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ANOTHER LOOK AT GENDER ROLES IN PRIME-TIME TELEVISION

BY

Jan Carolyn Kircher

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Arlo and Jeanette Kircher, and my children, Michael Mapes, Meggie Mapes, and Ethan Kircher, for your love and support during my years of education and in helping me pursue my dreams.

Abstract

ANOTHER LOOK AT GENDER ROLES IN PRIME-TIME TELEVISION

JAN C. KIRCHER

AUGUST 2007

Television has become an important agent of socialization in society today. Social interaction on prime-time television was examined 24 years ago by members of the Sociology Department at South Dakota State University. That study was similar to this research project that investigates gender roles on prime-time television. The earlier study used a modified version of the Bales Interaction Scale to code male and female behavior to assess the extent to which prime-time television presented traditional or non-traditional gender roles.

This study used research methods similar to those of the previous study to see if traditional gender roles depicted on prime-time television are still prevalent or if there has been a change. Feminist theory, an interactionist theoretical perspective, and Parsons and Bales (1955) perspective served as frameworks to assess the portrayal of gender roles on prime-time television. Included in this research project were 2,968 scenes, 24,994 interactions of male and female characters in the scenes were coded. In keeping with Bales Interaction Process Analysis (1950), the study examined task-oriented behaviors and socio-emotional behaviors of men and women. The data revealed that there are more male characters than female characters depicted in scenes on prime-time television

programming. Males were found to display more task-oriented behaviors than socio-emotional behaviors than females. There was a significant difference in the proportion of socio-emotional behaviors exhibited by women compared to men. In conclusion, men and women as portrayed on TV continued to be shown predominantly in traditional gender roles as in the study 24 years ago.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

A Statement of the Problem

The role of women in society has changed a great deal over the last several decades. Traditional roles for women were wife, mother and homemaker. Women's work outside the home was somewhat limited until World War II; their role as homemakers was their primary responsibility (Gini 1998). Traditionally, men's gender roles related primarily to financial responsibilities for their families and jobs or careers. Media images often supported and reinforced traditional gender roles through portrayal of men in careers and women at home. Beginning in the 1970s when women were increasingly portrayed in careers outside the home, they continued to be shown in mostly supportive emotional roles (Busby 1975).

According to Press (1991), the mass media is an important structure in our society and its influence over individuals is immense. Television is an integral part of culture today. As it takes up a great deal of time and attention, it is important to assess and study how television and mass media depict the roles of men and women. Access to mass media has increased, and television for many people has become part of their daily lives (Press 1991). Mass media has become a dominant cultural structure within society and individuals in part learn social norms via watching television (Scharrer, Kim, Lin, and Liu 2006). The mass media displays and maintains societal norms and values as well as exposing individuals to alternatives (Tuchman 1978). Prime-time television has come to

be regarded as an agent for socialization (Fabes, Wilson, and Christopher 1989). Definitions of what is considered to be acceptable behavior for men and women are provided on TV (Mackey and Hess 1982). Images and ideas that are presented on television often become trends in society (Silverstein, Perdue, Peterson and Kelly 1986).

Over the last few decades, women have been portrayed in a variety of different settings and roles on television, radio and/or in print. Traditionally, women were represented in the media as stay-at-home mothers and care-takers of their children (Press 1991). The portrayal of families on television displayed traditional gender roles with women involved in domestic duties, in shows such as the “The Cosby Show” and “Growing Pains” (Olson and Douglas 1997: 411).

As women began entering the workplace in greater numbers, their roles in the family were not as clear as they once were. Along with these shifting societal norms and values, media depictions of women have changed over time. More and more working women and single mothers are represented in the media (Press 1991). Furnham and Mak (1999) concluded that gender representation is prevalent in the media today, especially in television commercials.

Media depictions parallel the behavior of men and women in reality (Scharrer *et al.* 2006). With these changes in men’s and women’s roles in society, it is important to assess the extent to which gender roles displayed on television reflect that new reality. This study examines gender roles as they are displayed on prime-time television, focusing in particular on the social interaction between males and females on television.

Research Questions

Two basic research questions are addressed in this study.

1. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE WOMEN AND MEN PORTRAYED AS EXHIBITING SIMILAR MODES OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR?
2. TO WHAT EXTENT IS TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES BEHAVIOR REINFORCED BY PRIME-TIME TELEVISION IMAGERY?

Research Objectives

- To determine the extent to which traditional gender roles are depicted on prime-time television shows.
- To determine if prime-time television programming depicts women as displaying more socio-emotional behaviors than men
- To determine if prime-time television programming displays men as engaging in more task-oriented behaviors than women.
- To determine if men and women are depicted displaying similar types of behavior on prime-time television shows.

Dissertation Outline

In this dissertation, Chapter I introduces and discusses the research problem. It also presents the research questions and objectives of this study.

Chapter II of this dissertation includes a review of the research literature of relevance to this topic. Included in this review is research on television and its influence,

traditional and changing gender roles, and the portrayal of men and women in the media and particularly on television. A set of empirical generalizations drawn from the literature is also included.

Chapter III presents three theoretical perspectives which guided this study. Important theoretical concepts and implications are examined and discussed.

Chapter IV presents the research methodology. Research objectives are stated. The research design is presented and discussed. Research hypotheses are presented. Independent and dependent variables are identified and operationally defined. Data analysis procedures are described.

Chapter V provides the findings from analysis of the data and tests of the hypotheses.

Chapter VI summarizes the research findings and discusses them in relation to the research questions, the research objectives, the earlier study, and the theoretical perspectives employed. Limitations of the study are identified and recommendations for future research on the topic are also included.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Several bodies of research literature are of relevance to this study and are reviewed here. Included are studies on the media, and especially television's impact on society. Also, reviewed are studies on changes in gender roles and the portrayal of gender on television.

Mass Media Research Methods

Many studies have examined the mass media and television. According to Altheide (1996), television has become a major part of everyday life, and studying and researching it becomes important because of its potential for impact. Research on the mass media has explored several different genres, including newspapers, magazines, radio, television commercials and television programming. Research methods focusing on television have progressed and changed over time (Wimmer and Dominick 2003).

There was not a great deal of standardized and reliable research done on the mass media before the 1920s (Lowery and De Fleur 1983: 18). As quantitative methods and statistical procedures were refined and increasingly applied to human behavior, researchers in the area of mass communication began using these techniques to study television and other media (Lowery and De Fleur 1983).

According to Fuchs and Lyle (1972), as quantitative methods in social sciences were refined researchers began to use these techniques to study the effects of television. For instance, researchers were interested in the violence depicted on television. Consequently, this area of research has received attention. Included in that research was the investigation of the psychological impact of media violence on its viewers and also the extent to which females were depicted as victims of violence (Glascock 2003; Fuchs and Lyle 1972).

Surveys and questionnaires have been used to collect data from consumers of the mass media. These methods have provided valuable information about consumers' ideas, beliefs, and other patterns of behavior (Berger 1991). Surveys and questionnaires have been used to examine audience opinions, likes and dislikes. Survey data have been collected to determine characteristics of the television viewers and radio listeners. The findings of this research provided media producers with opportunities to tailor their programming and advertising to increase their audience's satisfaction. For example, the Nielsen Media Research Institute has used survey information about television viewers that in turn assists with decision-making for programming (Wimmer and Dominick 2003).

Content analysis has been used in research on television and the mass media for decades (Elasmar, Hawegawa, and Brain 1999). Content analysis pays particular attention to what is presented on television, radio, or print (Lombard, Synder-Duch, and Campanella-Bracken 2002). Content analysis has been used to examine the content of the media systematically, identifying common themes or ideas. From these themes or

ideas, researchers have drawn conclusions about attitudes and beliefs of those who make decisions for media (Berger 1991).

Content analysis has been used to assess a wide array of media content including violence, sex, and gender roles. According to Elasmir, Hasegawa and Brain (1999), content analysis has been used to study gender roles in the mass media including how women and men are depicted on television. It has been used to document images of women over time, and these images have been analyzed to identify their potential for negative or positive societal implications (Tuchman 1979).

Schneider and Schneider (1979) used content analysis to study television commercials. They concluded that commercials generally depicted men and women according to traditional gender roles. In 2006, Scharrer *et al.* again used content analysis to analyze commercials involving domestic chores and to determine whether there were differences in gender role portrayals in commercials. They also assessed the use of humor in those commercials. They concluded that gender roles depicted in television commercials may be changing with men shown participating in more housework.

Television in Society

It would be hard to imagine a world without the mass media because it has been an essential piece of society for several decades (Tuchman 1978). The printed media were created to provide information and news to a considerable number of people. Newspapers are printed in large quantities for mass consumption. The print media was designed to inform individuals about what is happening in the world on a daily basis.

However, as time passed and technology changed, the media came to serve another purpose, which was to provide amusement and recreation (Fuchs and Lyle 1972). The development of the radio also provided individuals with another means of accessing both information and entertainment. As technology continued to develop, the invention of television offered more people access to the electronic media on a regular basis (Fuchs and Lyle 1972). Thus, members of society came to rely on the mass media and especially television in their daily lives for both information and entertainment. In short, television has become an integral part of societal structure that influences consumers (Fuchs and Lyle 1972).

According to Lowery and De Fleur (1983), television provided individuals with various opportunities to access information and entertainment, and television is a primary source of information and entertainment. The average person in the United States in 2006 spent approximately 1,858 hours or 5 hours a day watching television. There is a prediction that this number will increase to 4,059 or 11 hours a day by the year 2008 because of the continued popularity of television (U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Abstract 2006: 736-737). Thus, watching television consumes a great deal of people's daily lives and has the potential to influence viewers (Press 1991).

