotions.	4	5	8	4
34. Be dominant.	0	2	3	0
35. Be independent.	1	1	4	2
36. Be superior to women.	5	0	1	2
37. Be competent.	1	0	2	2
38. Be competitive.	0	0	4	1

