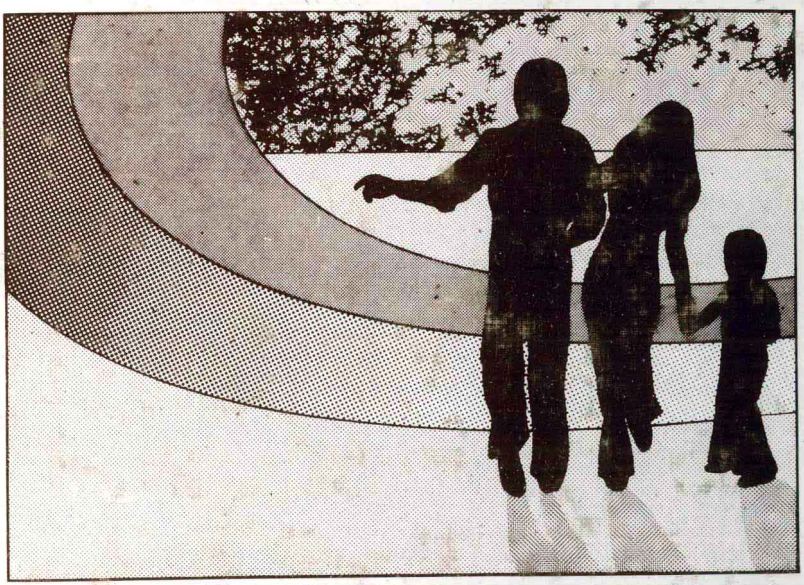
Role Structure and Analysis of the Family

F. IVAN NYE



Published in Cooperation with the
National Council on Family Relations

SAGE LIBRARY OF SOCIAL RESEARCH 24

Role Structure and Analysis of the Family

F. IVAN NYE

with Howard M. Bahr, Stephen J. Bahr,
John E. Carlson, Viktor Gecas,
Steven McLaughlin, and Walter L. Slocum

Volume 24
SAGE LIBRARY OF
SOCIAL RESEARCH

SAGE PUBLICATIONS Beverly Hills / London

Copyright © 1976 by Sage Publications, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

For information address:

SAGE PUBLICATIONS, INC.
275 South Beverly Drive
Beverly Hills, California 90212

SAGE PUBLICATIONS LTD
28 Banner Street
London EC1Y 8QE, England

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Role structure and analysis of the family.

(Sage library of social research; v. 24)
1. Family—United States. 2. Family research—United States.
3. Social role. I. Nye, F. Ivan, 1918- II. Title.
HQ536.R63 301.42'0973 75-40424
ISBN 0-8039-0663-3
ISBN 0-8039-0664-1 pbk.

THIRD PRINTING

ROLE STRUCTURE AND ANALYSIS OF THE FAMILY

Volume 24, Sage Library of Social Research

This volume in the Sage Library of Social Research
is published in cooperation with the
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS

General Editor

Jetse Sprey, Case Western Reserve

Editorial Board

Sharon Price Bonham, University of Georgia
Ronald E. Cromwell, University of Missouri–Kansas City
Marie W. Osmond, Florida State University
F. Ivan Nye, Washington State University
Robert G. Ryder, NIMH, Washington, D.C.

此为试读，需要完整PDF请访问：www.ertongbook.com

PREFACE

Obviously there are many ways that one can approach the description, analysis and explanation of family behavior. The psychoanalysts have focused on early childhood experience and the place of unconscious motivations as guides to adult family behavior. Structure-functionalists have tried to describe the interplay of the family with other social institutions, and under the leadership of Talcott Parsons, to extend that analysis into the role behavior of husbands, wives, and children within the family. Symbolic interactionists have focused on the meaning to the individual of decisions and behavior patterns of family members and those in meaningful interaction with family members. Recently, social exchange theorists have begun to reanalyze family behaviors in terms of rewards, costs, and goodness of outcomes. From these and more alternatives, why choose role analysis (and a rather special delineation of it at that) for structuring a program of research and theory development?

