The symbolic meaning of earned income and the division of household labor

Laurie Lynn Stange
Iowa State University

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The symbolic meaning of earned income
and the division of household labor

by

Laurie Lynn Stange

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Human Development and Family Studies
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(Marriage and Family Therapy)

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.
In Charge of Major Work

Signature was redacted for privacy.
For the Major Department

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For the Graduate College

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1996
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION**  
- Purpose of the Study  
- Limitations of the Study  
- Questions Posed by the Study  

**METHODOLOGY**  
- Qualitative Methodology  
  - Sample size  
  - Participant description  
  - Therapist description  
  - Procedure  
- Data Collection  
  - Trustworthiness  
  - Credibility  
  - Transferability  
  - Dependability  
  - Confirmability  
- Data Analysis  

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**  
- Determinants of the Division of Household Labor  
  - Resource theory and earned income  
  - Time-availability hypothesis  
  - Household utility function  
  - Hired domestic services  
  - Sex-role beliefs  
  - Professional status  
  - Education
Satisfaction with the Division of Household Labor 39
Qualitative aspects of home tasks 41
Absolute hours in home tasks 42
Congruence with sex-role beliefs 44

RESULTS 46
Couple Descriptions 46
Couple 1: Lisa and Chuck 46
Couple 2: Denny and Janet 50
Couple 3: Dick and Dianne 51
Couple 4: Jeff and Kate 53
Couple 5: Tony and Marlene 54
Couple 6: Brenda and Bill 55
Couple 7: Nick and Anne 57
Couple 8: Tim and Sue 59

Emergent Domains 61
Domain 1: The relative income of a spouse is related to his or her relative focus on home or work 62
Domain 2: Sex-role beliefs affect how individuals view spending on child-care and housekeeping 69
Domain 3: Housekeeping services reduce marital conflict 72
Domain 4: Levels of skill with tasks influence DOHL 75
Domain 5: The partner with the higher standard for a task has ultimate responsibility for the task 77
Domain 6: When both partners are busy at home, feelings of equity are increased 81
Domain 7: Relative incomes have differing degrees of influence on expectations for self and spouse 83
**Survey Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couple</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple 1: Lisa and Chuck</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 2: Denny and Janet</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 3: Dick and Dianne</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 4: Jeff and Kate</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 5: Tony and Marlene</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 6: Brenda and Bill</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 7: Nick and Anne</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple 8: Tim and Sue</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSIONS**

**Factors Contributing to Satisfaction with the Division of Household Labor**
- Balancing work and home is a team effort
- Putting family and personal needs ahead of social expectations
- Being flexible with one's roles as the relationship changes

**Comparison of Findings with Current Research Data**
- Examination of relative income and the division of household labor
- Examination of other factors related to division of household labor
- Examination of inconsistent findings

**Implications for Marital and Family Therapy**
- Identify multiple systems' influence on DOHL
- Recognize earned income's influence on DOHL
- Attend to the unique considerations of each couple

**REFERENCES**

**APPENDIX**
INTRODUCTION

Huber and Spitze (1981) have demonstrated that a lack of domestic sharing composes a large portion of marital conflicts. Likewise, perceptions of inequity in the division of household tasks have been found to be an important determinant of marital unhappiness (Pleck, 1985). Ross, Mirowsky, and Huber (1983) found wives who have full responsibility for housework, whether employed or not, suffer more depression. In addition, inequitable divisions of household labor decrease wives' satisfaction with their employed work roles (Sekaran, 1989).

These findings become particularly important when paired with the fact that for the first time in American history, more mothers are in the paid work force than are not (Cherlin, 1991). Although this trend emphasizes the need for shared responsibilities at home, women are still shouldering the major portion of domestic work (Berardo, Shenan, & Leslie, 1987; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Stone-Fish, New, & Van Cleave, 1992). In fact, Heath and Ciscel (1988) concluded that "the husband in a two-earner household appears to be contributing hardly enough to the household production process to offset the additional requirements his presence requires" (p.788). This conclusion was partially based on the authors' finding that married working mothers were expending household efforts equivalent to or greater than single working mothers.

Studies examining the division of household labor (DOHL) have revealed
that most employed women put in approximately twice as many hours per week than their husbands with family related tasks (Berardo et al., 1987; Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1986; Pleck, 1985; Spitze, 1988; Stone-Fish et al., 1992). Although research findings do suggest that wives' employment leads to greater participation of husbands in housework, these results are usually explained by wives doing less housework and child-care overall, thus increasing their husbands' relative contributions (Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Pleck, 1985).

Why this inequality exists between the genders has been only partially explained and many discrepant findings exist. Some of the more influential variables identified in research studies include education level (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990); sex-role beliefs (Bird, Bird, & Scruggs, 1984; Huber & Spitze, 1981; Seecombe, 1986); professional status of husbands and wives (Bird et al., 1984); and husbands' and wives' relative incomes (Ross, 1987; Stone-Fish et al., 1992).

Blood and Wolfe (1960) were among the first researchers to study the effects of wives' employment on family task allocation. They found that professionally-employed husbands were more likely to partake in domestic tasks if their wives also had jobs of professional status rather than just "earner" jobs. Subsequent research demonstrated that as wives' relative incomes rose, so did husbands' involvement in household tasks (Model, 1981; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Ross, 1987).

Although the relative income of wives has been clearly identified as a
predictor variable of DOHL, little is known regarding the nature of this influence. The relationship between relative income of wife and greater husband participation in home tasks remains strong even when controlling for number of hours each spouse spends at work (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990).

Women's relative earnings appear to mediate the relationship between sex-role beliefs and DOHL. That is, women's sex-role beliefs have been found to be less predictive of DOHL than men's (Bird et al., 1984; Hiller & Philliber, 1986) except for relationships where the wage-gap between husband and wife is less (Bird et al., 1984). One might conclude from this evidence that unless a woman has greater economic power, her husband's prerogatives regarding DOHL will prevail. This deduction is complicated by evidence suggesting that many women are satisfied with an apparently unfair division of labor (Berk, 1985; Pleck, 1985).

Satisfaction with an inegalitarian division of household labor may vary based on wives' incomes, above and beyond their reported sex-role beliefs. McHale and Crouter (1993) found women who are most likely to report marital dissatisfaction are those women with nontraditional sex-role attitudes, a traditional division of labor, and lower personal incomes than others in the study. This finding supports the argument that wives' power to achieve egalitarian marital relations is influenced by their economic resources (Oropesa, 1993).
Purpose of the Study

What is missing in the research thus far is an understanding of the ways in which the partners of each couple ascribe meaning to the wives' and husbands' earnings and how this meaning changes when wives' earnings are relatively higher or lower. The vast majority of previous studies have relied on the use of a single respondent, usually the wife, to describe a dyadic relationship.

Research efforts have identified several predicting variables, yet just why her higher earnings are associated with a more egalitarian division of household tasks is unknown, especially since dyadic analyses are few. How couples successfully negotiate a fair division of household labor despite discrepant spousal earnings is also speculative. Even less is known about marital satisfaction as it relates to the division of household labor, sex-role beliefs, and relative earnings. In fact, some researchers are unable to conclude that wives desire greater participation from their husbands in family work despite husbands' relatively small contributions (Pleck, 1985).

This qualitative study was designed to address "why" and "how" the variables of relative income and sex-role beliefs interplay, if at all, in the subsequent division of household labor and in the couple's marital satisfaction. In the spirit of the qualitative paradigm, other unique variables that the respondents identify as meaningful were investigated as well.
Limitations of the Study

Certain issues may limit the transferability and credibility of this study:

1. When the flyer was sent out seeking volunteers, several recipients declined involvement due to their fears that marital conflict would result if they participated. Therefore, one might deduce that the couples involved with this study were less fearful of investigating the topic than many of those who declined.

2. The researcher chose to interview spouses jointly versus separately in order to obtain the benefits of spousal elaboration, clarification, or disagreement. However, the joint interview format may have occasionally prevented spouses from speaking honestly about the issues being investigated.

3. The researcher solicited full time, dual-professional couples having at least one child under 12 years of age in order to narrow the study's focus to partners having heavy paid work loads, strong personal work commitments, and significant family responsibilities. Thus, the transferability to other non-similar couples may be limited.

4. The marital adjustment instrument used in this study has been criticized on its conceptual and empirical bases. Johnson, Edwards, and Booth (1986) criticize Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (1976) for combining interaction, disagreement, satisfaction, instability, and a variety of marital problems into a summated score. Johnson et al.'s confirmatory factor analysis of five components representing marital quality (marital happiness, interaction,
disagreements, problems, and instability) revealed two distinct dimensions in Spanier's tool: One contained marital happiness and interaction and the other dimension contained disagreements, problems, and instability. Since these two dimensions performed differently over forms of marital structure such as duration and sex, Johnson et al. concluded that meaning is lost when the two dimensions are combined.

C.L. Cole (personal communication, March 1, 1996) communicated theoretical limitations of the DAS. Among them, Cole identified the inability of the instrument to recognize individual benefits of using certain behaviors. For instance, the negatively evaluated behavior "leaving the house after a fight" might be the most beneficial behavior for some persons. In addition, Cole states that Spanier's bias towards spouses' consensus on goals, hobbies, and values fails to recognize how diversity in these areas can actually increase marital quality in some couples.

5. The researcher's personal bias towards collaborative efforts with the division of household labor may have influenced the results.

Questions Posed by the Study

This study addressed the following questions:

1. How do clients ascribe meaning (in terms of sex-role expectations) to the income each spouse makes and how do the amounts of the earnings affect these meanings?

2. How are expectations for spousal responsibility with DOHL affected by
the meanings associated with level of earnings?

3. How do these expectations for spousal responsibility, as they relate to the actual division of household labor, affect marital satisfaction?

4. How do different meanings around earnings affect the actual ways in which the couple negotiates the division of household labor?

For respondents who did not express a relationship between their earnings and the division of household labor (DOHL), other factors that influenced DOHL were investigated instead.
METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative methodology was chosen for this study because of its usefulness in examining meanings around lived experiences, its attention to multiple and diverse perspectives, and its focus on process (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). While a quantitative analysis would help identify aggregate social behavior, the qualitative paradigm provides the unique benefit of providing an in-depth accounting of individual experience and meaning.

In qualitative/naturalistic studies, the logic of purposive sampling is not to select participants based on similarities that can be developed into generalizations, but to investigate the unique context of each situation and to maximize information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Sample size

Unlike the traditional quantitative paradigm, which attempts to control contextual variables in order to generalize findings, the qualitative paradigm assumes that events and environments affect individuals differently. It is further assumed that these events are ascribed meaning by the individual that shapes the individual’s life.

Since qualitative research involves studying the phenomenological experience of participants as in-depthly as possible, few participants are needed. Instead, the sample size is considered adequate when it provides the investigator with a thorough description of a range of experience within the
topic under study.

In this study, eight couples were solicited through flyers that were sent to a hospital and a corporation in a large midwestern city (350,000+ people). The flyers described the research purpose and the characteristics required of the participants. Interested persons then contacted the researcher by phone to find out more details about the study. In addition, the researcher ensured that the couple fit the participant criteria as described below. The first six callers, all women, were immediately accepted into the study along with their husbands. Two of these callers also knew of another couple who fit the study criteria. After interviews with the first six couples, it was determined that the seventh and eighth couples would be needed in order to obtain a desirable range of experience for the study.

Participant description

The flyer requested couples where both spouses had full-time careers that they perceived as professional in nature. The word "spouse" was used in the flyer to solicit heterosexual couples since the purpose of the research was to study husband-wife (male-female) negotiation of household labor. In addition, the flyer stated that the couple needed to have at least one child under the age of 12 years.

The flyer was sent to the hospital and corporation with two people that this researcher knows personally. These two people were instructed not to solicit participants, but to simply give the flyer to people they knew in the office and
to post it in the work area. The two people reported back to this researcher that several persons declined the study for fear of marital conflict if they were to get involved. For example, one male recipient of the flyer said, "I'm not touching that!" Another male recipient was asked by a female colleague when he showed hesitancy, "Well, don't you do your share of work?" to which he replied "No!" Three females said their husbands would never agree to get involved with such a topic. In conclusion, one might deduce that the couples who volunteered for this study were not as afraid of the consequences of involvement as some who declined involvement.

Of the eight couples in the study, the average household income is $123,000 and the two median incomes are $130,000 and $94,000. In half of the households, the wife earns more than the husband. All of the respondents work at least 36 hours per week, with the exception of one female, who works 28 hours each week. In five of the eight homes, housekeeping services are employed. Exactly one-half of the respondents have Master's degrees and the other half have Bachelor's degrees. Another atypical aspect of the couples is the absence of blended families: All the children were born to the parents who were interviewed. In seven of the couples, neither spouse has been married before. All 16 participants in the study are Caucasian. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' demographic profiles.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Names (by couples)</th>
<th>Ages</th>
<th># of yrs. married</th>
<th># of children in home</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Gross Annual Income</th>
<th># hours per week at work</th>
<th>Amount of housekeeping services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chuck &amp; Lisa</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1 infant</td>
<td>Him: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$35K</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2 hrs./wk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denny &amp; Janet</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2 children, 11 &amp; 9 yrs.</td>
<td>Him: Master's</td>
<td>$73K</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2 hrs. twice per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick &amp; Dianne</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 infant</td>
<td>Him: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$33K</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff &amp; Kate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3 children, 13, 11 &amp; 7 yrs.</td>
<td>Him: Master's</td>
<td>$47K</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Name(s)</td>
<td># of yrs.</td>
<td># of children in home</td>
<td>Education level</td>
<td>Gross Income</td>
<td># hours per week at work</td>
<td>Amount of housekeeping services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Him: 44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1 child,</td>
<td>Him: Master's</td>
<td>$30K</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Marlene</td>
<td>Her: 38</td>
<td>11 yrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Her: Master's</td>
<td>$43K</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Him: 34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2 children,</td>
<td>Him: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$50K</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3 hrs. twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Brenda</td>
<td>Her: 35</td>
<td>6 &amp; 5 yrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Her: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$25K</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Him: 41</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2 children,</td>
<td>Him: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$65K</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5 hrs./wk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Anne</td>
<td>Her: 42</td>
<td>11 &amp; 4 yrs.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Her: Master's</td>
<td>$200K</td>
<td>50(^a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Him: 35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 infant</td>
<td>Him: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$105K</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2 hrs. twice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; Sue</td>
<td>Her: 35</td>
<td>2 children,</td>
<td></td>
<td>Her: Bachelor's</td>
<td>$25K</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>per month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Anne reports that 40% of the time she is traveling away from home.
Therapist description

The therapist involved in this study is a female doctoral student at Iowa State University in the Doctoral Specialization in Marriage and Family Therapy. This program has been accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education.

The therapist is 32 years old and has 5.5 years of experience of working with families on family and marital issues. The researcher has been married for 6 years and has no children. She has a Bachelor's degree in business and an Educational Specialist's Degree in School Psychology. She is a native Iowan and was raised on a small hog farm.

As the oldest of five children in a traditional gender-role family, this researcher once told her mother, as a child, that "big families are so much fun for everybody except the moms". This childhood concern for women's roles in families carried through in the researcher's professional activities: She taught women's studies courses for a university and developed course work on gender portrayals in media. This researcher considers herself a feminist and is equally concerned with the ways in which gender stereotypical behavior can limit the lived experience of men as well. The researcher focuses her interest on how gendered behaviors are built and replicated at a societal level and how individual couples are able to deviate from these cultural stereotypes.