According to Tuchman (1978), today television is accessible to all classes of Americans. Almost every household in the United States has at least one television set and most people do not go a day without watching TV. Television use dramatically changed daily leisure time by increasing the amount of time that people are physically inactive. Entertainment needs are often met by watching television rather than

involvement in outside recreational activities (Tuchman 1978). “In 2003, the average person spent approximately \$790 on television, radios and other sound equipment and only \$127 on reading” (U.S Census Bureau Statistical Abstract 2006: 789). Thus, not only do people invest considerable time accessing the electronic media, but they also invest more financial resources in the electronic than the print media. Again, this suggests that the potential of the electronic media to influence people’s ideas and views is great.

Gender Roles

Two terms, sex and gender, used in the literature have often been confused. In recent years, attention has been focused on clearly distinguishing between them. Sex is currently used to refer to what it is biological in nature while gender refers to what is socially constructed. Gender refers to specific expectations that are attached to an individual who is male or female (West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender roles imply that there are certain “social guidelines for sex-appropriate appearance, interest, skills, behaviors and self-perceptions” (Tuchman 1978: 3). Gender roles expect women to act in a feminine manner and men in a masculine way. For example, a male gender role may assume that an individual who is male is mechanically minded, whereas female gender roles include expectations for engaging in domestic behaviors like cooking and housecleaning (West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender often serves as a guide for behavior and interaction. Males and females, for the most part, follow these socially constructed

definitions of gender (Schmitt, Leclerc, and Dube-Rioux 1988). This study is concerned with how gender roles are socially constructed for prime-time television.

Traditional Gender Roles

Traditional gender roles are based upon conceptions of “masculinity and femininity” (Johnson 1997: 86). Masculinity and femininity provide prescriptions for the way that males and females are to behave (Coltrane and Adams 1997). Traditional gender roles would include expectations for women to be family-oriented and men to be career-oriented (Coltrane and Adams 1997).

Non-Traditional Gender Roles

Societal change has occurred especially in the gender roles of women. More women are entering the work force and choosing alternatives to marriage and children (Johnson 1997). According to the U.S. Department of Labor (2006), in 1980, 47.7 percent of women were employed. By 2004, this percentage had increased to 59.2 percent. In addition by 2004, women had moved into occupations that had been previously male-dominated, with women holding 50.3 percent of the professional jobs and 56.8 percent of the service jobs.

Over time, traditional gender roles as well as conceptions of masculinity and femininity have also been challenged by the feminist movement. The feminist movement offered alternatives ways of thinking about the roles of men and women (Johnson 1997). Women entering the workforce in increasing numbers and delaying marriage and

childbirth have also challenged traditional gender role conceptions. As a result, gender roles for women have come to be redefined to include career, education, and employment (Johnson 1997).

Despite these changes in society, it is still unclear how much impact these changes have had on television programming. To what extent does programming reflect changes in gender roles? How does television depict male and female gender roles? Does television portray women and men similarly to one another? Does television portray men and women in predominantly traditional or non-traditional gender roles?

Interaction of Men and Women

Gender roles influence the interaction of men and women (Coltrane and Adams 1997). There are some widely held beliefs about gender differences in the interaction styles of men and women, and many of these have been supported in the research literature. Women are said to be expressive, responsive, supportive, and concerned with intimacy and connection, whereas men are said to be task-oriented, dominant, and concerned with status and independence (Aries 1996: vii). Two broad interaction categories are task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors (Aries 1996; Bales 1950). Gender has been used as a variable to examine interaction differences in task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors (Aries 1996).

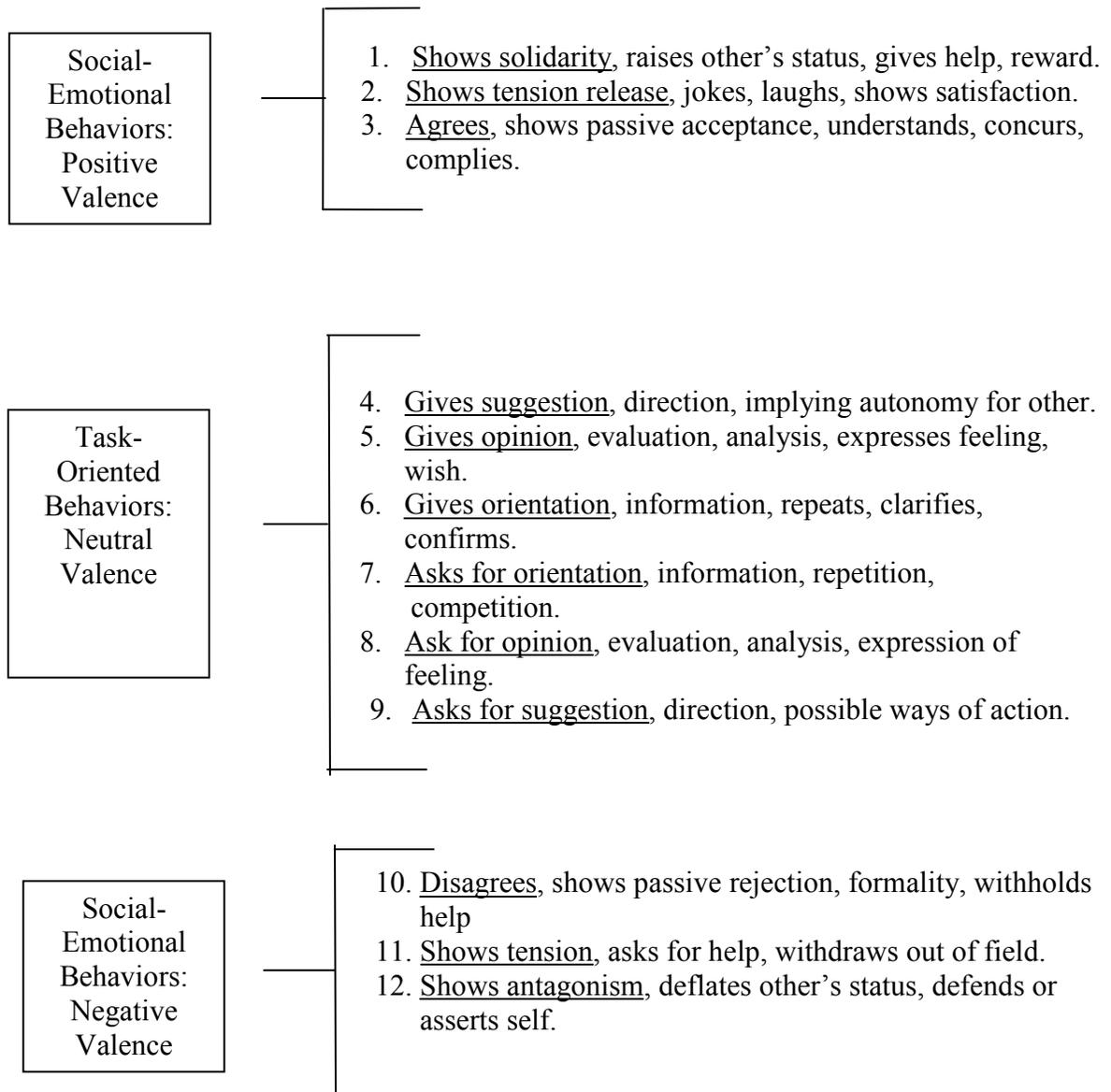
The Bales Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) has been used to study these behaviors. The scale was developed to categorize small group interaction. It has 12 categories of behavior in terms of instrumental or task-oriented behaviors and expressive

or socio-emotional behaviors (see Figure 1). It has also been used to determine if there are distinctions in the way men and women interact (Aries 1996: 25; Bales 1950).

Strodtbeck and Mann (1956) researched men and women during mock-jury deliberations and found that there were differences in male and female interactions. Women expressed more socio-emotional behaviors and were more supportive. Men engaged in more task-oriented or instrumental behaviors. Aries (1996) and Strodtbeck and Mann (1956) concluded that men and women did interact differently in small group settings.

Mackey and Hess (1982) used a modified version of the Bales Interaction Process Analysis to investigate male and female interaction on prime-time television. Following Bales' lead, the twelve categories comprised of task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors were collapsed into four categories of task-oriented asking behavior (that is, asking for direction, information, input); task-oriented giving behavior (that is, giving direction, information, input); social-emotional behavior that is positive in emotive valence (that is, showing solidarity, tension release, understanding); and social-emotional behavior that is negative in emotive valence (that is, showing antagonism, defensiveness, tension) (Hess and Grant 1983: 376-377). Hess and Grant (1983) found that men and women's interaction on prime-time television was differentiated by these behavioral categories. Men were more likely to be shown engaging in task-oriented behaviors on

Figure 1: Bales System of Categories Used in Observation (Bales 1950: 9).



prime-time television and female characters were more often shown engaging in socio-emotional behaviors.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Tannen (1990) who found that women's style of conversation was more supportive and emotional. Women interacted in communication in ways that were more expressive and helpful. Women's conversations were also mutual and not self-focused. On the other hand, men's conversation styles were found to be more driven by declarations of independence, assertiveness, and power. Once again, this study revealed differences between male and female interaction styles in everyday life that corresponded with those depicted on television (Tannen 1990).

The interaction and behavior of men and women becomes organized and predictable as a result of gender roles. Societal expectations for male behavior are clearly different from those for women and these differences can be seen on television. According to Tannen (1990), Men are expected to behave in a more task-oriented way and women are expected to behave in a more social emotional way. In the world of prime-time television, men are also more likely to be depicted as task-oriented (Hess and Mackey 1952; Hess and Grant 1983).

Thus, past research found that men and women on television follow gender expectations about male and female interaction. Men relate to women on television in a more dominant and aggressive manner. Men are often depicted in control of women and the family. Men are depicted in career-oriented and task-oriented and expect women to be gentle, soft-spoken, submissive, and more emotional. Women are depicted as responsible for the household chores and the family (Aries 1996; Coltrane and Adams

1997). Women on television tend to interact with males in a feminine and passive manner that is consistent with the traditional gender expectations of women being more expressive and emotional than men (Aries 1996; Coltrane and Adams 1997). These gender-related depictions have been observed in both television commercials and television programming (Coltrane and Adams 1997).

