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Benevolent Sexism, Perceived Fairness, Decision-Making, and Marital Satisfaction: Covert Power Influences

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Benevolent Sexism, Perceived Fairness, Decision-Making, and Marital Satisfaction:

Covert Power Influences

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Abstract

Benevolent Sexism, Perceived Fairness, Decision-Making, and Marital Satisfaction:

Covert Power Influences

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This study examined the association between endorsement of benevolent sexism and

marital satisfaction in heterosexual marriages, which are perceived as being

egalitarian. The goal was to explore how covert power dynamics like those involved

in benevolent sexism affect marital satisfaction, and how perceived fairness and

decision-making outcomes interact with this relationship. Men and women who

have cohabitated with their spouses at least five years were asked to complete

measures assessing their endorsement of benevolent sexism and their perceived

global marital satisfaction. Participants were also asked to fill out measures

examining the mediating effect of perceived fairness and decision-making outcomes.

Previous research on marital satisfaction in egalitarian couples has been equivocal.

Much research has found that wives in egalitarian marriages tend to be less satisfied,

while husbands tend to be more satisfied. Research on Ambivalent Sexism indicates

that, very often, both men and women hold favorable views toward women who

behave in "gender appropriate" ways. This study did not find a relationship between

endorsement of benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in either men or women,

but it did find that perceived fairness was a significant mediator. Benevolent sexism was positively correlated with the perception that division of household labor was fair, despite wives performing a greater share of the burden. Perceived fairness was also strongly correlated to marital satisfaction. Mediation analysis indicated that marital satisfaction was affected by benevolent sexism indirectly through perceived fairness. Though decision-making outcomes were not found to be a mediating variable, a significant relationship was found between endorsement of benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes. The goal of this research was to explore how covert power dynamics like those involved in benevolent sexism affect marital satisfaction, and how perceived fairness and decision-making outcomes interact with this relationship. This exploration provided valuable insight into how such covert power can be explored in marital therapy to strengthen relationships.

The electronic version of this dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd

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Definition of Terms

Sexism: Attitudes, conditions, or behaviors that promote stereotyping of social roles based on gender.

Ambivalent Sexism: Sexism directed against women based on both positive and negative attitudes (hostility and benevolence), rather than uniform dislike. Ambivalent sexism is a combination of benevolent and hostile sexist attitudes.

Benevolent Sexism: A seemingly favorable attitude that puts women on a pedestal but sometimes conveys an assumption that women need men's protection.

Hostile Sexism: Antagonistic attitudes toward women, including domination, degradation, and hostility.

Protective Paternalism: The implication that men should protect and care for women.

Chapter I: Introduction

This research explores the effect of covert sexism, namely Benevolent Sexism, on marital satisfaction. This research stems from Ambivalent Sexism Theory and research on perceived fairness and decision-making outcomes, all of which are outlined here. Benevolent sexism is one of the two components of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fisk, 1996). Ambivalent sexism is sexism directed against women based on both positive and negative attitudes (hostility and benevolence), rather than uniform dislike. Ambivalent sexism is a combination of benevolent and hostile sexist attitudes. Though ambivalent sexism does not directly address sexist attitudes toward men, it does implicitly address gender role expectations of both men and women. Ambivalent sexism is a double-edged way of viewing women, in which women are sometimes adored and sometimes viewed with contempt. Research on ambivalent sexism indicates that women who endorse benevolent sexist behaviors—chivalrous acts—are also more likely to "put up with" more hostile sexist behavior (Glick et al., 2000).

