Women, work and family in England and France: a question of identity

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Nuffield College

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For my mother,

whose work

made this possible;

and for Alice,

who I hope

will find it all easier

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Abstract

This thesis explores some of the individual attitudes and choices which may explain differing patterns in women's work in England and France. Women's work, however, cannot be considered outside the context of their family lives, and there exist important differences between England and France in terms of the structures in place to facilitate the combining of paid work and family commitments. It is proposed that these are related to broader social and economic structures which characterise the countries concerned, and the family and gender roles assumed by them.

The question addressed, therefore, is the relationship between work identity and female identity. This is examined by comparing full-time working women, both single and with families, in the two countries. Since the question concerns meanings rather than frequencies, quantitative methods such as surveys are rejected in favour of a triangulated methodology combining repertory grid, Twenty Statements Test and in-depth interview. The results from each of these are reported separately.

There is strong convergence within and clear differences between national groups, regardless of marital status. French and English groups are both committed to working, but this takes different forms in the two countries. The French women define themselves equally in terms of work, personal relationships and social lives, with relatively little conflict between them. For the English women, work identity comes first, there is more conflict between work and family roles and more tension in personal relationships. This may partly be accounted for by the English women's greater concern with career progression and personal advancement, which is more likely to conflict with family roles.

The findings are related to broader issues of economic, social and family policy, historical factors, religious traditions and attitudes towards gender and equality. These themselves are seen as reflecting more general ideologies in the countries concerned.

Finally, there is a consideration of questions raised by the study, and suggestions for further research.

Detailed abstract

Paid employment has been regarded as the key to women's liberation. But having two jobs to perform, in and outside the home, coupled with problems of childcare, has led some women to question work as a source of emancipation.

France has always had a greater proportion of women in paid work than other European countries. There are also more structures in place to facilitate the combining of paid work and motherhood. Women are also, however, encouraged by means of family allowances to stay at home to look after second and subsequent children. In France, therefore, both paid work and motherhood appear to be encouraged.

This thesis investigates comparative attitudes to women, work and family. The central question is the extent to which women's identity in the two countries is defined by their work and family roles respectively, and the psychological benefits or otherwise of paid work.

Chapter 1 presents the problem, and the aims of the thesis. There follows a consideration of the meaning of work, examined through data on the psychological effects of unemployment and, by extension, the psychological benefits of paid work. This analysis is then applied to the situation of women, who may benefit from the economic and personal independence of paid employment, but experience conflict 1) at a practical level between their work and home lives; and 2) at a psychological level between work and female identity.

Patterns of women's work in Britain and France are compared. French women's employment is more continuous while women in Britain tend to drop out of the labour force on the birth of children, resuming work once their children are grown. The greater provision of childcare facilities in France may partly explain this, but it

is suggested that such provision itself represents a cultural difference and is the result of differences in the economic organisation of the two countries, particularly earlier industrialisation in England. This resulted in a separation of the home and workplace, with men going out to work and women staying at home to raise families. France, however, was until the 1960s still characterised by family farms and small businesses run by couples. It is proposed that this results in societal attitudes which sanction women's combining work and family roles. France's social and family policies, rooted in its pronatalism, have also supported the combining of work and motherhood. The hypothesis is that these differences will be manifested in terms of greater conflict and tension for the English women and easier assimilation by the French women of their work and family identities.

Chapter 2 describes the methodology employed. The aims of the research are re-stated and related to the choice of methods. There follows a critique of traditional social psychology ("psychological social psychology"), which has focussed on interaction between individuals in dyads and small groups, neglecting larger social structure. By adopting the positivistic stance of general psychology, it has also been characterised by the use of experiments and statistical analyses. This has limited the kinds of questions which can be addressed and which are of social importance.

There is a tradition of "sociological" social psychology, but this has been dominated by the influence of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934), which regards mental processes as culturally derived, but still focusses on social interaction, emphasising language. This concern with language has characterised recent social constructionist approaches, through analysis of "texts", "accounts" and "episodes" A second sociological approach (Goffman, 1959) focusses on roles, but again the emphasis is on interaction, through the interlocking of individual roles and rule-governed behaviour.

The most recent challenge to traditional social psychology has come from Discourse Analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discourse approaches assert the pre-eminent importance of language and text. Meaning does not come about through representation, but is *produced* as people position themselves in social relations. These are never static or fixed, and so plurality, variability and multiplicity are emphasised.

This study questions both traditional social psychology and discourse analysis. Language is regarded as a vehicle for expression of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviour, but these are not seen as *purely* constructed in the discursive situation. Rather there is an extra-discursive reality, for which language is the means of expression. It considers what has to be the case for discourses to be possible. Language is seen as representation, not the one-to-one mapping of word to object, but rather representation as the term is used in philosophical aesthetics. The reality thus presented is a mediated reality, through the eyes of the respondent and subsequently the researcher.

The task of social psychology is regarded as being to relate such individual "ways of seeing" to the social context in which they are manifested. In order to do this, the emphasis must shift from the individual to the group. Where discourse analysis emphasises the variability and inconsistency of accounts in individual or dialogic situations, therefore, what is attempted here is the identification of *pattern* which relates or distinguishes members of particular *groups*. With its emphasis on order, there are parallels here with complexity theory, as opposed to "chaos".

Individuals are regarded as socially embedded and so cannot be considered outside their social, cultural and historical context. This study questions the assumption of universality made by much of psychology and seeks to show that attitudes, beliefs

and behaviours are related to social institutions and practices. A "societal psychology" (Himmelweit and Gaskell, 1990) approach is advocated and the characteristics of this outlined. A comparative study demonstrates the importance of such cultural and institutional influences.

Although an emphasis on language is questioned, because the study was concerned with individual meanings, methods were sought which allowed respondents to express themselves in their own words and on their own terms. At the same time, there was a concern for objectivity and systematic analysis. To maximise objectivity and robustness a triangulated methodology (Denzin, 1978) was favoured, where the results of one method could be compared against others. This necessitates an intensive rather than extensive design, and ten respondents in each country was considered feasible. Since the subject was identity, various measures of the self-concept were considered.

The three methods chosen were the Twenty Statements Test (or Who Am I? - Kuhn and McPartland, 1954), repertory grid (Kelly, 1955) and in-depth interview. These allowed a gradual progression in the interviewer/respondent relationship, from the quick to administer TST, to the "structured conversation" afforded by the repertory grid, then the potentially more invasive interview.

The procedures for the three methods are described in detail. Analysis took the form of categorisation of the data (statements produced for the TST, constructs for the repertory grids, transcripts of the interview data) and identification of themes. Individual grids were also analysed using the GAB and GRAN computer programs. The results are reported in separate chapters for each method.

Chapter 3 describes the repertory grid analysis and results. These are discussed together since the principal contribution of the grid data is in terms of the constructs

produced and the categorisation of these itself involved interpretation of the data. 41 categories of constructs were identified, with three major clusters: 1) Satisfaction and fulfilment; 2) Constraints and pressures and 3) Relations with others. Smaller categories identified were control; autonomy and independence; and self-confidence. Smaller again, but still distinguishable, were childhood/adulthood; comfort/discomfort; and balance. The categories of constructs thus identified were then related to the elements provided in the grid.

What particularly distinguishes the single women is their concern with fulfilment. They see this as coming from a satisfying job and relationship with a partner, rather than from children. The married women are more concerned with boredom and routine. For the English women stimulation and variety comes from a job outside the home, whereas for the French women it comes from a job but also partners, children and holidays.

The French women distinguish more clearly between the formal relations of work and affective relations outside work. Work is a source of self-development and fulfilment, but so are relationships with partner, children and life outside work. Joy and equality are seen in terms of personal relationships rather than work.

The English women are concerned about the respect of others, being regarded as an individual rather than in a role, and issues of control and powerlessness. These are not concerns for the French women. It is at work that the English women see themselves as fulfilling their potential and they derive their self-esteem from the workplace rather than the home or personal relationships. Consequently there is a concern with being approved and respected at work.

Overall, there is more tension in the picture of the English women than the French. Work is a source of self-esteem but there is anxiety about being valued. Children

and home life provide a feeling of being needed, but are also seen as a constraint and emotionally demanding. For the French women work is important in terms of self-development, variety and change, but fulfilment and self-esteem comes from relationships and life outside work. These themes recur in the TST and interview material.

Chapter 4 describes the analysis and results of the Twenty Statements Test. Again statements are categorised, largely according to McLaughlin's (Gordon, 1968) categorisation, adapted to the respondent group here. This classification consisted of 25 categories concerning ascribed characteristics, roles and memberships, interests and activities, material references, senses of self and personality. Statements were classified according to this scheme with some statements being assigned to more than one category.

The order position of statements was considered first, with those coming earliest in the list regarded as the most salient to the individual concerned. The statements were then assessed as a whole, in terms of the frequency with which a category was mentioned and the content of the statements within it.

The French statements are more descriptive and the English statements more evaluative. The English women are more judgmental, positively and negatively, about themselves. The French women are more aware of their femininity and partnership roles, with these coming earliest in their statement lists. For the English women work role is more important. Maternal role for the mothers is equally important in the two countries. The English women define themselves first as workers and mothers, and the French women first as women and partners. Work role comes next in the list. The English women are more concerned about childcare issues and the French women more openly express affection and emotion for their children. The French single women state a desire to have children while none of the

English women do. The extended family, however, features more strongly for the English women than the French.

The French women define themselves less in terms of their work role, and this is less enmeshed with their private lives. Domestic work and home-based activities feature more strongly in the English women's statements. The French women are more outward-looking, referring more to going out, social life and entertaining. Their statements are "lighter", lacking the "moral" tone of the English. The French express simple preferences about things while the English women refer more to activities. The English women refer more to physical appearance than do the French women. Women in both countries mention lack of time and the need to be organised, but only the English refer to being tired. The English women describe themselves as assertive and reliable, while the French describe themselves as "dreamers"

Again, therefore, there is an emphasis on work role in the English accounts, and on a balance between work and personal life in the French. Some reasons for this are given in the interview material.

Chapter 5 presents the interview analysis. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and themes identified and charted. There is a detailed description of how the interviews were analysed and themes identified. Subject areas included family upbringing, the respective influence of fathers and mothers, whether mothers worked and how domestic work was organised; biographical information concerning education and work history; positive and negative aspects of work now; and how this related to family situation and relationships with partner, children and extended family.

The women came from a variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds, but clear themes could be identified. Again there were greater differences between national groups than those of differing marital status. Even with this small sample, in both countries family background mirrored work patterns in the countries concerned. The mothers of the French women tended to work continuously, full-time, while those of the English women worked part-time once the children were grown, or not at all. Fathers in France were more present in the home.

The French women's educational backgrounds were more varied than those of the English women, with a greater emphasis on vocational training. Their work histories were also more straightforward. As is frequently documented for women, however, both groups had often found jobs through informal networks, and job moves were related to personal lives.

For both English and French women, work represents something personal, but for the English this means the freedom to *be* themselves, whereas for the French it represented something *for* themselves. Work makes the English women feel valued and competent, and gives them a sense of belonging, structure, variety and balance. For the French women work is distinctly separate from family, it gives them something outside the home, interest and stimulation and an escape from worries. For the English women the financial aspects of work are more of a necessity, largely because of financial commitments related to property. The English women also regard salary as some indication of their personal worth. The French women are more likely to spend money on their social lives or holidays and money is valued chiefly for the independence it gives them.

The negative aspects of work for the English women are lack of time, for themselves and domestic tasks; tiredness; lack of recognition; and being part of a male culture. For the French, negative feelings about work come from limited

opportunity for self-expression or self-development, and if the work is not intrinsically interesting. They do not want work to dominate their lives to the detriment of other aspects.

The English women often feel undervalued. For the French, being a women *per se* is not regarded as a hindrance.

In relationships, the English women describe more tension with partners. Relationships are more stable, but a partner represents another person to look after, is more absent, and more committed to work than family. There is a certain material basis to relationships, particularly with regard to property and mortgages. There is a fear of engulfment, but also a fear of solitude. The English women are also more conservative and less likely to live with a partner without marrying.

The French women's relationships are less stable, but they talk more openly about affections and emotions. Marriage or partnership does not limit autonomy, and solitude is "sad".

Childcare is more difficult in England and this creates tensions with partners. Mothers also worry and feel guilty about leaving their children in the care of others.

There is greater provision of childcare in France, much of it state-provided. The French women do not express the same guilt about leaving their children, rather seeing nursery schools, for example, as a positive experience for children. Children are more integrated into the adults' routine, relieving women of the need to cater for children and partner separately. Daily routine in general is easier for the French women, who can collect children later in the evening and shop after work instead of at lunchtimes, thus giving them a break during the day.

The English women are more distant geographically and emotionally from their extended families, and for several the "family house" is important, underlining the emphasis on property and the home.

The English women express more feelings of solidarity. Relationships between the French women are often characterised by competition.

Many of these findings reflect differences in social structure and attitudes towards gender roles and some possible explanations for the findings are suggested in the Discussion (Chapter 6).

Chapter 6 first assesses the Methodology and its relation to the questions under investigation, detailing practical methodological problems which were encountered. In general the methods selected were felt to be sound and appropriate. However, the underlying assumptions of the repertory grid technique, particularly the characterisation of individuals' construing as bipolar, is questioned.

The findings of the three methods are then compared. They are shown to be sufficiently different in character to demonstrate independence between methods, but there is sufficient convergence to provide evidence of real phenomena.

The significance of work for the women in the study is discussed and related to the literature presented in Chapter 1. There follows a discussion of the women's conceptualisation of work, family and femininity outside the framework of existing studies and in the context of the language used to express this. The study highlights the differing importance of the economic aspects of work to the women in the two countries, and the relative importance of different psychological functions for different groups: structure, for example, seems less important to the married women, self-validation is important for the English women and having something

personal and outside the home is important for the French. Gender relations are considered within their historical and cultural context, as are children and the extended family. Differences in conceptualisation of femininity in the two countries are discussed.

These differences are then related to various aspects of the two cultures: to historical factors such as France's pronatalist policies and the English emphasis on a family wage; the separate spheres of home and work; differing social and family policies and religious traditions. The findings are also related to the differing characters of Anglo-Saxon and French feminism, which Offen (1988) refers to as individualist and relational respectively.

Some implications for social psychology are outlined, and the study is assessed in the context of the societal psychology approach described in Chapter 2.

Finally, the study is reviewed as a whole, and suggestions proposed for further research.

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INTRODUCTION

Paid work outside the home and the economic independence it brings has been regarded in Anglo-Saxon cultures as the key to women's liberation. But now, with more women working than ever before, many find that, rather than being freed from the oppression of domesticity, they have two jobs - those of homemaker and worker - to perform. This, coupled with anxieties about affordable childcare, has led women to question paid employment as a source of emancipation, and we are said to be moving into a "post-feminist" era which seeks to redress the balance between work and family.

In France, there has not been the same emphasis on paid work and career advancement as a means to equality, yet women have consistently made up a larger percentage of the full-time workforce than in other European countries and there are institutional structures in place which facilitate women's working outside the home. At the same time, there are state financial incentives to encourage women to stay at home to look after children. It would appear, therefore, that in France both working and staying at home are supported, representing, perhaps, a real choice for women.

This thesis sets out to examine women's orientations to work and family in the two countries and explores the relationship between their work, family and female identities and the differing social, economic and cultural frameworks within which they are operating.

Aims of the thesis

The aims of the thesis are threefold. First, given the differing situations outlined above, to examine whether English and French women relate differently to their work and family roles. What is the relative importance of their work and personal lives, and of their roles as workers, partners, mothers, daughters or friends? It is suggested that because women's work is more accepted in France there will be less of a conflict

between women's work identity and female identity, and less conflict between work life and home life. Much of the difference between the two countries rests on attitudes towards children and childcare, and therefore single women and those with a partner and children are compared. In order to identify what is of psychological value in paid work, and how this can be related to women, the unemployment literature is reviewed, since the most systematic studies of the psychological meaning of work have come from looking at what is lost when paid work is taken away. The findings of the current study will later in the thesis be compared with the literature on unemployment.

The second aim is to investigate the extent to which any differences found in the two countries can be related to broader social and cultural characteristics of the countries concerned. This involves looking at both historical factors and current infrastructure, and identifying relationships between these and the accounts given by the women in the study.

By means of this comparison of particular individuals in particular countries, Britain and France, the third aim, at a broader social psychological level, is to show the relationship between social, historical and cultural factors and individual psychology. This does not mean looking at individual case studies, however. Individual accounts are examined, but what is important is the relationship between these as manifestations of individual experience, and the broader social context in which that experience takes place. It is asserted here that in order to postulate any meaningful relationship between broader social and cultural factors and individual psychology, it is not enough to analyse a handful of individual case histories and relate these to social context, as this would tell us little about the *shared* experience which constitutes the social and which is manifested in individuals. What is needed is to identify *patterns across individuals* which reflect cultural features. Since single women and those with a partner and children are to be compared, this involves looking at *groups*, French and English,

single and with children, and thus comparing similarities and differences within and across groups. However, the more usual methodologies used to compare groups, namely questionnaires, surveys and laboratory methods, are rejected since they do not allow respondents to express themselves freely and in their own words, but according to a format laid down by the investigator. While the aim is to look for pattern and to compare groups, therefore, the non-quantitative methodology chosen reflects a concern that the positivist approach of traditional social psychology does not adequately tap the meanings and interpretations which individuals place upon their experience, but rather expresses the pre-ordained interpretation of that experience by the investigator. The methodology focuses on individual accounts, therefore, but these are then considered together in order to identify the pattern which reflects the shared meanings and commonalities of the social. These issues are elaborated in Chapter 2.

Chapter 1 considers the meaning of work - whether there is a need to work, and the psychological concomitants of paid employment . These are discussed in relation to the documented psychological effects of unemployment (and by extension the benefits of work), and related to the situation of women. There follows a comparison of women's work in Britain and France and a consideration of the possible psychological consequences of differences which exist between the two countries.

Chapter 2 describes the methodology employed to investigate the questions posed in Chapter 1. It begins with a critique of contemporary social psychology and seeks to emphasise the individual in his or her social context rather than as a decontextualised "subject". This is followed by a rationale for the methods used and a detailed description of procedures.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present the analysis and findings for each of the methods used: the repertory grid, Twenty Statements Test and interview respectively.

Chapter 6 begins with an assessment of the methodology, its strengths and weaknesses. It goes on to discuss first the findings themselves, highlighting themes and relating these to broader social and cultural context; and secondly the relation of these to the view of social psychology taken in Chapter 2.

Finally, there is a review of the study as a whole, the questions it raises and suggestions for further research.

1 THE MEANING OF WORK

Why should I let the toad *work*
Squat on my life?
Can't I use my wit as a pitchfork
And drive the brute off?
Philip Larkin, *Toads*

What is the value of paid work in terms of psychological health and giving meaning to people's lives? Certainly from the psychological point of view it seems to be indisputable that for the most part the effects of being without work are negative (see below). This suggests that although work might be constraining, in our culture it is also of psychological value. Waged work in its present form came with the Industrial Revolution, when the introduction of large-scale machinery made discipline and structure essential. Where previously there had been resistance to the time-discipline imposed by waged labour, many households now became entirely dependent on a wage, and resistance was no longer possible without causing the family to suffer. Work gradually came to assume more importance, and Protestantism, in particular, lent support both to the value of hard work and the capitalist ethos. The need to work, therefore, may be an artificial creation of modern industrial society, but, as Sayers (1987) argues, it is no less a need for that. It may have been produced externally by social and historical forces, but has been internalised to become a "real and ineliminable feature of contemporary psychology" (Sayers, op cit,.p 23).

The psychological value of work

As described above, with the Industrial Revolution came dependence on a wage for family subsistence. The first and most obvious benefit of paid work, therefore, is financial. It has been suggested (see, for example, Smith 1997) that one of the reasons for family break-up in Britain in recent years is that women, by going out to work

themselves, are no longer dependent on men financially and so do not need them in order to provide for themselves or their children. Within families, studies such as that of Harkness et al (1997) have shown that women's earnings, far from being merely "pin-money", play an increasingly important role in keeping families out of poverty. One of the issues this thesis addresses is the relative importance of the financial aspects of work for the women in this study: to what extent families are dependent on the woman's wage, whether money has the same significance for the different groups of women studied, how it is managed within the family and whether they choose to spend it on similar things. Bostyn and Wight (1987), for example, propose that there is an association between commodities and personal identity. Consumer goods have a symbolic significance in expressing self-identity: the goods people buy are a physical expression of their characters and their worth. Being able to purchase goods may symbolise respectability (maintaining a "respectable" standard of living); renewal and regeneration; independence (particularly in the case of the young, and perhaps women); the ability to provide for one's family; reciprocal exchange (being able to buy a drink for someone in the pub, or offering hospitality when friends call); power, masculinity and sex (one of the young men in the Bostyn and Wight study is quoted as saying that without a car or a good job "It doesn't matter if you look like Robert Redford" (Bostyn and Wight, op cit, p 144). Money is needed to buy goods, and for most people the means to that money is through work. In the present study the relationship between money, consumer goods and identity is explored within the contexts of culture and gender. Like most studies on unemployment, analyses such as that described above are based on the experiences of men. It will be argued that findings such as those of Bostyn and Wight are not only gender-biased, but are also culturally specific, relating as they do to a society where a high value is attached to consumer power.

The money which paid work brings may nevertheless provide access to areas of experience regarded as necessary for psychological well-being: self-esteem, self-identity, autonomy, independence, physical security, social relations and control over one's environment. Is there anything which employment itself provides over and above these? We shall look at three models of the psychological benefits of work: Jahoda's (1982) "latent functions" of employment, the psychological by-products of the strictly economic function of work; Warr's (1987, 1994) "vitamin model", which proposes nine environmental features as of primary importance to mental health in the context of work/unemployment; and the psychoanalytic perspective, which sees work as crucial in attaching the individual to reality. These three models are presented in some detail since they will provide a framework against which to examine the accounts of work given by the women in this study.

Jahoda (op cit) would argue that there are certain "latent functions" of employment in addition to the "manifest function" of earning a living. Foremost among these is that employment imposes a time structure on the waking day; second, it provides the opportunity for shared experiences outside the nuclear family; third, it links people to goals and purposes that transcend their own; fourth, it defines aspects of personal status and identity; and finally, it enforces activity.

These may be gained as a consequence of the economic necessity of working, but have important psychological consequences of their own. In addition, only paid employment can provide these categories of experience to the same degree. Housework, charitable work, hobbies and leisure pursuits *might* provide one or more of them but only paid work offers all of them together. Neither, according to Jahoda, do such activities involve the social compulsion without which it is very difficult to obtain such experiences for oneself:

> ... nobody prevents the unemployed from creating their own time structure and social contacts, from sharing goals and purposes with others or from exercising their skills as best they can. But the psychological input required to do so on a regular basis under one's own steam entirely, is colossal.
>
> (Jahoda, 1979, p 311)

Yet work is often a negative experience, and this is a problem which Warr (op cit) has attempted to explore. He has looked at features of the environment which contribute to mental health, focussing on employment and unemployment, but proposing that his model provides a framework for comparing environments of all kinds, including family settings and domestic work. He identifies nine environmental features as particularly important in this respect: opportunity for control; opportunity for skill use; externally generated goals and task demands; variety; environmental clarity; availability of money; physical security; interpersonal contact; and valued social position. Warr refers to his model as a "vitamin model", because some of these features are like vitamins A and D (harmful over a certain level) while others are like C and E (have no benefit beyond a certain level), whether considered in relation to employment or being without a job.

Both Warr and Jahoda imply that paid work affords experiences which cannot be provided in any other way and without which the individual is psychologically deprived. For our purposes, the Jahoda and Warr models can be combined to give a number of features of paid work which may be of psychological importance. Indeed certain of Warr's "vitamins" correspond directly to Jahoda's five latent functions: "opportunity for interpersonal contact" and "valued social position" to "regularly shared experiences" and "personal status and identity"; and "externally generated goals", by Warr's own definition (Warr, op cit), to the remaining three in Jahoda's model. "Availability of money" similarly corresponds to Jahoda's *manifest* function of employment, namely earning a living. And "physical security" is in large part determined by availability of money; indeed physical security, in the form of shelter, clothing, food etc, cannot be obtained without money. This distilled version gives us the following aspects of paid work as important to psychological health: the availability

of money; regularly shared experiences; personal status and identity; time structure; externally generated goals; and enforced activity. The present study will examine the extent to which these are relevant or adequate to describe the experience of work in a female and cross-cultural context. It might be argued, for example, that women's domestic work also involves structure (in order to provide meals, or to fit in with children's routines, for instance) and enforced activity. Paid work may not be the only activity which provides these areas of experience, therefore, and for women there may be other important aspects of work not accounted for by these models.

The remaining features of Warr's model are "opportunity for skill use", "variety", "opportunity for control", and "environmental clarity". Warr argues that opportunity for skill use is "psychologically important in assisting people to achieve targets or to produce something useful or attractive" (op cit, p 4); and studies of both job satisfaction (eg Hackman and Oldham, 1975, 1980) and unemployment (eg Warr et al, 1985) have consistently shown lack of variety in activity and location to be associated with anxiety, depression and general psychological distress. Because domestic work is assumed to be boring and to require little skill (Llewelyn and Osborne, 1990), Warr suggests that women are likely to gain in terms of both of these environmental features by going out to work. However, as Llewelyn and Osborne also point out, many of the paid jobs performed by women are routine and unskilled and may therefore offer no advantages over staying at home. By examining their own accounts of what work offers them, we shall see to what extent these features, too, are relevant to the women in this study.

"Environmental clarity" refers to the ability of an individual to predict the consequences of his or her actions and those of others; and the clarity of role requirements and behavioural expectations. Warr presents this as a separate feature, but a person who has such "environmental clarity" is also likely to feel in control of events. It will be argued, therefore, that this and "opportunity for control" are important and related

concepts. Control is seen as a key factor in psychological well-being; work is a means to personal control first through economic independence, being able to provide for oneself; and ideally also through intrinsic features of the job itself. Control may be a particularly important issue when considering the significance of work for women: it is related to both agency and helplessness, discussed below.

Fryer (1986, 1990) has challenged what he terms the "deprivation theories" of Jahoda and Warr, proposing instead an "agency theory" of the psychological value of work. He argues that people are agents who are active, initiating, influencing and future-oriented, striving to make sense of what goes on and to act accordingly. Being out of work frustrates the exercise of agency, particularly through the effects of poverty. Fryer therefore seeks to highlight the psychological importance of the economic function of work, aspects of which have been considered above. The Fryer/Jahoda debate has generated much discussion; but as Jahoda (1992) points out, these positions are not in fact opposed, merely differing in emphasis. It may also be the case that different factors are emphasised for different groups of people. The "agency theory" may be particularly pertinent to the case of women, and this is discussed further under *Women and work* below.

The third dimension to the psychological value and meaning of work considered here comes from the psychoanalytic literature. Much emphasis has been placed on those aspects of Freudian theory concerned with human relations, and his stress on the importance of work largely ignored (although Storr, 1988, has attempted to redress the balance). But for Freud, freedom from neurosis was represented both by the ability to love and the ability to work - "lieben und arbeiten" - and he states quite clearly that "It is not possible, within the limits of a short survey, to discuss adequately the significance of work for the economics of the libido. No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work; for his work at

least gives him a secure place in a portion of reality, in the human community." (Freud, 1930; 1985, p 268).

Hartmann (1964) has elaborated these assumptions by distinguishing three ways in which we continuously keep in touch with reality: through the world of immediate experience; by observing from the consequences of our activities that external objects behave according to our expectations; and by testing our perceptions through sharing them with others. Jahoda (op cit) argues that employment as an institution provides the opportunity to engage in continuous reality testing in all of these ways. Again this aspect of work may be particularly relevant to the case of women with families, since work provides women with a task- (as opposed to people-) oriented environment outside the emotionally charged atmosphere of the home.

Women and work

Since domestic and family responsibilities are still almost always assumed by women, it is not possible to consider women's orientation to work without also taking account of conflicting pressures from partners, children, employers and colleagues. Apart from the practical difficulties of organising childcare and domestic tasks to fit in with work, even if women do make suitable arrangements they are often faced with criticism and feelings of guilt for having left their children. An example of such criticism came from Mrs Thatcher herself, when Prime Minister, in a Woman's Hour broadcast in 1990[1]. One result of these conflicts and the ambivalence to which they may give rise is that women's work is perceived, both by "society" and women themselves, as less important than it is for men. Women workers are considered "unreliable" because of their family commitments, and women themselves consistently put men's careers

[1] "I don't think that [publicly-funded childcare] is a substitute at all ... The idea that we might have a whole generation of crèche children is not one that I think would be right for the next generation or for each individual." (*Woman's Hour*, BBC Radio 4, 17 May 1990)

before their own, often describing their own work histories in the context of those of their partners (Llewelyn and Osborne, op cit). This may be because women are reluctant to put their own needs before those of others, and particularly those of men (see Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1982). But this is to assume that women's needs would at least in part be met by paid employment and that it is of positive benefit . What is the evidence for this?

The results of research studies have in fact been mixed. Warr (op cit) cites ten studies which conclude that for married women there is no significant difference in affective well-being between those with and without paid employment; while for unmarried women paid employment was found to be significantly beneficial. Warr assumes that economic factors are important here - unmarried women are usually principal breadwinners, and so the need for a wage is more pressing. However, Brown and Harris' celebrated study of over 400 women living in Camberwell (Brown and Harris, 1978), showed that paid employment outside the home was a protective factor against depression in the face of stressful events. Although having an intimate and confiding relationship with a partner proved to be a more powerful protector, in the absence of such a relationship having a job almost halved the number of women who became depressed following a severe life event.

Similarly, Cochrane and Stopes-Roe (1981) found that having paid employment outside the home also reduced the number of symptoms of depression reported by married women. However, the relationship is not straightforward and other factors may impinge. Ross et al (1983) found that levels of depression among American married women were unrelated to having a job per se. There was, however, a significant interaction between preference for paid employment: those women who preferred housework were more likely to become depressed if they had a job, while those who preferred paid employment were less likely to become depressed if they

worked. This leads to the rather simplistic conclusion that individuals' well-being is likely to be greater if they do what they prefer, leaving out the host of reasons (level and content of job, for example) which may contribute to preferences. More recent studies (see, for example, Lennon and Rosenfield, 1992; Romito, 1994; Dennerstein, 1995; Roxburgh, 1997) have emphasised the importance of the interaction of work and family conditions, showing *inter alia*, that degree of control at work moderates the effects of demands in the family, and that mothers' psychological well-being is negatively affected by difficulties with childcare, presence of one or more pre-schoolers and lack of involvement by partner. Degree of control at work and support from partner seem to be particularly significant and these are issues which the present study addresses.

What much of this evidence shows is that, first, paid work *may* help to mediate factors which would otherwise lead to depression; and secondly that a woman's family situation is an important intervening variable. One of the theories put forward to explain depression is Seligman's "learned helplessness" (Seligman, 1975). Seligman noted similarities between the manifestations of helplessness observed in animal laboratory studies on the effects of uncontrollable stress and at least some of the symptoms of depression in humans, for example appearing passive in the face of stressful events and failing to initiate action that might allow them to cope. Seligman suggested that although anxiety is the initial response to a stressful situation, it is replaced by depression if the person comes to believe that control is unattainable. Although Seligman's theory was formulated to explain adult depression as a consequence of early uncontrollable life events, and was later reformulated to include attributions (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978), there may be a link between learned helplessness and women's greater proneness to the disorder than men. An important issue is the possibility that male doctors may be more likely to diagnose depression in women than men; but feminist writers (eg Bernard, 1976; Chesler,

1974) have also suggested that the higher incidence of neurotic disorder in women may be attributed to lack of personal and political power. Women are more likely than men to become depressed because their social roles do not encourage them to feel competent. In fact it may be the case that little girls are *trained* to be helpless, because competence and self-sufficiency are seen as male attributes. One of the ways in which paid work may protect women from psychological disorder, therefore, is in giving them financial independence and, in Fryer's terms, allowing them to express agency, and encouraging them to be competent. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to look at depressive symptoms *per se*, these issues of independence, agency and competence are further explored in the context of women's own accounts of their experience.

Some important issues emerge here, therefore. First, that women may be no less committed to paid work than men, but that their employment follows different patterns from those of men because women's employment cannot be separated from their family situations. Repeatedly in the studies cited above women's family or marital situation was a mitigating or exacerbating factor. Secondly, that women's perceived ambivalence towards paid work may reflect inner conflicts regarding personal needs and societal expectations. And thirdly that paid work may offer some protection against neurotic disorder, specifically in terms of increasing independence, autonomy and control; but may also create tensions because of the conflict with family roles.

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Studies of female employment have tended to concentrate on the problems of women at work, such as barriers to advancement , sexual harassment and specific home/work conflicts. However, the meanings which women place upon their work, the intellectual and social value it holds for them, and what it brings them in terms of identity, autonomy, and recognition, have not been explored. The present enquiry attempts to address these questions, in the framework of the various meanings and functions of

work outlined above. The thesis herein explored is that individual psychology cannot be considered outside its social, cultural and historical context, and so the aim of the present enquiry is to investigate to what extent women's experience of themselves, work and family is determined by the structure and attitudes of the society in which they find themselves. In order to do this, groups of women are compared in two cultures, Britain and France, where there are subtle differences both in the patterns of women's work and the infrastructure which exists to support it.

Women, work and family in Britain and France: the context[1]

This section will begin with a review of the statistics relating to women's work and childcare in Britain and France, since these form the context for the women in this study. This incorporates a history of women's work in the two countries and hypotheses regarding how the different situations in the two countries may have differing psychological effects.

The extent of women's participation in paid employment is widely regarded as a measure of gender equality (as, for example, in the United Nations Development Project: UNDP, 1992) and in many tables of women's employment the figures given for France and Britain will be virtually identical. In 1989, for example, when this study was carried out, 43 per cent of the workforce in the UK, and 42 per cent in France, was female (Eurostat, 1989). However, these figures mask differences in the pattern of working in the two countries. In Britain, for example, a large proportion of women work part-time: in 1990, when the empirical work for this study was carried out, 86 per cent of part-time workers in Britain were women and 40 per cent of women in employment were working part-time (*Social Trends*, 1992). In 1989, women

[1] Most of the statistics given in this section are for the late 1980s/early 1990s, since this was the context pertaining when the empirical work for this study was carried out. It will be seen, where more recent figures are given, that these have not changed substantially in the intervening period.

worked an average of 30 hours a week (compared with 44 for men) while in France the average was 35 (40 for men). More recent figures are broadly similar: in 1996 in France 70 per cent of working women worked full-time and 30 per cent part-time, while in Britain there was an almost equal distribution of full- and part-time work (55 per cent and 45 per cent respectively - *Social Trends*, 1998). Indeed it will be noted that the percentage of women working part-time in Britain has increased slightly: women in Britain work fewer hours than anywhere else in the EC apart from the Netherlands, while British men work the longest hours in Europe (an average of 45.8 hours per week compared with 40.6 hours in France - *Social Trends*, 1998).

In addition, women's employment in western economies has largely formed an M-shaped graph, with women entering and leaving the workforce in response to family commitments and childbirth. In France this M-shape scarcely exists: women who work participate more continuously in the labour market. In France, too, participation rates are related to the number of children a woman has, while in Britain they are related to the children's age (in France women work less if they have more than three children. In Britain they work less if the children are below school age.)

There is considerable debate in Britain about the extent to which women's participation in the labour market reflects their desires and preferences[1], or structural constraints (see Crompton and Harris, 1998; Hakim, 1996; Crompton and Lefeuvre, 1996; Ginn et al, 1996); and whether part-time, as opposed to full-time, employment can be regarded as empowering women, by allowing them to fulfil both their family and working roles (Duncan 1991a; Duncan 1991b; Walby 1994). Hakim (op cit), in particular, has proposed a voluntarist, individualistic explanation of women's work, arguing that there are two qualitatively differing types of working women, the "committed" and the "uncommitted". Women who work part-time tend to fall into the "uncommitted"

[1] When asked, 79 per cent of married women said they did not want a full-time job (*Social Trends*, 1992)

group, working in low-paying jobs in the services sector, but often expressing a high level of satisfaction with what is essentially exploitative employment. This is because they give priority to their family lives and have carved out a "homemaker career" where they are satisfied with work which is shaped by convenience and flexible hours rather than the intrinsic qualities of the job itself. The "committed" group, on the other hand, have a commitment primarily to work rather than family and their work patterns more closely resemble those of men.

This is an interesting model for our purposes, because there is not the same full-time/part-time distinction among French working women, who almost exclusively work full-time. Does this mean that they are, as a culture, "committed" to work in a way which many English women are not? And if so, to what extent is such commitment itself determined by structural constraints? English women may be "satisfied" with what seems like exploitative employment simply because of the lack of alternatives: a low-paid job is better than no job, and part-time work may make more economic sense than paying for the extra childcare which full-time work would require. In this sense, "satisfaction" is a relative concept.

The individual preferences/structural constraints debate is essentially a sociological issue which is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, work commitment is examined in the form of the relative importance of work, partnership and family roles to the women concerned; and we turn now to the structural constraints themselves: differing patterns of work and family economies in the two countries, followed by an examination of childcare and family policy in Britain and France.

Patterns of women's work: an historical perspective

Tilly and Scott (1987), in their exhaustive study of women's work in Britain and France from the eighteenth century to the present day, have documented in detail the interweaving of women's work with family economics, marriage, and the birth and care of children. By tracing the history of women's work through what they term the "family economy", the "family wage economy" and, now, the "family consumer economy", Tilly and Scott show that women's work has always been linked to the practical and economic demands of their family situations. They argue that "the closer in time that a given household is to the experience of household production, the more likely it is that women will do productive work and that they will subordinate time spent in reproductive activity to that work" (Tilly and Scott, op cit, p 230). France has had larger numbers of women at work because, throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, it was still characterised by a small-scale, household organisation of production (the "family economy"), which depended on the labour of both husband and wife (as well as children). Britain, however, which had industrialised much earlier, had developed by the nineteenth century a large-scale factory-based system (the "family wage economy") where the introduction of machines meant that workplaces had to be centralised and employees worked away from home. Mothers were obliged to remain at home with dependent children and so paid work became the preserve of men and single women. This led to the early development in Britain of "separate spheres" work outside the home for men and domesticity for women - where women were called upon to enter the workforce only when, because of demographic changes, there were insufficient men and young people to sustain it; or unless family finances required it.

Obviously both France and Britain are now highly-developed industrialised nations and many of the structural characteristics of industrialisation described above will apply equally to France and Britain. However, the fact remains that women in France are more likely to work, are more likely to work full-time, and their work is less episodic

than that of women in Britain. It will be argued here that one of the reasons for this is that in France the family economy, in terms of a small-scale, household organisation of production, persisted almost until the 1960s. While Britain was industrialising, and in agriculture itself farms were becoming bigger, in France, particularly after the 1789 Revolution, "there was a clear tendency for an increase in the number of small owners whose assets consisted of no more than a house, a garden and one or two fields ..." (Wright, 1964, quoted in Tilly and Scott, op cit, p 74). At the height of this development in the 1880s, there were 3.5 million farms in France. By 1850, manufacturing was the dominant form of economic activity in Britain, while even a century later in France agriculture, services and manufacturing were of almost equal importance. (See Figs 1 and 2).

Figures 1 and 2: Number of males and females employed by sector, France and Britain, 1850-1960.

Fig 1: France

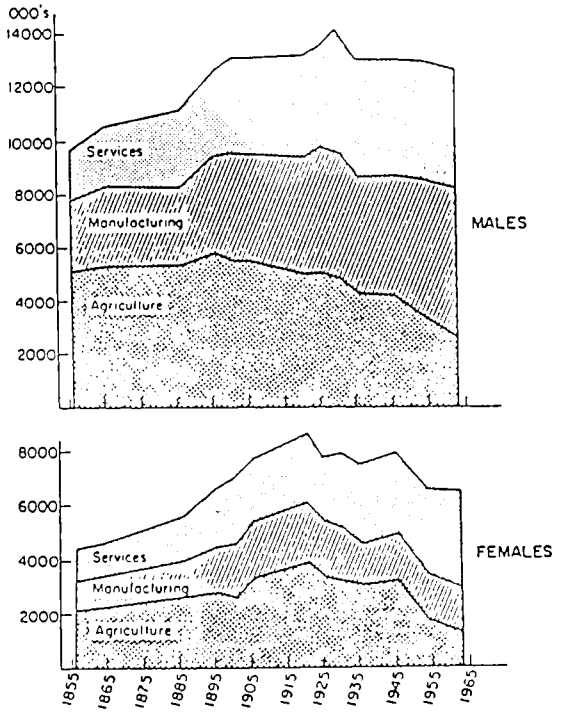
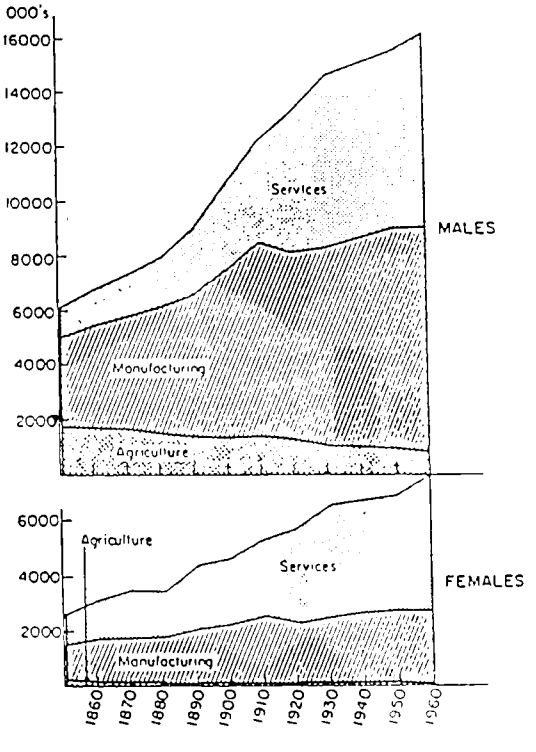


Fig 2: Britain



(Reproduced from Tilly and Scott, op cit, pp 65, 67))

In 1949, Alfred Cobban, the British historian, wrote that in France over half of the population lived in *communes* of fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, and that "In the last resort, and at bottom, France is a Peasants' Republic" (Cobban, 1949). Similarly, citing sociological studies of the French country woman of the 1950s, Tilly and Scott state that "the chores and rhythm of her life would have been familiar to many an eighteenth century peasant wife." (Tilly and Scott, op cit, p 194).

As well as agriculture, France has been characterised by "petites commerces". While British enterprises became large-scale, employing male clerks, France was typified by small family businesses, run by couples. This situation, too, is of course rapidly changing. Modernisation began with a vengeance in the 1960s under de Gaulle, and the French have in a sense moved straight from the early nineteenth century to the late twentieth. "The French, who do not do things by halves, have moved in one swoop from the little corner shop to the largest hypermarkets in Europe" (Ardagh, 1982, p 17). The transformation is so comparatively recent, however, and French women so much "closer in time ... to the experience of household production" (Tilly and Scott, cited above, p 18) that this is proposed as a major contributing factor to the cultural acceptance of women's work in France. For two centuries Britain has been characterised by "separate spheres", while in France men and women have to a much greater extent been working together. This means that in France combining work and motherhood is regarded as "normal" whereas this is not the case in Britain. In this study, this is manifested as feelings of guilt in the English women which are absent in the French, and echoes other findings. In a recent Franco-British qualitative study which reflects many of the findings presented here, for example, Windebank (1999) describes how the French women viewed continuing to work and putting their young

children into childcare as normal, while the English women felt it necessary to justify their actions either in terms of financial need or personal fulfilment.

Apart from its effect on the structure of the workforce, it is suggested that this historical difference has other consequences relevant to this study. In Britain women lost their role of producers, for the market or for household consumption, and became managers of the household budget and bearers of children. Their greater presence at home compared with men meant that bonds between mothers and children increased while fathers became more distant. Women's role as mother was emphasised and their role as "worker" diminished. This was to become more and more the case as sciences such as medicine and psychology developed: first the increased presence of the mother was seen to be important in reducing infant mortality rates, and later to be crucial to the psychological well-being of the child (eg Bowlby, 1951).

In France, because work has traditionally been structured around couples and the family, the couple assumes more importance. In a comparative study of French and Norwegian women, Apfelbaum (1993) has described how the Norwegian women's lives were primarily defined in reference to the family, whereas in France the focus tended to be on the dynamics of relationships between men and women. Apfelbaum places this finding within the French traditions of seduction, desire and *amour galant* , where men and women are not in direct competition with each other. Working together within family-based businesses is another example of this and has implications both for how women regard (and are regarded at) work, and for relationships between men and women.

It will be argued here, therefore, that the differing patterns of women's work in Britain and France, and contrasting societal attitudes towards it, will result in the women themselves placing differing constructions upon work, family, femininity and gender

relations. Additionally, it is proposed that these *may* be traced to historical differences in the family economies of the two countries concerned. As is emphasised in Chapter 2, such explanation is beyond the scope of this thesis and so such a relation is necessarily speculative. Neither is this the only factor: an important influence in France, for example is its pronatalist policy (see below). It will be shown, however (Chapter 6), that there are direct links between the women's present-day conceptualisation of work, family and so on, and those historical factors outlined above. For the moment, we turn to those structures which currently exist (or not) to facilitate the co-existence of women's work and their domestic responsibilities.

Childcare and family policy in Britain and France[1]

The structure of childcare and family policy in the two countries is important to this study because women's working patterns and the social and family policy of a country are closely interconnected, and reflect cultural attitudes towards women, children and the family. What this study attempts to show is that such attitudes are in turn similarly reflected in the attitudes, experiences and identity of women at an individual level.

In France there is almost comprehensive state provision of pre-school education, at least for children from three upwards. In both 1990/91 and 1994/5 almost all children in France were in state-provided pre-primary education by the age of three (*Social Trends*, 1998). The situation before age three is more complex, and similar to that of Britain, with a number of different sources of childcare facilities such as day nurseries, mother's helps, nannies and grannies. However, each *commune* in France has municipal crèches, and in 1988 there was provision for approximately 20 per cent of children under three in publicly-funded services (Commission of the European Communities, 1990).

[1] Again the figures given are principally for the late 1980s/early 1990s, since this was the context within which the empirical work was carried out.

Ecoles maternelles , for children over three, are open from 8.30 in the morning to 16.30 in the afternoon, providing meals and supervision. Beyond these hours, *services periscolaires* are provided from 7.30 in the morning and until 18.30 in the evening, on Wednesdays (when there is no school) and during holidays. Parents pay for such services according to income and number of children. The objective of government policy has been to increase publicly funded provision, which rose by 14 per cent between 1986 and 1988 alone.

In the UK in 1988 there were publicly funded (ie free) places for only 2 per cent of children under three and 2 per cent of children aged 3-4. In Britain 51 per cent of all children aged 3 or 4 were attending school in 1990/91 (55 per cent in 1994/95) and this figure includes both full-time and part-time attenders, in maintained and non-maintained schools (*Social Trends*, 1998). Compulsory schooling begins at an earlier age in the UK, officially age five but with many four year-olds attending on a voluntary basis. The school day is shorter than in France, however, usually from 9.00 to 15.30 but often shorter. Care outside school hours is available for fewer than 0.5 per cent of children aged 5-10 (Commission of the European Communities, 1990). Most day care places in Britain are run privately: between 1981 and 1990 the number of local authority day nursery places remained the same while private nursery places trebled (*Social Trends*, 1992). In the UK the privately funded service which provides for most children is playgroups, which take children aged two and a half to four, who attend on average five hours a week (Commission of the European Communities, 1990). The cost of day care therefore renders it beyond the reach of many women in the UK, and the hours are not compatible with a full working day.

In addition to better childcare provision, which facilitates women's working, France has a system of family allowances which supports part-time working as well as staying at home to look after children. In 1989, in his Foreword to the *Guide des Droits des*

Mères de Famille, Jacques Chirac, then Prime Minister, now President, and a right-wing politician, wrote:

> ... For the future of the family governs the whole destiny of our national community. It determines our happiness ...

The government's family policy:

> aims to give each family the liberty to have the number of children it wishes and to each woman the free choice to carry out a professional activity or to devote herself to bringing up her children ...
> (*Guide des Droits des Mères de Famille*, 1989[1], my translations)

The message is clear, and is reflected both in women's rights (pregnant women are afforded certain privileges, such as not having to queue at the cinema) and in government provision. In 1985 a "bringing-up allowance" ("l'Allocation de Femme au Foyer", now called "l'Allocation Parentale d'Education", to take account of either parent staying at home) was introduced. This is awarded on the birth or adoption of a third child to the parent who stops working in order to bring up the child. It is paid up to the child's third birthday (when free nursery provision is available) and in 1993 was worth 2871FF (approximately £287) a month, thus encouraging couples to have a third child and women (since in spite of the renaming of the allowance it is more likely to be the mother who does so) to stay at home. If the parent returned to work part-time, the amount paid was 1436FF (£143) a month.

By 1998 the social security budget in France, and particularly the need to reduce it, had become the subject of fierce political debate. Nevertheless, the "Allocation Parentale d'Education" has been extended to become available to those staying at home to look after a *second* child, and is worth 3039FF (£304) a month to those who give up work completely, 2010FF (£201) to those working up to 85 hours a month and 1520FF (£152) to those working between 85 and 136 hours a month (www.pratique.fr).

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[1] This (1989) edition of the *Guide* is cited since it was current at the time of the study.

In contrast, there is no state benefit in Britain specifically for those who stay at home to look after children. Neither is there any help for those who work part-time. The only family allowance is Child Benefit, paid universally to those in and out of work, and currently worth £62.40 a month for the first child and £41.60 for subsequent children. There are other state benefits for low-income families such as single parents and the unemployed, but none which enable one parent to work and the other to stay at home to look after children. Some help is now available in the form of the Working Families Tax Credit for those working and on low incomes but only the very lowest incomes qualify and so many women are precluded from working because they cannot earn enough to cover childcare costs. This probably goes some way to explaining why women in Britain tend to go back to work only when their children have started school, since school effectively provides free childcare. It is because of these discrepancies in state support that this study focusses solely on women working full-time. Although women working full-time are not in the majority in Britain as they are in France, the material situations of women working part-time (or staying at home to look after children) in the two countries are likely to be too great to afford just comparison.

Again comparative social historians (see, for example, Bock and Thane 1991; Pedersen 1994) have documented how development of the welfare state in different countries has been driven by historical factors and social and political ideologies. Pedersen (op cit) has argued that the social welfare interests of children and mothers have been virtually ignored by policy-makers in Britain throughout this century, with their needs recognised only in the form of inadequate family allowances and the married woman's right to opt out of national insurance contributions should she be able to find work (but thus also jeopardising her own state pension rights). In France, however, allowances for dependent children, as a supplement to the market wage, have been promoted and paid for by employers since before the First World War.

The key determining factor has been concern about the falling birthrate and therefore with women's role as mothers. The birthrate began to fall earlier in France than in other countries (dropping from 26 per thousand in 1870 to 19 per thousand in 1911), persisted through the first half of this century, and has been of national and political significance because of the constant fear that Germany would invade France. As late as 1940, Germany was still able to put twice as many men of military age into battle as France, one reason for the strong pro-family policy of the Pétain government. France's traditional *culte de l'enfant*, therefore, has its roots in pragmatic considerations. Women perceived as resisting motherhood were seen to be threatening national security, and more babies were the key to France's industrial and military strength. In May 1920 medals were awarded to honour mothers of large families, and this pronatalist policy was used by women as a weapon in the struggle for the rights of mothers. Women argued that the *dénatalité* in France was not the fault of the feminists but was due to the absence of support for maternity. Individuals such as Léonie Rouzade argued that "If one gets rights for killing men, one should get more rights for having created humanity" (cited in Bock and Thane, op cit, p 8).

In France, therefore, women's emancipation has been inextricably linked to questions of the strength of the French nation state. It has been in the interests of male legislators as well as women to promote maternity as a social function. Yet these reforms have taken place in a climate which does not seek to contest the familial base of the French socio-political structure, but instead emphasises women's roles as mothers in the republican nation state and seeks state support for that role. At the same time it acknowledges the place of women in the workforce and does not deny them the right to work if they wish. Again it is suggested here that this may be for historical reasons: because industrialisation began to take place much later in France, so also did the split between women's work in the home and men's work outside it, between women as workers and women as mothers. Women have always been a part of the family-based

workforce, but at the same time they are needed as mothers. It is therefore in the nation's interests to support them in both these roles.

Pedersen refers to the British model as the "male breadwinner model of welfare", where the primary concern has been with any "loss of earnings" suffered by the male head of household, whereas the French case constitutes a "parental" model of welfare, in which family support policies have become the cornerstone of the French welfare state. Lewis (1991) has also shown how, in the UK, discussion of social problems has tended to concentrate on sickness, disablement, old age, unemployment, labour protection and taxes, rather than motherhood, fatherhood, childbearing and childraising. Reforms, therefore, have focussed primarily on men and the problems of the male labour force. Debate in the UK regarding family allowances has always been linked to the demand for a "family wage" (Lewis, 1991). A "family wage" has been regarded as crucial to the well-being of society as a whole, and if the state becomes responsible for dependants, the case for a family wage disappears. Trades Unions, the Labour/socialist movement and conservative politicians alike have throughout the 20th century opposed generous family allowances for this reason. In the UK, although there has been a concern to reduce infant mortality and increase the welfare of mothers, this has been primarily through education (via midwives and, particularly, health visitors - see Davies, 1988) rather than cash. Women have until recently shared this ideal of a family wage, approaching marriage as a set of reciprocal obligations whereby they provided domestic and emotional support in return for economic security for themselves and their children.

However, since the traditional family is under threat (in 1996 the divorce rate in Britain was 53 per cent Eurostat 1998) and a "family wage" has over time become no more of a reality the attention of both women and the government has turned to waged work outside the home. The present government (1998/99) has particularly focussed its

welfare reforms on getting single parents (who are principally women) into work. In this way the "male breadwinner model of welfare" persists, except that women are now having to work to supplement the male wage, as we have seen above (Harkness et al, op cit), or to take the place of the male breadwinner. Welfare support in terms of family allowances, or supplements for those working part-time, still do not seem to be on the political agenda.

Implications for the thesis

What are the psychological implications of this? The present writer suggests that this "male breadwinner model" in Britain will be reflected in the attitudes and identity of the women studied here: not that they will subscribe to the "man going out to work/woman staying at home" model, but rather that working outside the home is still regarded as primarily a male activity and that to do it the women in Britain have to adopt aspects of traditionally male identity. In France, however, working is not regarded as antithetical to femininity. This is reflected in government policy, which does not, for example, see working and motherhood as opposed. It is likely, therefore, that French women themselves do not see working as a threat to their female identity: it is not necessary for the French woman to relinquish her femininity and adopt "male" attitudes in order to be recognised, since she is valued for her qualities as worker as well as mother and partner. This may be because of the tradition of women in France working as part of the family economy. In Britain, where women have not worked as part of a family economy since the eighteenth century, and where the separation of work and home has been in place for much longer, there is likely to be more of a conflict between the work role, which is traditionally masculine, and the domestic role, which is still seen as feminine.

In Britain, where the lack of State support in terms of childcare facilities may reflect a lack of support by the culture in general for the notion of women working, in purely practical terms women are likely to have to "juggle" more. Because work outside the home is not culturally supported for women, the British women are more likely to experience guilt and conflict in terms of their roles of worker, mother and partner. This may lead to tensions not only on a practical level but within couples and individual women themselves.

In France, where women and the family are supported, culturally and fiscally, whether the woman chooses to work or not, it is argued that French women have a *real* choice which is not available to women in Britain. The French women, therefore, are likely to experience less guilt (and thus tension) by going out to work. Role conflict is also likely to be reduced, compared with the British women.

Finally, because of the importance of motherhood to the nation state, and women's unique capability of fulfilling that role, women may be more likely in France to be valued for their uniquely feminine qualities. For the same pronatalist reasons, children may be more highly valued, for their own sake, in France than in Britain.

A note on identity

The issues addressed in this thesis have been described in the title as "a question of identity". The use of the term "identity" here is consciously ambiguous. The thesis herein explored is that individual processes cannot be divorced from broader social structure. This is examined in a cross-cultural context, where an attempt is made to show that differences between national groups may be explained in terms of differing social, cultural and historical characteristics of the countries concerned. As such, the

questions addressed are as much about national identity as personal identity, and the term is used for this reason.

This is not, however, to ignore the complexities of usage of the term "identity". As Breakwell (1986) has pointed out, in a particularly lucid review of what she calls the "battlefield" of theorising about identity, it may mean, among other things, a self-awareness achieved through identification in social relations (Erikson, 1968); or negotiated performances of role prescriptions (the symbolic interactionists - see Chapter 2); or be created through such processes as labelling (Biddle, 1979). It is often used synonymously with character, the self-concept and personality, to describe the unique combination of social, psychological and behavioural characteristics which differentiates one person from another.

Because it is used to denote national characteristics as much as personal ones, the use of the term here is to some extent a combination of all of these. "Self-concept" is used in the next chapter when considering methodology because it is respondents' own perspective which is the vehicle for the object of analysis. "Self-concept" is chosen in preference to "character" or "personality" because these latter terms suggest a fixed set of traits or characteristics, and since identity is regarded here both as social product and social process, coming about through the dynamic interplay between the individual and the social order, it is not static. "Self-concept" does not, however, accurately describe what is being investigated here, since it is not just the self-perspective which is being examined: as described above, the self-perspective is the vehicle of expression, but the ultimate objective is the bringing together of the characteristics of individuals and relating these to broader cultural groups and social context in an objective, rather than subjective manner. Identity is regarded as the combination of elements (construal of the world around them, interpretation of roles, past histories and present beliefs and attitudes) which constitutes the uniqueness of individuals. No two sets of individual

experience are identical. But individuals are embedded in a social context which they share, and features of that social context will be manifested in the perceptions of individuals. Personal and social identity may be distinguished, therefore, but they are inextricably linked. This relationship between the individual and his or her social context is examined in more detail in Chapter 2.