We believe that the role concept as developed in this volume has a number of advantages. Among these is its versatility. It can be profitably employed to describe the culture of a social institution and the groups which enact it. In this sense, it is a set of expectations for the behavior of occupants of all social positions—expectations based on a history of behaviors of innumerable occupants of these positions, not just the habits of a present position occupant. These expectations are incorporated in and form the substantive content of norms of the society. Too, the associated sanctions for enforcing role behavior are part of the culture. They may be written into laws and contracts to be enforced by special agencies or by informal, yet equally understood unwritten codes and equally effective institutionalized sanctions.

At the behavioral level, the concept finds expression in several constructs including role enactment, role-sharing (both among group members and among social organizations), role competence, role conflict, and role power. Thus, at the behavioral level, it is possible to determine whether a role is enacted by all or some fraction of position occupants. This can be an important issue in dealing with hypothesized roles—those emerging in the normative structure of the society or disappearing from it. Whether the role is part of only one or several positions, limited to a given social organization or part of more than one, can be determined. The level of competence of the role enactment can be estimated both by the role incumbent and by those with whom he or she interacts. Role conflict can be conceptually located within one or more roles; likewise, power can be usefully conceptualized and measured specific to each role domain.

Finally, the role concept can be utilized at the sociopsychological level, such as one's attachment to or identification with the role. Role activity disliked by many role occupants seems an especially likely target for social change, while those with which most occupants identify positively may persist indefinitely even though what would seem to be viable alternatives are readily available. Role strain may be predictive both of social change and of various outcomes for the individuals experiencing it.

Finally, the usefulness of a conceptual system to theory development and testing deserves mention. The role concept lends itself well to the assessment of rewards and costs which spouses provide one another. The two final chapters report our first exercises in utilizing role analysis to test and extend social exchange theory. Later papers will continue the application of this theoretical system, as well as symbolic interaction and perhaps others.

This volume reports the first major segment of a broad program of family research. It is, in effect, a large preliminary study in which the concepts are examined, reformulated at points, and empirically measured. How well these tasks have been accomplished may well be the principal contribution of the volume. However, data were collected from 210 couples randomly selected from lists of parents of third grade students. These data are reported here as the first available from the present role conceptu-

alization and measurement. We are, of course, aware of limits on their adequacy for describing and analyzing American family roles. Larger samples from broader populations, refinements of indicators and more sophisticated data analysis procedures will be necessary for that task.

A sizable number of scholars have been involved in the initial stages of the program, from which this is the initial major report. Most of them appear as contributing authors and/or co-authors of chapters. All of the contributors were, at the time the project was planned, either faculty or doctoral candidates at Washington State University. In addition, we want to mention one or more sessions with major sociologists at other universities. These include Felix M. Berardo, Robert Bell, Glen Elder, Bernard Farber, David Kallen, and Murray Straus. Their ideas and reactions to ours helped shape the initial directions of the research. Cynthia Devary and Leigh Galloway made a presentable manuscript possible by their care in typing and checking the final draft.

Our debt to Washington State University is probably obvious, since it funded and supported the program under Project 2008 of the Agricultural Research Center. We appreciate that sizable support which made the research possible.

—F. Ivan Nye

Pullman, Washington
January 1976

CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
	Preface	vii
	PART I. PERSPECTIVE ON ROLES	1
1	The Role Concept: Review and Delineation F. IVAN NYE and VIKTOR GECAS	3
2	Role Constructs: Measurement F. IVAN NYE	15
	PART II. NORMS, BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROPERTIES	31
3	The Socialization and Child Care Roles VIKTOR GECAS	33
4	The Kinship Role HOWARD M. BAHR	61
5	Provider and Housekeeper Roles WALTER L. SLOCUM and F. IVAN NYE	81
6	The Sexual Role JOHN CARLSON	101
7	The Therapeutic Role F. IVAN NYE	111
8	The Recreational Role JOHN CARLSON	131
9	Family Roles in Comparative Perspective F. IVAN NYE	149
	PART III. FAMILY ROLES AS SOCIAL EXCHANGE	175
10	Role Competence, Role Norms, and Marital Control STEPHEN J. BAHR	179