Specifically, the researcher has the following views regarding division of labor arrangements in dual-career couples and therapist intervention:
1. The researcher believes that gender is a socially created phenomenon, one that both reflects and reproduces itself at the level of the individual, the couple and the larger community. Subsequently, there is little room for the researcher/therapist's blame when analyzing couples' gendered relations, for these relations have been created within a systemic cultural and dyadic context. However, the researcher believes that American culture has traditionally provided males with a greater influence in how these gendered relations are co-created.

2. The researcher believes that notions of fairness are symbolically created and unique for each couple. Therefore, she believes therapists must distinguish between their own visions of justice and what the couple or individual clients report as uncomfortable or comfortable in their lives.

3. The researcher believes that some clients have a greater need to subscribe to dominant cultural standards with DOHL than other couples. Some persons have more tools socially and personally to move away from family and community expectations towards arrangements that the couple tailors for their unique relationship needs. Furthermore, some couples may find that traditional arrangements best meet their relationship needs above and beyond the community's support for traditional arrangements.

For any situation, the social and emotional consequences of DOHL arrangements (for each partner and the couple as a whole) should be considered when a couple is contemplating a more traditional-gender arrangement, a
traditional-gender role reversal, or an arrangement where the partners attempt to share home responsibilities equally.

4. As couples attempt to meet their individual needs apart from societal expectations with this issue, confusion and struggle are usually present. This researcher attempts to view self-sabotaging behavior, territorial behavior, and mixed messages among partners as a normal part of that struggle for change.

**Procedure**

Before interacting with any participants, the researcher submitted a human subjects form to the Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee, which was approved. The form outlined the purpose, procedures, and the means through which confidentiality was maintained in the study.

**Interviews.** When the researcher first spoke with the participants on the phone, they were informed that two interviews were needed with both spouses present and that each interview would last approximately one hour. Furthermore, they were informed that their input would be kept confidential and that audio tapes would be used for subsequent transcribing by the therapist. The first appointment was also set up during this first phone contact.

The spouses were interviewed jointly. This design allowed the interviewer to observe partners interacting. Furthermore, joint interviews invited couples to elaborate and clarify events and to share similar or disparate views (Daly, 1992). At the beginning of the interview, participants were encouraged to point out the instances where they felt differently than their partners. Specifically,
the couples were told that it is a normal part of healthy relationships to see some things from a different point of view and that these differences are important for our understanding in the study.

An initial set of questions was developed to collect information about spouses' experiences and values regarding the negotiation of household labor in their homes. The investigator presented the following open-ended questions, in some similar form, to the partners of each couple:

1. How did you come about your role in the division of household responsibility?
2. How do you feel about the roles each of you has?
3. How does your division of household responsibility match or not match your beliefs about what men and women should do with home and family?
4. How does the money you earn affect the way you feel about your roles, if at all?
5. If you wanted to change your roles, how would you go about it?

These open-ended questions were asked in order to obtain a basic description of the experiences with the division of household labor. The remainder of the interviews were semi-structured, using a continuing series of structural, contrast, and descriptive questions which flowed from the data generated during the interview.

Surveys. At the first interview, each participant was given a survey that measures: a. proportional efforts of the respondent in the division of household
labor; b. satisfaction level with the current division of household labor; c. sex-role beliefs; and d. marital satisfaction (see Appendix). Each partner was given an addressed, stamped envelope with which they were to return the survey. In addition, the partners were told not to discuss their survey responses until after the surveys were completed.

The marital satisfaction component of the survey was measured with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), developed by Graham B. Spanier in 1976 (see Appendix). This 32 item instrument is designed to assess the quality of relationships as perceived by married or cohabiting couples. Factor analysis of the instrument indicates four major aspects of relationships: Dyadic satisfaction (DS), dyadic cohesion (DCoh), dyadic consensus (DCon), and affectional expression (AE). The DAS has an overall excellent internal consistency with a total alpha score of .96. The sub scales have the following internal consistency scores: DS .94, DCoh .81, DCon .90, AE .73.

The results of the surveys were unknown to the researcher until after the second interview and were used to analyze the respondents' survey answers in conjunction with their interview responses.

Data Collection

The fundamental purpose of ethnography is to investigate the meanings that people ascribe to their actions and to events around them (Spradley, 1979). As a way to understand these meanings, open-ended questions are used that elicit unique and self-authored responses. Since unanticipated responses result from
these questions, the design of an ethnographic study emerges as the research questions evolve (Guba, 1981).

Qualitative methodology does not include pre-determined theory and hypotheses, random sampling, and statistical control of variance, yet relevant theories and previous quantitative and qualitative research findings are considered in developing a qualitative investigation. Qualitative researchers focus on individual realities instead of a universal reality for all persons, thus the conventional criteria of quantitative research have limited usefulness for this type of study. Since qualitative researchers do not use conventional methods to build trustworthiness in their studies, they are often accused of engaging in "merely subjective" and "sloppy" research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following sections outline the ways in which this qualitative study will strive for trustworthiness through the use of naturalistic methods.

Trustworthiness

Naturalistic or qualitative inquiry defines aspects of trustworthiness in different ways than the traditional scientific terms associated with quantitatively based studies. Within the qualitative paradigm, trustworthiness refers to whether the researcher is able to persuade the audience that the findings are worth paying attention to and worth taking account of (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to convince the audience of this trustworthiness, the qualitative researcher attempts to build the concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
Credibility

The first domain of trustworthiness, credibility, exists to the degree that the findings represent the multiple constructed realities of all the respondents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study employed several methods of building credibility: 1. peer debriefing, 2. triangulation, and 3. member checking.

Peer debriefing. Multiple benefits are obtained from using peer debriefing as a means to increase a study's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, the process exposes the researcher's biases and meanings that might otherwise remain implicit in the study. Second, peer debriefing provides an opportunity to test working hypotheses that may be emerging in the researcher's mind. Third, the debriefing process provides the opportunity to develop and test the emerging methodological design and its components. Last, peer debriefing provides the catharsis that allows researchers to clear their minds of emotions that may be clouding their judgment.

In this study, two sources of peer debriefing were utilized. The first source was an adjunct faculty member who supervises therapists at Iowa State's Marital and Family Therapy Clinic. The researcher met with this supervisor regularly during and after the interviewing stage. The second source consisted of the researcher's dissertation committee members who met as a team at irregular time intervals during the study. In addition, three of the committee members met individually with the researcher during the data collection.
**Triangulation.** Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources, multiple methods of data analysis, and/or the use of multiple investigators for the same study. The goal of triangulation is to provide the researcher with more sources from which to look for patterns of similarity. Three forms of triangulation were used in this study: First, multiple participants were used to gather information on the topic of study. The second form of triangulation involved analyzing the respondents' survey answers in conjunction with their interview responses.

The third form of triangulation used in the research was investigator triangulation (Stainback & Stainback, 1981). In the first stage of this form, another therapist read the transcribed interviews without knowing the researcher's thoughts and then pointed out what she perceived were key words and phrases. Sometimes the therapist pointed out things that the researcher had not noticed. Subsequently, the researcher included the ideas in further analysis. In the second stage of investigator triangulation, the therapist read quotes that the researcher had placed into initial domains. The therapist confirmed the perceptions of the researcher regarding the common themes linking the quotes. Once, the therapist identified a quote as fitting better in one domain than another. After discussion between the therapist and researcher, the therapist's idea was incorporated.

**Member checking.** The final method of establishing credibility was a member check, perhaps the most crucial method of all (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
In this method, respondents are asked to confirm the data, interpretations, and conclusions that the researcher gathers and constructs. Member checking can occur formally or informally and is usually continuous throughout the study.

In this study, the researcher asked questions during the first and second interviews such as, "What did you mean when you said..."; "Is this what you meant when you said..."; and "How would you summarize the main points of what you just shared?". This type of immediate and informal checking provided the opportunity to assess the respondents' intentions, allowed the respondent to correct errors, invited further information and clarification, and puts the respondent on record as having agreed with the investigator's information gathering.

Member checking also occurred at the end of the study when each couple was sent a copy of the results section. The couples were encouraged to read the results and provide comments as to the accuracy of the data presented. Subsequently, any corrections were incorporated into the results section.

Transferability

This inquiry, like other naturalistic inquiries, does not attempt to generalize its findings to the entire population. Rather, the intent is to provide information that is thick in description about the unique contexts under study. Therefore, the researcher establishes an index of transferability by providing a detailed description so the reader can compare the contexts of the study with other contexts. Only then, can transferability be contemplated (Guba, 1981).
Couple descriptions are provided at the beginning of the results section so that the reader better understands the unique context of each couple before reading the results. Furthermore, the domain results are presented couple by couple, so that the reader can simultaneously be aware of both common themes and individual contexts.

**Dependability**

Dependability refers to the stability of the data over time, while accounting for the instability associated with multiple and unique realities across many respondents. In addition, the naturalistic inquirer must consider the natural fluctuations in human recall and perception within the same individual.

One method of increasing dependability, according to Guba (1981), is to use multiple data collection methods. As was described in the credibility section, both surveys and interviews were used to identify patterns across the data.

In addition, the researcher used an audit trail. The audit trail requires that the researcher keep detailed notes of where and when data was collected, how the domains of analysis were performed, and on what bases interpretations and conclusions were drawn. With this detailed “diary” of events and thoughts, the researcher can go back and sample entries and determine whether they are supported by the data or not (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). If this process of critiquing verifies “the bottom line”, then the confirmability of the study is established.
Confirmability

As mentioned above, the major technique for establishing confirmability is the confirmability audit. This audit is more likely to yield successful results when the researcher's conclusions have been corroborated with other sources of information. In this study, this was achieved through the use of multiple data collection techniques, peer debriefing, and member checking. All of these methods are meant to clarify and test meanings derived from the study.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis is not limited to a particular time during the inquiry, but instead, begins with the very first data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This early analysis is necessary in order to accommodate the emerging theory, the emerging design, and the planning of later data collection. It is the data analysis, then, that determines when the researcher can stop collecting and processing. Guba provides the researcher with four criteria which should inform such a decision: 1. exhaustion of sources (respondents); 2. saturation of categories (continuing data collection yields only tiny pieces of new information); 3. emergence of regularities in data; and 4. overextension (continuing data collection yields information that is far removed from the viable categories).

Within the naturalistic paradigm, data are viewed as the product of an interaction between the researcher and the respondents. Data then, are considered to be the constructions offered by the respondents; data analysis is
intended to reconstruct those constructions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, data analysis is not considered to be data reduction, but rather, data induction.

Inductive analysis begins with the data itself, not with hypotheses to be tested. From this data, theoretical categories and relational propositions are built (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These patterns and categories are distinguished through the techniques of domain analysis.

Domain analysis is used in order to increase the reader's understanding of an individual by highlighting that individual's categories of meaning. The process of this analysis is a search for characteristic phrases which are included in larger categories based on some conceptual similarity. Domain analysis takes into account the naturalist's belief that meanings are created through conversation between the respondents and the researcher. Subsequently, it is the conversations between the two parties that are analyzed.

Spradley's Developmental Research Sequence was used in the domain analysis (1979). In order to establish a domain of meaning using this tool, three elements must exist. Among these is the concept of a "cover term", which is a name for a category of knowledge. A cover term represents a larger category of knowledge under which multiple sub-units of this term exist. For example, vegetable may be a cover term; under it are peas and carrots.

The second feature of a domain of meaning is that the sub-units under the cover term belong to the category of knowledge named by the cover term (Spradley, 1979). For example, peas and carrots both belong to the category of
vegetable.

The third element of a domain of meaning is a semantic relationship that links the cover term to all the sub-units. For instance, peas are a kind of vegetable. The semantic relationship is "a kind of".

The first step of the domain analysis involved transcribing the audio taped recordings onto paper. The researcher then identified and underlined characteristic phrases that constructed the bases for domain categories. Identification of such phrases occurred through a mixture of intuition and systematic processes.

The researcher used her tacit knowledge to classify phrases into initial categories of meaning based on a "looks right" basis. Such phrases may have been those that were repeated by the respondent or those that the respondent emphasized as important. These statements were synthesized and noted in the margins of the transcribed interviews.

As the researcher clustered these phrases, cover terms or concepts naturally evolved. For example, within the present study, a cover term (concept) identified was "housekeeping services reduce marital conflict". Under this cover concept are multiple quotes from different couples representing their thoughts on how housekeeping services reduce marital conflict.

Later, the researcher built and refined the clusters by comparing a phrase with previous phrases in the same and different groups coded in the same category. This comparative method is part of Spradley's (1979) systematic
analysis of semantic domains. Spradley suggests that researchers look for the following semantic domains when building or refining categories of meaning:

*strict inclusion—x is a kind of y
*spatial—x is a place in y, x is a part of y
*cause-effect—x is a result of y, x is a cause of y
*rationale—x is a reason for doing y
*location for action—x is a place for doing y
*function—x is used for y
*means-end—x is a way to do y
*sequence—x is a step (stage) in y
*attribution—x is an attribute (characteristic) of y

In the second interview, the researcher sometimes asked the couples how they compared their perceptions to information gathered from other couples. In this way, a domain of meaning could be further developed.

It is important to note that qualitative methodology allows for differences of opinion: Even though common domains begin to form over multiple interviews, these domains are constantly expanded and refined to include "negative instances" that do not fit the more common responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This constructive process is the basis of a naturalist/inductive analysis.
Resource theory and earned income

Resource theory posits that the marital partner having control over the most valued resources will have more power in determining the nature of the relationship than the partner with lesser valued resources. These resources are used as rewards in bargaining for one’s prerogatives (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). The value of any given resource in a relationship depends upon: 1. whether the other partner also has resources with which to bargain; 2. how easily the other partner can obtain the resource elsewhere; and 3. the ability of the other partner to forego the resource if necessary (Emerson, 1962).

Resource theory recognizes more than economic resources: Physical attractiveness, attention, and love can also be used as bargaining tools. However, within American culture, discrepancies in economic resources create significant power differentials between men and women, perhaps because income and educational status determine status in social stratification (Scanzoni, 1980).

Theorists argue that within the traditional marital arrangement where men earn more than their wives and women take primary responsibility at home, men are provided with material and symbolic advantages that prevent women from bargaining at an equal level (LaRoss, 1988; Thompson, 1993). Furthermore, husbands may be granted greater power by society than wives
regardless of their personal resources (Hess-Biber & Williamson, 1984). A traditional social orientation that favors male dominance complicates the resource bargaining process.

The division of household tasks is often viewed within a relative power hypothesis (Ross, 1987). Since housework is typically devalued, unrewarded and menial, the spouse with more power should be able to delegate it to the other. Thus, the more money a wife earns, the more successful she should be in delegating undesirable household tasks to her husband. While controlling for number of hours spent at paid work, Ross found that the more a husband’s earnings exceeds his wife’s, the less housework he does; and the less the husband’s earnings exceeds his wife’s, the more housework he does. This pattern has been supported by Model, 1981; Perry-Jenkins and Crouter, 1990; Steil and Weltman, 1991; and Stone-Fish et al., 1992. In an older study, Nickols and Metzen (1978) were actually able to compute a DOHL bargaining formula: For every one dollar increase in the wife’s hourly earnings, the husband increased his time allocation to family tasks by 20 minutes per week.