Summary of research questions

The aim of this enquiry is to investigate the relationship between social, historical and cultural factors and individual psychology. It does this by comparing women's attitudes to work and family in two countries, Britain and France, where historically work patterns have been different, and currently different structures are in place to support women working. It is suggested that because women's work is more accepted in France there will be less of a conflict between women's work identity and female identity and less conflict between work life and home life, including between partners. In addition, the various psychological meanings of work (the importance of money, Jahoda's latent functions, Warr's vitamin model and Freud's "tie to reality") outlined in the literature but hitherto neglected in relation to women, will also be examined.

2 METHODOLOGY

> There is no such thing as Society.
> There are individual men and women,
> and there are families.
> Margaret Thatcher, *Woman's Own*, 31 October 1987
>
> No man is an island, entire of itself;
> every man is a piece of the continent,
> a part of the main ...
> John Donne, *Devotions*

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the aims of this thesis are to investigate 1) whether English and French women relate differently to their work and family roles; 2) the extent to which any differences found in the two countries can be related to broader social, historical and cultural factors and 3) to use these findings to illustrate the relationship between culture and the way its people think, feel and behave. It is the third of these which principally determines the methodology employed here. Again as set out in Chapter 1, what the present study is concerned with is how the broader social context, as opposed to individual family or other experience, can be used to explain individual behaviour. The unit of analysis is therefore the individual, but the aim is to uncover patterns across individuals which reflect cultural features. In this respect the approach taken here is an *idiographic* one, where the focus is on the relationship between variables *within* cultures, followed by comparison of the patterns found *between* cultures.

Because the emphasis is on the interpretations and meanings which individuals place upon their experience, the traditional methods of social psychology, such as laboratory experiments, questionnaires or large-scale surveys are not appropriate. These all imply some prior interpretation by the investigator, in the form of hypotheses or pre-formatted questions which constrain the respondent. However, discourse analytic approaches,

which have been advocated as an alternative to traditional methods in social psychology, place too much emphasis on the individual, the language used by individuals, and the interactions between individuals, as opposed to the patterns across individuals which are the focus here. The object of analysis is not face-to-face interaction or social exchange, but interpretations across individuals of those environments characterised by the statistical and historical data presented in Chapter 1. The concerns of discourse analysis, therefore, such as how language is used in social situations, or the relationship between objects and signs, are no more appropriate here than the methods of traditional social psychology. While language is viewed as a social process and it is through language, in its various forms, that culture is transmitted, it is here taken at face value, as the medium through which attitudes are expressed. It is *what* people say which is important, not *how* they say it.

Although the focus is less on the *way* people use language than on what they say, there must be room for them to express their own individual experiences rather than having to fit themselves to pre-determined concepts and categories which limit what can and cannot be said. If people are allowed to express themselves in their own words, it is their mediated reality which is presented, rather than a "reality" anticipated by the researcher; and if results obtained in this way show similarity or pattern across individuals, there is a sense in which they are *more* robust than any which can be obtained from pre-formatted questionnaires, because they are driven by the data and ultimately the respondents themselves, rather than by the researcher.

The methodology chosen needed to reflect these concerns. This chapter therefore begins with a discussion of both traditional social psychology and discourse analysis, outlining in more detail why these were considered inappropriate for the present study, and then sets out the alternative approach taken here.

Social Psychology

As Frazer (1995) points out, disagreements about research methods and research aims map on to disagreements in philosophy. This is illustrated in the discussion which follows, whereby research methodologies are seen to reflect particular positions with regard to knowledge (epistemology), existence (ontology) and reality - in other words "the relationship between the world, our observations, scientific data and scientific theory" (Frazer, op cit, p 270; see also Henwood and Pidgeon, 1994). We begin with a consideration of traditional social psychological method.

The problem with which social psychology is perpetually faced is that of reconciling the social with the psychological. Psychology's subject is held to be the individual. How does one approach the question of the relationship between the social and the psychological without on the one hand "doing sociology" (thus making social psychology redundant) and on the other descending into psychological (for which read biological or cognitive) reductionism? This question is at the core of the "crisis in social psychology", to which attention was first drawn in the early 1970s. Twenty years later social psychology had still failed to find an identity, and continues to struggle to justify its existence.

Part of the reason for this is that social psychology lies in that no-man's-land between general psychology, whose interest is what goes on in the brain (perception, memory, language, effects of drugs and so on) and the branches of applied psychology (educational, clinical and occupational) which are concerned to a large extent with the role of the psychological in social settings, and individuals' relations with others. Until comparatively recently, it has attempted to bridge the gap by using the methods of traditional psychology - conducting controlled experiments in the laboratory - to look at such problems as conformity, obedience to authority, non-verbal behaviour and communication, and in doing so it has of course informed these applied areas and

increased our understanding of human interaction in general. But since theory, method and content are inextricably linked, putting the emphasis on the psychological rather than the social means that social psychology has allied itself with the positivist tradition of those other areas of psychology described above, where the only valid research method is laboratory experiments and laboratory results the sole arbiter of a theory's validity. Method has dictated subject matter rather than the other way round, and the kinds of questions which it has been possible to ask have been limited as a result:

> Much of social psychology at present does seem resolved either to study common sense or else to ignore it, as for example in research on attitudes and attribution theories on the one hand and studies of social interaction and non-verbal communication on the other ... Since these topics between them cover all the major areas of the subject, it is hardly surprising the saying was coined that "two thirds of social psychology is common-sense and the other third is nonsense." (Clarke 1987, p 52)

Just as social psychology is described above as lying in a no-man's-land between general psychology (what goes on in people's heads) and applied psychology (largely how people behave in social settings), so it has been regarded as mediating between the disciplines of psychology and sociology. However, Collier et al (1991) argue that this is a myth - that social psychology, since its beginnings, has never stood *between* the two disciplines of sociology and psychology, but in fact exists *as* two separate disciplines, psychological social psychology and sociological social psychology, each with its own literature and interests. Psychological social psychology concerns itself with individual processes (attitudes, person perception, cognition, for example) which it sees as timeless and universal. The sociological social psychology approach starts with the broader social context and uses it to help explain individual behaviour. Individual differences are attributed to differences in reference groups and culture, and such differences occur not just in attitudes but in the*way* people think[1]. It is this latter aspect ("the way people think") which has preoccupied most proponents of the

[1] The exact terminology used here is disputed below. However, the broad distinction - between an emphasis on individual processes or on the broader social context - drawn between the two approaches to social psychology is a useful one and is retained for the moment. In its emphasis on the broader social and cultural context, the present study falls clearly into the "sociological social psychology" camp.

"sociological" social psychology approach this century, largely through the dominant influence of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934). Until the mid-1940s, social psychology and its literature had become increasingly characterised by the "psychological" approach, and symbolic interaction represented an attempt within sociological social psychology to recapture its lost ground as a distinct sub-discipline. It countered the psychological approach chiefly by regarding mental processes as culturally derived, and focusing its attention on the two means by which they are derived, namely language (and other symbolic processes) and social interaction. The chief architect of this transition was George Herbert Mead[1], for whom symbolic interaction was part of his pragmatic general world view. The pragmatists (Peirce, James, Dewey, as well as Mead) saw thought as emerging during the course of concrete activity, in an attempt to solve problems and make decisions rationally. Since language is the vehicle of thought, such problem-solving and decision-making can be passed on from generation to generation through the medium of language, and interaction between people.

Societies are seen also to have prescribed roles, with duties, rights and obligations assigned to individuals. People learn to respond to each other because they learn that certain types of behaviour are characteristic of certain roles. According to Mead, such roles are acquired first through unconscious imitation and later through self-conscious play. Later, in games (particularly team games), children learn how individual activities can be co-ordinated through interlocking roles. This emphasis on roles is best illustrated by the work of Goffman (1959).

The principal elements of symbolic interaction, therefore, are language, social interaction and role/rule-governed behaviour, and it is these which have dominated post-war sociological social psychology. Language, in particular, has been

[1] Mead did not in fact use the term himself. It was coined subsequently by one of his students, Herbert Blumer (1937).

emphasised: in Collier et al's analysis (Collier et al, op cit), "That which is not expressed in language is not consciously experienced and has no meaning" (p 216). Since language is what distinguishes humans from animals, language was also emphasised in the initial critiques of social psychology of the 1960s/early 1970s, which called for a less mechanistic approach to the study of social behaviour. An "anthropomorphic model of man" (Harré and Secord, 1972) was advocated, where individuals would be re-endowed with those qualities and characteristics (particularly language) which made them uniquely human, and the message to psychologists wanting to know about people's modes of action was "Why not ask them?" (chapter title in Harré and Secord, op cit). Throughout the last twenty years, "new paradigm" and alternative approaches to experimental social psychology have shifted emphasis from the relationship between mind and world to that between language and reality. The literature of recent "sociological" approaches to social psychology has been permeated by the vocabulary of a linguistic approach, with analysis of "discourse", "texts", "episodes" and "accounts" the preferred methods to those of the laboratory (Harré, 1972; Billig, 1987; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Shotter and Gergen, 1989). Since the present study is also critical of mainstream social psychology, advocating the use of non-quantitative methods and allowing respondents to express themselves in their own words, it might be expected to subscribe to such linguistic approaches. While there are common concerns, however, there are also important differences. Discourse analytic approaches are therefore considered next.

Discourse analysis

The discourse analytic approach to social psychology is exemplified by Potter and Wetherell (op cit), whose theoretical framework has its roots in speech-act theory, ethnomethodology and semiology. Discourse approaches seek to "deconstruct" the unitary, rational subject of traditional psychology, regarding those so-called "affective" and "cognitive" dimensions of human behaviour as socially constructed rather than

located in the individual. Recently discourse analysis has been criticised for, variously, its lack of a theoretical base (Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1999), its logo- and phallogocentrism (Morgan, 1998) and for being relativistic (Henwood and Pidgeon, op cit) and individualistic (Parker, 1997). The following discussion focusses on those aspects of discourse analysis which are most relevant to the present study, namely the emphasis on language, the construction of meaning and the plurality and variability of talk.

Discourse approaches assert the pre-eminent importance of language and text. Language orders our perceptions, constructs social interaction and "makes things happen" Idealist views of language, however, such as those of Chomskian linguistics, where words refer unproblematically to things and sentences represent chains of logical reasoning, are rejected. Language is not a transparent medium through which the social world is represented in a straightforward manner: there is no one-to-one mapping of word to object. (Content analysis, which involves recording every instance of key words, and has often been used as a "systematic" way of analysing open responses, is also rejected for this reason). Signification comes about not through the representation of objects by words, but is a *production* as individuals are positioned in social relations. Meaning is based on difference, and is achieved through relations between units of meaning or signifiers, and signifying practices. These relations are never static or fixed and therefore meaning is never achieved within the boundaries of a word, or sentence, or extract of text. It is always deferred - what Derrida terms *différance* (Derrida, 1972).

There is no such thing as absolute truth, therefore. Through language a *plurality* of social worlds and multiple *versions* of objects in those worlds are constructed. Potter and Wetherell thus emphasise the *variability* of ordinary talk: they argue that experimenters, in their use of terms such as "bias" and "distortion", are blind to variability and that even those who have adopted non-quantitative methods have selectively read accounts of respondents in line with a preferred theoretical "story".

Discourse analysis seeks to identify those discourses embodied in texts by "exploring the connotations, allusions and implications the texts evoke" (Parker, 1989). It is bound to the actual use of language in context, and concrete, particular instances. Research strategies which employ concepts such as Harré's "generative rule" (Harré et al, 1985), based on the application of Chomskian idealist linguistics, are therefore rejected. Instead, Potter and Wetherell argue that we should study how rules themselves are articulated in discourse and how we employ different *repertoires* depending on the *purpose* of talk. For example, the discourse of scientists in learned journals is shown to be "empiricist", that is emphasising the objective and dispassionate, whereas in informal interview it is "contingent", giving greater importance to insight, craft skills and social ties. Thus repertoires also replace *social representations*. They are not construed as related to social groups, no attempt is made to find consensus and they are intimately linked to the social practice of language use. The concepts of "cognitive" social psychology - attitudes, beliefs, goals and wants - are also rejected, in particular the notion of fixed, enduring attitudes. Because meaning is based on relations which are never static, attitudes, beliefs and wants are seen as a historical product, located in time.

Potter and Wetherell thus address many of the problems which characterise both traditional social psychology and more recent cognitive approaches. In particular they draw attention to the contradictions and variability in individuals' accounts, the importance of social context, and the impossibility of fixed meaning or absolute truth. The approach taken in the present study is sympathetic to many of the aims of discourse approaches, in particular the deconstruction of the unitary, rational, ahistorical, acultural and acontextual psychological subject, but differs in several important ways.[1]

[1] In the years since this study was carried out, there has been a huge shift towards discourse analytic approaches in the social psychological literature. This has engendered a number of critiques of discourse analysis itself, on the grounds of, for example, relativism, idealism, individualism, moralism and lack of theoretical framework. While these are important criticisms, the emphasis here is on those aspects of discourse analysis which are relevant to the present methodology, and the reasons for its rejection as an approach at the time of the study.

An alternative approach

First, the emphasis here is not on language *per se*. Language is regarded as a vehicle for expression of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviour, but these are not seen as *purely* constructed in the discursive situation. While it is acknowledged that different discursive situations will produce different forms of discourse, the notion that there are no thoughts, attitudes or perceptions until these become embodied in language in the social situation is rejected. A key aspect of Austin's speech-act theory (Austin, 1962), upon which Potter and Wetherell's thesis is based, is that illocutionary meaning emerges in *dialogue*. It is the product of a negotiation which depends on a speaker's utterance being taken up by the addressee. In this study, however, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values are regarded as *influenced and determined* by the social environment, but can exist *independently* of their expression in dialogue. Meaning is not seen as constructed only in language and text; otherwise how could there be any notion of not being able to find the words to express what we feel, or of not saying what we meant to say? It is precisely this inadequacy of language to express what we mean which necessitates the use of multiple sources of evidence, as described in the section on triangulation below.

What is presented here is no less social constructivist than discourse methods, but is social constructivist in a different sense. Where discourse approaches regard meaning as constructed *in* social relations, this study asserts that the various meanings given to experience are constructed *by* social, cultural and historical factors at a broader level. Where discourse approaches focus on the social at an immediate, micro level, in dialogue, this study is concerned with those aspects of the social environment which impinge on the individual not only directly but also indirectly.

It is asserted here that there is an *extra-discursive social reality*, for which language provides one means of expression.[1] Where discourse approaches see meaning as constituted *in* language, therefore, this study regards it as expressed*through* language. As Bowers (1988) points out, Potter and Wetherell's analysis is essentially a *functionalist* one. Its aim is to "clarify the linguistic resources used to make certain things happen" (Potter and Wetherell, op cit, p 171). Language is used for specific, functional purposes. However, in focusing on language in actual, concrete instances of discourse, discourse analysis does not seek explanations for the functions themselves. It asserts that different repertoires will be employed for different purposes, but does not address the question of what determines the employment of one repertoire rather than another or, as Bowers (op cit) puts it, "What else has to be the case for discourses to be possible?" Discourse theorists such as Potter and Wetherell would argue that this is not a legitimate question, since there *are* no causes outside discourse, that discourse itself and the social relations produced by discourse, are what constitutes reality. The debate here centres on views of causation, explanation and reality. Henriques et al (1984) argue that there are two possible positions in relation to the question of reality. First, that there are irreducible real processes (the economy, or nature, for example) that determine what may ultimately be contained in discourse. The second position is that there can be no appeal to anything outside discourse since what is outside can only be specified in some discourse that "always already" constructs it in a specific form. Bowers clearly takes the first of those positions, Potter and Wetherell the second. The present author advocates a qualified version of the first position. It is maintained here that there are extra-discursive factors, in particular broader social structure and social and cultural institutions, which give rise to particular discourses. In this respect, the approach taken here has more in common with other writers who embrace "discourse"

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[1] In this respect, the position taken here is allied with philosophical realism, which asserts that there is a material or social reality which does not depend for its existence on some mind being aware of it. Philosophical realism also sees both positivism and interpretivist approaches to social science as unsatisfactory, because neither acknowledges an independently existing reality. Whether social institutions could be regarded as existing independently of the persons who constitute them, however, is problematic. For a detailed discussion, see Frazer (op cit).

but also take account of what exists outside discourse. In other words, there is more that can be investigated than discourses, even though this may be investigated *through* discourses. Hollway (1989), for example, proposes that the theoretical goal of any analysis should shift from that of "ensuring the methodological conditions for the discovery of truth" to "understanding the conditions which produce accounts" (Hollway, op cit, p 42), thus developing a theory of meaning which incorporates personal history, culture, unconscious processes and social differences. Similarly, Henriques et al (op cit) advocate a deconstruction which "retraces the system of dependencies of a discourse" (p 104) and attempts to identify the conditions (which may be material, or discursive, or historical) of its production. This is based on the "genealogy" of Foucault (Foucault, 1966, 1971), which aims to reconstitute the present from its traces in the past. In particular it seeks to retrace the mutual dependencies of the "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser, 1971), such as the family, the church and school which work by "interpellating subjects" to produce discourses.

Where Potter and Wetherell see reality as constituted in discourse, therefore, the view is taken here that there is a reality which exists outside dialogic discourse and determines the content of accounts. This reality cannot be directly apprehended, however. It is interpreted and communicated through language. In this sense, language is seen as *representation* in a way which discourse approaches reject. This view is neither idealist nor cognitivist, however. It is not asserted that there is a straightforward relationship between words and things, or words and thoughts, feelings or attitudes. Neither is it claimed that what is being presented here is the "truth", or that any single account directly reflects an individual's experience. Language is regarded rather as an often imperfect *tool* for the representation of the meaning of experience. This has particular implications for cross-cultural studies, and this question is addressed below.

An account is, then, regarded as a representation of something in reality. It is not a straightforward representation, however, where there is a one-to-one relationship

between words and things. An appropriate analogy for the term "representation" as it is employed here is its use in philosophical aesthetics: a painting, or sculpture, or piece of music is a representation of reality *as it appears* to the creative artist. A work of art thus constitutes an *interpretation* of the artist's perceptions, or feelings, or experiences. It is then in turn *critically interpreted* by those who apprehend it. In this study, a respondent's interpretation of her experience is expressed through language and the account thus produced is critically interpreted by the researcher.

What the researcher accesses, therefore, is not "reality", but reality through the eyes of the respondent. This is in turn mediated through the eyes of the researcher. Again, the analogy with art is useful here. Berger (1972) writes:

> The photographer's way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject. The painter's way of seeing is reconstituted by the marks he makes on the canvas or paper. Yet, although every image embodies a way of seeing, our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing ... (p 10)

What is being argued here is that a respondent's "way of seeing" her experience is influenced by the social structure within which that experience is lived. The researcher's "way of seeing" is similarly influenced. But the task of the researcher is regarded here as the attempt to further our understanding by identifying those ways of seeing and giving possible explanations for them. The particular task of social psychology is to relate individual "ways of seeing" to the social context in which they are manifested. In order to do this, the emphasis must shift from the individual to the group. It is only by identifying commonalities *across* individuals that we can say anything about the *social* origins of individual representations. The social is, by definition, concerned with commonalities rather than difference.

Where discourse analysis emphasises the variability and inconsistency of accounts in individual or dialogic situations, therefore, what is attempted here is the identification of *pattern* which relates or distinguishes members of particular *groups*. While the variability and complexity of individual accounts (and individual lives) is

acknowledged, there *is* an attempt to find consensus, and repertoires *are* construed as linked to social groups (see above, p 39). It is this emphasis on *pattern* and *groups* which constitutes the main difference between this and discourse analytic approaches. Parker (1997, op cit) has pointed out that the promise of a fully social account of human activity and experience, from within the European tradition of social psychology, has not been fulfilled, and that recent trends have returned to the individual as a focus of study. Discourse analysis, for example, privileges individual experience by concentrating on individual accounts or the individual in specific discursive contexts. The study presented here privileges *social experience* by identifying what is common across individual accounts and may be attributed to the common social experiences to which individuals in particular social groups have been exposed. While there is variability, there is not *infinite* variability. The methodology chosen reflects this: looking at small groups permits respondents to represent their experience in their own words, rather than those formulated by the researcher in a questionnaire, for example, but at the same time allows for the identification of repeated themes and concepts which reflect commonalities of broader social experience. Some reference to frequencies is therefore necessary, but these are frequencies of themes and concepts across individuals, rather than the frequencies identified by, for example, percentages of numbers of respondents in a large-scale survey. And while the intensive nature of the methods constrains the study to small samples, the identification of pattern shows that the results are not merely chance collections of individual differences. Small samples cannot provide definitive answers regarding group differences and any conclusions must therefore be tentative, but if pattern is found across groups of randomly chosen individuals, as here, this is an indication of real phenomena.

In identifying pattern, therefore, the focus of the present study is on order, rather than the variability and contradiction of discourse approaches. As such, it may be accused of social psychological orthodoxy. However, it is not claimed that human experience follows mechanistic or immutable laws. What is asserted here is that order can be

found in human experience *beyond the contradictions of individual experience* and that this order is related to the common social context in which that experience is lived. The difference between discourse analysis and the approach taken here is essentially one of emphasis. There is a parallel between discourse approaches and chaos theories in science (Gleick, 1987), where emphasis is placed on the unpredictable, contradictory aspects of phenomena. The approach taken here corresponds rather to the more recent "complexity" theories (Waldrop, 1992).[1] These advance the notion of "edge-of-chaos":

> The mysterious "something" that makes life and mind possible is a certain kind of balance between the forces of order and the forces of disorder ...
> (Waldrop, op cit, p 293)

It is possible to focus on either those forces of order or forces of disorder. Discourse analysis seeks to reveal the messy, disorderly and duplicitous processes of negotiation which go into the formulation and construction of ordered discourse. The approach taken here attempts to identify the patterns of order which define social groups and make social life possible. "Order" here is not taken to be characterised by fixed structures, however, but is rather something which is brought about by individuals' need for a non-threatening, structured and consensual universe. At the individual level, there is a need for structure and continuity to reduce cognitive and emotional strain by reworking novel experiences to bring them into line with existing personal history. At the societal level such structure and continuity is also necessary for social groups to function co-operatively. The focus on pattern and order here is therefore regarded as reflecting the order which both individuals and society seek to place upon random experiences.

Although the aim here is to identify pattern, it is not claimed that what is being presented is "the truth", or that an account directly reflects an individual's experience. Even the concept of "production of knowledges" (Henriques et al, op cit) is disputed: there is no claim to "knowledge", but an interpretation of the material as presented

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[1] These comparisons illustrate the point made by Henriques et al that psychology itself is a historical and social product, and part of general intellectual movements.

together with a search for explanation. It is not assumed that "when people describe the same event ... their accounts will be consistent" (Potter and Wetherell, op cit, p 34), and the methodology employed here has been chosen to reflect this. It allows respondents to give accounts of experience in different ways, while still attempting to identify similarities within and differences between groups. Thus, although a non-quantitative approach which allows respondents to express themselves in their own words and shows how cultural features as macrophenomena are represented as microphenomena in the perceptions of individuals, it is their repeated expression *across* individuals which is of interest here.

At the same time, it is recognised that we must take account of what is not said, or is not accessible to straightforward questioning; and that attitudes may be expressed differently according to social context. Rather than take a psychoanalytic approach (Hollway, op cit), where evidence for the non-conscious aspects of an individual's experience, or portrayal of that experience, then becomes a matter of the researcher's interpretation, according to psychoanalytic principles, of a single account, what is preferred here is the use with each respondent of a combination of different *methods*, each designed to elicit from that respondent, in her own words, but more or less directly according to the particular method, her position in relation to womanhood, work and family. While the researcher must still impose an interpretation on the material, therefore, it is the multi-dimensional character of the data which drives the analysis and interpretation, and not a preconceived theoretical framework.

The position taken here, therefore, is that psychological processes - that is both thinking and behaviour - are culturally derived, via the medium of language, through value systems, institutions and socialisation practices which are themselves consonant with historical and economic circumstances. This is not to take a deterministic, totally structuralist view, however, since individuals interpret the world around them and act

upon their interpretations. Agency and structure, individual and society, are seen as interdependent: attitudes derive from society and are reworked by the individual who in turn influences society. Both actor-oriented and structure-oriented theories are rejected, therefore, and replaced with the kind of model proposed by Bhaskar (1989), which he terms the transformational model of social action. This is similar to the Marxian view, articulated in psychology by Vygotsky (1962) and Luria (1976), that as the environment changes so psychological processes change and individuals in turn act upon the environment. Individual attitudes, "character" or "personality", while not wholly determined by society or culture, will be consonant with the expectations imposed through the ideal character types of that society (see Brown, 1990). Attitudes towards us, which themselves reflect cultural influences, are internalised and there is a constant modification of our sense of self by suggestion from others. We are not merely "looking-glass selves", however (Mead, op cit). Attitudes transmitted through social institutions and practices are filtered through the unique viewpoint of each individual. Since no two sets of experience, nor interpretations of that experience, can be the same, any understanding of this process must come from individual accounts.

There are certain precedents in psychology for the type of approach advocated here, but it has more in common with older approaches, such as Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* (see Danziger, 1983)[1], than with more recent ones. While there has been some work on the social context of psychological processes, this has been limited. In abnormal psychology, for example, attention has been paid to the social determinants of mental illness (Brown & Harris, op cit; Cochrane, 1983), but largely at a micro level, focusing on the role of the family. Where there is a tradition of placing the individual within his

[1] Wundt also argued that psychology should be divided into two parts, the experimental and the social The simpler mental functions - sensation, perception, memory - can be studied by laboratory experiments. But the higher mental processes involved in human thinking (in the present case, attitudes, for example) are so strongly conditioned by linguistic habits, moral ideas, and ideological convictions that scientific experiments are impossible. Only by studying the *products* of thought - ie language - as these have accumulated during human history, can we hope to understand thinking. Wundt also placed emphasis on language, therefore, and it is not this emphasis which is disputed here: it is the notion, such as that expressed by the pragmatists, that thought emerges only during the course of action. Wundt's view that experimental methods are appropriate for *some* aspects of psychology is also shared.

or her broader social context, this has tended to be within the therapeutic fields (Adler, 1929; Laing, 1967; and more recently Banton et al, 1985; Smail, 1991). Cross-cultural psychology, on the other hand, has for the most part looked at differences between pre-industrial and industrialised societies. There has been very little work in psychology which compares the effects on psychological processes of different western, industrialised cultures. It is assumed that there is a "western" homogeneity, and what this thesis sets out to show is that different economic, historical and political factors in these otherwise similar cultures will be reflected in the differing thought and behaviour of individuals within those cultures.

Societal psychology

Much closer to the present study than any of the "sociological" approaches outlined above is the "societal psychology" described by Himmelweit and Gaskell (1990). Although their book of the same name was not published until after this study was conceptualised and carried out, there are many common points of interest.

Himmelweit and Gaskell argue that the emphasis of contemporary psychology on the individual and small groups has neglected examination of the way social life functions in favour of artificial and simplified environments which can be studied experimentally. This means that social psychology can contribute relatively little to an understanding of the social problems which we face. It is partly for this reason, they argue, that "the tide is beginning to turn" (p 10), but they also acknowledge the influence of the various critiques of social psychology put forward by Gergen (1985), Tajfel (1981) and Moscovici (1984), who question its ahistorical, acontextual stance and neglect of the relationship between environment and individuals. There are "exceptions to current practice", therefore, (Jahoda herself represents another recent example - see Jahoda, 1986; 1992) but "generally, such work has gone forward in selected fields and has lacked the critical mass needed to make a decisive impact on the discipline"

(Himmelweit, 1990, p 20). In particular, it is European, rather than British or American, social psychologists, who have taken a societal approach, and this is one of the issues raised in the Discussion.

Himmelweit (op cit) acknowledges the "clumsiness" of the label "societal" but says that this was chosen in preference to "sociological" psychology because of the latter's association with a single social science discipline. An important aspect of "societal psychology" therefore is the contribution to be made by other disciplines, - not only sociology, but also anthropology, political science, economics and the humanities - and it is for this reason, too, that the term "societal psychology" is preferred here to the "sociological social psychology" of Collier et al (op cit) referred to above.

Himmelweit outlines fifteen key propositions which characterise a societal psychology. While some of these are not directly relevant to the present study (individual responses to social change, the need to move from the individual to social institutions as the unit of analysis, and the need for a *rapprochement* between applied and basic social psychology, for example) there are clear links with the views expressed above. The fifteen propositions are presented briefly here, and the extent to which those which are relevant have been addressed in the present study is considered in the Discussion.

Key propositions which characterise a societal psychology

1. Human beings need to be studied in a sociocultural context, which is itself attuned to economic and historical circumstances.

2. We need to be "conversant" with the characteristics of the environment in which individuals function just as experimental psychologists are familiar with the properties of the stimulus materials they provide.

3. The objective characteristics of the environment need to be studied alongside its mediated reality.

4. The products of social order, that is social institutions and so on, are a legitimate object of study in their own right, and the unit of analysis needs to move from individuals to these.

5. We need to acknowledge that change is ever present and to pay attention to the factors which are associated with social change, whether this be factors in individuals, minority groups, the economy or other external forces.

6. The aim of societal psychology is "the development of conceptual frameworks or models rather than the forlorn search for invariant laws."

7. We need theories and insights drawn from the other social science disciplines as well as from psychology.

8. Generalisations, as well as individuals, are embedded in the historical circumstances of the day and there is therefore a need to maintain a historical perspective.

9. Cross-fertilisation between societal psychology and the other social science disciplines is essential for the adequate analysis of social phenomena and social systems. Psychology has much to offer the other social sciences as well as much to gain from them.

10. There is a need for cross-fertilisation between societal and other psychologists particularly those in the developmental and personality fields.

11. There is a need for cross-fertilisation between basic and applied research.

12. In analysing both institutions and individuals, a systems approach is required in which objective reality and the perceptions of that reality, as well as individual histories and "mental maps" are all considered essential ingredients.

13. The study of social phenomena requires analysis at the macro as well as the micro level.

14. We need to accept that there is no such thing as value-free research. Researchers are as embedded in their own culture and the current canons of their discipline as the individuals they are studying.

15. We need a range of research tools drawn not only from psychology but also from the humanities and the other social sciences. No one method is ideal: method should be fitted to the phenomena to be examined rather than the other way round.

It will be observed that Himmelweit refers frequently to the relationship between "objective reality" and individual interpretations of that reality, thus taking for granted that there *is* an objective reality. The view of reality taken here is described above (p 47 *et seq*) and further elaborated in the section on triangulation below. It is asserted that although an external reality is assumed to be a useful working assumption, this cannot be accessed directly in social psychological research. It is not "objective", therefore, in the sense that there is one "true" reality, and we can only ever say anything about a mediated reality. However, it is also asserted that there are "facts", which can be drawn upon as evidence to support an interpretation. In the present case these are represented by the statistical and historical data relevant to the issues under discussion. It is these kinds of data which are taken to be what Himmelweit describes as "objective reality"

Rationale for methods chosen

The methods chosen here, therefore, and which are described in detail below, reflect the following assumptions:

1. That psychological processes, namely thinking and behaviour, cannot be divorced from their social and cultural context, and so as psychologists we may find it more fruitful to take account not only of individual experience but also of larger structures, institutions and socialisation practices.

2. In spite of these influences, no two individual histories, or interpretations of those histories, will be the same. Laboratory methods, with their emphasis on general laws, are therefore inappropriate. Respondents should be allowed to express themselves in their own words.

3. While acknowledging the contradictions and multiplicity of individuals' experiences, the influence of culture will produce certain commonalities among the members of particular cultures, and those members will themselves seek to impose a structure and order on their individual experiences, to bring them into line with their existing cultural history. The use of several methods with each individual will highlight those common characteristics by eliciting themes which reflect the continuity within individuals and the commonality between individuals.

4. Similarly, because the task is to compare groups, the methods themselves should represent an attempt to address the issues in a systematic way, both in the execution of the methods and the interpretation of the results. The methods selected should therefore allow respondents to present their subjective experience in a subjective manner, while at the same time permitting analysis which is as *objective* as possible. As stated above, it is not thought possible to access reality directly. Therefore the possibility of total objectivity is also rejected. What *is* possible, however, is plausibility based on

systematic analysis and the extent to which evidence converges. "Objectivity" is therefore used in a *qualified* way here to refer to the maximisation of plausibility and the avoidance of purely subjective interpretation by gathering different types of evidence from multiple sources. In this way it is objective in the sense that social science is objective: that is, that it is independently replicable by others. "Objectivity" as used here does not imply commitment to a single truth.

This study began as part of a large-scale survey of unemployment and attitudes to work in Britain and France, and was to focus on the situation of women. The point of departure was therefore survey methods, using questionnaires and looking at such issues as women's work and educational histories, family situations, income etc. However, it became clear that although such an approach would yield useful statistics and a wealth of factual information, this would mask the possibly complex range of decision-making processes and the multiple interpretations which women might place upon their work. To use Yin's (1984) description, a survey approach will answer the questions "who", "what", "where", "how many" and "how much"; but not the questions "how" or "why" It was also felt to have a male bias: we have already seen (Chapter 1) that women's work has been linked to their family situation and that women's work histories are as a result less straightforward than men's. It seemed therefore that a simple classification according to certain pre-determined categories assumed a masculine linearity which was not appropriate to women.

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The issue to be addressed was: how is work placed in relation to other aspects of women's lives? To what extent do they see themselves as workers, partners, mothers, daughters or friends, and what is the relative importance of work and private life? The question therefore was essentially one of role, identity, senses of self; and the problem how to measure these.

There is a substantial literature on "the self-concept", surveyed extensively in Wylie (1961, 1974) and re-evaluated in Wylie (1989). In 1974, Wylie concluded that the situation differed little from that of 1961, when she criticised both the state of theory and the use of unvalidated measuring instruments or flawed research designs. She concluded that there were:

> only two defensible alternatives - abandon theorizing and research involving self-referent constructs, or make whatever theoretical and methodological improvements are necessary in order to put such work on a more respectable scientific basis. (Wylie, 1974, p 315).

By 1989, there was little improvement, however. Research publications were seen to address substantive questions rather than methodological ones, and involved measuring instruments whose reliability, validity and psychometric characteristics were questionable (Wylie, 1989).

According to Wylie, the "primitive state of theory" was an important factor in the continuing methodological limitations. The constructs involved were inadequately delineated and defined by personality theorists, and internally inconsistent. Rather than abandon theories of the self, predictiveness might be improved by the addition of more variables.

The concern for such issues as internal consistency, predictiveness and "scientific respectability" stems from Wylie's standpoint as an experimental psychologist. What is proposed in this thesis is that the ready-made instruments which are available to the researcher do not in general answer his or her purpose because the global self-concept is of itself so complex (William James' material, spiritual, social and bodily selves, to give but one example - James, 1890), that any attempt to reduce it to the exigencies of experimental psychology cannot succeed. The failure of personality psychologists working with traditional methods to devise an adequate measure of the self-concept, and yet their continuing to attempt to do so, provide a prime example of their unwillingness to recognise the inability of experimental psychology to address those

questions which are intuitively considered to be important. Rather than abandon theories of the self, or make "methodological improvements such as the addition of more variables, it is argued here that no single instrument is adequate for measuring the self-concept. The concept is itself too complex to be "measured" in the experimental sense of the term, and a different approach using several methods is needed. This is why a triangulated methodology was preferred.

Triangulation

As described above, the researcher's analysis of accounts constitutes an interpretation (by the researcher) of a representation (by the respondent) of experience. It is an interpretation of an interpretation. This does not confine us to a purely individualistic or relativistic position, however. Just as it is argued above that our way of seeing is influenced by our social experience, so our seeing is influenced by what we know. Berger, for example, illustrates this by means of Van Gogh's painting *Wheatfield with Crows* (Berger, op cit). The painting is reproduced twice, first with the caption "This is a landscape of a cornfield with birds flying out of it" and then with the sentence "This is the last picture that Van Gogh painted before he killed himself". Our interpretation of the painting is crucially changed by the information provided by that second caption. Similarly, interpretations of literature may be influenced by biographical information we have about the author or historical information relating to the period in which it was written. Accounts presented in the social psychological context may be regarded in the same way: as interpretations and expressions of experience which are in turn interpreted by the researcher, whose interpretations may be informed in various ways. The aim of the triangulated method is to increase the robustness of those interpretations through the convergence of evidence from multiple sources.

Triangulation is usually taken to refer to the use of more than one data collection approach in order to combine the strengths and correct some of the deficiencies of any one source of data. Sociologists such as Denzin (1970, 1978) have argued that because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, we can gain a better perspective on a research problem by effectively positioning the problem in the centre of a triangle and viewing it from its three corners or angles. While it is maintained here that "empirical reality" cannot be directly apprehended, but only interpreted, it is nevertheless asserted that we can *postulate* reality by assembling various representations of that reality and identifying what is common to them. Wollheim (1968) suggests that "interpretations" are not uniquely determined by facts, nor can they be conclusively established in any other way. Rather interpretations are the constructions we place upon "facts", which are established by reference to the evidence. Since interpretations cannot be conclusively established, they must be assessed by reference to pragmatic considerations such as theory, intuition, judgement, taste and plausibility. In a study such as that presented here, plausibility is increased by the extent to which evidence converges. *Explanation* for the phenomena thus observed can similarly only be speculative, but can also be judged by its plausibility, based on the convergence of evidence. What is claimed here, therefore, is not "knowledge" or "fact" or "objective truth", but a furtherance of understanding through the convergence of various sources of evidence. The more disparate those sources of evidence, the more likely it is that pattern in findings is indicative of real phenomena rather than artefact. In the case of the present study, the methods chosen were selected so as to be sufficiently different from each other, and were presented on different occasions so that any one method would not influence the results of another. Ensuring that the methods are genuinely independent in this way diminishes the possibility that the findings are the result of artefact and that they merely represent a plurality of versions.

Triangulation is both time-consuming and expensive, especially in a cross-cultural context. Of necessity, therefore, the design of the study had to be intensive rather than

extensive. Given the limitations of time and geography, it would not be possible to use the chosen methodology on several hundred individuals, as would be the case for a survey, for example. Because of the small numbers involved (ten women in each country was considered feasible), it would not be possible to generalize in a statistical sense, but the amount of material generated by the study would provide important information regarding areas for further study (including by more traditional methods) and form the basis for generalization at a theoretical level. In this sense a multiple case-study approach corresponds to the use of experiments, where a series of experiments (like the series of case-studies carried out here) becomes generalizable to theoretical propositions, and not populations. The goal is analytic generalization, not statistical generalization (Yin, op cit).

The methods selected

What was required was a combination of methods which would satisfy the criteria of: 1) directly asking respondents how they felt and behaved, allowing them to express themselves in their own words; 2) less direct approaches which might tap unconscious (in a general, rather than Freudian sense) processes; 3) which would transfer between languages and cultures; and 4) which could be analysed with some rigour. The methods also had to be sufficiently different from each other to ensure that they were giving different perspectives on the problem, but also able to be synthesised in order to trace themes. Of the enormous number of measures evaluated by Wylie, only one, the Twenty Statements Test (TST), or Who Are You?, seemed appropriate to the present study. This requires the respondent to write 20 sentences in reply to the question "Who Am I?" in a time limit of twelve minutes (see Kuhn and McPartland, 1954). Responses are then analysed according to categories such as Roles and Memberships (kinship, occupational role, political affiliation etc), Interests and Personal Characteristics. The method was seen to have a number of advantages: it allowed respondents to write about themselves in their own way; the number of sentences required encourages a

progression from the (usually) more obvious and superficial statements of the first few lines to greater self-reflection further down; there are no linguistic/cultural limitations; and it is quick and simple to administer. One of the criticisms which Wylie makes of the TST, that it has been mainly of interest to sociologists rather than psychologists, was seen as one of its strengths. As Gordon (1968) points out, an important characteristic of the TST is that it provides respondents with the opportunity to describe themselves in "noun forms", thus broadening self-descriptions to include "categories", such as roles, group memberships, activities and loyalties, in addition to "attributes" Wylie's assertion that "of course, categories of interest to sociologists such as consensual references, demographic variables, roles and group memberships are not psychologically meaningful" (Wylie, 1974, p 243) is precisely what is being challenged here: social and cultural categories are considered to be of great psychological importance.

The second method chosen was the repertory grid technique developed by Kelly (1955). This is not considered by Wylie, but since the present study was concerned with the meaning which women attach to their worlds, with their personal construal of those worlds, it led to a consideration of Kelly's Personal Construct Theory (Kelly, op cit). One of the postulates of Personal Construct Theory is that reality cannot be directly apprehended but only construed. From the individual viewpoint there is no objective, once-and-for-all reality, therefore, but only interpretations of experience. The result is not chaos, however: construing is the perpetual attempt of individuals to relate what was hitherto seen as diverse, and thereby envisage a more integral universe. In addition, the events of a person's life may make sense only if he or she is seen as acting in relation to the future as well as the present and the past. It is the individual's attempt to make sense of his or her world, to organize life experience.

This juxtaposition of individual interpretations of experience and the need to order that experience coincided precisely with what was being attempted here (see p 51), and use

of the grid method which Kelly developed to examine individual construct systems seemed therefore appropriate and justified. Grid method is a form of projective test, in the sense that the observer is attempting to uncover and interpret the private world of the individual, rather than plotting the individual against axes predetermined by the observer or others, as in "objective" psychometric tests[1]. An example of a projective test is the Rorschach, or inkblot test, where the respondent is asked to interpret the shape of ten bilaterally symmetrical inkblots. While those interpretations will be completely free on the part of the individual concerned, the interpretations which the investigator (usually, in this case, a clinician) in turn places upon his or her responses will be considered in relation to others who have also taken the test. Projective tests are thus respondent-led rather than investigator-led, but individuals may still be compared in order to establish pattern.

Basic grid method involves presenting respondents with cards on which certain "elements" are written. (In the original role construct repertory test, these would be roles, or relationships, such as father, brother, mother, wife etc). Respondents are asked to choose three cards and to describe one way in which two of the cards are similar and different from the third. This yields a bi-polar differentiation, such as Strict-Easygoing in the role construct example, which constitutes one part of the respondent's construct system.

The technique is then repeated, using different cards, eventually producing a number of such bi-polar constructs. The results are plotted on a grid with the elements forming the columns and the constructs the rows. The procedure is described in more detail below, and an example given in the Appendix. Elements are in general provided by the

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[1] Kelly would in fact argue that such a method is *more* objective. "It is more objective, not because it is more legalistic - a feature which is often confounded with objectivity - but because it is more object-orientated. It recognises that it is the client who is the primary object of the psychologist's investigation and not the test. Thus, we would argue that the psychology of personal constructs is more objective because it is more projective." (Kelly, ibid, p 207-8).

investigator, and the constructs may be similarly provided or generated by the respondent. In addition, there are various methods of relating the constructs and the elements, and this again is detailed below. The grid thus produced shows the major themes in an individual's construal of those aspects of his or her world under investigation; and how these aspects, as represented by the elements in the grid, relate to each other in terms of those themes.

Finally, respondents were interviewed individually. This was in order to allow them to talk freely, without the structural constraints of the previous two methods. In order that respondents addressed the issues under investigation, rather than simply relating their life histories, for example, a semi-structured format was chosen, whereby certain subject areas were delineated in advance by the investigator, and kept in mind during the interview. A detailed account of how these methods were applied in the present study is given under *Procedure* below.

Linguistic equivalence

As Hofstede (1980, 1984) points out, "language is both the vehicle of most cross-cultural research and part of its object" (1984, p 27). However, language is not neutral: our thinking is influenced by the words and categories available in our language, a phenomenon recognised by what has become known as the "Whorfian hypothesis", namely that "observers are not led by the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar or can in some way be calibrated" (Fishman, 1974, p 65). Language gives an indication of how the world is categorised in different cultures. Japanese, for instance, has no equivalent for "decision-making" and, in an example relevant to the present study, Hofstede (op cit) refers to the fact that there is no adequate equivalent in French for the English "achievement"

Communication perhaps poses the greatest difficulty for cross-cultural research, therefore. Both verbal and non-verbal communication involve transmission of meaning which is not the same for different cultural groups. "Doing cross-cultural psychology can never be like reading a thermometer in different countries" (Smith and Bond, 1993, p 29). Cross-cultural psychology can never be an exact science. The problems can be minimised, however, through an awareness of some of the pitfalls and how they can be addressed in practice. If there is no equivalent word for a concept in another language, for example, meaning can still be communicated by paraphrase or circumlocution. In this respect, it helps considerably if the researcher is multilingual. In the present case, the researcher already had a degree in French, was a qualified French teacher and (perhaps more importantly) translator and had lived in France for two years. She therefore had not only a thorough knowledge of the language, but an understanding of the culture derived from many sources - literature, history, the media, friends - as well as living in the country concerned.

It was partly because of this background that a quantitative methodology was avoided: although a questionnaire methodology can be rigorous, it assumes an equivalence (questionnaires are customarily translated into the second language and then back-translated into the first language by a native speaker) which as we have seen above can be misleading. In a cross-cultural situation, a less structured format has considerable advantages over, say, a questionnaire, because any misunderstandings can be negotiated and resolved while the interview is in progress. This is helpful both to interviewer and interviewee and contributes to a richer understanding of the issues under discussion.

The French part of the research, with the exception of the TST, involved face-to-face interaction in the respondents' own language, French. The researcher was therefore a second-language user interacting with first-language users. Among the problems associated with such a cross-language situation are that first-language speakers may

modify their speech in order to make it easier to understand (Coupland et al, 1988). In doing so, they pay more attention to the addressee than would normally be the case (Gallois et al, 1988). This diverts attention from the task to the process of communication itself. Similarly, using a second language imposes cognitive strain on the speaker which is in addition to the demands of the task in hand. There is some evidence (Wible and Hui, 1985) that a person's perceived professional competence is associated with their proficiency in the second language, which again adds strain to the task of the researcher in her role as "expert"

The consequence for both parties is that more attention than normal is paid to the vehicle of communication and some accommodation must occur on both sides in order that misunderstanding and confirmation of stereotypes does not take place. If this is the case, to what extent can what is being presented be regarded as a "true" picture of the respondent? And can the researcher be viewing the material from both cultural groups with equal objectivity? Again, there are arguments on both sides. The researcher, like the respondents, is culturally embedded. In the case of the present study, she is always viewing the French from the perspective of an English woman. The French will always be "different" However, just as she cannot view the French with the eye of a Frenchwoman, she cannot, as a single woman, completely identify with the English married women, or those with children. What she can do is be aware of the social and cultural baggage she is bringing with her, and attempt to maximise her knowledge and understanding of other groups in order to empathise with them. The methods chosen here also permitted the respondent to talk freely, with minimum intervention from the researcher, thus reducing the "cognitive strain" involved in first- and second-language speakers accommodating to each other, as outlined above.

The entire procedure was carried out in the respondents' native language, with the investigator conducting all parts herself. The only part of the TST which required translation was the question, "Who Am I?", for which the equivalent is a

straightforward "Qui suis-je?" In the repertory grid, "Self" was originally proposed for the naming of the elements, but because of translation problems, "You" or "Vous" was substituted (see below). The elements could then be translated literally, and the French equivalent of the grid was piloted on French nationals in England before being administered in France. For the interviews, the format and guideline questions were the same in both countries. Interviews, both French and English, were almost all transcribed by the investigator. Where this was done by a third party, the transcriber was experienced and completely bilingual, of English mother tongue but living in France.

Problems of linguistic equivalence in the interpretation of the material are considered in the Discussion (Chapter 6).

Cultural equivalence

The practical problems in obtaining matched samples in different cultures cannot be underestimated and compromises have to be accepted if any data is to be obtained at all. The choice of respondents was deliberately not limited to any particular social or educational group (such as working class women, or women managers). This is not to deny the importance of such factors as occupational level or education, and these were taken into account (see respondent profiles in Appendix), but what was preferred was a broad range of occupational level and qualifications, in order to assess the relative influence of these. This broad range was matched in each country.

It was, however, felt necessary to keep the *working environment* constant and to match this as closely as possible in the two countries. In restricting the study to such narrow samples, care has to be taken in generalising to the culture as a whole. To what extent are differences found the result of a culture effect or an occupation effect? Can a particular type of organisation or occupation be said to be *functionally* equivalent from

one culture to another? These are questions which would require a much larger scale study, in which particular subcultures are compared with other subcultures, beyond the scope of a doctoral thesis. For the purposes of the present study, it was important to keep the type of industry constant, in order at least to *minimise* the occupation effect across countries.

Organisations were sought, therefore, where there were women at all levels, and where nominal equivalents could be found in each country. This was not an easy task. Organisations such as hospitals and firms of solicitors were considered and approached, but either did not prove co-operative or equivalents could not be found. Eventually the Personnel Director of a major publishing company in Oxford (publishing is traditionally a large employer of women) was approached and agreed to co-operate. Finding equivalents in France proved more difficult as the negotiation was being conducted from a distance. However, the Oxford publishing company was currently engaged on a joint project with a company of similar size and stature in Paris. The company was contacted and agreed to co-operate.

There was one difficulty, however: although women were approached in exactly the same way in both countries, that is randomly within the limits of age and marital status, in England it proved very difficult to find women with children who worked full-time, and in France it was impossible to find enough single women in the relevant age group who were not living with a partner. This is an issue which reflects some of the findings of the study and is discussed in later chapters, but it meant that in France cohabiting participants, as opposed to "single" women in a strict sense, had to be included.

The difficulty of finding single women living alone for the French group illustrates how demographic differences may create problems in terms of "equivalence": one is in effect searching for equivalence within contexts which are by definition *not* equivalent or there would be no point in comparing them. Matching is therefore somewhat

arbitrary, usually using demographic parameters of the kind described here, but which themselves may have different meanings in the contexts being studied. Those Frenchwomen who were cohabiting, for example, described themselves as "célibataire" (single). In order to refer to those who were single and *not* living with a partner, they would describe them as "célibataire célibataire". This issue alone raises problems of meaning and identity before any other data are gathered: it was more difficult to find women in France who were not living in relation with a partner, yet they still described themselves as "single" Is this because they retain more autonomy than the English women even within a relationship, or is it simply that "célibataire" is used in French for any state which is not one of formal marriage? These are the kinds of questions which are considered in the Discussion, but are raised here as an illustration of the problems which need to be addressed in cross-cultural and cross-language research.

Respondents

Problems such as those outlined above were not considered to affect the study unduly. (One of the English women also began living with her partner shortly after the study was under way). Rather they mirror increasing fluidity in society at large with regard to relationships, household composition, and the notions of permanence and commitment. What is important is that the issues under consideration here are to do with identity and self-concept, and those cohabiting *described* themselves as single. The chief differentiating factor was felt to be whether or not women lived in a *family* situation, and the single, cohabiting women did not consider themselves to be living in family situations like those of their colleagues with partners and children. For similar reasons, single mothers were excluded from the study, though several proposed to take part, as it was felt that the situation of single mother would entail particular problems of its own.

Respondents were sought who were women in or nearing their thirties, either living with a partner and children, or single (five in each category in each country), and working full-time. This age group was selected because it was felt that they would be women who had worked for a number of years and therefore had enough experience of working to have formed certain attitudes towards and impressions of working life. In addition, it was felt that at this age the women with children may be experiencing some conflict between their work and home lives; and that the single women may also be experiencing conflict because of the biological urgency to have children. Work and personal life would in both cases be involved in a tension which might throw the relevant issues into relief. Full-time workers were also chosen for this reason - where the tension might be greatest. Women were sought, therefore, with a minimum age of 28 and a maximum of 38. In the event the minimum age at the time of interview was 29 and the maximum 37.

A second reason for choosing women in this age group was that the youngest would have been ten and the oldest seventeen in 1970. They would therefore have spent their adolescent years while the Women's Movement was at its height, and since one of the aims of the enquiry was to try to establish what influence, if any, larger social and cultural factors may have upon individuals, this was considered of particular importance to the topic of women at work.

The Personnel Director of the publishing company, as described above, supplied the names of a number of women who fitted the required profile, approached them with a letter of introduction from the investigator, outlining the project, and initial meetings were arranged. Where those originally interested felt unable to participate (the total time commitment was considered to be 5-6 hours) they often gave the names of others who might take part, and in this way the sample of five single women and five women with partners and children was achieved.

In the case of France, because a joint publishing project was being undertaken, a contact name was provided, she supplied names of individuals who fitted the profile and might agree to take part, a visit was arranged and again where those individuals felt unable to participate they often provided names of other people who might do so. A similar sample of five single women and five women with partners and children was therefore assembled in Paris. In all these negotiations, the language of discussion from the beginning was French.

The final group of respondents was therefore as follows:

England	France
4 married with children	2 married with children
1 cohabiting with children	3 cohabiting with children
4 single, living alone	3 single, living alone
1 cohabiting	2 cohabiting

For the purposes of brevity, those with a partner and children are referred to as "married" throughout; and those without children, whether cohabiting or not, are referred to as "single". These terms are preferred to "with children" or "childless" because they better capture the notion of family life or otherwise described above. What is important is that *all* of those described as "married" have partners *and* children; while *none* of those described as "single" have children.

The organisations

The two organisations differed in that the English company is an independent academic publisher while the French company forms part of a larger communications group which is one of the five largest in the world. Its book publishing division, however, is self-contained, both organisationally and geographically, in its own Paris offices. Both

companies are strongly international, with offices outside France and England. In addition, the publishing activities of the two companies are similar, and so the working environments are comparable.

The English company employs 900 staff in its Oxford headquarters and has four publishing divisions: Arts and Reference; Science, Medical and Journals; Educational and English Language Teaching. There are also supporting divisions of sales, distribution and administrative staff.

The French company employs 800 staff in its Paris headquarters and also has four publishing divisions: Literature; Education; direct sales (rather than through bookshops); and General Books. It has a wider range than that of the Oxford company, therefore, but a large part of its list is academic books. It too has supporting divisions of sales, distribution and administrative staff. In both countries, participating respondents came from all divisions of the company.

Procedure

The empirical work was conducted during the first half of 1990 in England, and the second half of 1990 in France, according to the following procedure.

1. Twenty Statements Test

This was carried out at the first meeting with respondents, after outlining the aims and nature of the study, and what participation would entail. Respondents were asked to complete a form giving brief personal details - name, age, position in company and educational qualifications - and then presented with a sheet headed "Who Am I?" ("Qui suis-je?" in France), on which were printed twenty blank lines. They were asked to complete all twenty sentences in response to the question as spontaneously as possible,

and in any case within the time limit of twelve minutes. The instructions were that the sentence could be completed in any way at all, using nouns, adjectives or verbs (eg "I am a secretary", "I am slim", "I am learning to play the piano"). Respondents were urged to complete all twenty sentences, however difficult this seemed, and there were in fact no omissions.

Analysis

Analysis of statements was carried out by the creation of categories to which statements were then allocated. For all three methods, analysis is data- rather than hypothesis-driven, and categories are therefore determined by the data rather then pre-formed. For this reason, the method of analysis cannot be considered without the data itself. The procedural details of analysis are therefore described together with the results of that analysis in the TST chapter which follows.

2. Repertory Grid

This was carried out within two weeks of the initial meeting, either at the respondent's place of work or the investigator's office.[1] Each grid took on average two hours to administer.

The Minimum Context Card Form was used, as described in Kelly (op cit), except that triads of cards were chosen by the respondents themselves, rather than being selected by the investigator. Elements were, however, provided, since a common framework was necessary in order to be able to compare individuals. (For a discussion of questions regarding the provision of elements and constructs, see Phillips, 1989). Elements were chosen to represent the respondent in various situations and with various people at work and home. A number of different combinations of elements was

[1] It should be recalled that all the participants were women working full-time. The various parts of the study therefore had to be carried out at a time and place convenient to the women concerned. This was usually during a lunch-break or at the end of the working day.

considered and tested on friends and acquaintances, before being used with the respondents in the study. Consideration was given to cultural and linguistic equivalence in the two countries, and the phraseology first used - Self at home, Self at work, Self with partner etc - was abandoned in favour of "You at home", "You at work" etc, because "Self" would not translate easily into French.[1] The list of elements finally chosen was as follows:

1. Ideal you.	(Le "vous" idéal).
2. You in 20 years.	(Vous dans 20 ans).
3. You now.	(Vous maintenant).
4. You with parent.	(Vous avec parent).
5. You with partner.	(Vous avec partenaire).
6. You with child.	(Vous avec enfant).
7. You at home.	(Vous à la maison).
8. You at school.	(Vous à l'école).
9. You in best job.	(Emploi le plus agréable).
10. You in worst job.	(Emploi le plus désagréable.)
11. You with colleague.	(Vous avec collègue).
12. You with boss.	(Vous avec supérieur).
13. You with best friend.	(Vous avec meilleur(e) ami(e)).
14. You alone.	(Vous seule).
15. You on holiday.	(Vous en vacances).
16. You at work.	(Vous au travail).

Grids, with sixteen columns and ten rows, were prepared in advance (see Appendix for example).

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[1] In the event "You" or "Vous" was considered to be preferable to "Self" because being addressed in the second person meant that respondents related situations more directly to themselves.

All sixteen cards were placed in front of the respondent, and she was asked to choose three cards, of which two were for her similar in some way and different from the third. She was asked to describe in what way they were different. This would yield an idea such as "These situations are relaxed and that situation is tense" - a bi-polar construct. The investigator entered these constructs on the first line of the grid, with the emergent pole (that relating to the two similar cards) on the right of the grid, and the implicit pole (relating to the single card) on the left. (See example in Appendix). The three cards chosen by the respondent were indicated by a circle in the appropriate square on the grid.

The respondent was then asked to score each of the sixteen cards in terms of the construct she had produced. A scale of 1-5 was used, as this was felt to be sufficiently broad to give variation, but not so large as to make decision-making difficult or arbitrary. A score of 1 was the minimum for the emergent pole, and 5 the maximum for the implicit pole. Scores were entered in the appropriate cell on the grid.