Women on Television

Gender Roles in the Mass Media

In the early days of television, women were seen in TV only in traditional gender roles. These traditional gender roles involved women being actively involved in household and domestic chores (Scharrer *et al.* 2006). Women were always in roles that were passive and mild-mannered (Atkin 1991). Married women were rarely portrayed as employed outside of the home because a man's role was to work and provide for his family. Television reinforced traditional gender roles of women by casting them as characters in parts that performed typical household duties and child-care in the role of homemakers (Elasmar *et al.* 1999). According to Kilbourne (1995), housewives were to maintain a clean and spotless environment in which to raise their families and of which their husbands were proud.

Traditionally domestic and household duties were considered women's work and women's responsibility. Mothering and caring for others were natural and expected responses for women (Ceulemans 1979). Television shows like *Leave it to Beaver* and

The Brady Bunch clearly emphasized traditional women as ones who enjoyed staying home and who were content having little power (Marinucci 2005).

Traditional gender roles depicted women as being relationship-oriented and family-oriented. They were portrayed on television as being satisfied in such roles. Women on television generally did not venture into men's public world of work. Unlike their male counterparts who were involved with a wide variety of individuals, early television portrayed women as being more limited in their social relations (Press 1991).

Women were seen on television as enjoying the participation in household duties despite the fact that those duties became everyday, ordinary, and routine. Housewives and women performing those chores were frequently portrayed on television as being less intelligent than men. Women were not represented as mature and wise; rather they were portrayed as needing help and advice (Press 1991). Even though domestic duties were considered to be a woman's responsibility, women in the mass media frequently consulted men. For example, while women were often shown in commercials advertising household products, the voice-overs providing product information were most often male voices (Kilbourne 1995; Ceulemans 1979; Courtney and Wernick-Lockeretz 1971).

The family has been a social context used by television to portray gender roles. Television shows, such as *Leave it to Beaver* and *Father Knows Best*, were prime examples of traditional gender roles for men and women and the value that was placed on women being home (Olson and Douglas 1997). "Our ideas about the family, as of so many other things, are in part shaped by television, and television has long shown the ideal family to consist of a husband, wife and their dependent children" (Cantor 1991:

207). The father on those shows held power within the family and typically was the decision-maker. Those early family shows clearly reinforced traditional gender roles (Olson and Douglas 1997). Although some changes did take place in the media in regard to the family, television families frequently continue to conform to what was previously considered to be the ideal family (Cantor 1991).

Television programming in the 70s began to change and it appeared that the portrayal of women was also changing (Atkin 1991). Television shows like *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Charlie's Angels* were created. These shows depicted women in less traditional roles and in professional positions outside of stereotypical gender roles. Mary Tyler Moore was a professional woman who was content with working rather than pursuing traditional gendered role such as wife and mother (Atkin 1991; Davis 1990). The change in programming has been attributed to the women's movement and issues that came to light during this time (Heide 1995). In this period, women were increasingly seen in working roles, and their roles in the household were not as clearly emphasized. They appeared not to be as weak or dependent upon men as previously portrayed. Women were more likely to move outside the traditional gender norms (Press 1991).

Despite the appearance that advances had been made in television programming about women, some researchers have found that television shows continued to present women as weak and as sex objects. Davis (1990) found that some shows depicted women as requiring a man's help to solve problems and some were depicted in a way that enhanced their sexuality. Atkin (1999) reported that single working women were not depicted as seeking careers that were equal to men, but rather as filling traditional female

jobs, as nurses and secretaries. Working women were shown with little or no power and almost always with a male for a boss (Atkin 1991). According to Press (1991), women's issues were seldom given much attention in television programming and were often downplayed when they were addressed.

Programming in the 1980s was thought to have transformed the role of women in the world of television. Television shows, such as *Roseanne* and *Murphy Brown*, appeared to be portraying more assertive women in the working world. Women in this era of television programming seemed to be reviewing issues raised by the women's movement and addressing some repercussions from the women's movement (Heide 1995; Taylor 1989). Despite some changes in television programming in regard to women, Atkin *et al.* (1991) contended that television programming continued to portray women in ways that were deemed destructive. For example, in the show *Murphy Brown*, the lead character's propensity for demonstrating assertiveness was often presented as humorous rather than revealing a valued quality of a professional woman (Press 1991).

Although women during this era were increasingly portrayed as working, such as in the case of *Roseanne*, their lives and roles as women were deeply intertwined with their private family life and demonstrated reinforcement that a woman's first priorities and commitments were to their families. The pendulum it seemed had swung back to more traditional and conventional views of gender roles and these views were again seen regularly on television (Press 1991).

Although *Murphy Brown* made attempts to show what life was like for a working woman, it frequently used a comical stereotype of women. *Cagney and Lacey*, another

television program, tried to incorporate working women. However, these women were often ridiculed for choosing the non-traditional gender role of working in law enforcement rather than the more traditional role of mothering. Post-feminist television programming often made light of women's issues and did not clearly portray the struggle that women have when working and parenting in the real world. As a result of such programming, television tended to reinforce gender roles rather than encouraging people to accept and live non-traditional lives (Press 1991).

Media Images of Women

For decades now, women have been portrayed in stereotypical roles. Researchers have also observed stereotypical images or characteristics in the portrayals of women in the media. Throughout the media (print or electronic), women have been presented as sex objects in advertisements. On television, sexuality is considered to be the highest quality that a woman can possess (Kilbourne 1995). Kilbourne's analysis of television commercials revealed that women have frequently been presented as seductive and desirable even when performing mundane tasks like washing dishes. A woman is often implied to be the prize if a man purchases a particular product and a woman's attractiveness is presented as reflecting on her man by increasing his worth. Kilbourne concluded that rather than being her own person, a woman is characterized as an object and/or a possession of her male counterpart in many commercials. If she is beautiful, a man's status is improved. A woman's body has been objectified on television and used as a means to sell a variety of products from hand lotion to bottled water. This

objectification of women is a tactic which illustrates that a woman continue to be presented as a possession to be dehumanized (Ceulemans 1979; Kilbourne 1995).

Davis (1990) found that most often women on television are portrayed as beautiful and thin, and many times are younger than most men on television. Women on television tend to be about 10 years younger than the men who are seen on television. Women who are younger are valued more than those who are older. However, men increase their importance and worth as they age, even on television. Davis concluded that such presentations reinforce stereotypes which hold that a woman's worth is directly related to her age and appearance. The younger and thinner a woman is, the more valuable she is (Davis 1990).

According to Davis (1990), television often shows women fitting into the ideal societal stereotype. Women's hair color on television corresponds with society's stereotypes that a woman's beauty relates to hair color. The preferred colors for women on television in the United States are red or blonde. Graying hair on a woman signifies aging and this is not considered a valuable attribute. This is in direct contrast to a man with gray hair representing wisdom and intelligence. It may even be considered somewhat sexy. However, hair color of women is associated with beauty and feminism, and graying is not acceptable for women (Davis 1990).

Media images strengthen gender stereotypes about men and women (Coltrane and Adams 1997). These ideals and unrealistic images can be harmful. Milkie (2002) contends that media images of women often provide a negative framework for reality and limit a girl's or women's views about what it means to be a woman.

Power and Domination on Television

Often the portrayals on television show women falling victim to domination and violence far more often than men (Gerbner, 1978). Gerbner observed that (1978: 49-50):

One of the most interesting doubled-barreled cultural tactics—most visible on television drama—is that when women or other groups that have been denied full access to power are shown as independent, adventurous or powerful, they are portrayed as enforcing rather than challenging the laws that oppress them. They become policewomen, detectives or soldiers. In other words, they are accepted into the ranks of power provided they act on behalf of the rules designed to protect the interest of the majority groups. And even then they usually need to be rescued by male partners.

Women in power position are characterized as weaker and unequal to males. Despite their positions, they are frequently shown as subject to male dominance (Tuchman 1979). Men on television are shown as being bigger and superior to women. Men are portrayed as looking down on women, which reinforces male dominance (Coltrane and Adams 1997: 326). Gender is, therefore, an important characteristic that is utilized in television portrayals to maintain gender roles that view women as having less power and being dominated by men (Lemon 1978).

Numbers of Men and Women on Television

Men far outnumber women on television programs (Coltrane and Adams 1997). Reinhard (1980) found that white women represented less than 25 percent of characters found on television. In television commercials and advertisements, Bretl and Cantor (1988) found that there were about the same numbers of male and female characters. It was concluded that the number of women shown in television commercials had increased over the past two decades (1980s and 1990s).

A study of prime-time television programming found that there were fewer female characters than men, and women are not seen on television as often as men. In prime-time television programming, “men outnumbered women by a 2-1 ratio” (Mackey and Hess 1982: 208). On television, men are seen more often than women in all programming categories examined (Mackey and Hess 1982). For the prime-time season 2002-2003, 59 percent of characters on television were male and 41 percent were female. The ratio of men to women increased from the previous season of prime-time television (National Association of Women 2002).

Influences on Gender Roles in the Media

Unequal numbers of men and women have been an issue on television since the beginning of the television industry. Numerous explanations have been identified for the disparity between men’s and women’s roles in the media. One of the reasons for unequal numbers has been attributed to audience demands. Some have contended that viewers are not very interested in alternative depictions of women. Audiences do not want to see

women on television actively involved in alternatives roles. As a result, programming favors more traditional gender roles and women are portrayed in these roles to meet viewer preference (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Atkin *et al.* 1991).

The television industry is primarily interested in making money and profits (Greenberg and Collette 1997). “In 1993, advertisers spent about \$26.6 billion in support of network and local television broadcasting, and another \$2.5 billion on cable television” (Coltrane and Messineo 2000: 366). Consequently, determining programming for networks is important. Network programming that has been successful in the past is many times revised and reworked to satisfy viewers (Greenberg and Collette 1997).