Women whose husbands are the primary breadwinners are thought to develop ‘patterns of deference’ (Pahl, 1983) as they experience the negative evaluation associated with consuming verses earning. Thomas, Franks, and Calanico (1972) add that persons having more power (more money) are less likely to defer to others because more powerful persons, in general, are less sensitive to the evaluations of others.
Zvonkovic, Schmiege, and Hall (1994) hypothesized that women having higher incomes would not only have greater power, but that their strategies for influencing their mates would be more direct as a result of this power. In fact, their results demonstrated that wives' income was significantly positively correlated with bargaining and reward influence strategies (both direct strategies) in comparison to lower earning women who relied more heavily on emotional influence strategies. For the women who used the direct strategies, measures of marital satisfaction were significantly higher. These results are consistent with Hochschild's (1989) finding that women who lack professional and economic resources more often use "emotional capital" (e.g. praising, flirting, soliciting sympathy) in attempting to get their needs met.

**Time-availability hypothesis**

Since most household tasks are menial and repetitive in nature, the major resource required is time (Blood & Wolfe, 1960). The time-availability hypothesis assumes that husbands and wives will engage in domestic work and child-care in proportion to the number of hours each spends in the market place. This theory is supported by wife's work hours and absolute efforts at home (Stone-Fish et al., 1992). However, the time availability hypothesis is not supported by data on men's work hours and absolute efforts: Berardo et al. (1987) found dual-career wives devoted less than half the hours to housework as full-time wives devoted, yet dual-career wives still spend three times as much time with housework than their husbands (Spitze, 1988; Pleck, 1985).
It is important to note that professional couples often maintain traditional patterns. Back in 1960, when women typically worked significantly fewer hours at paid work, Blood and Wolfe explained inequitable DOHL in a practical manner: "Not that successful husbands disdain household tasks—they are just too busy being successful to have the time" (p.61). The time-availability component inherent in this explanation fails to account for the DOHL arrangements found in most dual-career couples currently.

**Household utility function**

The household utility function assumes that goods (food, clothing, a clean house, vacation, leisure time) are jointly consumed by all household members (Zick, 1992). The cost of the good, whether it be a pizza or a clean toilet, equals the sum of the market price (a maid will clean the toilet for $5) and the forgone value of the time used up (I could have made $20 at my job in the time it took me to clean the toilet). Therefore, cleaning the toilet would be more costly for a wealthy family than for a poor family, since the wealthier family could have made more money spending that time at their jobs. Cleaning the house would also be more costly (in the household system) for a family member who has few cleaning skills and takes a great deal of time completing the task, unless the ability of that person to earn money in the market is very poor.

Within this theoretical framework, each household must make the consumption choices that maximize household utility given its members' preferences (does someone like to clean the house?) and the household's
income, time, and skill (is someone really good/fast at cleaning the house?; does someone have more time at home to do such tasks?).

In summary then, the household utility function model predicts that if a husband earns significantly less than his wife and the husband is more efficient at cleaning, he and his wife will probably act in a way that allows her more time to focus on work and he will do most of the housecleaning. If he is an inefficient cleaner, yet still the lower earner, the couple’s allocation of resources may not be quite so straightforward. Nonetheless, the theory assumes that the allocation of time of any member is greatly influenced by what benefits the other partner can bring to the household (Becker, 1965).

Ferree (1990) outlines the limitations of resource and utility models on the division of household labor. She emphasizes the lack of logical economic rationale behind the majority of DOHL arrangements. Thompson and Walker (1989) add that “there is no simple trade-off of wage and family work hours between wives and husbands, nor do partners allocate family work based on time availability” (p.856).

**Hired domestic services**

Resource theory, the time-availability hypothesis, and the utility function model all suggest that dual-career couples will hire domestic services more than other types of couples since a. both partners spend much time at work; b. the partners’ free time is more “valuable” in market terms, than in earner couples; and c. the partners have similar resources with which to bargain for their
prerogatives in the marriage; thus one partner is less likely to get "stuck" with undesirable tasks.

This assumption, although rarely tested, hold true in light of research findings: Berardo et al. (1987) found dual-career couples to be the most likely to employ housekeeping services, yet only 20% of these couples reported hiring such services.

It may be the woman's level of income in dual-career families that results in housekeeping services being employed. In a stratified random sample of over 700 women, personal income of women, above and beyond household income and sex-role beliefs, was found to be the strongest predictor variable of hiring household help (Oropesa, 1993).

Sex-role beliefs

Several authors have emphasized the importance of sex-role beliefs and provider-role beliefs in the ways family roles are negotiated (Hood, 1986; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). When controlling for age, income, job prestige, education, and number of hours worked, Perry-Jenkins and Crouter were still able to identify husbands' provider-role beliefs as a strong predictor of the division of household tasks. These authors argued that if men felt the primary responsibility for the economic survival of the family, they would also feel less obliged to take on family work. However, Coverman (1985) found husbands with nontraditional sex role attitudes to be slightly less likely to partake in domestic tasks.
Jane Hood (1986) conceptualizes family roles as the product of mutual expectations that determine one's behavior. Given this definition, it is possible that women and men are enacting similar roles (e.g. they both work full-time), but they may be hanging onto the complementary psychological responsibilities of "homemaker" and "provider", respectively. Therefore, a woman may be participating in the labor force, but she may not assume the psychological responsibility of co-provider and her husband may still view her primary role as homemaker (Hood, 1986). Hood offers the following illustration of a husband's struggle between needing his wife's income and hanging onto the image of being sole provider: "Like now, we just use her paycheck to pay the house-payments. So that's about all we do with hers...just pay the house payments. So that's a whole lot of money I don't have to worry about." (p.355).

Few researchers have measured wives' perceptions of provider-role responsibilities independent of their employment and income status; thus, the evidence is unclear as to what factors encourage women to adapt this psychological responsibility (Hood, 1986). More importantly, it is unknown whether the wives' adoption of provider-role responsibility will actually change their responsibilities at home.

Some evidence suggests that wives' perceptions of provider-role responsibility, and sex-role beliefs in general, carry less weight than their husbands' beliefs in the actual division of household labor. Although one's roles in the family are supposedly interdependently and mutually defined
among family members (Hood, 1986), whether women have an equal voice in this "mutual definition" has been questioned.

Women's relative earnings appear to mediate the relationship between sex-role beliefs and DOHL. That is, women's sex-role beliefs have been found to be less predictive of DOHL than men's (Bird et al., 1984; Hiller & Philliber, 1986) except for relationships where the wage-gap between husband and wife is less (Bird et al., 1984; Ross, 1987).

In an attempt to clarify whether men really lag behind women in their desire to partake in domestic work or whether women simply perceive that they do, Hiller and Philliber (1986) measured the degree of agreement between spouses in their perceptions of spousal role expectations. The authors concluded that women, more often than men, inaccurately perceive their spouses' expectations. Specifically, many women reported their belief that their husbands expected them to do the housework and child-care, while the husbands reported that the roles should be shared. Additionally, the husbands were more likely to report that household tasks were actually shared, where wives reported having the major responsibility.

Smith and Reid (1986) state that, "If attitudes equaled behavior, the issue of husbands providing support for their employed wives would be virtually nonexistent" (p.396). In their study, an overwhelming amount of husbands and wives agreed with several egalitarian sex-role statements, yet these responses were not predictive of DOHL. Hiller and Philliber's (1986) data revealed that
four-fifths of couples expected to share child-care, but less than half actually did so; over half of these spouses expected to share housework, yet only one-third of the husbands reported sharing even two tasks equally (dishwashing and shopping).

In another part of Smith and Reid's study (1986), participants were asked why they thought the husbands would share equally in a home task in various vignettes the researcher presented. The husbands tended to respond, "out of fairness or the right thing to do" or "it's the husband's responsibility too."

However, the wives most frequently checked responses such as "because wife insists", "to make wife easier to get along with", or "smoother marital relationship" (p.399). Smith and Reid concluded that husbands usually shared their wives' egalitarian sex-role beliefs, but wives felt they had to be the enforcers of the egalitarian standard.

Could the discrepancy between sex-role attitude and behavior be the result of survey measures that fail to adequately tap role priorities? Saflilios Rothschild sheds light on this question with her words: "It is only when the economic support of the family ceases to be the primary responsibility of the man that housekeeping and child-care cease being the primary responsibility of the woman" (1972, p. 83). If this is so, respondents might report sex-role beliefs that are in contradiction with their actual behavior, since role priority may dictate where they place their efforts. Smith and Reid's (1986) data reflect this notion: Only one-third of the husbands and just over a fourth of the wives
in their study agreed with the following statement: "Even if a husband and wife are both working, the husband should hold the more important position in terms of status and income." In contrast, almost half the husbands and more than sixty percent of the wives agreed that "A married women's most important role should be taking care of her husband and children".

Hood (1986) also emphasizes the component of "role relinquishment" as a precondition for the reallocation of household roles. Given this, couples will not require husbands' equal participation in household tasks as long as they both hang onto the belief that he has more responsibility for wage earning than her.

Data exists to support this belief: Out of 131 female and 103 male students enrolled at a large midwestern university, 79 of the females (in comparison to 7 of the males) expected their future partner to earn more than themselves (Ganong & Coleman, 1992). Hiller and Philliber (1986) analyzed 489 midwestern married couples, of which two-thirds were dual-income couples, and found that 58% of husbands reported the need to be better at earning income; only 2% of the wives reported a similar need.

Professional status

Several studies have linked the division of family tasks to various "couple types", a typology based on the individual incomes and job statuses of dyads. Scanzoni (1980) reported that couples representing more "equal" statuses and incomes shared more fully in housework.

In a subsequent study, Bird et al. (1984) attempted to explain the relationship
between family types, sex-role orientation and income on family tasks using separate regression analyses for women and men. The authors found that for men, marriage to a career-oriented spouse was associated with more sharing of child care, meal preparation and cleaning tasks. Further, men who agreed that interchangeable roles are the preferred norms for spousal behavior accepted more responsibility for these tasks. For women, the explanatory model was somewhat different: Wives' individual incomes had the single greatest influence on sharing of family tasks. Specifically, as wives' incomes rose, they reported their husbands to be more involved in meal preparation and cleaning tasks. In a similar manner, wives' membership to a two-career marriage (versus dual-earner or earner-career) was related to more sharing of child-care.

Rachlin (1987) replicated Bird et al.'s finding that more dual-career spouses reported egalitarian relationships than dual-earner spouses. Nonetheless, the vast majority of dual-career women in Rachlin's study reported that they contributed more to the relationship in terms of personal, emotional, and day-to-day sacrifices than their husbands.

Berardo et al. (1987) did not find more egalitarian trends in dual-career couples. When controlling for age, education, age of youngest child, income, and housework performed by wives and other family members, professional men married to professional women did no more (proportionally) with housework than professional men married to nonprofessional women. Furthermore, the authors found professional men married to professional
women to do no more with housework than professional men married to unemployed women. Specifically, across Berardo's 1565 dual-career, dual-income, and single-earner families, women performed 79% of all housework. Dual career wives devoted less than half the hours to housework as full-time wives devoted, yet they still spent three times as much time with housework than their husbands. The authors concluded that this absence of significant differences between dual-career husbands' housework hours and other husbands' hours suggests that the household labor of husbands and wives is not interchangeable.

In addition to the DOHL inequality found between genders of all couple types, Berardo et al. (1987) found the total number of combined hours allocated to housework to be lowest for dual-career couples. These authors questioned whether this result might be due to the smaller family size of dual-career couples or the possibility that these couples were more likely to hire household help.

Education

In general, it appears that more educated women do smaller proportions of the housework (Berardo et al., 1987; Nyquist, Slivken, Spence, & Helmreich, 1985). Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) found husbands are more likely to see their wives as co-providers when their wives are more educated than other wives in the study. In addition, these husbands did more housework than other husbands.
Model (1981) did not find education to be significant when analyzing DOHL within individual couples. She argued that the liberal effect of husbands' education is often neutralized by their high incomes, which in her study, was found to mitigate DOHL. Ross (1987) attempted to explain this confounding of education and earnings by pointing out that husbands' income and education are positively correlated, but correlated with DOHL in opposite ways. That is, husbands' income is inversely related to efforts in housework; education, in itself, is directly related to effort in housework. Ross found husbands' education to have an effect on DOHL over and above sex-role attitudes; but for women, their education does not significantly affect DOHL, with or without the inclusion of sex-role attitudes.

These findings emphasize that some of the effect of education on DOHL is due to sex-role beliefs, but some is not. Ross (1987) argues that education probably indicates more about a man's beliefs, life-style, and social setting than simple measures of sex-role beliefs.

Satisfaction with Division of Household Labor

Very few researchers have analyzed the relationship between general marital satisfaction and DOHL; more have looked at the relationship between DOHL and specific measures of satisfaction with DOHL. Rachlin (1987) analyzed the relationship between general marital satisfaction and DOHL and found that wives in egalitarian relationships reported much higher marital satisfaction than men in egalitarian relationships.
Often though, women report satisfaction with what appears to be an overburdening and unfair amount of housework. Several authors have provided different explanations. Ross et al. (1983) argued that housework is usually considered menial work that a person of lower status performs for someone of a higher status. Therefore, even a minimal level of participation from husbands can reduce the status distinction and result in satisfied wives.

In a similar vein of exchange theory, Thompson (1991) explained women's acceptance of imbalanced division of family work on the basis of within-gender comparisons. Many women consider themselves lucky to be better off than other women having husbands who do even less.

Yet another reason women may report satisfaction with inequitable arrangements lies in gender power relations: Lamb et al. (1986) suggest that women do not have an innate love of household and child-care chores, but that increased paternal participation might result in a loss of domination in the family arena. Subsequently, some women will report that they do not want their husbands more involved in household work, even though they feel overworked.

A potential barrier to accepting husbands' domestic efforts may exist in wives' relatively higher standards for task completion (Smith & Reid, 1986). These authors found husbands often did not perform domestic tasks to their wives' satisfaction, but many of the wives conveyed suspicions that their husbands tried to get out of a chore by doing a shoddy job. Therefore, some
wives may be content doing chores by themselves, believing that it will be more
difficult to complete if they engage their husbands.

**Qualitative aspects of home tasks**

It may be the different values placed on various effort in DOHL that help
explain why research often fails to identify clear links between absolute hours
each spouse spends in DOHL and satisfaction with DOHL. In fact, Berk (1985)
was unable to find any significant correlates of perception of fairness in DOHL
including time and task contributions of each spouse.

According to Benin and Agostinelli (1988), the values women place on
various household tasks vary. Specifically, they found that wives' satisfaction
with the division of labor was heavily influenced by whether their husbands
shared women's traditional chores (e.g. cleaning bathrooms, vacuuming), above
and beyond the absolute amount of time men spent with household tasks.

Men's involvement in these tasks is changing slowly: Barnett & Baruch (1987)
found 150 out of 160 white middle-class husbands were responsible for none of
the so-called "feminine home chores".

Ferree (1990) encourages scholars to look beyond women's reported
satisfaction with DOHL and to examine women's personal and emotional costs
as well. She asks, "Who is more likely to be depressed--employed women who
are angry about how little housework their husbands do or those who are
resigned to it?" (p.877). Ferree argues that women and men often collaborate to
maintain a system that constructs housework as "women's work". Subsequently,
women are caught between seeing their labor as an expression of love and an expression of subordination. Given this struggle, Ferree views conflicts over housework a good sign, indicating women’s growing sense of equal entitlement.