To illustrate: a respondent may have chosen "You at work", "You with partner" and "You with child", saying that the first of these situations was "Stressful" and the other two "Relaxed" She would then score these cards on a scale from 1 to 5, giving perhaps 4 (because it may not be *totally* stressful) to "You at work" and 2 (because they may not be *totally* relaxed) to the other two cards. The lowest scores would always be related to the emergent pole (the two similar cards) and the highest to the implicit pole (the card seen as the opposite). The thirteen remaining cards would also be scored in this way, and the scores entered on the grid. This procedure was repeated until ten constructs had been elicited, thus providing a matrix of 160 cells, all with a score from 1-5.

Analysis

Analysis of the grids was more problematic than for the TST. The analysis needed to perform three functions: 1) an individual analysis for each respondent, which could be shown to them and compared with, for example, the TST. This was to be for the benefit of the respondent, rather than to form a part of the data for the study as a whole; 2) a comparison of elements and constructs, showing the relevant importance of particular constructs to particular elements; and 3) most importantly, a comparative analysis of the constructs supplied by the various groups. It is this last function which is the most pertinent to the present study, since the purpose in using the grid technique was to elicit in a structured way respondents' attitudes towards those aspects of their lives represented by the elements provided. For this reason it is the categorisation of the constructs which forms the principal analysis of the grids and since, like the TST, this was an evolving process driven by the data themselves, it is described fully along with the data in Chapter 3. The other methods of analysis used are employed principally to give support to this more important analysis of constructs. The following description of these additional methods of analysis may therefore appear disproportionate to the role which they play in the final analysis of data, but since they involve computer programs, it is necessary to document them in some detail.

The repertory grid technique is a more systematised method than the others used in this study, and when used on an individual basis there are standard methods of analysis. Repertory grid analysis usually takes the form of either principal components analysis or cluster analysis. Principal components analysis (eg Slater, 1965) represents elements and/or constructs in 2- or 3-dimensional graphical form which aims to portray the most important variations in the data. Cluster analysis may simply group similar elements or similar constructs (Riley and Palmer, 1976) or on the basis of such groupings also re-order the grid to show the relative importance of the relationships between elements and constructs (Leach, 1980; Thomas and Shaw, 1976).

Various computer programs are available for carrying out such analyses. The most commonly used are INGRID (Slater, op cit), which does a principal component analysis of the kind described above, and FOCUS (Thomas and Shaw, op cit) which produces cluster analyses of elements and constructs, and then rearranges the grid. Such programs are useful when used to analyse grids individually, for example in a clinical setting, but for the present purposes are unnecessarily complex. The use of computer programs for the analysis of grids carries similar dangers to those in relation to experimental psychology described above: just as method has dictated subject matter in psychology, so the use of computer packages in repertory grid technique has "tempted psychologists to make their hypotheses and modes of exploration the servant of the computer program, rather than the reverse (Higginbotham and Bannister, 1983, p 2).

For the first of the functions described above, what was required was a *simple* method of analysis which would show the relative importance of elements and constructs in an individual grid and portray these in a manner which could easily be explained to respondents. The simplest form of computer analysis is provided by GAB (Grid Analysis for Beginners - Higginbotham and Bannister, op cit), which shows the relationships between constructs and the relationships between elements. It then gives some indication of the relative importace of constructs and elements by showing their contribution to the variance. It takes the construct accounting for the greatest variance and identifies this as the central construct of "component" 1. There follows a list of all the constructs which are related to this construct at the 5 per cent level or higher. The program then goes on to select that construct which accounts for the next highest variance but which is *not* significantly related to the central construct of component 1. This process is continued until all constructs have been listed. A similar analysis can be performed for the elements.

In this way, clusters of constructs and elements are identified, showing which are related and their relative importance in the individual's construal system. This was felt to be the most appropriate analysis to take back to respondents in order to discuss the relationship between their intuitive construal of their worlds and that represented by the grid analysis, since "importance" is simple and accessible to them. The analysis was discussed with respondents about a week after carrying out the grid, and was compared with the TST which they had completed previously. The GAB analysis was thus used as a check on the validity of the grid method to each respondent, but does not form part of the analysis of the grid material as a whole.

What GAB does not do is show the relationship between elements and constructs. For this, GRAN (Leach, 1988) was used. GRAN is similar to FOCUS, producing cluster analyses of elements and constructs and then rearranging the grid to bring together similar constructs and similar elements, but presents the results in simpler form. It produces matrices of the distances between elements and distances between constructs, then clusters them and shows them in dendogram or tree form. Finally, it rearranges the grid, in accordance with these cluster analyses. It was this last element of the GRAN analysis which was useful to the present study, and this is described in the repertory grid chapter which follows. It was also this function which the GAB program could not perform. GAB, however, was felt to be preferable for the analysis presented to respondents because of its greater simplicity and accessibility, as described above.

Such computer programs are, as stated above, mostly used in the analysis of individual grids. Comparing groups is possible by producing an "averaged" grid, but this can only be done if the elements or constructs to be compared are the same, since they have to be allocated a code number in order to be entered into the computer. It was not possible, therefore, to use a computer program for the most important task performed by the grid in this study, namely the comparison of constructs elicited by the particular

elements provided here. This involved the creation of categories, as for the TST, and so is described in more detail in Chapter 3, the repertory grid analysis.

3. Interviews

The interview was conducted in two parts, each part lasting an hour to an hour and a half. The first part was carried out about a week after the grid, and the second part within a week thereafter. No reference was made either to the TST or the grid, in order to maintain independence between methods. Each interview was tape-recorded.

The first part of the interview consisted of autobiographical accounts of childhood, family upbringing, education and employment history. Since the purpose of the interview was to be less structured than the other methods employed, and to allow respondents to talk freely, questions were kept to a minimum, this part of the interview being initiated simply by "Tell me something about your family, where you went to school, how you got to be where you are today." Emphasis was placed on those aspects thought to be relevant to the subject of the enquiry, and the respondent guided towards these - work patterns in family of origin; whether the mother worked; what provision was made for childcare; how domestic work was divided; attitudes as an adolescent towards school, qualifications, further education and career; attitudes of school towards these issues and careers advice in general; feelings about working life as it had evolved up to now; how siblings' lives and careers had developed. This first part was therefore largely descriptive, providing the context in which each individual was to be considered.

The second part of the interview was more analytic and reflective. Certain issues had arisen from the first interview session which perhaps needed to be elaborated, or a particular circumstance or aspect of experience was thought to have been of importance and warranted further discussion. Questions (which again were kept to a minimum)

concentrated on feelings about experience rather than straightforward narration of events; and on hopes, fears, worries and dreams. Questions would therefore be of the type: "Is there anything in your life, at work or home, which is particularly difficult?"; "When you were at school, how did you imagine your life would be?"; "How do you see yourself, or what do you hope for in twenty years' time?"; "Is there anything you would change?" The aim, therefore, was to sketch an individual's history, and then try to establish in what ways this may have influenced current attitudes and behaviour.

Analysis

Interviews were all transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts analysed for demographic information and emergent themes. Since the interviews were conducted and for the most part also transcribed by the investigator, certain themes had already begun to be identified before the systematic analysis took place. Some of the themes, of course, are defined *a priori* by the central objectives of the study and the research questions. Others emerged through the repetition of comments, concerns or ideas by different individuals and which were unanticipated by these broader research questions (the importance of housing is an example - see Interview chapter). Themes were charted and quotations from the transcripts listed under the relevant themes. As transcripts were read, more themes emerged and so earlier transcripts were read again in the light of these. Again, therefore, analysis and categorisation was an emergent process where some categories were defined in advance but modified and expanded as determined by the data. The interview analysis is presented in Chapter 5 under the broad headings of the thesis itself, namely "women", "work" and "family". The differing themes which emerge for the various groups under each heading are the result of the more detailed categorisation process described here, and a fuller description of how those themes were identified is also given in Chapter 5.

Note: The following three chapters describe the findings by method. They are presented in the order of analysis of the data, rather than order of execution of the

methods, each of which was carried out without reference to the others. Only at the end of the data collection were respondents given feedback, when the grids were compared with the list of statements they had given in the TST at the first meeting. The presentation of data which follows reflects the chronological presentation of results to individual respondents.

3 ANALYSIS OF REPERTORY GRIDS

As described in Chapter 2 above, the repertory grid technique was used principally to examine in a structured way individuals' attitudes towards those aspects of their lives represented by the elements. The essential contribution of the repertory grid data to the present study is therefore the analysis of the constructs thus elicited. It is this analysis which forms the major part of this chapter.

Categorisation of constructs

Initially a computer program (such as a Thesaurus) was sought to categorise the constructs in an "objective" way. This was not feasible, however, since there *is* no objective meaning of a particular word: its meaning is defined by its use. A manual method of categorisation therefore had to be employed.

The 200 constructs produced by the women were written on cards and these were sorted according to semantic categories. The aim at this stage was to place together constructs which seemed to be linguistically similar, at a very basic level. That is, no attempt was made to interpret the constructs in terms of personal, psychological or sociological "meaning". This is not to say that meaning is objective, that there is one "true" sense of any particular word (see above). In order to distinguish different uses of the same word or phrase, some account has to be taken of context. In the case of constructs, the process of interpretation is aided by the fact that each construct is bipolar: the sense of a construct is defined by its opposite. A construct such as "responsibility", for example, may refer to responsibility for others, or responsibility for tasks. Examples from the data which illustrate this distinction would be, for instance, 1) "Responsable" de soi "Responsable" des autres and 2) Responsabilité - Pas d'initiative.

In addition, each construct had originally been produced by means of a process of negotiation between researcher and respondent, until a construct was arrived at which was felt by the respondent satisfactorily to express what she wanted to say. While not relying heavily on this information and thus over-interpreting the data, it was felt that some recourse to this process was useful in determining what the particular usage of a construct was.

This initial sorting produced a large number of piles of cards, each representing a distinct category of construct. In order to qualify as a "category", the pile needed to be composed of at least two cards. 41 distinct categories were identified in this way. For the most part, constructs were not repeated within individual sets of responses, since respondents had been encouraged to produce ten *different* constructs. Where, for any particular individual, more than one construct belonged to a certain category, any supplementary instances were discarded, so that any individual respondent was not over-represented within a certain category. In addition, there were some constructs which could not be placed with any others, and so were not categorised. These together formed a "ragbag" of 32 single constructs. All other constructs were allocated to the 41 categories, which were named as follows:

1. Fulfilment
2. Creativity
3. Performance
4. Use of potential
5. Success/failure
6. Goals
7. Boredom
8. Full life
9. Routine/variety
10. Self-development
22. Individual/role
23. Detached/emotionally involved
24. Formal/informal
25. Responsibility
26. Sharing
27. Giving
28. Approval of others
29. Respect of others
30. Tolerance
31. Fidelity

11. Openness
12. Joy
13. Freedom/constraint
14. Choice
15. Conformity
16. Organisation/discipline
17. Spontaneity
18. Rhythm/pace
19. Stress/relaxation
20. Social relations
21. Sympathetic people
32. Equality
33. Feeling needed
34. Belonging
35. "Ragbag" of relationship constructs.
36. Control
37. Autonomy
38. Confidence
39. Childhood/adulthood
40. Comfort/discomfort
41. Balance

To guard against an overly individual and biased interpretation of the material, the constructs were categorised by a second person, not involved in the research, female and of French mother tongue. The instructions were to sort the constructs "according to whether you think the words mean the same thing - that is, not what you think they are about, or what they are describing, but whether in everyday usage they mean more or less the same." The categories produced in this way were then compared with those identified by the researcher herself.

Categories identified by the independent "judge" were as follows:

1. Social role
2. Relationships I (formal/open)
3. Relationships II (distant/intimate)
4. Sharing
5. Power/inequality
6. Tolerance/openness
7. Spontaneity/creativity
8. Stimulation

9. Tension/relaxation
10. Constraint/conformity
11. Constraint/freedom
12. Structure and organisation
13. Satisfaction with life
14. "Epanouissement"
15. Balance
16. Independence
17. Confidence.

There are fewer categories here than identified by the researcher. However, there is also considerable overlap. With only two exceptions (Power/Inequality and Tolerance), all of the themes identified by the independent judge were also identified by the researcher. The purpose of this second assessment, however, was not to provide some "objective" categorisation of the constructs, but to check the validity of the themes identified by the researcher. It was felt that this independent assessment lent sufficient support to the original identification of themes to allow these categories to stand. The main difference between the two sets of categories is their number. The aim, however, was to begin cautiously with a very strict categorisation resulting in a large number of small categories, and thence to proceed to clusters of meaning which embraced groups of these smaller categories. The themes originally identified were felt to be valid, therefore, and the smaller number of categories identified in the independent assessment accounted for by a less "strict" categorisation of the data. Since the original categories were to be collapsed into clusters, this was not felt to undermine this grouping.

The independent assessment also provided a means of looking at the material from another point of view. Where alternative interpretations were proposed, these were considered and, if appropriate, incorporated into the final categorisation. To illustrate: Spontaneity/Creativity was identified as one category by the independent assessor, but

the two ideas were not felt by the researcher to be sufficiently close in meaning to constitute a single category. (Creativity was felt to be to do with productiveness, while spontaneity is to do with unpremeditated action and lack of constraint.) Similarly, "openness" and "tolerance" were seen by the independent assessor as one category, while the researcher felt that "openness" was more to do with novelty than with tolerance. In these cases, therefore, the separate categories remained, but it was important to consider alternative interpretations; and while the 41 categories were felt to be valid, the final placing of constructs within them was the result of this initial sorting, the independent assessment, consideration of any alternative interpretations and incorporation of these into the final categorisation. In some cases, more than one construct was produced in a particular category by the same woman (certain themes being of particular concern to individual women). Where this occurred, duplicate cards were removed, so that apparent emphasis on certain categories was not accounted for by one particular woman. In each category, therefore, each construct represents a different individual.

Although the 41 categories were felt to be distinct, in the sense that they could not be said to mean exactly the same thing, there were sufficient similarities among certain categories for them to be placed together to form "clusters" of meaning (broadly, what the categories seemed to be "about"). There were three major clusters, concerned with 1) Satisfaction and fulfilment; 2) Constraints and pressures and 3) Relations with others. Three further themes which emerged, smaller but which could not be placed in the clusters above (because they straddled more than one cluster, for instance) were: 1) Control; 2) Autonomy and independence and 3) Self-confidence. Mentioned much less frequently, but still distinguishable, were constructs to do with 1) Childhood and adulthood; 2) Comfort/discomfort and 3) Balance. This produced a hierarchical structure which is depicted in Figure 5. The top tier consists of the three major thematic areas and shows which of the 41 construct categories listed earlier is allocated to these broad headings. The themes indicated by the two lower tiers, being far smaller, are

themselves part of the 41 category list. In other words, those listed *under* the three major thematic areas, plus those which *constitute* the six minor thematic areas, together form the 41 construct categories defined above.

Figure 3: Hierarchical structure of thematic areas and construct categories

Satisfaction/Fulfilment	***Constraints/Pressures***	***Relations with Others***
Fulfilment	Freedom/constraint	Social relations
Creativity	Choice	Sympathetic people
Performance	Conformity	Individual/role
Use of Potential	Organisation/discipline	Detached/involved
Success/failure	Spontaneity	Formal/informal
Goals	Rhythm/pace	Responsibility
Boredom	Stress/relaxation	Sharing
Full life	Routine/variety	Giving
Development		Approval of others
Openness		Respect of others
Joy		Fidelity
		Equality
		Feeling needed
		Belonging
		Tolerance
		"Ragbag" of relationship constructs

Control	***Autonomy***	***Self-confidence***

Child/Adulthood	***Comfort/discomfort***	***Balance***

A full list of the constructs produced is shown in the Appendix.

These, then, are the concerns of the women in relation to themselves, their work and their families as represented by the elements of the grid. Most important are satisfaction and fulfilment; the pressures of everyday life; and relations with other people. Secondly there is a concern with control; feelings of autonomy; and self-confidence. Thirdly, issues of childhood/adulthood; ease and discomfort; and balance.

Distribution of constructs among groups

Within these general themes, however, the issues of concern are distributed differently among the four groups of women (French married, French single, English married, English single). Table 1 (on this and the following page) shows how the constructs produced are distributed among the different groups. Figures indicate the number of constructs produced by each group in that particular category. The total number is 168 rather than 200 because the 32 single constructs which could not be placed with any others have not been assigned to categories.

Table 1: Distribution of construct categories among respondent groups.

	FS	FM	ES	EM
1. Fulfilment	2		4	
2. Creativity	1		3	
3. Performance	1		1	
4. Use of potential				3
5. Success/failure	1	1		
6. Goals		1	1	
7. Boredom		1	2	2
8. Full life		2		
9. Routine/variety		2		2
10. Self-development	1	1	1	
11. Openness	3	1		
12. Joy		2		
13. Freedom/constraint	4	4	3	3
14. Choice	1	1		1
15. Conformity			1	1
16. Organisation/discipline		1	2	2
17. Spontaneity	1		1	1
18. Rhythm/pace	1	2		
19. Stress/relaxation	3	3	2	3
20. Social relations	1			1
21. Sympathetic people		2		
22. Individual/role	1		2	2
23. Detached/involved	3	1	1	4
24. Formal/informal	2	3	1	
25. Responsibility	1	1	1	1
26. Sharing	3		1	
27. Giving		1	1	1
28. Approval of others		2	1	3
29. Respect of others			3	
30. Tolerance	1	1		
31. Fidelity	1		1	
32. Equality	1	1		
33. Feeling needed		-		2
34. Belonging			2	
35. "Ragbag" of relationship constructs	1	3	3	1

(Cont'd over ...)

36. Control			2	3
37. Autonomy	3			1
38. Confidence	2	1	2	2
39. Childhood/Adulthood	2	1		1
40. Comfort/discomfort		1	1	1
41. Balance	2			1

Key: **FS**=French Single women; **FM**=French Married;

ES=English Single; **EM**=English Married

Since repetition of constructs within individuals was eliminated, each occurrence of a construct represents one individual respondent. It must be recalled that these categories were defined by the constructs themselves, rather than pre-determined. For a different group of respondents, completely different constructs may have been produced. In this sense, *any* occurrence of a construct is meaningful, but this is particularly so when a construct is produced by more than one respondent. The figures presented here and the differences between groups are not intended to represent significant differences in a statistical sense, but to highlight themes and variations which have arisen from data generated solely from the respondents themselves.

It can be seen from the table that Fulfilment and Creativity are of concern to the single women but not the married, and are mentioned more often by the English single women than the French. All women are represented in the group of constructs to do with performance/achievement (Performance, Use of Potential, Success/failure and Goals), but within this Use of Potential is notable because it is mentioned by three out of five of the English married women but not by the other groups. Performance is mentioned only by single women, and Success/failure only by French women.

Those constructs to do with stimulation, boredom, activity and change (Boredom, Full life, Routine/variety) are dominated by the married women. The French women are less concerned with boredom, however, and more concerned with a life which is full,

moving, changing. While the English single women mention boredom, the French single women do not provide any constructs at all in this group of categories.

The two constructs to do with self-development, learning and openness to new ideas (Self-development and Openness) are dominated by the French women. Openness is represented particularly by the single French women. This reflects the concern with change and movement described above, as opposed to something which is fixed and routine. Self-development is mentioned by only one of the English single women and none of the English married women.

Finally, Joy is mentioned only by French married women.

Of note, therefore, in this Satisfaction/Fulfilment cluster is that the single women in both countries, but particularly the English women, construe those aspects of their lives represented by the elements in terms of fulfilment and creativity. The French single women, in addition, are concerned about self-development and openness to new ideas.

The married women in both countries are more concerned with routine, variety and change, stimulation and boredom, perhaps reflecting the need for more routine when one has children. The English married women, however, are also concerned about use of potential.

In general, the French women are more concerned about a life which is full, stimulating, moving and changing, while the English women are more concerned with fulfilment, use of potential and creativity. The English women's concerns are with *productivity*, while the French women are concerned with a life which is not static, where they are open to change and self-development. Fulfilment for the English women is to do with using one's potential to produce, while for the French women it comes from a full and varied life where one is stimulated and busy.

The second cluster, Freedom/Constraint, is dominated by those constructs to do with freedom itself, and with stress/pressures/relaxation. Women of all groups are equally represented in these categories. In addition, however, "Organisation and discipline" are mentioned more by the English than the French women (not at all by the French single women and only once by the married). Time, being able to live life at one's own pace, is mentioned only by French women. Conformity is mentioned only by English women.

Life is therefore divided by all women into areas of freedom and constraint, stress and relaxation. The English women are more concerned about being organised, however, while the French are more concerned about the pace of life. The English are in addition concerned about the need to conform.

The third large cluster, Relations with Others, is more diverse. Women from each group are equally represented in this cluster, but there are a number of concerns which while they are related are nevertheless subtly distinct. Most notable are the questions of role and the opinions of others. The feeling of playing a role, as opposed to being an individual, is of concern to the English women, but is mentioned only once by the French single women and not at all by the married women. Concern with the opinions and attitudes of others takes different forms for the different groups: for the English single women it is almost unanimously (four out of five) to do with having the *respect* of others, while for the married women in both countries (the French single women are not represented at all here) it is to do with having the *approval* of others. This is in particular a concern of the English married women (three out of five). Eight out of ten English women are therefore concerned in some way about the way others see and treat them.

Other categories of note are those to do with Formal/Informal relations (particularly a concern of the French women, mentioned only once by the English single and not at all by the English married women) and Sharing (mentioned only by single women, and particularly by the French). Belonging and Feeling needed were mentioned by the English women but not by the French, and Equality and Tolerance by the French but not by the English.

A more complex category is that of Detachment/Emotional Involvement, since it contains several elements: distance/intimacy; affective relations as opposed to those which are not emotionally charged; being linked to and having demands made by others. These constructs were placed together because they all concerned emotional involvement, but for the English women this involvement tended to be seen as demanding and a threat to "personal space". The French women were more likely to distinguish between superficial relations and those based on emotional attachment and described as "deep".

The "ragbag" of miscellaneous constructs to do with relations with others consisted of four French and four English constructs. The French were to do with feelings of benevolence and malevolence on the part of others towards the individual concerned (not quite the same as respect of others/approval of others - benevolence and malevolence are more concerned with desiring the well-being of another person); influencing and being influenced; being directed or being supported; and the opportunity to seduce! The English constructs were to do with being friendly or unfriendly; team spirit; professional support as opposed to emotional support; and being loved/unloved. These are all clearly about relationships, but were felt not to be sufficiently close to constructs in the named categories to be placed with them.

"Relations with others" is the largest cluster, consisting of 62 constructs (compared with 39 and 41 for the two other major clusters). This reflects women's traditional

concern with relationships, and the diversity in categories of construct produced suggests the complex nature of women's relationships and their attitudes towards them. Some clear themes emerge, however. First, there is a distinction made between affective and more detached relationships. This is more the case for the French than the English women, however. The French women in addition see the distinction in terms of formal/informal relations, intimacy/distance and façade/no barriers. The English women see the distinction more in terms of emotional *demands*: if a relationship is emotionally charged it is also demanding.

The English women are also more concerned about the attitudes and opinions of others, suggesting a certain lack of self-confidence in relationships. They are also more concerned about belonging and feeling needed, with being regarded as an individual rather than in a role. The French women are more concerned with tolerance, equality and having a sympathetic entourage. In addition, the French single women are concerned about "sharing". The impression is one of relationships being "lighter", that emotional attachment means intimacy and that life is more enjoyable when it is shared.

The smaller clusters are concerned with Control, Autonomy and Self-confidence. Notable among these groups is that, firstly, the French married women are not represented at all in either the Control or Autonomy clusters. Three out of five of the French single women, however, mention Autonomy, and five of the English women mention Control. These are related concepts, but the French single women seem more concerned about independence, while the English women are more concerned about feelings of powerlessness. Neither seems to be an issue for the French married women.

Self-confidence is mentioned by women in all groups, but is not of overwhelming concern in any articulated, overt way. Self-confidence and self-esteem do, however,

come through in less direct ways in the other clusters (see "opinions of others", above) and in the interview and TST data below.

The three remaining clusters (Adulthood/Childhood, Comfort/Discomfort and Balance) are too small to be of special significance. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that adult identity is mentioned only once by the English married and not at all by the English single women; and that "balance", which is generally considered to be of concern to women, particularly those who are juggling work and family, is mentioned only twice overall.

Table 2 summarises the above by showing which constructs particularly distinguished the single and the married women as a whole, the French and the English women as a whole. An (S), (M) or (F) indicates that the category particularly applies to (Single), (Married) or (French) women in that group.

Table 2: Construct categories distinguishing single/married and French/English women.

Single	**Married**
Fulfilment Creativity Performance Sharing (esp F) Fidelity	Full life Routine/variety Approval of others
French	**English**
Success/failure Openness Self-development Rhythm/pace Sympathetic people (M) Formal/informal Tolerance Equality Child/adulthood Joy (M)	Use of potential Boredom Conformity Organisation/discipline Individual/role Feeling needed (M) Belonging (S) Control Respect of others

Two groups of constructs, those to do with Freedom/Constraint, and those to do with Stress/Relaxation, were common to all groups, and are considered at the end. Women in different groups may be producing similar constructs, however, but using them in differing ways. Two women may both produce the construct Constraint/Freedom, for example, but Freedom may lie in different areas for one woman compared with another. What will now be considered is how these constructs are related to the various aspects of the women's lives represented by the elements. In other words, what were the respondents saying these things *about*? Wherein does fulfilment, boredom etc lie?

Relationship between constructs and elements

As Table 2 shows, there is much less which distinguished the single from the married women than the English from the French. The only constructs which clearly distinguish the single women are those to do with fulfilment, creativity and performance, and the married women boredom, routine and variety. In order to establish what constituted fulfilment, boredom etc, it was necessary to look at which elements were represented by the two poles of the relevant construct. The GRAN computer program groups similarly rated elements together for each construct and so it is a relatively simple task to see which elements were given the same scores by any individual on a particular construct. However, different individuals rate items in different ways: some tend always towards middle scores while others tend always to the extremes of a scale. It was not sufficient, therefore, to look at only scores of 5 or 1, since for a woman who scores mostly in terms of 2s and 4s it is these which represent the contrasting poles of the construct. For each individual who had produced the construct being considered, therefore, the elements represented by the maximum and minimum scores (whether this be 1, 5, 4 or 2) were listed. The following describes the clearest tendencies in terms of this analysis.

Six of the single women produced constructs under the heading of "Fulfilment". Of these, half felt that they were not fulfilled now. Five out of six felt that fulfilment came from their "best job" and four out of six felt (or hoped) that they would be fulfilled in twenty years. Five out of six felt that being alone did not represent fulfilment, but only one felt that having a child represented fulfilment. In terms of creativity, however, all four of the women who produced this construct felt that a child represented creativity, and three out of four felt they would be creative in twenty years. All four associated lack of creativity with "worst job". For the single women, therefore, although they might not feel fulfilled now, fulfilment comes not from children (despite their being associated with creativity) but from relationships. Fulfilment also comes from a good job, and they are optimistic, seeing themselves in twenty years as both creative and fulfilled.

What distinguishes the married women of both nationalities is the emphasis on boredom and variety/routine. For all the women producing these constructs, "worst job" is one which is routine and boring. "Home" is not necessarily seen as boring, but the three English married women see stimulation and variety as "ideal" and coming only from a job. The French married women, however, do not all see these things as "ideal", and they come not only from a good job, but also from partner, child and holidays. For those who mentioned "full life" (both French) this comes from work, friends, children and partner.

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French and English women compared

The constructs which distinguish the English and French are greater in number, and these will be dealt with in turn, by national group. The first clear group of constructs which distinguishes the *French* women is those to do with self-development and openness to change and new ideas. For all women producing this construct these are seen as "ideal", and therefore desirable. "Worst job" is a job where these qualities do

not feature. For three out of five self-development and openness are associated with a partner and being alone reflects the opposite. Holidays and "best job" are also positively associated with these constructs. For those who mentioned "joy" (both French), this is associated exclusively with personal relationships (with child, partner, best friend and on holiday, in both cases), although "worst job" is associated with the opposite of joy.

The next largest group of constructs which distinguishes the French is those to do with formal/informal relations and intimacy. Both of these were seen exclusively (nine out of nine) in terms of relationships outside work. Work relationships were exclusively seen as formal.

For the three women concerned about the rhythm of life, "worst job" was a job where it was not possible to live life at one's own pace. This was contrasted with life in twenty years' time.

Tolerance, Equality and Success/failure, while being produced only by French women, were only produced in each case by two respondents, and are seen therefore as worthy of mention but not as significant as those above. Tolerance and Success/failure were, in any case, seen in terms of different elements by the two women who produced the constructs. Equality, however, was related to partner, best friend and holidays by both the women who produced this construct. Only one related equality to "best job" although both associated "worst job" negatively with equality.

The constructs which principally distinguished the *English* women are those to do with role/individuality; emotional demands; attitudes of others; organisation and discipline; and control. Most important among these were those constructs concerning the attitudes of others - the approval of others in the case of the married and the respect of others in the case of the single women. The "ideal" for the married women was a

situation where they were not dependent on the approval of others. Situations which were seen as dependent on the approval of others were work (six out of six) and school (four out of six). For the single women, the ideal situation was unanimously (four out of four) one where they had the respect of others, and, again unanimously, "worst job" was where they did not have the respect of others. These both suggest that work is important in terms of approval and respect, but that there is a certain anxiety about gaining these from the workplace.

A related set of constructs is those to do with role/individuality, being seen as a person rather than performing a function. Four out of five of the women who produced this construct felt that "alone" was the only situation in which they could be an individual. For three out of four of the women who produced the construct, partner and child were seen as emotionally demanding.

Organisation/discipline was related to a diverse number of elements, perhaps reflecting the need to be organised both at work and at home, but that priorities varied among individual women. Control, too, varied, but "worst job" was associated consistently (five out of five) with lack of control, and three out of five associated it with school.

Other groups of constructs mentioned only by the English women were those to do with belonging and feeling needed, and conformity. Belonging, which was produced only by English single women, was associated with "best job" and "feeling needed", which was produced only by married women, was associated with children. Conformity was for both the women who mentioned it associated with work and school.

Comparison by nationality and marital status

Of the individual groups (that is, by nationality *and* marital status), Sharing and Autonomy were mentioned particularly by the French single and Use of Potential only by the English married women. Sharing was seen as "ideal" by all four women who produced the construct, and all four associated it with a partner and twenty years' time. Three out of four associated it with holidays. This suggests that sharing life with a partner is seen as desirable and that the respondents hoped they would be doing so in twenty years. Lack of autonomy was associated particularly (three out of three) with "worst job" and autonomy with "ideal" and "in twenty years."

For the English married women, Use of Potential was associated by all three who produced the construct with "ideal", "best job" and "in twenty years." Fulfilling potential is therefore associated with work rather than home. For only one of these respondents was "at home" associated with the positive end of the scale, and then only alongside "best job".

Finally, two constructs, Freedom/constraint and Stress/Relaxation were mentioned equally by all groups. Of the fourteen who produced a construct in the Freedom/Constraint group, half see freedom as ideal (suggesting that half see some constraint as beneficial). Eight (four French, four English) see freedom in being alone and six (four French, two English) in being with a partner (two in being alone *and* being with a partner). Eleven associate freedom with holidays. Work, and not necessarily "worst job" is seen as constraining by all fourteen women, and five of the fourteen also associate school with constraint. Only two women (both French and single) see being at home as constraining, and four (all English) see a child as a constraint.

In terms of Stress/Relaxation, work featured at the "stress" end of the continuum for all eleven women who produced the construct. Situations seen as not stressful were with

best friend (eight out of eleven) and on holiday (nine out of eleven). Six (three in each country) saw being with a partner, but only two, both French, being with a child, as relaxing. Nine out of eleven saw an unstressful situation as "ideal" (and therefore desirable), four (all single) hoped for this "in twenty years", and three saw being alone as relaxing.

Summary of rep grid findings

What, then, does the grid material tell us about the attitudes of the various groups of women towards work and family, and their feelings about themselves?

First, what distinguishes the single women from the married women of both nationalities is their concern with fulfilment. It might be argued that this concern with fulfilment comes from a lack of completeness because they do not have children. However, fulfilment is seen not as coming from children, but a satisfying job and a relationship with a partner, even for those who are currently in a relationship.

The married women's concern with boredom and routine is perhaps, as stated previously, a reflection of the more routine life which is necessary when one has a family. The single women may not yet be fulfilled, but they are not bored! However, for the English women stimulation and variety comes from a job outside the home, whereas for the French women it comes not only from a job, but also from their partners, children and holidays.

This difference in emphasis is reflected in the contrasts between the French and English women as a whole. The French women distinguish more clearly between the formal relations of work and informal, affective relations outside work. Work is seen as a source of self-development, of learning, but not in isolation: life outside work, holidays, relationships with partners and children all contribute to the stimulation,

variety and "openness" which are seen as important. There is more of an emphasis on personal relationships than for the English women: sharing life with a partner is seen as desirable, as a source of fulfilment, and joy and equality are seen in terms of personal relationships rather than work.

The French women are less concerned about having the respect and approval of others, or about being accepted as an individual rather than in a role. They do not appear concerned about the issues of control and powerlessness. All of these are of concern to the English women. For them, there is an emphasis on not being seen as a person in one's own right, but as mother, wife, employee etc. It is necessary to be alone in order to be an individual. There is a need to be respected on the part of the single women, and an anxiety about the approval of others on the part of the married women, particularly in the workplace. It is at work, however, rather than in the home, that the married women see themselves as fulfilling their potential, and for the single women there is a need to belong which is also associated with work rather than personal relationships.

The English women, therefore, both married and single, seem to derive their self-esteem and fulfilment from the workplace rather than the home or personal relationships. The workplace is, however, a source of a certain amount of anxiety, with concern about being approved and respected. For the French women, there is much less emphasis on the workplace as a source of fulfilment and self-esteem. This is seen as coming from relationships and the family as much as from work. Work and home are seen as separate, and the quality of the relationships is different. While the English women feel they are seen only in a role both at work and at home, for the French it is at work that they are playing a role. Relationships outside work are more natural and intimate.

Overall, there seems to be more tension in the picture of the English women than the French. For the English women work is a source of self-esteem but there is an anxiety about being valued. Children and home life provide a feeling of being needed but are also seen as a constraint and as emotionally demanding. For the French women work is important in terms of the self-development, variety and change which are of concern to them, but there is equal emphasis on holidays, the family and life outside work as a source of fulfilment. These differences will be further considered in the analysis of the TST and interview material which follows.

4 ANALYSIS OF TWENTY STATEMENTS TEST

This chapter describes the method of analysis of the TST, together with the results. A critique of the TST as a method, and an account of any problems encountered in this study, are given in Chapter 6 in the assessment of the three methods used.

Categorisation of statements

As described above (Chapter 2), the Twenty Statements Test required respondents each to provide twenty responses to the question "Who Am I?" ("Qui suis-je?" in French). Each set of statements was examined first to assess the relative importance of particular representations to each individual, and the statements were then analysed as a whole in order to compare groups.

The four hundred statements (twenty from each of the twenty women) were categorised using an approach similar to that taken with the grid material. A full list of statements produced is given in the Appendix. An initial attempt was made to employ the scheme used by McLaughlin (cited in Gordon, op cit) where statements were classified according to the following categories:

A. Ascribed characteristics

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Name
4. Racial or National Heritage
5. Religious Categorization

(Cont'd ...)

B. Roles and Memberships

6. Kinship Role

7. Occupational Role

8. Student Role

9. Political Affiliation

10. Social Status

11. Territoriality, Citizenship

12. Membership in Actual Interacting Group

C. Abstract Identifications

13. Existential, Individuating

14. Membership in an Abstract Category

15. Ideological and Belief References

D. Interests and Activities

16. Judgements, Tastes, Likes

17. Intellectual Concerns

18. Artistic Activities

19. Other Activities

E. Material References

20. Possessions, Resources

21. Physical Self, Body Image

F. Four Systemic Senses of Self

22. The Sense of Moral Worth

23. The Sense of Self-Determination

24. The Sense of Unity

25. Sense of Competence

(Cont'd ...)

G. Personal Characteristics

26. Interpersonal Style

27. Psychic Style

H. External Meanings

28. Judgements Imputed to Others

29. Situational References

30. Uncodable Responses

However, this scheme was designed to be used with American student respondents, and several of the categories (such as Student Role) were not relevant to the present respondent group, while other categories (such as Domestic Role) which were felt to be important to this group were not represented. A second attempt was made, therefore, to categorise the data independently, in a manner similar to that employed for the grids, where each statement was considered in turn to establish what it was *about*, and categories created as a result. This produced the following:

1. Gender (used here in preference to Sex)
2. Age
3. Occupational Role
4. Domestic Role
5. Partnership Role
6. Maternal Role
7. Kinship Role
8. Friendship Role
9. Work/Home Interface
10. Physical Characteristics
11. Personality

(Cont'd)

12. Competence
13. Activities, Interests
14. Likes, Dislikes
15. Present State
16. Current Life Situation
17. Life Satisfaction
18. Worries/Anxieties
19. Hopes/Ambitions
20. Control
21. Time
22. Material Concerns
23. Ideological and Belief References

It will be noted that certain of these categories (Competence, Life Satisfaction, Control, Time, for example) correspond to those used in analysing the grids, further highlighting these concerns. It was not possible to categorise the statements using the scheme employed for the grids, however, since the TST requires the respondent to consider her own roles, behaviours and personality (which may or may not be connected with others) while the inherent method of the grid requires that she consider herself in relation to other people and/or situations. The TST therefore produces a set of responses which is different in character from the bipolar constructs elicited by the grid.

While it was felt that the McLaughlin categories were characterised by an American, male, academic bias ("Student Role", "Territoriality", "Intellectual Concerns") the statements produced in the present study could for the most part be classified according to this scheme. Relevant categories were retained, therefore, and others replaced by more appropriate categories as identified in the independent classification above. "Relevant" categories were deemed to be those which were represented in the statements elicited, but it is worth looking at those categories which were *not*

represented in the data under consideration, as an illustration of the way in which the present respondent group differs from a predominantly young, male student sample. Those categories which were not represented were:

- Name
- Racial or National Heritage
  Religious Categorisation
- Student Role
- Political Affiliation
  Social Status
  Territoriality, Citizenship
- Intellectual Concerns
- Sense of Unity
- Judgements Imputed to Others

"Student Role" was not relevant for obvious reasons, and "Domestic Role" was substituted. It is interesting to note that while gender and age are mentioned, "Name" is not mentioned at all, suggesting that although "Name" is an obvious means of identi*fying* an individual, it is not necessarily a part of identi*ty* at a conscious level to those in the present study. The responses here are more qualitative in nature, rather than simply labels.

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Neither are Racial or National Heritage, Religion, Political Affiliation, Social Status or Territoriality particularly salient to these women. Activities and Interests are more likely to be categorised as "Other" than "Artistic" or "Intellectual". What is striking about these non-represented categories is that they correspond to the abstract, to the external world. According to some writers (particularly those with a feminist psychoanalytic perspective - see, for example, Eichenbaum and Orbach, 1982) these represent typically male orientations.

The "Sense of Unity" is indicated by phrases such as "in harmony", "mixed up", "ambivalent" etc, and refers to the degree of conflict or inconsistency among personality dispositions, social roles and the like. Its absence in the statements produced here may reflect greater integration (in Erikson's sense Erikson, op cit) of the personalities of the present respondents compared with a younger, student group. It might be expected that a lack of a sense of unity would result from the different roles which women traditionally play, but this is indicated rather by phrases to do with control, or lack of time. There is no conscious conflict of roles.

"Judgements Imputed to Others" is a relatively infrequent category even with student groups (Gordon, op cit). Its complete absence here may again be due to the age of the respondents (that is, a lessening concern with the opinions of others) but is interesting given that "expectations of others" was a theme which emerged from the grid material, particularly in relation to the English married women. It is clearly not a *conscious* concern, and perhaps is more evident when the respondents are considering themselves in relation to others, as was the case with the grid.

These non-represented categories were either removed, or replaced by more appropriate categories taken from the second, independent classification of statements. Given the concerns of the thesis, namely "women", "work" and "family", it was important to distinguish between the various family roles (as partner, mother, other kinship roles) and to take account of themes, not necessarily related to role or "personality", which clearly emerge. Taking these considerations into account, the following scheme was adopted:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Partnership Role
4. Maternal Role
5. Kinship Role
6. Occupational Role
7. Domestic Role
8. Friendship
9. Existential, Individuating
10. Abstract Category
11. Ideological and Belief References
12. Judgements, Tastes, Likes
13. Activities, Interests
14. Possessions, Resources
15. Physical Self
16. Sense of Moral Worth
17. Sense of Self-Determination
18. Sense of Competence
19. Interpersonal Style
20. Psychic Style, Personality
21. Current Life Situation
22. Fears and Anxieties
23. Hopes and Wishes
24. Present State References
25. Satisfaction with Life

All statements could be coded according to this scheme, and so there is no "uncodable" category. The statements were then analysed first in terms of relative importance of

particular categories as indicated by position in the list, and secondly in terms of frequency according to each respondent group. Finally the statements are examined qualitatively - that is, not simply in terms of the subject of particular statements, but what is being said *about* that subject.

Order position of statements

There is some disagreement about the importance of particular statements according to their position in the list. Kuhn and McPartland (op cit) consider order-position to be a measure of the salience of a particular self-representation, and assert that salience can be reasonably interpreted as an indicator of the importance of that representation to the individual. Psychoanalytic interpretations, on the other hand, would attach greater psychological importance to those statements which are less accessible to consciousness, and so come lower in the list. Others have found no significance in the order position of statements: in a cross-cultural study, Watkins et al (1997) found that the rank (or, indeed, number) of statements made little difference to the testing of hypotheses about gender and cultural differences in self-conceptions. The view taken here is that the rationale for employing the TST in the first place was based upon its similarity to certain projective techniques (see Chapter 2). The repeated-stimulus format initially exhausts those identifications which are easily accessible to the respondent, and then elicits less available or semi-unconscious material. At a very simple level, since there is an imposed time limit for the task, those statements elicited first are those which require least reflection. While not necessarily being an indication of the *importance* of those representations to an individual ("important" in what sense?), in terms of role definition (rather than, say, personality) it is those statements produced first which are likely to indicate those roles which are most salient to the respondent herself, and it is these which are of particular interest to the present discussion.

The first task, therefore, was to look at the first two statements produced by each respondent. These are not distributed among all the 25 categories listed above. Table 3 shows which categories are represented in the first two statements for each group. Figures represent individual respondents, that is the number of respondents who produced a statement in these particular categories.

Table 3: Categories represented in first two statements by nationality and marital status.

	FS	**FM**	**ES**	**EM**
Gender	4	2	2	
Age	4	3	1	
Partnership Role		3		1
Maternal Role		3		3
Occupational Role	2		3	3
Activities/Interests	3	1		1
Physical Self			1	1
Personality			1	1

F S=French Single; **FM**=French Married;
E S=English Single; **EM**=English Married

Gender and Age (which may be chronological age or implied by such references as "I am a girl" or "I am a woman"), are mentioned in the first two statements by all but the English married women. Partnership Role and Maternal Role are mentioned only by the married women in the first two statements. Occupational Role is mentioned by all but the French married women. Activities and Interests are mentioned by all but the English single women. Physical Self and Psychological Style/Personality are mentioned by the English women but not the French.

Within these, however, there are further differences. Gender is mentioned by only two of the English women (both single) but six of the French (four single, two married). Age is mentioned by only one of the English women but seven of the French. Partnership Role is mentioned by only one English woman (the only one cohabiting). Occupational Role is mentioned by six of the English women but only two of the French (both single). Activities and Interests are mentioned by only one English woman (married) but four of the French.

Gender, Age, Partnership Role and Activities/Interests appear to be more important to the French women than the English, while Occupational Role seems more important to the English than the French. Maternal Role is more important to the married than the single women and of equal importance in the two countries.

Femininity and Occupational Role are therefore reversed in the two countries: femininity is mentioned by six of the French women but only two of the English (and none of the English married women) while Occupational Role is mentioned by six of the English women and only two of the French, both single. Only three women in total, one English, two French and all single, mention both Occupational Role and femininity in the first two statements. It would appear, therefore, that the French women are more consciously aware of their femininity, while the English women are more consciously aware of their work role. For the French women, even Activities and Interests are mentioned more frequently in the first two statements than Occupational Role.

Where the women are also mothers, this appears to be both intrinsically important, since Maternal Role is mentioned by three out of five of each group of married women, and is similarly important in the two countries. Partnership Role is more important for the French married women than the English, however, and while two of the three French women who mentioned Maternal Role in the first two statements place this with Partnership Role, two of the three English women who produced it place it with Occupational Role.

Although there are not enough instances of Physical Self or Psychological Style/Personality in the first two statements to make these significant categories, it is of interest that they are not mentioned at all by the French women. French women are stereotypically concerned with appearance, yet this is not of sufficient import to the

respondents here to be placed among the first two statements, while it is for two of the English women.

Since the selection of the first two statements is to a certain extent an arbitrary one, it is worth looking at the third statement to see whether this alters the picture described above. Table 4 shows the same categories with the third statement included. Italics indicate any change in the figures as a result of this. (Any new categories occurring in the third statement have been ignored, as they represent only single instances.)

Table 4: Categories represented in first three statements by nationality and marital status.

	FS	**FM**	**ES**	**EM**
Gender	4	2	2	
Age	4	3	2	
Partnership Role		3		2
Maternal Role		*4*		*4*
Occupational Role	2	*3*	*4*	*4*
Activities/Interests	3	1		1
Physical Self		*1*	1	1
Personality	2		2	1

F S=French Single; **FM**=French Married;
E S=English Single; **EM**=English Married

It will be seen that for the most part the third statement merely reinforces those results described above. Psychological Style is now mentioned by three more women, including two French (both single), and Physical Self is now mentioned by one French woman. But as stated above, these are not taken to be significant categories. What is more significant is that Maternal Role is now mentioned by four of the five married women in each country; Occupational Role by eight out of ten of the English women as a whole (four married, four single), resulting in four out of five of the English married women mentioning Occupational Role and Maternal Role together in these early statements. Of particular interest, however, is that three of the five French married

women mention Occupational Role in the third statement. This suggests that while Occupational Role is important to them, it is less important than the roles of partner and mother.

Overview of earliest statements

The view is taken here that the earliest statements in the list are those which, while not necessarily being the most *psychologically important*, are of particular significance to the individual concerned. The principal features of the data presented here are the importance of femininity and activities/interests to the French women; of work to the English women; and their roles as mothers to the married women in each country. Work is of some importance to the French married women, but of less importance than their roles as partners and mothers.

The statements will now be examined as a whole, to see whether these emphases are reflected in the rest of the material.

Analysis of statements as a whole

Each statement was categorised according to the classification scheme described above. The numbers of occurrences for each group of women in each category are shown in Table 5. Since some statements may be assigned to more than one category ("Je suis une fille" or "Je suis une jeune femme", for example, bear a reference to age as well as gender - see above), the number of frequencies for each respondent group is not uniform and exceeds one hundred (5 x 20 statements for each group). In the case of the grids, where a construct was repeated by any individual, subsequent occurrences were ignored in the classification. This was possible for the grids, because respondents were asked to produce ten *different* constructs and repetition was infrequent. While each respondent produces twenty different statements for the TST, the repeated format and

the fact that there are twice as many statements as constructs means that repetition of themes (and therefore categories) both within individuals and between groups is more likely. It was not possible to ignore second and subsequent occurrences of categories within individual respondents, therefore, since in several instances this would give an occurrence of one for every person in a given category, suggesting a uniformity which would be misleading if the results are taken as a whole. All women may be represented in a certain category, but there may be twice as many occurrences in one group of women as another (compare, for example, the French married and English married women in the case of Occupational Role - Table 5). At the same time it was not possible to take the results of a group of women as a whole, since a marked difference between, say, the English single women and French single women may be accounted for by that category being of particular importance to one individual. Computing a mean was philosophically unacceptable given the orientation of the study and would be methodologically unsound by the criteria of a quantitative approach, since the numbers are very small and therefore easily skewed by one respondent.

Since the repetitions are within individual sets of responses it is not possible to look at frequencies of occurrence within groups without taking account of individual differences. In Table 5, therefore (see over), categories are recorded by each individual, so that it is possible to see where there are clear differences between groups without reducing the data to averages.

Table 5: Numbers of statements produced in each category by individual respondents (five respondents per group).

	FS	FM	ES	EM
Gender	11102	00011	10100	01000
Age	11202	10011	10000	11000
Partnership Role	10201	32010	01000	21201
Maternal Role	01011	41201	01000	32212
Kinship Role	00002	30001	01011	14111
Occupational Role	51802	12111	27142	21583
Domestic Role	00100	12000	00001	12230
Friendship	11011	12011	10020	10010
Existential/Individuating	00000	00200	00000	00000
Abstract Category	01000	00201	00400	20001
Ideological/Belief refs	00010	00000	20011	00010
Judgements, Tastes, Likes	12011	22622	00000	00000
Activities/Interests	75195	48645	45343	61052
Possessions/Resources	00001	00010	00101	00000
Physical Self	00100	00012	02001	13005
Sense of Moral Worth	00010	00000	10224	00000
Sense of Self-determination	10000	00100	00000	00200
Sense of Competence	00000	00000	11044	10405
Interpersonal Style	03030	10042	43533	21302
Psychic Style/Personality	38065	72062	54966	12402
Current Life Situation	00302	20001	10000	02131
Fears and Anxieties	00000	00001	00002	00110
Hopes and Wishes	01210	10001	10000	00100
Present state refs	00100	10100	00010	20130
Satisfaction with life	00100	00300	00001	01001

FS=French Single; **FM**=French Married;
ES=English Single; **EM**=English Married

Because of the difficulties outlined above, it is also necessary to discuss categories one by one.

Note: In what follows, quotations are each from a different respondent, except where an oblique sign appears. This indicates two or more statements on the same subject from a single respondent.

1. Age and Gender

These are considered together, because in many cases a statement regarding gender includes one regarding age ("I am a young woman", for example). The result here is not very different from that discussed above in relation to the first two statements. Femininity is mentioned by six of the French women in all, but only three of the English women. Only one of the French single women does not mention gender.

Age is of greater concern to the French women than the English, with seven of the French women and only three of the English women mentioning age. (As stated above, an "Age" reference is not necessarily to chronological age, but includes being old, young, "a girl" etc).

Two of the three English women who mention Gender refer to being "female", the third to being "a woman" The equivalent of "female" does not exist in the French statements, with reference to being "une femme" (woman), "une jeune femme" (young woman) or "fille" (girl). The French statements therefore by definition also refer to age, giving some indication of how young, or old, the individual feels herself to be. In one case, the respondent refers to being "une fille, ou plutôt une femme? (sic) ..." Of the six French women who mention gender, two describe themselves as "fille", three as "femme" and one as "jeune femme".

Of the three English women who refer to age, two refer to chronological age, and to the fact that they are approaching 30. The third reference to age is "I am not worried about getting old" Of the seven French references to age, five are implied by the reference to gender, and two refer to chronological age.

2. Partnership Role

Five of the English women and six of the French women mention some aspect of marital status or partnership role. But in England this is accounted for by all but one of the married women and only one of the single women, where in France there are three in each group.

The English women's references to Partnership Role are more evaluative than the French. Two of the English married women refer simply to being "a partner" or "a wife", but the remaining statements are: "I am working hard at my marriage" and "I am sometimes irritable with my husband" (both from the same woman); "I am a dutiful wife"; and (the only reference to this category from an English single woman, and the only one cohabiting) "I am not terribly interested in marriage/family" The French references to partner are mainly descriptive: "Je suis mariée" (I am married); "Je suis divorcée" (I am divorced); "Je vis avec quelqu'un" (I live with someone). However, one of the French single women describes herself as "une amante" (a lover); one of the cohabiting single women says that marriage is "ni un problème ni une question" (neither a problem nor a question) and one of the "married" women, who had comparatively recently begun cohabiting with her present partner because she was expecting his child, said "Je me considère toujours seule" (I think of myself as still single). One of the cohabiting French single women says simply "J'aime être avec mon conjoint" (I like to be with my partner).

3. Maternal Role

All five of the English married women mention maternal role while it is mentioned by only one of the English single women. In France four out of five of the married women mention maternal role, but it is also mentioned by three of the single women.

Only one of the English single women refers to motherhood, and then to being "not terribly interested in marriage/family" Of the three French single women who refer to this category, one says that she is "pas encore une maman" (not yet a mother) and the other two say that they would like to have children ("Je voudrais avoir un enfant"; "J'aimerais avoir un enfant") Of the ten references to Maternal Role by the English married women, two refer simply to being "a mother", three to childcare ("I am secretary of the playgroup ..."; "I am happy with child-minder"; "I am anxious about leaving the kids"), two (from the same respondent) to the quality of the relationship ("I am very loving towards my son", "I am also sometimes very angry with him"), one to competence ("I am a good mother"), one to the children's education and one to not wanting more children ("I am not thinking of having more children"). Of the eight references by the French women to maternal role, four are from one woman, two of which refer to "famille" in general. Other references are descriptive: "Je suis mère de 2 enfants" (I am the mother of two children); "Je suis une maman" (I am a mum) or qualitative: "J'ai deux enfants adorables avec lesquels je passe beaucoup de temps" (I have two adorable children with whom I spend a lot of time) and "J'ai une fille que j'adore" (I have a daughter whom I adore), "J'aime mes enfants" (I love my children). Maternal Role is not mentioned at all by the respondent who wrote "Je me considère toujours seule".

4. Kinship Role

Kinship Role refers to family roles other than those of partner or mother. It is mentioned by all five of the English married women and three of the English single women. Only two of the French married women and one of the French single women mention Kinship Role.

Two of the English women refer simply to being "a sister", "a daughter" etc, but the other statements are more qualitative: "I am happiest with friends and family around

me"; "I am worried about my father"; "I am wishing I could finish my father's pyjamas"; "I am very close to my family (mother etc)"; "I am close to my family". Two of the French women also refer simply to kinship roles - "Je suis une soeur/Je suis une fille" (I am a sister/I am a daughter); "Je suis une "jumelle"" (I am a twin), and the remaining two references are "J'aime ma famille et mon travail" (I like my family and my work) and "Mes frères et soeur comptent beaucoup" (My brothers and sister mean a lot to me). There is no reference to relationship with parents in the French statements, whereas half of the English women refer to parents, either explicitly or by describing themselves as a "daughter". In general the extended family is more apparent in the English statements than the French, where the reverse might be expected given the traditionally greater emphasis on the family in France than in Britain.

5. Occupational Role

All but one of the twenty women mention Occupational Role. However, apart from one exception where it is mentioned twice, the French married women mention work only once each. Among the other groups there is only one individual in each who mentions work just a single time. There are particularly high frequencies (eight each) for the two women who had started their jobs recently, indicating that the job was uppermost in their minds at the time of the study.

This is one of the largest categories, but is mentioned less frequently by the French married women than the other groups. In addition the French married women refer only to working in general, rather than to a particular work role: "J'aime ma famille et mon travail" (I love my family and my work); "Je travaille depuis 21 ans" (I have worked for 21 years); "Je travaille" (I work); "Je travaille et j'aime ça" (I work and I enjoy that). Four of the English women refer explicitly to their job title: "I am a secretary"; "I am an assistant editor"; "I am an office worker"; "I am sales and marketing manager at - -". The rest of the English references are to aspects of the job:

"I am well-paid for a demanding job", "I am now on my first book of my own", "I am responsible for a large budget", "I am in charge of four members of staff"; to enjoyment of/involvement with the work: "I am enjoying the work a lot", "I am very involved with my job", "I am very happy in my job"; or to competence: "I am a successful manager", "I am successful at work", "I am a good manager", "I am good at what I do", "I am not ambitious, but resent being undervalued". Two of the English married women also refer to the demands of the job: "I am too busy at work", "I am very busy at work", but only one refers explicitly to the work/home interface: "I am trying to balance home/career" and "I am not always successful in doing so" Five of the English women refer to Occupational Role at least three times.

Only two of the French women (both single, one of whom was new to the job) refer to Occupational Role as frequently as this. These are also the only two respondents who explicitly mention job title: "Je suis une géographe-cartographe" (I am a geographer-cartographer), "Je suis responsable de projets chez - -" (I am a project manager at -). While most of the French women refer to enjoying their work - "J'aime ... mon travail" (I like my work), "J'aime beaucoup mon travail" (I like my work very much), "Je travaille et j'aime ça" (I work and I enjoy that) - these are also the only two respondents to express feelings about their current job, or work in general, in the same way as the English women: "Je suis quelque peu ambitieux (réussir dans mon domaine)/J'aime échanger des idées technologiques (informatiques)" (I am quite ambitious - to succeed in my field/I like to exchange technological and computing ideas), "Jusqu'à une date récente, j'étais traductrice/J'aime changer: j'ai été salariée, puis indépendante, à nouveau salariée" (Until recently I was a translator/I like change: I have been salaried, then freelance, then salaried again). However, even this latter respondent, who made eight references to work, says "Je ne veux pas d'une vie professionnelle, ni privée, toute tracée" (I do not want just a professional life, or just a domestic life, on their own) and, feeling under pressure because of the novelty of the job, "Je ne veux pas faire partie de ces intoxiqués du travail" (I do not want to become a workaholic). The French

women therefore, while enjoying their work, do not appear as involved in it as their English counterparts. Among the French statements there is only one reference to competence or ambition. Apart from those of the two women cited above, the French statements provide no information about what their working lives are actually *like* - they are for the most part simply statements of fact.

6. Domestic Role

Domestic Role pertains to any reference to work in the home, and is mentioned particularly by the English married women (four out of five). It is mentioned by one of the English single women. Only two of the French married and one of the French single women are represented in this category.