11 Role Competence and Marital Satisfaction 191
F. IVAN NYE and STEVEN McLAUGHLIN

Postscript: Toward Further Research 206

References 208

PART I

PERSPECTIVE ON ROLES

此为试读，需要完整PDF请访问：www.ertongbook.com

Chapter 1

THE ROLE CONCEPT: REVIEW AND DELINEATION

F. Ivan Nye and Viktor Gecas

Few sociological concepts are used more frequently than role—and its use is far from limited to sociology, with extensive use found in psychology, anthropology, social work, and other fields. Perhaps this is why no consensus has been reached on a specific meaning of the concept or the precise means of its measurement. In fact, most authors do not define it even for their own use, but permit the reader to sense a meaning from the way it is employed. This has led to a few major and many minor variations in its usage.

The importance, range, and diversity of the concept had reached a point by 1958 that Gross et al. (1958) devote five chapters to a review and formulation of the concept prior to applying it to their study of the role of superintendent. In their 1966 review, Biddle and Thomas listed 343 articles and books relating to role theory. This represented a growth from 25 in 1938 and from 112 in 1950. However, after reaching 278 in 1956, the increase in role literature showed signs of leveling off, but growth had not ceased by the last year of the above survey.

Along with Gross et al.'s (1958) and Biddle and Thomas' (1966) extensive and systematic reviews, a number of other book-length

treatments of the role concept and its uses have recently appeared: Banton (1965), from an anthropological perspective, stresses the historical and cross-cultural development of the concept; Heiss (1968) emphasizes the expression of role theory in the family sociology literature; Znaniecki (1965) discusses roles from a symbolic interactionist perspective; and Jackson (1972) offers a collection of essays focusing on the utility of the role concept in sociological theory.

Besides these major comprehensive reviews of the concept, a number of review articles have dealt with special problems in its development and use. Such comprehensive treatments will not be attempted here. Rather, we will focus on some of the key issues that have appeared in conceptualizing the role concept. The reader is referred to the above as competent and relatively full reviews of the concept.

ROLES AS CULTURAL PRESCRIPTIONS VERSUS BEHAVIORAL REGULARITIES

There are at least two distinct traditions within sociology regarding the concept of role: the structural tradition initiated by Ralph Linton (1936, 1945); and the interactionist tradition, gaining its coherence and impetus from the social psychology of George H. Mead (1934). Briefly, the difference between these two orientations is one of emphasis. The structuralists define role as an element of culture (normative) associated with a given social status or position. In Linton's (1936: 114) words:

> A role represents the dynamic aspect of a status. The individual is socially assigned to a status and occupies it with relation to other statuses. When he puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into effect, he is performing a role.

In his later work (1945: 77), Linton more pointedly stressed the cultural context of roles:

> Role will be used to designate the sum total of the culture patterns associated with a particular status. It thus includes the attitudes, values,

and behavior ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying the status.

The interactionist tradition, on the other hand, lays major emphasis on the *emergent* quality of roles–that is, a conception of roles as behavioral regularities emerging out of social interaction. For example, for Turner (1962: 25), "Role refers to a pattern which can be regarded as the consistent behavior of a single type of actor." Because of this greater emphasis on the behavioral expression of roles, the interactionist perspective is more likely to stress the processual, developmental, and even creative aspects of role behavior. Derivative concepts such as role-playing and role-taking, stressing the developmental aspects of role interaction, occupy a more prominent place in this orientation than in the structuralist view of roles.

The emphasis on the emergence of roles from social interaction is carried perhaps farthest by Turner. In his recent book *Family Interaction* (1970), Turner applies the concept of role to such social categories as "antagonist" or "dissenter" (1970: 186). It is not evident that there are cultural expectations concerning the proper or necessary behavior of one in a position of antagonist or dissenter, nor are the positions of antagonist or dissenter part of the culture of a society.[1] Rather, people in various positions, such as member of a small group, enact their roles differently from others–some dissent more, some harmonize more, etc. These behavioral regularities may, of course, result in behavioral expectations of the participants in the social group. But there is no reason to expect that they would go beyond the expectations of the group members. What seems to have occurred in small group research is that a position is inferred from a type of distinctive behavior. This reverses the structuralist process of expecting certain behavior from persons occupying positions–positions are inferred from descriptive types of behavior.