The qualitative analysis of who-does-what tasks is important for reasons beyond symbolic values and subsequent satisfaction since parenting issues are also surfacing in the data. It appears that men’s involvement in household tasks is disproportionately placed in child care (Pleck, 1985; Stone-Fish et al., 1987). More specifically, Stone-Fish et al. found that in egalitarian couples (those couples agreeing that they shared 40-60% of child-care tasks), men took more responsibility than wives in only one domain; that of “playing with children”. Even in “traditional” couples (those couples agreeing that the wife did more than 60%), men took more responsibility for “playing with children” than their wives. In both traditional and egalitarian couples, women out-worked men on every other child-care task. This study emphasizes the need to analyze parenting quality and parenting satisfaction in relation to specific aspects of DOHL.

**Absolute hours in home tasks**

If some spouses spend less time at the work-place than their partners, will they be satisfied with doing more of the housework than their partners? The answer is “no”, according to Benin and Agostinelli (1988). In their analysis of dual-career couples, these authors found the difference between perception of one’s own work at home and perception of spouse’s work at home to be more
predictive of satisfaction than the actual difference between husbands' and wives' total hours spent with paid work and housework. In other words, the couples appeared to separate household tasks from paid work hours in determining satisfaction and fairness with DOHL. The same authors found education, age, salary difference between husbands and wives, and status difference between husbands and wives to be insignificant predictors of satisfaction with DOHL.

In a similar vein, Stone-Fish et al. (1992) found perceptions of an "egalitarian marriage" to be more dependent on the perceived equitable division of child-care tasks than on a balance of husbands' and wives' total hours spent with paid work and child-care, but more so for women than for men. Although 83% of men in the traditional group (those men who reported doing less than 40% of child-care tasks) reported that they had egalitarian relationships, only 57% of wives in traditional relationships felt the same way. This finding takes on further significance in light of the fact that women in "traditional" couples spent significantly fewer hours at the workplace than their husbands (36 versus 48 hours per week). While the majority of both men (92%) and women (89%) in the shared group (couples who agreed that they shared 40-60% of child-care tasks) reported satisfaction with DOHL, men in the traditional group were more likely to report satisfaction than their wives (77% vs. 55% respectively).

Benin and Agostinelli (1988) discovered an interesting caveat in their analysis of gender differences in satisfaction of DOHL. They found husbands'
satisfaction with DOHL to be high when they perceived equity as long as they
did not have to spend a lot of hours on family work. Wives, on the other hand,
were satisfied with equitable arrangements regardless of the number of hours
both spouses had to spend on family work. The authors surmised that these
findings reflect men's desire for lower standards of housekeeping.

**Congruence with sex-role beliefs**

Perry-Jenkins and Crouter (1990) established support for their hypothesis
that men will view their marriage more positively when their sex-role attitudes
are consistent with the role behaviors they enact in the home: Men who
perceived themselves as having more responsibility for earning income were
happiest when they did less housework in comparison to men who perceived
their wives as co-providers. Furthermore, the husbands' various provider-role
beliefs predicted their actual efforts at home, despite the fact that all the men in
the study were married to full-time employed wives. Perry-Jenkins and Crouter
concluded that it is the individual's perception of reality, not an objective
measure of reality, that is the key to explaining family role behavior.

Congruence between spouses on reported sex-role beliefs and marital
satisfaction may be somewhat different between men and women. Lye and
Biblarz (1993) found that when husbands agreed with the idea that "if both
partners work, they should share domestic work", their reported marital
satisfaction was higher than the husbands who rejected the egalitarian idea.
However, their wives' desire for an egalitarian division of household labor was
associated with lower marital satisfaction than wives holding traditional views.

This nuance was explained by Lye and Biblarz in terms of met and unmet expectations: Their analysis of interaction effects suggested that when men are less traditional than their wives, the men do more than is expected of them, and disagreements are reduced. Inversely, when wives are less traditional than their husbands, they do more than they expect of themselves, and disagreements are increased.
RESULTS

Although certain themes were shared across couples, the contexts in which those similar themes arose are very unique to each relationship. In addition, certain emergent information was shared by only one couple. Therefore, descriptions of each couple are provided in order to give the reader contexts in which to better understand the respondents' information.

Couple Descriptions

**Couple 1: Lisa and Chuck**

This couple has been married for 14 years and have two preschool aged children. Chuck, 35 years old, has a bachelor's degree and Lisa, 34 years old, has a master's degree. Both have full-time professional careers. They have a nanny who is at their home for child-care. They also employ two hours of housecleaning services each week. Chuck spends approximately 38 hours at his work place each week and Lisa spends approximately 42 hours. Neither spouse brings a significant amount of their work home.

Chuck describes his sex-role beliefs as follows:

[Chuck] My role is constantly evolving, it is what it needs to be for us to be happy as a family, so it's a flexible role. It changes to meet the flow, the needs of the family, so when the needs of the family change, my primary roles with the family change.

Lisa stated her belief that it would be better for American society if at least
one parent stayed home with their children, yet she believes that role can be taken on by men or women, based on the circumstances of their marriages. Lisa mentioned that at times, she deliberately attempts to avoid tasks stereotypically assigned to women, yet both partners communicated that they have become increasingly comfortable with accepting that they were raised with traditional gender skills (e.g., siding the house, sewing draperies) and that they enjoy these skills.

Chuck and Lisa identify Chuck as having the primary responsibility for the children, and at one time, the home. The balance between work and home has been a conscious one:

[Chuck] We had an argument recently where I said "you know, we need to decide what's going on here" and we both agreed we don't have room for two careers. And the nature of my career is that I'm not going to get the same rewards as Lisa. She has much more earning potential and we decided it was not a good thing to have one person taking so much time off of work when the kids are sick. It was like, "why don't we just sacrifice my career and you just do it and I'll take care of things at home for the most part. You concentrate on your career."

[Lisa] We made a measured decision with Chuck's work. He does a lot more and stays home with the kids if one's sick. It's my philosophy that this two-career family, super-parents stuff is somewhat baloney and that one
parent probably needs to take the back seat. If they are both trying to get their goals done, and try to raise super kids and everything, either both people are going to be too stressed out or the kids are going to miss out. Chuck could be making more money if he took himself out of nonprofit work because he has a lot of skills. We've been reluctant to do that because that might involve him having to travel a lot, work a lot of hours, which might require me to start leaving work earlier and to be home every week night and our stress levels would sky rocket.

The couple reports that they can successfully shift responsibilities from day to day without significant conflict. Lisa attributes part of their success with this issue to the following: “Chuck’s not a big fairness person, he doesn’t worry if he does do more and since our son was born, he does do more.” In response, Chuck adds, “Part of the reason for that [the low conflict around DOHL] is probably my desire to have children more than Lisa’s. It’s not really a feeling of guilt, maybe it is a little bit.”

The couple has struggled over the years with the concept of bringing in housekeeping services in order to achieve a comfortable work-family balance. Chuck identifies a difference in cleaning standards between his wife and himself and attributes this largely to what they saw in their families of origin. Lisa admits that her father is “somewhat neurotic” about having things neat and that she has inherited some of these expectations. Lisa describes the struggle
around housekeeping services as such:

[Lisa] After the children came, I was probably the first to get frustrated. It wasn't that Chuck wasn't doing enough, but we just had so much to do. It became a situation where I wanted to have a maid and Chuck wasn't as comfortable having someone come into our house and paying someone, so he began to do more of the household work. I had become sort of exasperated with his position on this and I started doing less and less....For a good year and a half, Chuck took the role as the maid and in exchange for that, he kept a little account of what we saved from the maid money and there it is [she points to a lovely piece of furniture].

Eventually, the couple decided to hire a housekeeping service. Lisa recognizes her earning power as an influencing variable in Chuck's concession with the arrangement: "We have a financial imbalance in our situation, so that did come into play. So he knew I wanted a maid and then it got harder and harder to convince me over the years [not to have one]." Chuck, on the other hand, feels that his concession was more of a result of increasing total household income. Chuck described his feelings about the housekeeping services as follows:

[Chuck] I guess in the overall scheme of life, cleaning a house is not essential to existence. I know there are maids all over the place,...but it has to do with my domain and where I live and I am responsible for where I live.
I don't need anyone else to come in and do what I am really responsible for.

**Couple 2: Denny and Janet**

This couple has been married for 13 years and have two school-aged children under 12 years old. Denny is 44 years old and Janet is 45 years old. Both partners have master's degrees and are in full-time professional careers. They have a housekeeping service visit twice a month. Denny and Janet spend approximately 50 and 48 hours, respectively, at their work places each week, although Janet reports spending another eight hours per week doing job-work at home.

Both partners report satisfaction with the amount of work their spouses are doing in all areas of household responsibility and child-care. Janet describes their relationship as "perfect because I have an ally". The couple attributes much of their success in this area to the egalitarian sex-role beliefs they each had when they entered the marriage.

[Janet] It just wouldn't have been acceptable any other way. We were almost cold blooded in coming together. We had questions about each other's politics, about children and how we would do things, and we'd both been married before, so if the wrong answers came out, they could have been deal-breaking answers.... I asked things like, "say we have children and one of them gets sick, then what do we do?" Denny had the right answer....We needed to have the same values in order to get married.
The couple attributes their egalitarian values to both good and bad examples they experienced in their families of origin.

[Denny] I think some of [our sharing of responsibilities] is a point of living alone for some while. Another influence in my life has been my great grandfather. He took care of my grandmother when she was ill. I spent a lot of time with him in the summers and he always took care of the laundry and cooking.

[Janet] I learned a lot from bad examples. It's the weekend and we're going to visit relatives, Mom's getting all the children ready, Dad's sitting in the car honking the horn and Mom still has her slip on. Where was Dad, why wasn't he brushing hair?....I still resent that and I love Dad, but that's just not acceptable.

When asked how the couple negotiates the division of household responsibility, Janet refers back again to the early agreements at the start of the marriage: "[Our division of labor] doesn't take any skills because we haven't had to negotiate anything. We had discussions before we were married so we had underlying principles from the start, everything else was fundamental, flowed out of that."

**Couple 3: Dick and Dianne**

This couple has been married 5 years and have one infant. Dick is 28 years old and Dianne is 27 years old. Both partners have bachelor's degrees and are
in full-time professional careers. Dick and Dianne spend approximately 36 and 55 hours, respectively, at their work places each week. Neither spouse reports bringing home significant amounts of job-work. They do not employ housekeeping services.

Both partners report growing up in families where their mothers did almost all the housecleaning, child-care, and cooking. Dick speaks of the importance of being present as a father, since his parents were divorced and he seldom saw his father. Dianne states that she expects Dick to earn more money since "he is the husband in the relationship" and that she is more comfortable with that arrangement.

Dianne is currently frustrated with the lack of future she sees in her husband's present position. When faced with her disapproval, Dick tells Dianne that she should seek a higher paying job or work more hours if she is uncomfortable with the household income since he accepts his current position as it is. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the couple moved from another city where Dianne was earning significantly more than she is now. Dianne reports feeling frustrated that she sacrificed such good pay in hopes that Dick would be doing better than he is with this job.

Dick, like Dianne, predicts that he will remain the primary earner in the relationship:

[Dick] I'm disappointed because I know she could be earning more
money, but I can't see her in a situation where she's earning three times as much money as me because being with our kids is going to be very important for her in the next coming years.

Couple 4: Jeff and Kate

Jeff and Kate have been married 16 years and have one teenager and two other children under 12 years of age. Jeff, age 41 and Kate, age 40, both have master's degrees and are employed full-time in professional positions. Kate reports spending approximately 40 hours per week at her job. Jeff reports spending approximately 45 hours per week with his work. The couple does not employ housekeeping services.

Both partners grew up in families where their mothers were not employed outside of the home and did the majority of the home-related tasks. Although Jeff grew up with three sisters and he was not expected to partake in household chores, he reports being involved in cooking and cleaning because he "didn't mind cleaning and enjoyed cooking". Kate, on the other hand, was the oldest child and was expected to spend much time watching her siblings, cooking and cleaning. Kate reports that she dislikes many household tasks because she had to do them so much growing up.

Jeff and Kate have changed their division of household labor significantly over their marriage. During the first years of their marriage, Jeff was attempting to start a business out of their home while Kate worked many 3 p.m.
to 3 a.m. shifts as a nurse. Both partners report this period of time as high in conflict, which they attribute to financial struggles, an inequitable division of household chores, and most of all, poor communication. Kate describes the period of time as follows:

[Kate] Work was easier, less demanding than the kids and I was a person at work, I wasn't a mother. At home, it was thankless and there’s no one to talk to. It was like, gosh, I just can’t wait to get to work. And we didn’t share things well then....See, it wasn’t just the money, it was the feedback I got [at work], and since Jeff and I weren’t communicating very well, I didn’t have that need fulfilled at home.

The couple describes their current division of household responsibility as comfortable, respectful, and evolving. They attribute the positive transition to better communication skills and a shift in priorities towards family.

[Jeff] When you both work, someone’s going to be unhappy if they bear the brunt of all that stuff. Because we both share equally the responsibilities of jobs and incomes, it’s just more necessity than anything. Particularly with three kids, when something needs to be done, you just do it.

Couple 5: Tony and Marlene

This couple has been married 12 years and have one child under 12 years of age. Both Tony, age 44, and Marlene, age 38, have master's degrees and are employed full-time in professional positions. Marlene estimates that she spends
45 hours each week at her job, while Tony estimates he spends 40 hours each week at his job. The couple does not employ housekeeping services.

Marlene and Tony report that, on the continuum of potential problems, conflict around the division of household labor (DOHL) is a “such a minor thing”. The couple states that they have different standards for a clean house and Tony adds that he wishes “Marlene would relax more and not feel that it’s so important to do these things all the time”. Marlene explains how she has learned to accept the different standards:

[Marlene] I’ve learned that a lot of what I do is not for him or for the relationship, but for me. It’s how I want to live. So if I choose to live that way, I have to pick up stuff. Or if I don’t want to pick up after people, I have to walk over it. They’re just choices you have to make.

The couple has designated one night each week that the entire family cleans the house together. Tony jokes that the arrangement was an ultimatum and that it bothers him somewhat that he doesn’t have a say as to when it will be done. However, he “reconciles [his] feelings by recognizing that she gets things done”.

Couple 6: Brenda and Bill

Brenda and Bill have been married 10 years and have two children under the age of 12 years. Both Brenda, age 35, and Bill, age 34, have bachelor’s degrees. Brenda works 36 hours each week at her job and Bill works 44 hours. The
couple has a housekeeping service twice a month for three hours.

Brenda's mother did not work outside of the home except for volunteer work. She defines the arrangement of responsibilities between her parents as very traditional. Brenda also speaks of the remarkable "health" among the family members:

[Brenda] We joke today because we're so not-normal because we function so well. We're all really supportive of one another and we're all really compatible and have open communication. We've had little to no trauma and problems that we have had, we dealt with, we talked them out. We're very blessed. I had great models for parents.

Bill, on the other hand, saw atypical gender roles as a child.

[Bill] My mom was the professional in our house and my father worked out of our house so he was home every minute of the day... So we were pretty self-sufficient kids, we had to do a lot by ourselves at an early age, so there wasn't a pre-conceived notion about how it was because my parents had this role reversal. Dad was the primary care giver.