The statements of the French women (both married) who refer to Domestic Role are mostly negative: "J'ai horreur des tâches ménagères sauf faire la cuisine" (I hate housework, except for cooking), "Je n'aime pas faire les poussières" (I don't like dusting), "J'ai horreur de coudre" (I hate sewing). This is also true of the one English single woman who produced a statement in this category: "I am not good at practical household tasks like cooking, sewing etc". The statements from the English married women are more to do with being busy and lacking time: "I am often too tired to do much housework", "I am wishing I could spend more time at home/on the garden"; or the work/home interface: "I am happy to be at home, but not all the time", "I am trying to balance home/career" There is a more clear-cut differentiation of household tasks by the French women, therefore. The English statements all suggest that work influences home life and vice-versa.

7. Friendship

Reference to friends (usually a reference to social life) is made particularly by the French women - eight out of ten compared with four out of ten of the English women. Friends are mentioned equally by single and married women in the two countries.

Once again, the French statements are for the most part statements of fact: "J'ai beaucoup d'amis" (I have a lot of friends), "Je suis une amie" (I am a friend); or about enjoying spending time with friends: "J'aime mes amis"" (I like my friends), "J'aime être avec mes amis" (I like being with my friends), "J'aime sortir, rencontrer des amis" (I like going out, meeting friends), "J'aime rire avec des amis" (I like to laugh with friends). Two of the English women, however, talk about the quality of their friendship: "I am a loyal friend", "I am a good friend", while only one of the French statements is of this nature: "Je suis tres fidèle en amitié" (I am a very loyal friend). Simply seeing friends in a social context appears to be less important to the English women than the French.

8. Existential, Individuating

This category refers to statements such as "I am me", "I am an individual" etc. There is reference to it by only one (French married) woman: "Je vis" (I live) and "Je suis moi" (I am me). This particular respondent's statements were in general more abstract than those of the others and are not felt to be representative.

9. Abstract Category

"Abstract Category" refers to statements such as "I am a voter", "I am a ratepayer" that is statements which place the individual in a large or abstract category without implication of interaction among members. It is mentioned by two each of the married women and one each of the single women.

Two of the English women producing statements in this category refer to being drivers: "I am a driver" and "I am a good driver" One respondent produces four statements in this category, but again this is not representative of the results as a whole. Other statements refer to being "a person in my own right" and, from the French women "Je fume trop" (I smoke too much) and "Je suis un être humain" (I am a human being).

10. Ideological and Belief References

These refer to statements such as "I am against apartheid" and are mentioned four times by the English women (three single, one married) but only once by the French: "Je suis contre les inegalités" (I am against inequality). Ideological and belief references are not mentioned at all by the French married women.

The English statements represent general concerns about the world: "I am wondering whether to pay the poll tax", "I am concerned about green issues/I am against apartheid", "I am concerned about world politics". One, however, is a negative statement: "I am not committed to any causes".

11. Judgements, Tastes, Likes

Nine out of ten of the French women make a reference to this category while none of the English women do. Statements in this category refer to preferences of any kind, from music to colours to the weather.

Some of the statements in this category could possibly be classified as Activities and Interests, but are differentiated by the fact that they refer mostly to objects rather than activities. Four women refer to the weather: "Je suis très influencée par le temps,

j'aime le soleil, je déteste la pluie" (I am very influenced by the weather, I like the sun, I hate the rain), "Je déteste la pluie" (I hate the rain), "J'aime le soleil" (I like the sun), "J'aime la mer, le soleil et les vacances" (I like the sea, the sun and holidays). The one English statement which could be placed with these also refers to the weather, but in relation to mood rather than in terms of simple preference: "I am depressed by gloomy weather and lifted by sunny weather." The weather is the only recurring theme in this category; other statements refer to individual preferences: "Je préférerais vivre en province qu'à Paris" (I would rather live in the provinces than in Paris), "Je suis gourmande de sucre" (I have a sweet tooth), "J'aime les bijoux" (I like jewellery), "J'aime le théâtre" (I like the theatre) etc.

12. Activities and Interests

Activities and Interests are not only mentioned by all but one of the women as a whole, they are for the most part mentioned more than once. This category contains by far the largest number of references (87 in total).

Only one woman (English, married) does not produce any statements in this category. Most of the English women's activities are related to the home: "I am interested in cooking ...", "I am wishing I could finish the curtains",
"I am interested in cooking", "I am a reasonable cook", "I am interested in sewing/soft furnishings", "I like watching TV". Three of the married women refer to holidays: "I am looking forward to another holiday", "I am fond of holidays", "I am looking forward to the bank holiday".

There is one reference to "keeping fit", but none to outdoor pursuits or sport, apart from "I am not interested in much sport". Only two women refer to organised activities: "I am a slimming club adviser" and "I enjoy taking part in plays/musicals". Four women refer to artistic or literary interests: "I am going to read *Oscar and Lucinda*

soon"."I am interested in the arts", "I am an artist rather than scientist", "I am a reasonable singer/dancer" Only two women mention reading: "I am mostly reading low-level books/I am going to read *Oscar and Lucinda* soon", "I am an avid reader"; and only two explicitly to going out.: "I am interested in going out for meals", "I like going to the cinema/going out for meals"

All of the French women mention interests and activities, and there are more statements in this category than for the English women (54 for the French, 33 for the English). Five respondents refer explicitly to going out: "J'adore sortir" (I love to go out), "Je sors beaucoup" (I go out a lot),"J'aime les sorties (culturelles, restaurant)" (I like outings - cultural, to restaurants), "J'aime sortir, rencontrer des amis" (I like going out, meeting friends), "J'aime le cinéma (je m'y rends souvent)" (I like the cinema - I go often). There are also several references to holidays and travel: "J'adore les vacances" (I love holidays), "Je vais en vacances" (I am going on holiday), "J'ai souvent envie de voyager" (I often want to travel), "J'aime voyager" (I like to travel), "J'aime les voyages" (I like travelling), "J'aime découvrir les nouveaux pays" (I like to discover new countries).

Few of the French references are to "domestic" pursuits: "J'ai horreur des tâches menageres sauf faire la cuisine" (I hate housework, except cooking), "J'aime cuisiner, recevoir" (I like to cook, have people round), "Je fabrique des habits" (I make clothes). Activities are more likely to be cultural: "J'aime aller au spectacle/J'aime bien les bons films" (I like going to shows, I like good films), "J'aime le théâtre" (I like the theatre), "J'aime les sorties (culturelles ..)" (I like cultural outings), "J'aime le cinema" (I like the cinema). Reading is mentioned by four women: "J'adore la lecture .." (I love reading), "Je lis" (I read), "J'aime lire" (I like reading), "Je suis passionnée de lecture" (I love reading). Active or outdoor pursuits are mentioned more often than by the English women: "Je ne suis pas très sportive mais j'aime nager" (I am not very "sporty" but I like swimming), "Je fais du vélo de temps en temps" (I go cycling from time to time),

"J'aime les ballades dans la nature" (I like country walks), "J'aime la danse (de société, moderne)/J'aime le ski, la randonnée pédestre" (I like dancing/I like skiing, rambling), "Je danse" (I dance), "Je fais du vélo" (I cycle). Four women mention eating: "J'aime surtout manger" (I especially like eating), "J'aime les sorties (... restaurant)" (I like going out to restaurants), "J'aime manger" (I like eating), "Je suis un gourmet" (I am a gourmet). Two respondents refer to antiques/flea markets: "J'aime faire les brocantes", and two to plants or gardening: "J'aime les plantes et la nature" (I like plants and nature), "J'aime les fleurs de mon balcon" (I like the flowers on my balcony). There are no references to organised activities.

In general, therefore, the French women have more activities and interests, they are more external to the home, more active and more cultural. There is a feeling of movement about the French statements, while the English statements seem more static, echoing findings from the grid.

13. Possessions, Resources

This category contains material references. It is mentioned by two of the English single women and one each of the French married and French single women.

There are relatively few references in this category: "I am a houseowner", "I am worried about not having enough money but very organized with what I have", "Je suis dépensière" (I am a spendthrift), "J'habite un petit appartement qui a une jolie vue" (I live in a small flat which has a nice view). Material concerns do not seem to be particularly salient to the respondents here.

14. Physical Self

Any reference to physical characteristics (height, weight, colour of eyes etc) is included in this category. It is mentioned by five of the English women (three married, two single) and three of the French (two married, one single).

Four of the English women mention height: "I am not tall enough", "I am average height", "I am short", "I am 5'5" tall" Only one of the French women mentions height: "Je suis grande ..." (I am tall), but all mention hair and/or eyes: "Je suis blonde" (I am blonde), "Je suis brune/J'ai des yeux verts" (I am dark/I have green eyes), "Je suis blonde aux yeux verts" (I am blonde with green eyes). Three of the English women refer to size or weight: "I am on a diet", "I am wishing to lose 1 stone in weight", "I am a size 12 - sometimes" One refers to being short-sighted and one to being scruffy. Only one says "I am reasonably attractive". Once again, the French responses are straightforward description, while the English responses are more evaluative in character.

15. Sense of Moral Worth

This category contains references to feelings of being "good" or "bad" in relation to moral standards - "good", "honest", "reliable" etc. It is mentioned by four of the English single women, one of the French single women and none of the married women.

This category refers to *moral* worth, rather than competence or self-esteem in general. Most of the statements are positive, and relate to friendship: "I am a loyal friend", "I am a good friend/I am kind and helpful", "Je suis très fidèle en amitié" (I am a very loyal friend). Two respondents produce negative statements, however: "I am self-indulgent"/"I am ungenerous with money" and "I am fairly cowardly about making important personal decisions/I am greedy/I am lazy".

16. Sense of self-determination

This refers to the perceived capacity for determining goals and pursuing the lines of action necessary for attaining those goals. Examples would be "deciding things for myself", "ambitious", "out of control" This category is mentioned by one each of the English married, French married and French single women, but there are several references which, while not strictly belonging to this category, are related to it (see below).

The one English married woman makes two references to this category: "I am feeling slightly out of control at the moment" but also "I am a person who makes things happen" The French single woman refers to being ambitious "Je suis quelque peu ambitieuse (réussir dans mon domaine)" (I am quite ambitious to succeed in my field). The one reference from a French married woman was from the respondent who had recently begun cohabiting after discovering she was pregnant: "J'essaie de réussir ma vie" (I am trying to make a success of my life). This is perhaps a reflection of her particular circumstances.

17. Sense of competence

"Sense of competence" refers to feelings of efficacy, of being good at certain things, rather than good in a moral sense. Examples would be "intelligent", "creative", "good with my hands". This category is mentioned by seven of the English women (three married and four single) but none of the French women. In four cases where this category is mentioned it is mentioned at least four times by the individual concerned.

Only four of the English women's statements (from twenty in total) refers to a lack of competence: "I am not as quick-brained as I would like to be/I wish I had a better aptitude for computers", "I am not always successful [in balancing home/career]", "I am not good at practical household tasks like cooking, sewing etc". Only one refers to

innate ability: "I am fairly bright". Several of the statements refer to work: "I am a successful manager", "I am a good worker", "I am a good manager", "I am good at what I do" Others refer to interpersonal or other skills: "I am a good listener" (twice), "I am a reasonable singer/dancer", "I am, I think, a good organiser". Only one woman refers to her role as mother: "I am a good mother".

18. Interpersonal Style and Psychic Style, Personality

These are considered together because they constitute two sides of what would normally be referred to as "personality" The "Interpersonal Style " category contains references to the individual's habitual ways of acting or interacting with others - "friendly", "kind", "helpful" and so on. It is mentioned by nine out of ten of the English women (four married, five single), all but one more than once. It is mentioned by five of the French women (three married, two single), but less frequently.

Where "interpersonal style" refers to ways of acting, Psychic Style/Personality refers to characteristic styles of psychological functioning - that is not necessarily related to others or the external world. Examples would be "happy", "sad", "perfectionist" etc. Almost all women produce statements in this category - seventeen in all, from all of the English single women and four from each of the other groups. In almost all cases, too, (there is just one exception) there is more than one reference to this category by each individual.

Although large, both of these categories are very diverse, with few themes and no clear differences in the content of statements for individual groups. Their importance lies in the fact that they are large, reflecting a certain degree of introspection on the part of most of the respondents (three women, one English, two French, produce no statements in either category) and in the fact that while all but one of the English women produce statements in both categories, only five of the French women produce

statements in the Interpersonal Style category (eight in Psychic Style/Personality). That is, the English women are more likely to describe themselves in relation to others.

Several women refer simply to being sociable or liking people: "I am fairly sociable", "I am interested in people", "J'aime les gens" (I like people), "J'aime les gens, les regarder, les écouter" (I like people, looking at them, listening to them). Two of the English women describe themselves as assertive, while the French women talk more about shyness: "I am assertive", "I am reasonably assertive", "Je suis très bavarde mais plutôt timide" (I am very talkative but rather shy), "Je suis moins douce que j'en ai l'air" (I am not as "soft" as I appear), "Je suis timide" (I am shy). Two of the English women say "I am a good listener" and two "I am easy to get on with" Another says "I am generally placid and even-tempered". There are more statements related to positive qualities than negative qualities in both countries, but the English women are more likely to be critical of themselves than the French: "I am sometimes aggressive", "I am demanding/impatient with fools", "I am emotionally lazy/immature" The only statement which could be interpreted as a negative evaluation among the French is "Je suis peut-être un peu possessive" (I am perhaps a little possessive), and the wording here is hesitant. Reflecting one of the constructs in the grid material, produced by a different respondent, one of the French statements here is "J'aime séduire" (I like to seduce).

Among the Psychic Style/Personality statements are several to do with being organised: "I am fairly chaotic", "I am a bit untidy", "I am, I think, a good organiser", "I am untidy", "Je manque d'organisation" (I am not very organised), "J'aime organiser mon temps" (I like to organise my time), "Je suis très organisée" (I am very organised). Two of the English women refer to not being afraid: "I am not afraid (by and large)", "I am not afraid of travelling/going on courses alone, in fact often prefer it". One woman, however, says "I am frightened by violence". One English respondent describes herself as "emotional", and one as "a worrier", but the French women are

more likely to use words related to sensitivity: "Je suis une grande nerveuse" (I am very nervy), "Je suis parfois deprimée" (I am sometimes depressed), "Je suis assez sensible" (I am quite sensitive), "Je suis fragile" (I am fragile). Several of the English statements refer to being "reliable": "I am never late for appointments", "I am always early for work", "I am conscientious", "I am very conscientious", while three of the French women describe themselves as dreamers: "Je suis une rêveuse" (I am a dreamer), "J'aime rêver" (I like to dream), "Je rêve" (I dream). Again, there is a "lightness" about the French statements compared with those of the English, reflecting one of the themes of the grid.

19. Current life situation

This refers to the individual's current lifestyle and day-to-day existence - "tired at the moment", "very short of time". It is mentioned by four out of five of the English married women, one of the English single women, and two each of the two French groups.

All but one of the married women who produce statements in this category refer to tiredness or lack of time: "I am often too tired to do much housework", "I am very short of time for anything", "I am always doing something. I never seem to sit down and relax", "Je suis toujours pressée/Je voudrais disposer de beaucoup plus de temps" (I am always rushing/I would like to have a lot more time), "Je cours toute la journée" (I am running all day). Other statements are related: "I am feeling slightly out of control at the moment", "Je suis ... prise par la vie, bouffée par le travail" (I am ... caught up in life, up to my eyes in work). Others are simple statements of fact: "I am isolated over here" (referring to current work conditions), "J'habite presque seule" (I live almost alone). Only one respondent (French, single) refers explicitly to being happy: "Je suis privilegiée: heureuse, ni pauvre ni riche, j'exerce un métier qui me plaît" (I am privileged: happy, neither poor nor rich, I do a job which I like).

20. Fears and Anxieties

These include worries of any kind, and are mentioned by one each of the English single and French married women and two of the English married women. Three of the statements are related to other people or family: "I am worried about my father", "I am anxious about leaving the kids", "J'ai peur que les gens que j'aime disparaissent (meurent)" (I am afraid that the people I love will disappear (die)). The two from the English single woman have been mentioned before: "I am frightened by violence" and "I am worried about not having enough money ..."

21. Hopes and Wishes

These may refer to immediate wishes ("I wish I had more time for the garden") or hopes for the future ("J'aimerais avoir un enfant"). It is mentioned by two of the English women (one in each group) and five of the French women (three single, two married).

Again several statements refer to lack of time: "I am wishing I could spend more time at home/finish the curtains/finish my father's pyjamas/spend more time on the garden", "Je voudrais disposer de beaucoup plus de temps" (I wish I had a lot more time). Two of the French single women refer to wanting to have children: "Je voudrais avoir des enfants" (I would like to have children), "J'aimerais avoir un enfant" (I would like to have a child). Two are work-related: "I wish I had a better aptitude for computers" and "J'aurais voulu être ecrivain" (I would have liked to have been a writer). One respondent refers to less concrete issues: "Je suis désireuse devenir plus intelligente, c'est-à-dire de mieux comprendre les gens et les choses" (I would like to become more intelligent, that is to understand people and things better) and "J'aimerais parfois tout recommencer ailleurs, mais le changement existe-t-il?" (I would sometimes like to begin again elsewhere, but does change really exist?)

22. Present State References

This category refers to thoughts and feelings about the task in hand, or physical or emotional states at the time of the exercise. There are four references of this kind from the English women (three married, one single) and three from the French (two married, one single).

Three statements refer to the test itself: "I am glad this is the last one!" (referring to last statement), "J'ai du mal à commencer une phrase par "je"" (I have difficulty in starting a sentence with "I"), and "Je suis peu inspirée par ce questionnaire et embarrassée par la question" (I am not inspired by this questionnaire and embarrassed by the question). The latter two are particularly interesting, the first for what it reveals about the respondent, and the second because this particular respondent produced the longest, most complex responses of all.

Three statements refer to holidays, reflecting the time at which the test was carried out: "I am looking forward to another holiday", "I am looking forward to the bank holiday", "Je vais en vacances" (I am going on holiday). Finally, two women refer to being tired: "I am tired today" and "I am tired".

23. Satisfaction with Life

This category corresponds to the "Fulfilment" category of the grid data, and refers to explicitly stated feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. These are mentioned by three of the English women (two married, one single married) and twice by the French women (one married, one single).

These are explicit references to satisfaction, as opposed to descriptions of current life situation as outlined above. They are mostly describing happiness: "I am happy - mostly", "I am a happy person", "I am mostly content with my life", "J'aime la vie/Je

me sens bien" (I like life/I feel good). One French respondent describes herself as happy, but "Je suis consciente d'être privilégiée et pourtant pas toujours satisfaite de moi" (I am conscious of being privileged but not always satisfied with myself).

Overview of statements as a whole

When looking at the sets of statements as a whole, therefore, Partnership Role becomes more important for the English women, with four out of five of the English married women mentioning this category. Maternal Role becomes even more significant, with all five English married women mentioning it, but what is also of interest is that three of the French single women also mention motherhood, while only one of the English single women does (and then only to say "I am not terribly interested in marriage/family"!) Kinship Role is mentioned by eight of the English women (all five of the married women), but only three of the French women (two married and one single). In most cases, however, this category is mentioned only once in any particular set of statements.

Occupational Role, with Activities and Interests, is the most frequently mentioned category of all, with nineteen of the twenty women referring to it. Whereas Occupational Role is mentioned several times by most of the ten English women, however, five of the French women mention it only once.

Domestic Role is mentioned by four of the five English married women but only two of the French, Friendship by eight of the ten French women (four married, four single) but only two of the English. Like Kinship Role, however, friends are for the most part mentioned only once.

Of the other frequently mentioned categories, Judgements, Tastes and Likes are referred to exclusively by the French women. Nine of the ten English women mention both

Interpersonal Style and Psychic Style/Personality, but while eight of the ten French women mention the latter, only five mention the former. The English married women mention each of these fewer times than the single women.

Sense of Moral Worth is mentioned by four out of five of the English single women, none of the married women and only one of the French single women. Sense of Competence is mentioned exclusively by the English women (three married, four single). Current Life Situation is mentioned by four out of five of the English married women.

Those categories which occur frequently for all women, therefore, are Occupational Role, Activities and Interests, and Psychic Style/Personality. Maternal Role is especially important for the married women. In addition, the English and the French women can be distinguished in the following categories: Gender, Age, Kinship Role, Domestic Role, Friendship, Judgements/Tastes/Likes, Sense of Moral Worth, Sense of Competence and Interpersonal Style. Less marked differences are apparent for Ideological and Belief References, Present Life Situation and Hopes and Wishes.

Summary of TST findings

On the whole the French statements are descriptive while the English statements are more evaluative. The English women are more likely both to be critical of themselves and to describe themselves positively. The French women are more aware of their femininity than the English women, and of their role as partner. For the women who are mothers this role is important to them, but the English women are more concerned about childcare issues. The French women more openly express affection for their children. The French single women state a desire to have children where none of the English single women do. The extended family appears more important to the English women than the French, as does work role. The French women enjoy their work but

they appear less involved in it and it is not so enmeshed with their private lives. Domestic work is more important for the English women, and they are concerned particularly about not having enough time for domestic tasks, where this appears not to be an issue for the French. The English women's activities and interests are also more likely to be connected with the home, whereas the activities of the French women are outside the home. Friends and social life are in general more important for the French women, and friends are people to go out with, to laugh with, whereas for the English women the quality of the friendship and their own loyalty seems more important. The French are more likely to express simple preferences about things and activities and are particularly influenced by the weather, preferring sunshine to rain. They are less concerned about physical appearance then might be expected and are less judgemental about themselves in relation to moral worth and competence. They are less likely to describe themselves in relation to others. Lack of time and the need to be organised is a concern for women in both countries, but the French do not complain of being tired. The English women are more likely to describe themselves as assertive and reliable while the French describe themselves in terms of sensitivity, or as dreamers. In general, therefore, the English statements deal more with the specific and the concrete while the French statements are more general and abstract. The English women express more feelings, both positive and negative, suggesting a certain tension and conflict which is absent from the more impersonal statements produced by the French. This echoes the findings of the grid material, and will be considered further in the chapters which follow.

5 INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

The interview was both a fact-gathering and a feeling-gathering exercise. That is, it was used both to obtain facts such as the women's demographic details and information about the relative situations in the two countries (vis-à-vis issues such as childcare, for example), and to gain insights into the women's feelings and attitudes towards the various aspects of their work and personal lives. To this end, as described in the Methodology section above, the interview was divided into two parts. The first part was principally for the purposes of information-gathering, by means of biography, and the second for a deeper consideration of the issues raised in part one. In this way, the first part acted as a "warming-up" session, where a certain amount of trust and confidence could be built up between interviewer and interviewee before embarking on the possibly more "personal" questions of attitude and feeling broached in part two.

There was a core list of themes and topics, rather than questions, which were required to be addressed at some point during the interview, but there was no strict format or restrictions on time, and the various themes were introduced when and where appropriate. The "prompt list" was as follows:

whether both parents worked
how domestic tasks were divided in the family
siblings
- education and careers advice
work history
- affective relations and links to above
feelings about work, positive and negative
feelings about home, domestic tasks
- children and childcare

(Cont'd ...)

how future life envisaged when young

- what is important?

what would you change?

This prompt list formed the basis for the analysis of the interview data. The basic method for analysis of the interview data was as follows. Transcripts were read for quotations or observations which provided examples of the categories defined by the prompt questions above. The interview was designed to identify the situations and attitudes with which women had been brought up and how these had been translated into their current lives. The interview data was therefore essentially categorised into "Biography" (or past life), which included childhood, parents and attitudes within the family of origin, together with education, visions for the future and work history; or "Current Life", namely positive and negative aspects of work, women's work, relations at work, and family life (partner/marriage, children and childcare, the extended family, daily routine, interests and activities). Each category was used as the heading for a separate sheet, under which heading was written a quotation or comment, with the name of the speaker, as these were identified from the transcripts. Quotations were recorded systematically according to group, namely French or English, married or single. Headings were essentially those described above, namely:

Biography (factual and demographic information)

Mothers/models

- Siblings

Education and careers

Vision for the future

Work history

Value of work

(Cont'd ...)

Negative aspects of work

Work relations

Women's work

Partner

- Marriage/divorce
- Childcare

Attitudes to children

Extended family

- Work/family interface
- Daily routine
- Domestic tasks
- Activities, interests and social life

As transcripts were read and other themes emerged a new page, with a new heading, was created for each. "Themes" are defined as "recurring regularities", that is quotations or observations which go together, providing examples of the same underlying idea or concept. In qualitative analysis, this can only rely on the judgement of the investigator herself. Since there are no statistical tests to determine the significance or otherwise of an observation, the investigator must rely on her own judgement about what is significant in the data. Although *statistical* significance is not an issue here, therefore, *recurrence* of a particular observation across individuals does suggest a theme. Clearly a single instance of an observation does not constitute a theme, and this is the importance of frequencies, as outlined in Chapter 2. If there were at least three quotations from a particular group (given that each group consisted of five individuals) that was considered a significant theme for that group, since examples had been identified for the majority of individuals in that group. While this numerical criterion may seem to contradict the usual aims of qualitative research, it must be recalled that the purpose of this study is to compare *groups* , not to provide

individual case studies, and it is therefore the pattern of findings across individuals within the groups which is important. However, there is a qualitative as well as a quantitative element to the identification of themes. The simple mention of a particular idea or issue was not by itself considered significant. It became significant in relation to other quotations from the same group of respondents or when compared against those of the other groups of respondents. Further themes which emerged in this way were:

[for the French women]

Religion (in relation to marriage)

Small farms and businesses

- "Ouverture", or being open to new experiences and ideas

[for the English women]

Belonging

Personality (self-reflection)

- Self-confidence

- Age

[for both]

Social pressure

Houses

Money

The themes and categories which were charted in this way have been synthesised into the analysis of the interview material which follows, below.

Biography

The youngest of the women were approaching 30 at the time of the study, and the oldest 37. Only one of the English women had been born in the Oxford area, while six of the French had been born in Paris or the Paris suburbs. Two of the French women had been brought up in the former French colonies of Tunisia and Morocco, but had been wholly educated in French schools and lycées.

Respondents in both countries came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Fathers' occupations ranged from lorry driver to film producer, mechanic to Cambridge don, with the majority in what could be termed middle-income jobs. Half of the women in each country were the eldest child in the family; one in each country (purely coincidentally) was a middle twin in a family of five; the English families were for the most part smaller than the French, with eight out of ten consisting of families with two children (five for the French). None of the women was an only child. Three of the English women had a younger sister while three of the French had a younger brother. Most of the women had grown up in a family with both parents. Of the English women, the mother of one had died when the respondent was eight and her father remarried when she and her sister had left school. The parents of another had divorced when she was six. Her mother remarried when she was nine and she and her brother lived with her, her stepfather and (subsequently) their two children. Of the French women, two had had invalid fathers. Both worked, despite their disabilities, one to retirement age and the other until he died when the respondent was ten. The parents of two of the French women and one of the English women divorced when the children became adult. The consequences of these individual family circumstances are discussed where appropriate in the various sections which follow.

Note: The speaker's name is given in square brackets. All names have been changed in the interests of confidentiality. Figures in brackets indicate reference numbers for translations, given in the Appendix.

Mothers/models

Of particular interest to the present study is whether the mothers of respondents worked, how this affected the organisation of the home and the relative influence of mothers and fathers. None of the mothers of the English women worked full-time when their children were young, but only two had never worked at all after having children. One of these was a mother of five and was described as a "sort of silent sleeping partner" to her husband's business and "Dad's ear, really". The other was the one who had divorced and remarried, partly so that she would not have to work:

> She said that she sort of married him in a way out of convenience ... she said she just couldn't see a way out of not having to go to work to support us ... [Jacqui]

Most of the mothers of the English women started to work when the respondents were, or were about to be, at secondary school: five began working part-time when the respondents were 10-12 (and younger siblings had started school), and one changed from part-time to full-time. Only one of the mothers of the English women, therefore, worked full-time at any point during the respondent's childhood.

Of the mothers of the French women, two had never worked at all, one (a teacher) had worked part-time, two had begun working full-time when respondents were 10 and 16 respectively, and five had always worked full-time. Although these samples are small, therefore, they reflect the differing patterns of women's employment in the two countries outlined in Chapter 1: the English mothers were more likely to work part-time and they tended to begin working when their children were older; the French mothers were more likely to work full-time. Where the pattern of women's employment in England is related

to the age of children, in France it is related to the number of children. Among the French sample, there is one family of five children and two of four. Of these, one mother had never worked once she had children, and two worked full-time. This is contrary to the general tendency in France, but these latter two mothers were those who had invalid husbands. They were therefore (in spite of their husbands' continuing to work) effectively the "chef de famille" (head of household) and were described as such by their daughters.

The pattern of employment for the mothers of respondents therefore largely reflects the general patterns for women's employment in the two countries. However, the women in the study were all working full-time. To what extent, therefore, do the attitudes of the women in the study coincide with, or differ from, the attitudes of their mothers?

The English women explained their mothers' "choices" in various ways. For several, the fact that their mothers did not work, or worked part-time, was a reflection of the prevailing culture:

> ... she just didn't seem to be the pattern that she would go to work at all. She said in fact not an awful lot of people did really, they more or less most of them stayed at home. [Jacqui]

> ... before she got married she worked full-time and then when she got married, in common with a lot of women, even though she'd got no family, she went part-time and home-maked for a while until I came along three years into the marriage and then she gave up work completely ... [Lyn]

> Because she couldn't, even if she'd have wanted to, gone to work and maybe it just wasn't accepted as well as it is now. [Lorraine]

Two of the English women came from families of five children, and motherhood was seen as a full-time job in itself:

> ... for the next ten years she didn't work, because there were ... children coming along every couple of years. So no, she hasn't worked, well ever since she started producing children, which is a biggish job, with five of you. [Lyn]

Fathers were often absent:

> ... he did do long distances so he was away overnight. So then we didn't see him an awful lot. And he did go early in the mornings, so we didn't see him much then. [Lorraine]

> ... he was abroad a lot, he travelled an awful lot, my mother always thought very much it was her duty to stay home and provide a stable background ...
>
> [Maggie]

> Dad wasn't there a lot. He was working sort of quite long hours ... and you always felt that when he was there only half of him was there, I mean he was always off thinking about something else ... [Debbie]

Typically, the children would eat and sometimes be already in bed before their father was home:

> ... we'd have sort of tea or something and then we'd be ready for bed, we'd have eaten before Dad got back. And I think he actually sort of quite liked the peace. [Debbie]

While some justified their mothers' staying at home in these ways, others found their attitudes difficult to understand. The respondent whose parents had divorced and whose mother had remarried said:

> ... she just really wanted some sort of house and security. So she said ... "Well if we get married, I don't mind having some more children" ... Sort of made a bargain of it ... It just seems so peculiar, I don't know why she didn't want to go back to work ... [Jacqui]

Another described her mother as possibly jealous of her own situation:

> ... I think I don't get much support from her, because in some ways she's slightly jealous about it, because she couldn't do it, and I think that would be a true impression that I'd get from her. [Lorraine]

A third suggested that her mother concentrated on the home in order to keep her father:

> ... you know he was a good catch in lots of ways, perhaps not financially but he was in others, and she was very aware of it, and she worked very very hard at keeping him. And she won ... [Maggie]

Although fathers were often absent, they appeared to have the greater influence in several cases. One woman had worked for her father's company for six years and another, who had originally wanted to be an aircraft mechanic, suggested this might be because of her father's interest in cars:

> Probably just because of my dad, you know, sort of maybe, I don't know, modelling myself on him ... [Lorraine]

Another expressly described herself as like her father in temperament and looks, and the opposite of her mother, who was stereotypically feminine:

> ... my mother is extremely reserved, very femininine, extremely pretty, petite... my brother has a much more reserved, serious nature and would have made a much better girl ... [Maggie]

It was the father of another who encouraged her to achieve:

> I'm very grateful to him because I'm sure if it wasn't for his influence I wouldn't be where I am now, because he's always pushed and shoved for everything that he's had to do, cos he's not particularly academically bright, neither am I, so he knows all about hard work and perseverance and he's instilled that in both of us ... [Lyn]

The French women expressed both the view that it had always been normal for women to work in France; and that it had not been usual at the time they were children. One respondent who had lived in Germany compared that country with France:

> Ça fait très longtemps que les femmes travaillent en France. Je dirais par exemple, comparé à l'Allemagne, il y a beaucoup plus de femmes qui travaillent en France et ça a toujours été considéré comme très normal, très naturel, mais en Allemagne, même encore maintenant, une femme qui travaille en ayant des enfants c'est vraiment une mère indigne ... [Nathalie] (1)

Others found it less usual:

> ... à l'époque où maman travaillait, c'était pas, franchement, c'était déjà un peu exceptionnel en fait ... [Valérie] (2)

> A l'époque où maman, il y a 20 ans, a commencé à travailler bon il y avait des femmes qui travaillaient déjà mais il n'y avait pas des années ... [Josiane] (3)

One woman spoke of her mother starting to work because of problems in her marriage:

> Bon avec les problèmes qu'il y avait entre mon père et ma mère, ma mère en fait a voulu travailler pour avoir son argent à elle. Ne pas avoir à demander tout le temps ... [Danièle] (4)

One of the women whose mothers worked attributes her own attitude towards work firmly to her mother:

> Tout ça ... m'a amenée vers avoir un travail, à aimer le travail que je fais et tout ... [Valérie] (5)

But both of the women whose mothers did not work at all still explicitly state that they always thought they would work:

> ... j'ai toujours eu dans la tête, je sais pas comment, ma mère travaillait pas à mettre ça dans la tête, mais j'ai toujours eu dans la tête que pour vivre il fallait travailler et puis point final ... [Brigitte] (6)

Fathers were in general more present in the home. The two women who had invalid fathers talked of a certain role reversal in the home, with their fathers at least as present as their mothers. One was a school doctor:

> Il était très très proche de nous, parce que d'abord il aime beaucoup les enfants, ça c'est dans sa nature, mais comme il pouvait se faire ce métier-là il avait les mêmes horaires que nous, ... il avait les mêmes congés scolaires, alors qu'elle travaillait, finalement plus tard le soir, donc c'était lui, on était à la maison avec lui le soir etc ... [Valérie] (7)

These were exceptional circumstances, but in several cases both mother and father worked near home. In the provinces in particular the family would eat together at lunchtime, for example. One woman who had at first described her father as being at home very little, then went on to say:

> ... en fait rétrospectivement je pense que c'est par rapport à la présence continuelle de ma mère que je trouvais que mon père n'était pas beaucoup là. Mais moi je ne suis pas plus près de mes enfants maintenant aujourd'hui que lui était, bon et pourtant j'ai l'impression d'y être un maximum. Donc c'est pas qu'il partait tout le temps, il était là, et puis peut-être même il rentrait plus tôt que moi je ne rentre actuellement ... mais c'est plus la proportion quoi? Il y avait ma mère beaucoup et mon père peu. [Brigitte] (8)

Fathers were more likely to cook, if not take part fully in domestic work:

> ... même maintenant c'est lui qui fait les repas ... [Josiane] (9)

One woman's mother worked in a supermarket and so worked on Sunday mornings. It was her father who prepared Sunday lunch therefore. And while fathers might be more likely to cook for special occasions:

> ... son père fait la cuisine noble et sa femme fait la cuisine de tous les jours ... [Nathalie] (10)

they were at least to be seen in the kitchen.

Although they did not all work, therefore, and it was clear that it was the mothers of the French respondents who were mostly responsible for running the home, fathers appeared to be both more present and to take some part in domestic tasks. In particular they seemed to have more contact with the children than their English counterparts. Although the French women talked about their fathers as being more absent, in relative terms, both to their mothers and to the English fathers, relations seem more equitable.

Education

All but two of the English women went to girls only schools, one to a girls' boarding school. Only one went to a mixed comprehensive school and one went to a mixed boarding school as a weekly boarder. Three of the women were educated privately. Three were educated to O-Level, one to A-Level, five had degrees and one a PhD.

The French women's education was much less uniform, with several possessing vocational, rather than academic, qualifications. French educational qualifications are centred on the "bac" (baccalauréat) and job advertisements, for example, are described in terms of "Bac + ? years", rather than, say, "educated to degree level" The baccalauréat is taken at 18 and followed by perhaps one or two years of university study, without taking a degree; or by a degree; or by some kind of vocational training. "Bac + 2" would indicate that a person has the baccalauréat, plus two years of study of one these kinds. A maîtrise (master's) is one or two years' study after the degree, and may be followed by a more practical or vocational diploma. Those who do not take the baccalauréat usually take vocational qualifications, which exist at various levels and for a wide range of occupations: a former partner of one of the French women had such a diploma in Acting, for example.

Of the women in the study, seven had the baccalauréat and three had pre-baccalauréat vocational qualifications in secretarial work. Two had post-baccalauréat vocational qualifications, in secretarial work and accountancy. Five had degrees, three a "maîtrise" and two professional qualifications (in cartography and translation/interpreting) in addition to the "maîtrise".

The English women who had attended single-sex schools largely found these deficient in terms of careers guidance and ambition, despite being fairly academic and the girls bright and able:

> There were two categories of girl, well three actually, you went to Oxbridge, which there was hardly, I mean there was like two or three within living memory ... or you went to teacher training or you went off and got married ... [Lyn]

> We did have a Careers Counsellor come in I think and have a chat to us, but they, that was an outsider and it was a very short interview and didn't really mean very much to anybody I don't think. And within the school there was no teacher who gave much advice. No it was very much up to you and I suppose your parents, at that age, unless you've got, you're fairly strong-minded, I mean I certainly didn't have much of a clue. [Emma]

> ... we weren't brought up to believe we had to work, we weren't brought up, I mean we were brought up to marry accountants or doctors, frankly, and they all did. I didn't, but they all did ... [Maggie]

> We had a couple of careers talks, but they were very limited and it was the usual sort of careers that were open to women at the time, you know, secretaries, teaching, librarianship ... [Sarah]

Those attending mixed schools received no careers advice either, however:

> There was nothing at school and they didn't bring in any outside career counselling or anything ... There was nobody sort of really pushing you and saying "Look, I know you can do better than this", you know "Haven't you thought of this, that and the other." [Nicola]

One woman had wanted to be an aircraft mechanic in the Navy, but was refused on medical grounds.

> I didn't have anywhere else to go locally and if I, I didn't know where else to apply further afield, I didn't have any guidance on what to do next, I didn't know where to go to ask, and so it just fizzled out really. [Lorraine]

The French women, in comparison, were advised on subject choice at 14 and had received some guidance in school, though this was not always adequate:

> A mon époque on les voyait pas souvent, on allait les voir une fois par an quand on était dans des classes où il y avait des orientations, sinon on les voyait pas ... [Marie-Claire] (11)

The situation had improved, however:

> Maintenant on les voit plus souvent, je crois ma fille aînée quand elle est passée en seconde on a bien vu le conseiller d'orientation trois, quatre fois dans l'année ... [Marie-Claire] (12)

Only one of the English respondents mentions having received any opinion from her parents about her choices. This was the woman who felt she owed her achievement to her father's encouragement:

> I wanted to do Psychology. I have always been interested in people and how they think and why they do things. And my parents were very much against it, they saw it as an airy-fairy subject and they wanted me to do History ... And it was really quite a struggle, and my father saying things like he'd refuse to pay my grant,and all the rest of it. But in the end I found these combined courses and we had a compromise ...[Nicola]

Unsurprisingly, the other English women were themselves not particularly ambitious or clear about their futures when they were at school:

> I think my only ambition when I was at school was that I wanted to work on a fruit and veg stall at Leicester market. I wanted to work at Terry's chocolate factory in York. And they were really my only two ambitions ... [Lyn]

> Well if I did think about it I don't think I ever had much idea. I mean I never found it very easy to think about what work I'd want to do and ... I don't think I did have a clear idea, and if I had any ideas they'd probably change from one week to the next ... [Emma]

If they had always thought they would carry on working after having children, it was rather because they were "undomesticated" than that they had ambitions about work:

> I never sort of felt that there would be a time when I'd put my feet up and stay at home. Never been that domestic ... [Debbie]

The French women, when they were at school, were more likely to envisage themselves working and having a family in equal measure:

> ... quand j'étais adolescente je voulais être prof, donc bon, je me disais, "J'aurai un travail intéressant", ou "J'aurai pas trop d'heures et j'aurai des

enfants, des chats et des chiens ..." [Laurence] (13)

Avec une famille, avec les enfants. Mon travail toujours aussi, oui ... [Françoise] (14)

Work history

The English women had almost all been in other jobs before coming into publishing. Seven of the ten had secretarial training and six of these had done other secretarial jobs before working for the present company. Two had trained and worked as secretaries before going to university. None had taken a straightforward route of school (university) - settled job. Those who had gone straight to university from school travelled or experimented in other ways after leaving university and before coming to their present job. Table 6 shows the work histories of three of the English women, educated respectively to O-, A- and degree level. Confirming the results of other studies (eg Marshall, 1984), these work histories are all slightly haphazard. Also following the pattern of women's work histories (see Callender, 1987), many of the jobs had been found through friends, family or word of mouth. An asterisk marks those jobs which were found in this way for the individual women in the table.

Table 6: Sample work histories - English respondents

Lorraine (O-Level/CSE)	**Emma** (A-Level)	**Sarah** (Degree)
Navy (rejected)	Secretarial training	• Year in ski resort
T-shirt company*	Sec, intl writers' group*	Australia - cooking
Office job*	Cooking	Decorating*
Reception*	3 yrs charity*	Educational travel co*
Office supervisor	Telephonist	Present company (assistant)
Accounts	Hotel manager	Current job (manager)
Supermarket	America	
Staff bureau (part-time)	Oxford - temporary work	
F/t current job	F/t current job*	

The work histories of the French women are for the most part more stable: two women had worked for this present company for 20 years, and one for 16 years. Others, like the English women, had already had several other jobs, including three who for a period had worked free-lance. Table 7 shows three examples of the French women's work histories. Again an asterisk indicates where a job has been found through informal networks.

Table 7: Sample work histories - French respondents

Danièle (Vocational training)	**Françoise** (Bac+2)	**Nathalie** (Maitrise + voc. training)
Short period of temping	Department store asst	Language assistant
Current job	Accounts training	Translator, Germany
	Accounts dept, intl co	Free-lance translation
	Current post	Editor, travel guides*
		Editing course
		Current post

For the women in this sample at least, the higher the level of education, the more varied the career. There is only one example in the table of a job being found through informal networks, but the total number of job changes is much fewer than for the English women. Half the French respondents had found at least one job through friends or family and one woman had found all her jobs in this way.

Work history for the women in both countries was closely bound up with family and affective relations. Of the examples in the tables, for example, the two women who had worked abroad had done so in order to be with people with whom they were having relationships (see below), and the intertwining of Linda's work and family life is fully documented in the section "Children and childcare". The women themselves often described career moves and relationships together, giving some aspect of relationships as

the reason for a particular decision. When asked about how she came to the decision about what to do after school, one respondent replied:

> What happened was that I met my first husband when I was in the Sixth Form ...
>
> [Lyn]

And others:

> So I decided that was where I was going to go (the Scottish islands) and when I was there I met this guy ... that went on for seven years ... [Emma]

> Yeah, till 23 or 24 I lived at home. And then Paul got transferred to - -, which is in Wantage, and it was quite a while before that Ian my brother came up to college here so I used to come and see him, and when Paul moved I thought "I like Oxford" and he's at Wantage, so I'll move to Oxford ... [Jacqui]

Among the French women there were two who had lived abroad (Belgium and Germany respectively) in order to be with partners, both returning to Paris when the relationships broke up. Another had left school at 16 because she was pregnant, and had to begin work immediately the baby was born because her husband was away in the army and she needed both the social interaction and the money. Another had left home while still at school to live with her boyfriend. He was subsequently killed in a road accident, and she felt that she needed to get a practical qualification immediately, rather than go to university, because she had to earn a living.

It would appear, therefore, that the French women's work histories are rather more stable than those of the English women, but both groups show some of the common characteristics of women's employment, namely that careers are not straightforward, that information about jobs often comes from acquaintances, and that work life is to a large extent related to family and relationships.

One way in which the English women do not follow the more usual pattern for women's employment in Britain is in going straight back to work after having children. It will be recalled from Chapter 1 that in Britain women's employment has formed an M-shaped

graph, with mothers dropping out of the work force and re-joining it when their children are older. The English women here are, with one exception, atypical in going straight back to work after taking statutory maternity leave. But they are atypical anyway in working full-time when they have children. Some of the difficulties the English women face in having children and working full-time are documented in later sections, and may go some way to explaining why theirs is an atypical pattern, with more women choosing to work part-time.

Following on from work histories, attitudes towards work will now be examined: the value of work, negative aspects of work, being a woman at work. Then attitudes towards family: relationships with partner, children and childcare, and the extended family.

Work

1. Reasons for working

Responses to the question: "What does work give you?" varied, but the English women were unanimous in giving "money" and "social contact" as reasons for working. The money served different purposes, however. For the mothers it was more likely to be seen as necessary to the family income or mortgage, enabling them and their partner to buy a bigger house, for example. But one of the mothers and all of the single women felt that their income gave them independence. This was in some cases the reason for not going on to higher education:

> ... whatever my domestic situation was, I ... I certainly couldn't accept anybody else's money, no, I'd have to work ... [Debbie]

> I'd always longed to leave school, I'd always - what I wanted to do was to go out and work, go out into the world and be independent really... [Lorraine]

> I liked things like clothes and going out and boyfriends ... I also wanted to learn to drive ... So I wanted to do lots of things that you needed money to do things with ... [Jacqui]

Work also gave them a purpose, a sense of feeling valued, of contributing:

> I think it's important to a lot of people as a social place and as a place where there's a value, monetary and otherwise, put on what you're doing, you know, you feel you're contributing to the wealth, prosperity, success of the company you're working for ... [Nicola]

> ... a sense of satisfaction as far as the work goes ... And I think it ...I don't know, a sort of sense of purpose, not that it's not, wouldn't have a sense of purpose with a child, but it's different ... [Sarah]

> ... I just feel as if I'm doing something worthwhile, whereas being at home all day, not really thinking and just doing things for the sake of it ... [Debbie]

Echoing one of the themes of the grid, the single women talked particularly of the satisfaction of getting the job done, of feeling competent:

> I like actually getting it done, I like meeting the deadlines ... I like coming in and saying "Right" and looking at it and thinking "Ah, I wouldn't have done that" and ringing up and saying "Do you really want this, because you've said x but y is more appropriate because ..." [Maggie]

> I also quite enjoy the sort of getting things right aspect of the job. I mean in a way it's a very masochistic thing to be doing because you have this very tangible end product by which the author and me and all the other people involved, but in a way to some extent embodied by me, brought together in me because I was supposed to get them to do the right thing. Even though I'm not actually doing it myself at all, they're doing it, it's my fault if they don't do it right. [Emma]

> Yes, it's the order of everything, you know sort of slotting into its place and that's been ordered and now it's being delivered and there's the note and ... [Jacqui]

They also found the structure valuable:

> ... quite a big part of me likes to know that I've got to be in this place at nine o'clock or somebody will wonder where I am and I've got to stay there until five o'clock and then I'm expected to - you know, I'm spewed out in some way ... [Emma]

Work could also provide a sense of belonging and feeling needed:

> It gives me a sense of belonging really. I think "Gosh, what if I didn't go in tomorrow?" ... I feel that I've really got to be here and that I'm sort of really important in it, which I'm probably not at all, but that's the way I feel ... [Jacqui]

Variety and "balance" was also mentioned frequently, the job providing a contrast to life outside work. The mothers also felt that work provided intellectual stimulation, space to be themselves, and in one case improved relations with her partner:

> I just felt a bit brain dead really, and although I had friends and they all had babies and children it just wasn't me. I just needed something more ... space to think on my own ... you know just a few hours every day when you sort of don't have a child in your arms or round your legs or whatever, doing something completely different ... and the other thing we've always found, and it's worked both ways, is that Richard and I between ourselves are much happier when we're both working ... we've had the odd few months when I've been work-, when he's been working and I haven't, and there's such a difference between what you're doing all day, you know the person who's been working comes home and doesn't want to say anything, or is just tired, and the person who's been at home has been bored all day and is desperate to talk, and we've always found that it sort of creates quite a lot of tension. [Sarah]

One woman (not a graduate) articulated several of these reasons together particularly clearly:

> ... it just gives you a bit more sort of independence as well. I mean it just means that I'm not reliant on somebody else. It just gives you a bit more freedom to do things. I think it's sort of being given credit for doing something well ... it's the recognition, the fact that you are useful and you've got some kind of contribution to make to things. And that's ... it's good for self-esteem I think. It gives you confidence. I'm extremely clumsy at home, I sort of forget where my brain is. But I mean that's fine. At least at work I sort of feel ... it just means that you feel you're good at something. [Debbie]

The workplace is less emotionally charged and respondents often feel they are better able to cope because that is what is expected of them:

> I'm more level-headed at work, there are appearances to keep up at work ... I think at work I tend to try and sort of keep, you know, if there's a crisis you think, "Oh, I can cope, we'll deal with this, no problem," whereas at home if something happens then it's, well it's sort of more of a, sort of different nature. It's easier to cope with crises at work than it is at home. And that's because I'm more emotionally involved ... I feel that at work people expect you to make a decision ... at home I can't make the slightest decision without consulting Nick. You know "What shall we have for tea? Shall we go shopping tonight?". I mean Nick says to me "I don't know how you hold down a job, you're just so stupidly clumsy ..." [Debbie]
>
> I think I'm more controlled at work and I seem to put systems in at work, I come into work and this goes there and that goes there and this is what

> happens if you want this, and there are systems all set up to work round, whereas at home it's completely different, it's not so well organised. [Jacqui]

Like the English women, the French women also see money and social life as important, but for the mothers the money is less important to the family income: four said that their income was not *necessary* to the household budget, but that they worked for other reasons. Principal among these was to have something outside the home:

> ... un des gros intérêts du boulot je trouve c'est justement de faire sortir de sa maison de voir des gens, de croiser des gens même qu'on n'a pas choisis de voir, d'être à l'extérieur quoi. [Catherine] (15)

> ... je suis pas une femme à être entre les quatre murs de la maison ... pour voir du monde, un peu de mouvement, du bruit, parce que, à la maison, c'est mort ... [Danièle] (16)

> ... pour avoir autre chose, à vivre autre chose que la vie privée, que la vie de famille ... [Françoise] (17)

There was a clear separation of work and family:

> C'est deux choses que j'aime beaucoup, auxquelles je tiens beaucoup, mais qui sont, presque aussi importantes, mais, pour donner une image, si je prends le métro pour rentrer chez moi j'oublie totalement le travail. Bon le matin, j'ai mis les enfants à l'école et je prends le métro pour aller au bureau, j'essaie d'oublier totalement mes enfants et mon mari. C'est deux mondes qui ne sont, j'ai dû passer, ça fait douze ans, treize ans que je travaille, j'ai dû passer trois coups de téléphone au bureau. Je veux pas que l'un envahisse l'autre ... [Valérie] (18)

> ... quand on a fermé la porte du bureau, c'est fini ... [Nathalie] (19)

Relations with colleagues are different from those with friends or family:

> ... C'est pas horrible hein, mais c'est lointain, distant ... [Danièle] (20)

Work provided a means of escape from family or other worries:

> C'est peut-être aussi un oubli de temps en temps, j'ai des problèmes de nouveau avec un enfant etc, c'est aussi si vous voulez ... une espèce d'oubli. C'est quelque chose qui me permet effectivement de réaliser moi et de plus penser aux autres problèmes ... [Valérie] (21)

> Ah oui, parce qu'il n'y a rien tel que le travail pour oublier ses soucis hein? [Danièle] (22)

> Ah oui, ah oui, parce que quand on est ici on est absorbé, on pense pas ... [Marie-Claire] (23)

The French women also talked about independence, both personal and financial. Seven out of ten said that they would not want to depend financially on a man; and one who had left her alcoholic husband said that she may never have left if she had not been financially independent:

> Ben comme beaucoup de femmes, si j'étais une femme au foyer, je serais jamais partie, peut-être, un peu comme les femmes dans le temps qui travaillaient pas ... Je voulais pas dépendre d'un homme ... parce que lui il voulait deux enfants, puis il m'a dit "Arrète de travailler", j'ai dit "Non", pas dépendre d'un homme pour s'acheter comme j'ai dit une paire de collants! [Danièle] (24)

> Quand je ne travaille pas j'ai aucun revenu, je suis tributaire financièrement de lui ... [Annick] (25)

> Si mon mari a une situation assez importante pour me permettre de rester à la maison ... je travaillerais à mi-temps pour avoir mon indépendance financière ... [Françoise] (26)

Work was also seen as personal, however, something for the woman herself rather than for her family:

> Je travaille beaucoup pour la maison ... et j'aime bien ça ... mais disons que c'est toujours raisonnée en vue des autres, pas uniquement moi ... le travail m'apporte vraiment cette indépendance, c'est pas financier, c'est personnelle ... c'est là où je peux exprimer mon, ... ma propre compétitivité, je veux dire .. je peux m'améliorer personnellement, pas sur le plan des contacts, un peu sur le plan intellectuel dans une certaine mesure ... [Valérie] (27)

Like the English woman above, one of the French women also saw work as important for her relationship with her partner:

> ... je pense qu'un homme a tout intérêt à avoir une femme qui travaille plutôt qu'une femme qui reste frustrée à la maison avec ses enfants et qui n'a pas d'autre sujet de conversation que la promenade au square et les courses qu'elle a fait au magasin ... j'en sais rien, mais je ... un homme qui préfère une idiote c'est pas ... [Nathalie] (28)

Life would be boring without work:

> ... si je travaille plus qu'est-ce que je vais faire? [Brigitte] (29)

> ... une fois qu'on a fait le ménage et qu'on s'est occupé des enfants il y a plus rien a faire ... [Marie-Claire] (30)

And for the single women, again repeating the findings of the grid, work was a means of fulfilment, of self- development:

> Le travail? Mais disons un épanouissement pour moi ... c'est plus enrichissant et puis on peut pas rester en arrière non plus, à suivre le mouvement, c'est-à-dire de ne pas rester en arrière ...[Josiane] (31)

> C'est pour ça que j'aime changer de société - comme ça j'apprends de nouvelles choses ... [Françoise] (32)

Negative aspects of work

There are negative aspects to work, however. For the English women, the main complaint was lack of time - time with the children, time for housework and shopping, time for oneself:

[Comparing herself with someone who works part-time]

> I'm always helter skelter, she's oh things like other kids' parties, of which there's one this afternoon, you know, she'd decided what to buy, she'd given it thought, she'd gone out, she'd packed it up, you know, she'd done all that by about Tuesday and I hadn't even thought about it ... so I went and bought it on Wednesday in my lunch hour and then wrapped it up last night and forgot to buy any labels and didn't buy a birthday card and all that sort of thing, you know, she has that little bit more time and I rather envy her that ... I feel a bit like the White Rabbit some of the time ... [Lyn]

> I think what I'd do if I had one day extra I'd probably actually still send her to the childminder for half the day and just run round and get the house cleaned and get the shopping done ... [Sarah]

> I like the idea of working part-time, but I don't think it's practical at the moment ... Although it would make life easier at home, I wouldn't have to juggle so many things around and it would give me a little bit more time to myself and to the children ... [Lorraine]

Both single and married women are often tired:

> ... most times I go home feeling quite tired and just ready to go to bed sometimes ... [Debbie]

> I mean I take work home to do in the evenings, but by the time we've put Lucy to bed ... I get sleepy and can't get going again ... [Sarah]

> Tired? Very tired, yes ... [Maggie]

Work is also a negative experience if there is no recognition:

> ... the frustrations come from a lack of acknowledgment coupled with an inability to use my skills and use my abilities ... Nicola[

> I can imagine standing on the end of an assembly line, I mean you're producing something but you're just a number ... I felt a bit like that when I was at - -. Here I'm part of a system but I feel more recognised ... there I just felt insignificant, just too lost ... [Emma]

Or if there are problems with superiors, or colleagues leave:

> ... a bad boss is someone who doesn't give you a chance to use your abilities and doesn't help you grow ... or is threatened by you ...[Lyn]

> I've been thinking about (leaving) for about a year because - for lots of reasons - one, because I felt it was time to move on, b) because I was unhappy with my boss and unhappy with not being involved in the proper marketing side of things ... I did also, I must say, lose a lot of very close colleagues about eighteen months ago, particularly ... who was so helpful and such a joy to work with ... [Nicola]

Time appears to be less of a problem for the French women:

> Ah oui, j'en prends. On a du temps quand on a décidé de le prendre. On a tous du temps, hein? Parce qu'il y en a plein qui disent "J'ai pas le temps", si on a tous le temps. Pendant qu'on va au cinéma, ben on fait pas le chiffon hein? [Danièle] (33)

> ... on trouve le temps si on veut hein? [Annick] (34)

> Oui je prends le temps ... Il faut le prendre. [Françoise] (35)

They are also less tired:

> Je suis pas fatiguée du tout hein? J'estime que bon ben, on n'est pas obligée de travailler comme un mulet chez soi, à faire du ménage tous les jours hein, bon, celles qui veulent bien s'y en donner la peine oui effectivement elles doivent être crevées, parce qu'elles font une double journée. Mais moi en rentrant le soir je vais pas faire toutes ces choses-là hein? [Marie-Claire] (36)

> Crevée? Non, si je me couche vers 10h et demi, 11h non, pas fatiguée, mais je dis il faut aller se coucher ... [Danièle] (37)

But daily life can be stressful:

> ... quand même il y a des fois ... qu'on est plus énervée aussi ... [Danièle] (38)

> ... la vie au quotidien est pénible parce qu'il y a toujours des embouteillages, parce que la moindre chose est compliquée, il faut faire la queue, perdre du temps dans les transports, tout est cher ... [Nathalie] (39)

Rather than not being recognised, a negative work experience was one where the individual could not express herself, or which did not allow self-development:

> ... ce que je veux pouvoir faire dans mon travail c'est exprimer ce que j'entends sur moi, je veux dire, je fais tel boulot mais on demande mon avis, on demande si c'est comme ça que je vois les choses etc ... [Valérie] (40)

And the work must be intrinsically interesting:

> ... je travaille pas dans un but purement parce qu'il le faut etc ... je veux dire que je pense qu'à partir d'un moment où mon boulot ne m'intéressait plus, ou je trouvais mon boulot désagréable, je ne travaillerais plus. [Marie-Claire] (41)

> ... le travail ce n'est intéressant que si je m'y intéresse vraiment ... [Laurence] (42)

In some ways the French single women were more stressed than the mothers:

> ... quand je travaille pas je suis moins fatiguée, je peux, d'abord j'ai du temps pour moi, c'est-à-dire pour m'occuper des choses à mon intérêt est nécessaire, plus un peu de temps pour moi, un tout petit peu ... [Josiane] (43)

They do not want their lives to consist solely of work:

> ... il faut que j'arrête, sinon, à 55 ans, à 60 ans, ben, je vais enfin tout d'un coup, me rendre compte que j'ai passé ma vie à travailler ... [Annick] (44)

> Maintenant bon je connais mieux le travail. C'est là que je me suis calmée. J'ai envie d'autre chose. J'ai envie de m'investir plus dans ma vie privée ... [Françoise] (45)

Women at work

The English women's need for recognition, or acknowledgment, is repeated when they talk specifically about women at work. Even in publishing, a large employer of women, there is a strong sense of being undervalued:

> .. there's an element of feeling beleaguered and feeling not, that they're not taken seriously, not listened to often by men ... [Lyn]

> ... and all these sort of men used to come in at lunchtime and sort of sit on the edge of the desk and you know, I was the little girl in the office and I just hated that ... I thought I don't want to be sort of seen as the little bit of fluff in the office ... [Debbie]

> ... my boss ... has been very good to me ... but I find as an individual he's very difficult for me to feel comfortable with, I don't think he has much respect for me really. [Emma]

As stated above, all but three of the English women had a secretarial qualification. A secretarial job is a traditional "way in" to British publishing houses, but this may exacerbate feelings of being undervalued:

> ... so I came to see them and in those days they would take graduates on without specifying what the job was if you like, except of course if you're a girl you get a typewriter ... [Maggie]

> ... I just deeply resented the thought that the only thing this [shorthand] was going to fit me for was writing down other people's work, for God's sake, you know, it wasn't even my own work ... [Emma]

While bosses may talk of secretaries being indispensable, "the power behind the throne" and so on, secretarial work is still seen by the women themselves as having little status and providing few opportunities for recognition:

> ... they put me in this room in a sort of cupboard, really it was quite literally almost a cupboard off the very grand chandeliered enormous office of the College Secretary, and I couldn't believe it - there I had to go every day, and I wasn't even allowed to answer the telephone ... And I used to have not hallucinations - fantasies about - because I could look out on the windows of - College across the square and I used to go and buy fruit in the market at lunch, and I used to sit and think about all I wanted to do in the world was get these oranges and apples and throw them at this great power through the windows of College, Oxford, and shatter them, and wait and see what would happen, and just cause some sort of uproar around the place ... [Emma]

In spite of their more elevated status, however, women in management also experienced problems, particularly in meetings likely to be dominated by men:

> ... and I remember going to some of these big meetings, big monthly meetings and being the only woman there and feeling quite thrown, having to come to terms with it and feeling I didn't know what the game, what the rules of the game were, so did you take your jacket off in meetings? ... [Lyn]

> I always feel sort of like "Oh dear, I probably shouldn't say this, but I'm going to" ... [Jacqui]

> ... when they said "Who's going to take the minutes?", I mean there's probably some women who'd say "Oh I'll do it", you know well I didn't, I deliberately didn't ... and if we're ever a chair short I don't go out and get it ... I suppose I do make a deliberate attempt not to take the female role, I mean if it's ever "Go and get the coffee" ... And I suppose that is actually against my nature, because I probably would normally offer, and I don't in that situation ... [Nicola]

Wondering whether or not to keep her jacket on illustrates how the workplace for some women represents an unfamiliar, male culture:

> ... and there obviously is still this macho male thing about being seen to go to the coffee machine at about a quarter to six ... I've always been aware of that since I've been here. I don't know if it's getting any better or whether it's getting any worse because I'm not here at quarter to six any more but ... certainly there is, there's a whole subculture based on going to, being seen going to the coffee machine at a quarter to six. That shows you're committed and you care and you're gonna stay ... [Lyn]

> ... negotiating skills ... I'm light years away from being very good at it. I don't like playing games really ... [Nicola]

Again confirming other research (Marshall, op cit; Tannen, 1990) women's management styles and ways of relating to people are seen to be different from men's, with the emphasis on the empathic and democratic rather than authoritarian:

> I think you have to understand somebody to know how they're going to react to things, and understanding sort of comes from being able to talk ... [Debbie]

> ... I always try and work with them as opposed to "You work for me" sort of thing ... [Jacqui]

> I try not to have that kind of attitude ... [Caroline]

When someone suggested to one of the women that she take a more direct approach in supervising staff, she replied:

> I said to her "Surely all you want out of the person is the most you can get for your money, and if the way to do it is to say to them "Is there any chance of doing that before 11 o'clock?" as opposed to "I need that before 11 o'clock" ...[Lyn]

Not only are the English respondents' own work lives bound up with their personal lives, they take account of this in staff they may be managing:

> ... some days she'll just be completely quiet and other days she'll be completely bubbling over and if you say to her "Is there anything wrong?" she'll say "No". But I'm sure it's things at home that have affected her and she's come in, she's either had an argument with her mother or something, and so she's come in and she's just quiet. But I don't think of it as anything wrong with her, I mean if she turned round and said "I'm not going to do that because I'm not in a very good mood" then that's different, but she doesn't ... [Jacqui]

One woman manager now felt very isolated as a woman. The few women who had reached managerial level were not on the whole felt to be supportive. This was attributed to their having, or having adopted, a more masculine way of interacting:

> ... some of the women I'm thinking of are quite hard and ... not every woman, but quite a lot of them are very poor with people, very poor managers of people ... [Maggie]

> There's not many women at my level in the company and those that are at my level, most of them, they're not quasi-men, that's very unfair, but some of them, most, quite a lot of them actually stand alone ... so I do feel isolated ... [Lyn]

Some of these themes were echoed by the French women, but they were more likely to talk about the difficulties of making progress as a woman, or of the differences between working with, or for, men or women respectively. Only two women talked about a lack of respect:

> ... le service où j'étais, j'étais un peu petite chouchou, j'étais la petite dernière, j'étais chouchoutée par tout le monde ... [Josiane] (46)

> ... j'ai senti que ça lui plaisait pas du tout que je commence à me débrouiller ... [Laurence] (47)

Secretarial work was not seen as necessarily menial:

> C'est pas un grand boulot ... mais j'ai pas l'impression d'être la secrétaire *de* quelqu'un, puisque ce quelqu'un me laisse considérablement la paix, donc je travaille assez souvent seule et bon, je travaille pour elle, mais c'est pas astreignant du tout. [Marie-Claire] (48)

Since women working part-time is much less common in France, they were asked how they felt about this possibility. In general being a mother was already seen as an obstacle to advancement, and working part-time would exacerbate this:

> ... un congé maternité est une pente difficile à remonter et moi je supportais mal, j'ai mal supporté qu'un congé maternité rappelle aux gens que j'étais une maman ... [Brigitte] (49)

> L'idéal peut-être c'est de travailler peut-être un tiers de temps. Mais du coup, si vous travaillez ... 4/5èmes je ne sais pas si ça pose des problèmes, mais si vous travaillez moins que 4/8èmes après vous êtes un peu déclenchée du travail ... vous ne vous engagez pas entièrement ...
>
> [Catherine] (50)

> ... je crois que même une femme qui a des enfants, je crois qu'elle est quand même traînée dans son avancement ... J'ai une amie qui est dans l'édition, dans une autre maison d'édition et qui a un fils. Elle me dit que très certainement si elle n'avait pas eu d'enfant elle aurait été promue plus rapidement ... [Nathalie] (51)

Being a woman *per se*, however, was not seen as a hindrance:

> Il y a beaucoup de femmes dans les services où je vais ... même chef de service ... Pas de problème ... [Françoise] (52)

Indeed several of the woman preferred working with or for men:

> ... il y a des femmes qui sont pourries, qui sont peaux de vache même avec d'autres femmes, or je pense que même à la limite c'est mieux de travailler avec un homme dans certains cas. La mentalité femme des fois dans les bureaux peut être pourrie je trouve avec certaines ... [Marie-Claire] (53)

> Mais enfin c'est bien connu que les bureaux c'est beaucoup les histoires, surtout quand c'est que les femmes. Parce que les hommes ils sont pas comme ça quand même ... je trouve que c'est direct, mais c'est peut-être plus franc ... [Danièle] (54)

Where the English women felt that men "played games" in the workplace, therefore, the French women found them more direct. One woman did think that a female boss would have more understanding of family problems however:

> Ah oui, une femme elle comprend plus qu'un homme vous venez pas, votre enfant il est malade, lui il voit que vous êtes pas la ... [Valérie] (55)

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Summary

Women in both countries were concerned about advancement, but the French women did not seem to experience the feeling of being undervalued which was expressed by the English women. Work was a means to independence for both sets of women, but for the French women it represented an individual, personal domain as much as financial

independence. For them, too, work was more sharply differentiated from family. In England the mothers appear to be more stressed than the single women, while in France the reverse is true. The French women do not talk in the same way about the differences between a man's attitude and behaviour at work, with several preferring to work with men because they are more direct. Relations with men in the personal domain, children and childcare make up the "Family" section below.

Family

Partner

With only one exception, both married and single English women describe tension in their relationships with partners. All of the mothers were living in stable relationships with the fathers of their children. Only one couple was not married and only one woman had been married before - at 18, divorcing three years later. This stability masks an underlying dissatisfaction, however, centred around domestic tasks and childcare. One woman had at one stage left her husband (they were later reconciled) because of his lack of support in helping her to balance home and career. Another, when asked "What would you change?" replied:

> Well, I wouldn't be married... [Debbie]

She felt that she would be able to cope financially, and that her husband represented a second person to look after in addition to her daughter:

> I mean there are so many times I think "Well why do I have all this? I mean I have an extra person to look after. It sounds awful but I mean, I just wouldn't, you know for the amount of help I get it might as well be just the two of us. I'm quite sure it couldn't be any tougher.
> [Debbie]

Another wonders whether her husband has a greater commitment to his job than to the family:

> ... there's been times when I've thought "I wonder if it really means you've got to work late. I wonder if you've really got to, or if you'd really rather

> be there because it's easier to be there and coming home is more difficult ... I have accused him of that, I've said "You'd rather be there, I wonder where your heart is ... [Lyn]

Her husband enjoys his work, and she sees that as "his time" while she has no time for herself:

> I said to him "Well actually that's your "me" time isn't it? If you're choosing to use it to work that's your decision, so that's actually Michael time and Lyn isn't getting Lyn time ..." [Lyn]

Another woman suggests that her relationship with her husband may have deteriorated in part because she is so absorbed in their child:

> ... it's the change in your own relationships as well. I mean it does put an added strain on that ... instead of your partner being number one on the list ... they've got to realise that there's somebody else that perhaps needs you a bit more ... [Sarah]

Single women appear not to fare any better, and even the woman who is living with her partner seems to be doing so primarily as a financial arrangement:

> We had a flat each and we were paying out all this money in rent ... we went to see the solicitor and what have you and he said "Well look, even if you buy something, and it only lasts for six months, at least you've got some money, cash in your hand each, why don't you do it?" ...[Jacqui]

Indeed this business-like attitude and language characterises several of the English women's accounts:

> I'd like to trade Stephen in, I think, the more I think about it ...[Maggie]

Another had joined an introduction agency to find a partner:

> I wasn't meeting people ... and I have always been the sort of person on the whole that if I have wanted something I have set out to get it and why should this be any different really ... [Nicola]

She even had a sort of shopping list of qualitities that she was looking for:

> I'm looking for self-confidence, warmth and an enquiring mind ...[Nicola]

A fear of being taken over appears to be the single most important reason why the single women have been dissatisfied with relationships:

> I find them threatening because on the whole people want to change me, rather than finding them enriching and finding them rewarding ...[Caroline]

> It didn't work out because he was forever trying to turn me - I felt trying to turn me into somebody I didn't want to be, and that he didn't care about me for what I was but for what I might be if I became ... what I didn't like was the feeling that how I was was not good enough, that I was going to have to change in order to be worthwhile ... I really just felt ... stuffed into a box in some way ... [Emma]

The woman living with her boyfriend has serious doubts about staying with him because she feels that if they had children he would put pressure on her to stay at home and she would need to have financial independence in order not to feel that her life was being controlled by somebody else:

> ... he'll sort of be earning the money and he'll say "We're not buying that because they don't need it." And then I'll think "Damn, if only I earned the money I'd buy them it myself." And I'd be sort of back in control of it ... I've got this real sort of thing about it ... that I feel that there's no way he's going to rule my life or run my life. [Jacqui]

At the same time there is an ambivalence about relationships because of the fear of solitude:

> I've always felt the need for somebody. In fact in many cases that's why I've hung on in relationships as long as I have, going right back to when I was fifteen, because I was frightened of being on my own. [Nicola]

The respondent who would like children but not with her present partner, for instance, knew that in order to resolve the problem she had to end her current relationship, but this would not be easy:

> ... if somebody said that to me I would say "Well the first thing you have to do then is to get away from him, that's the first move." ... But I don't seem to be able to do that unless I've got someone else ... because I've never been not going out with someone. [Caroline]

There seems to be an ambivalence about dependence/independence therefore: a need for a relationship but a fear of losing one's autonomy. While wanting to be independent, too, the English women appear somewhat conservative about relationships. At the same time as not wanting her current partner to "run her life", the same woman had once had a boyfriend for whom she would have done anything, gone anywhere:

> But he was nice, I mean he did things like open the door for you ... And when he walked along the road he'd step on the outside when you're walking along and all things like that ... [Jacqui]

Another talked of how important it was to look good for her man:

> ... when I'm going out with Philip I also wear make-up and try and, you know, look as good as I can. Other than that I don't, cause I can't be bothered ... I wear the things that he likes and don't wear things he doesn't like, when I'm seeing him ... [Nicola]

The English women are also for the most part conservative about marriage. Only one of the couples with children, as stated above, was not married, and this had caused family problems when their child was born:

> ... there was always a little bit of, because we never got married, not because we wanted to upset anybody but we just didn't feel, we couldn't really see the point, we didn't want to do it just for the sake of it, and that upset his family a bit, so we didn't there was a bit of a stage when we didn't see much of his parents ... [Sarah]

The cohabiting couple without children would also not consider having them outside marriage:

> ... my mother's always saying to my brother "Oh when are you going to have a family?" cos he's married, so that seems to be the next step in her mind, whereas we get pressure about "Oh when are you getting married?" or "Are you going to get married?" but we don't get it about the family, because in their eyes it'd be quite wrong to have one at the moment ... [Jacqui]

And another would not live with a man unless she felt committed enough to marry him:

> I don't think that I would want to live with anyone unless I felt I wanted to marry them ...and I do have old-fashioned ideas on marriage and I do think that it should last and I think that people should go into it very seriously ... [Nicola]

For one woman, however, the marriage ceremony itself reinforces all that she finds threatening in relationships with men:

> ... your father, A Man, gives you A-way to Another Man ... my father couldn't give me away if he tried anyway, nor would he want to, but I'm not a chattel ... [Maggie]

The tension which seems to characterise the English women's relationships with partners, therefore, appears to derive both from feelings of a lack of practical support, and conflict between dependency/independence, needing someone but afraid of being engulfed, and wanting to be emancipated but embracing conservative values.

The French women talk in a different way about their relationships. Their relationships are not as straightforward as the English women's: only one of the five mothers was married and living with the father of all their children; two were co-habiting with the father of their children, the first of these also having to stay each weekend the two children from her partner's previous relationship; a fourth lived with her daughter from a previous marriage, her current husband and the daughter from that relationship; the fifth lived with her current partner of ten years, whom she had never married, and her daughter from her first marriage. These latter two women had both walked out on their first husbands, leaving everything behind them. One had taken her daughter with her, and been given custody of her; the other had been allowed custody of her daughter, but not her son, who now lived with his father.

The French women talk more easily of their affections. When asked to tell me about her partner, one woman replied:

> Il est beau, je l'aime ... [Brigitte] (56)

This was said tongue-in-cheek, with a mock romanticism, but in detailing her story she also said:

> ... jusqu'au moment où sa soeur était séparée de son compagnon, Anne-Marie voulait quand même rester en contact avec Jean-Claude, mon homme actuel, Jean-Claude, et donc je les suivis, on sortait des fois et puis je suis tombée amoureuse. Voilà. [Brigitte] (57)

Another talks of a previous relationship:

> Comme je savais qu'il était très amoureux de moi ... [Annick] (58)

And another of her own feelings:

> Ensuite j'aimais très fort un garçon ... c'est vrai que moi très souvent j'ai cédé par amour ... [Laurence] (59)

"Aimer" can of course mean both "love" and "like", but "amoureux" is unambiguously "in love" and it is usually clear from the context which meaning is intended.

Three of the single women had had long relationships which had ultimately proved unsatisfacory, but they associated this with the men concerned rather than with relationships in general. Two of these women said that they would now prefer to be alone than in such relationships; but they were actually both living happily with men in new relationships at the time of the study.

The French women in general talk more positively about their relationships and marriage was not regarded as limiting their autonomy:

> ... je crois c'est vrai qu'avec mon mari je dis tout et je peux tout dire ... c'est un peu si vous voulez, je considère mon mari un peu comme une espèce de miroir ... [Valérie] (60)

> Oui, je pense que j'ai trouvé ce qu'il me fallait ... [Marie-Claire] (61)

> ... là j'ai un mari très gentil. Bon il a des défauts hein, qui n'en a pas? Mais bon je décide beaucoup ... [Danièle] (62)

> ... même de toute façon si j'ai envie de faire quelque chose je le fais ... on n'est pas esclave hein? [Nathalie] (63)

> Mes soeurs elles sont très indépendantes, mariées ... elles s'en sortent très bien je crois. Psychologiquement elles sont bien dans leurs peaux, et elles sont très indépendantes tout en étant mariées ... C'est une indépendance d'esprit ... [Annick] (64)

Solitude is "sad" rather than something to be feared:

> C'est triste, non, de rentrer, faire un seul plat, pour une personne ... [Marie-Claire] (65)

One of the single women admits that living with a man would now be difficult:

> ... plus on attend plus on prend l'habitude de son indépendance ... J'ai l'habitude de faire un peu ce que je veux ... [Françoise] (66)

but that she would be able to accommodate such a relationship:

> en m'organisant différemment ... mais avoir une activité sportive, pour moi ça compte beaucoup, pour l'équilibre déjà et pour la santé ... donc je continuerais. Au lieu d'aller deux fois par semaine bon j'irais peut-être une fois. Au moins j'irais. Dès le départ ce serait comme ça ... et c'est pareil pour lui ... D'ailleurs je conçois la vie mais avec une petite indépendance quand même. [Josiane] (67)

It is strength of feeling which is important, rather than formal marriage. All but one of the women had been baptised and brought up as a Catholic, but this was described as having nothing to do with the questions of marriage or cohabiting. Marriage is in any case seen rather as a civil ceremony than a religious one:

> ... bof se marier ça sert à rien. C'est qu'un oui devant monsieur le maire ... [Danièle] (68)

> ... je pense pas que ça à rien à voir avec la religion ...[Brigitte] (69)

> Si je suis pas croyante je vois vraiment pas ce que la mairie a à voir là-dedans ... [Marie-Claire] (70)

One woman would be obliged to marry her current partner if they had children because he is from north Africa, but this would be the only reason:

> Moi je sais que je serais obligée parce que comme je vis avec un étranger, pour que l'enfant soit reconnu dans le pays ... mais normalement ... alors il y en a qui me disent oui si tu te maries ça veut dire que vraiment tu confirmes ton amour, tout ça. Mais je dis si j'ai consacré 7 ans de vie avec la personne ... me marier, je vais pas plus l'aimer ou moins l'aimer ... [Catherine] (71)

There is no notion of living together as being somehow shocking or immoral. It is referred to simply as "union libre" (a "free relationship"). Neither are children born outside marriage referred to as "illegitimate" as they still are in Britain. Children are either "légitime" if born within marriage or "naturel" if born outside. In fact there are tax advantages to not marrying: it was possible to declare a child each as a single parent.

Although relationships are spoken of more positively, they are not regarded as particularly stable. One of the reasons put forward for living together rather than marrying was that it was then easier to separate:

> ... les gens sont un peu plus prudents ... je pense qu'ils habitent plus facilement ensemble et puis se séparent plus facilement ... [Marie-Claire] (72)

And divorce is not cheap:

> Les divorces coûtent cher! [Danièle] (73)

It appears, therefore, that for the French women relations with men are more satisfying, but at the same time are not necessarily expected to last. Feelings are more important than formal legitimisation and it appears that when the relationship becomes unsatisfactory the French women are more prepared to quit and seek another. Working and being financially independent may make this easier, not only because the woman has her own money, but also because work can help her "forget" emotional problems.

None of the French mothers complains about a lack of support from her husband in terms of childcare or domestic tasks. On the contrary, much of the work is shared:

> ... manger, bon c'est moi qui fais. Quand il y a du monde il m'aide évidemment, quand il y a des invités. Et puis bon par contre il s'occupe beaucoup des enfants, il s'occupe beaucoup de ça, et bon par contre mes filles mettent les couverts, débarrassent, elles travaillent un tout petit peu ... non j'ai pas beaucoup de travail dans l'ensemble, je crois pas ... [Marie-Claire] (74)

> Les courses non ...Oui, le pain, les bricoles quoi, les petites courses de la semaine. Les grosses courses c'est lui le samedi, dimanche ... [Brigitte] (75)

> C'est le mari maintenant qui fait les courses, le mari ... [Danièle] (76)

Like the fathers of the French women, their partners would also cook:

> Il aime pas faire la cuisine tout le temps ... mais il aime pas manger n'importe comment, alors comme moi je m'en fiche, il fait la cuisine. Oui, il aime plus faire que moi. Moi je mets le couvert, je débarrasse, je fais la machine, je range la cuisine, je fais la lessive etc ... [Brigitte] (77)

> S'il y a des invités on fait moitié-, moi je fais les plats de résistance et mon mari fait le dessert. Parce que j'aime pas faire les desserts. [Danièle] (78)

They will also do housework, but some jobs are seen as better done by women:

> ... il dit "Tu veux que je passe l'aspirateur?", il le passera. Mais j'aime mieux le faire parce que c'est jamais à mon goût ... [Danièle] (79)

Two women had resolved some of the problems associated with domestic work by employing others to do it - a cleaner and someone to do the ironing. (The French women do not earn more than the English women, however - see below). Another said that since

she and her partner had differing views about how clean and tidy the house should be, she had bought household appliances to help her:

> Puisqu'il aime que tout soit rangé, et moi, le ménage ... j'ai décidé que ... il fallait que je sois assistée donc j'ai décidé d'acheter plein d'appareils, le lave-vaisselle, que j'ai jamais eu parce que je m'en fiche complètement, mais je me suis dit si lui il veut que ça soit rangé ... il faut que j'aie toute l'infrastructure pour que ça va, parce que je trouvais ça dur de se disputer pour, pour des choses pour, pour des choses pour la vie quotidienne quoi ... [Laurence] (80)

The French women seem less prepared to allow domestic work to come in the way of the relationship, and in their turn their partners seem more prepared to meet them halfway:

> ... on en a beaucoup discuté, on a décidé tous les deux de faire la moitié du chemin, donc ça devrait coller ... [Brigitte] (81)

This attitude is also apparent with regard to children and childcare - subject of the next section.

Children and childcare

Although the English women were on the whole happy with the childcare arrangements they now had, it had sometimes been a struggle to reach that point. Three of the mothers currently used childminders, one shared a nanny (who came to the house) with another couple and one placed her child at a nursery.

Maternity leave was comparatively generous: twenty weeks on full pay, and up to a year of unpaid leave with a similar level job guaranteed upon return to work. One woman investigated childcare first, before making any other decisions about what leave to take:

> So I just, finding out I was pregnant, I just saw about childcare for Alice, got that sorted out first, and then decided I would just take the twenty weeks. [Debbie]

Quality of childcare was crucial. This respondent had chosen a nursery because:

> I always thought childminding sort of sounded ... I don't know, a bit hit and miss really. And sort of not that professional. I don't know why. You know just mums sort of being tied at home with all these hundreds of kids

> running around. And without any sort of real structured day. Stick them in front of the television you know, with a packet of crisps ... [Sarah]

For all women, as long as they felt happy about the quality of childcare, leaving their children was not too great a wrench:

> I was really quite confident that the child care was going to be very good. And we had sort of dummy runs anyway so that we sort of built it up. She would go for half an hour and I'd stay at the nursery. And then she'd go for an hour and eventually it would be a full day. So I knew that she was quite happy and they were quite happy. So it just meant that I could go off to work and not really worry about it too much. [Debbie]

> ... being a function of the fact that I'm very pleased with the nanny, I can come to work and I don't fret, I don't think "I wonder if he's all right, I wonder if he's happy ..." ... even when she first started ... I knew she was OK and I left him with a light heart ... I remember the first time I drove off, the first morning, I thought "Oh dear" and then the second morning I drove off and I thought "Oh well!" and then the third morning I drove off and I just drove up the road smiling and went to work ... [Lyn]

Once satisfied that their children were happy, it seemed to be the parents who suffered rather than the children:

> Oh she's very happy there. And she always has been, the worries have only been ours all the time. [Sarah]

> There are odd days where ... she gets a bit sort of tearful But I know that as soon as I've gone she's better. I mean I think they know they sort of have to put on some kind of show just to ... tug at your heart for a bit ... [Debbie]

> I think "Those are not children that sit and brood about missing me all day" because they don't, I know they don't. And if I go to pick them up it's "Do we have to go home now?", you know, "I'm doing this, I'm doing this colouring" ... [Lorraine]

When asked how that made her feel, she replied:

> A bit redundant at times! ... I think "Hmm, I'm not missed, I'm not needed, but I miss them." Sometimes if Alex is a bit off-colour ... he'll say "I don't want you to go Mummy, I don't want you to go" ... and I go back and I get into the car and I'm thinking "Oh God" and I've got tears and I'm all guilty and I come to work and I think "Oh I hope he's all right" and then I get there at night and she says "Oh five minutes after you'd gone he was fine!" I think you know, I'm the one that's suffering through all this, I think, more so than them. [Lorraine]

This comes partly from guilt:

> Yeah. Cos society makes you feel guilty ... [Lorraine]

Different problems were likely to arise according to the different types of childcare chosen. Nannies needed to be reliable: if they failed to turn up, women had to make other arrangements and this could make them late or create problems at work. A sympathetic boss did not necessarily ease the anxiety:

> ... we had a classic case when the nanny started coming in late and obviously making me late and then just sometimes not turning up at all, I would just ring and say "I'm very sorry but there's nothing else I can do" and she would be really good. But it didn't help me because I just felt "I'm not doing my job, I might just as well not be here" and sometimes I'd feel that I'm hanging on to the job by the skin of my teeth ... [Lorraine]

Illness might be a problem if a childminder was caring for several children:

> ... we did have a rocky patch last winter when we thought "We've got to take her away". She had lots of problems with her eardrums, they kept bursting, and every cold she got made the problem worse, and every day you'd turn up and there'd be another kid snuffling in the corner and you'd think "Oh no!" [Sarah]

For all types of childcare (apart from a live-in nanny, which one couple had tried but ultimately rejected because of 1) the cost and 2) the lack of privacy) it was necessary to relieve the carer(s) by a certain time each day, and this was a potential source of conflict both between the respondent and her partner, and between the woman's commitment to her work, her child and the carer. One woman, whose nanny came to the house, was having particular problems at the end of the day. She and her partner had a "system of pick-up" but her partner was consistently ringing the nanny when it was his turn to say that he would be late. The English women were particularly concerned about being unfair to whoever was looking after their children:

> I think I've made it fairly clear that it's not fair to ring Suzie and say "I can't get away, can you stay?" He mustn't do that, it's not fair on her.[Lyn]

> I mean I've just got into the habit of dropping things, if it's not done I just have to go. I mean that's one thing that I feel I can't afford, we can't afford to let slip. The childminder finishes work at 5 and it just, it's really imposing on her to sort of, it would be very easy to never turn up before 5.30, to just sort of do that last thing at work and get there a bit later. But I just daren't ... [Sarah]

Support from partner was again seen as crucially important, but although two of the mothers (including one whose husband really thought his wife should stay at home instead of going to work) had a completely shared system, where one partner left the child(ren) and one picked them up, three of the women were responsible for virtually all the childcare arrangements. Even when there was sufficient support, however, childcare could pose anxieties. One woman's story is here presented in full, as it illustrates the sorts of problems and dilemmas which childcare poses, and how solutions may even include moving house:

> [Lorraine] And then I thought I'd like to go back to work, not because of the money primarily but because of the company I think, adult, just adult company ... So, decided to work evenings, just in a supermarket, stacking shelves, thought it would get me out, give us a bit more money, you know, just try that. So I did that for about, oh it must have been six months, I just, it wasn't what I wanted, it wasn't filling the right voids, because I'd be at home all day with the children, I mean I had the car and we used to go out a lot, but there's only so much you can do with two small children and you can't go out every day of the week, but then I was finding I had the children all day and then trying to do an evening job till ten in the evening was just too much really, it just wasn't the right way of doing things, I couldn't see any other solution, so I thought I'd just give the evening job up and stay at home again, try and find something part-time in the day time.
>
> [Interviewer] And Andrew was presumably working during the day so you didn't see much of him either.
>
> (L) No.
>
> (I) Cos you weren't there in the evenings.
>
> (L) That's right, so that became difficult again, he didn't mind having the children but we just didn't see each other an awful lot. Although I only worked two to three evenings a week it was still quite a big chunk of time really, so we thought that wasn't a very good idea, so maybe going back part-time would be a better idea, which I did one or two days a week in one of the staff bureaux in Witney, typing. And my neighbour had the children.
>
> (I) Right, who were three and two or something?
>
> (L) No, they weren't that old, I think ... about no cos Alex was only sixteen months when I started here, so he must have been about a year and Samantha just under, just under three. Yeah.
>
> (I) So a neighbour took them while you were working.
>
> (L) Yeah, but she had two of her own, which wasn't a very good idea, because it was too much for her as well, I felt it was too much for her as

well. So then we thought we'd get a childminder to have them, but the amount of money I was earning wasn't really enough to pay a childminder and childminders just weren't interested in taking children part-time. So I then thought, well maybe if I try part-, full-time work I know that I can get a childminder full-time, I know I could probably earn enough money to cover both, and just thought if I give it a try and it doesn't work out I haven't lost anything but if I don't see if I can do it then, you know, you never know do you what you can do until you try?

(I) What did you, did you think that you might, did you really want to work part-, full-time though or was it because of these difficulties?

(L) A lot of it was because of the difficulties, but I wasn't daunted at working full-time, I felt if I had the right job then working full-time would be, may be even more rewarding. But really I didn't know what I wanted to do, I didn't know if I wanted part-time or full-time, or whether what the children would be like, or whether I'd even be able to find anybody to help them. And then, that's how I started really. I had a friend who was a childminder, I knew she was a childminder and that she didn't have any children, she, she worked weekends in a shop and Andrew said to me "Oh why don't you ask her if she'll have the children, then she can give her shop job up and look after our children, so hopefully both of us will have a solution to our problem." So we approached her about this and she said yes it was a good idea and we discussed money obviously and she wasn't going to charge me as much as a normal sort of standard rate a childminder would charge so that was good for me, and she was quite happy to give up her weekend job, because her husband worked the week and she worked the weekends so they didn't really see a lot of each other, so it was hopefully making her life a bit easier as well. So that's what we did. And it's, it worked.

(I) And is it still ...?

(L) No. (Laughs) No because then she ... fell pregnant, so it meant that she couldn't take mine anymore and so we didn't know what to do because we knew that, well actually funnily enough it's only been since this year because it had worked for almost a year and then she said she was pregnant, so in that time we had, I had got this job here, we had moved house to Eynsham, because that's where she lived and also Samantha was going to playgroup in Eynsham, so we thought that life would be easier for Samantha, especially like thinking ahead to school, otherwise it would have meant I'd have had Samantha at school in Witney, Alex over here in Eynsham, we'd have been all over the place, so it just seemed a good solution to move house.

(I) And you were working here by then.

(L) Yeah.

(I) Was this, so was this the first full-time job you got after ...

(L) Yeah.

(I) After the children.

(L) Yeah. So it worked quite well. So then, after we'd moved house she found out she was pregnant, which miffed us a bit, cos she could have said (laughs), so then we were back to the money situation, could we afford to pay a proper childminder, or you know a standard rate childminder, and for me to work etc etc, so we decided that no we couldn't afford to do that, so we had a nanny for six months.

(I) And that was cheaper than a childminder?

(L) We paid her the same as we paid Jane, but it was cheaper than a childminder.

(I) And Samantha was going to play school by then.

(L) Yes.

(I) Every day?

(L) No, three days a week.

(I) So that was, so she was, so for three days a week she was just looking after one, not two.

(L) Yeah.

(I) She wasn't live-in, a live-in nanny.

(L) No, no. So that seemed to work for a time. But then she wanted to go off and go to further education and university, so we've recently got another childminder in Eynsham who's quite happy to take both of them. But it's becoming a problem inasmuch as I don't want them moved around any more than I have to, and Samantha starts school at Easter, so hopefully she won't be moved any more, but I don't, I don't know what's round the corner. So it is a problem.

The French women also had a variety of childcare arrangements, and although the burden was eased somewhat by the possibility of sending their children to an "école maternelle" at the age of three (see below) there were also circumstances which in fact made the French women's situation potentially more problematic than that of the English. Maternity leave was shorter, for example - eight weeks' before and eight weeks' after confinement. Again illustrating the French emphasis on the number of children rather than age, this rose to six months on the birth of a third child.

Before the age of three, they had all sent their children to a "nourrice" (a registered childminder), found from a list at the town hall, and who was placed near home rather than near their place of work. Municipal crèches do exist but it is almost impossible to obtain a place:

> Il était 800ème sur la liste d'attente pour une crèche de 40 places ... [Brigitte] (82)

> C'est épouvantable. Il faut s'inscrire pratiquement avant d'être enceinte ... [Marie-Claire] (83)

A "nourrice" was described as the "luxury" alternative, but in view of the scarcity of municipal crèche places it was the only solution for the women in the study. Clearly, however, they considered themselves fortunate to be able to afford it.

Once their children were three, they had all sent them to "écoles maternelles". This is free, state-provided nursery education available to all. Compulsory schooling begins at age six, but all the women opted for this additional provision, not only to enable them to work, but because they thought the child benefited:

> ... moi je trouve, et d'ailleurs les instituteurs nous disent c'est très bien pour les enfants, ça leur apprend quand même déjà de ne pas être dans les jupons des parents, d'apprendre des choses que nous on n'est pas, peut pas faire, ils apprennent un petit peu à ecrire, ils font des dessins, ils apprennent un peu à compter, enfin ils font beaucoup de choses, ils ramènent des choses qu'ils ont faites à leurs parents, c'est très éducatif, ça les éveille, moi je crois que c'est bien. [Marie-Claire] (84)

It was also good for the child's social development:

> ... ils se font des camarades, moi je trouve que ça les rend moins bête qu'avant dans le temps, c'est vrai qu'on était, la preuve moi j'avais du mal à m'intégrer à cette école et puis bon, maintenant les enfants comme ils se trouvent sans les parents, bon ben ils s'intègrent très bien n'importe où ... [Danièle] (85)

There seemed to be no anxieties about leaving their children, even when they were sick:

> ... je la mettais malade à l'école ... [Marie-Claire] (86)

Or:

> [Brigitte] Je l'emmène malade chez la nourrice.

> [Interviewer] Vous prenez pas de congé pour ça?
>
> (B) Non, une fois une demi-journée mais ... pour voir le médecin, enfin le temps d'appeler le médecin, de le voir et puis je l'emmène bourré d'aspirine après, une fois que je sais ce qu'il a, quels médicaments il faut lui donner ...
>
> (I) Et ça vous inquiète pas?
>
> (B) Non! Si je me laisse à m'inquiéter à chaque angine ou à chaque rhume je pourrais plus. C'est un malade toutes les trois semaines, il faut pas s'inquiéter pour cela ... (87)

There was a certain amount of leave allotted to women for the care of a sick child (eight days for one child, two days each for any other children), but if he or she was sick for more than a few days, the mother asked the doctor to give *her* sick leave, in order to stay at home to look after the child.

A potential problem for the French women is that schools are almost all closed on Wednesdays, traditionally reserved for religious instruction and the catechism. (In theory there are classes instead on Saturday mornings, but in practice few parents send their children to school as this entails getting up at the same time as on a weekday). This means that there is a problem on Wednesdays for children of all ages. However, once again there is state provision: there are "centres aérés" (recreation centres) where activities are organised for children all day, up to the age when they usually decide that they no longer wish to attend. The "centres aérés" also operate during school holidays, in addition to "colonies de vacances" - camps where children can be sent for the holidays. Another potential problem, that of having to collect children at the end of the school day, is overcome by the provision at school of "étude" This is a period of time at the end of the school day when children of all ages can be supervised, by specially employed helpers rather than their teachers, until they are ready to go home. "Etude" and most other forms of childcare operate until 6.30 or 7 at night. This means that it is possible for a child to be in some form of care from 8 in the morning to 7 in the evening, without their mother expressing any anxiety or guilt about this.

Attitudes towards children

It is clear that there is much greater provision for the care of children in France than in England. In addition, however, there seems to be less anxiety about leaving children in the care of others anyway. The French women themselves had often been left in the care of others during the day, or even, particularly during the months of July and August, sent away altogether - perhaps to other family members, but in any case away from their parents.

There appears to be a different attitude towards children in the two countries. Three of the English mothers professed not to be particularly fond of children:

> ... I was just hoping that when the baby did arrive I would feel maternal because I hadn't ever felt maternal ... I was just hoping that I would feel maternal when it happened ... I didn't think they were gorgeous little things at all, but when he turned up I thought "What a gorgeous little thing", all this pre-programming went Bzzzzzzzzzzzzz! and I was incredibly maternal, it took us both by surprise ... [Lyn]

> I've never really taken to children. You know mine are different ... [Lorraine]

> Well we sort of talked about it and thought you know when we both feel that we're sort of settled enough then we'll do something about it ... my sisters sort of started producing children so I also felt that, you know, do something ... [Debbie]

This is of course a self-selected sample, where the women are working full-time and therefore possibly attaching greater importance to work than family. But the French women are also working full-time. They, however, had always imagined that they would have a family alongside a working life, and one does not appear to be valued above the other. The fact that they are more likely to have children outside marriage suggests that children are less a taken-for-granted consequence of marriage than something which enriches a relationship.

In the TST, the French single women mentioned Maternal Role where the English single women did not, and this is echoed in the interview material. Among the French women all five expressed both the desire and the assumption that they would have children, despite being in their thirties. Among the English women, one said that she would have a child alone, though she had "no romantic notions" about what this would entail; three were ambivalent, saying, for instance, that they had no "physical need" to have children; one that she might consider it, but principally so that she would have some family in old age; and one was sure that she did *not* want children:

> I don't understand them, I don't - they don't mean anything to me really, they're like a sort of, bit of a subspecies, and I realise that if I did have children I would have to give them a lot of time and effort and energy ... [Nicola]

There is a certain amount of pressure from families and others to marry and have children:

> ... until she's got a certificate from the doctor to say my ovaries have finally withered up, she's still going to keep,you know, plodding on with this idea ... [Maggie]

> ... he said "Well you won't be having any children now will you?" he said "Obviously you know you've made your mind up and now you won't be having any." I said "Why?" ... He said "Well you're 31" ... [Jacqui]

> ... my dad at one serious occasion said that I was wasting my time ... I say "Yes, I would like to get married. If you find me the right person, fine" I said "It's not that I don't want to get married but I want to find the right person", and I'm also quite happy with the rest of my life, and I don't feel unfulfilled ... [Nicola]

The French women appeared to see having children both as natural and joyful:

> ... il y a des moments je me dis ben c'est étonnant, il s'est passé du temps, t'as pas d'enfants, tiens c'est très étonnant peut-être que t'en auras pas ... [Annick] (88)

> ... ça apporte la joie un enfant. Il apporte des choses un enfant et réciproquement nous on peut lui donner aussi ... [Josiane] (89)

Age was not an obstacle to those who had not yet had children:

> ... je me sens encore jeune heureusement ... si j'en ai plus tard ça m'est égal ... [Nathalie] (90)

> ... on peut avoir les enfants même plus tard. Ce n'est pas vraiment un problème. [Françoise] (91)

Neither was there any particular pressure on them to have children, except occasionally from friends:

> ... ma mère ne me considère pas comme les autres, du fait que je ne suis pas mariée ... mais non, elle ne fait pas de pression ... Ah non non ... personne qui ait une pression sur moi ... Elles me prennent comme je suis ... [Annick] (92)

> Un petit peu quand même ... Et surtout à partir de ... 26, 27 ans ... La famille pas trop. Les amis un petit peu, des amis qui ont des enfants. [Catherine] (93)

What did seem to be of importance was the fact of living in Paris and what sort of lifestyle they could give their children. Of the French women with children, three lived in "pavillons" (houses with gardens) in the suburbs, while two lived in central Paris apartments. One of these was the woman who had her two stepdaughters to stay each weekend. They and her own two sons all slept in the same room in their two-bedroomed apartment, apparently without difficulties. But the single women were more aware of the quality of life Paris would offer to any potential children:

> Moi j'ai grandi dans une petite ville où on pouvait faire du vélo dans les rues. On était toujours dehors, on allait se promener. J'imagine pas du tout devant un parking. Qu'ils restent en appartement toute la journée pour aller se promener une fois par jour dans les squares avec trois bancs et quatre arbres, dans la poussière, ça me parait sinistre ... [Nathalie] (94)

Any resistance to having children, therefore, was related to their current lifestyle rather than psychological factors.

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So much for partners and children. What of the relationships between respondents, their parents and siblings?

The extended family

While the parents of seven of the French women lived in the Paris area, only one of the English women had parents who lived locally. Five of the French women saw their parents at least once a week, often with other brothers or sisters and their children. Only one woman said that "la famille n'est jamais ensemble" (the family is never together), largely because her father now lived with another woman and there was tension between her and the children. Another, however, never saw her father, because she was living with a man of whom her father did not approve.

One woman talked at length about her parents' decision, on their retirement, to move to Provence. It had clearly disrupted the family:

> ... on y allait en week-end, il y en avait toujours un avec les enfants ou avec sa femme ou on a toujours passé tout le Noël ou le jour de l'an, enfin il y avait une réunion de famille à ce moment-là, ce qui depuis qu'ils sont dans le sud n'existe plus ... [Valérie] (95)

Another talked of the difference between her own parents and those of her partner:

> Non, c'est beaucoup moins formalisé, mes parents, d'abord mon beau-père ne se déplace pas, mon beau-père reçoit! Donc si on veut le voir il faut qu'on y aille ... C'est très famille, Italo-Corse, c'est les jeunes qui doivent se déplacer pour aller voir les vieux ... [Brigitte] (96)

The English women saw their families much less frequently, mainly because of the geographical distance between them. Physical distance was not the only reason, however. The one woman whose parents live locally, for example, said:

> ... my parents, although I'm quite close to them, my mother always has the attitude that she doesn't want to be interfering, so I never see her. I mean that's gone on for nearly eleven years now, and she's never been any different. I have to actually formally invite her over before she actually gets there ... [Lorraine]

Another feels that her parents, perhaps because she is not yet married with children, still treat her as a child, and where in a French family three generations may go on holiday together, a weekend is enough for this particular individual:

> ... I find that for a day or a weekend it's absolutely fine, longer than that and they gradually eke away at you, and erode you until you become a three year old having a temper tantrum again, because they resume the roles of being parents and you resume the role of being a naughty girl ...
> [Maggie]

Another blames the distance between her brother and mother on their inability, or unwillingness, to be direct with each other:

> ... they're sort of just drifting apart, they're too sort of nervous to sort of offend each other and to me that's not close, that's not a sort of close relationship ... [Jacqui]

The parents of one of the English women had divorced when she was at university, and some time afterwards the family house was sold. She spoke of the effects on the family:

> I mean once there's not a family house, actually that's made a huge difference, you have to really make efforts to meet up, you don't sort of just drift together like, you know, Robert's family, they sort of see each other, it just happens, they don't have to plan it all, when they go back to visit his mum, there'll be one or two of the brothers and sisters there. but if there's not a family house as such, you actually have to sort of make more plans ...
> [Sarah]

One of the single women also stresses the importance of a family house:

> But it is nice, I love going back there because it is a lovely house with a lot of character with an enormous garden at the front and back in central London. I don't know, I feel, I mean it has changed a lot since ... because my stepmother has brought all of her own stuff into this already quite full house and filled it up, but it is nice to have that sort of continuity, going back to the same place. [Emma]

"Houses" figure prominently in the English accounts as a whole, and this is discussed below.

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Family relationships among the French, therefore, while not as close as might have been anticipated, are perhaps more open. There are disputes, which in a minority of cases may mean that parents and children do not see each other, but the reasons for these are stated and known. Where no such disputes exist, and parents are geographically proximate, parents, children and siblings visit each other regularly.

By comparison English family relationships are both geographically and emotionally distant (the latter perhaps explaining the former). Problems and resentments remain unspoken, so that parents and children continue to see each other, but less frequently. The importance of the "family house" suggests that the idea of "home" may be more tied up in place and bricks and mortar than in family relationships. But the practical difficulty of families coming together among the English respondents means that another possible source of support in childcare is lost.

Apart from its specific subject matter, all of the preceding material has contributed to an impression of what it is to be a woman in the two countries and this is further explored in the Discussion. However, there were also specific references to women and their relations to men.

"Being a woman"

It has been suggested (fathers as models, above) that the English women in the sample identify to some extent with men; or, if not actually identifying with men, feel that they need to adopt male attitudes and behaviours in order to be accepted at least at work, and perhaps more generally. Identification with men is illustrated by one woman in what are perhaps Freudian slips:

> As far as I was concerned I was the *odd man out.*. [Lyn]

and

> ... some of them can be quite ... sharp, not necessarily aggressive, but quite sharp and I think probably I can be and that's, but I think sometimes that's a result of spending half the time with *other men*... [my emphasis]

The woman who wanted to be an aircraft fitter suggests above that she saw her father as a model, and that she was something of a "tomboy" when she was young. But eventually she felt forced to adopt a more stereotypical feminine role:

> I thought, well, if I have to go back into being "normal" again ... I had to start somewhere ... [Lorraine]

When this idea of "normality" was questioned, she said:

> No, but what I was doing was not considered to be what a girl of that age grows up to do, that's what I felt.

To some extent this identification may come from a sense of unfairness, of being undervalued simply by virtue of being a girl. This in turn may come from mothers, who themselves felt undervalued:

> ... my grandparents made it very clear she was a disappointment cos she wasn't a boy ... and my mother actually said ... she never felt accepted by her mother until she'd had my brother, who was the surrogate son ... [Maggie]

This may also account for the certain amount of denigration of women and femininity which is expressed by the women themselves:

> I found girls all on their own ... you know, twelve, thirteen, all they wanted to talk about was boys and periods and I just found it so, I just found it really boring ... [Nicola]

> I think if I was different, I mean if I was a silly sort of female ...[Caroline]

At the same time there is a clearly identifiable sort of female who does take on a masculine role and is no more sympathetic:

> I'd got a director on this side of me, some very sort of high flying woman with a short skirt and briefcase and very positive, and I thought "Whatever's she doing on this?" [an Assertiveness for Women course] [Jacqui]

However, there is also a solidarity among the English women. When talking about the founding of the Women in Publishing group in Oxford, for example:

> ... the day was fantastic ... because it was a whole pile of women together and you know the early eighties was quite a time for that, of excitement and it was just women together, being together, finding joy in talking and sharing. I mean it all sounds so hackneyed and ... you know, like you can be sick on the spot, but it was, it was that, it was very exciting and very caring ... [Lyn]

The success of other women is fêted. When a colleague became an editorial director:

> I remember seeing her in the corridor and I said "It's just fantastic, I'm so pleased" and I gave her a hug and she returned that hug ... [Nicola]
>
> Now she's become a director up there, I said "That's really good", I sent her a card saying "Well done" ... [Jacqui]

And outside work, other mothers can provide support:

> ... it's really important to see other mums with their children ... you know, sort of just having chats about how they're getting on, how I'm getting on and everything. It's like a real support group. [Sarah]

There is no such talk of solidarity among the French women, and much less about themselves in relation to men. One of the women whose father was invalid, and therefore at home a great deal, resents the fact that her husband does not give her as much help as he could, but although she insists that he plays a full part in the children's upbringing, she does not do the same in terms of domestic work, blaming the situation on the high expectations she has as a result of her own upbringing:

> ... c'est vrai que par exemple je vois que j'exige beaucoup de choses de mon mari ... [Valérie] (97)

Another resented her brother going out to play when she had to help at home:

> Il y a des fois ... quand je voyais mon frère qui allait jouer avec les copains et moi j'allais faire les courses, moi je n'étais pas très très heureuse des fois. [Josiane] (98)

and another describes all men as "égoistes" (self-centred). In spite of this, she also says:

> C'est la femme qui dirige ... [Danièle] (99)

The French woman who had lived in Germany talked at length about that country compared with France and this was particularly revealing:

> Moi je me souviens que quand je travaillais chez --- [in Germany] j'avais aucune collègue de travail qui avait des enfants. Aucune. C'est-à-dire qu'elles travaillent jusqu'à ce qu'elles aient des enfants éventuellement et après elles s'arrêtent. Je crois que c'est une question de ... conception du rôle de la femme quand même. En Allemagne il n'y a pas du tout, enfin très peu d'infrastructures sociales pour accueillir les enfants, il y a très peu de crèches, il n'y a pas de maternelles. Les enfants normalement sont à l'école à l'âge de six ans, donc déjà il faut s'en occuper, il y a quelques jardins d'enfants mais ils sont rares, donc ... et puis en plus l'école s'arrête à une heure l'après-midi en Allemagne, enfin c'est tout un ensemble de choses qui forcent les femmes, je pense, s'il n'y a pas de crèche qu'est-ce que vous voulez faire d'un enfant s'il n'y a pas de crèche? ... Je crois que c'est une conception du rôle de la femme ... Mais c'est drôle parce que même dans

> nos générations ... le féminisme allemand a été quand même assez virulent, mais je trouve que ... les jeunes femmes que je connais elles envisagent d'avoir des enfants mais quand elles auront les enfants elles arrêteront de travailler. Ou elles travailleront à mi-temps ... Mais elles considèrent que c'est pas la peine de faire des enfants si elles s'en occupent pas.
> [Nathalie] (100)

She thinks, however, that women may play a part themselves in their relations with men, and how they are regarded:

> Est-ce que les femmes acceptent ... Parce que je me dis que les femmes sont souvent responsables aussi de ce qui leur arrive, c'est-à-dire de la misogynie qu'on peut avoir à leur égard, parce qu'elles ont elles-mêmes une conception des femmes qui n'est pas brillante quoi. Parfois quand on entend les femmes parler d'elles on se dit "Mais c'est pas étonnant que les hommes soient misogynes puisque même les femmes elles-mêmes proposent ce genre de, je ne sais pas, de conviction ..." Moi je me souviens en Allemagne, bon j'avais une amie qui était mariée, je sais plus, je crois qu'elle n'était pas encore mariée, mais enfin elle allait se marier avec son copain, et je me souviens que les relations par exemple extra-conjugales quoi, n'étaient pas les mêmes, les exigences n'étaient pas les mêmes pour les hommes et les femmes, c'est-à-dire elle les concevait tout à fait, enfin elle le disait de façon générale, elle ne parlait pas de son cas personnel, elle disait qu'il était tout à fait normal qu'un homme ait envie d'avoir, d'aller voir ailleurs, d'avoir des copines ailleurs mais que pour la femme c'était pas la même chose. Elle l'expliquait aussi par des raisons physiologiques en disant que la femme elle n'avait pas les mêmes besoins que l'homme et que l'homme c'était dans sa nature physiologique profonde de voir, aller ailleurs et, mais en revanche la femme devait rester fidèle ... Il est évident que si les femmes elles-mêmes professent ce genre de chose, on ne doit pas s'étonner que les hommes après ... (101)

Although there had been a fairly strong Women's Movement in France in the late 1960s and early 1970s, she was not aware of what gains had been made by them, except on abortion law. And although there is a Minister for the Rights of Women, she did not know who the current Minister was. While talking very articulately about the position of women, therefore (and this was the only one of the French women who did so) she does not identify with the collectivist, feminist tone heard in the English women's accounts. Throughout, there is no sense of the French women feeling undervalued by virtue of being a woman. This last respondent is suggesting that such feelings are in part determined by the attitudes of women themselves. These themes are further explored in the Discussion.

The foregoing reviews the interview material in terms of the major themes of the thesis, namely Women, Work and Family. However other important themes emerged from the interview material, and these are discussed below.

Money and property

There was more of an emphasis on the financial aspects of working by the English women than the French. The English women also considered themselves to be badly paid in relation to other sectors, while the French, though living in Paris and earning a similar wage to the English women, were quite satisfied:

> Ah non non, c'est pas mal payé ... [Annick] (102)

> Non c'est pas trop mal payé ... C'est vrai c'est moins bien payé que si on travaille dans le commercial ou dans ... Oui, commercial, informatique, mais on n'est quand même pas ... Moi j'estime que c'est quand même pas mal payé ... [Valérie] (103)

> ... publishing is also perceived by those outside of it to be a very desirable thing to be in ... so therefore they can pay people less than they need to, cos every time someone says "This money's not good enough" they say "Well you know where you can go, don't you?" [Maggie]

> I would like more money, so that one didn't have to constantly have to worry about that, on top of everything else ... [Emma]

Part of the reason for this is the English emphasis on owning property: all of the English women, married and single, owned the property they lived in. Of the French women, only half owned their properties (three married, two single). Only one talked about it making economic sense to buy, the others saying that purchase prices were unaffordable in the centre of Paris, while rents were reasonable. Most women appeared to value lifestyle (less travelling, more varied social life) above property. In addition, they preferred to have more disposable income

> pour des vacances, par exemple ... [Nathalie] (104)

than to invest in property.

The English women talked about houses much more. The house being "in ruins" after her husband's do-it-yourself attempts was a significant feature of the only divorced English woman's first marriage:

> The house by this time was in ruins because he'd knocked holes in it and it was just appalling ... and I just had to get away. [Lyn]

In particular, moving to a bigger house was seen to be important, and in many cases governed decisions:

> ... what we didn't really want to do, was we'd got a 3-bedroomed semi which was quite big and we didn't particularly want to sort of have to go into something like a one-bedroom maisonette ... we felt that it would actually be going back a step and we really wouldn't be achieving anything by having this move. [Debbie]

> ... I don't have money to myself, it all goes into the house and it hopefully provides us with a better standard of living, inasmuch as we could move house again and you know the house is reasonable ... [Lorraine]

One of the single women was "astonished" when she came across women who had not bought property:

> I'm astonished with women my age, older whatever, who for example have never bought a house, because mortgages are what married men have, not even married women ... [Maggie]

However, owning a flat or house could also be a constraint:

> ... in a way I curse the house because if it's not the work it's the house and if it's not the house it's the work that's taking up my time at the moment ... [Sarah]

> I can't afford to take a job on a lower salary because of the mortgage ... [Vicky]

Apart from being linked to property, money for the English women to some extent defined their status:

> I don't tell people what I'm earning but I know I'm earning a good salary and that partly makes me feel that I'm, you know, a worthwhile professional person ... [Debbie]

The French women did not feel that they were worth less as a person if they were earning less than others:

> J'ai des amis qui gagnent 5000F, qui gagnent 20,000F par mois ... il n'y aura pas une reconnaissance en plus parce qu'ils ont de l'argent ou pas d'argent ... [Catherine] (105)

Money and ownership therefore appears to be of more importance to the English women than the French. The English women seem to have greater financial requirements, partly because money enables ownership, but partly because their status is defined economically. The French women appear to demand less and choose to spend their money differently - on entertainment, eating out, holidays, rather than tying it up in property. Differences in interests and activities are discussed in the next section.

Interests and activities

Again echoing the TST, the French women, both married and single, talk more about going out, inviting people round, playing sports, going into the country and enjoying nature:

> [Talking about where she lives] ... c'est assez boisé donc c'est assez calme ... L'Essonne, c'est très très jolie l'Essonne. C'est très verdoyant. Et moi j'adore la nature ... [Josiane] (106)

> ... d'abord j'habite en banlieue, hein, la vue chez moi est jolie, près de chez moi il y a un grand bois et sinon ben je marche un peu, dehors ... et bon j'ai quand même des amis en Normandie aussi, et parfois je vais en Savoie ... [Annick] (107)

> J'aime mieux sortir en général ... partir en weekend, pour sortir de la ville un peu. Partir un peu à la campagne, la mer, tout ça ...[Nathalie] (108)

> ... on va voir les amis. On va chiner aux Puces souvent ... On va à la piscine ... le cinéma ... [Catherine] (109)

Two of the French women talk about enjoying indoor, manual pursuits (sewing and jewellery making), but going out, to the cinema, restaurant or to friends, is preferred:

> Et puis le magnétoscope, d'accord on peut ... mais pour moi ça me fait une sortie. Ça m'oblige à sortir. Sinon je resterai confinée et ça non. Ça je refuse. [Françoise] (110)

The English single women also talk about going out or having friends round, but not usually during the week because they arrive home relatively late. The English women with children, however, go out much less:

> Having a child just changes everything so much, it really knocks the balance of your life off kilter terribly ... the old things that you used to use as a balancer have gone and it's difficult to ... find the time to find something else ... we're finding you've got to be quite mechanistic about it, we've got to say "Right, a week next Friday we're going to go out for this spontaneous meal" ... [Lyn]

> It's always sort of the case of making an effort ... I mean every time we make plans to go out something always happens. So you think, you know "Why am I doing this?" [Vicky]

> I think what does go by the board a bit is sort of anything outside of work and being at home, you know ... we very rarely go out ... I think we've always felt that because Lucy's sort of got used to being with somebody else during the day, which is like a second home to her and is fine, but it's always just seemed like too much of an upheaval for her and us in a way, to get a babysitter on top of that. Just never quite seemed fair on her ... [Sarah]

Only one women goes out regularly, and this is for organised activities. She feels that she could not do this without the support of her husband:

> I have two or three interests, so I'm probably out at least two nights a week, so Andrew stays at home. [Lorraine]

Again, attitude towards children is important here. Just as the children in France will stay up and eat with their parents at home (see "Daily Routine", below), parents will also take them out, to restaurants, for example. Babysitting therefore becomes less of a problem. The inclusion of children in parents' activities is also a feature of daily routine, which contributes to differences in attitude and is discussed below.