Television networks are not necessarily interested in developing diverse and new programming to keep up with societal changes. Rather, they are interested in attracting and keeping viewers (Greenberg and Collette 1997; Turow 1992). Since the 1980s, advertisers have altered their marketing techniques and now focus on particular subgroups (Coltrane and Messineo 2000). If networks make alterations and modifications in their television programming, it is usually done with a financial motive to entice a new market segment, thus increasing profits for the sponsors (Greenberg and Collette 1997).

In addition to commercial sponsors, television programming also takes into consideration viewer preferences. Television programming is determined through the use of a “rating feedback system” (Mackey and Hess 1982: 208). This system has shown that certain interactions on television are clearly more highly rated than others. For example, woman-to-woman interactions are not as valued by viewers, as are male-to-

male or female-to-male interaction which receives better ratings. As a result, programming reflects these preferred types of interactions (Mackey and Hess 1982).

In the early days of television, there were not many, if any, female producers (Atkin *et al.* 1991; Creedon 1989). Men have been dominant in the television industry for some time. Attempts have been made to attract diversity into the field of television, especially in executive positions. The hope was that this would in turn increase diversity in television programming (Greenberg and Collette, 1997). There have been some small changes in programming as more women have made headway into the field of television programming and network administration. In recent years, women have been portrayed in more professional positions and are challenging traditional gender roles (Atkin *et al.* 1991; Creedon 1989). Television programming and networks that are controlled by women executives also have an increased number of women on their programs (Glascock 2001; Lauzen and Dozier 1999).

Empirical Generalizations

From the review of the research, gender roles have been defined as socially constructed values and beliefs about the roles that women and men should perform. Early television programming and advertising displayed images of women in traditional gender roles, such as housewife and mother. They were also shown primarily in the private sector and rarely shown as participating in the public sphere.

In more recent years, attempts have been made on television to expand the roles of women to portray them in more non-traditional roles. In the 1970s and 1980s, women

were depicted on television in more professional occupations and as being involved in more roles outside of the home (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Heide 1995; Atkin 1991; Davis 1990; Taylor 1989). Even in these non-traditional women's roles researchers have found stereotypical imagery to persist. The woman who is thin, young, and beautiful is still shown on television programming and in advertisements as the ideal (Kilbourne 1995).

Empirical Generalizations from the Literature

1. Men's behavior has traditionally been portrayed as task-oriented while women's behavior has been portrayed as socio-emotional.
2. Early television programming presented distinct traditional gender roles for women and men.
3. In more recent years, women have increasingly been portrayed in alternative gender roles.
4. Women portrayed in non-traditional roles are most often depicted as having less power than males.
5. Women on television are more often portrayed as more submissive and less capable than are men.
6. The gap in the number of male and female characters is decreasing.
7. The media responds to viewer preferences by portraying both men and women in traditional gender roles.

Summary

The literature reviewed has indicated that television is a major social structure in society and a great deal of research has been done on it (Wimmer and Dominick 2003; Lowery and De Fleur 1983; Fuchs and Lyle 1972). Researchers have concluded that traditional conceptions of gender roles impact how men and women are portrayed on television. Men and women on television are most often depicted in traditional gender roles. Research on early television programming revealed that women were often presented as caretakers in domestic roles. When women were portrayed in work roles outside of the home, they were most often portrayed in traditionally female occupations, such as nurses and secretaries.

As women's roles in society have changed, television also had begun showing women in less traditional roles. Women have increasingly been portrayed in professional positions and as taking on the responsibilities of both work and family. Women characters in television programming have increasingly been portrayed in careers that had previously been dominated by men, like police officers. Although these non-traditional images of women were increasingly seen on television, women still were not shown as equal in power or influence with men. Men still outnumbered women on television and women were still portrayed as being less powerful. Women have often been portrayed under male domination (Coltrane and Adams; Tuchman 1979; Gerbner 1978; Lemon 1978). Interaction of men and women on television also reflected traditional gender roles that encourage men to be aggressive and women to be submissive.

In the next chapter, several theoretical perspectives are brought together to provide a framework for this study of gender portrayals on prime-time television.

Chapter III

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

Three theoretical perspectives are drawn together to inform this research project. The first one is feminist theory, a broad perspective that focuses on femininity, gender and gender inequality (Johnson 1997). A second perspective is an interactionist theoretical perspective that draws upon Goffman's work (1977) on the portrayal of gender in advertising. The third perspective is an older one from Parsons and Bales (1955) that addresses socialization and family interaction through which role behavior is distinguished in terms of task-oriented and socio-emotional behavior. Each of these theoretical perspectives is discussed in this chapter.

Feminist Theoretical Perspective

Feminist theory is a broad "framework for understanding gender inequality and interpreting women's experience in relation to men, other women, and patriarchy as a system" (Johnson 1997: 99).

Gender Inequality

Feminist theory grew out of the women's movement (Hamilton 2006) which challenged traditional social structures. Of particular concern to theorists working in a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and communications,

has been their recognition of gender inequalities (Hamilton 2006). Feminist theory focuses on women and provides a female perspective on issues and a distinctive view of women's experiences. Most proclaim a goal of gender equality for women (Lorber 2005; Smith 1979/1987; Always 1995; Lengermann and Niebrugge 1996; Saltzmann-Chafetz 1997). Gender equality consists of "treating men and women legally the same" (Lorber 1997: 325).

The era of the feminist movement included attempts to identify the sources of gender discrimination and to offer solutions (Disch 2003). The mass media, including television, were identified as contributing to discrimination against women (Butler and Paisley 1980; Lemon 1978; Tuchman 1978; Tedesco 1974). According to Lorber (2005: 11):

Gendering divides the social world into two complementary but unequal sets of people—"women" and "men." This binary division confers a legal, social and personal status that overrides individual differences and intertwines with other major social statuses—racial categorization, ethnic grouping, economic class, age, religion and sexual orientation. Although we act out gender norms and expectations constantly in our interactions with others, gender's thrust is *structural* in that it orders the processes and practices of a society's major sectors—work, family, politics, law, education, medicine, the military, religions and culture. Gender is a system of power in that it privileges some groups of people and disadvantages others in conjunction with other systems of power (racial categories, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation).

Feminist theory offers an explanation for why men and women are treated differently in society and how gendered systems have led to discrimination and domination of women (Lorber 1994). Feminist theory asserts that television presents the dominant values in society that promote gender inequality and portray women in traditional gender roles (Coltrane and Messineo 2000).

Consistent with feminist theory, Coltrane and Messineo (2000) asserts that television makes type-casting of women a part of their regular programming and advertising. These are considered normal. Women are portrayed on television finding satisfaction and pleasure through participating in domestic and child-care activities. Female bodies on television are almost always portrayed perfect, supporting the gendered view that women are objects (Coltrane and Messineo 2000). “Present-day women who look at the major mass media are exposed to a standard of bodily attractiveness that is slimmer than that presented for men and that is less curvaceous than that presented for women since the 1930s” (Silverstein *et al.* 1968: 531). Women are subjected to a standard of attractiveness that is different for men in the mass media. These ideals often become the norms by which society lives (Silverstein *et al.* 1986). Since television and the mass media are such prominent structures in society, feminist theorists contend that it is important to address and research the impact that media images have on men and women.

Patriarchy

Feminist theorists are particularly concerned with oppression and discrimination.

They identify patriarchy as being at the core of female oppression and discrimination. Under patriarchy men, as a whole, dominate women both in the workplace and on the home front and gives men privilege (Lorber 1994). From a feminist theoretical perspective, patriarchy is built around the socially-constructed definitions of males and females and prescribes behavioral differences. Patriarchy is said to lead to the oppression of women through political, social and economic systems that are dominated and controlled by men. The concept of control by men is identified as a driving force that organizes men's lives by implying entitlement and control over women (Johnson 1997).

Patriarchy is said by feminist theorists to influence the social construction of knowledge and definitions of male and female behavior and roles. From this perspective, those in power control norms, values and beliefs that create the social construction of knowledge. Men have a very influential role in the social construction of knowledge and social definitions of gender roles. Men's perspectives contribute to the social construction of knowledge and are considered to be correct (Saltzman-Chafetz 1997). Given that men are the dominant force in decision-making for television programming, as revealed in the literature (Atkin *et al.* 1991; Creedon 1989), feminist theorists argue that it is reasonable to expect that their social definitions for gender roles are predominantly reflected in programming.

According to Davidson and Gordon (1979), "males provide the standard by which 'normal' is defined. Females when different are regarded as the exception to the rule" (p. 158). As a result, feminine qualities and traits socially constructed tend to be less valuable and desired than masculine qualities and traits. Individuals portrayed with

feminine characteristics will not be as important as those individuals identified as being masculine. This creates a structure of inequality based upon the social definition of femininity and masculinity (Saltzman-Chafetz 1997). Therefore, from a feminist theoretical perspective, the traditional definitions of gender roles are more likely to be displayed on prime-time television (Lorber 1994; Lucal 1999; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Gender

There are several concepts that are central to feminist theory. One of these is gender roles. Gender roles are norms or sets of behaviors for acting appropriately as male and female in a specific society or group (Coltrane and Adams 1997). Gender roles are socially prescribed and constructed ways of behaving and interacting. Understanding gender roles assist with learning how to be a man and a woman (Lorber 1994). “Gender status produces patterns of social expectations for bodies, behavior, emotions, family and work roles. Gendered expectations can change over time both on individual and social levels” (Lorber and Moore 2007: 5). Gender also includes “status, identity and display” (Lorber, 1999: 417). Gender relates social characteristics with being male and female (Glick and Fiske 1999) and establishes the division of labor in society that determines an individual’s status of being dominant or submissive (Aries 1996: 16-17). Gender is a concept that people use to guide how to behave in society (Aries 1996).

Interactionist Theoretical Perspective

Symbolic interaction is a theoretical perspective in sociology. This theory concentrates on the micro and subjective aspects of social life and human behavior. It addresses human interaction and how humans provide meaning to their interaction. Symbolic interaction focuses on the individuals in social settings and how their interaction produces and is influenced by shared meaning or definitions. Individuals in interaction interpret situations and adjust their behavior according to the meanings that they develop in the social setting (Blumer 1969).