When Brenda and Bill had their first child, Brenda chose to stay home for a year and one-half. Although she was glad she had the choice to stay home, she found "she wasn't a very good stay-at-home mom" and that she's "a much better person and mother when working". Brenda discussed her beliefs about being a woman and a mother:
[Brenda] We’re pretty traditional. I like to think that I’m living in the 90’s and that I’m progressive in my beliefs about what men and women are doing and the equality of those men and women, but I also have the traditional side to me as far as a mom is a mom and a dad is a dad. My beliefs are such that I like it that Bill earns more than I do, it gives me a secure feeling. He’s supposed to make more money because that’s how I grew up and that’s what I know, but then on the other hand, I like to be an active woman in society, and I like to keep up with the trend.

Couple 7: Nick and Anne

This couple has been married 15 years and have one pre-school aged child and one grade-school aged child. Nick, age 41, has a bachelor’s degree. Anne, age 42, has a master’s degree. Both partners are employed full-time in professional positions. Anne works 50 hours every week and approximately 40% of her work week is spent traveling. Nick works approximately 45 hours each week. The couple employs a housekeeping service every week for five hours of cleaning.

Nick and Anne both grew up in homes where their mothers did the majority of household and child-care tasks. The couple admits that they never really thought about what their gender roles would be when they married. Anne started out doing the bulk of household chores. Nick reports in the early days thinking, “gonna cook supper Anne?”, but that it “became pretty obvious that
this wasn’t the plan”. Nick continues, “When Anne started commuting, that’s when I started cooking and more out of frustration than anything, because I was like ‘are we gonna eat or not’?”

Currently, the couple has decided that Nick will focus more on the children given Anne’s traveling schedule and professional demands.

[Anne] My hunch is, our family situation, the balance of that and the stress in our lives would be much higher if we were equally compensated and trying to juggle two high-level professional jobs. I keep encouraging Nick to quit and start his own business here, because it doesn’t matter what he makes. If he’s happier and here with the kids, we’re all happier.

Although both partners believe this arrangement is best for the family overall, they struggle with the perceptions of others in their community:

[Anne] If you were a gung-ho business guy, our life would be a whole lot easier in term of quote “normal”, but I don’t think we’d be happier. Personality style wise, I think we’d be less happy. If nobody knows about it, I feel like things are O.K.

[Nick] I have a little trouble with the cooking and the running around with kids stuff especially when people who know us, who are in the other roles, like our neighbor, who always reminds me when Anne is out of town and I’m at a basketball game with the kids, that her role and my role are the same in the marriage....I’m not sure if that’s too bad for her or too bad for
me. I'm a little bit proud of my ability to cook, but I don't brag about it, I'd just as soon nobody knows that I cook. If somebody comes to the door when I'm cooking I generally act like I'm doing something else.

Couple 8: Tim and Sue

Tim and Sue have been married 13 years and have two children under 12 years of age and an infant. Tim, age 35, and Sue, age 35, have bachelor's degrees. The couple employs a housekeeping service twice a month for two hours. Currently, Tim works approximately 45 hours each week, while Sue works approximately 28 hours each week. Tim estimates that he does another four to five hours of office work at home each week. Due to the researcher's oversight, it was not known that Sue works only three-quarters time until the first interview. Nonetheless, the researcher decided to keep the couple in the study for the benefit of across-couple comparisons.

Sue and Tim grew up in families where their fathers were not involved in cleaning and cooking and child-care, even though Sue's mother worked full time. Tim recalls that his father played with the children a great deal. Currently, Sue does most of the housework and child-care. Tim attributes this primarily to scheduling, for Sue is at home more often. Sue believes other factors play into the arrangement other than pragmatics:

[Sue] I think a lot of stuff does fall on me just because Tim didn't grow up with doing housework....I think sometimes [the housework] defaults more
on me because sometimes I come home from work and the dishwasher's empty, but the dishes aren't in the sink or dishwasher. So the person who should have done it by default wasn't always or isn't always able to complete the task. So I do it when I come home.

Tim grew up in a home that was more messy than Sue's and both partners believe this is a factor behind their different standards of cleanliness. Tim also attributes much of the housework-related conflict to different styles of negotiating tasks:

[Tim] I'm more of a logical, methodical person. I've always been on this, "Why don't we just make a list of all the things that we want done and you write down what you want me to do and you write down what you're going to do"....Sue is not very proactive when addressing something and then she gets mad about it afterwards. I'm more of a "let's address it up front and then we don't have to miss the communication."

Both partners report that they are more satisfied now than earlier with the division of household responsibilities. Tim has become more involved with home and child-care tasks as his attitudes have changed.

[Tim] I find that our relationship has been a slowly evolving one and that we change as each other prompts the other to change. But I think that kind of attitude did not make her happy, that became apparent to me, which in turn didn't make me happy and then you start changing and then you realize
with a little different attitude things start going better. It's a trial and error, and being soft-headed enough to make changes.

**Emergent Domains**

The respondents were asked to describe how the division of household responsibility is determined in their marriages and how the respondents perceive their roles within this division. From these open-ended questions, several domains of meaning emerged as the conversation between individual and researcher unfolded. The remainder of the interviews were semi-structured, using a continuing series of structural, contrast, and descriptive questions which flowed from the data generated during the interview. For example, a couple may have been asked, “You mentioned that you’ve ‘backed off’ from your work focus since Jeff’s business has picked up: How has his increased income affected your focus on work?” Subsequently, a contrast question may have been used in this example, “How do your feelings about work responsibilities compare now with ten years ago?”

From this questioning process, seven domains were found to exist in the majority of the eight couples:

1. The relative income of a spouse is related to his or her relative focus on home or job.
2. Sex-role beliefs affect how individuals view spending on child care and housekeeping services.
3. Housekeeping services reduce marital conflict.

4. Levels of skill with tasks influence the division of household labor.

5. The partner with the higher standard for a task has ultimate responsibility for the task.

6. When both partners are busy at home, feelings of equity are increased.

7. Relative incomes have differing degrees of influence on expectations for self and spouse.

Each of the quotes in the results section is referenced back to the particular respondent so that the reader may return to the couple descriptions in order to better understand the context.

**Domain 1: The relative income of a spouse is related to his or her relative focus on home or work**

Respondents accept a relatively higher focus on household when partners earn relatively more. Six of the couples in the study had significant relative income differences between spouses. Of those couples, five couples provided rationale for why they have chosen different and complementary levels of focus on work and home. Among the reasons given for such arrangements are decreased stress levels, the belief that children are better cared for, and that financial goals are better met by allowing one partner to focus more on work.

[Chuck] There is just room for one of use to really go all out and there is no sense in sacrificing both [careers], because people with children are out a
lot of time because of the kids. We didn’t want to jeopardize anything for Lisa, her career and earnings potential...so I’m totally content to take up the slack of the household and family affairs.

[Nick] I readily accept the position of the lower income earner of the family, I actually feel good about that. In a way, I’m relieved because if something happens to my income, it doesn’t change the way we live. It doesn’t bother me at all to speak about the fact that Anne’s salary is a multiple of mine. I think it makes it easier for me to accept when she’s gone and I’m running the kids around and doing what I have to do. If we were equal earners, I’d have a hard time with that.

Jeff and Kate. Kate admits that for the first time, she is more comfortable putting more focus on the family. Although Kate believes this is partially due to Jeff’s growing business and growing income, she also attributes the transition to better communication skills in the marriage.

[Kate] It has something to do with Jeff and I’s communication improving so much that I don’t have the need to be recognized at work. And the kids are older so I get good feedback from them. It’s not just changing diapers and keeping them off the street. They make me feel more valued now. Since Jeff is doing well now, I don’t feel as much pressure to work. In a couple of years, I can actually decide whether I want to work or not.
Dianne and Dick. Dianne finds herself frustrated with the lack of opportunity she perceives in Dick’s job. Although Dianne currently takes on the majority of household duties, she predicts she would do much more if Dick’s prospects were higher.

[Dianne] I think I would protect Dick’s job more in terms of letting him focus more on his work and I’d let up on house stuff, if I respected his job more. If I thought he really liked it and he was really going to excel in it, I would do anything I could if I really felt like it was worth supporting, even if that meant having dinner late or waiting or whatever—I would do it.

Partners express ambiguous feelings about accepting a stronger focus on either home or work. Among the five couples who currently have chosen to have one partner focus more on work and for the sixth couple, Jeff and Kate, who once had such an arrangement, all of these couples expressed some ambiguous feelings about focusing relatively more on work or more on home.

Jeff and Kate. [Jeff] The first 10 years we were married, my focus was more on home and family and hers was definitely more on career...We had quite a few arguments and fights about if. I felt she didn’t care as much about us as she did her career and that really bothered me. Which wasn’t really the case, but that’s the way I perceived it.

[Kate] And I felt I had to do what I had to do to make money and I didn’t see his point since we had this lack of communication. I thought he felt he’d
been stuck with the load, while here I am trying to work and make a living when in reality, he was sad that I was gone, but he didn’t tell me that....Jeff felt, and rightfully so, that he was doing most everything and I didn’t even realize all he did. He’d always make sure we had milk in the fridge. We didn’t communicate well and the hours I worked, I never saw what he did. It wasn’t intentional, I just wasn’t aware.

[Jeff] It used to really piss me off because on her time off, she’d spend it playing with the kids and leisurely drinking a cup of coffee. I’d feel resentful, like it’s your time to take over the house so I can have some fun...I think that my time spent with child-care was taken for granted because she made more money, her job was more important, therefore, it wasn’t as important if I had the time to devote to my work.

Nick and Anne. Much of Nick’s discomfort with his heavy focus on family comes from what he perceives as negative evaluation from other people in his community. Anne feels less negatively evaluated, but she reports occasionally feeling the burden of being the primary earner.

[Anne] Sometimes I feel the burden of being the primary earner and it’s funny because there have been times in the last year or two where I wished I wasn’t. It’d be nice to feel like my income was less important to our family...I think the ability to choose kids and family over work would be there; or just to choose your own sanity not to work so many hours, not to
put in the energy and effort.

[Nick] I guess part of it is, some of the threat is gone because I know that when I'm operating in that role of house-mom, I need to feel that's not my primary role. I'm just filling in that role and that's not really what I am, I'm an engineer and a guy who likes to do this stuff with the kids. For some reason, it's easier to accept that this is a temporary thing--this is a thing I do because of the situation where her job is really demanding and to keep bringing in the pay that she does, she needs to be there while I'm doing these things at home.

...Not long ago, Anne was in [another country] and I was to be in [another city] at the same time,...and this time I said I'm not going, and that was a major milestone for me. I guess that's a difficult thing for me to do, for me to say "no I'm not going to do what's expected of me at work, because my wife's doing that for the company and I need to take care of home". I kind of avoided the issue with the people I was supposed to go with, I wasn't "well, my wife's out of town so I'm going to stay home and take care of the kids", it was more like, "well I have a lot of other stuff to do, you guys can handle it for me"...It was a milestone for me because it helped me realize that I can put things in the perspective that makes the most sense for me and still survive.

....I think one of the things that holds me back from starting my own
business is that if I go to do that and I'm not successful, then I will end up as
the house-dad and all the house chores will be mine and then the neighbors
will see me as this guy who just stays home and takes care of the kids and
does the laundry and all that other crap and that's probably a bigger part of
what keeps me from doing that than I realize.

Lisa and Chuck. [Lisa] Chuck doing the cleaning makes me slightly
uncomfortable. Like, I'm comfortable with my marriage, but not totally
socially. Whenever I tell people, "I'm not cleaning, Chuck's doing it", I just
kind of get a strange look and that's weird. Or like people think I'm a
domineering female. I don't like for people to see me that way, because
that's not really how it emerged.

Bill and Brenda. Bill and Brenda report that they are comfortable with
Bill earning more money and Brenda being able to focus more on the family.
However, Bill expresses some doubt as to whether he is justified in his
expectations regarding whose work time is more supported:

[Bill] [Our individual incomes] are not a big issue for us, not a point of
contention in terms of decisions we make, consciously or otherwise, but
when there's extra time that needs to be spent on the job and we have to
choose between her staying late and me staying late, I think selfishly, I take
my job as a little more important. I attach a little more importance to what I
do verses what she does for the wrong reason, for money's sake. What she
does is probably as important or maybe more important because she's doing something for mankind. So if we say, I have to go to the office, and she says "so do I", I always think I should go because what I'm doing is more important because of both the short term and long term benefit of doing that. But if she made more money than me, I'm not so sure I'd be able to say "you're right, you go in".

Summary of domain 1. The level of income of one's spouse appears to affect one's acceptance of putting more or less focus on household tasks. It seems that the higher number of hours one's spouse has to put in at work can be rationalized and accepted if one's spouse is making relatively more money.

However, for the two couples who have decided to have the husbands focus more on home tasks than the wives, discomfort with the community's reaction was reported. Even so, both of the couples reported their belief that they were doing the right thing for their families.

Jeff and Kate brought up the important point that until they were able to improve their communication, Jeff's focus on home and Kate's focus on her job often resulted in both partners feeling their different efforts were being taken for granted. Subsequently, Kate explained how she desired to be at work even more since her emotional needs were often unmet at home due to this conflict. This couple's story is one that is often heard with the sexes of the partners reversed.
Domain 2: Sex-role beliefs affect how individuals view spending on child-care and housekeeping

Four couples expressed how their sex-role beliefs affect their views about employing housekeeping and child care services.

Lisa explains how hiring a maid relieves her discomfort with Chuck’s relatively higher focus on the family, especially as it relates to the community’s reaction: “It’s just easier for me to say, ‘We have a maid like everybody else’ verses, ‘yeah, my husband takes care of all the housecleaning’, kind of like he’s the poor beat-up husband.

Tim and Sue. Sue, the only respondent who works only three-quarters time, admits that she “owns” housekeeping tasks in the marriage. She reports that if she “were to divide the bills into two columns, I’d put the housekeeping service into my column”. This ownership is depicted in her story of when she first hired the housekeeping service:

[Sue] When I was pregnant with [our son], I ended up with carpal tunnel in both hands and I was wearing braces on both hands and as you get more pregnant you can’t do the cleaning the way you like ...Finally, the neighborhood was going to have a block garage sale and it was the first year we lived here and we had a lot of stuff that I could have on this garage sale. I decided that since I got everything together for the garage sale, I told Tim what I want is for somebody to come and clean the house for me while I was
in the hospital so that I would have a clean house after the baby was born...I'm embarrassed, but it took five people three hours to clean it because I hadn't been able to clean toilets or anything and he will not.

Sue's husband, Tim, supports the housekeeping service that they now have twice each month. He states that it allows him and Sue to have more quality time together. Nonetheless, Tim expresses the struggle he's had coming to that point of acceptance:

[Tim] I have a problem [with the housekeeping service] to start with because I have this middle income, lower income mentality about spending on things like that. My mom and dad and her mom and dad had five or six kids and they both worked and they never had to have people come in and do things for them. I'll be honest with you, what got the change was she said, "fine, you clean the bathrooms". Then, the maid sounded awfully good.

Brenda and Bill. Brenda thinks that her career provides a better balance for her relationship. She states that she's "not a very happy stay-at-home mom" and that her work is more for personal satisfaction and marital balance than it is for the money, since she does not "have to work". Brenda relates her income back to the welfare of her children:

[Brenda] I look at the money I make as their child-care and that's my contribution to the whole circle of things....I also justify working by thinking
I give back to the care of my children by working, that’s how I can be the best mom I can be, that’s my contribution.