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Daily routine

There are several aspects of daily routine and rhythm which may influence attitudes in the two countries. Most of the women in both countries arrive at work at around 9-9.30 am. However, unless there are exceptional circumstances or particular pressures at work, all the

French women take a lunch break and eat in a café or restaurant outside the office. Of the English women, only two (both single) regularly eat out at lunchtime. All the rest, married and single, eat a sandwich at their desks. For some this is because they have to leave by a fixed time (4.30 or 5) to pick up children. With one exception, the French women do not have to pick up their children until 6.30 or 7. In France, therefore, both the single and married women leave the office at around 6.30 or 7. They then do any necessary shopping (what they refer to as "petites courses" - little bits of shopping), such as bread for the evening meal. This is not a dash round the supermarket, however: there are more markets and smaller food shops, both general grocers and specialist food shops such as "charcuteries", than in England and they are universally open until 7.30 pm. The charcuterie and "traiteur" also make and sell freshly prepared whole dishes, which saves cooking time. After arriving home, children and parents eat together at about 8.30.

For the English married women more has to be fitted into a shorter day. Shopping has to be done during lunch-hours, since local shops often close at 5.30, they have to collect children by 5 or 5.30, then generally bath and feed the children so that they are in bed by about 7. As detailed in the "Children and Childcare" section above, little help is forthcoming from partners: they may not return until after this time, when women then have to start cooking for the adults.

Lifestyle, as well as better childcare, therefore facilitates women's working in France. It is said that working women have a double day's work (in the office and at home) but for the English women this can be a triple job: working in the office, then caring for and feeding children, followed by the same for the adults. In France children are integrated into the *adults'* routine, eating and going to bed later than children in England.

The daily routine of the single women in France is similar to that of the married women - going out for lunch, doing any necessary shopping after work, eating at about 8.30. The English single women, however, tend to work much later hours - often until 8 pm - and sometimes at weekends. Although the French women talked about specific periods when they had had heavy workloads, particularly when new to the job, work again seems to be more consuming for the English women.

It might be argued that differences in daily routine arise because Paris is being compared with a provincial city in England. This issue forms the subject of the next section.

Paris -v- the provinces

Although the two cities involved in the study were not comparable in size, differences with regard to, for example, travelling time, were not very great. The Parisian women did not complain about travelling time: except when there is a strike, public transport is fast and efficient. The longest any woman had to travel was an hour door-to-door, and if they lived outside the city and had to negotiate Oxford traffic, the English women's journey time could be as long. The French women took travelling in their stride:

> C'est une habitude ... Bon ben je dis c'est comme ça, ça fait 20 ans je prends les transports ... [Marie- Claire] (111)

And again, lifestyle is important:

> ... oui il y a des fois, quand il y a les grèves, quand des fois j'ai bien pensé changer de travail, puis travailler dans mon coin, mais c'est vrai quand on est habitué ici à Paris, à un mode de vie, en banlieue c'est un peu mort hein? [Danièle] (112)

Although there would be certain similarities if the comparison had been between Paris and London (shops open later in the evening, for example) there would also be greater differences. London is much bigger than Paris, for instance, and travelling times are greater. And if Oxford had been compared with a provincial town in France, this might

also reveal greater differences. The French women were asked whether their circumstances and the attitudes they expressed were likely to be echoed in the provinces. Issues like cohabiting were not thought to be considered very differently, except perhaps in very remote rural areas:

> Je parle pas non plus forcément du Bas Berry ou de la Haute Sologne ... [Brigitte] (113)

There would be an even greater "coupure" (break) from work at lunchtime, since most people go home:

> La plupart, oui. Pour eux, parce qu'ils ne sont pas très loin, ils se déplacent en voiture en plus. Ils ne sont guère plus loin qu'un rayon de 10 kms. A moins d'avoir une cantine sur le lieu de travail, une grande maison, une grande entreprise. Sinon ils rentrent chez eux. [Valérie] (114)

> Ah oui, ça c'est sur. J'ai pas mal d'amis qui sont en province ... Dans les petites villes, d'abord il n'y a pas souvent des cantines parce qu'il n'y a pas souvent de grandes entreprises. Et puis tout est proche. Ils rentrent chez eux en voiture. [Marie-Claire] (115)

Childcare may also be less of a problem:

> ... je connais pas mal de personnes en province, souvent ils ont des fermes, alors bon quand ils ont des fermes effectivement ils ont toujours leurs enfants avec eux, puisque bon ils s'occupent des fermes, ils font le foin, ils traient les vaches et tout ... [Josiane] (116)

Although there is a specific culture attached to capital cities which differs from the provinces, therefore, in terms of the issues under discussion here, if Paris had been compared with London, or Oxford with, say, Orléans, the distinctions may have been even greater.

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In addition to these major themes in the interview material, there were two or three issues which are of note because they echo themes in the TST and/or grids.

Age

The French women both looked, on the whole, younger than the English women, and appeared to think of themselves as younger. The French single women, as described in the "Children" section above, felt that they were still young enough to have children. Three of the English mothers, however, had actively started to think about children at 30, before they were "too old" Similarly 30 was seen as important in terms of job decisions:

> ... then I became 30 ... it was very clearly a time when decisions had to be made, I mean there was nothing ahead at all, nothing ... so I simply had to do something ... [Emma]

and one of the single women felt that she needed to move jobs before she was 35:

> ... yes I mean for the last few years I have been aware of the fact that if I don't do something by the time I'm 35 it will be very difficult looking for jobs which say "something to 35", not many jobs say "something to 40" and the fact is I'm coming up to 36 now and for that reason if nothing else I have got to make the change soon. The longer I leave it the more difficult it is, people are very ageist ... [Nicola]

The French women appeared to live more for the present, preferring not to think about getting old.

Two other themes which were specific to the French and English groups respectively in the grid, were also reflected in the interview material. Related to ageing is the French women's desire always to be developing. When talking about both work and relationships, "épanouissement" was important:

> ... je trouve c'est bien aussi d'avoir quelqu'un qui a pas les memes goûts parce que ça permet d'élargir un petit peu ... [Laurence] (117)

> ... j'avais l'impression que j'allais pas m'épanouir ... [Annick] (118)

> ... je me rendais compte qu'il n'y avait pas d'évolution possible dans cette maison ... [Josiane] (119)

> ... c'est pour ça que j'aime changer de société, parce que comme ça j'apprends de nouvelles choses ... [Françoise] (120)

> ... je fais des choses en me disant bon, je vais faire une expérience à l'étranger, développer un petit peu ... [Nathalie] (121)

This need for self-development on the part of the French women was matched by

a need for belonging by the English women:

> At school you had a large sense of belonging somewhere ... [Lyn]
>
> I wasn't particularly happy there ...people tended to have their little groups, you know, and I didn't feel I belonged to anybody's little group ... [Emma]
>
> But I really like what I'm doing. It gives me ... what does it give me? It gives me a sense of belonging really ... [Jacqui]

The need for development, for evolution, on the part of the French women underlines the feeling of movement which characterises the grid and TST material. For the English women, we have seen that there is a need to be regarded as an individual, rather than in a role, but there is also concern about belonging. The need for development and openness on the part of the French women, and that for an individual identity at the same time as belonging on the part of the English women, may relate to differences in French and English attitudes as a whole. This issue is one of those raised in the consideration of all the empirical findings which follows in the Discussion.

Summary of interview material

Although the women came from a variety of socio-economic and educational backgrounds, what was striking was the commonality in their experience, rather than the differences. There were sufficient patterns and parallels for clear themes to be identified. In terms of family background, work patterns among the mothers of respondents reflected the work patterns of women in the two countries concerned: the mothers of the French women tended to work continuously, full-time, while those of the English women worked part-time once the children were grown, or not at all. While the fathers of the English women were represented as largely absent, nevertheless the English women in the study seemed to identify with fathers rather than mothers. In several cases the mothers of the French women worked because their marital relationships were fragile. Where no such conflict existed, however, the fathers of the French women appeared to be more present in the

home and more prepared to take part in domestic tasks and looking after children. This was partly facilitated by a daily routine in which the family came together more often, for example at mealtimes and especially at midday.

The French women's educational backgrounds were more varied than those of the English women, with a greater emphasis on vocational training as an alternative to academic achievement. Careers counselling was limited in both countries, however. The French women had all assumed that they would work, and combine this with a family, while the English women described their work commitment in terms of being "undomesticated" rather than ambitious. The work histories of the French women were more straightforward than those of the English women, though in France the more highly educated the woman the more varied the work history was likely to be. Both French and English women had often found jobs through friends and personal networks rather than formal means, and decisions about jobs were often related to family considerations and affective relations.

For both the English and French women, work represented something personal, but for the English women this meant the freedom to *be* themselves, rather than acting out the role of wife or mother, while for the French women it represented something *for* themselves. Work made the English women feel valued and competent; gave them a sense of belonging and feeling needed; structure; variety and balance. For the French women work is distinctly separate from family; work gives them something outside the home; an escape from worries; interest and stimulation. It was said to enrich rather than damage relations with partners, and was a means to self-development. Although the English women saw work as providing autonomy and independence, it was the French women who were more likely to act upon the financial independence which their jobs provided, for example in quitting an unsatisfactory relationship. The negative aspects of work for the English women were lack of time - for children, domestic tasks and themselves; tiredness; lack of

recognition; relationships with superiors and colleagues; and being part of a male culture. For the French women, daily life could be stressful, if there were problems with transport, for example; and work was a negative experience if there was limited opportunity for self-expression or self-development, or if the work was not intrinsically interesting. single women in France appeared more stressed: they did not want work to be the predominant aspect of their lives.

The English women's work lives are more enmeshed with their private lives, with work relations often becoming social relations and/or emotionally charged. The English women also distinguish more sharply between male behaviours and attitudes at work and those of women, and feel undervalued in stereotypically female roles such as that of secretary. For the French women there is a sharper distinction between work life and private life. With regard to work life, they do not talk about lack of respect in the same way, secretarial work is not seen as menial, and being a woman *per se* is not regarded as a hindrance. Part-time work is not desirable, however, as this could be an obstacle to advancement. In some cases working for a man is preferable to working for a woman, as men are regarded as more direct, and less prone to gossip.

In terms of affective relations, the English women describe a greater degree of tension with partners. Although relationships are stable, a husband is often regarded as an extra person to look after rather than a source of support, is often absent and appears more committed to his job than the family. There is a certain material basis to relationships, for example if there is a mortgage to sustain, and partners may be described in material terms. There is a fear of engulfment in relationships, of loss of self, but at the same time a fear of solitude. The English women appear more conservative in their attitudes towards relationships, preferring marriage to living together, and avoiding separation.

The relationships of the French women are less stable and less straightforward. Women are more likely to cohabit, and this is preferred because it is easier for a couple to separate when they are not married. The French women talk more openly about affections and emotions, and if their relationships fail they see this as related to the particular men involved rather than a problem with relationships themselves. Marriage or partnership does not limit autonomy, and solitude is sad rather than frightening. Strength of feeling is more important than formal marriage, and there are no moral implications in living together. Domestic work is largely shared, but it is preferable to buy domestic appliances or employ someone to do domestic work, than to argue over domestic issues.

Childcare is more difficult in England than in France, with less provision both in terms of quantity and reliability. Mothers often anguish over leaving their children, the guilt which is experienced being blamed in part on "society". In practical terms, the English women usually have to relieve childminders by 5 pm, they are worried about imposing on nannies or childminders, and it is usually the women themselves who are responsible for childcare arrangements. The single women do not express a desire to have children, but there is social and family pressure to do so.

In France there is a much greater variety of childcare provision, much of it state-provided. The French women do not experience the same guilt about leaving their children, seeing nursery schools, for example, as good for the child's social and educational development. The French women have leave allotted to care for a sick child. Children are more integrated into the adults' lifestyle, with families eating together at the same time, or going out together. The French single women would all like to have children , and do not regard themselves as too old.

In terms of the extended family, in France this is more taken for granted and families come together more often. The families of the English women are more distant both geographically and emotionally and there is more of a "generation gap". Much of the sense of family centres upon the "family house".

The English women appear to identify more with men, feeling undervalued as a girl. There is a certain amount of denigration of women and femininity. There is a solidarity among the English women, however, and they have little respect for women who adopt stereotypically male roles and attitudes in order to succeed. The French women see men as "égoistes" , but do not appear to feel undervalued. Women who experience lack of respect may do so because they do not respect themselves.

The financial aspects of having a job were regarded differently in the two countries. The English women saw themselves as poorly paid, while this was not the case for the French women. The French married women did not feel that they needed to work for the money. In the case of the English women, both married and single, financial need was greater because of mortgage commitments. Money was also connected with status and seen as an indicator of personal worth.

The French women appeared to spend their money differently: it was not tied up in property, but was spent on going out, social life and holidays. The French women's activities were more likely to be outside the home - going out to restaurants or the cinema, for example, or participating in sport. The English women's activities were more centred on the home, partly because children and the need for babysitters restricted them. This was not the case for the French women because they were more likely to include their children in their activities.

Daily routine in the two countries was different: the French women nearly always took a lunch break; they picked up their children around 6.30 or 7 in the evening; shopped on their way home; and ate together as a family (or couple) around 8.30. The English women had to fit the same activities into a shorter day, picking up their children by 5.30, shopping or working during the lunch hour and therefore being less likely to take a lunch break. They would prepare a meal for the children and then for themselves and/or partner. For the English single women, work seems more consuming, with their often working late in the evening. The French single and married women work more similar hours.

Some of the differences between the two countries might be thought to be attributable to the fact that the French women are in Paris and the English women in a provincial town. Although there are sometimes problems with transport in Paris, however, in general travelling times are similar for both groups. If London had been compared with Paris differences might be even greater, since London is bigger and travelling times longer. Similarly two provincial towns may have shown even greater differences, since families tend to eat together at lunchtime in provincial France, for example, and the extended family is more likely to live nearby, easing childcare problems.

The English women are more aware of their age than the French, feeling themselves to be old at 30, and expressing concern about ageism with regard to employment and motherhood.

Finally, there is an emphasis in the French accounts on "épanouissement", or self-fulfilment, and in the English accounts on "belonging".

The findings as a whole are now considered in the Discussion.

6 DISCUSSION

> It is only in work that has no connection with the self that we can find rest to our spirits. Life, personal life, is a great battlefield. Those who enter it must fight. Those who enter it and will not fight get riddled with bullets.
>
> Olive Schreiner to Havelock Ellis, 1887.

1. Critique of methodology

General remarks

A case study approach was adopted, and survey methods rejected, because the primary concern in this study was with meanings rather than frequencies.[1] A *multiple* case study approach was taken because the fundamental proposition being examined was that the differing culture, structures and institutions in France and Britain would lead to patterns within, and differences between, national groups. Pattern-matching was therefore of greater interest than the individual cases: the aim was to strive for general explanations and associations which would fit the individual cases in each group, even though those individual cases might vary in their details. In addition, while the research was guided by certain propositions, the methods were chosen to optimise the degree to which participants could respond in their own language and on their own terms. Multiple sources of evidence were used to minimise bias, but hypotheses were not fixed: it was felt rather that sustained interaction with respondents leads to an evolving process where new, emerging hypotheses are continually tested and those meanings presumed by the investigator are continually challenged by those of the respondent.

The view taken here is that non-quantitative methods in social science are no less *science* than quantitative approaches. Frazer (op cit) argues that there are two ways of regarding what constitutes science: one is a certain kind of outcome (the ability to

[1] That is, frequencies in terms of *people*. In order to establish pattern in the findings it was of course necessary to look at frequencies of occurrence in terms of *concepts*. See p 44.

predict) and the second is a certain range of practices (precision in observation and measurement, experimental rigour, meticulous record-keeping and the publicity of data). While the first of these cannot be claimed for social science, the second can, whether the methods used are quantitative or non-quantitative. Frazer sees the main stumbling block as measurement - but this can be overcome by the use of structured methods such as the repertory grid and TST employed here.

Whether regarded as hypothesis- or proposition-testing, therefore, non-quantitative research should be based on "sound reasoning and the empirical risking of theory" (Kirk and Miller, 1986), even if this takes a slightly different form (such as the evolving, emergent hypothesis-testing described above) from that of the conventional picture of science. Foremost among the characteristics of science, however, is its *objectivity*, and non-quantitative research need be no less objective for its emphasis on individuals' own words and interpretive analysis. Essential to an appreciation of the objectivity of a piece of research is an evaluation of the reliability and validity of its observations. The chosen methods of the present study are now assessed in terms of these criteria, and this is followed by a consideration of other issues relating to the methodology in general, and the individual methods in particular.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of a study to be repeated, achieving similar results. It is important to distinguish between types of reliability, however: psychology has for the most part restricted its attention to "diachronic reliability" (see Kirk and Miller, op cit), demonstrated by similarity of measurements or findings taken at different times. As Kirk and Miller point out, this is only appropriate to measurements of features which remain unchanged in a changing world. More appropriate to studies of sociocultural phenomena, such as the present study addresses, is an evaluation of "synchronic reliability", where observations are consistent with respect to those features of particular interest to the observer. In particular, however, reliability depends on

explicitly described observational procedures, so that if a later investigator conducted the same case study over again, the same findings would be reached. The TST and repertory grid used here were carried out according to accepted protocols for these methods and their analysis, and the framework of questions for the interviews is equally explicitly described. These, taken with the assessment of each method below, provide clear guide-lines for repeating the procedures. The fact that there is substantial convergence of findings across cases provides some indication of the reliability of the study and the methods used, but this rather constitutes evidence for the *validity* of the study, discussed next.

Validity

The quality of a research design is conventionally judged on the basis of three tests of validity. These are no less relevant to non-quantitative designs.

Construct validity refers to the establishment of correct operational measures for the concepts being studied - that is, ensuring that the design of the study is such that it measures, or investigates, that which it purports to measure or investigate. Diversity of method and multiple sources of evidence provide powerful means of achieving this.

> When a hypothesis can survive the confrontation of a series of complementary methods of testing, it contains a degree of validity unattainable by one tested within the more constricted framework of a single method ...
> (Webb et al, 1966, p 174)

In the present study, the same propositions were subjected to empirical testing by three different methods with clear and related themes emerging from each, suggesting that construct validity was achieved.

Internal validity refers to a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions. In case studies, where an event cannot be directly observed, such relationships can only be inferred from the interview and documentary evidence. In order to establish whether such an inference is correct, rival explanations

and possibilities must be considered. In the present study, this was done by subjecting the analysis and reporting of the data to scrutiny by third parties, as well as discussing the results with the respondents themselves. In addition, the strong convergence of the data from the various methods provides evidence for its internal validity.

External validity refers to the problem of knowing whether a study's findings are generalisable beyond the immediate case. Critics typically point to the inability to generalise from non-quantitative studies, due to the small number of cases observed. This is to compare case studies with survey research, however, where a "sample" generalises to a larger "universe" As stated in the Methodology section above (p 56), this is not a correct analogy: survey research relies on *statistical* generalisation, whereas case studies (like experiments) rely on *analytic* generalisation. The investigator is striving to locate a particular set of results within some more general theory. In the present study, the results largely support the propositions on which the study was based, namely that differences would be found between the two national groups which could be related to broader social and cultural characteristics of the countries concerned. This provides a broader theoretical framework which can in turn be applied to new cases. Yin (op cit) stresses the need for a *replication* (rather than *sampling*) logic, where, as in multiple experiments, the research design predicts either similar results in the cases observed (*literalreplication*), or contrary results but for predictable reasons (*theoreticalreplication*). In the present study, there is sufficient similarity within national groups and sufficient difference between national groups to demonstrate both literal and theoretical replication. In addition, the number of cases, though small compared with survey research, is sufficiently large and the patterns found sufficiently striking to allow that abstraction which constitutes external validity.

Reliability and validity can only be incontrovertibly demonstrated by means of repetition of the study in question. Insofar as it is possible here, however, reliability and validity can be vouched for in the present study. Other issues concerning the methodology in general will be discussed next.

Thoughts, words and action

A fundamental issue in a study of this kind, where the vehicle for the investigation is respondents' own words, is the relationship between thought, words and action. The strength of the methodology chosen here is that 1) it taps respondents' attitudes both directly (via the interview) and indirectly (via the TST and repertory grid) and 2) the multiple sources of evidence provide corroboration for each other. While a single, focussed interview, for example, may yield valuable material, the picture thus depicted is one-dimensional. The use of several methods provides a multi-faceted picture which, particularly if much of the evidence converges, confirms reliability and validity.

The investigator/respondent relationship

The design of the study allowed the relationship between investigator and respondent to build up gradually, from initial presentation of the study and the quick-to-complete Twenty Statements Test; to the repertory grid, which provided the opportunity for a "structured conversation" based around the task of completing the grid; to the potentially more invasive interview[1]. These conditions applied to both the English and French respondents, but there were differences in the *manner* in which the women from the two countries responded, as well as in the *content* of their responses, as documented in the findings. The responses of the French women were shorter, more factual and descriptive. The English women expressed more worries and anxieties. It might be argued that this represents a reluctance on the part of the French women to

[1] It will be recalled, however, that the interview was conducted in two parts, to keep such invasion to a minimum.

self-disclose to a foreign researcher; but at the same time the French women spoke more openly of their affections and of their physical relations with their partners. This suggests that there may be a difference in patterns of disclosure, not in terms of the *extent* to which the various groups of women were likely to self-disclose, but what they were prepared to self-disclose *about*. It is not that the French women were less prepared to talk about their personal lives to a foreign researcher. It is possible that they were less prepared to present a negative image of their lives; but the more indirect method of grid was designed to counteract such an effect. The fact that there is consistency in the findings across methods suggests that these are real effects rather than interviewer bias, but this could only be tested using different combinations of English and French researchers and respondents.

The French women appeared slightly less comfortable with the methods used, particularly with the grid ("Je trouve ça curieux" "I find it strange" was one woman's comment) while the English women welcomed the opportunity to spend time sharing their thoughts, fears and anxieties. This may reflect the findings of the study - the French women experience less conflict and tension and so do not need the "space" which the study afforded them - or it may be that the English women are more accustomed to psychologistic language, concepts and methods of investigation which in themselves may be particularly Anglo-Saxon in character[1]. Of course these differing attitudes towards the investigator and the research situation in themselves constitute cultural differences, and overcoming the problem of differing language and culture on the part of investigator and respondents by, say, employing same-nationality investigators for each part of the study would bring its own problems - in interpreting the findings, for example. But it is important not to lose sight of the fact that differences found between national groups are seen necessarily from the linguistic and cultural viewpoint of the investigator. It was stated above that meanings presumed by

[1] Academic psychology is dominated by the Anglo-Saxon countries. Psychology in France continues to be characterised by a principal interest in psychoanalysis.

the investigator cannot be presumed also to be those of the respondent. This is even more the case where there is a linguistic and cultural difference between the two.

These are some of the problems associated with the study in general. We shall now turn to specific aspects of the individual methods used.

Twenty Statements Test

Some of the problems of the TST have been documented in the Methodology section above. These include the fact that the form of the test in some cases generates several statements of the same type, diminishing the richness of the material. The order position of the statements is also a controversial issue. As was stated above, Kuhn and McPartland (op cit) took the earliest statements in the list to indicate the salience of those particular subjects to the individual concerned, whereas psychoanalytic approaches would regard those further down the list as the most psychologically meaningful. It is the former view which is adopted here. However, the definition of "salience" is also problematic: what is it which determines the relative importance of aspects of self-definition? Is it those which are most taken for granted, or those which are most distinguishing, for example? When the test was being piloted for this study on friends and acquaintances, two sets of responses were particularly striking. One woman, English but living in France, gave "I am English" as her first statement; another, in England, gave "I am Jewish" Among the statements considered in this study, however, neither Nationality nor Religion was mentioned. This may be because the groups were deliberately *representative* of the countries concerned, and that "difference" is of greatest salience where it is an issue. This is an interesting theoretical question which would require further studies using the TST and cannot be addressed here. That such differences in responses are possible, however, lends strength to the power of the TST as a method, and suggests that the order of statements is indeed of significance.

A potential problem with the TST as it was employed here is that the form of the test as given to the two sets of women was slightly different. The title was translated literally (Who Am I? and Qui suis-je?), but the English women were given a sheet with the title followed by twenty lines each beginning "I am ..." whereas the French women's sheet featured twenty blank lines. The original form of the test (Kuhn and McPartland, op cit) was as presented to the English women, whose part of the study was carried out first. When coming to the French part of the study, however, this form was not possible: translating "I am" to "Je suis" would have limited the French women to responses involving only adjectives and nouns, whereas "I am" for the English women permits the use also of present continuous verbs. In order to allow verbs, therefore, it was necessary to present the French women simply with the question, and blank lines. (They could not even be given "Je", since many verbs, such as "J'aime" ("I like") replace the "e" with an apostrophe. However, this then permitted the use of verbs in the *simple* present (there is no distinction between simple and continuous present in French) which were not permitted to the English women. In the case of "J'aime", for example, this may account for the differences found between the groups in terms of tastes and likes. This only came to light upon analysis, and clearly it would have been better to have given all women a sheet with the title followed by twenty blank lines, asking them simply to respond to the question at the top of the page. It is also possible, however, that this did not affect the results: in many cases an English respondent crossed out the "am" on the sheet and replaced it with "like" (still inserting an interest or activity, rather than an object, consistent with the results), or used the existing wording to express a preference, such as "I am fond of ..." Nevertheless, this example highlights one of the problems of linguistic equivalence in a study of this kind.

Repertory grid

The repertory grid was chosen because it provided a means of investigating the issues under consideration in a structured way, amenable to computational methods of analysis. This proved something of a strait-jacket, however: while pattern and

structure was looked for in the data as a whole, the grid produced a two-dimensional representation of what were thought by the respondents themselves to be more complex issues. In order to elicit a bipolar construct, the grid method forces the respondent towards a highly focussed single word or phrase which respondents sometimes felt uncomfortable about using to depict situations which for them were not so clear-cut. In particular there were problems with the bipolar differentiation, with women making such comments as "I don't think in that way", seeing the situations or people represented by the elements as complementary rather than contradictory. This may reflect the choice of elements, but respondents selected triads themselves rather than having them imposed, and so were free to choose those elements they saw as similar or different. Still in some cases they found this difficult. Again this may be significant in itself, since it suggests that women's thinking, like their lives, is not linear in character. But it also raises questions about Kelly's Personal Construct Theory and the bipolar constructs on which it is based. If respondents find it difficult to conceptualise in the manner required by the grid method, it suggests that the propositions on which the method is based may be faulty. It is possible that the method, devised by a man, represents an essentially masculine view of the world, where separation and detachment are easier, and which is inappropriate for women (see Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982). A paradox of the grid method is that it seeks coherence and pattern based on direct opposition, namely the bipolar constructs. It may be that this is a misrepresentation of the way women in particular construe their lives, seeing complexity rather than linearity and complementarity rather than contradiction. (For a discussion of differences in complexity of constructs produced by boys and girls, see Phillips and Johnson, 1981). In many ways, the decision-making process by which respondents arrived at the final constructs was more interesting and informative than the completed grid itself. In this sense the grid was indeed useful as a framework for a "structured conversation" and users of the method might consider tape-recording or noting comments as the procedure is carried out.

One further problem with the grid is its static nature. It can only represent an individual's construal of the world, as represented by the elements, at that moment in time. In the present study this problem is lessened by the use of additional methods, but grid method perhaps gains in strength when used in longitudinal studies where an individual's constructs are compared over time. This is indeed the case in those situations where grid method has hitherto been most often employed, namely clinical and therapeutic settings.

Interviews

The interviews were for the most part free of methodological problems. By the time the interview was carried out a relationship had been built up between investigator and respondent and the women did not appear inhibited. Splitting the interview into two parts, the first largely factual and the second more probing, was also positive in this regard. It also ensured that the interview was not too tiring, with each part taking a maximum of one and a half hours. Time was in fact the biggest difficulty, since these were busy women, working full-time. It was not always possible to conduct interviews in the same conditions, therefore (and one or two women suggested that they might respond differently if they were not being questioned in the workplace). This was regarded as an advantage, however, since the women were being interviewed in context rather than as decontextualised "subjects"

Overview

In the light of the results, the methods adopted were felt to be appropriate in terms of the aims for which they were selected. Respondents participated in their own words, on their own territory and on their own terms, but a unidimensional view was avoided by the use of different methods, each of which contributed to the final picture. The order in which each part of the study was conducted permitted the relationship between investigator and respondent to build up gradually, thus addressing the issues under

investigation in a non-invasive way. Attention is drawn to certain details regarding the practical carrying out of the study and these would have to be addressed in any replication. The basic design of the study, however, was felt to be sound.

2. Findings of the three methods compared

As described above, the design of the study allowed the relationship between investigator and respondent to build up gradually, by moving from the more structured and impersonal TST and grid, to the freer and potentially more invasive interview. It is important to emphasise that this order of presentation was solely for the benefit of the investigator/respondent relationship, and that the data from each method were both obtained and analysed without reference to each other.

In addition, as stated above (p 57), the methods were selected to be sufficiently different from each other to give different perspectives on the problem. The three methods are, first of all, seeking different types of responses: unprompted *statements* for the TST; distilled, *single-word concepts* for the grid; and free-ranging longer *accounts* for the interviews. This means that although respondents are in each method thinking about themselves, each method is capturing a different *aspect* of thinking about themselves - how they can describe themselves, in the TST; how they construe various aspects of their lives, in the grid; and, as well as simple factual information, a more detailed consideration of their family background, education, work history and so on in the interview. Because it is less structured, more informal and there are no time constraints, the latter also gives them an opportunity to reflect on their *feelings* about these issues.

Summaries of the findings of each method are given at the end of the relevant chapters (4, 5 and 6). In order to compare these, the principal themes elicited by each method are here presented in tabular form.

Table 8: Principal themes elicited by the three methods - French respondents

GRID	TST	INTERVIEW
Work/home separate	Work not enmeshed with private lives	Work/home separate
Work = formal relations, playing a role	Enjoy work, but less involved	Work = something for themselves, escape from worries, interest, stimulation, enriches relationships
Work = self-development, learning		Work negative if not interesting, limited scope for self-expression, self-development
Fulfilment	Importance of friends/social life	Do not want work to predominate
Boredom/routine	Activities outside the home	Activities outside the home
Stimulation, variety from (all of) job, relationships, holidays, social life		Money for social life, going out, holidays rather than mortgage
		Domestic work less important
Importance of personal relationships	Role as partner	Marriage not constraint
	Maternal role	Nurseries good for children
	Affection for children	Children more integrated into adult life
	Desire for children	Single women not too old to have children
		Extended family taken for granted
	Femininity	Do not experience lack of respect at work
		Lack of respect because women do not respect themselves?
		Men "égoïstes"
		But prefer working for man
	Sensitivity, dreamers	Talk openly about feelings
	Simple preferences	
	Lack of time organisation	
	Not tired	

Table 9: Principal themes elicited by the three methods - English respondents

GRID	TST	INTERVIEW
Fulfilment, joy, equality from job	Work role dominant	"Undomesticated"
Boredom/routine		Work = be themselves, structure, variety, balance, autonomy, independence
Stimulation, variety from job		Work more consuming
Belonging		Feel valued, competent, belong
Respect approval		Work negative because lack of time, tired, lack of recognition, male culture, undervalued
		Relations with superiors, colleagues emotionally charged
		Poorly paid
		Salary as indication of status, personal worth
		Need money for mortgage
Relationships = constraint, demanding	Maternal role	Partner = extra responsibility
Individual/role	Childcare	Material basis to relationships
	Extended family	Fear of solitude, loss of self
		Conservative
		Guilty about children
		Worried about imposing on others
		Extended family distant
		Importance of family house
	Friends: importance of loyalty	Activities centred on home (difficulties of childcare)
	Domestic work	
	Activities centred on home	
Control/powerlessness	Assertiveness	Identify with men
		Denigrate women, femininity
		But solidarity with women
	Reliability	
	Moral worth/competence	
	Lack of time/organisation	
	Tiredness	

The tables show the major themes emerging from each method, as set out in the summaries referred to above. Themes have been grouped together to show how the three methods compare with regard to similar topics. Several points are worthy of note. Differences between the methods will be considered first (the columns in the table), demonstrating independence between the methods; followed by similarities across methods (the rows in the table), showing how the findings converge.

First, it will be apparent that the three methods produce differing amounts of material. This is partly a function of the methods themselves: the grid produces ten constructs, the TST twenty statements, and the interview an indeterminate number of themes depending on the respondent's experience, willingness to talk, availability and so on. This is also as intended in the choice of methods and their presentation, from the simpler, time-limited TST to the lengthier but still structured grid, to the more relaxed, detailed interview.

Secondly, the table shows that the different methods produce different *types* of response, as described above. While all responses are related to the subjects of femininity, work and family/relationships, those produced by the grid are largely abstract concepts, the TST simple descriptive statements and the interview more detail, feelings and beliefs. Again this is as would be expected from the demands of the methods themselves: constructs in the case of the grid, statements in the case of the TST and accounts in the case of the interviews.

It will also be noted that some themes appear for one or two methods but not all three. Again this is a function of the type of response demanded from each method. These more isolated themes can be related to the overall picture presented by the data, however.[1]

[1] Similarly individual themes could belong to more than one grouping.

Reading across the tables, we can see that certain themes are represented in all three methods. In the case of the French respondents, these are the separation of work and home, the emphasis on work as an opportunity for learning and self-development, fulfilment coming from all aspects of the respondents' lives (work, relationships, family, social life, holidays), the importance of personal relationships and a positive view of femininity. For the English respondents, work has much more significance as a source of self-affirmation, and work and personal life are more enmeshed. There is tension, guilt and ambivalence in personal relationships, the home is emphasised and there is a negative view of the feminine.

These are clear themes which can be seen across all three methods. We have seen, however, that the three methods differ both in style and in the demands they place on the respondent. In addition the tables show that slightly different *aspects* of the various themes are revealed by the different methods. We therefore have a convergence of material arising from independent sources which each reveal different aspects of the phenomena under discussion. This is the aim of triangulation, which, as described in Chapter 2, aims to gain a better perspective on a research problem by viewing it from different angles.

Discussion of findings

This study began as an investigation into the meaning of work for women in Britain and France. It quickly became clear, however, that it was not possible to consider women's work in isolation from other aspects of their lives, since women's work histories, including those of the women represented here, are closely entwined with their personal lives. As the comparative aspects of the study evolved, it also became evident that attitudes towards work and family were themselves reflections of wider notions of what it is to be feminine in the two countries, and that the differences found

between them could perhaps be explained in terms of these differing notions of femininity. As such, the findings provide support for the more general proposition forwarded here, that individual psychology reflects not only immediate individual experience, in terms of family, upbringing, education and so on, but also features of the culture and society at large in which such institutions and practices are embedded.

The discussion which follows addresses these issues in turn. It begins with a consideration of the findings within the framework of those general theories of the meaning of work, economic and psychological, outlined in Chapter 1. This is followed by an overview of the results outside the context of existing models, paying attention to the women's own conceptualisation of work, the family and femininity. The findings are then related to their cultural context, showing how culture is manifested in the thinking, attitudes and experiences of individuals within that culture. Finally there is a consideration of these issues in relation to the more "social" social psychology being advocated above.

The significance of work

In Chapter 1, several possible functions of paid work were discussed, ranging from Jahoda's manifest and latent functions to Warr's "vitamin model", to Freud's "tie to reality". To what extent do the findings of this study support these various theories?

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Financial aspects

Jahoda's manifest function of work is economic reward. People work to live; but in consumerist cultures such as those of the industrialised nations in the late 20th century this does not mean simply the provision of food, clothing and shelter. It was suggested in Chapter 1 that commodities to a large extent define personal identity and money provides access to important areas of psychological experience: status, social life,

independence, self-esteem and control over the environment. How far is this true of the women in the study? What is the economic significance of work for them?

First, although commodities themselves do not appear to play an important part in terms of *personal identity* (in the TST, "material self" was hardly represented) the English women appear to be more materially conscious - two women talk about spending a substantial amount on clothes, for example, and another describes herself as a "compulsive shopper" - and the financial rewards of working seem to be more important for the English women than the French. For the English women working is more of a financial necessity, but financial reward is also seen as bestowing status and self-esteem.

The French women with families state that it is not necessary financially for them to work, while the English women with families say it would be difficult for them to live on one salary. One possible explanation would be that the French women's partners earn more than their English counterparts, but this is not the case. Salaries are comparable in the two countries and the samples here represent a range of material circumstances. Rather the difference comes from the English emphasis on owning property, which drives behaviour to a remarkable degree. Lorraine talked about her job allowing the family to "move house" - which means moving to a bigger house - so that it is not important just to own property, but to ascend the property ladder. Debbie did not want to live and work in London because this would have meant being unable to buy a house of comparable size to the one they already had. One of the important factors in Lyn's first marriage break-up seemed to be that the house was "in ruins", suggesting again that it is not only the fact of owning property which is important, but also the size and quality of that property. Property thus seems to be perceived as an important indication of respectability - one of the qualities which commodities were seen in Chapter 1 to represent.

This emphasis on property ownership is also seen among the single English women: Maggie's near-contempt for those single women who do not buy a house or flat; Nicola's search for a new job being dictated in part by salary, because of her need to cover the mortgage; Maggie, Nicola and Emma all having to take lodgers to do the same; Jacqui buying a house with her boyfriend because it made economic sense. This is not the case for the French women, for whom ownership of property does not have the same importance. Only half of the French women own their homes, and only one speaks of the financial advantage of doing so over renting. Ownership of property generally comes later in life and represents stability: the French married women who do own their homes, for example, do not show the same concern with "upgrading" or moving on. House ownership for the English women does not necessarily imply stability, but is important for its own sake.

The need to own property creates a situation where two salaries in a family become a financial necessity, rather than an option. For the single women, too, having a mortgage constrains them to earning enough to cover repayments. For both groups of English women, therefore, the financial aspects of paid work assume greater significance than for the French.

Home ownership thus becomes an important factor in the English women's orientation to work and is itself a manifestation of certain cultural features. It could be argued that, since these data were collected in 1990, the British emphasis on property ownership is related to British government policies in the 1980s, when mass home ownership was encouraged. (Home ownership in Britain rose from 43 per cent in 1961 to 65 per cent in 1986. In 1985 in France the level of owner occupancy was still only 47 per cent. See Saunders, 1990). In this way the individual attitudes and behaviour seen in the material presented here directly reflects economic policy. Muellbauer (1990) has argued that government housing policy, and in particular inflated house prices, has wide-reaching implications, leading to demands for higher wages, resistance to training

because young people try to earn as much as possible as early as possible in order to get on the housing ladder; and a reduction in career choice and mobility. These are all manifested, to a greater or lesser degree, in the individual accounts given here.

It has also been argued, however, that while inflated house prices and the subsequent association of housing with financial speculation may be a consequence of 1980s economic policy, the English concern with owning property is not necessarily a phenomenon related to Thatcherite ideology. Saunders (op cit, p 41) writes:

> The desire to own a house has deep roots in English popular history. To try to explain it away as some ideological mystification conjured up by capitalist interests over the last few decades is to ignore the evidence of seven centuries.

The importance of property ownership is seen rather as reflecting a number of peculiarly English characteristics, and expressing a specific set of cultural values: economic rationality, autonomy, security, respectability, consumerism and control over personal space. It is seen as making economic sense to buy a house, which appreciates in value, rather than rent; as giving one autonomy from landlords and the State; providing security of tenure; respectability in a society which is still acutely class-conscious; and a focus for the consumption and display of material goods. Ownership of one's own space also implies control of that space (Ryan 1983), and again government policy is important here. Laws of tenancy in England are such that the tenant has greater rights in unfurnished than in furnished accommodation. This has led to unfurnished accommodation being virtually impossible to find. If a property is rented, therefore, it is almost certain to be furnished, thus limiting the extent to which the tenant has control over the physical space in which he or she lives or can stamp his or her individuality upon it.

Above all, then, property ownership is related to individualism: to autonomy, as outlined above; and to social distinction and the stamping on of individual identity (witness the individualisation of former council houses once they have been bought).

The attitudes towards housing expressed in the material presented here, therefore, may represent a microcosm of English cultural values and in particular English individualism. This issue is discussed further below.

A further respect in which the women in the two countries differ is in the extent to which the English women feel that salary gives some indication of their *status* and value. Nicola states this explicitly - while Catherine, in France, states equally explicitly that her friends and acquaintances are not seen, and do not see themselves, in terms of their monetary worth. It will be recalled, too, that the English women felt that they were underpaid relative to other groups, while the French women were reasonably satisfied with their salaries. None of the English women was contemplating looking for a better paid job elsewhere, however, suggesting that as long as they had enough money for their needs they did not seek a higher salary for its own sake. Status is related to self-esteem, and it may be that the status conferred upon the English women by earning a reasonable wage contributes to their self-esteem. We have seen that their self-confidence and self-esteem come from work rather than family or relationships, and this may in part be related to the fact that their worth is given a monetary value. There are echoes of Marx here: Marx believed that industrial work was alienating because it has no intrinsic value. It is merely a way of earning a wage. Workers are completely interchangeable with each other and so their worth is determined by what they earn rather than what they do. They come to think of themselves as commodities and regard others in the same way. (It will be recalled that the English women also used the language of the market place in talking about their relationships with men - see Chapter 5 and below). It is possible, therefore, that although the women here are not involved in industrial work as such and do not appear to be "alienated" from it in any obvious way, the attitudes they are expressing are related to more general values emanating from a long-industrialised society. The eighties "boom" in which certain groups, such as those in the financial sector, earned very high salaries and displayed visible wealth, may simply have reinforced such attitudes.

The significance of the economic aspects of work for the French women lies principally in the *independence* it gives them from men. In particular, the fact of earning a wage has been instrumental in allowing several of the women, and the mother of one of them, to quit unhappy relationships. The English women say that having a salary allows them to feel that they could manage on their own, but they do not in fact do so. Debbie, for example, feels that she could manage perfectly well bringing up her daughter on her own, but she is reluctant to do so because her standard of living would have to drop and she would have to move to somewhere smaller. Again we see the importance of property: to a certain extent it is responsible for keeping women in what they themselves seem to consider unsatisfactory relationships. It may be, therefore, that earning a wage is a source of independence in a much more real sense for the French women than the English.

Rather than tie their money up in property, the French women prefer to have more to spend - on going out, holidays and entertaining. This is not visible consumption, therefore - the money is not spent on material goods but on *social life*. The French women do not talk about buying objects, but rather about doing and relating. It appears not to be necessary to show a veneer of respectability in the outward display of consumer goods. The French woman who buys a number of household appliances does so in order to avoid friction about domestic tasks, rather than simply to *have* them.[1] Again, this does not reflect differences in level of income, but rather in priorities regarding how it is spent.

For the women in both countries, the independence which stems from paid work also implies *control over the environment*, in its broadest sense. Danièle does not want to have to ask a man for money to buy a pair of tights, for example; and Jacqui feels that

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[1] One of the women observed that one house she visited in England had an enormous number of household appliances, but that nobody did any cooking.

she would not be able to buy the things she wanted for any children she might have if she did not earn her own money. This relates to the issue of helplessness outlined in Chapter 1: money is a means to control over one's life and freedom from dependency on another person. Financial independence may not be enough, however. In spite of their economic independence the English women remain in unsatisfactory relationships and/or have a fear of engulfment, implying a psychological dependency which is not resolved by earning a separate wage.

In examining the economic functions of work, therefore, we see certain themes emerging which differentiate the English and French women: the English women are characterised by more materialistic and individualistic attitudes. There is a concern with respectability and appearances and a certain psychological dependency with regard to relationships. The French women are more concerned with independence, and may in fact be more independent in a real sense. Their money is spent less on material goods but rather on social experiences - what we might term "having fun" There are links here both with Marxian theory and the Protestant Work Ethic as expounded by Weber and this is explored further below.

The manifest function of work, namely earning a living, seems to be important for different reasons to the two national groups, and is relatively more important to the English women. What then is the *non-economic* significance of work for the various groups of women? Again we examine this first in relation to those existing models outlined in Chapter 1.

Psychological aspects.

We saw in Chapter 1 that work might perform certain psychological functions over and above its manifest function of economic reward. Those which could be distinguished were that work i) structures the day; ii) provides the opportunity for shared experiences

outside the family; iii) provides externally generated goals; iv) defines status and identity; v) enforces activity; vi) provides opportunities to use skills; vii) offers varied experiences; viii) gives some degree of personal control; and ix) "attaches the individual to reality"

The aim of this study was not to *test* these hypotheses, but to allow respondents to express themselves in their own words and see to what extent the interpretations and accounts thus generated corresponded with such hypotheses. While there is support for certain of the functions outlined here, there are also differing emphases, both in the material as a whole and between groups.

The importance of *time structure* is less marked than might have been predicted. Only two women both English and single - talk about this spontaneously, and speak positively of having to be at work by a certain time and for a certain part of each day. In terms of time, the working day is seen rather as a constraint - in the grids almost all the women produced a construct of Constraint-Freedom in relation to work. This is particularly true of the married women, and especially the English married women, who have to fit everything into a shorter day and complete their work by deadlines in order to pick up children. But the French women too see work as a constraint on their time, preferring the unstructured time (and consequent freedom) of holidays. The need for time structure may therefore be more appropriate in a consideration of *male* orientations to work: from the accounts presented here, it would seem that the women's time is structured to a large extent by the tasks they have to perform. Women have been noted for their ability to "juggle", and it may be that due to the variety of tasks they carry out (job/domestic work/childcare)[1] the structure of their day is largely pre-determined. Since many of these tasks are related to the needs of others, structure

[1] The fact that single women may have fewer demands on their time in these respects may account for the fact that "structure", where it is mentioned at all, is done so by them but not by the married women.

is also provided by these other people. Rather than there being a lack of structure in these women's lives, therefore, it may be that there is too much, and that since this is not self-imposed it is seen as a constraint.

Jahoda's second "latent function" of work is that it provides the opportunity for *shared experiences outside the emotionally charged context of the family*. There are two elements here: shared experiences, or social contact, and the fact that this takes place "outside the emotionally charged context of the family" The social contact was important for different reasons to the various groups in the study. For the English women as a whole, contact at work was more properly "social": they related to the people at work, had lunch with them, and saw them outside working hours. For the French women there was a sharp differentiation of work and affective relationships: the English women would refer to "someone at work" or "a friend at work", while the French refer to "colleagues" (This strict separation of professional and private life in France is a common finding and is discussed in more detail below, p 241). The social contact which work provides for the French women, therefore, is rather in terms of its conversation, stimulation and simply seeing different people from those at home (or no people at home, in the case of the single women). These are important in themselves, and do not diminish the social value of work for them. But work relationships are unlikely to become social relationships outside work; at work they feel they are playing a role, presenting a "façade"

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Access to an environment outside the emotionally charged context of the family appears to be more important to the women here. We saw in the grid material that "Relations with others" was the largest cluster of constructs, supporting the evidence that women see themselves more in relation to others than do men. For the English women emotional involvement was equated with emotional demands; and for the French women the workplace provided an opportunity to "forget their worries" It may be, therefore, that having something to do and somewhere to go outside the home is of

greater value to women than to men - perhaps because women are more emotionally involved in the family in the first place, and the workplace therefore provides greater relief from it. In the case of the English women, who are more involved with their colleagues, the workplace may also provide a place in which to discuss any emotional problems, and thus have themselves validated by people other than family members. For the French women, the sharp division of work life and life outside work means that they can leave their worries at home and concentrate on tasks external to themselves.

These are the *externally generated goals* which constitute Jahoda's third latent function, and again there are two elements: "externally generated" and "goals". Neither of these is referred to specifically by the women here, but at least one of the English women refers to work giving her "a sense of purpose" which she missed while at home, and several refer to the "satisfaction of getting the job done". Those who had worked at home spoke of the difficulty of being disciplined about working, and not being distracted by, say, domestic tasks. There is a sense in which individuals lack motivation unless stimulus, in terms of deadlines, required results or feedback, is provided from outside (Tubbs, 1986; Jahoda, 1979, cited in Chapter 1). It is these that are lacking both in working at home or staying at home with children.

The value of work in terms of *status* and *personal identity* has been partly considered above in relation to the economic functions of work. These are two separate issues, however, and again have differing significance for the two national groups. Status appears to be more of an issue for the English women than the French, both in terms of monetary and personal worth. The French women do not complain of being undervalued, whatever their employment status, and appear content with their position, showing less ambition in terms of moving up the employment ladder. The English women do not express dissatisfaction in the sense that they are keen to move on, but they do experience a lack of recognition. This is particularly true of those in what are regarded as typically female, low-status jobs, namely secretarial work, but is not true

for the French women. Secretarial work, for example, may not be a "grand boulot" (great job), but it is not associated with low status to the extent it is for the English women.

This may be because the French women do not define themselves in terms of their work role as do the English women. Contradicting Hakim's committed/uncommitted model of women's orientations to work (see p 16), we find that the French women, despite manifesting the full-time, continuous work patterns of men, define themselves more in terms of their personal lives than work, unlike the English women. Work is more important for the English women's personal identity. In the TST, we saw that work role was more important for the English women than the French, generally coming first or second in the list of statements, and that the English women were more likely both to describe themselves by their job title and talk about the content of their work. The French women are more likely to talk about "work" in general, and to define themselves in terms of their personal relationships (for them work did not appear in the first two statements). If one is more likely to describe oneself in terms of work role or job description, then the value attached to that label becomes more important. For the French women it is the fact of working which is important, and their status (and associated self-esteem) comes equally from other areas of their lives. French writers (eg Herzbrün-Dayan, 1984; Apfelbaum, 1986) have described how both French women and men see women's advancement as a threat to family life. This may be regarded as reactionary, or as preserving the family unit; but the finding underlines the importance of affective and/or gender relations in France, and may be one reason why the French women here appear less ambitious. These issues are further discussed below, in relation to cultural context. However, the finding suggests that Hakim's model *may* apply to a British context, but is not universal.

As was indicated in the section above on "time structure", the women here have rather too much to do than too little. It is not clear, therefore, that for them work *enforces*

activity. There is probably a difference between the single and married women because, again as suggested above, the latter have much of their activity enforced upon them by others. They would have to cater to the needs of their children, for example, whether or not they had a job outside the home. Two of the French women do ask what they would do with their time if they did not work, saying that once the housework is done and the children attended to there is nothing left to do. But for the most part, and especially for the English women, it is *intellectual* stimulation which work provides, rather than stimulating activity. Apart from those examples cited above, none of the women complains about having nothing to *do* during any periods they may have spent at home, but rather of having nothing to *say* (in the case of the French women), of not having to *think* (in the case of the English), if they spend the day at home. Work does obviously promote activity, therefore, but at least for the women represented here it is a source of intellectual stimulation, rather than activity as such. There may be a gender difference here - if men are not involved in domestic work they may be more inactive if spending their time at home - or a difference between single and married women. Single women living on their own are perhaps more likely to be inactive if not working outside the home because their time and activities are motivated and structured to a lesser degree by the needs of other people.

Intellectual stimulation, *opportunity for control* and *opportunity for skill use* are related aspects of work for the women here, because they are all to do with *competence*. It is the English women rather than the French who talk about feeling "brain dead", not having to think and so on when at home, and so work appears to allow them to use their abilities in a way which being at home does not. Consistently, regardless of job level, the English women refer to the fact that at work they feel they are good at something, that they like getting the job done, getting things right. They feel both that they are good at something, therefore, and are using their skills; and that they are able to control events. For at least one of the English women (Jacqui), there is

also the feeling that she *is* more controlled at work - that is more in control of her emotions.

Warr (1987) defines "opportunity for skill use" as both the opportunity to use skills already possessed, and the acquisition of new skills. For the French women, there is not the same emphasis on the use of already possessed skills, but rather on "épanouissement" and "ouverture" - that is on self-development and the acquisition of new skills. For them, too, the control which work provides comes largely from the financial independence it endows. It is having their own money which allows them to take control of their lives: as Danièle observed, if she had not had a job of her own she would never have left her alcoholic husband, and she cited the examples of several of her friends who were trapped because of their financial dependence. Control for the French women, therefore, arises indirectly from the financial rewards of work rather than the work itself. And as we saw from the TST and grid material, satisfaction about themselves and their lives comes from affective relations and leisure activities as much as from work.

It may be, therefore, that opportunity for control and opportunity for skill use are important functions of work for the English women because these are not provided by the non-work aspects of their lives. It is suggested below that part of the reason for this is that, in line with the Protestant work ethic, work and the accumulation of wealth are valued to the neglect of other "lighter" aspects of life such as leisure and affective relations. Since social activities and the emotional aspects of family life are traditionally women's domain, but these are not valued as highly as work and the products of work, this may account for the English women's emphasis on work as a means of feeling competent and able. If their traditional skills are not valued by society as a whole then they must compete in a sphere which is valued, namely the workplace.

For women, *variety* is perhaps one of the most valuable aspects of having a job. We have already seen that for the French women one of the important features of working is that it gives them something outside the home. A change of *environment* is therefore one important aspect of work. Warr, in his consideration of the unemployed, also points out that domestic activities are likely to be "unchanging from day to day, with standard routines and an absence of novelty" (Warr, 1987, p 215). He cites the Martin and Wallace study (Martin and Wallace, 1984) in which unemployed women spent more time on those domestic activities associated with the role of housewife, rather than embarking on new activities. The emphasis in the English women's accounts upon home-based activities would support this. Without work outside the home, therefore, they are likely to spend more time on traditional domestic work, which is itself unlikely to change significantly from day to day. This may be less true for the French women, who take part in more leisure activities and are less home-based. While work does contribute variety to the women's lives, therefore, it may do so in different ways for the two national groups, change of environment being important for the French women and change of activity for the English.

The last remaining feature of the Warr model referred to in Chapter 1 is *environmental clarity*. Warr states that "'clarity' is used as a broad designation for a range of perceived environmental features which make it possible for someone to understand what is the case, what will happen, and what is required" (p 145). Studies of unemployed men (eg Payne et al, 1984) have indeed shown that this is an anxiety-provoking aspect of unemployment, since the unemployed are likely to be unsure of the consequences of their actions in terms of finding a job, unsure of what they will actually be doing in months to come, and unable to plan because of uncertainty about this or their financial position. While this unpredictability may apply equally to unemployed single women, it is less likely to be a feature of the lives of married women with children. As was indicated in the section on "structure" above, these women's lives are likely to be rather *too* predictable than not predictable enough.

However, as Warr also points out, environmental clarity may be viewed in terms of the other components outlined above, and it is clear that this is the case for control, for example, (being able to direct and see the consequences of one's actions), feeling part of a wider organisation in which the woman has certain expectations and there are certain expectations of her; and being in a more objective environment than that of the affective relations of the family.

The final possible function of work presented in Chapter 1 is Freud's "tie to reality" This is a wide-ranging notion, several of the elements of which have been touched on above. Freud saw work as providing links with the environment, giving the individual a place in the human community, and preventing him or her from becoming overwhelmed by fantasy and emotion. We can relate all of these to the material presented here: work provides the women in this study with a link to the world and environment outside the immediate family; provides social contact; and an escape from family and emotional worries. Jahoda's argument that employment provides the opportunity to engage in continuous reality testing through immediate experience, seeing that external objects behave according to expectations, and testing perceptions through sharing them with others are also supported above: first through engaging with an environment outside that of the home and the individual; secondly in terms of control and environmental clarity; and thirdly through the social aspects of work.

Those psychological functions of work outlined in Chapter 1 have therefore been supported to varying degrees in the material presented here. Work is important for women in both countries in terms of shared experiences outside the family. For the English women it is also important in terms of goals and purposes, status and identity, control, skill use, variety and environmental clarity. For the French women it is important in terms of activity, learning new skills, and offering a change of environment. The structure of the working day may be important for the single women.

What the above discussion demonstrates is that while models such as those of Warr and Jahoda contribute much to the understanding of the psychological benefits of work, they do not tell the whole story. It must be emphasised again that this is not an experimental study, designed systematically to test such theories. It is possible that, although the grid and TST were utilised in order to tap attitudes in a less direct way than simple question and answer interview, work fulfils those functions outlined in such models without individuals being aware of these effects; or that the methods used here did not uncover them. What is clear, however, is that both the economic and psychological functions of work are more complex than such models imply. There is evidence above that women may differ from men, that single women may differ from married women, and that there may be differences between cultures, both in the extent to which a particular function or "vitamin" may be salient, and the meaning which these may have. If we take a more free-ranging look at the data presented here, (that is, not in the light of pre-existing models), we find also that other aspects are uncovered and highlighted, illustrating Himmelweit's point (Himmelweit, op cit) that we must be open to the possibility of unexpected but illuminating findings. What follows, therefore, is such a free-ranging overview of the results, showing what the current data emphasise when considered outside the context of existing models.