Gender provides shared meanings or definitions of situations for individuals. By differentiating individuals on the basis of gender, different qualities are identified with being masculine or feminine. Definitions of masculine and feminine characteristics provide behavioral and interaction guidelines for people (Goffman 1977).

Men, of course, are trained from childhood in outdoor competencies, mechanical, electrical, automotive, and so forth, just as they are very often given some rudimentary practices in the arts of self-defense. They come then, to social situations with these advantages, just as women come to social situations without them (Goffman 1977: 321).

These gendered expectations contribute to definitions of acceptable interaction and appropriate roles for men and women, thus creating meaning through and for social interaction (Goffman 1977).

Media images reflect social expectations that society has about male and female behavior (Goffman 1976). Magazine advertisements, according to Goffman, represent cultural standards of men and women in discreet and inconspicuous ways. By placing men and women's bodies in different positions, the readers are provided with subtle messages about behavior and the power differences between men and women (Goffman 1976). Visual images of men and women in advertisements provide social meaning about gender. Media images become symbols of what females are and what females imagine they should be. These symbols contribute to a shared meaning based on the social knowledge and cultural norms held about gender that impact social interaction and social life for males and females (Kang 1997; Goffman 1976).

Images provide rules for male and female interaction based on masculinity and femininity (Goffman 1976). These rules shape and influence the social interaction of men and women. In advertising, women are portrayed as submissively interacting with men by avoiding eye contact and showing more emotions (Crane 1999; Hoschild 1990; Goffman 1976). Women in the media are depicted and posed listening to men and appearing attentive to their needs. Men, on the other hand, are shown having influence and power, and overseeing the female. Media images therefore demonstrate the definitions of acceptable female behavior (Hoschild 1990; Goffman 1976).

Act, Behavior, and Interaction

The terms act, behavior, and interaction are important in symbolic interaction. The word act is preferred in symbolic interaction over behavior. The symbolic

interactionists distinguish themselves from behaviorists. In symbolic interaction the act refers to the division of action into individual units. An act consists of anything that a person is involved with (Charon 1998; Blumer 1969). “Acts are sometimes even said to have a ‘beginning’ and an ‘end,’ but such designations are usually used for analytical purposes. Most symbolic interactionists understand full well the fact that individual acts are simply social objects pulled out from the ongoing stream of action” (Charon 1998: 130). An act can be identified as a unit of analysis from the ongoing stream of action. “Each act has a goal or goals as well as social objects, and each involves decisions by the actor” (Charon 1998: 131). The act, unlike behavior, recognizes definitions of situations prior to the act (Charon 1998).

Interaction is “built on social action” (Charon 1998: 152). Interaction is more than behavior and the act because it allows for the interpretation of human behavior. Interaction involves a reciprocal understanding and analysis of the actors’ stream of action (Charon 1998; Blumer 1969). “Interaction means that actors take one another into account, communicate, and interpret one another as they go along” (Charon 1998: 152). Interaction provides meaning and understanding to social life and society which creates an environment where people adapt and adjust their interactions (Charon 1998; Blumer 1969).

In the present study both terms, behavior and act are used. Behavior is the term used by Bales (1950) to observe and code units of interaction while act is the term used mostly by symbolic interactionists in reference to units of interaction.

Structural Functional Perspective of Parsons and Bales

Parsons and Bales (1955) applied a structural functional perspective to the family. They proposed that task-oriented and socio-emotional orientations found in small group interaction were also present in families (Crano and Aronoff 1978). Women most often showed expressive roles and men were most often involved in instrumental social roles (Crano and Aronoff 1978; Parsons and Bales 1955). These differences were said to be a result of gender role socialization. Socialization in the family encouraged males and females to differentiate between instrumental and expressive behaviors and thus contributed to the maintenance of the family. The wife specialized in roles that are expressive while the husband specialized in roles that are instrumental. Together, through these structural specializations, husbands and wives were seen as contributing to the maintenance of the family (Crano and Aronoff 1978; Parsons and Bales 1955).

Parsons and Bales (1955) held that the performance of the expressive and instrumental roles is important to preserve the family. They held that these roles cannot generally be accomplished by the same person. As a result, Parsons and Bales contended that the emotional roles are usually carried out by the women and the instrumental roles are usually performed by the men. Roles in families are thus differentiated by gender. This perspective is most consistent with a traditional understanding of gender roles (Crano and Aronoff 1978; Parsons and Bales 1955).

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of feminist theory, an interactionist perspective, and a structural functionalist perspective as they relate to this study. The feminist perspective provided a framework for understanding gendered dominance patterns in interaction and society. The interaction perspective provided insight to gender meanings communicated symbolically and through social interaction. The structural functionalist perspective called attention to the functional relationship between task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors. It also provided the basis for a methodology (Interaction Process Analysis) for examining these behaviors in relation to gender roles.

The next chapter presents the research methodology of this study. It includes the research design, methods of data collection, data analysis. Also, included are the hypotheses for testing and the variables.

Chapter IV

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods that were used in this study. The chapter includes discussion of the research objectives, research design, and sampling procedures. Also, included are the research hypotheses, the variables and their operationalizations, as well as the statistical methods to test the hypotheses.

Research Objectives

This research project addressed the following objectives:

- To determine the extent to which traditional gender roles are depicted on prime-time television shows.
- To determine if prime-time television programming depicts women as displaying more socio-emotional behaviors than men
- To determine if prime-time television programming displays men as engaging in more task-oriented behaviors than women.
- To determine if men and women are depicted displaying similar types of behavior on prime-time television shows.

Research Design

This research design is based upon a previous study that was done in 1982 (Hess and Grant 1983; Mackey and Hess 1982) that addressed distinctions in male and female behavior on prime-time television. It is a partial replication of the earlier study.

In the current study, Bales Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) was used to examine the behavior of men and women as portrayed on commercial network prime-time television. The IPA focuses on "systems of human interaction" (Bales 1950: 257). From this perspective, communication and interaction are broken into acts. These acts consist of verbal or non-verbal behaviors that are identified into two broad types, socio-emotional and task-oriented behaviors. These categories were further distinguished between socio-emotional positive and negative behaviors and task-oriented asking and giving behaviors. These four types of behaviors were broken down into 12 sub-categories: showing solidarity, showing tension release, agreeing, giving suggestion, giving opinion, giving orientation, asking for orientation, asking for opinion, asking for suggestions, disagreeing, showing tensions and showing antagonism (Bales 1950: 59) (see Figure 1 presented in Chapter 2 page 13). These categories were then used to observe and code types of behaviors portrayed for males and females on prime-time television to establish frequencies.

Thus, following the earlier study, an adapted version of the Bales Interaction Process Analysis was utilized to observe and code gender role behaviors on prime-time television (Mackey and Hess 1982). Behaviors observed were broken down into two categories: "task-oriented behavior and socio-emotional behaviors" (Mackey and Hess

1982: 204). These two categories were then divided into two categories each: task-oriented asking, task-oriented giving, socio-emotional positive, and socio-emotional negative behaviors. The operational definitions of these four categories of behavior are provided in Figure 1 (see Chapter 2 page 13). The units of analysis in this study were the individual acts or behaviors of characters in prime-time television.

In gathering the data six independent raters observed the social behavior on prime-time television (PTTV). These independent viewers coded behaviors observed with a coding frame (see Appendix A). These behaviors were differentiated by gender on the coding sheets. Prime-time television was defined as TV programming on commercial networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS) between 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Central Standard Time. The data were gathered during the period of February 26 to March 2, 2007 and March 5 to March 9, 2007. Raters were assigned TV networks to watch and code behaviors observed by men and women. Two raters were assigned to each network insuring that each program on PTTV would be watched and the behavior coded by two independent raters. An ad-hoc selection was made by each rater of a 10-minute segment of each half hour between 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. (Mackey and Hess 1982: 204). In the earlier study types of programs were coded as “comedies, police shows, family drama, crime shows” (Mackey and Hess 1982: 204). Shows which did not fit these categories were placed into an “other” category (Mackey and Hess 1982). In the current study, the “other” category included reality television, game shows, and special programming. These three categories had not been included in the earlier study.

A coding frame was used to record the observations of raters (see Appendix 2). Each coding frame had enough space to record the social behavior of three male characters and three female characters. Also included on the coding frame was information about the type of show, name of show, and number of males and females portrayed in each scene (Hess and Grant 1983). Coding of social behavior was done in 10-minute segments. Coding began when two or more individuals entered a scene and started interacting. A new scene occurred if a new character entered, if a character left, or if the setting changed. Entry of the second actor/actress in a scene changed the scene to a new social setting and coding of behavior would begin (Mackey and Hess 1982: 205). “Whenever there is a change in locale (not just camera angle) and/or person-composition, a new scene is observed” (Hess and Grant 1983: 379). Behavior was coded by the rater when a person during the scene started an interaction, usually done by verbal communication of some kind. This signaled the rater to start the coding process (Mackey and Hess 1982). The same processes of coding the data were employed in this study.

Non-verbal behaviors, such as hand gestures and facial expressions as well as verbal behaviors of the actors and actresses were coded. The initial behavior of a scene was recorded when either a verbal or a non-verbal behavior was observed. This behavior was identified and coded on the coding sheet. Each behavior was regarded as continuing until another person within the scene reacted either verbally or non-verbally, which indicated the beginning of a new act in the interaction. The process continued in this manner until the scene changed, as described above. The process was repeated until the

ten-minute period ended. Commercials were not included as part of the 10-minute coding segments (Hess and Grant 1983: 379; Mackey and Hess 1982: 204-205).

The coders were trained in the methods needed to accurately code the behaviors and produce reliable data from their observations. To establish the reliability of the coding scheme, a segment of television programming was recorded on a videotape. The coders watched the videotape at the same time and coded the social behaviors. At the end of each taped scene, the six coders compared their observations. Inter-coder reliability was 93 percent.