**Dianne and Dick.** For this couple as well, sex-role beliefs affect how they view expenditures on housekeeping services. In the following dialogue, the struggle between Dianne’s feelings of responsibility for their home and some discomfort with that responsibility is apparent:

[Dianne] If I made more money, I’d get a maid in a second and Dick wouldn’t have anything to say about it....It would be worth it to me in terms of time and money to be able to do that and not have to worry about it, and spend more time with the baby. It’s an issue of my relative earning because I don’t think Dick would go for it any other way. I’d have to do it myself with my own money, because it’s kind of my thing so it would be my treat--kind of like getting your nails done, that would be like getting your house cleaned.

[Dick] If she really thinks she needs a maid, she could go out and hire it, I’d just take the same amount of money and spend it on something for me...like I’d put it towards a trolling motor.

[Dianne] See, that doesn’t make any sense at all. When it’s for the house, it’s for me. One year, I got vertical blinds for a birthday gift...but if I got him a chair, it would go over like a lead balloon.
Summary of domain 2. Of the three couples in the study reporting the most traditional arrangements, the three wives attach a symbolic value to the money they earn that reflects their sex-role arrangements. For instance, Brenda conceptualizes her earnings as covering child care expenses more so than her husband’s; Dianne would designate her own earnings, not her husband’s, as going towards housekeeping services; and Sue considers housekeeping services as one of her expenses. The two couples having the role reversals where the husbands focused more on home and earned less did not offer such information.

Tim also brings sex-role beliefs into his perceptions of spending money on housekeeping services since, in his traditional family, his mother stayed home and took care of most of the household and child needs without his father’s assistance and without paid help. Lisa reports feeling more comfortable with her nontraditional role when they can hire someone to do many of the household chores. In conclusion, despite their differences, the respondents share the influence of sex-role beliefs on the symbolic meaning of their earnings.

Domain 3: Housekeeping services reduce marital conflict

All five couples receiving housekeeping services report that the housekeeping services reduce the potential for marital conflict. Although Dianne and Dick have not hired such services yet, Dianne predicts that housekeeping services would reduce conflict, while Dick states that he doesn’t
“see hardly any conflict over housekeeping at all”. Dianne says, “[If we had a housekeeping service] there’d be a lot of pressure off the old ‘honey, would you clean the toilets’, and then a half hour later, you’re still watching TV and you have to respray the blue stuff.”

Brenda and Bill. For this couple, the housekeeping service reduces stress in other ways:

[Brenda] I think [the housekeeping service] reduces a lot of conflict. Remember when I wasn't working and home with the kids and how crabby I was, and I think a lot of it was just that overwhelming I've got to get the house cleaned' feeling. I know it's reduced conflict, but it's hard to recognize it; it's incredibly complex.

[Bill] Without [the housecleaning service], we wouldn't have conflict about the job itself, it would be the time spent doing the work and that would mean time away together or with the kids or being productive in another way. So it would be another stress on our time.

Janet and Denny. In this relationship, both partners agree that with work and raising children they “didn't want to be cleaning bathrooms in [their] free time”. The partners also have somewhat different reasons for supporting the housekeeping service as the following dialogue represents:

[Denny] If it were my choice, I'm not sure I'd have them at all, but then I wouldn't care as much how the house looked.
[Janet] Well, what I'd do is I'd just do it myself. Because it would be my need, not his. You can't make somebody do that. At one point, I thought I'd just do it myself because I was so dissatisfied with how they were doing, but Denny said, 'Oh, no' because he thought I'd be crabby.

[Denny] That would probably be a potential area of conflict, because I really don't have a desire to clean.

Chuck and Lisa. Chuck and Lisa's decision to employ a housekeeping service was partially an effort to increase their quality time together:

[Chuck] Lisa mentioned [that with the second baby] I just couldn't keep up with the cleaning and it was getting harder to do, but if I were calling the shots, I'd still be doing it, but I decided Lisa had had enough. The time that it took to do it took away from our relationship.

[Lisa] I'm glad he gave up on attempting to do all the household chores because even though he was getting them done, he was spending time doing that and I don't feel like having him do that during the few times that we can do something relaxing.

Tim and Sue. Tim reports that in their relationship, it has been Sue's decision to have a maid because "it's mostly her job--with the house, and the standards she has set is higher than mine...the standard I would set might not require a maid". In the following dialogue, the couple discusses how the service decreases conflict.
[Sue] Nobody fights over who has to clean the toilets. If they weren't coming, it would be a source of contention and stress, because I don't know when I'd get to all of it. I don't think I could get to all of it in the course of a day.

[Tim] I think it really reduces conflict because the blow-ups we have now [over DOHL] would be just that much more because I know that would be something that I would not do. I'm not a bathroom cleaner person.

[Sue] I hate it too. I don't know anyone who enjoys cleaning bathrooms. Even housekeeping people don't enjoy it.

Summary of domain 3. It appears that housekeeping services allow a couple to partially avoid the issue of differing standards of housekeeping, thus significantly reducing potential conflict in this area. In addition, the couples reported that their stress levels were generally decreased since they could focus more on the marriage and the family instead of household chores.

Domain 4: Levels of skill with tasks influence DOHL

This domain emerged in six of the eight couples as the participants responded to the question, "How did your division of household labor come about?" For Janet and Denny, certain gender-stereotypic skills are accepted and enacted (e.g., car repair), yet the couple made sure they developed skills together when their children were born:

[Janet] We agreed early on that neither of us was an expert, we were
both reading Dr. Spock. When we were going to nurse, Denny went to the library and got all the LaLeche books, everything. It was a joint effort...Denny learned how to give baby baths before we left the hospital and he's done it ever since. But he said he didn't like doing hairstyles or clipping nails, so I've always done that.

Tony and Marlene. In this marriage, the division of labor reflects both personal interests and personal skills:

[Tony] I revert back to doing things that I know well and can do well and the things I'm accustomed to doing. Cooking and housecleaning are not in those areas. Although I can cook. I did a lot of cooking before we were married. But once we had a child we were really pressed for time and to me it was what do I do most efficiently or what do I feel most efficient at?.... I think it doesn't boil down to who really wants to do this or that, but rather who's willing to do this in exchange for that. I'm willing to stand on a ladder and scrape paint or mow yard because they're things I can do well and to me they're lesser evils than dusting or sweeping, although I do some of the house stuff too.

Tim and Sue. Tim also sees himself doing what he's good at (e.g., household financial management) and doing tasks that he describes as follows: "I enjoy yard work. That's the kind of job where you can go out, get things done and see a nice clean conclusion to them. Those are the things I probably
Dianne and Dick. This couple struggles with the concept of "what is work?" versus "what is hobby" when they discuss how skill differences lead them to different tasks:

[Dianne] I don't think we've ever sat down and said "o.k., I'll be in charge of this and you be in charge of that." I think we've just found things we're good at and we both know that the other one's responsible for that because they're better at that job. I guess it's pretty sexually divided, but I don't know how to change the oil...Dick like to tinker with automobiles and he'll call that work, but I think of it as more of a past-time, because I've been in here scrubbing toilets, and I don't like it and that's work.

[Dick] I might be looking through a repair manual for the truck and to her that's leisure time and she's like, "here, go change the baby" and to me I thought I was doing something. If I were doing something that she thinks is work, that's fine, but if I'm doing something that she doesn't believe is work, then...

Domain 5: The partner with the higher standard for a task has ultimate responsibility for the task

Six of the couples provided information that suggests that the partner with the higher standards for housekeeping and/or child-care perceives responsibility for ensuring completion of those tasks. For five of the couples, the information
emerged as the researcher and participants discussed how the division of household labor evolved. For the sixth couple, Tony and Marlene, more direct questions were used such as “Do you consider yourself the delegator of household tasks? If so, what’s that like?” Four of the six couples identified differing standards for a neat house as a source of marital conflict.

Two of the respondents, Anne and Janet, report that they consciously attempt to maintain reasonable standards for housekeeping so that they avoid feeling too much responsibility:

[Anne] I think we both generally try to share as much as possible. I don’t know if it’s just our own expectations---Nick says he always expected it this way---or my own unwillingness to do it all. Because a lot of women will do it and bitch. If I don’t think it’s fair or I don’t have time or energy, I just don’t do it, and if it bothers him, he can do it. There are priorities in life and people and kids come first and the rest of it comes later...The house is not maintained at the level I’d like to have it maintained, but it also doesn’t bother me terribly. I don’t stay up late at night worrying about that...We’re both much more willing to tolerate a reasonable standard and try not to be Joe-perfect wife and husband ... It’s more accepting what’s rational rather than living with unmet expectations all the time.

[Janet] Once we sorted the work out, we’re not judging how the other person does it or when it needs to be done which is really nice. I don’t have
to even think about it. That's how women make themselves crazy. They set the standards for how things need to be done and then they have to watch over everything. The more they're observing or telling what to do, the less inclined the man is to do something without being told.

**Tony and Marlene.** Tony and Marlene agree that it is less important for Tony to have the house as neat as Marlene wishes it to be. Tony says, “I think the things she wants done she tends to manage. She ensures that it’s going to get done, whether or not I help or not or [our son] helps or not.” Marlene responds, “If I’m the manager, then I own it and I want to think it’s a family deal. But, I’m probably wrong. I probably do own it.”

**Dianne and Dick.** The partners identify their different priorities when explaining why Dianne falls into the delegator role. Dick says that Dianne is a “bit fanatic” about her housekeeping standards and that “I’m the helper more often because she does things I wouldn’t necessarily do”.

[Dianne] Dick helps a lot, but he’s not a big initiator. There can be five loads of laundry in a big pile and probably unless I say “can you throw in some clothes?”, that could be walked past for five or six more days. He’ll vacuum, but I need to ask, or unload the dishwasher—sometimes he’ll do that on his own. But most of the time it’s not a priority as much to you as it is to me so the 30% that you do is what I ask you to do...I see it all and he just doesn’t seem to see it. It’s because I know I’m going to have to do
everything later... So, it's easier for me to stay on top of things than to fall behind.... I think the delegator just feels more conflict in themselves to get it done and maybe they get stressed out over it, and the delegatee just doesn't notice it because it's not a priority.

**Lisa and Chuck.** Lisa and Chuck attribute many of their conflicts early in the marriage to "two totally different standards". Lisa believes that her and Chuck's standards have become more similar over the years, thus diminishing the conflict. Lisa describes the feelings of responsibility that come with the higher standard:

[Lisa] For the first half of our marriage, Chuck's tolerance for a dirty house was a lot higher than mine. I came from a family of two fanatic clean parents and you didn't so we had a lot more fights about that. I always felt I was doing more because I hit the wall sooner all the time... I think the person with the higher standard—which is me—spends all the time feeling resentful, not because Chuck isn't a helpful person, just because it didn't occur to him to clean.

**Tim and Sue.** Tim identifies different standards, in terms of both what needs to get done and what a good job is, as the source behind most of their conflicts around household tasks. Tim attributes much of the difference in standards to their families of origin, where his family was "messier" than Sue's. Both partners agree that Tim's standards for a clean house are higher than they
were earlier in the marriage due to some “serious prodding”. In the following quotes, Tim describes how he hesitates to take on tasks for which Sue has a higher standard of completion.

[Tim] With household chores, she has a definite way that she does them and it’s kind of like “if you’re gonna do that you gotta do it that way”, and so there’s not really the ability for me to do it the way that I would do it, which wouldn’t be to her standards. I get to the point where I say, “I’m not gonna do them since I know I’m not gonna do them quite the way she wants to do them.” It doesn’t make sense for me necessarily to do them to that level...I can guarantee you that she doesn’t think I would attend to the children with quite the same standard that she would attend to the kids, but usually when I do it, she’s not here so I can get away with that as far as child-care.

Summary of domains 4 and 5. These two domains appear to be highly related since skill in a task area often results in responsibility for that task area. As Janet, Lisa, Dianne, and Sue mentioned, feeling responsibility for a task can also result in higher stress as one attempts to ensure the task completion. Janet and Denny avoided this situation by ensuring that both partners participated equally in acquiring child rearing skills from the beginning. Other respondents suggested living with more reasonable standards. Several of the couples stated that their standards became more similar over the life of the marriage, thus reducing conflict.
Domain 6: When both partners are busy at home, feelings of equity around the division of household labor are increased

In four of the couples, serendipitous information emerged suggesting that when both partners are working concurrently on various household tasks, feelings of being overburdened are reduced.

Denny and Janet report that similar goals and purposes with the family decrease the possibility that one of them will feel unfairly overburdened. This couple also reports that it would be highly unlikely for one to sit while the other needs assistance. Janet says, "Usually I don't feel overburdened. I can remember one time, when we were really busy, and we came home and Denny flipped on the TV and sat down--it was totally out of character for him, I was dumbfounded. Janet's husband, Denny, adds that, "We can see when something needs to get done, and if something isn't done, it's probably because the other person couldn't do it, so the other person just does it." The following quotes from different couples reflect similar values.

[Lisa] Another reason we can just check in with each other [on how each person is feeling about the DOHL] and it doesn't get to be a big issue is that Chuck and I are both really hard workers so it's not like I'm just setting on the couch reading a book, drinking a Coke while Chuck runs around frantically. We both work really hard until the kids go to bed.

[Brenda] We're both very driven where it's important. We have the same
values as far as it's important to both of us that the house is picked up; that
the dishwasher's unloaded—we're on the same wave length. We're really
fortunate that way; not one of us is sitting in front of the TV. We don't seem
to have conflict there.

[Dick] I don't really want to change our arrangement. It's not like one of
us is sitting there watching TV while the other is waiting on us hand and
foot.

Summary of domain 6. This information suggests that an element of
perceived fairness comes from the timing of task completion as well as the
underlying work ethics that the partners perceive in one another. Janet and
Lisa's quotes also suggest that couples may decrease the amount of negotiation
and delegation of tasks when spouses simply trust that their partners are trying
their best.

Domain 7: Relative incomes are reported to have differing degrees of
influence on expectations for self and spouse

When asked "How might your individual earnings affect what you each
expect of yourselves and your partners with household chores?", several of the
respondents reported that their earnings were "invisible" in their minds. This
question and the responses are somewhat unique from the rest of the results
section because they represent the respondents' feelings about whether the
actual dollars earned (not number of hours worked or other practical issues)
affect their expectations for partners. The symbolic meaning of earned income is apparent in other sections of the results, but it is helpful to present how partners respond to the direct question. Due to differing degrees of spousal agreement, the following quotes are presented in conjunction with partner responses:

**Denny and Janet.** [Denny] Since money is not a problem for us, we both have everything we want or need materially. As a result of that, I'm not really sure we think about the money we each earn...I feel like I have everything I need, so our two incomes causes us to think less about that stuff. But I don't know, [if I lose my job], we'll see what it is like if I have a graduate assistantship next year.

[Janet] But I don't think your income would have anything to do with what you'd do at home. I don't think what we do at home is related at all to income.

**Dianne and Dick.** Both partners see attitude changes in Dianne since her income has dropped, although they're not sure if that drop in income is related to their current expectations with the division of household labor. Dick says, "I don't see that [my higher earning] makes a difference, it just goes into one big pot and we divvy it out from there."