Work

The positive aspects of work put forward by the different groups of women have much in common, but with varying degrees of emphasis. Both the French and English women value having something outside the home, but for different reasons. For the English women the workplace represents a less emotionally charged atmosphere, the space to be themselves as opposed to partner or mother, with the demands that those roles imply. For both married and single women work gives a sense of purpose and of feeling valued and needed. It allows them to feel competent in a way which is not

always possible at home, and provides the social contact, variety and intellectual stimulation which is often lacking in domestic activities alone. For some, the structure is important - having to be there at a certain time, for a certain part of each day.

For the French women there is a clear separation of work and family and work for them is something very personal, for themselves. Because of this separation, work can provide respite from emotional or domestic worries. Life would be boring without work: they would have nothing to do once the housework was completed, and nothing to talk about at the end of the day. Work enriches relations with partners for this reason. Above all work is a means to fulfilment and self-development, particularly for the single women, and they prefer to move on if work is not providing anything new.

There is some empirical correspondence between the findings described here, therefore, and Jahoda's "latent functions" and Warr's "vitamin model" of the psychological value of work: Jahoda's time structure, social contact and shared experiences, a sense of purpose, personal identity and activity are all mentioned when the women talk about what work gives them, as are Warr's variety, control and skill use. However, there are different emphases in the two countries: for the French, variety, social contact outside the home and independence, particularly that which comes from financial independence, are the most important. For the English women a sense of purpose, personal identity and what Warr calls "valued social position" are the positive aspects of work. The differences are subtle, therefore. Both French and English women see work as something personal, outside their family roles, but the English women talk of work providing the opportunity to *be* themselves, whereas for the French women it provides something *for* themselves.

Taking the English respondents first, we saw in the grid material a concern with being "*a person in my own right*". They felt that they could only be an individual when alone. This suggests that the English women are more enmeshed in their family and

relationship roles, that they find it more difficult to separate from them. We have seen that for the English women emotional ties mean emotional demands, and this is perhaps related to their difficulty in separating self from role. The less emotionally charged atmosphere of the workplace creates fewer emotional demands and separation becomes easier, allowing the women to feel that at work they are "themselves" or "an individual".

The *rationality* of the workplace is also something which the English women value. They like the "order" of the workplace and feel "more level-headed" and "more controlled" at work. This "rationality" is traditionally regarded as a male attribute, reinforcing the notion that the workplace is still largely a male domain. Both the French and English women feel they can leave their female emotionality at home and adopt the rational guise of the male at work. This can also cause problems, however: it means leaving behind aspects of the self and more "natural" ways of responding in order to be accepted in the workplace. The English respondents refer to "not knowing the rules of the game", saying they "don't like playing games" and suggesting a male ethos at work from which they can feel alienated.

A constant and related theme for the English women is that of *respect.*. They consistently use words like "respect", "approval", "value", "recognition", "recognised", "insignificant", "not taken seriously", "lack of acknowledgment", "little bit of fluff", "resent being undervalued" There seems to be a continual anxiety about not being respected or recognised for what they are. It is not specifically stated that this is an anxiety about themselves as *women*, but phrases such as "little bit of fluff" and "not taken seriously" suggest that this is the case. They express a need for approval and respect which they appear to find in the workplace rather than at home, again reinforcing the idea that femininity is not valued for its own sake: in order to feel valued, the women here have to compete with men in the traditionally male arena of the workplace. But this creates some ambivalence, and anxiety about being undervalued is

carried over into work. Paid work can bestow value and recognition in a way which childcare and domestic work cannot, but can also reinforce negative feelings about the self if there is a lack of acknowledgment.

A further theme in the English women's accounts is what might be termed the *moral worth* of work. Here we have words such as "useful", "contribution", "sense of purpose", "something worthwhile", "getting it done", "getting things right" and "reliable". Again this implies that the women's experience of life outside work is of being undervalued. In her account, Sarah talks of work giving her a sense of purpose, and quickly adds "not that it's not, wouldn't have a sense of purpose with a child", but clearly domestic and childcare work is regarded as inferior, of less value. Words such as "useful" and "contribution" also imply a relationship with society which is based on production and which is not satisfied by domestic responsibilities alone. We can see the roots of these attitudes in the Protestant work ethic, which raised the value of work to a moral obligation. This is further discussed in relation to cultural context below.

Finally, work is construed in terms of *self-affirmation*. "Hardworking", "conscientious", "good at what I do", "good manager", "good worker", "successful", "successful at work", "successful manager" are all examples of the women affirming their own abilities at work. Again there is the implication of moral worth ("hardworking", "conscientious"), which is regarded positively, but there is also the feeling of simply doing the job well. This kind of self-affirmation also reflects an aspect of Anglo-Saxon feminism, rooted in consciousness-raising, whereby women are encouraged to raise their self-esteem (lowered through the experience of patriarchal dominance) by emphasising their positive attributes, skills and abilities. In the late 1960s/early 1970s "fear of success" (Horner, 1972) was proposed as a principal reason for women's lack of career progress, arguing that women were afraid of jeopardising their femininity by performing successfully in traditionally male domains. There is no evidence of this here, perhaps because twenty years on such self-affirmation and

consciousness-raising has succeeded in changing the way women view themselves - or at least in the way they feel they should present themselves. As early as 1979, Bardwick reported similar findings, arguing that the women in her sample did not expect circumstances of which they had no experience, although another factor, again reflecting the situation here, may be that the women are not to any large extent transgressing gender roles since they are working in areas where women are well represented.

Turning to the French women, they do not express the same need for approval and respect, and work is a means to self-development and self-improvement rather than self-affirmation. If expressing a need for approval and respect is an indication of *lack* of approval and respect, then it appears that this is not a problem for the French women. Work is regarded as separate from home and family in the same way as it is for the English women, and it provides a means of forgetting family problems. But there is no sense of work giving the French women a feeling of being valued which is absent from other parts of their lives. Neither are we left with the impression that identifying with their family and relationship roles results in a loss of "themselves", for which the workplace provides compensation. We have seen that the financial independence which work brings plays an important part in giving women control over their lives. As described in Chapter 1, economic independence, the means to which is paid work, has been viewed as the road to women's liberation. This cannot be underestimated, but as we shall see below, the emphasis on the right to work at the expense of other aspects of women's lives may again be particular to Anglo-Saxon cultures, and may derive from a sense of being undervalued outside the workplace.

Taking the French responses from all three methods together, there are three main themes reflected here. First, the notion of having something *outside the home*. Work is a means of getting out and seeing people: "faire sortir de sa maison", "voir du monde", "un peu de mouvement, de bruit", "autre chose que la vie privée" Although

work was seen for at least one of the English women as a "social place", this need to escape the confines of the house, to experience some movement and "noise", did not feature at all in the English women's accounts.[1] This underlines findings reported elsewhere in the thesis concerning the French women's greater emphasis on a social life and activities outside the home, whereas the English women's activities are more domestic. The fact that the home is seen as more restricting for the French women than the English may simply reflect the fact that more of them are living in small apartments without gardens, but the need to get out and see people is expressed equally by those living in houses in the suburbs, suggesting that it is more deeply seated. Certainly life in France, and not only in Paris, is lived much more outside the home - in restaurants, cafés and so on: it will be recalled, for example, that several of the interviews with French women took place in cafés rather than offices or homes. In this respect the French are much more outward looking than the English and it may not be fanciful to suggest, along the lines of the Annales historians, that this has to do with geographical and climatic factors. The English are quite literally more insular than the French. France, which borders six countries, is more outwardly directed. A related factor may be the sharp division between public and private life (see below). We have seen that the French women regard work relations as formal and distant ("lointains") compared with their relationships outside work and colleagues in France are rarely also friends or invited into each other's homes. Since the family is an intensely private unit, there is possibly a greater need for "autre chose que la vie privée". Similarly work provides "un oubli" some time away from family pressures and worries ("je ne veux pas que l'un envahisse l'autre").

A second theme is to do with *independence*, which in the case of the French principally means *financial independence*. "Pas dépendre d'un homme", "tributaire financièrement", "indépendance financière" and "ne pas avoir à demander" all

[1] The use of "bruit" is interesting here, implying a desire for noise, or sound, rather than silence. It will be recalled from the findings that one of the positive aspects of work for the French women was that it gave them something to *talk about* at the end of the day.

emphasise a desire not to have to rely on a man for money. Again this aspect of work did not feature at all in the English women's accounts. It is not clear why it should feature so strongly for the French women, but an important factor may be that before the 1964 Matrimonial Act in France women still had to obtain their husbands' permission to open a bank account or get a passport and much joint property was legally considered to be the husband's. The final inequalities were not removed until further legislation in 1975 and 1979. For the women interviewed here, therefore, the anxiety caused by such discrepancies would still be part of living memory (and indeed forms part of the accounts of some of them, either in terms of their own experience or that of their mothers - "pour vivre il fallait travailler").

Thirdly, work is seen as a means to *self-development*: (or perhaps self-actualisation, to use Maslow's term). "Epanouissement" is the word most commonly used to describe this, and it is a word which is difficult to translate into English. Used in a literal sense, it refers to the opening up or blossoming of a flower, and by association, the blossoming of a person, or of a person's heart, for example. Because of the association with a flower "blooming", there is also an element of joy, and work appears to provides all of these elements for the French women. It is a place where a woman can find self-expression and self-fulfilment: "exprimer ce que j'entends sur moi", "réaliser moi" - again, perhaps, because it is a place which is entirely separate from the family and other emotional ties. "Epanouissement" also embraces the notion of being open to new ideas ("suivre le mouvement"), echoing the emphasis the French women put on variety and change, seen above in Chapter 3.

The notion of joy which is contained in the concept of "épanouissement" is in contrast to the findings of Apfelbaum (1993) who, in her comparison of French and Norwegian women in positions of leadership, cited in Chapter 1, found that the French women's narratives involved "souffrance" ("suffering"), where those of the Norwegian women were more "jubilant". This may be explained by the fact that the women in

Apfelbaum's study were in high office (sixty per cent of her sample had held posts as cabinet or subcabinet ministers). They had achieved such high office at some cost to their private lives and marital relationships, with a much higher divorce rate than the Norwegian women. As mentioned previously (p 225), several French writers have referred to the fact that women's advancement is seen by both French men and women as a threat to family life. Apfelbaum suggests here that French men are "unable to cope with the social comparison involved once their wives become too visible" (p 423) and so it may be that work for French women is a source of "épanouissement" at a lower level, but of "souffrance" if they step into the public or political (that is decision-making) arena. Apfelbaum links her findings to a tradition of intimate relations between men and women which is predicated on a rhetoric of seduction, desire and *amour galant* (romantic love)[1]. All imply conquest or domination. It may be that work, so long as the traditional positions of men and women are not breached, provides a context in which French women can express themselves outside the restraints of what are essentially unequal relations between women and men. This is further explored in the section on relationships, below.

From the same starting point, therefore, the French and English women respectively have produced quite different accounts of what work means for them: principally respect, moral worth and self-affirmation for the English and a life outside the home, financial independence and self-development for the French. Other writers have suggested that paid work is of less importance to women than it is to men because women have other roles available to them, namely those of wife and mother. But the evidence of this study suggests that for the English women these do not offer the same benefits as paid work because these roles - that is, those which are quintessentially

[1] Although translated as "romantic love" here, this does not adequately render the notion of *amour galant*, underlining its French particularity and the cultural difference under discussion here. For this reason, the French term is used subsequently.

feminine - are not valued to the same extent as their roles as workers.[1] To assume that working is less important for women simply because other roles are available to them may be misguided, therefore. The mere existence of those roles may not be sufficient: they may also need to be perceived as valuable. An interesting paradox is that in France femininity (and therefore female roles) appears to be more valued, and work roles are less important to the French women than the English; yet more French than English women work and are more likely to work full-time. This appears to confirm that there is less of a conflict between working and femininity in France. The French women are able to carry their feminine persona into the workplace, whereas the English women feel they have to leave their femininity at home, because their female qualities are not valued. That the French women do not express the same need for approval and respect suggests that they may feel more valued in their roles outside work, and as women. It is these roles which are considered next.

Relationships

In both countries "relations with others" formed the biggest cluster of constructs elicited by the grid, supporting the notion that women see themselves largely in relation to others. However, the French women present their relationships in a more positive light than do the English women. They distinguish between the formal and superficial relationships at work and the informal, deeper relationships they experience outside work. They express more satisfaction with partners and speak more positively about children. For the French women it is only at work that they feel they are playing a role, describing it as a "façade", whereas for the English women they are also playing a role within the family. It is only when they are alone that they feel they can truly be themselves. The English women are openly dissatisfied with their relationships with

[1] Interestingly, although they may complain that it is more difficult for women to gain advancement in the organisation, that they are all placed at the base of the pyramid and so on, none of the women interviewed feels undervalued, herself, in her job.

partners and for the most part negative about children, though their own provide exceptions. They are concerned, just as they are with regard to work, with the attitudes and opinions of others, with being respected and with "belonging" These issues will now be examined in more detail.

Partner

It was suggested at the end of the previous section that work may be of more value to the English women than the French because they do not derive satisfaction and fulfilment from their personal relationships and domestic roles, and do not feel valued within those roles. We saw in the TST that maternal and partnership roles were the most salient (coming first and second in the list) for the French women, while for the English women work and maternal roles were most important. The English women express greater dissatisfaction with their relationships with partners, saying, for example, that they would have a child on their own, do not regret having children but do regret being married, or have only stayed in a marriage for the sake of the children. Partners appear to be at best superfluous, at worst a hindrance, another person to look after rather than a source of support. For the married women, this is largely because of the unequal (or perceived unequal) distribution of childcare and domestic tasks; but other factors such as the organization of the day (and having to cook twice, for example) may also be important.

For the English women, then, a partner represents more practical work, therefore, but also more emotional work: emotional attachment, as indicated above, is seen as emotionally demanding. The English women's talk about relationships (like their talk about work) is characterised by *moral rectitude*: "good friend", "kind and helpful", "loyal friend", "good mother", "dutiful wife" all describe relationships in terms of what is *right,* as opposed to what is *pleasurable*. There is a *lack of joy* in the English women's accounts of their relationships. They are, instead, conceptualised in terms of work, effort and anxiety: "being needed", "extra person to look after", "lot of time and

effort and energy", "too much effort to go out", "working hard at my marriage", "worried about my father", "anxious about leaving the kids". The immediate family does not appear to be a source of happiness or fulfilment to the English women.

At the same time, however, they express a fear of solitude, they are more conservative about issues such as marriage/living together and relationships with partners are more stable (though this may be for material reasons, particularly the joint ownership of property - see sections on financial aspects of work, and below). There is a conflict here between wanting a relationship with a partner but at the same time maintaining the boundaries of self. The English women express sentiments such as "I'm not a chattel", or "there's no way he's going to rule my life" at the same time as saying "I do need someone" or being pleased if a man opens a door for them. It may be that *because* the English women are more enmeshed in their family and relationship roles, these are experienced as oppressive, whereas the French, who appear more able to separate roles, and to separate self from role, experience less tension in their relationships.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the way the English women talk about their relationships is in their use of the language of the marketplace. For them, there is the notion of relationships as *exchange and production*: "producing children", "sort of made a bargain of it", "married him out of convenience", "good catch", "trade Stephen in", "I'm not a chattel." Nicola had a "shopping list" of qualities which she was looking for in a man ("I'm looking for self-confidence, warmth and an enquiring mind"). Napoleon described the English as a "nation of shopkeepers", and certainly the language of trade and commerce seems to permeate even the realm of affective relations. This, taken with the apparently superfluous nature of their partners for several of the women, and the material ties (in terms of housing, for example) supports the Marxian idea that people are interchangeable, that their worth is determined in material terms, and that they regard themselves and others as commodities. There may be a relation between this attitude and the fact that many theories of interpersonal

relationships in the Anglo-Saxon literature are based on notions of "exchange and equity" (Kelley and Thibaut, 1978; Adams, 1965). In an experimental study of game behaviour related to this issue, it was indeed found that American students preferred a consistent ratio of rewards to input, whereas European (ie continental European) students preferred an equal distribution of rewards (Gergen, Morse and Gergen, 1980). This notion of exchange and equity in relationships may also be an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, therefore, reflecting the concept of people as commodities and expressed through the language of the marketplace. Again, the cultural context of this, and in particular its relationship to Marxian theory and the Protestant Work Ethic, is explored further below.

For the French women, partnership role is more important than work role. There is a clear separation of work and affective relations, with the latter being described as more "natural", more relaxed. The French women express more satisfaction with their partners: "une espèce de miroir", "j'ai trouvé ce qu'il me fallait", "j'ai un mari très gentil", "j'aime être avec mon conjoint" They describe their emotional lives more openly, talking explicitly of love ("tomber amoureuse", "très amoureux de moi", "cédé par amour", "tu confirmes ton amour"), physical relations and "seduction".[1] These findings reflect important aspects of French culture: the strict separation of public and private life, and the primacy of the couple.

The separation of public and private life is an aspect of French culture which is well-documented. To the outsider the French family can appear a united yet closed institution: the French have a reputation for not entertaining in their own homes, for example, and particularly for not inviting business colleagues. Bartolomé and Evans (1979) write: "While French managers believe more in a rigid separation of professional and private life - work should not in principle be allowed to interfere with

[1] "Séduire" in French does not necessarily signify sexual seduction (it can also mean attract, draw), but it is clear from the contexts in which it is used here that this is what is meant.

family and leisure - the British executive perceives a fluid and much less clear boundary between the two domains ..." (quoted in Hofstede, 1980, p 257). The French have strict privacy laws, much discussed at the time of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in France in 1997. The public should not penetrate the private, therefore, but similarly the private should not threaten the public. The French find it inconceivable that a public figure should be brought down by private sexual scandal. In writing of the Judge Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill affair in America, in which the judge was accused of sexual harrassment, Fassin (1991) comments: "L'élément le plus exotique dans cette affaire, pour un public français, est peut-être cette *irruption brutale* de la vie privée dans l'arène politique" (p 121 my italics).[1] The President Clinton/Monica Lewinsky scandal has provoked similar reactions from the French press: "Le Monicagate est un vaudeville surréaliste parce que s'y téléscopent les univers jusqu'ici séparés de l'intimité sexuelle et de l'ordre constitutionnel: les affaires de fesses et celles de l'Etat se retrouvent dans les mêmes draps"[2] (Sabatier, 1998, p 3).

Ardagh (op cit) attributes this defence of the private, and in particular the family, to the mistrust traditionally felt by the French to what may be termed "out-groups" The French over time developed a social system whereby each interest group or class had its own position and privileges, often defined by written rules and laws, and culminating in the Code Napoléon of 1804, which laid down rules even for the conduct of family life. This system established order for social life by giving a nation which was "prone to violence and disorder" (p 618) a certain freedom as long as it kept within certain rules. It was however based on the mistrust of groups outside one's own. French society has traditionally been less stratified than compartmentalised, with each vested interest group experiencing other groups as a threat. The only people who could

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[1] "What is perhaps most foreign to a French public in this affair is the brutal intrusion of private life into the political arena" [My translation]

[2] "Monicagate is a surreal spectacle because it brings together the separate worlds of sexual intimacy and the order of the Constitution. Sexual affairs and the affairs of state have become bed-fellows." [My translation]

ultimately be relied upon were an individual's family, and so the family became fiercely protected.

The basis of the family is of course the couple and so the couple is also accorded prime importance. Zeldin (1979), citing the work of Hunt (1970) on the psychology of family life in France, writes of the 18th and 19th centuries: "While their fathers were alive children could not get at their mothers" (p 316). A woman's first loyalty has therefore been to her husband/partner, and this is echoed in the responses given by the French women here.

Shope (1994) in an examination of Durkheim's views on gender relations, regards these as predicated on a biologically differentiated conception of gender role complementarity that emphasises the couple, not the individual, in a manner which is uniquely French. (We shall return to the issue of "complementarity" below.) In her study, cited above, Apfelbaum (1993) contrasts Norway, where the lives of both women and men are predicated upon the family, and France, where the focus is on male/female interpersonal relationships. Apfelbaum suggests that this reflects a deep-seated aspect of French culture. She refers to the literary tradition of *amour galant*, where feelings of love and romance and games of seduction are idealised, thus defining "the possible boundaries and content of women's strategies for social behavior [sic] both in the private and public domains" (p 424). The tradition of *amour galant* , and the unequal positions for women and men on which it rests, has been referred to above (p237) in relation to women's advancement. But this second aspect, namely the culture of romance, is also represented in the present study in the way the French women talk about their partners and the priority placed on relationships with them, and in the *way* they talk, namely in terms of love and seduction. "To live for one man, to use feminine charm or guile to persuade or please him: this may be a woman's instinct in many societies, but especially it has been so in France" (Ardagh, 1987, p 335). Similarly, Ezekiel (1996), in an account of the hostility in France towards American feminism,

describes such hostility as serving as a warning to French women not to question the commonly held belief of a Gallic consensual relation of seduction between the sexes.

While the subject of adultery was felt to be too delicate to be broached within the context of the present study, private discussions in France suggested that the possibility of male adultery and having to pay attention to the relationship in order to keep a partner, were possible reasons for the relatively greater importance to the French women of their relationships with their partners. This would fit with the traditions of love, romance and seduction, and would provide some explanation for the French women's concern to keep the relationship alive via the family, shared social life and so on; or buying household appliances or hiring someone to do domestic work in order to avoid conflict between partners over such issues. The importance of the couple, and possible anxiety about adultery, however, may lead to competition between women. This was suggested in informal discussions, and there is some evidence for it in the material presented here, where negative comments are made about female work colleagues, for example. By contrast, there is a solidarity among the English women, in terms of supportive networks of other mothers or among work colleagues (congratulating them on their success, for example). Where there appears to be competitiveness between the French women, perhaps based on the greater importance of their relationships with men, there is a solidarity among the English women, perhaps based on a shared feeling of having to compete with men. Apfelbaum (1990) has noted a similar difference in "collectivity" when comparing French and Norwegian women and so this may represent a difference between Latin (or Catholic) and Northern (or Protestant) European cultures.

Children

"Maternal role" was equally important in the TST for the married women in both countries. For the English women, however, children were more important than partner, both in terms of role, as expressed in the TST, and in stating that they would still have children, but not necessarily marry, for example. At the same time, having children appeared to come less "naturally" to the English women (two of the French women had children now in their teens, for example, while the oldest of the children of the English women was four), and they admitted to not "understanding" children or not having "maternal feelings" before their children were born. The French women, single and married, described children as both natural and joyful. Children are seen as enriching a relationship, whereas for the English women (again showing a certain conservatism) they are a stage one arrives at in a marriage, or in one's life-span. As stated previously, this is an atypical sample of English women, since they are mothers and working full-time, and might be expected therefore to have more of a work identity than maternal identity. But "maternal role" is as important for them as for the French women, and the aim of the study is to compare women in similar situations. The point here is that the French women are less ambivalent about children *despite* having a role as a full-time working woman. For them having children appears to be no less "natural" than might be expected for full-time mothers. In this respect, the French women are reflecting, through what they say, the attitudes of the culture (particularly as expressed through social policy) at large: the culture encourages women both to work *and* to have a family, and the women themselves do not see the two roles as incompatible.

The French women are more openly affectionate when talking about their children, again speaking more easily of "love" At the same time, however, they are more ready to leave their children with carers, even when the child is ill. The English women also describe a situation where it is they who suffer when leaving their children, and where they feel redundant if the children seem too ready to say goodbye to them. This may

reflect quality of childcare: the difficulties for the English women of finding adequate childcare are well documented above, and especially in Lorraine's story, Chapter 5. The greater provision of childcare in France than in England, much of it state-provided, does not only mean that the French women can leave their children with confidence: it also suggests a fundamental acceptance of leaving one's child in the care of others (see also Badinter, 1980). This need not be interpreted as a neglect of children, but rather that such public provision of childcare facilities indicates a public acknowledgment of the value of children and motherhood. Neither does it mean that some French women would not prefer to stay at home with their children: Windebank (op cit) found that a significant minority (ten out of 56) of her French sample had not taken career breaks, but would have preferred to bring up their young children themselves. The reason was not that the child was felt to be harmed by being left in the care of others, but because the mother herself "misses out" on her child's development. Indeed Windebank found that the differing configurations of state support for working mothers had a significant impact on the practical aspects of child care strategies in the two countries, but less impact on their fundamental conceptions of mothering.[1]

What is absent from the French women's accounts is the *guilt* of the English women at leaving their children, and in particular the notion that, as Lorraine said "*society* makes you feel guilty" (my italics). Windebank (op cit) also found that the French women "appeared to view continuing to work and putting their young children in to child care as something which is normal and does not require justification." (p 10) It might be argued that the French women find it easier to leave their children because they themselves were more likely to be left, sent to school (the *école maternelle*) at an earlier age, or to *colonies de vacances*. But this would merely reinforce the notion being put forward here, that a society's practices and institutions have a bearing on the attitudes and behaviour of those individuals within it.

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[1] For example, half of the samples in each country made some effort to fit work hours to the school day and to work regular hours, so that they could "be there" for their children.

The extended family

To the outsider, the family in France appears to be more important than in England. For the foreigner, the image of France, as of other Latin countries, is of large family gatherings. In the grid and the TST, however, we saw that, contrary to expectations, the extended family seemed to be more "important" to the English women than the French, in the sense that the family featured more strongly in their responses. Similarly, Apfelbaum (1993, see above) found that French life was less predicated on the family than Norwegian life. What the family actually *signifies* for the women in this study is, therefore, a complex matter.

One interpretation is that because the French women are in general less enmeshed in their relationships than the English, relationships with both immediate and extended family are less tense and less *in*tense. For the English women, the family, whether that in which the women were brought up, or that which they have created with their own children, appears to be more insular, with activities centred on the home, for example. This may create a situation where the family is more intense and so becomes a source of anxiety. It may be that the English women express more concern for family members, and the family features more prominently in the English women's accounts, because of their difficulty in separating self from family role and self from others.

Just as the English women feel more autonomous and "a person in their own right" when separated from partner and children at work, they need physical distance in order to separate from their families. While the extended family features less strongly in the accounts of the French women, however, they actually see their families more often than do the English women. As children, although the French women were more likely to be left with carers, the family would come together for meals, often at lunchtime and

always in the evening[1] "Family occasions" involved the *extended* family, and several generations would holiday together, for example. The combination of these aspects of French life - a lack of anxiety about leaving children in the care of others but a more frequent coming together of the family as a whole, may facilitate the separating and relating (without engulfment) which the English women appear to find difficult. For the French women, the family is important as an *institution*, taken for granted, but which does not overwhelm their senses of self.

Overview of relationships

The French women's accounts of their relationships are in general more positive than those of the English women. This may in itself represent a cultural difference in terms of the research process: the French women may be more concerned to present a positive image to a foreign researcher; or, because of the French separation of public and private, they may be more reluctant to reveal publicly negative aspects of their private lives. These issues are beyond the scope of this thesis, since they would need to be tested through, for example, participant observation or using a same-nationality interviewer. Attention is drawn to them here, as they represent one of the difficulties of cross-cultural research. For the moment, however, both the French and English women's accounts need to be considered at face value.

The English women's accounts of their relationships, both with partners and family, are characterised by a tension which is absent from the accounts given by the French women. However, the practical difficulties which the English women face should not be underestimated. The statistics concerning childcare, domestic work and so on were presented in Chapter 1, but the reader is reminded that in the UK both the range of childcare facilities and the number of hours they are available are limited, and the cost may be prohibitive. It will be clear, therefore, that unless a working mother is given

[1] One of the women interviewed was shocked when her daughter, on an exchange visit to England, was given supper on a tray in front of the television.

substantial help by friends or family (particularly partner), combining a job and childcare is very difficult. The greater provision in France has both practical and psychological effects: a potential source of tension between partners in a couple is taken out of the family and given support both by the State and society at large. The notion of children being cared for outside the family is therefore being sanctioned both by men and women, the relations between them being preserved in the process. This may not be the principal aim of such social policy, but it is a practical consequence. In England, since only the relatively wealthy are able to "buy in" help from outside, the burden of childcare falls upon individual families, increasing the pressure on couples and the tension between partners. It also reinforces the insularity of the family, since individual families effectively have to fend for themselves.

The practical difficulties which contribute to the tension expressed in the English women's accounts are themselves reflections of cultural values. The fact that there is very little State provision, either in terms of childcare or fiscal policy, also means that there is no visible sign that "society" sanctions women's work or values their role as mothers. Apfelbaum's work, described above, highlights the importance of the couple in France and how this is based on an inequality between men and women: women are appreciated and valued as long as they do not seek to transgress certain boundaries. What is significant is that the women, here at least, do not feel themselves to be oppressed or down-trodden. On the contrary there is a confidence in themselves which is lacking from the English women's accounts. One explanation for this may be that femininity is prized in France but not regarded as inferior. While the culture may appear to reject the notion of women in leadership positions, therefore, this is based on a view that such positions threaten femininity (implying as they do a thrusting, American-style approach) rather than that women, being "inferior", are not capable of filling such positions. This still implies inequality, but is based on a positive appreciation of "feminine" qualities rather than a view that feminine is necessarily inferior. English "society", on the other hand, by failing to support women in any of

the roles of worker, partner or mother, appears to equate "feminine" with "inferior". It is for this reason that women at work feel the need to compete with men on men's terms rather than their own. There is inequality in relationships between men and women in both countries, therefore, but it is characterised and experienced differently in each.

Femininity

Both the material on work and that on relationships inform our understanding of what it is to be a woman, and how femininity is experienced, in the two countries. In France, work does not appear to be antithetical to femininity, whereas the English women feel that they will only be taken seriously at work if they compete on men's terms. In relationships, the English women have greater difficulty than the French in separating self from role, and in separating themselves from others. They are more enmeshed in their relationships.

We saw in Chapter 1, and the work of Chodorow and Gilligan, that for boys and men gender identity is tied to separation and individuation since separation from the mother is necessary for the development of masculinity. For girls, female identity does not depend on separation from the mother or issues of individuation, and there is a fusion of identity and intimacy by defining themselves through relations with others. According to such theory, therefore, female identity is formed and defined through relations with others, and indeed "relations with others" features strongly in the responses from both countries here. However, the English women constantly express a need to be considered "a person in my own right" or "an individual", rather than in relation to others. In doing so, are the English women also seeking to deny their femininity? We have seen that they do not refer to their femininity (in the TST, for example), as the French women do. Similarly, as working women they feel that they have to leave their femininity at home in order to be taken seriously. Although they

describe the "male" culture at work as alien, they feel that they need to subscribe to it in order to succeed.

The French women, however, do not express the same concern with individuality, with separating self from role, or self from others. This may indicate, as suggested above, that they are less enmeshed in their relationships than the English women; or it may be that they are more accepting of their femininity and the relatedness to others which that implies. Again in the TST we saw that the French women were more likely to mention their gender; and it was more apparent in their talk about "seduction" for example. But at no point did it appear that they wished to *deny* their femininity. It is suggested here that this is for cultural reasons: femininity is prized in France and, even though it may be argued that this is based on a fundamental inequality, the fact that feminine qualities are appreciated means that French women are more aware of their femininity and do not feel a need to deny it, even in the workplace.

A related factor may be that France is in general a less "masculine" country than Britain. In Hofstede's (1980, op cit) extensive cross-cultural survey of 40 countries, France scored below average on the Masculinity index (which measured typically "masculine" and "feminine" work goals) while Britain scored well above (France: 41, UK: 66, Mean: 51). Of particular relevance to the present study is the fact that Masculinity, in Hofstede's study, is significantly negatively correlated with the percentage of women in professional and technical jobs, at least in the wealthier countries. That is, in more "feminine" countries, more working women are in the more qualified jobs.

Another issue which may be important here is that of language. French is a gendered language whereas English is not. This means that in French both animate and inanimate objects are gendered in terms of language, and also, more importantly for our purposes here, that adjectives agree in gender with those nouns which they qualify. This means that in the TST, for example, each time one of the French women described

herself in terms of an adjective ("Je suis grande" "I am tall") that adjective would take the feminine form. By using such feminine forms in relation to themselves, French women are constantly referring to their femininity, consciously or unconsciously, and at the same time differentiating themselves from the masculine. This has the effect of reinforcing their female identity, not only in terms of how they describe themselves, but also by positioning themselves as different from (though not necessarily in opposition to) men.

Toril Moi (1985) points out another linguistic difficulty in relation to French/English considerations of femininity. French has only one adjective relating to "femme" ("woman"), namely "féminin", whereas English has two relating to "woman": "female" and "feminine"[1]. The convention in English is to use "female" to denote biological sex and "feminine" to denote socially constructed gender. When "féminin" is used in French, therefore, it is not clear which usage is intended. Equally it could be argued that the French language conflates the two: biological sex and socially constructed gender are one and the same thing. Similarly "femme" has two meanings in French: "woman" and "wife". Again this equates what in English are two different concepts, implying that a woman is also a wife, that is part of a male/female relationship, and supporting Apfelbaum's emphasis on the importance of the couple in French culture.

Six of the ten French women specifically mentioned gender/sex in the TST and all referred either to "femme" or "fille" "Femme" is problematic, for the reasons given above: is the intended meaning "woman" or "wife" (in the case of the married women)? The use of "fille" also presents an interesting cultural difference, since "fille" is, strictly, "girl", and it is highly unlikely that in England a woman over thirty (as all these women were) would describe herself as a "girl". This is partly because "girl"

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[1] "Femelle" does exist in French, but is used principally for animals and therefore is only used pejoratively in relation to women.

(implying as it does youth, lack of knowledge and competence, and inferiority) is considered derogatory by feminists, and this has penetrated the culture in general; but its use in French and not in English has other implications. "Girl" implies "nubile" ("marriageable"), again emphasising the importance of male/female relations; but also a youthfulness about the French women which has been alluded to elsewhere (p 192).

The themes which recur throughout the material presented here are those of autonomy, independence, separation and boundaries; and femininity, equality and difference. These may be linked to broader aspects of the two societies, and provide a key to essential differences between the two cultures under consideration. It will be shown that in their accounts and interpretation of their lives, the women here are reflecting not only their individual experience but also cultural values at a much broader level.

Womanhood, culture and society

First, a reminder of the findings. We have seen that for the English women the economic aspects of work are more important than for the French, both at a practical level (because of property ownership) and because monetary value also confers status and self-esteem. For the French women financial independence represents liberty, control over their lives, and is a means to other areas of experience which are important to them, such as a social life, holidays and leisure. Although economic independence has been presented as the path to women's liberation, therefore, this appears to be less true for the English women, whose money is often tied up (in property) with that of their partner; the value of a wage is rather that it establishes their worth.

Similarly, paid work performs a psychological function for the English women in terms of self-esteem, because it makes them feel competent and skilled. It allows them to be themselves, free from the emotional demands of the family. They define themselves more in terms of their work role than partnership or family roles. Maternal role is

important, but both at a practical and psychological level tension is experienced between this and their work and partnership roles. Gender relations are strained, both for the married and single women. For the English women there is a need to produce, a need to achieve, and their lives are more circumscribed, centred on the home and the workplace, with fewer activities based outside the home and family. And "family" here represents the nuclear family, since other family members are for the most part living at a distance.

The French women define themselves less in terms of their work roles, and more in terms of their affective relations. For them, work is a means to self-development and the acquisition of new skills rather than self-fulfilment. It is a learning experience, and a source of stimulation both for themselves and their relationships with others, but they are less concerned about career progression than the English women. There is a strict separation of work and home; despite (or perhaps because of) this, they appear to experience less conflict between the roles associated with each. They are more aware of their femininity, and gender relations appear less strained - marriage is not seen to limit their autonomy or individuality. Their social lives are less circumscribed - they take part in more activities outside the home, and involving people other than the immediate family. There is more contact with the extended family and with friends.

What we are presented with, therefore, is a picture of the English women's lives as being more concerned with the individual, the home and the immediate family. At the same time, there is a conflict between the roles of worker and woman. The French women's lives are less concerned with individual self-fulfilment, appear to extend beyond themselves and the immediate family and personal relationships of all kinds are more important to them than to the English women. While this is a traditionally female concern, and the French women do define themselves more in terms of their femininity than do the English women, this does not seem to conflict with their roles as workers. This may partly be because they are less concerned about career advancement,

however, and this in turn may be because such advancement would jeopardise the family. These contrasting pictures can be related to differences between the two countries in terms of social organisation, and underlying images of gender. In the context of the present study, it is social and family policy which is most clearly related to the findings presented here, but, as will be shown, these policies themselves reflect ideologies concerning the family, equality and difference, and gender relations.

Social policy, the family and gender

As was described in Chapter 1, much of France's social and family policy rests on a pronatalism which arose from the fear that the falling birthrate which France experienced at the turn of the century (from 26 per thousand in 1870 to 12 per thousand in 1918) would put the country at greater risk of invasion by Germany. Producing more and healthier babies, in order to increase the stock of fit young men able to fight, and the number of workers able to contribute to the French economy, was therefore seen as providing a service to the nation. Thus it became in the nation's interests - that is, the interests of both men and women - to support women in their uniquely female role, namely motherhood. It was precisely women's *different* role from men which was of value, and because of its value to the nation could not be regarded as inferior.

Women's unique and essential role as mothers was also, of course, at the same time supported by the Catholic church. There was a convergence of influence, therefore, from the state and from Catholic doctrine, both of which regarded the family as the basic socio-political unit of the nation-state. There are two important elements here: first, the state's involvement in issues of maternity and the family; and second, the value of maternity, women's unique role, itself. In addition, the primacy of the couple, without which maternity is (or was) not possible, is also emphasised.

It might be expected that such an emphasis on maternity and the family would also emphasise women's domestic role, and discourage them from working. In fact this was not the case. In its efforts to reduce infant mortality, also responsible for the falling number of babies, the French state identified the cause as poor infant feeding resulting from mothers returning to work too quickly after childbirth because of poverty. The solution, in 1913, was to introduce compulsory postnatal maternity leave, accompanied by a daily allowance to compensate for lost wages (Jenson, 1986). Infant mortality was not, therefore, linked to women's working *per se*, but rather a too rapid return to work. Few argued that in order to produce more and healthier babies women should not take part in paid labour; the debate, on the part of all groups - employers, labour organisations, nationalists and social Catholics - centred upon the best ways of allowing mothers to combine their productive and reproductive activities. This has continued to the present day, and is illustrated by the current family policies and systems of allowances and childcare described throughout, and the statement by Jacques Chirac quoted in Chapter 1.

In Britain, although a falling birthrate was less marked, there was a similar concern with infant mortality. The solutions adopted were different, however. Although the 1895 Factory and Workshop Act prohibited women from returning to work for a month after childbirth, no financial compensation was instituted. Rather, the emphasis was on education - teaching mothers to nurture their babies better - and took the form of visits by public health officials concerned with housing conditions, feeding patterns and cleanliness (Lewis, 1991). The role of the health visitor (a profession unique to Britain) was particularly important (Davies, 1988). Where, in 1913, maternity leave and allowances were being implemented in France, the Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education in Britain was saying:

> The principal operating influence [in causing infant mortality] is the ignorance of the mother and the remedy is the education of the mother.

(quoted in Lewis, 1980, p 89). The British state opposed paid maternity leaves even in the inter-war years, mainly because it was felt that such financial provision by the state would devalue the father's role of supporting the family and thus encourage family disintegration. The important elements here, therefore, in contrast with the situation in France, are first, the emphasis on *mothers'* responsibility for children's welfare; second, the role of the father as breadwinner; and third, opposition to state intervention in issues of maternity and the family. Such opposition, and the lack of financial compensation to mothers, results in a situation where maternity, women's unique function, is not given validation by the state. Such a lack of financial support is particularly important in a society which, as we have seen, tends to value individuals in monetary terms. At the same time, an emphasis on the male as breadwinner denies support to women as workers, since their place is assumed to be in the home. Again, this situation persists today: family allowances are lower in Britain than in other European countries, and so maternity is largely unsupported; and there is a lack of the childcare facilities which make it easier for women to work, so that their position as workers also goes unsupported.

Where French family policy rests on a pronatalism which also acknowledges women's role as workers, British family policy has been influenced by the emphasis on a "family wage" In France employers, labour organisations, the state and even the church (the social Catholics) campaigned for ways in which work and motherhood could be combined, while unions and government in Britain were driven by demands for a family wage. Men were accepted to be the breadwinners, and any family support from the state was regarded as undermining the case for higher wages. Taking place in the context of a liberal tradition which opposed state intervention and advocated individual responsibility, this resulted in demands being directed on behalf of men (who as breadwinners were those responsible for their individual families) towards employers rather than the state. The powerful labour movement, whose members largely composed male, skilled craftsmen, was also opposed to moves to employ female,

unskilled (and therefore cheaper) labour. In addition to this, social reformers of the time, many of them women, sought to remove women and children from the conditions of the factory.

While in France, therefore, groups across the social and political spectrum sought a solution to women's right to motherhood *and* work, in Britain campaigning groups were reinforcing the notion of men's role as breadwinners and women's role as mothers and homemakers. There are clear links here with the findings of the present study, where we see a conflict of roles experienced by the English women and the relative absence of such a conflict among the French.

What is curious is first, that the situation in France developed despite its Catholic tradition, which might be expected to oppose the notion of women as workers; and second, that what might appear to be the obvious solution to the fruitless British demands for a "family wage", namely creating situations by which women would more easily be allowed to work and thus contribute to family income, was rejected. It is not the purpose of the present study to propose explanations, but to relate the findings to the social and cultural conditions pertaining to each country. These themselves derive from differences in social organisation and historical circumstances, however, and some possible explanations may be forwarded based on these.

There are several possible reasons for the situation in France. First, and particularly since the Revolution, Church and State have been in violent opposition but both immensely powerful. The encouragement both to work and to stay at home and produce babies may simply reflect the two sides of these opposing influences. In fact, however, Catholicism and the State share one of the principle tenets of the Revolution, namely universality. Todd (1988, 1991) argues that the Revolution "borrowed" the notion of universality from the Roman tradition (first the Empire, then the Catholic church) and that the church had never been opposed to equality, but principally to

liberty. While there may be opposing influences from church and state, therefore, there may also be a confluence: universality and equality are as much a part of Catholicism as of the Revolution and the state.

Reasons for the situation in Britain have already been suggested above: the opposition to state intervention in the family; the influence of the labour movement and its opposition to the use of cheaper, unskilled female labour; and that of social reformers who wanted to remove women from the factories. However, what both the British and French situations rest upon is contrasting images of gender roles, and in particular the question of "separate spheres". Clearly, as Jenson (op cit) points out, the imagined ideals in the two countries were very different:

> Behind the unions' actions was an imagined utopian future of an idyllic family household in which women would be spared the horrific working conditions of the factory, and where they could devote themselves (in health and with time) to their families. This imagined idyll obviously also benefitted men who would find a healthy, happy home after work, one which would be their "castle" (Jenson, p 32)
>
> For French unions and the social reformers close to them, the world imagined was one in which women were not necessarily confined to the private sphere. Rather the imagined ideal was one in which there was sufficient time for both work and family, for leisure and for homelife. The campaign for the reduced work week, for example, emphasized the *semaine anglaise* (a half-day off on Saturday) arguing it would allow women to do their domestic work on Saturday and still give time for both women and men to enjoy a leisurely Sunday. (Jenson, p 37)

There is a remarkable accord between the imagined ideals described here and the accounts given by the women in this study - the concern of the English women with housework, and the emphasis on the home, for example, and that of the French women with balancing work lives, home lives and leisure. It was, and still is, assumed that women will be responsible for domestic work in both countries (see, for example, Chabaud et al, 1984; Gershuny et al, 1994) but what is important here is the difference in ideals concerning work, the home and the roles of men and women.

It is stressed in Chapter 2 (p 57/58) that a study such as this is based on interpretations which cannot be conclusively established, but which can be judged for their plausibility. The aim is analytic generalisation and the generation of hypotheses. Any *explanations* for the findings are beyond the scope of this thesis, therefore, and what follows represents *speculation* on the reasons for the differences found, relating the existing literature, the data presented here and its cultural and historical context. Such speculation presents a framework for discussion and further research.

The explanation offered here for the contrasting ideals of the two countries is, as outlined in Chapter 1, the different economic systems operating in the two countries until very recently: the family economy in France and the family wage economy in Britain (Tilly and Scott, op cit). Industrialisation ("the family wage economy") resulted in "separate spheres" for men and women in Britain, whereas in France, where industrialisation was slower to develop, men and women were working together (albeit on different tasks), in the same place and thus both playing a role as producers. There was not the same physical separation of work role and family role, of male and female "spheres" which might give rise to images of women's domain being the home and men's the workplace. Even after industrialisation in France, manufacturing continued in smaller, family-based firms; textiles were less important, and agriculture, with women working alongside men, remained a larger part of the total economy (Jenson, op cit; Tilly and Scott, op cit).

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In addition to these differing family economies, France has pursued a pronatalist policy, also outlined in Chapter 1, which has encouraged women to combine working with motherhood. These factors together have created a situation where "society" is transmitting different messages to the women in Britain and France. In France "women's work" is valued, and children and the family shown to be important, by means of allowances paid to mothers and responsibility for childcare being taken to a large extent by the state. In Britain "women's work" and the caring of children is

validated neither by state financial incentives nor by its taking responsibility for childcare. The situation thus presented is one where it is assumed that those who bear children must also be responsible for their upbringing, but that this work is not of value to "society". Since this concerns women's unique and essential feminine role, it may go some way to explaining why the English women in this study feel undervalued as women and more confident/competent at work, which is traditionally a male domain and, since it is paid, given greater validation. Women cannot deny their female identity and their roles as mothers and homemakers, however, and since this is also assumed by society to be their role, there is a conflict between work and femininity. The emphasis on separate spheres and paid work as men's work may also account for the English women's concern with control and powerlessness, because they have traditionally been dependent on men for their livelihoods.

Much of the above discussion centres on the questions of equality and difference. How should the issue of equality be resolved given men's and women's difference? Offen (1988, 1991) has approached this question by looking at the different ways in which feminism has evolved in France and the Anglo-Saxon countries, and the differences relate clearly to the differing ideologies described above, and the findings of the present study.

Feminism, equality and difference

Offen argues that it is the Anglo-American model on which much discussion of feminism is based. This has a strongly individualist character, and is concerned with self-realisation, resistance to domesticity and dependence on a male breadwinner, and ambivalence about government intervention. French feminism has emphasised women's rights *as women*, and the complementary responsibilities of men and women rather than personal liberty. While there has been a feminist movement in France which

resembles those in the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries[1], this has not gained widespread support. We see this in the findings of this study: it will be recalled that only one of the French respondents in this study (Nathalie) spoke of the social position of women. As one of the most highly educated women in the study, it might be expected that she would echo some of the feminist views of the English women. Her account, however, though analytical and articulate, was not characterised by the collectivist/feminist (in the Anglo-Saxon sense) tone of the English women. Indeed she suggested that negative attitudes towards women are often brought about by the women themselves.

Both Zeldin (op cit) and Ardagh (1982) describe the feminist movements in France as "marginal", and both attribute this to the power which women have traditionally had within the family. Ardagh describes French women as seeing themselves in relation to the family and to individual men rather than to other women or the community as a whole. And similarly Ezekiel (op cit) describes how American feminism is regarded as a threat to French universalism and to male/female relationships in France. Offen terms these differing forms of feminism "individual" and "relational", rooted in the historical factors described above. In both cultures the issue has been equality, but in France women have fought for equality on the basis of difference and complementarity, while in Britain and America the emphasis has been on individual rights regardless of gender. Again this lends support to Apfelbaum's (1993) observations on the primacy of the couple: French women appear not to want to engage in a feminism which will alienate them from men.

Offen argues that in the Anglo-Saxon countries the language of classical economics and political liberalism has been transposed to serve the emancipation of women. It downplays socially defined roles and socially constructed norms, and so refuses to

[1] Those authors from the Centre Lyonnais d'Etudes Féministes cited in this study (Chabaud et al, Herzbrün-Dayan), for example, would be more recognisably "feminist" in the Anglo-American conception of feminism.

acknowledge limitation by them. Both single and married women, therefore, have seen liberation in terms of personal independence and a non-family-based existence. A stress on motherhood has been seen as conservative and reactionary, and attention has instead been focussed on paid extra-domestic work, competing with men in this traditionally male "sphere". Anglo-Saxon feminism has therefore been characterised by "sameness": equality comes from having the same rights and opportunities as men, regardless of bodily difference.

French socio-political discourse, by comparison, with its emphasis on the nation-state and the family, has been anti-capitalist, anti-individualist, solidarist and corporatist. In particular the importance of the family, and the couple as the basis of the family, has stressed the complementarity of men and women, not only in the context of family relations themselves, but also in terms of the family as an economic unit. This complementarity has resulted in a feminism based on women's difference from, but not inferiority to, men.[1] It acknowledges a dualism but not a hierarchy. Men and women are not in competition, but are complementary.

It is clear that there are similar threads running through this consideration of family policy and feminism, and the findings of this study. The emphasis in the English women's accounts is on independence, autonomy, self-fulfilment, individuality and freedom from restriction. We see this in their attitudes to work, where they feel free to be themselves and where they find fulfilment; in their affective relations, where emotional attachment is experienced as emotionally demanding and restricting; and in the home, where home ownership is valued because it brings independence from landlords and the state. Their lives are configured around individual fulfilment at work and home-based activities centring on the nuclear, rather than the extended family.

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[1] Ardagh (1982) cites one of the slogans of the French women's movement as "le droit à la différence" (p 334).

The emphasis for the French women, however, is on relations with others. They are aware of their femininity but do not regard this, or their affective relations, as restrictive. The most important aspect of work is to have something outside the home, something to stimulate conversation with (that is, relating to) others; they do not see their relationships as restricting their autonomy; and their lives outside work involve the extended as well as the nuclear family, and a broader range of activities.

The groups of women here, therefore, would appear to epitomise the contrasting "individual" and "relational" attitudes defined by Offen. As such they reflect not only the different types of family economy and social organisation in the two countries, but also another important influence, namely that of Protestantism/Catholicism.

Protestantism and Catholicism

It is not possible here to engage in a detailed discussion of Protestant and Catholic doctrine and how these relate to the present study. Again, too, it is necessary to emphasise that what follows is not offered as *explanation* but serves rather to highlight relations between the current findings and cultural features which *may* account for them.

There are certain parallels between aspects of Protestantism and the characteristics of capitalist and industrialist societies criticised by Marx and alluded to above (the interchangeability of workers, people's worth determined by what they earn, regarding people as commodities, for example). Weber, however, who differed from Marx in rejecting the notion that ideas derive solely from socio-economic conditions, and argued that ideas and socio-economic conditions often develop together, believed that the development of Protestantism produced a type of individual particularly suited to capitalism. Industrialisation, capitalism and Protestantism therefore form a combination

of socio-economic conditions and ideas which developed together, mutually reinforcing each other.

The principal feature of both Protestantism and capitalism is the accumulation of wealth. At the same time Protestantism discourages the spending of money on personal pleasure. This situation is described by Collier et al (op cit) in their discussion of Weber:

> Protestantism raised work to the level of a moral obligation and made idleness a sin. At the same time, a person was discouraged from spending money on personal luxuries. The Protestant ethic in its original form opposed any form of spontaneous enjoyment - games, art, theater [sic], or any ostentatious display of wealth. The result was a hard-working individual, continually striving to earn more money, but unable to use it for personal enjoyment. (Collier et al, p 161)

There is a clear relation between this description and the accounts of the English women in this study: work is the most important aspect of their identities; there is a need to produce; and an emphasis on housework. They go out less than the French women, spending less on entertainment, and there is less of an emphasis on social life and holidays. The emphasis on property ownership is at least in part because (particularly in the 1980s) owning property was regarded as an investment.

Secondly, Protestantism emphasises the individual rather than the community. Protestantism rejects the papal authority and clerical hierarchies characteristic of the Catholic Church, and replaces it with an equally "vertical vision of the universe and society" (Todd, op cit, p 52), where the summit is, as in Catholicism, God, but to whom all individuals have direct access. Protestantism thus rejects universality, equality and authority. As Todd describes, it did not accept the idea of a communion of peoples within a universal Church and was inegalitarian in its emphasis on a "chosen elite of true Christians and the mass of humanity that would not escape from original sin" (Todd, p 52). It was hostile to redistribution in its institutionalised form of alms and the charity of the Catholic Church.

Again this is somewhat exaggerated, since clearly equality and charity are not completely absent from British society. But, as we have seen above, the *institutions* of British society do not advocate universality in terms of men and women, who are still assumed to inhabit separate spheres; as such they do not take responsibility for equality, emphasising instead individual responsibility; and laisser-faire liberalism opposes institutionalised redistribution in the form of state intervention.

Catholicism, on the other hand, is anti-capitalist, anti-individualist and authoritarian. Although hierarchical in terms of clergy and the authority and infallibility of the Pope, it regards individuals as equals, united within a universal Church, and so is opposed to the Protestant notion of "the elect" The accumulation of wealth was, at least in principle, not sanctioned by the Church.

> The Church respected the land, but hated money and trading in goods. It considered that, in general, economic interests should be subordinated to moral principles. It was anti-capitalist. It could not accept the overall vision of an individualistic and commercial society free of constraint. (Todd, p 94)

The Church was favourable to a moderate form of state intervention and had always supported charitable redistribution and the moral responsibility of élites. We can see these values reflected in the lesser emphasis of the French women on money and the economic aspects of work, and in the greater acceptance in France generally of state intervention compared with Britain.

Above all, the Catholic church is anti-individualist. The Church in France did not like to leave the individual isolated and free, preferring a tight network of social relationships. Principal among these was the family. The purpose of marriage is the constitution of families and the procreation of children. This leads to a simultaneous idealisation and repression of women (Zeldin, op cit): the idealisation of motherhood and repression in the form of opposition to abortion and contraception, for example. Zeldin argues, however, that such repression was counterbalanced by giving women considerable power in limited fields, and that Mrs Pankhurst, for example, attributed

the lack of a feminist movement in France to the "backstairs influence of women: Frenchwomen knew they had power and they did not think the vote would increase it" (Zeldin, op cit, p 346). This is reflected in Danièle's comment in the material presented here: "C'est la femme qui dirige" (It's the woman who is in charge). Certainly in the accounts given by the French women here there is not the same lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem and concern with powerlessness presented by the English women. Their femininity forms an important part of their identity and they do not seek to deny it. They feel valued as much in their strictly female roles as in their roles as workers.

Another important factor related to the family is that of attitudes towards children. McClelland (1961) has argued that Protestant ideas and values produce childrearing practices which encourage independence and mastery. McClelland linked this to strong achievement motivation, which is also evident in this study, but a further consequence is the development of self-reliance rather than dependence (Lorraine's mother not wishing to "interfere", for example).

While it is regarded as a Catholic country, however, what particularly characterises France (compared with its Latin neighbours) is the opposition of Church and State. While the Republican state has, as has been described, adopted certain Catholic values, such as universality, equality, solidarism and anti-capitalism, in terms of the Revolution it was the notion of individual liberty which chiefly distinguished the Church and the State. It might be expected, therefore, that there would be strong anti-state, anti-authoritarian influences as well as those of Catholicism. It is possible that these are reflected in the French women's greater tendency to reject the formal ties of marriage, for example, thus rejecting both religious and state authority. At the same time, however, there is an acceptance of limited state intervention as an agent of the common good. In some ways, therefore, the authority of the Church has been replaced by the authority of the State. It is possible that the Revolution and the State, while seeking to

destroy the Church, has perpetuated some of its values and these are reflected in the individual attitudes seen here.

As stated above, it is not within the scope of this study to establish causal relationships for the findings presented here. The aim is rather to point to the relationships which exist between the perceptions and attitudes of individuals, and broader social, cultural, historic and economic factors. As such they are offered as *possible* explanations for the differences found. Further research would draw on this material to test the validity of the hypotheses put forward. What this study suggests, however, is that personal, social and cultural identity are closely related, and that individual psychology must be understood within its broader social and cultural context.

Implications for Social Psychology

In the critique of social psychology in Chapter 2, the aim of social psychology was taken to be the reconciling of the social with the psychological. It was further suggested that an historical assessment of social psychology shows that there have been broadly two approaches: the sociological and the psychological, and that the present study, with its focus on the relationship between the broader social context and individual behaviour, falls distinctly into the "sociological" social psychology camp. It differs from major recent sociological approaches, however, which tend either to emphasise language, or to see behaviour and personal identity as a collection of prescribed roles, duties, rights and obligations. The modernist assumption that psychological principles are timeless, universal and applicable to different cultures was also questioned, as was the dualism of subject and object.

While this study is not sufficient in itself to undermine existing approaches to social psychology, it serves to highlight the complexity of social psychological phenomena and to argue for the societal approach referred to in Chapter 2 and below. The clear

patterns and themes which emerge also show that, as long as different methods are used rigorously and compared systematically, large sample sizes are not necessary to uncover meaningful results. Obviously the findings presented here cannot be generalised to large populations, but there is enough consistency to provide the basis for further studies and hypothesis testing. In addition, not only has a relationship between individual psychology and broader social context been uncovered, the patterns found across individuals and in particular between the two national groups shows that the study of social institutions ("the products of social order", Himmelweit, op cit, p24) is not only possible but also a potentially fruitful area for research.

This study subscribes to a view of social psychology which recognises the social embeddedness of individuals. The heuristic function of cultural comparison shows how attitudes are determined by social context. While the object of analysis was to remain the individual, therefore, the aim was to uncover patterns *across* individuals which reflect cultural features: that is, to see whether cultural features as macrophenomena were represented as microphenomena in the perceptions of individuals. Since the aim was to discover to what extent individual attitudes and behaviour are related to social and cultural differences, however, the emphasis was on commonalities rather than individual difference.