Research Hypotheses

Based upon the literature reviewed and the theoretical perspectives, the following research hypotheses were tested.

H1: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional behaviors will be higher for women than for men.

H2: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional positive behaviors will be higher for women than men.

H3: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional negative behaviors will be higher for women than men.

H4: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

H5: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented giving behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

H6: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented asking behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

Operational Definitions

The variables in the hypotheses are defined and operationalized as follows.

Task-Oriented Behaviors

A behavior is coded as task-oriented giving when a character: gives suggestions or directions in a way that implies autonomy; gives opinions, evaluation, analyses; expresses feelings, wishes; gives orientation, information; repeats, clarifies, confirms. A behavior is coded as task-oriented asking when a character: asks for orientation, information, repetition, confirmation; asks for opinion, evaluation, analysis; expresses feelings, asks for suggestions, direction, and possible courses of action.

Social-Emotional Behaviors

A behavior is coded as socio-emotional positive when a character: shows solidarity; raises another's status; gives help, reward; shows release of tension; jokes, laughs; shows satisfaction; agrees; shows passive acceptance; shows understanding; concurs and complies. A behavior is coded as socio-emotional negative when a character: shows disagreement; shows passive rejection; uses unnecessary formality; withholds help; acts tense; asks for help; withdraws out of field; shows antagonism; deflates another's status; defends or asserts oneself.

Data Analysis Procedures

The purpose of the data analysis is to determine how gender roles are depicted in the behaviors observed and coded. Measurement of social behavior allows gender roles to be categorized as traditional or non-traditional. If traditional gender roles are not depicted on prime-time television (the null hypothesis), then one would expect men and women to display these types of behaviors equally. The number of men and women observed in the scenes differs, as does the number of acts or behaviors observed for each group. This makes a direct comparison of the frequencies of observed behaviors impossible. Therefore, the proportion of behaviors, from each gender, that falls into each behavior category was noted. Statistical tests of differences of proportion are used to determine statistical significance for all of the hypotheses. A difference of proportion is a method for comparing two variables that are expressed as proportion (Vogt 1993). "One proportion is subtracted from the other. The results range from -1.0 to +1.0, with zero indicating that the two variables have $(p_1 - p_2)$ identical conditional probabilities on a dependent variable" (Vogt 1993: 69).

A one-tailed z-test is used to determine statistical significance because the hypotheses indicate direction (Healey 2002). A one-tailed test is used when the research hypothesis predicts that the value of one variable will be more than that of another variable (Voelker, Orton, and Adams 2001). The .05 level of statistical significance common in social sciences research is used in deciding whether or not the null hypotheses (no differences) can be rejected.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the research methods used in the study. Research objectives and design were discussed; research hypotheses, variables and operationalizations were included. The statistical methods used in this research were explained. The following chapter presents the findings.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the sample and findings from the analysis of data used to test the research hypotheses, presented in Chapter IV.

Sample Description

This study compared the behaviors of men and women as depicted in prime-time television. Socio-emotional (positive and negative) behaviors and task-oriented (asking and giving) behaviors of men and women in prime-time television scenes were coded. A total of 2,968 scenes containing 24,994 behaviors were viewed and coded by the six raters in this study.

Prime-time television was defined as TV commercial networks (ABC, NBC, and CBS) between 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Central Standard Time; data were collected February 26 to March 2, 2007 and March 5 to March 9, 2007. Six raters watched ad-hoc 10-minute segments every half-hour of commercial network prime-time television programming. All of prime-time television, commercial network programming was used as a sampling frame.

Table 1: Distributions for Male and Female Characters and Behaviors Observed

<u>Totals</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Total</u>
Behaviors	14,988	60	10,006	40	24,994
Number of Characters	4,991	60	3,278	40	8,269

The coded material revealed that men had a total of 14,988 behaviors (60 percent) and women had a total number of 10,006 behaviors (40 percent) (see Table 1). Among all characters observed and coded in prime-time television scenes, 60% were males and 40% were females (see Table 1).

Table 2: Sex Composition of Scenes by Program Type

Type of Program	No. of Scenes	No. of Characters		%	
		Males	Females	Males	Female
Comedy	447	860	486	64	36
Drama	1,125	1,791	1,254	59	41
Crime	630	1,224	540	69	31
Police	147	244	138	64	36
Other	619	872	860	50	50
Total	2,968	4,991	3,278	60	40

Table 2 shows the total number of males and females coded in scenes by program type. In comedy programming there were 447 total scenes coded. In these scenes, 64 percent of behaviors were by males and 36 percent were by females. In drama programming, there were 1,125 scenes coded, and in these scenes 59 percent were male behaviors and 41 percent were female behaviors. Six hundred and thirty scenes were recorded in crime programming. In crime programming, 69 percent of behaviors were by

men and 31 percent by women. Police programming had 147 scenes coded and 64 percent of behaviors were by men and 36 percent were by females. The other category had 619 scenes recorded and there were 50 percent male and 50 female behaviors.

Table 3: Type of Behavior by Males and Females

<u>Behavior Type</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>% of Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>% of Females</u>
Socio-Emotional Positive	2,435	49	2,127	52
<u>Socio-Emotional Negative</u>	<u>2,570</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>1,980</u>	<u>48</u>
Total Socio-Emotional	5,005	100	4,107	100
Task-Oriented Asking	3,140	31	1,956	33
<u>Task-Oriented Giving</u>	<u>6,843</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>3,943</u>	<u>67</u>
Total Task-Oriented	9,983	100	5,899	100

Table 3 shows the number of male and female behaviors observed and coded as socio-emotional positive and negative and task-oriented asking and giving behaviors. Of all the behaviors coded as socio-emotional, fifty-two percent of women's behavior was positive and 48 percent was negative. Of all the behaviors coded as task-oriented, 33 percent of women's behavior was asking behaviors and 67 percent was giving behaviors. The observed and coded behaviors of males were similar. That is, 49 percent of male behavior was coded as socio-emotional positive and 51 percent was coded as socio-emotional negative. Thirty one percent of men's task-oriented behavior was coded as asking and 69 percent as task-oriented giving behaviors.

Table 4: Distribution of Male and Female Socio-Emotional Behaviors by Program Type

Type of Program	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total
Comedy	64	36	2,185
Police	70	30	192
Crime	63	37	1,588
Drama	52	48	3,455
Other	40	60	1,692
Total	55	45	9,112

Table 4 shows the distribution of male and female socio-emotional behaviors by program type. Men exhibited more socio-emotional behaviors in all programming type, except the other category. In comedy programming, 64 percent of male behavior was socio-emotional and 36 percent of female behavior was socio-emotional. In police programming, men and women showed the greatest difference between socio-emotional behaviors. Men displayed 70 percent socio-emotional behaviors and women showing 30 percent. In drama, programming, men and women showed the least gender difference in socio-emotional behaviors.

Table 5: Distribution of Male and Female Task-Oriented Behaviors by Program Type

Type of Program	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total
Comedy	71	29	2,033
Police	68	32	743
Crime	71	29	4,462
Drama	56	44	6,596
Other	55	45	2,044
All Types	63	37	15,878

Table 5 shows the distribution of male and female task-oriented behavior by program type. In all program types, men exhibited displaying more task-oriented behaviors than women. In comedy programming, 71 percent of male behavior was task-oriented and 29 percent of female behavior was task-oriented. The program type showing the least gender difference for task-oriented behavior is the other category.

Test of Hypotheses

This section provides statistical test of the relationships among the variables. The null and research hypotheses were tested using a z-test. An alpha level of .05 is chosen to reject or fail to reject null hypotheses. A difference of proportion statistical test was used to determine the relationship of the variables. A difference of proportion takes into account the unequal numbers of males and females in scenes on prime-time television programming.

Hypothesis 1

Research Hypothesis 1: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional behaviors will be higher for women than for men.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₁: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as socio-emotional

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as socio-emotional

Table 6: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Socio-Emotional Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Socio-Emotional Behaviors	Other Behaviors	Z	p-value
Male	5,005 (.334) ^a	9,979	12.175	.001*
Female	4,107 (.410) ^b	5,899		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

- a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Socio-Emotional; 5,005/14,988.
- b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Socio-Emotional; 4,107/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 1. The p-value was .001 (see Table 6). These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level of significance. Thus, null hypothesis 1 is rejected. This finding supports research hypothesis 1 that in prime-time television scenes women exhibit a higher proportion of socio-emotional behaviors than do men.

Hypothesis 2

Research Hypothesis 2: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional positive behaviors will be higher for women than men.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₂: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as socio-emotional positive

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as socio-emotional positive

Table 7: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Socio-Emotional Positive Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Socio-Emotional Positive Behaviors	Other Behaviors	Z	p-value
Male	2,435 (.162) ^a	12,533	9.812	.001*
Female	2,127 (.213) ^b	7,879		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Socio-Emotional Positive; 2,435/14,988.

b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Socio-Emotional Positive; 2,127/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 2. The p-value was .001 (see Table 7). These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level. Based on this outcome, null hypothesis 2 is rejected. The finding supports the research hypothesis 2 that in prime-time television scenes, women exhibit a higher proportion of socio-emotional positive behaviors than do men.

Hypothesis 3

Research Hypothesis 3: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional negative behaviors will be higher for women than men.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₃: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as socio-emotional negative

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as socio-emotional negative

Table 8: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Socio-Emotional Negative Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Socio-Emotional Negative Behaviors	Other Behaviors	Z	p-value
Male	2,570 (.171) ^a	12,418	5.199	.001*
Female	1,980 (.198) ^b	8,026		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

- a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Socio-Emotional Negative; 2,570/14,988.
- b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Socio-Emotional Negative; 1,980/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 3. The results, presented in Table 7 show the p-value of .001. These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level. Based on this outcome, null hypothesis 3 is rejected. This finding supports research hypothesis 3 that in prime-time television scenes women exhibit a higher proportion of socio-emotional negative behaviors than do men.