This use of the role concept may be futher illuminated by reviewing a list of roles which occur in Turner's extensive discussion of family roles. A few can reasonably be derived from culturally defined positions. Thus, cooking, housekeeping, and child care roles usually are associated with the position wife and/or mother. Female, aged, and child roles correspond to the

position of female, aged person, or child. However, a much larger aggregate of roles is not derivable from any culturally defined position. These include from Turner's work: encourager, harmonizer, compromiser, aggressor, blocker, recognition seeker, mediator, antagonist, dissenter, irresponsible critic, advocate, challenger, hero, tyrannical, submissive, and authoritarian (1970: 185-216). (From a stucturalist perspective, these designations would be more descriptive of *styles* of behavior rather than of roles in their own right.)

The difference between the structural and interactionist positions on role is not only a difference in emphasis (prescriptions versus behavior), but also a difference in the types of social contexts considered for role analysis. The structuralist view is most appropriate to the study of roles in *formal* organizations or groups, where the cultural definitions for the roles are fairly clear. Interactionists, on the other hand, are more comfortable with analyses of roles in relatively unstructured, informal groups, where roles are vaguely defined and where there is a good deal of latitude in role behavior. The family, of course, is an advantageous context for the study of roles since it has strong elements of both formal structure and informal interaction.

Most, but not all, scholars appear to be aware of both basic elements of the role phenomenon: a set of expectations which is part of the culture and typical behavior of persons occupying a status (position) which, in fact, either validates the cultural expectations or emerges to create new roles. Sociologists who are more interested in social structure find the cultural emphasis more congenial while social psychologists, with their focus on behavior, have employed the behavioral definition. Gross et al. succinctly sum up an important aspect of the controversy in these words:

> Another reason for some of the differences in definition is simply semantic; the same phenomena are frequently given different names. Thus, what Linton and Newcomb define as a role, Davis defines as a status. What Davis defines as a role, Newcomb calls role behavior and Sarbin role enactment [Gross et al., 1958: 17].

It would be possible to resolve the conflicting definitions by assigning the single term "role" to a set of cultural expectations of

behavior, attitudes, and values, while employing dynamic concepts such as role enactment, role performance, or role behavior to the actual behavior performed in enacting the role. While any individual scholar is likely to be more interested in one or the other, awareness of the other and some common role language would greatly increase the value of the concept.

Our study orients more to the structural properties of roles. Until now, at least, the family has been characterized by a relatively high degree of normative structure. Certain duties and privileges have been prescribed for husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and to some extent children, and many activities have been proscribed to all or some family members. While this structure has become less rigid recently, still the normative prescriptions and proscriptions are relatively well defined in comparison with many other groups, and especially compared to groups of subjects assembled to solve problems in small group experiments.

We suggest, therefore, that the cultural content, the normative prescriptions and proscriptions, have relatively large influence on the behavior of husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children and, therefore, it is important in describing and explaning *family* behavior that these cultural guides to role behavior be measured and analyzed. Consequently, our further elaboration of the role concept will proceed from the structuralist perspective. This is not to ignore or deprecate the significance of role behavior, which does not necessarily correspond to the norms. Major components of the study will involve the measurement of role enactment and of the sanctions employed to enforce role prescriptions and proscriptions. The latter is important in distinguishing between prescriptions (which are enforced) and mere preferences for one rather than another behavior.

POSITION AS HAVING ONE ROLE VERSUS MANY

In relation to a given position, role has been employed both in the singular and plural; for example, the *role* of mother or the *roles* of a mother. Linton employed the singular, gathering all the expected behavior of position into one role. While he speaks of the roles of an individual, he has reference to the fact that each person

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com