[Dianne] When we lived in [another city], I earned more than Dick and I can feel a change of attitude within myself. I felt I had grounds to say,
"Hey, this is as much mine as yours", or "I make as much as you do so I have as much say in this". I let some things pass a little more now because it's his money, even though it goes in one pot, I still see the difference... It was like a big self-esteem drop when I wasn't earning that much money; it meant a lot to me. But my responsibilities are a lot greater with this job.

[Dick] Sometimes, now, she'll ask me things she didn't before, like "do you mind if I go out and buy a new shirt?" or something like that and I'm like, "I don't care, if you need clothes, go buy clothes". She'll come to me with this little stuff that most people wouldn't.

Tony and Marlene. Tony's career field is quite unstable so he has experienced several job transitions and occasional periods of unemployment. Marlene reports that "as long as Tony is earning money, it's invisible, [in influencing the division of housework]; it's something that is never talked about." When asked how, if at all, the disparity in their earnings comes up in their behaviors, the following dialogue took place:

[Tony] I tend to think I get angry, sulking, or just generally dissatisfied with myself. Maybe I isolate myself or seem distant. What do you perceive, Marlene?

[Marlene] I didn't know it was an issue. If you're angry, I didn't know.

[Tony] Well, I'm not inclined to say, "Gee, I wish I was earning as much as you." I don't think I've ever felt resentful of Marlene's earning power, it's
just more a dissatisfaction with myself.

[Marlene] ...I earn more because I got lucky, not because of who I am.

[Interviewer] If we reversed the discrepancy in income, would it still seem invisible?

[Marlene] No, I would want to make more...I'm a tiny bit more competitive than Tony, I don't want any man making more than me (said jokingly). ...As is it now, our take-home pay is about the same. I have a lot more taken out of my check first, so you throw it in the pot and it's invisible.

Further into the interview, Marlene shared how it made her somewhat uncomfortable early in the marriage when Tony, who had less education than her at that time, was earning more than her. When Tony was asked if he was aware of Marlene's discomfort with the earning discrepancy at that time, he replied, "I don't recall anything. I'm in the same boat that Marlene is in now, I wasn't really aware of anything that was going on with her."

Nick and Anne. [Anne] It's all our money and I almost have to force Nick to spend it. We don't have his money and my money... I feel like the income differential is a matter of luck and who worked for who at one point in their careers verses skill or ability or worth. I think he's grossly underpaid and I'm overpaid for what they let me do.

[Nick] I value the security of knowing that I could live off of Anne's income, that means a lot to me, so it's worth it to me to do some of these
things to support that.

Jeff and Kate. This couple compares where they were years ago with this issue compared to where they are now. Jeff says, "At that time, Kate was earning much more than I and it made me feel somewhat inadequate, like I can't provide for the family and my wife has to."

Kate I think as Jeff's earnings increased, he communicated more. Before, when things weren't quite as good, things were more nonverbal, now it's more direct...I think his self-esteem has improved. He used to say, "I'm just a maid, just here to wait on everybody." ....I don't think an income discrepancy would come into play that much now. I think it has to do with just feeling really secure and we communicate so much more now. When we were having trouble with [the DOHL], we were having big financial stress, so it's hard to separate it all out...I think it comes down to respecting the other person and trying to be aware of what you're asking the other person to do.

Summary of domain 7. Several of the couples mentioned to this writer their belief that income discrepancy awareness and symbolism would be greater for couples having low total household incomes. Some of the respondents argued that when money is a less salient concern in the marriage, it does not manifest itself as often in various household conflicts, including issues around the division of household labor.
Three of the couples communicated an interesting pattern: The higher earners in the relationships reported that the income discrepancy was "invisible" in their minds, while the lower earners in the relationships reported being aware of their lesser earnings when considering spending decisions. Given this, it is possible for some couples that the "power" of the higher earner is partially built through the self-imposed deference of the lower earning partner.

Survey Data

The participants' responses in the interviews were compared with their responses on the surveys. The brief survey assessed a. proportional efforts of the respondent in the division of household labor; b. satisfaction level with the current division of household labor; c. sex-role beliefs; and d. marital satisfaction (see Appendix). The spouses were told that if they chose to share their responses with their spouses, that they were to wait until both partners had completed the questionnaire.

The marital satisfaction instrument used was the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), developed by Graham B. Spanier. Four aspects of relationships are measured with this tool: Dyadic consensus (DCon), Dyadic cohesion (DCoh), Dyadic satisfaction (DS), and Affectional expression (AE). The instrument is created so that higher scores on each domain reflect a better relationship. On a sample of 218 non-divorced, married persons having an average marriage of 13.2 years, the mean score on the total DAS was 114.8 with a standard
deviation of 17.8. The results of the marital satisfaction instrument used for these participants are presented in Table 2. The results of the participants' sex-role beliefs as measure by the survey are presented below.

**Couple 1: Lisa and Chuck**

On the surveys, both partners agreed that Chuck does "somewhat more" with the children than Lisa. In addition, both partners reported no wish to have their spouses decrease or increase their efforts in all areas of housework listed. Chuck and Lisa "disagreed" with all of the traditional sex-role statements, with one exception: Lisa "agreed" with the statement, "Women have as much chance to get big and important jobs—they just aren't interested." She added the following personal notes, "I do think that women today have excellent opportunity to have career-type jobs. I don't know why they do not always achieve this. It could be desire, or something else," and "It would be better for American society if at least one parent stayed home with the children."

Chuck and Lisa's sub-domain scores on the marital adjustment instrument are very similar to one another's and their composite scores of 121 points are the same. Both partners reported that they are "extremely happy" in the relationship.

**Couple 2: Denny and Janet**

Both partners reported no wish to have their spouses decrease or increase their efforts in all areas of housework listed. Both partners "agreed" that they
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<tr>
<th>Participant Names (by couples)</th>
<th>Dyadic Consensus (DCon)</th>
<th>Dyadic Satisfaction (DS)</th>
<th>Dyadic Cohesion (DCoh)</th>
<th>Affectional Expression (AE)</th>
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Table 2
Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale
Participant Results
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<th>Participant Names (by couples)</th>
<th>Dyadic Consensus (DCon)</th>
<th>Dyadic Satisfaction (DS)</th>
<th>Dyadic Cohesion (DCoh)</th>
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<td></td>
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do about the same amount of work in each household area listed, with the exception of financial management, which Denny does. Janet "strongly disagreed" with every traditional sex-role statement. Denny "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" with every statement except, "By nature, women are happiest making a home and caring for children", which he scored as a "neutral" feeling.

Janet scored every area of marital adjustment significantly higher than her husband. In particular, Janet reported their level of agreement on friends, goals, affection, and decision making as much higher than Denny reported. Janet wrote in, "I have the best possible life with Denny who means the world to me."

**Couple 3: Dianne and Dick**

Dianne and Dick reported their beliefs that their partners put in "about the same" amount of work as they each do, overall, for the home and family. However, Dianne reported that she does "somewhat more" with their child and with household tasks and "much less" with financial management. Dianne wishes Dick would do "somewhat more" with the care of their child and home. Likewise, Dick wishes Dianne would do "somewhat more" with the care of their child and home even though he agrees that Dianne does "somewhat more" than him in those areas.

Dianne's reported level of satisfaction is consistent with the interview information: Dianne stated her wish to have Dick more involved in traditional
women's chores, above and beyond the absolute amount of time Dick spent with household tasks. Also, Dianne communicated her desire to have Dick more involved in housework even though she knew he was at his job many more hours than her every week. These two interview findings reflect Benin and Agostinelli's research (1988) identifying two determinants of women's satisfaction with DOHL: 1. the qualitative aspects of home tasks (does the husband also do the "dirty work"?); and 2. the division of household labor above and beyond relative employment hours.

In addition, this interview information may help explain why Dianne reports satisfaction with Dick's efforts with home and family overall on the survey, but states that she would like him more involved in housework and child care.

Dick "strongly disagrees" or "disagrees" with all of the traditional sex-role statements. Dianne "disagrees" with all the statements except for two, which she scored a "neutral" feeling: 1. By nature, women are happiest making a home and caring for children; and 2. It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family. It is interesting to note once again, that Dick's survey responses regarding sex role beliefs are not indicative of his behavior in the division of household labor.

Dianne and Dick have nearly identical scores on all sub-domains of the marital adjustment instrument and have composite scores of 124 and 125,
respectively. The only significant differences in item scoring are “agreement on friends”, which Dianne scored higher, and “agreement on career decisions”, which Dianne scored lower. Both partners report that they are “very happy” in the relationship.

**Couple 4: Jeff and Kate**

Jeff and Kate wish each other would continue to do about the same amount of work in all the areas of home and family, except Kate wishes Jeff would do somewhat more with financial management. Both partners see themselves as doing about the same, overall, for home and family, although Jeff reported doing somewhat more with household tasks and Kate reported doing somewhat less with financial management.

Kate “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” with all of the traditional sex-role statements. Jeff “agreed” with the statement, “It would be better for American society if fewer women worked” and marked “neutral” feelings in response to the statements, “By nature, women are happiest making a home and caring for children,” and “It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.” Again, these survey responses do not reflect the couple’s current arrangement in which Jeff reports doing slightly more with household tasks. However, the reported beliefs may partially explain why Jeff was uncomfortable with the traditional role-reversal they had earlier in the marriage.
Jeff and Kate scored similarly across the marital adjustment sub-domains, except for dyadic satisfaction, where Kate scored somewhat lower than Jeff. In addition, Jeff scored their level of agreement on "household tasks" with a "3=occasionally agree", while Kate scored that item with a "5=almost always agree". Kate's composite score is 125 while Jeff's is 132. Jeff notes that he is "extremely happy" in the relationship and Kate notes that she is "happy".

**Couple 5: Tony and Marlene**

Tony and Marlene wish each other would continue to do "about the same" in household tasks, child care, and financial management, except Tony wishes Marlene would do "somewhat less" for the home and family, overall. Tony reported that he does "somewhat less" with their child, "about the same" with household tasks, and "much less" with financial management than Marlene. Marlene reported doing "somewhat more" with their child, with household tasks, and with financial management, yet both Marlene and Tony report that they do "about the same", overall, for their home and family.

In the interviews, it was the researcher's perception that Marlene wished to have Tony more involved with household and child care, and that she resented having to enforce his participation in these areas. However, this frustration was not mirrored in the survey results.

Marlene and Tony "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" with all the traditional sex-role statements. The partners had nearly identical scores on all
sub-domains of the marital adjustment scale except Marlene gave somewhat lower ratings on the couple’s consensus of values and activities like “philosophy of life” and “leisure time interests”.

Couple 6: Brenda and Bill

Both Brenda and Bill reported that they do “about the same” amount of work, overall, for their home and family. In addition, both partners reported their wish that each other continue with “about the same” amount of work with child care and household tasks, although Bill wishes Brenda would do “much more” with financial management and Brenda wishes Bill would do “somewhat more” in that area. Likewise, both partners see themselves doing “somewhat more” than the other with financial management.

Brenda “disagreed” with all of the traditional sex-role statements. In the interview, however, Brenda provided information suggesting that it was more herself, than her husband, who wished to protect the traditional aspects of their relationship. Bill “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” with half of the traditional sex-role statements. He marked a “neutral” feeling for the following three statements: 1. By nature, women are happiest making a home and caring for children; 2. It would be better for American society if fewer women worked; and 3. It is more important for a husband to have a good job than for a wife to have a good job.

Brenda and Bill were within one point of one another on all four
sub-domains of the marital adjustment scale. They both received a composite score of 139 points. Brenda and Bill rated themselves as being "extremely happy" in the relationship.

**Couple 7: Nick and Anne**

Nick reported that he does "somewhat more", overall, with their home and family, "somewhat more" with household tasks, "about the same" with child care, and "much less" with their financial management than Anne. Anne, on the other hand, reported that she does "about the same" with household tasks and child care, but that she does "much more" with financial management.

Nick wishes Anne would do "much more" with household tasks and "somewhat more", overall, with the home and family. Likewise, Anne wishes Nick would do "somewhat more" with household tasks and overall, with the home and family. Both Anne and Nick "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" with all of the traditional sex-role statements. However, in the interview, Nick shared his discomfort with being perceived as just a "house-husband".

On the marital adjustment scale, Anne scored the couple's consensus on values and activities higher than Nick did. This might be partially explained by Nick's reported "social" discomfort with his heavy focus on family.

Both partners rated their "engagement in outside interests together" and "stimulating exchange of ideas" relatively low, consistent with what they shared in the interview: The partners identified the major problem in the
marriage as finding time to spend together away from work and kids. Both partners rated themselves as “happy” in the relationship.

**Couple 8: Tim and Sue**

Tim reported that he does “somewhat less” with the amount of household tasks, but that he does “much more” with financial management. He hopes Sue will keep doing “about the same” amount of work in the household area, except he wishes she would do more with financial management. Sue reported that she does “somewhat more” with children and household tasks and “much less” with financial management than Tim. She desires no more nor no less from Tim in the area of child care and home and family overall, but she wishes he would do “somewhat more” with household tasks and somewhat less with financial management. The survey results are not consistent with interview information which suggested Sue is frequently upset by Tim’s failure to complete household tasks.

Sue and Tim “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” with all of the traditional sex-role statements even though they have a fairly traditional arrangement around the division of household labor. The couple scored very similarly on all sub-domains of the marital adjustment instrument, with Sue scoring their consensus on decisions and lifestyle as somewhat higher than Tim. Sue’s composite score is 126 and Tim’s is 123. Both partners reported that they are “very happy” in the relationship.
CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions chapter contains an identification of the factors that appear to contribute to satisfaction with the division of household labor, a comparison of the findings with other research data, and a discussion of the implications for marital and family therapy.

Factors Contributing to Satisfaction with the Division of Household Labor

Several factors emerged during the interviews that appear to contribute to satisfaction with the division of household labor, and marital satisfaction, in general.

Balancing work and home is a team effort

Perhaps most important, several of the couples identified conscious, deliberate team efforts to balance work and home. Instead of letting sex-role beliefs dictate an arrangement that might be a poor fit, or haphazardly letting responsibilities default on whoever has the least tolerance for ignoring a task, satisfied couples reported collaborative problem solving with the topic.

For instance, Denny and Janet did not wait until conflict arose later in the marriage around the division of labor; instead, they discussed and committed to principles of sex-role egalitarianism before starting a family and were vigilant about ensuring equal skill development with tasks they wanted to share.

Bill and Brenda wished to keep some traditional sex-role aspects of their
marriage, but they knew that did not mean Bill was free to ignore the home and family; instead, the couple reports working hard over the years to negotiate a balance for both partners that prevents each of them from becoming overly focused on home or work.

Lisa and Chuck sat down and discussed how to prioritize the partners’ efforts at their two jobs. Instead of taking Chuck’s focus on the home for granted since he is the lower earner, the couple openly communicated their concerns, needs, and goals, both personally and for the family. As a result, the couple mutually agreed to put his career growth on hold for the next few years.

Jeff and Kate also emphasized the necessity of open communication and cooperation in successfully managing the division of household labor. Jeff and Kate recall how much conflict and “taken for granted” feelings existed when they failed to communicate and negotiate their family and work roles. Even though both partners report working very hard at the time, Jeff worked harder with family, and Kate worked harder with her job. Their efforts in these different domains paired with a lack of cooperation and a lack of perceived choice left each partner feeling “dumped on”.