Hypothesis 4

Research Hypothesis 4: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₄: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as task-oriented behaviors

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as task-oriented behaviors

Table 9: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Task-Oriented Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Task-Oriented Behaviors	Other Behaviors	Z	p-value
Male	9,983 (.666) ^a	5,005	12.389	.001*
Female	5,899 (.590) ^b	4,107		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Task-Oriented Behaviors; 9,983/14,988.

b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Task-Oriented Behaviors; 5,899/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 4. The p-value was .001. These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level (see Table 9). Based on this outcome, null hypothesis 4 is rejected. This finding supports the research hypothesis 4 that in prime-time television scenes men exhibit a higher proportion of task-oriented behaviors than do women.

Hypothesis 5

Research Hypothesis 5: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented giving behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₅: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as task-oriented giving behaviors

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as task-oriented giving behaviors

Table 10: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Task-Oriented Giving Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Task-Oriented Asking Interactions	Other Interactions	Z	p-value
Male	6,843 (.457) ^a	8,145	9.922	.001*
Female	3,943 (.394) ^b	6,063		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

- a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Task-Oriented Giving Behaviors; 6,843/14,988.
- b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Task-Oriented Giving Behaviors; 3,943/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 5. The p-value was .001. These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level (see Table 10). Based on these results, the null hypothesis 5 is rejected. This finding supports research hypothesis 5 that in prime-time television scenes men exhibit a higher proportion of task-oriented giving behaviors than do women.

Hypothesis 6

Research Hypothesis 6: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented asking behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

H₀: $p_1 = p_2$

H₆: $p_1 < p_2$

p_1 : Proportion of men's behaviors classified as task-oriented asking behaviors

p_2 : Proportion of women's behaviors classified as task-oriented asking behaviors

Table 11: Difference of Proportion of Male and Female Task-Oriented Asking Behaviors in Prime-Time Television Scenes

Gender	Task-Oriented Giving Behaviors	Other Behaviors	Z	p-value
Male	3,140 (.210) ^a	11,849	2.761	.003*
Female	1,956 (.195) ^b	8,050		

* $p \leq .05$ (One-tailed test)

- a. Proportion of all male behavior coded as Task-Oriented Asking Behaviors; 3,140/14,988.
- b. Proportion of all female behavior coded as Task-Oriented Asking Behaviors; 1,956/10,006.

A difference of proportion test was used for testing hypothesis 6. The p-value was .001. These results indicate statistical significance at less than the .05 level (see Table 11). Thus, the null hypothesis 6 is rejected. This finding supports research hypothesis 6 that in prime-time television scenes men exhibit a higher proportion of task-oriented asking behaviors than do women.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this study, including the tests of hypotheses. The six hypotheses tested revealed statistically significant differences in the proportions of socio-emotional and task-oriented behaviors of males and females observed on prime-time television. While the observed differences in proportion were statistically significant, the proportion differences were actually small. The large sample sizes contributed to the findings of statistical significance. The final chapter discusses the findings and examines the findings in light of the theoretical perspectives. Limitations and suggestions for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The literature reviewed for this study indicated that prime-time television is a major socialization mechanism in today's society. Prime-time television programming shows men and women interacting in a variety of settings, situations and in different roles. Consequently, the gender roles of men and women on television are an important area to study to determine what changes, if any, have occurred in these portrayals overtime. According to the Department of Labor (2005), about 60 percent of women worked full time in 2003. In 2004, women held approximately half of all management positions. Thirty-three percent of women obtained a college degree in 2004 as compared to 11 percent in 1970 (U.S. Department of Labor 2006). To what extent have these changing roles of women in society been reflected in prime-time television programming? This was a question of interest in this study.

As Parsons and Bales theoretical work suggested (1955), changes in women's gender roles are likely to be accompanied by changes men's gender roles since the roles are structurally related to one another. Consequently, this study of how gender roles are portrayed included an examination of both women's and men's role portrayal on prime-time television.

Specifically, the following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE WOMEN AND MEN PORTRAYED AS EXHIBITING SIMILAR MODES OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR?
2. TO WHAT EXTENT IS TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES BEHAVIOR REINFORCED BY PRIME-TIME TELEVISION IMAGERY?

Review of the Findings

Discussion of Hypotheses

According to the literature reviewed, in the past on PTTV, women have been in supportive socio-emotional behaviors consistent with traditional female gender roles. Behavior of men and women on PTTV did not play the same roles. On the other hand, men were engaged primarily in task-oriented behaviors that were consistent with traditional male gender roles (Hess and Grant, 1983; Mackey and Hess, 1982). Using a modified version of the Bales IPA, both task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors were coded for both male and female characters observed on PPTV in this study. Based upon the literature reviewed and the three theoretical perspectives which informed this study, the following research hypotheses were tested:

- H1: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional behaviors will be higher for women than for men.
- H2: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional positive behaviors will be higher for women than men.

- H3: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of socio-emotional negative behaviors will be higher for women than men.
- H4: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented behaviors will be higher for men than for women.
- H5: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented giving behaviors will be higher for men than for women.
- H6: In scenes on prime-time television shows, the proportion of task-oriented asking behaviors will be higher for men than for women.

The unit of analysis in this study was individual behaviors of characters in prime-time television.

As noted in Table 12, all of the hypotheses tested in this study were supported by the data analysis. A difference of proportion statistical test was used to determine significance of difference in the portrayed behaviors of males and females. This test takes into account the unequal numbers of males and females in scenes on prime-time television. However, the finding of statistically significant differences in proportions must be viewed with caution, owing to the large sample sizes.

This study found that females in scenes on prime-time television exhibited more socio-emotional positive and negative behaviors than men. Men exhibited more task-oriented giving and asking behaviors than women. According to this research, men and women on prime-time television display traditional gender roles.

Table 12: Summary of Results

H_R	Variables	Males	Females	Decision on H_R
1	Social-Emotional Behaviors		Exhibit a higher proportion than males	Accept
2	Social-Emotional Positive Behaviors		Exhibit a higher proportion than males	Accept
3	Social-Emotional Negative Behaviors		Exhibit a higher proportion than males	Accept
4	Task-Oriented Behaviors	Exhibit a higher proportion than females		Accept
5	Task-Oriented Giving Behaviors	Exhibit a higher proportion than females		Accept
6	Task-Oriented Asking Behaviors	Exhibit a higher proportion than females		Accept

Findings in Relation to Theory and Earlier Study

Feminist theory, a symbolic interactionist perspective, and structural functional perspective of Parsons and Bales were used to study gender roles on PTTV. Feminist theory suggested that gender role differences and gender inequality would be seen on television. The symbolic interactionist perspective suggests that males and females would be portrayed based on the shared cultural meanings of gender roles (Goffman 1976). The structural functional perspective suggested that the portrayal of females would be organized around socio-emotional behaviors while that of males would be organized around task-oriented behaviors. The findings of this study were consistent with these theoretical perspectives.

A total of 2,968 scenes and 24,994 behaviors were viewed and coded for both men and women. Overall, men were observed in a total of 14,988 behaviors (60%) while women were observed in a total 10,006 behaviors (40%). Men were observed to engage in a total of 9,983 (63% of all task-oriented behaviors) task-oriented behaviors while women displayed 5,899 task-oriented behaviors (37% of all task-oriented behaviors). Men had 5,005 socio-emotional behaviors (55%) and women had a total of 4,107 (45%) socio-emotional behaviors. In the 24,994 scenes that were coded, males made up 60 percent of the characters in scenes and women made up 40 percent of the characters. One possible explanation for the higher numbers of male behaviors on prime-time television is that men have more opportunities to act than females. As a consequence, the differences observed were tested using a difference of proportion statistical test. This test revealed that differences in observed behaviors were related to gender roles. This finding needs to be viewed with caution since the large number of behaviors observed makes it very likely that differences will be statistically significant.

This study found that in 2007 on prime-time television; male characters displayed more socio-emotional behaviors than they had displayed in a similar study (Mackey and Hess 1982). In the earlier study, men displayed less socio-emotional behavior than men in this current study. One might attribute the increase in men portrayed as exhibiting higher numbers of socio-emotional behaviors as indicating a societal recognition and acceptance of changes occurring in male gender roles.

Program type impacted the behaviors and roles that men and women displayed. Both men and women in crime and police programming exhibited a higher number of

task-oriented behaviors and lower numbers of socio-emotional behaviors. Males in comedy programming showed a higher number of socio-emotional behaviors than in any other type of programming. Females were more likely than men to show socio-emotional behaviors in most types of programming except in police programming. The other category (reality programming, game shows, and special programming) had the least amount of gender difference in task-oriented behaviors. This suggests that the type of PPTV programming impacts how men and women are portrayed.

This study revealed that in all categories of prime-time programming there were a higher percentage of males than females except the category labeled other. There were equal numbers of males and females in scenes in the other category on prime-time television. The other category also did not show as much variance between male and female gender roles. These types of programs are geared toward certain audiences and this may impact how gender roles are displayed. Although scripting exists in this category, the more equal numbers of men and women may be attributed to these characters on reality, games shows, and special programming reflecting more gender neutral roles.

One of the findings in this study was the observation that women exhibit more socio-emotional positive and negative, behaviors than men on prime-time television. Another finding of this study was that on average men exhibit more task-oriented giving and asking behaviors than women in scenes on prime-time television. Socio-emotional behaviors for women and task-oriented behaviors for men fit into traditional gender roles. This is consistent with a persistent finding in the literature that women are portrayed in

traditional gender roles in the mass media (Coltrane and Messineo 2000; Saltzman-Chafetz 1997; Atkin 1991; Press 1991; Davis 1990). This study reinforced that finding by showing female characters on prime-time television being depicted in gender roles that involve primarily socio-emotional behaviors. These roles reinforce society's ideas about how women should behave and act. Gender roles are socially constructed and convey behavior norms for women on prime-time television. This study found that socio-emotional behaviors are frequently displayed by women on PTTV and thus continue to communicate traditional gender roles.