Language reveals cultural differences and so in-depth methods using respondents' own words were felt to be necessary, in order to bring out cultural specificity in terms of how the English and French women conceptualise their roles and identities. As described in Chapter 2, language *per se* was not the object of analysis here. However, language, and in particular respondents' own words, was the vehicle for eliciting individual attitudes, and this allowed respondents to express themselves in ways that were revealing of cultural values - the English women's tendency to use the language of the marketplace, for example, and the French women's talk in terms of love and romance - which would have been missed if more structured, quantitative methods had

been used. As pointed out previously (p 60), language is not a neutral vehicle and, assuming that we think in words as well as pictures, we are only able to think according to the words available to us in our language. Those words are passed to us by our immediate families, educational, political and religious institutions and, increasingly, the media. Our language, and therefore our thinking, is consequently the product of our culture. This applies not only to national culture, but also to different sections of society within one culture - differences in class, religion, gender and so on will be reflected in the language individuals use to describe their experiences.

In addition to the expression of attitudes through individual language, the present study has also examined the importance of role, and the relative importance of the different roles which are fulfilled by the women here. While it is accepted, therefore, that there are discrete roles which individuals perform, it is less clear that these are sharply defined between the relevant corresponding situations, or that they are equally differentiated for all people. The French women, for example, describe a clear division of work life and home life which suggests that roles are more sharply differentiated for them than for the English women. At the same time they describe themselves as being more "natural" at home, or with their partners and families. The English women, on the other hand, say that they are more "themselves" in their work roles, freed of emotional involvement. What is common to both is their own feeling that there *is* a core self, which transcends the roles they play or which are expected of them.[1] It is clear that the women here do see themselves in terms of different roles in different situations, and so the theatrical metaphor remains a useful one. But just as the actor is not the sum of his or her roles, and has a persona independent of these roles, so the women here have a sense of themselves which is independent of their various roles, feeling that they are more "themselves" in one role than another. The concept of role is useful but not sufficient, therefore, in defining identity.

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[1] Of course the notion of a "core self" is debatable (see Chapter 2). The symbolic interactionists, for example, would argue that since our self-concept is the result of our perceptions of how others see us, there is no independently existing "self" What is important is the women's own perspective here.

This study demonstrates clearly that there is a relationship between social and cultural context and individual attitudes and behaviour. The differences found between the English and the French women can be directly related to economic and historical circumstances, differences in the organisation of work and the family, aspects of social and family policy, societal attitudes towards childcare and childrearing, religious values and political ideology. While a uni-directional causal relationship cannot be established here (see below), the fact that a relationship between these factors can be demonstrated shows the importance of taking social and cultural context into account. It demonstrates the social embeddedness of individuals, and shows that subject and object, individual and society, cannot be considered separately when examining questions of this kind. Cultural features as macrophenomena *are* represented as microphenomena in the perceptions of the individuals here. Societal *values* are reflected in individual *attitudes and behaviour*.

The present study demonstrates that the social embeddedness of individuals means that social psychological principles and mechanisms cannot be considered as timeless, universal and applicable to different cultures. The findings presented here suggest not only that individual attitudes reflect broader social and cultural context, but also that these have historical roots. In the case of the present study, possible explanations for the attitudes expressed have been traced to, for example, the earlier onset of the Industrial Revolution and the wage economy in Britain; and the continuation of the family economy and the problem of a falling birthrate in France. If attitudes can be linked with historical circumstances in this way, they can also be expected to change as circumstances change. Again this is a dynamic situation, where the attitudes of individuals may both influence and be influenced by their environments. Attitudes cannot be regarded as timeless, therefore, but as reflecting changing sets of values.

This study also demonstrates the importance of carrying out cross-cultural research within western cultures, rather than regarding them as homogeneous. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, psychology, where it does make cross-cultural comparisons, tends to differentiate between, say, industrialised and pre-industrial cultures, or between east and west. We have shown here that important distinctions can be drawn between two apparently similar, industrialised cultures. These more subtle, but no less clear-cut distinctions become increasingly important in, for example, the context of European unity, or racial integration. An awareness of national differences may facilitate dialogue and compromise where an assumption of "sameness" may only create conflict. Again, it is necessary not only to be aware of differing attitudes, but also of the differing social, cultural and historical contexts in which they are formed.

Social psychology also needs to be aware of the cultural embeddedness of its practitioners themselves. In particular, theoretical and epistemological positions in social psychology have been dominated by the Anglo-Saxon model. Sampson, in a series of articles (1977, 1978, 1985, 1988) argues that the dominant American scientific paradigm, and that which persists in psychology, derives from the context of Puritan Protestantism, individualism, male dominance, selective equality, private property and capitalism.[1] In its concern with the abstract, the general and the universal it reflects the Anglo-Saxon cultural ideal which is, according to Sampson, male-oriented, individualistic and with an emphasis on achievement, mastery and detachment, on agency rather than communion, and on establishing order and coherence. The ideal of personhood thus presented is androgynous, both male and female; and self-contained, with the principles of agency and communion balanced within each individual. Such an ideal is incongruous with the thesis of

[1] Early European social theory, on the other hand, such as that of Marx and Durkheim, stressed the importance of larger social and economic institutions, and French social psychology in particular has focussed on collective representations rather than individual understanding (Farr, 1987).

interdependence, and so it is the individual person, not the community, who is responsible for success and failure, for resolving problems and inducing change.

There are clear parallels between the scientific paradigm and the ideal of personhood presented by Sampson, and the findings of this study. There is a striking similarity between his descriptions of the Anglo-Saxon cultural ideal and the Anglo-Saxon ideal of personhood, with their emphasis on self-contained individualism, achievement, mastery, detachment and androgyny, and the attitudes expressed by the English women here. We have seen that they are concerned about being an individual, with achievement and needing to "produce", with control and feeling too enmeshed in their relationships with others. They are less aware of their femininity than the French women, and it has been suggested that they need to pursue traditionally masculine ideals because it is these which are valued.

Sampson thus provides us with a link between the practice of psychology, the ideal of personhood which it presents, and the findings of the present study. We need to be aware that not only are the questions which social psychology might wish to investigate socially embedded, but so too are we as researchers. And just as cross-cultural comparisons may throw light on our own experience of certain phenomena, so an awareness of alternative paradigms, notions of the person and differing approaches in psychology itself may provide us with insights which would otherwise be unavailable to us. It is a concern with issues such as these which characterises the societal psychology approach, to which we now turn.

Societal Psychology

In the consideration of social psychology in Chapter 2, particular attention was paid to the societal psychology approach of Himmelweit and Gaskell. Himmelweit (op cit) presented fifteen propositions which characterise a societal psychology approach. Certain of these - individual responses to social change, the need to move from the individual to social institutions as the unit of analysis (but see above), the need for closer links between basic and applied social psychology, for example - are not directly relevant to the present study, but the extent to which it fulfils the remaining twelve criteria will now be assessed.

1. Human beings need to be studied in a sociocultural context, which is itself attuned to economic and historical circumstances.

The sociocultural context of women's lives in the two countries has been taken into account throughout, with economic and historical circumstances being considered both as the basis for the research questions, and related to the ultimate findings. These include the organisation of work and the family, France's pronatalist policy *versus* Britain's emphasis on a family wage, and the effects of these on social policy and gender relations.

2. We need to be "conversant" with the characteristics of the environment in which individuals function just as experimental psychologists are familiar with the properties of the stimulus materials they provide.

Himmelweit argues that while anthropologists have contributed most to our knowledge and understanding of the meaning which a given culture places on legal and political institutions, value systems, representations and norms, there is a valuable role to be played by psychologists in describing the consequences that occur when "a new idea out there becomes part of people's repertoire or scripts" (Himmelweit, p 23). The present study shows quite clearly that there is a relationship between the differing characteristics of the French and English women's environments and their individual

attitudes and behaviour. While a causal relationship cannot be established, the fact that such a relationship exists shows that " Ontologically speaking, individual and collectivity are inseparable" (Jahoda, 1986), and that further studies should focus on this relationship rather than the individual stripped of his or her social context.

3. The objective characteristics of the environment need to be studied alongside its mediated reality.

Himmelweit argues that we must take account not only of societal and individual attributions but also the objective circumstances of social phenomena. She uses Jahoda's approach to the question of unemployment as an example: when investigating the psychological effects of unemployment we must take into account not only individual interpretations of the situation of unemployment, but also the objective circumstances of job loss, such as social deprivation, deskilling, loss of identity and structure. Corresponding to this, what the present study has done is to align individual attitudes and behaviour with both historical and economic circumstances and the differing day-to-day aspects of the French and English women's lives. In this way the objective characteristics of the relevant environments have been taken into account alongside individuals' interpretations of those environments.

4. The aim of societal psychology is "the development of conceptual frameworks or models rather than the forlorn search for invariant laws".

As has been stated previously, the aim of this study was not to test hypotheses or attempt statistical generalisation. The aim was rather analytic generalisation, and the *generation* of hypotheses. It was not known at the beginning whether any differences between the various groups would be uncovered. For the most part the findings are descriptive rather than explanatory, therefore. Any explanations for the findings are necessarily speculative. But such speculation itself represents a framework for further research (including quantitative research using larger samples) which may or may not confirm the findings here.

5. We need theories and insights drawn from the other social science disciplines as well as from psychology.

Throughout, the present study has drawn on literature from other disciplines - social anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, social history, social policy and philosophy. This has been necessary in order to take into account all those factors which may contribute to an understanding of the issues involved. Just as the individual cannot be considered outside his or her social context, so psychology cannot be considered in isolation from those other disciplines and literatures which inform it.

6. Generalisations, as well as individuals, are embedded in the historical circumstances of the day and there is therefore a need to maintain a historical perspective.

The present study does not attempt generalisations, but the historical embeddedness of psychological principles and mechanisms has been acknowledged above, suggesting that since attitudes reflect societal values, they will change as values change across time.

7. Cross-fertilisation between societal psychology and the other social science disciplines is essential for the adequate analysis of social phenomena and social systems.

This issue is related to point 5 above. Just as this study has drawn on the literature and research of other disciplines, what should follow is dialogue between psychologists and practitioners of other disciplines, because psychology has much to offer these other disciplines just as they have much to offer psychology. In the context of women's work, for example, where sociologists and those concerned with social policy may focus on work patterns, labour markets and so on, psychology can contribute by showing how these affect or are affected by the behaviours, beliefs, perceptions and responses of the kind presented in the material here.

8. There is a need for a cross-fertilisation between societal and other psychologists - particularly those in the developmental and personality fields

Himmelweit argues that the study of socialisation is essential for understanding the interdependence of the individual and the collectivity, whether this be early socialisation of the individual or socialisation into the institutions of a society. In its focus on the self-concept, and in looking at the respondents' own family upbringing, education and work history, the present study clearly shares ground with developmental and personality psychology. Again, it has drawn on theory and literature from both these fields, but in general psychology ignores the broader social context in theories of development and personality. This study demonstrates how these areas are related, and how collaboration and dialogue between these different areas could contribute much to our mutual understanding.

9. In analysing both institutions and individuals, a systems approach is required in which objective reality and the perceptions of that reality, as well as individual histories and "mental maps" are all considered essential ingredients.

In the present study, objective reality is represented by the patterns of work, childcare provision and day-to-day structure in the two countries; perceptions of that reality by the data gathered from each of the methods used; individuals' histories by the interview material; and mental maps by the patterns and themes identified in the data thus elicited. In so doing, the present study acknowledges the complexity of the issues under consideration, and attempts to examine the different elements thought to contribute to it.

10. The study of social phenomena requires analysis at the macro as well as the micro level.

Himmelweit uses the example of health psychology to show that in order to understand a phenomenon, it is necessary to gain perspectives at several interlocking levels. In the case of health psychology this would include, for example, epidemiological statistics, trend analyses, comparative analysis about the uptake of new ideas and practices by the

medical professions and by the public. Corresponding elements in the present study would be statistics concerning patterns of work, provision of childcare and state benefits, differing patterns of daily life, and attitudes towards the family and children, for example. These are considered at a societal level, and related to individual histories, attitudes and experience.

11. We need to accept that there is no such thing as value-free research. Researchers are as embedded in their own culture and the current canons of their discipline as the individuals they are studying.

This needs particular attention in the case of cross-cultural research. In particular, there is a tendency among cross-cultural researchers to regard other cultures as superior in certain aspects to their own. This is understandable, since they are a) trained to regard their own culture critically and b) are by definition interested in cultures other than their own. Special efforts need to be made to view each culture in an equally open-minded manner, but ultimately this is not possible. We are as embedded in our own culture as those we are attempting to study.

A further issue is that of differences in assumptions held by researcher and respondent. In the present study, a period spent living in France, rather than simply visiting for the purposes of gathering data, was deemed necessary partly to overcome this problem. It was still the case, however, that the French women, for example, though completely co-operative, were clearly less familiar with the discourse and methods used in carrying out the study than were the English. This suggests that the aims and design of the study were themselves the products of a culture different from that of the French. A French researcher is likely to investigate and report the same issues quite differently. This cannot be avoided, because the researcher herself is culturally embedded, however aware and knowledgable she may be of differences between the cultures being compared. The cultural and historical embeddedness of researchers themselves is discussed in relation to Sampson above.

12. We need a range of research tools drawn not only from psychology but also from the humanities and the other social sciences. No one method is ideal: method should be fitted to the phenomena to be examined rather than the other way round.

It will be recalled that this study was originally to be carried out using survey methods and questionnaires. This was ultimately felt to be inappropriate, however, for the subject under investigation, namely the meaning of womanhood, work and family, and the place of these in women's identity. At the same time, a single method such as in-depth interview (and, say, discourse analysis) was felt to be unacceptable as this would not be sufficiently robust or objective. The methods finally employed were chosen, therefore, first in order to answer the question being asked; and second to increase robustness and allow analysis in a systematic way. Only one of the methods used - the repertory grid - is drawn from psychology in a strict sense; the TST was originally used in sociology (though it has been used extensively in psychology), and the interview material, in being transcribed and treated as texts, has more in common with literary analysis. These were felt to be the methods most appropriate to the present study; but as has been mentioned above, the results found here could be further investigated using larger samples and alternative techniques, depending on what is to be examined.

The present study, therefore, may be regarded as an example of "societal psychology" As such, it shows the values of such an approach: it illustrates the insights which can be gained by examining the individual not only in his or her micro-social context, but also taking account of broader social, cultural and institutional factors, particularly in historical perspective. This has important implications not only for the practice of social psychology itself, but also for its application in real-life settings.

CONCLUSIONS

The starting point for this study was the differing employment patterns of women in Britain and France, with that of French women showing continuous activity and British women dropping out of employment to rear children, resuming work once their children were grown. This investigation set out to examine women's attitudes towards work and family in the two countries, in order to relate these patterns to individual choices and the larger institutional factors which might determine them.

Schmidt (1993) argues that what has been neglected in research on participation rates is a truly comparative framework and satisfactory explanations for the cross-country differences in labour force participation, particularly the institutional determinants of such differences. He lists as examples of such institutional determinants taxation, economic policy, the role of the unions, the political composition of government, the political representation of women, employment structure, religious traditions and attitudes towards gender. It is a consideration of such issues which this study provides.

Initially it was suggested that the principle explanation for differences in women's employment in England and France lay in economic structure: earlier industrialisation in England and the relatively late persistence of the family economy in France. While this remains a plausible explanation on the strength of the findings presented here, it is clearly not the only factor. Economic policy (in terms of housing, for example), social policy (family allowances and childcare), trade union acceptance or resistance, religious traditions and attitudes towards gender have all been implicated. What is suggested, however, is that none of these influences alone can account for the differences found. Each of these factors itself reflects more general ideologies of the countries concerned. In the case of women's work, for example, argument in Britain has centred on the provision of childcare. But

Belgium, which enjoys state provision of childcare equal to that in France, has a female activity rate similar to those of Greece and Portugal: that is, high rates only for single women, with others stopping work definitively after marriage or childbirth. It becomes necessary therefore to look to more general ideologies concerning gender relations, the family and the role of women to explain such phenomena.

The importance of this study lies in its demonstration that such ideologies are reflected in the identities, attitudes and behaviours of individuals. What it cannot do is say to what extent those individual beliefs and behaviours determine, or are determined by, such ideologies and institutions. The strong convergence of attitudes within the national groups examined here, suggests that the institutional influence comes first, through childrearing practices, education (in its broadest sense), religion and the State, for example. But what determines such institutional difference between cultures? Is it, as the *Annales* historians would argue, ultimately the exigencies of climate and geography? Such questions are perhaps untestable - but uncovering patterns and linking material from different sources in the manner of the present study may go some way to furthering understanding.

At a more immediate level, this study raises several questions for further research. As has been stressed above, since they are based on a small number of respondents the findings presented here cannot be generalised to a larger "population" There is however enough consistency within, and differences between, national groups to suggest that these may represent differences in national and cultural identity which could be examined on a larger scale.

The number of respondents represented here is not only small, it is also highly selective. To what extent are the findings here reflected in the attitudes of women working in different sectors, at different levels, or at different stages in the

lifecycle? How does the identity of the women here differ from that of women who choose to stay at home to look after children, or choose to work part-time? To what extent *are* these free choices, and to what extent are they determined by the social and institutional factors outlined above? In particular, much of the discussion here has centred on differing ideologies concerning the family and gender roles. What of men, therefore? Do their identities, beliefs and attitudes also reflect these differing ideologies? Of particular interest is the differing patterns of gender relations in the two countries: the French women in this study appear to have maintained relations with their partners after having children, whereas for the English women relations with partners have largely broken down. Is this a more general phenomenon in the two countries, and if so, how does it come about? How is the culture of the couple in France transmitted and internalised?

It has been emphasised in earlier chapters that the aim of a study of this kind is to generate hypotheses rather than test them. In addition, since there was no similar previous work on which to draw, this study constitutes an initial step which is necessarily descriptive, rather than explanatory, in nature. Any relationships and extrapolations are speculative, therefore, suggesting links from which explanations *may* follow. What has been uncovered are differences which need to be investigated further by means of the kinds of questions suggested above. This, therefore, is only a beginning ...

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APPENDIX I: Sample grids

Ideal ya

ya ii 20 yrs

ya nrs

ya with parent

ya with partner

ya with child

ya at home

ya at school

ya ii last yd

ya ii next yd

ya with colleague

ya with boss

ya with best friend

ya alone

ya a holiday

ya at work

	Ideal You	You in 20 yrs.	You now	You with parent	You with partner	You with child	You at home	You at school	You in last job	You in next job	You with colleague	You with boss	You with friend	You alone	You on holiday	You at work	
Focus on hobbies	3	2	3	3	⑤x	2	5	3	2	4	②	②	5	3	5	2	Committed
Lack of knowledge	1	①	3	3	3	①	2	4	2	4	2	2	2	⑤x	2	2	Insecurity of the people
Committed	3	3	3	4	①	4	2	4	3	3	3	⑤x	①	1	1	4	Rude
Insignificant	①	3	2	4	3	3	3	4	②	⑤x	2	2	2	3	2	2	Unapproved
Belonging	5	4	④x	①	3	4	3	①	5	2	4	4	4	3	4	5	No belonging
Rude	1	3	3	2	1	3	①	④x	①	5	3	2	2	4	1	2	Shy, lack
Unstructured	①	2	3	3	3	2	④x	3	2	3	2	2	3	4	3	①	Structured
Tense	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	④x	3	3	①	4	②	3	Relaxed
Insignificant	4	3	2	2	②	2	3	2	3	1	3	3	4	⑤x	4	②	Important
Unemployed	①	②	④x	4	4	2	3	4	2	4	2	2	2	4	2	2	Employed

Le "Vous" Idéal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vous dans 20 ans	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Vous maintenant	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Vous avec parents	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Vous avec partenaire	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Vous avec enfants	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Vous à la maison	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Vous à l'école	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
L'emploi le plus agréable	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
L'emploi le plus désagréable	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Vous avec collègues	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Vous avec supérieurs	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Vous avec meilleur(e) ami(e)	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Vous seul	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Vous en vacances	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Vous au travail	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16

APPENDIX II: Respondent Profiles

French Single women

Name:	Annick
Age:	33
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	-
Education:	Bac + 2 (book production)
Position in company:	Production manager

Name:	Nathalie
Age:	31
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	
Education:	Degree, maîtrise, translation qualification
Position in company:	Project manager

Name:	Josiane
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	Vocational qualifications (secretarial/bookkeeping)
Position in company:	Bookkeeper

Name:	Catherine
Age:	29
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	
Education:	Degree, maîtrise, cartography qualification
Position in company:	Cartographer

Name:	Françoise
Age:	32
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	Bac + 3 (accountancy), computing qualification
Position in company:	Accountant

French Married

Name:	Valérie
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Married
No of children:	2 (5 and 7 yrs)
Education:	Bac + 5 (computing)
Position in company:	Computing services

Name:	Marie-Claire
Age:	35
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Divorced Re-married
No of children:	3 (17, 12 and 6 yrs)
Education:	Secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Secretary

Name:	Laurence
Age:	33
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	1 (6 mths)
Education:	Bac + secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Assistant editor

Name:	Danièle
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Divorced Cohabiting
No of children:	1 (14 yrs)
Education:	Secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Secretary

Name:	Brigitte
Age:	33
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	2 (1 and 5 years)
Education:	Degree, maîtrise
Position in company:	Project manager

English Single

Name:	Caroline
Age:	36
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	Degree, secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Publicity production manager

Name:	Nicola
Age:	35
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	Degree, Diploma in Marketing
Position in company:	Area Sales and Marketing Manager

Name:	Emma
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	A-Levels, secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Assistant editor

Name:	Maggie
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Single
No of children:	
Education:	Degree, secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Publicity and mailing manager

Name:	Jacqui
Age:	30
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	
Education:	O-Levels, hotel reception qualification
Position in company:	Office supervisor

English Married

Name:	Sarah
Age:	30
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Cohabiting
No of children:	1 (2 yrs)
Education:	Degree
Position in company:	Marketing manager

Name:	Debbie
Age:	31
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Married
No of children:	1 (2 yrs)
Education:	O-Levels
Position in company:	Assistant head of department

Name:	Lorraine
Age:	29
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Married
No of children:	2 (2 and 4 yrs)
Education:	O-Level/CSE, secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Secretary

Name:	Lyn
Age:	36
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Divorced Re-married
No of children:	1 (1 yr)
Education:	Degree, secretarial qualification
Position in company:	Project manager

Name:	Vicky
Age:	37
Married/single/ cohabiting:	Married
No of children:	2 (2 and 3 yrs)
Education:	Degree, PhD
Position in company:	Assistant Editor

APPENDIX III: List of constructs produced

French Single

La pression L'absence de pression
Renfermé sur soi Ouvert sur d'autres idécs/manières d'être
En désaccord - En accord avec moi-même
Indépendance - Dépendance
La contrainte - La liberté
Artificiel - Naturel
Déséquilibre - Equilibre
"Responsable" de soi "Responsable" des autres
Bienveillant envers moi - Malveillant envers moi
Vivre à ton rythme - Pas vivre à ton rythme

Immobilisme - Enrichissement
(Complémentaire)
Imposé - Choisi
Empauvrissement/perte - Epanouissement
La contrainte - La liberté d'être soi-même
L'échec - La réussite
Les relations sociales - Manque de relations sociales
Ouverture - Confinement
Relations chargées d'affectivité - Moins chargées ...
Enfermée dans une catégorie, figée - Pas enfermée ...

Confiance en moi Timidité
Tendu - Décontracté
Manque de souplesse - Tolérance
L'assurance Manque d'assurance
Manque de soutien/fidelité - Fidélité par rapport à moi
Partage/dialogue - Manque de sympathie
Prise en conscience - L'insouciance
Spontané - Moins spontané
Je suis autonome - Je suis pas autonome
Des relations ouvertes - Des relations formelles

Dépendance - Indépendance
La contrainte - La liberté
Relations de travail Relations plus approfondies
Partager/échanger - Ne pas partager ...
Conflit - Le calme, la paix
La création - Manque de création
Stressé - Etre moins stressé
Egalité - Manque d'égalité
Adulte - Adolescence
Décontraction - Pas décontracté

Pas d'initiative - Responsabilité
Incomplète - Complète/épanouissement
N'avoir pas la possibilité de s'ouvrir - La découverte
Relations profondes - Relations superficielles
On n'apprend rien - On apprend
Satisfaisant - Pas satisfaisant
Partage - Plus renfermé
Enfant - Adulte
Contrainte - Loisir
Laisser qch derrière - Ne rien laisser derrière

French Married

Je reçois - Je donne
L'imprévu L'ordinaire
Hypernaturel - Relations sociales/façade
Manque de liberté d'expression Liberté d'expression
Choix - Contrainte
L'action - La réflexion
Foisonnement - Calme plat
Fixe - Découverte, évolution
Je suis influencée J'influence
La peur de décevoir - Confiance

La détente - L'énervement
La contrainte - La liberté
La distance - L'intimité
Angoisse - Joie
(Les personnes que j'aime le plus)
Ennuyeux Pas ennuyeux
Vieillesse - "Jeunesse"
Imposé - Choisi
Pas d'obligation - Obligation
Desagrément - Joie

Directif - Libre
Vie organisée - Pas organisée
L'ouverture - La mollesse
Vie remplie - Vie vide
La réussite - L'échec
Aléatoire - Sur/durable
L'efficacité - La perte de temps
Spontané - Diplomate
Le repos - Le stress
Tolérante - Intolérante

But - Manque de but
La liberté de vivre, de faire ce qu'on veut - On est tenue
On n'a pas le temps de profiter - On a le temps
L'inconnu - Je suis bien dans ma peau
Stressé Plus détendu
Assisté - Dirigé
Contrainte - La vie à soi/liberté
La routine - Le changement
Ça ne bouge pas - Vivant
Mêmes idées - Pas la même mode de vie

Timide - Confiance
Gens que je n'ai pas choisis - Gens que j'ai choisis
L'anéantissement - Sentiment d'existence
Faut être fort, responsable - Montrer ses faiblesses
Entourage désagréable - Entourage agréable
Moins de possibilité de séduction Possibilité de séduction
On a des défauts - On n'a pas de défauts
Egalité - Infériorité
L'enfer - Le paradis

English Single

Sterile - Fulfilling
Intellectual stimulation - Humdrum
Responsibility - Dependency
Fickleness - Fidelity
Self-confidence - No confidence
Active - Passive
Stagnation - Self-development
Belonging - Alienation
Being free - Tied down
Creative - Not creative

Tense - Relaxed
Able/Unable to perform to best of ability
Respected - Not respected
Loved - Unloved
Doing something worthwhile well Not doing ...
At ease - Ill at ease
Ideal - Least ideal
Lack of goals - Trying to achieve goals
Complete - Incomplete
Freedom - Conformity

Having demands made - Fewer demands from other people
Sharing Not sharing
Having to impress - Not putting on a show
Discipline - Self-indulgence
Demoralizing - Self-esteem giving
Giving Ungiving
Undesirable image - Image would like to have for self
Non-person Important in the eyes of others
Personal - Role rather than individual
Stifling of creativity - Creative, imaginative

Role - Natural
Independence - Conformity
Personal control External control
Spontaneous - Structured
Reserve - No barriers
Pressures, stress Relaxation
Cold Warm
Stifled - Creative
Valued - Exploited
Frustrated - Fulfilled

Controlled - Less controlled
Lack of security - Security of other people
Constrained - Free
Insignificant Recognised
Belonging - Not belonging
Boredom - Stimulating
Structured - Unstructured
Tense - Relaxed
Requires effort Requires no effort
Complete - Incomplete

English Married

Control - Less control
Anxious - Relaxed
Confident - Less confident
Formal - Spontaneous
Isolation - Companionship
Personal space - Demanding
Bored - Stimulated
Ratty - Giving
Selfish - Generous
Freedom - Constraint

Detached - Emotionally involved
No need to live up to others' expectations - Expectations ..
Lack of closeness - Closeness
Organised/Self-discipline - Disorganised
Team spirit - Lack of team spirit
Decisive - Indecisive
Just me - "Somebody's wife", "Somebody's mother"
Fulfilling potential - Not fulfilling potential
Routine - Variety
Bored - Stimulated

Me as individual - Me in role
Routine - Variety/change
Feeling needed - Not feeling needed
Detached - Emotionally demanding
Individual - Linked to others
Restricted - Balance between freedom and support
Unfulfilled potential - Fulfilling potential
"Reckless abandon" - Pressure to organise
In control - Not in control
Professional support - Emotional support

Constrained - Luxurious
Powerless - Empowered
Shackled - Unshackled
Warm - Cool
Use of potential - Not achieving potential
Conforming - Not having to conform
Comfort - Discomfort
Unconditional acceptance - More critical
Light - Dark
Easy - Difficult

Friendly - Unfriendly
Replaceable - Irreplaceable
Adult identity - Being somebody's child
Interest, performance, self-confidence - Lack of ...
Autonomy - Lack of autonomy
Need for approval - No need for approval as self-confident
Not accountable/responsible for .. - Accountable/responsible
Balance - Lack of balance
Anxiety - Calm
Self-determination/choice - Confinement

APPENDIX IV: Full list of statements

French Single women.

Je suis une jeune femme.

Je chante.

Je pleure.

J'aime les paysages.

Je travaille.

Je ne suis pas encore une maman.

Je suis une soeur.

Je suis une fille.

Je suis une amante.

Je suis une amie.

Je fabrique des livres.

Je rêve.

Je me pose des questions.

J'habite un petit appartement qui a une jolie vue.

Je fais du vélo.

Je marche.

Je suis fragile.

Je suis idéaliste.

Je fabrique des habits.

J'habite presque seule.

Je suis une jeune fille, ou plutôt une femme? de 31 ans.

Je suis responsable de projets chez - -.

Jusqu'à une date récente, j'étais traductrice.

Je souhaiterais le rester encore, tout en faisant de nouvelles expériences professionnelles.

J'aime changer - j'ai été salariée, puis indépendante, à nouveau salariée.

Je ne veux pas d'une vie professionnelle, ni privée, toute tracée.

Je vis avec quelqu'un; je ne suis pas mariée.

Le mariage n'est pour moi ni un problème, ni une question.

Je suis privilégiée: heureuse, ni pauvre ni riche, j'exerce un métier qui me plaît.

Je ne pense pas être trop adulte; je ne voudrais pas le devenir.

Je suis consciente d'être privilégiée et pourtant pas toujours satisfaite de moi.

Curieuse de voir ce que réservera l'avenir.

Désireuse devenir plus intelligente, c-à-d de mieux comprendre les gens et les choses.
Blonde aux yeux verts.
Peu inspirée par ce questionnaire et embarrassée par la question.
Débordée de travail et ce travail nouveau est mon unique préoccupation actuellement.
Je ne veux pas faire partie de ces intoxiqués du travail.
J'aimerais parfois tout recommencer ailleurs, mais le changement existe-t-il?
Passionnée de lecture, intéressée par le chant.
Mais prise par la vie, bouffée par le travail.

J'aime le cinéma (je m'y rends souvent).
La danse (de société, moderne).
Le ski, la randonné pédestre.
Je pratique sport (gymnastique).
J'aime cuisiner/recevoir.
M'isoler est quelquefois nécessaire.
Je suis contre les inégalités.
Je suis timide.
Un peu égoiste.
Très fidèle en amitié.
Quelquefois je manque d'assurance.
J'apprécie les vieux meubles.
Conservatrice.
Je pratique le vélo.
Persévérante.
Peut-être un peu possessive.
Je me sens bien auprès des personnes âgées.
J'aimerais avoir un enfant.
Je suis un gourmet.
J'aime les voyages.

Une femme.
Une géographe-cartographe.
Une rêveuse.
J'aime la musique.
J'aime lire.
J'aime voyager.
Une perfectionniste.
J'aime rire avec des amis.
Quelque peu ambitieux (réussir dans mon domaine).
Les ballades dans la nature.
Organiser mon temps.
Travailler dans mon domaine géo-carto.
Les sorties (culturelles, restaurant).
Aller au Maghreb.
Flâner.
Faire les brocantes.
Etre organisée et opérationnelle au travail.
Etre avec mon conjoint.
Echanger des idées technologiques (informatiques).

Je suis une femme.
J'aime sortir, rencontrer des amis.
J'aime voyager.
Je suis sociable et dynamique.
Je suis un être humain.
J'aime mon travail.
Je voudrais avoir des enfants.
J'aime mon indépendance.
J'aime aussi être entourée.
J'aime rêver.
Je crois à "aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera"
Je suis optimiste.
J'aime l'eau.
J'aime lire.
Je suis assez sensible.
J'ai aussi du caractère.
J'aime manger.
Je suis curieuse.

J'aime découvrir de nouveaux gens.
J'aime les objets.

French Married

J'ai 37 ans, je suis mariée et mère de 2 enfants.
Je suis toujours pressée.
J'aime ma famille et mon travail.
Je manque d'organisation.
J'ai beaucoup d'amis.
Je suis très bavarde mais plutôt timide.
J'ai deux enfants adorables avec lesquels je passe beaucoup de temps.
J'aime le week-end en famille.
J'adore la lecture, mais je n'aime pas le cinéma.
Je suis une "jumelle".
Je voudrais disposer de beaucoup plus de temps.
J'aime les plantes et la nature.
Je ne suis pas très sportive, mais j'aime nager.
Je suis rationnelle et raisonneuse.
J'ai horreur des tâches ménagères sauf faire la cuisine.
J'ai du mal à commencer une phrase par "je"
Je préférerais vivre en province qu'à Paris.
Je suis très curieuse et j'aime la nouveauté.
Je n'aime pas la routine.
Je suis très influencée par le temps: j'aime le soleil, je déteste la pluie.

Je parle.
Je ris.
Je suis une mère.
J'aime la vie.
Je travaille.
Je vais en vacances.
Je lis.
Je danse.
J'aime mes enfants.
Je me sens bien.
J'aime le poulet.
J'aime la couleur blanche.

J'aime les bijoux.
Je regarde la télé.
J'aime les fleurs de mon balcon.
Je n'aime pas le football.
Je suis moi.
Je n'aime pas la nuit.
J'aime les gens minces.
J'aime ma vie.

Je suis une fille.
Je me considère toujours seule.
Je travaille.
Je sors beaucoup.
J'aime les gens.
J'aime le théâtre.
Je suis dépensière.
Je suis parfois très heureuse.
J'aime mes amies.
J'aime surtout manger.
J'ai besoin d'espace pour vivre.
J'aime séduire.
J'aime le soleil.
J'ai souvent envie de voyager.
Je déteste être seule.
J'ai peur que les gens que j'aime disparaissent (meurent).
Je suis bavarde.
J'essaie de réussir ma vie.

Je suis divorcée.
J'ai une fille que j'adore.
Je travaille depuis 21 ans.
J'adore sortir.
Je suis très organisée.
J'ai beaucoup d'amis.
Je vis avec un garçon depuis 10 ans.
J'adore les vacances.
J'aime faire les brocantes.

Je suis gourmande de sucre.
J'aime aller au spectacle.
Je déteste la pluie.
J'ai un petit caniche nain.
Je n'aime pas faire les poussières.
Je fais du vélo de temps en temps.
J'ai horreur de coudre.
Je suis une grande nerveuse.
J'aime beaucoup mon travail.
J'aime bien les bons films.
Nicole est très sympa!

Je suis une femme.
Je suis une maman.
Je suis grande et brune.
J'ai des yeux verts.
Je travaille, et j'aime ça.
Je suis moins douce que j'en ai l'air.
J'aime faire des choses de mes mains.
J'aime jouer.
J'aime écrire.
J'aurais voulu être écrivain.
Je suis paresseuse.
J'aime la mer, le soleil et les vacances.
Je n'aime pas le sport.
Je cours toute la journée.
Je fume trop.
J'aime créer.
J'aime les gens, les regarder, les écouter.
J'aime être avec mes amis.
Mes frères et sœur comptent beaucoup.
Je suis solide.

English Single

I am an administrator rather than a creative person.
I am not ambitious, but resent being undervalued.
I am fairly cowardly about making important personal decisions.
I am close to my family.
I am generally placid and even-tempered.
I am reasonably attractive.
I am fond of reading, music and films.
I am fairly bright.
I am calm in a crisis, but won't actually make the best decisions in one.
I am depressed by gloomy weather and lifted by sunny weather.
I am not good at practical house-hold tasks like cooking, sewing, etc.
I am greedy.
I am not committed to any causes.
I am lazy.
I am fond of solitude and quite antisocial.
I am lacking in self-confidence.
I am unadventurous.
I am frightened by violence.
I am mostly content with my life.
I am worried about not having enough money - but very organized with what I do have.

I am sales and marketing manager at -
I am hardworking.
I am conscientious.
I am very involved with my job.
I am good at what I do.
I am interested in people.
I am concerned about world politics.
I am a good friend.
I am kind and helpful.
I am normally easy-going.
I am a worrier.
I enjoy taking part in plays/musicals.
I am a reasonable singer/dancer.
I am not as quick-brained as I would like to be.
I take on a lot of things to do.
I like watching TV, going to cinema.

I like going out for meals.
I like seeing friends.
I wish I had a better aptitude for computers.
I am tired.

I am a woman.
I am an office worker.
I am a houseowner.
I am a ratepayer.
I am a non-graduate.
I am a drinker.
I am a non-smoker.
I am a bicyclist.
I am literate.
I am ungregarious.
I am emotionally lazy.
I am a loner.
I am easy to get on with.
I am emotional.
I am ungenerous with money.
I am untidy.
I am self-indulgent.
I am very conscientious.
I am an artist rather than scientist.
I am immature.

I am female.
I am demanding.
I am clumsy.
I am interested in the arts.
I am a loyal friend.
I am creative with my hands.
I am vulnerable.
I am a reasonable cook.
I am obstinate.
I am an avid reader.
I am a good manager.

I am against apartheid.
I am impatient with fools.
I am responsible for a large budget.
I am concerned about green issues.
I am not very neat.
I am kind to animals.
I am not worried about getting old.
I am good with words/witty.
I am isolated over here!

I am 5'5" tall.
I am wishing to lose 1 stone in weight.
I am very happy in my job.
I am reasonably assertive.
I am always early for work.
I am often at work late in the evening.
I am in charge of 4 members of staff.
I am responsible for purchasing equipment/stationery.
I am not interested in much sport.
I am interested in sewing/soft furnishings.
I am interested in restoring old/antique furniture.
I am not terribly interested in marriage/family.
I am, I think, a good organiser.
I am happy mending my car or doing household repairs.
I am very close to my family (mother etc).
I am often sent on relevant courses.
I am interested in going out for meals.
I am happy to meet new people.
I am also always happy to hear new ideas.
I am not afraid of travelling/going on courses alone, in fact ofter prefer it.

English Married

I am a mother.
I am a partner (to baby's father).
I am too busy at work.
I am fairly busy at home.
I am often tired!
I am happy - mostly.
I am fond of holidays.
I am happy with child-minder.
I am average height.
I am average looks.
I am fairly chaotic.
I am often too tired to do much housework.
I am nearly thirty.
I am female.
I am scruffy.
I am a daughter.
I am a daughter-in-law.
I am a sister.
I am a godmother.
I am fairly sociable.

I am short.
I am interested in cooking.
I am a good mother.
I am a bit untidy.
I am a good driver.
I am a good worker.
I am successful at work.
I am never late for appointments.
I am a happy person.
I am on a diet.
I am a good listener.
I am a dutiful wife.
I am a sister.
I am a good singer.
I am very busy at work.
I am short sighted.

I am a size 12 - sometimes.
I am someone who likes 8 hours sleep.
I am not thinking of having more children.
I am always doing something. I never seem to sit down and relax.

I am a secretary.
I am mother of two small children.
I am a wife.
I am a person in my own right.
I am interested in cooking, keeping fit.
I am a lover of TV.
I am not tall enough.
I am a slimming club adviser.
I am a good listener.
I am interested in my children's pre-school education.
I am secretary of the Playgroup which I attends.
I am easy to get on with.
I am a driver.
I am nearing 30.
I am happy to be at home, but not all the time.
I am a person with no real strong objections.
I am happiest with friends and family around me.
I am looking forward to another holiday.
I am hoping to get on in my job.
I am glad this is the last one!

I am thoughtful.
I am successful.
I am tired today.
I am sometimes aggressive.
I am often innovative.
I am able to put my arguments persuasively.
I am not afraid (by and large).
I am sometimes intimidated by my older, male colleagues.
I am working hard at my marriage.
I am very loving towards my son.
I am also sometimes very angry with him.

I am well paid for a demanding job.
I am worried about my father.
I am feeling slightly out of control at the moment.
I am trying to balance home/career.
I am not always successful in doing so.
I am sometimes irritable with my husband.
I am assertive.
I am a successful manager.
I am a person who makes things happen.

I am working at -.
I am anxious about leaving the kids.
I am wishing I could spend more time at home.
I am enjoying the work a lot.
I am new to the job.
I am very short of time for anything.
I am wondering whether to pay the poll tax.
I am out of touch with world news (even more than usual).
I am going to a meeting in Zoology tomorrow.
I am wishing I could finish the curtains.
I am wishing I could finish my father's pyjamas.
I am wishing I could spend more time on the garden.
I am looking forward to the Bank Holiday.
I am an assistant editor.
I am now on my first book of my own.
I am mostly reading low-level books.
I am going to read *Oscar and Lucinda* soon.
I am going to ring Alison tonight.
I am going to the salaries briefing at 2.
I am going to ring - in Zoology about his book.

APPENDIX V: Translations

(1)
Women have been working for a long time in France. I would say that compared with Germany, for example, there are a lot more working women in France and that has always been considered quite normal, quite natural, whereas in Germany, even now, a woman who works when she has children is really an unworthy mother ...

(2)
... at the time when Mum was working, it wasn't really, it was a bit exceptional in fact ...

(3)
At the time when Mum, 20 years ago, began working, yes there were women who already worked, but it had not been for very long ...

(4)
With the problems there were between my father and mother, my mother wanted to work to have some money of her own. To not have to ask all the time ...

(5)
All that ... led me towards working, towards doing a job I like and everything.

(6)
... I have always had the idea, I don't know how, my mother didn't work and so it wasn't she who gave me the idea, but I have always had the idea that in order to live I had to work, full stop ...

(7)
He was very close to us, because first of all he likes children very much, that is in his nature, but as he was able to do that job he had the same timetable as us ... he had the same school holidays, while she worked later in the evening, so it was him, we were at home with him in the evening etc ...

(8)
... in fact looking back I think it is rather in relation to the continual presence of my mother that I found my father not there very much. I am no closer to my children now, today, than he was and still I have the impression of being there as much as possible. So it's not that he was away all the time, he was there, and he perhaps even came home earlier than I do at the moment ... but it is rather the proportion, you know? My mother was there a lot and my father relatively little.

(9)
... even now it's he who prepares the meals ...

(10)
... his father cooks for special occasions and his wife does the everyday cooking ...

(11)
In my day we didn't see them very often, we went to see them once a year when we were in classes where there was guidance, otherwise we didn't see them ...

(12)
Now they see them more often, I think my elder daughter when she went into the Seconde [Sixth Form], they saw the Careers Adviser three or four times in the year ...

(13)
... when I was an adolescent I wanted to be a teacher, so yes, I would say to myself "I'll have an interesting job" or "I won't work too many hours and I will have children, cats and dogs .."

(14)
With a family, with children. Always my work as well, yes ...

(15)
... one of the best things about work I find is just the fact of getting out of the house and seeing people, meeting people even if you haven't chosen them, to be in the outside world, you know.

(16)
... I'm not a woman who could stay inside the four walls of the house ... to see some people, a bit of movement, noise, because it's dead at home ..

(17)
... to have something else, to have a life other than my personal life, the life of the family ...

(18)
They are two things I love very much, which I am very attached to, but which are almost equally important, but, to give you an idea, if I take the metro to go home I completely forget my work. And in the morning I've taken the children to school and I take the metro to go to the office, I try to forget my children and my husband completely. It's two worlds which are not, I must have spent, it's twelve years, thirteen years since I started working, I must have taken three phone calls at the office. I don't want one to invade the other ...

(19)
... when you've closed the office door it's finished ...

(20)
... It's not awful, you know, but it's detached, distant ..

(21)
It also provides oblivion, perhaps, from time to time, I again have problems with a child etc, it's also if you like ... a sort of oblivion. It's something which allows me to fulfil myself and not think about these other problems ...

(22)
Yes, because there's nothing like work for forgetting your worries, eh?

(23)
Oh yes, yes, because when you're here you're absorbed, you don't think about it ...

(24)
Well, like a lot of women, if I'd been a housewife, I would never have left perhaps, a bit like the women at the time who didn't work ... I didn't want to depend on a man ... because he, he wanted two children, then he said to me "Stop working", I said "No", I'm not going to depend on a man to buy myself, as I said, a pair of tights!

(25)
When I don't work I have no income, I'm financially dependent on him ...

(26)
If my husband had a job which paid enough to allow me to stay at home ... I would work part-time to have my financial independence ...

(27)
I work a lot in the house ... and I enjoy that ... but let's say that it's always for other people, not only for me ... work really brings me this independence, it's not financial, it's personal ... it's there that I can express my ... my own competitivity, I mean ... I can develop myself personally, not in terms of contacts, rather at an intellectual level, to a certain extent ...

(28)
... I think that for a man there is every advantage in having a wife who works rather than one who stays at home frustrated in the house with her children and who has no other subject of conversation than the walk in the square and the shopping she's done ... I don't know, but I ... a man who prefers someone empty-headed, I don't know ...

(29)
... if I no longer work, what am I going to do with myself?

(30)
... once you've done the housework and dealt with the children, there's nothing more to do ...

(31)
Work? Let's say it's a means to self-development for me ... it's more enriching and besides you can't let yourself go, you have to move with the times, not let yourself get left behind ...

(32)
That's why I like to change companies - that way I learn new things ...

(33)
Oh yes, I take time. Everyone has time if they decide to take it. We all have time, no? Because there are plenty of people who say "I don't have time", but we all have time. If you go to the cinema, well you don't do the dusting, eh?

(34)
... you find the time if you want to, no?

(35)
Yes, I take the time ... you have to take it.

(36)
I'm not tired at all, eh? I think that, well, you're not obliged to work like a mule at home, to do housework every day, yes, those who want to give themselves the bother must be exhausted, because they do a double day. But when I get home at night I'm not going to do those things, eh?

(37)
Exhausted? No, if I go to bed around 1030, 11 o'clock, no, not tired, but I say I must go to bed ...

(38)
... at the same time there are some occasions ... when you are more tense, too ...

(39)
... daily life is difficult because there are always traffic jams, because the smallest thing is complicated, you have to queue, waste time on transport, everything is expensive ...

(40)
... what I want to be able to do in my work is to express what I understand, I mean that I do a certain job but that people ask my advice, ask if that's the way I see things etc ...

(41)
... I don't work just because I have to etc ... I mean that as soon as my work ceased to interest me, or I found I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't work any more.

(42)
... I am only attracted to work if I'm really interested in it ...

(43)
... when I don't work I'm less tired, I can, first of all I have time to myself, that is it's necessary for me to do things of my own interest, plus a bit of time for me, just a little bit ...

(44)
... I have to stop, otherwise, at 55, or 60, suddenly I'm going to realise that I've spent my whole life working ...

(45)
Now I know the work better. I'm calmer there now. I want other things. I want to put more into my private life ...

(46)
... the department where I was, I was a bit of a pet, I was the little youngest one, I was petted by everyone ...

(47)
... I felt that it didn't please him at all that I was starting to find my feet ...

(48)
It's not a great job ... but I don't have the impression that I'm *someone's* secretary, because this someone leaves me more or less in peace, so I work fairly often on my own, and yes, I work for her, but it's not at all constraining.

(49)
... a maternity leave is a difficult slope to negotiate again and I particularly found it difficult that a maternity leave reminded people that I was a mother ...

(50)
The ideal is perhaps to work a third of the time. But straight away, if you work ... 4/5 time I don't know if that would pose problems, but if you work less than 4/8ths you become a bit disengaged from work ... you are not wholly involved ...

(51)
... I think that a woman who has children, I think that she is still held back ... I have a friend who works in publishing, in another publishing company and who has a son. She tells me that certainly if she had no children she would have been promoted more rapidly ...

(52)
There are lots of women in the departments where I've worked ... even heads of department ... no problem ...

(53)
... there are women who are nasty, who are bitchy even to other women, so I think given the choice it's better to work with a man in certain cases. The female mentality in offices can sometimes be nasty I find with some women ...

(54)
But in fact it's well known that there is a lot of gossip in offices, especially when they are all women. Because men aren't like that ... I find it direct, but perhaps more honest ...

(55)
Oh yes, a woman will understand better that you can't come because your child is sick; he on the other hand will only see that you're not there ...

(56)
He's handsome, I love him ...

(57)
... when her sister separated from her partner, Anne-Marie still wanted to stay in contact with Jean-Claude, and so I used to go round with them, we went out a few times and then I fell in love. There.

(58)
As I knew he was very much in love with me ...

(59)
After that I loved a boy very much ... it's true that I have often given in for love ...

(60)
... I think it's true that with my husband I say everything and I can say everything ... it's a bit, if you like, I see my husband as a sort of mirror ...

(61)
Yes, I think I've found what I needed ...

(62)
... I have a very nice husband. He has some faults, who hasn't? But I make a lot of the decisions ...

(63)
... anyway if I want to do something I do it ... you're not a slave, eh?

(64)
My sisters are very independent, even though they're married ... they manage very well, I think. Psychologically they are at ease with themselves, and they are very independent even though they're married ... It's an independence of spirit ...

(65)
It's sad, don't you think, to come home and cook for one person ...

(66)
... the longer you wait, the more you get used to your independence ... I'm rather used to doing what I want ...

(67)
by organising myself differently ... but it's important for me to do some kind of sport, for well-being and health ... so I would continue with that. Instead of going twice a week I'd just go once perhaps. But I would go. From the beginning it would be like that ... and it's the same for him ... That's how I'd envisage life, but with a bit of independence all the same.

(68)
... getting married is pointless. It's just a nod in front of the mayor ...

(69)
I don't see what that has to do with religion ...

(70)
If I'm not religious I really don't see what the town hall has to do with it ...

(71)
I would have to, because I live with a foreigner and otherwise any child wouldn't be recognised in the country ... but normally ... some people say to me, if you get married that means you are really confirming your love, all that. But I say if I've devoted 7 years of my life to someone ... getting married isn't going to make me love him any more or any less ...

(72)
... people are a bit more wary ... I think they live together more easily and separate more easily ...

(73)
Divorces are expensive!

(74)
... cooking, I do that. When we have people round he helps me of course, when we have guests. And then he also helps a lot with the children, he looks after them a lot, and then my daughters lay the table, clear up, they work a little bit ... no, I don't have a lot of work on the whole, I don't think ...

(75)
Shopping no ... The bread, things for the house, little bits of shopping during the week. Bigger shopping he does, on Saturday or Sunday ...

(76)
It's my husband now who does the shopping, my husband ...

(77)
He doesn't like doing the cooking all the time ... but he won't eat just anything, so since I'm not bothered about it, he does the cooking. Yes, he likes doing it more than I do. I lay the table, clear away, put the things in the machine, tidy the kitchen, do the washing etc ...

(78)
If we have people round we do half-, I do the main courses and my husband does the dessert. Because I don't like doing desserts.

(79)
... he says "Do you want me to put the vacuum cleaner round?" and he'll do that. But I prefer to do it, because it's never to my taste ...

(80)
Since he likes everything tidy, and I, housework ... I decided that ... I needed help so I decided to buy lots of household appliances, a dishwasher, which I've never had because I don't care about it, but I said to myself if he wants everything tidy ... I must have all the infrastructure to do it, because I found it difficult to argue about, about things, about things to do with everyday life ...

(81)
We talked about it a lot, we both decided to meet each other halfway, so it should work ...

(82)
He was 800th on the waiting list for a crèche with 40 places ...

(83)
It's terrible. You have to enrol almost before you're pregnant ...

(84)
... I find, and teachers tell us as well, that it's very good for children, it teaches them not to be hanging on to their parents, to learn things which we can't teach them, they learn to write a bit, they do drawings, they learn to count a bit, they do lots of things, they bring things home to show their parents, it's very educational, it stimulates them, I think it's good.

(85)
... they make friends, I find it makes them more lively than in our day, it's true that we were, I found it very difficult to integrate myself at school and now, children are away from their parents and integrate anywhere ...

(86)
... I would send her to school sick ...

(87)
(R) I take him, ill, to the childminder.

(I) You don't take holiday for that?

(R) No, once half a day but ... to go and see the doctor, or the time to call the doctor, see him and then I take him afterwards, stuffed with aspirin, once I know what's wrong with him, which medicine I have to give him ...

(I) And that doesn't worry you?

(R) No! If I allowed myself to worry about every ache or every cold I'd go mad. He's ill every three weeks, I can't worry about that ...

(88)
... there are moments when I say to myself it's surprising, time has passed, you don't have any children, gosh, it's very surprising, perhaps you won't have any ...

(89)
A child brings joy. It brings you things and then we in turn can give to them as well ...

(90)
... I feel myself to be young still, fortunately ... if I have them later that's fine by me ...

(91)
... you can still have children later. It's not really a problem.

(92)
... my mother doesn't see me as any different from the others, just because I'm not married ... no, she doesn't put any pressure on me ... no, no ... nobody puts any pressure on me ... They take me as I am ...

(93)
A little bit ... And especially from about 26 or 27 ... Not the family so much. Friends a little, friends who have children.

(94)
I grew up in a little town where you could bicycle in the streets. We were always outside, we would go out. I can't imagine life at all in front of a car park. With them staying in a flat all day, going out once a day into the square with three benches and four trees, in the dust, that seems horrible to me ...

(95)
We used to go there at weekends, there was always one of us with the children or his wife, or we always spent Christmas or New Year's Day, there was always a family reunion then, which since they've been in the south no longer happens ...

(96)
No, my parents are much less formal, first of all my father never visits, he receives visitors! So if we want to see him we have to go there ... It's very family-oriented, very Italo-Corsican, it's the young ones who have to do the visiting in order to see the older ones ...

(97)
... it's true that for example I demand a lot from my husband ...

(98)
Sometimes, when I saw my brother go out and play with friends and I had to do the shopping, sometimes I was not very happy.

(99)
It's the woman who's in charge ...

(100)
I remember that when I worked at Citroën I didn't have a single female colleague who had children. Not one. That's to say they work until they have children and then they stop. I think it's a question of how you regard the role of women. In Germany there is no, well very little social infrastructure for looking after children, there are very few crèches, there are no *maternelles*. Children normally start school at six, so you have to look after them, there are a few kindergartens but they are rare, so ... and then on top of that school ends at 1 o'clock in the afternoon in Germany, so there's a whole assembly of things which forces women, I think, if there's no crèche what are you supposed to do with a child if there's no crèche ... I think it's a certain conception of the role of women ... But it's funny because even our generation ... German feminism was quite strong, but I find that ... the young women I know, they envisage having children but when they have them they will stop working. Or they will work part-time ... But they think it's not worth having children if they don't look after them.

(101)
Is it that women accept ... Because I say to myself that women are themselves often responsible for what happens to them, that's to say the misogyny directed against them, because they themselves have an image of women which is not very brilliant. Sometimes when you hear women speak about themselves you say to yourself "But it's not very surprising that men are misogynist since women themselves hold this kind of, I don't know, conviction ... I remember in Germany, I had a friend who was married, I'm not sure, I think she was not yet married but she was going to marry her boyfriend, and I remember that extra-marital relations, for example, weren't the same, the demands weren't the same for men and women, that's to say she conceived of them quite, she was talking in general, not about her particular case, she was saying that it was quite normal for a man to want to have, to look elsewhere, to have girlfriends elsewhere but that for women it wasn't the same. She explained it too in physiological terms, saying that women don't have the same needs as a man and that it was deep in a man's physiological nature to look elsewhere and ... but on the other hand the woman should remain faithful ... It's obvious that if women themselves say this kind of thing you can't be surprised if men afterwards ...

(102)
No, no, it's not badly paid ...

(103)
No it's not badly paid ... It's true that it's less well paid than if one works in business, or in ... yes, in business, or computers, but even so we're not ... I don't think we're badly paid all the same ...

(104)
for holidays, for example ...

(105)
I have friends who earn 5000 francs [£500], who earn 20,000 francs [£2000] a month ... they are no more valued because they have money or don't have money ...

(106)
... it's quite wooded, so it's quite quiet ... The Essonne is very pretty. It's very green. And I love nature ...

(107)
... first I live in the suburbs, I have a pretty view at home, there is a big wood near me and so I do a bit of walking ... and I have friends in Normandy, and sometimes I go to Savoie ...

(108)
In general I prefer to go out ... go away for the weekend, to get out of the town. Go off to the country, the sea, all that ...

(109)
... we go to see friends. We often go and browse round the flea market ... we go to the swimming pool, the cinema ...

(110)
Of course one could get a video ... but for me it's an outing. It forces me to go out. Otherwise I'd be stuck in the house and no - I refuse to do that.

(111)
I'm used to it ... that's how it is, I've been using public transport for 20 years ...

(112)
... yes, there are times, when there's a strike, when I've thought about changing my job, to work nearer home, but when you're used to it here in Paris, to a certain way of life, it's a bit dead in the suburbs, no?

(113)
I'm not talking necessarily about Bas Berry or Haute Sologne ...

(114)
Most of them, yes. For them, because they don't live far away, they travel by car. They're hardly more than 10 km [6 miles] away. Unless they've got a canteen at the workplace, if it's a big company. Otherwise they go home.

(115)
Oh yes, definitely. I have several friends in the provinces ... In small towns, first of all there aren't often canteens, because there are not many big companies. And then everything is near. They go home by car.

(116)
... I know quite a few people in the provinces, often they have farms, and when they have farms they've always got their children with them, they look after the farm, make the hay, milk the cows and everything ...

(117)
... I find it's good to have someone who doesn't have the same tastes because that allows you to expand a bit ...

(118)
I had the impression that I wasn't going to flourish ...

(119)
... I realised that I wasn't going to flourish in that company ...

(120)
... that's why I like to change companies, because that way I learn new things ...

(121)
... I do things saying to myself, right, I'm going to get some experience abroad, develop a little bit ...