Whatever roles the couples choose to enact in the end, the concept of “choice” gained through open communication and team negotiation appears to be important in the acceptance of roles.
Putting family and personal needs ahead of social expectations

Several participants discussed the struggle of putting family and personal needs ahead of what they perceive the dominant society prescribes: Lisa discusses peers' perceptions that she is a domineering female; Janet describes her colleagues' reaction to Denny buying dresses for their girls; Tim attempts to be "soft-headed enough" to try new sex-role behaviors; Jeff discusses how he felt himself a failure when relying on his wife's income; Dick struggles with wanting to keep his job even though Dianne expects him to earn more "as the husband"; Marlene remembers being scolded by another woman for scraping paint off the house; Brenda talks about the challenge of protecting her values as a mother while wishing to "stay up" with the cultural trends; and Nick describes his increasing ability to put work second and focus on what's best for him and his family.

All of these people have been able to adapt or change sex roles to best meet their own personal and family needs. In some cases, like Tim's and Nick's, that meant setting aside expectations originally brought into the relationship. It may also require the individual or couple to accept public scrutiny when sex-role arrangements are used that one's peer group typically does not support.

Being flexible with one's roles as the relationship changes

Flexibility with one's roles appears to be another factor that increases satisfaction with the division of household labor. Several respondents changed
their roles as their relationship needs changed. As examples, Tim and Nick explained how they were encouraged to change their more traditional role expectations in light of their wives’ needs. Both husbands report higher marital satisfaction as a consequence.

Brenda experimented with staying at home full-time with her children, but found it important to re-involve herself in the workplace. Brenda’s husband, Bill, discusses how the demands of fatherhood have helped prevent him from becoming over focused on his work, something he believes may have happened without the presence of his children and his wife’s profession.

Denny explains the need for flexibility in child care as follows, “We both understand that we have professional careers and that we have to adjust. Sometimes I have to pick up the kids, sometimes she does.”

Another example of role flexibility is in Kate and Jeff’s marriage. This couple may experience another reversal in roles if Kate decides to stay home with their children while Jeff focuses more on his thriving business. Kate and Jeff have had to continually redefine their family and work roles as economic, family, and personal interest factors have changed over time. This time however, the couple reports greater marital satisfaction as they consider various arrangements that best fit their needs. They talk about “weighing the options” and “being aware of what you’re asking the other person to do”, concepts that suggest flexibility.
Comparison of Findings with Current Research Data

This qualitative study was designed to investigate a few couples' symbolic worlds; it was not designed to generalize the findings to the mass population. Therefore, comparing this study's findings with quantitative research findings has significant limitations. Despite this, several observations emerged that may provide insight into inconsistent and contradictory research results.

Examination of relative income and the division of household labor

Of the various factors analyzed in men and women's domestic labor behaviors, perhaps the strongest predictor of DOHL has been women's relative earnings (Model, 1981; Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990; Ross, 1987; and Stone-Fish et al., 1992). The analysis of sex-role beliefs, time availability, education level, and professional status on DOHL yield much more inconclusive findings.

If this researcher attempted to "quantify" her findings with this small and atypical group of people, the above would probably be supported: The three couples who reported the most sharing with DOHL also had the least relative income discrepancies of the eight couples in the study. However, the three couples gave somewhat different reasons for why they shared DOHL: Jeff and Kate explained how they struggled with feelings of "being dumped on" until they learned to communicate and be sensitive to one another's needs with this issue. They emphasized the importance of previous marital counseling and improved communication behind their current sharing of domestic
responsibility.

Denny and Janet, on the other hand, spoke of having “underlying principles [with DOHL] from the start..., and that everything else was fundamental, flowed out of that.” Denny also attributes some of his domestic behavior to the fact that he was in his early 30’s when he married Janet, and that he was ready at that time to take on the shared responsibilities of child care and home.

Tony and Marlene identified yet another reason behind their sharing of DOHL. They joke about Tony having been given “an ultimatum” to partake in housecleaning. Tony also recognizes that Marlene “manages the things she wants done” domestically, although Tony agrees to cooperate with those tasks.

Most of the information provided about the influence of different relative incomes on DOHL revolved around practical issues of time and supporting income earning capacity. None of the participants reported feeling that their influence in domestic task decision making was increased when they earned more money. None of the participants reported feeling that their free time away from work was more or less valuable than their partners based on relative income. If these feelings and dynamics exist, it is unknown whether they would be admitted, or even whether they would exist in one's conscious experience.
Examination of other factors related to division of household labor

In this sample of eight couples, there is some support for the "time availability hypothesis" since some of the lower earning partners who focus more on home also have more time for home tasks. There is also scattered support for the "utility function" as the partner with greater skill with certain domestic tasks focuses more on those tasks. Across the eight couples, the relationship between sex-role beliefs (as rated on the survey) and DOHL arrangements appears weak.

Tim and Nick did identify how their sex-role beliefs for their marriages evolved as they faced firm boundaries by their wives, and as they learned what it took to be happier in the relationships. These reports suggest that sex-role beliefs and sex-role arrangements can dynamically evolve.

Examination of inconsistent findings in research

Similar to quantitative findings, in this qualitative study there appears to be inconsistent relationships between 1. DOHL and marital satisfaction and 2. satisfaction with DOHL and general marital satisfaction (as rated on the survey).

This researcher noted the following dynamics that may help explain such inconsistencies between survey data and interview data. On the survey, some of the couples reported satisfaction with the partner's level of involvement in child care and housework, yet during the interviews, some of the partners spoke
about frustration with having to ensure task completion. This dynamic may not be captured on an inventory.

In another example, Dianne reported feeling that many of her husband’s domestic activities were “more hobbies” than tasks, although her husband felt differently. It could be that in such a situation, the husband would report higher involvement with domestic tasks than the wife would give him credit for. Again, an inventory may not catch this dynamic.

Jeff and Kate gave insight into another factor that may not be recognized in research, and thus may contribute to inconsistent results with DOHL and marital satisfaction. This couple described the story of when Jeff focused more on home and Kate on work, since Kate had higher earning power. However, they report this situation to have felt very unfair for both partners since collaboration and perceived choice did not exist in the arrangement. Across couples then, there may be some who have disproportionate efforts at home and are accepting of the situation, and other couples who report dissatisfaction. In this example, it may not be the arrangement in itself that determines the level of satisfaction, but how the couple is able to communicate and come to agreement on that arrangement.

Sex-role beliefs were more fully captured by using both inventories and interviews. Using only one source of information may not as adequately explain the apparent discrepancy between one’s beliefs and one’s DOHL behavior. In
this study, participants sometimes reported sex-role beliefs on the inventories that they believed were best for society overall; but in the interviews, they defended their current arrangement as best for their marriage even though it may not reflect their reported sex-role beliefs. In summary, it appears that people compromise on more than cleaning the toilets; they also compromise on their values about sex roles in order to obtain what is best for their marriages.

Sue and Brenda both spoke of supporting egalitarian sex-role beliefs in society, but that for themselves, they perceived greater responsibilities for children and home since they were the mothers. Again, this information emphasizes the complexity in distinguishing between what one believes in socially regarding sex-roles and what one believes in for themselves.

**Implications for Marital and Family Therapy**

The results of this study emphasize the need for marriage and family therapists to examine 1. the multiple changing systems of clients who are experiencing difficulty with the division of household labor, 2. the influence of earned income on decision making within the marriage, and 3. the unique needs of each couple regarding this issue.

**Identify multiple systems’ influence on DOHL**

Family systems theorists view families as groups of people who adapt to their environment and whose collective behavior is directed toward accomplishing a set of tasks (Constantine, 1986). Spouses in the family system
continually monitor and regulate their behavior in relation to their personal values and their partners' values. These values, in turn, affect expectations of self and other. The results of the study support systems theory: An objective 50/50 split of family and work tasks cannot ensure satisfaction with DOHL since concepts of "fairness" and "good wife" or "good husband" are determined not only from one's pre-marital sex-role beliefs, but from interactions that occur at the level of the individual, the marital dyad, and the dyad's relationship with other systems in the larger society (e.g., school system, work system, peer system).

One level of the system is the individual her or himself. Schwartz (1994) emphasizes that individuals are systems unto themselves, struggling with different inner messages that prevent or encourage them to engage in new behaviors. Certain participants in this study exemplified the struggle between wanting new behavior and letting go of personal expectations of self and spouse. Since human systems are self-reflexive, (they examine and explain personal behavior and have evolving self-awareness) (Bateson, 1971), therapists can assist clients in changing behavior by identifying the history and components of their belief systems around DOHL. The participant, Dianne, provides an excellent example of how individuals struggle with contradictory messages in themselves and how, through investigation of her feelings, she might change her self awareness. Minuchin (1974) would encourage the
therapist to avoid focusing directly on Dianne’s behavior in an attempt to understand her marital and family structure. It is important that the therapist examine other systems as well.

Another level of the system that must be examined is the marital dyad. Some of the participants are attempting new behavior, but receiving negative feedback from their partners or from the marital interaction. For instance, both Sue and Tim want to decrease marital conflict around DOHL and are desiring more shared behaviors in order to achieve this. Sue wants to let go of certain domestic responsibilities and have Tim more involved, yet Tim hesitates to get involved, both because he dislikes many home chores and because he feels he cannot meet Sue’s standards of task completion. Sue sees his incomplete and “sloppy” work, worries that the family’s needs are not being, criticizes Tim, ends up taking over the task, Tim stops trying, Sue feels forced to do the tasks since Tim has stopped trying, and the couple feels dissatisfied in the end. In effect, both partners are acting to maintain homeostasis in the DOHL arrangement, even though they state that they want change. Part of the this struggle may come from conflicting messages the partners are receiving from larger social influences.

Systems theory recognizes that within a given society, there is a consensus of tolerable differences in beliefs about such concepts as sex roles (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). The participants in this study emphasized the
importance of societal beliefs as an influence on their DOHL behavior and their comfort with the behavior. It was suggested in the results that some clients had an easier time than others of attending to the relationship needs above and beyond their pre-marital expectations and current social forces. Therapists can trace each partner’s expectations of the spouse and self to family-of-origin and social influences and assess what makes the person or couple more or less influenced by these outside sources.

In summary, the couples in this study highlight the need for therapists to attend to multiple systems simultaneously in order to understand “how” and “why” people ascribe meaning to earned income and the division of household labor.

**Recognize earned income’s influence on DOHL**

Perceptions of inequity in the division of household tasks have been found to be an important determinant of marital unhappiness (Pleck, 1985) and conflict around money has been ranked as a major source of marital conflict (Blood & Wolfe, 1973; Geiss, 1981). However, there is a lack of research analyzing “why” and “how” the variables of relative income and sex-role beliefs interplay, if at all, in the subsequent division of household labor and in the couple’s marital satisfaction.

The results of this study emphasize the need for marital therapists to address the issues of how couples negotiate work and home efforts in light of the
economic considerations in the marriage. Even for the couples who have achieved satisfaction with DOHL, most report the issue as having been one of significant challenge in the marriage. In addition, all of the couples identified economic considerations in the negotiation process. Unfortunately, therapists are often not trained in understanding marital financial dynamics and subsequently, fail to investigate the influence of earned income in marital interactions (Poduska & Allred, 1990).

**Attend to the unique considerations of each couple**

The participants in this study have emphasized that there are a multitude of pragmatic and symbolic factors that influence the division of household labor and satisfaction with that division. An arrangement that is comfortable for one couple is uncomfortable for another, what was once comfortable for a couple can become uncomfortable as personal and relationship dynamics change.

The participants have also provided information that suggests both sexes can feel and act in similar ways when experiencing similar circumstances. For instance, in the couples experiencing stereotypical role-reversals, many of the statements sounded as if they should have come from the opposite-sexed partner.

This observation is an important one: Instead of viewing sex-role behaviors and values as innate in men and women, or viewing sex-role behavior and values as an inevitable and permanent consequence of early socialization, this
study supports the theory that gender behavior is a continuous, "life-long process of situated behavior" that is determined not only by the marital dyad, but by other social systems as well (Ferree, 1991, p. 870). Guided by this view, therapists can investigate the client’s unique meanings around sex-role beliefs and DOHL, while at the same time, recognizing the larger social context in which the client and couple functions.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

WHO DOES WHAT WORK IN OUR FAMILY?

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to each question as accurately and honestly as you can. Feel free to write in the margins when you would like to clarify or add to your response(s).

If you choose to share your responses with your spouses, please wait until you have BOTH completed your questionnaires!

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=much less than my spouse & 5=much more than my spouse, circle the number that best represents the amount of work you do in each area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. the amount of work I do, overall, for our home and family</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. the amount of work I do with the care of our children</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. the amount of work I do with household tasks (such as laundry, food preparation, cleaning, yard work, home repairs)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. the amount of work I do with our financial management</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1="I wish my spouse would do much less" and 5="I wish my spouse would do much more" please circle the number that best represents your feelings about each area of work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. the amount of work you each do for your home and family, overall?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. the amount of work you each do with household tasks?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. the amount of work you each do with the care of your children?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d. the amount of work you each do with your financial management?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=strongly disagree & 5=strongly agree, please circle the number that best represents your feelings about each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>neutral</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. by nature, women are happiest making a home and caring for children</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. men are born with more drive and ambition to be successful than women</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. it would be better for American society if fewer women worked</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. it is more important for a husband to have a good job than for a wife to have a good job.</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. women have as much chance to get big and important jobs—they just aren't interested</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.</td>
<td><em>1</em></td>
<td><em>2</em></td>
<td><em>3</em></td>
<td><em>4</em></td>
<td><em>5</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What is your marriage like?

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the scale of 1 to 6, where 1 = always disagree & 6 = always agree.

1 = always disagree
2 = almost always disagree
3 = occasionally agree
4 = frequently agree
5 = almost always agree
6 = always agree

1. Handling family finances
2. Matters of recreation
3. Religious matters
4. Demonstrations of affection
5. Friends
6. Sex relations
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)
8. Philosophy of life
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws
10. Aims, goals and things believed important
11. Amount of time spent together
12. Making major decisions
13. Household tasks
14. Leisure time interests and activities
15. Career decisions

Please indicate below how often each item on the following list occurs, where 1 = all of the time and 6 = never.

1 = all the time
2 = most of the time
3 = more often than not
4 = occasionally
5 = rarely
6 = never

16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
19. Do you confide in your mate?
20. Do you ever regret that you married? (or lived together?)
21. How often do you and your partner quarrel?
22. How often do you and your mate “get on each other’s nerves?”

23. Do you kiss your mate? Every day Almost every day Occasionally Rarely Never

   4   3   2   1   0
24. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All of them</th>
<th>Most of them</th>
<th>Some of them</th>
<th>Very few of them</th>
<th>None of them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

- 0 = never
- 1 = less than once a month
- 2 = once or twice a month
- 3 = once a day
- 4 = more often

25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas
26. Laugh together
27. Calmly discuss something
28. Work together on a project

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no)

- Yes _ No 29. Being too tired for sex
- Yes _ No 30. Not showing love

31. The numbers on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Unhappy</td>
<td>Fairly Unhappy</td>
<td>A Little Happy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Extremely Happy</td>
<td>Perfect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. Please check one of the following statements that best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship.

- _ I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
- _ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
- _ I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
- _ It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
- _ It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
- _ My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more that I can do to keep the relationship going.