Feminist theory suggests that television programming preserves inequality for women by portraying women in traditional gender roles where women are emotional, caring, and subordinate to men (Coltrane and Messineo 2000; Coltrane and Adams 1997; Tuchman 1978). Men are displayed in positions of authority, as leaders, effective problem-solvers, and as goal-oriented. Feminist theory also implies that men as television producers make conscious decisions to portray women in secondary, supportive roles. The evidence of this research reinforces these ideas from feminist theory since women are still primarily portrayed in roles that are supportive and emotional. Male roles on television are more often task-oriented as males are portrayed as responsible for problem-solving and decision-making.

Feminist theory as well as symbolic interactionist theory assert that gender roles are socially constructed and provide meaning about feminine or masculine behavior. Social and cultural structures in society, such as television influence what is considered to be acceptable male and female interaction (Saltzman-Chafetz 1997). As television is an

important structure in society, it may be seen as supporting the understanding of traditional and non-traditional gender roles by portraying women in socio-emotional roles and men in task-oriented roles (Coltrane and Messineo 2000). These ideas are consistent with the findings that television as a social structure promotes traditional gender roles for women and men. As all of the six hypotheses were accepted in this study, the data collected in this study support the premise that prime-time television continues to reinforce traditional gender roles for men and women.

Media images provide social meaning about gender and validate expectations of women's and men's behaviors (Goffman 1976). As Goffman (1976) suggested, gender displays are used to portray women in positions that accentuate femininity, thus creating social meaning about gender definitions. The results of this study can be interpreted from this interactionist perspective. The continued portrayal of men and women in primarily traditional gender roles on prime-time television reinforce traditional gender-based meanings, making it likely that these characterizations of men and women will persist on PTTV.

Men were shown in more task-oriented asking and giving behaviors than are women. Women, on the other hand, exhibited proportionately more socio-emotional positive and negative behaviors than men. The interactionist perspective would suggest that traditional gendered images of men and women are not only seen today in scenes on television, but are also recreated or reinforced. These images then create meaning and understanding about acceptable masculine and feminine roles. This study found that

understanding about masculine and feminine roles continue to be based on the traditional gender roles for men and women as portrayed on PTTV.

The findings of this research are also consistent with the structural functional perspective of Parsons and Bales (1955). Parsons and Bales (1955) contended that socialization provided prescriptions for gender roles of men and women in families. These gender roles were based upon functionally linked roles where men performed instrumental tasks and women carried out emotional tasks. The finding of this study support Parsons and Bales division of traditional gender roles based on the functional relationship that task-oriented and socio-emotional behaviors have for men and women in society. Prime-time television continues to portray women in expressive roles and men in instrumental roles, again reinforcing traditional gender roles.

The use of feminist theory, the interactionist perspective, and the structural functional perspective of Parsons and Bales provided alternative explanations for gender role portrayals on prime-time television. From a feminist theory perspective, traditional gender roles on prime-time television can be explained by the gendered systems that lead to inequality between men and women (Lorber 1994). Television portrays primarily traditional gender roles and portrays women as having less power than men (Coltrane and Messineo 2000). Traditional gender roles that show women in primarily socio-emotional behaviors and men in primarily task-oriented behaviors are related to the concept of patriarchy in which men are dominant and in control while women are submissive to men's authority.

From the interactionist perspective, interaction gives meaning to gender roles and offers guidelines for how men and women should act. The structural functional perspective of Parsons and Bales (1955) provides still another explanation of how traditional gender roles are separated into functionally important expressive and instrumental roles. This is also supported by the depiction of traditional gender roles on television for men and women.

Limitations of the Study

Prime-time television currently provides only a part of the television viewing opportunities for people in today's society. As a result, the use of only prime-time television in this study may limit generalizability. Other programming types, such as public broadcasting television or pay-for-view television, may provide different gender role depictions.

Another limitation of the study is that the behaviors of men and women were coded but not the context of the behaviors. For example, coding did not include whether men or women were in a home or work environment. The social environment may impact the portrayal of gender roles. Researching further into the context of the interaction may help to explain and understand the differences in socio-emotional behaviors and task-oriented behaviors of men and women as shown on television.

While a large sample size is generally regarded as a "plus" in research, making it more like that a representative sample has been drawn, it can also be a liability. With nearly 25,000 observed behaviors serving as the unit of analysis in this study, the large

sample size may have distorted the statistical significance of differences observed. Even relatively small differences in proportions of observed male and female behaviors are likely to produce statistically significant differences. Thus the findings here need to be interpreted with caution.

Further Research

Further studies could expand this research by using additional types of television programming, such as cable and paid programming to assess gender role portrayals. These were not analyzed for this research. In recent years, satellite and cable television has expanded to provide hundreds of channels, many of them aimed at special interests. These channels were intentionally excluded from this research. However, these alternative types of programming would enhance the research about the roles of women and men on television. Similarly, public broadcast (PBS) was not included in this study. Programming on PBS may provide a very different view of gender roles.

Another consideration for future research may be to evaluate the social aspects of gender roles. For example, how are women's roles at home and at work portrayed on television? Are women in the work setting cast in similar roles as men, or are they shown in occupations that are typical of traditional women's work. Another recommendation for a future study may be to focus on the increasing socio-emotional behaviors of men on television programming in a variety of settings, such as in comedy programming.

Further investigation into programming type, such as comedy, drama, crime, police or other, and gender roles on these types of programs would add to the current

research. This research could focus on a more in-depth examination of variations in the portrayals of the role of men and women according to the type of media programming.

Summary and Conclusions

This study investigated the gender roles among men and women in scenes on prime-time television. Earlier research found that women were more frequently portrayed showing socio-emotional behaviors than men. The previous study also established that men had more task-oriented behaviors than women (Mackey and Hess 1982). The current study found that men more frequently in 2007 are cast in supportive roles, especially in comedy programming. Although men today are shown in more supportive and emotional roles than in the earlier study, they still are heavily involved in task-oriented and directive behaviors. Men in television programming are cast in roles showing them making decisions and pursuing goal-oriented tasks. Thus, men continue to be presented in primarily traditional male gender roles. However, women's roles on television have not changed to a greater extent from earlier portrayals.

The literature revealed that structures in society, such as prime-time television, are dominated and controlled by men (Coltrane and Adams 1997; Tuchman 1979; Lemon 1978; Gerbner 1978). Networks are motivated by profits and money-making. Research has determined that media viewers prefer to see more male interaction. As a result, male behavior and male agendas may be promoted on prime-time television to increase profits and ratings. Women may not be seen as frequently on television as men, and their interactions may not be as numerous because female interaction may not contribute to

high ratings or raise profits for television networks (Coltrane and Messineo 2000; Greenberg and Collette 1997; Atkin *et al.* 1991; Creedon 1989).

The greater prevalence of male versus female characters observed on prime-time television, in this study, may reveal that this distribution is more valued by those who watch PTTV. Those who make decisions about PTTV are responsive to consumer preferences. It is this same consumer who drives the industry that is economically dependent upon advertising that is viewed by those who watch its programming. The analysis of the 2007 data collected from this study compared to the data collected in 1982 show that there has been little change in how roles of women and men are portrayed on PTTV. Yet, census data show that over this period of 25 years, women's roles in society have changed and are becoming increasingly more diverse, and women are increasingly involved in employment and new roles outside of the home. Gender portrayals on PTTV seem to lag behind this current reality.

The findings of this study reveal that PTTV may be responsive to societal preferences for traditional gender behaviors portrayed in programming and that these preferences are increasingly incongruent with the changing norms of society. Consequently, this study may be indicating that PTTV is most responsive to preferred gender roles that sophisticated market surveys show as pleasing to viewers of PTTV. This, an important finding of this study is that women's entrance into the work world may be incongruent with values that resist these changes in social norms. Further, PTTV programming, viewed by large portions of society, may be fostering the continuation of this resistance by maintaining the presentation of images of women in traditional gender

roles. This study concludes with the assertion that PTTV is currently presenting women in gender roles that are not congruent with contemporary changes in society. PTTV may even be creating challenges for women who are striving to achieve equality in the work place with men.

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Appendix A

Figure 2: Coding Frame for Observation of Social Interaction on Television.

Name of program observed _____

Number of male characters in scene _____

Number of female characters in scene _____

Behavior Category	Male #1	Male #2	Male #3	Female #1	Female #2	Female #3
Social– Emotional Positive						
Social– Emotional Negative						
Task– Oriented Giving						
Task– Oriented Asking						

Appendix B

Figure 3: Categories of Television Programs

Show Name:	Category
How I Met Your Mother	Comedy
The Class	Comedy
2 and ½ Men	Comedy
Rules of Engagement:	Comedy
America's Funniest Videos	Comedy
My Names is Earl	Comedy
The Office	Comedy
George Lopez	Comedy
Knights of Prosperity	Comedy
According to Jim	Comedy
In Case of Emergency	Comedy
CSI Miami	Crime
NCIS	Crime
Criminal Minds	Crime
CSI: NY	Crime
Numbers	Crime
CSI: LV	Crime
Shark	Crime
Crossing Jordan	Crime
What about Brian?	Drama
Boston Legal	Drama
The Unit	Drama
Ghost Whisperer	Drama
Close to Home	Drama
Las Vegas	Drama
Jericho	Drama
Lost	Drama
Ugly Betty	Drama
Gray's Anatomy	Drama
Men in Trees	Drama
Black Donnelly's	Drama
Medium	Drama
Friday Night Lights	Drama
30 Rock	Drama
Heroes	Drama
Law and Order	Police
Law and Order: CI	Police

Law and Order: SVU	Police
Wife Swap	Other
20/20	Other
1 vs. 100	Other
Primetime	Other
To Iraq and Back	Other
Building a Dream, Oprah	Other
Super Nanny	Other
Survivor: Fuji	Other
Dateline	Other
Deal or No Deal	Other
48 Hours	Other