Research has been done since Glick and Fiske (1996) first developed Ambivalent Sexism Theory, but the research has focused on the extent to which ambivalent sexism is accepted and maintained (Barreto & Ellemers, 2005; Jost & Kay, 2005; Moya, Glick, Expósito, De Lemus, & Hart, 2007) and how it justifies other beliefs that oppress or hurt women, especially in the areas of system-justification (Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Major, Kaiser, & Mccoy, 2003; Sibley, Overall, & Duckitt, 2007), adherence to beauty ideals (Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, & Wise, 2007; Franzoi, 2001; Rudman & Fairchild, 2007), and rape myth

acceptance (Abrams, Viki, Masser, & Bohner, 2003; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2007; Yamawaki, 2007) while little research has focused on the effect of ambivalent sexism on human relationships. The clinical implications of ambivalent sexism, which result from system justification, adherence to beauty ideals, and rape myth acceptance, are vast and systemic in nature. For example, women suffer from depression attributed to dissatisfaction with household labor division. A thorough database search for benevolent sexism on PsychINFO and ISI Web of Knowledge suggested that direct reference to the clinical relevance of benevolent sexism represents a significant gap in the research—a gap addressed by this research.

Much of the research on egalitarian relationships between men and women indicates less satisfaction for women than for men (Henry, Berg, Smith, & Florsheim, 2007; Mickelson, Claffey, & Williams, 2006; Ono, 2006). Those women who endorse egalitarian ideologies of gender roles in relationships tend not to endorse indicators of benevolent sexism (Moya et al., 2007). A review of literature on marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples (Coltrane, 2000, 2010; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010) did not indicate whether married women who endorse egalitarian ideologies tend to reject indicators of benevolent sexism at the same rate as those who women who are unmarried. Though the number of dual-earner marriages is on the rise, women tend to take on a larger burden of household and child-rearing responsibilities than their male partners, even when giving equal time to their career as their partner (Bernard, 1981; Ono, 2006; Robinson & Hunter, 2008).

Research on division of labor has indicated conflicting results in regards to the effects of unequal division of labor on marital satisfaction (Helms, Proulx, Klute,

McHale, & Crouter, 2006; Glass & Fujimoto, 1994; Tichenor, 2005). Perceived fairness of household labor division, rather than equal exchange of labor, seems to positively affect marital satisfaction (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999). Perception of fairness is not synonymous with equal sharing of domestic labor; therefore, indicating that unequal division of labor does not necessarily predict marital dissatisfaction. Decision-making power is also relevant to marital satisfaction and implicitly tied to division of labor. Women who bring more economic resources to their marriages tend to make fewer decisions within the marriage (Tichenor, 1999). Married women who work full-time in the workforce may exert power in the process aspect of decision-making, but relinquish final say in order to "appear" to have less power (Lips, 1991).

Though research indicates that women with more egalitarian gender belief systems tend to be less satisfied in their marriages and men tend to be more satisfied (Henry et al., 2007; Mickelson et al., 2006; Ono, 2006), still unknown is the degree to which the endorsement of benevolent sexism correlates to marital satisfaction or whether or not married women and men who support egalitarian gender belief systems endorse benevolent sexism. It is also unknown if benevolent sexism influences perceptions of fairness in division of household labor, and therefore causes perceived fairness to have a mediating effect on marital satisfaction.

Women may not be aware that hostile and benevolent behaviors from men are potentially co-existing forms of sexism, nor are men, in many cases, conscious that their cultural role of protector and provider might result in entitlement to dominance (Kilianski & Rudman, 1998). As such, both men and women often are unaware of

their attitudinal and behavioral contributions to marital distress. Studies indicate

marital problems link to psychological distress (Bird, 1999; Greenstein, 1996) and

relationship problems are the primary reason people seek therapy (Vaughn & Baier,

1999). If benevolent sexism contributes to marital dissatisfaction, it should be

addressed in intervention for those seeking therapy for relational difficulties.

This research examines whether husbands' and wives' endorsement of

benevolent sexism is correlated with their level of marital satisfaction. It will explore

how the hidden power dynamics of sexism, specifically endorsement of benevolent

sexism, is related to marital satisfaction. This research also will examine possible

mediating effects of perceived fairness of household labor division and decision-

making outcomes. The study will investigate how sexism, as a socio-cultural

variable, relates to satisfaction within those relationships. It will contribute to the

body of literature that informs practitioners of therapy for those experiencing

problems with intimate relationships.

For this research, a cross-section of married men and married women who

have been married and have lived with their spouses for at least five years will be

administered the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory and the Norton Quality of Marriage

Index. Participants will be surveyed to determine who has final say in decisions and

if they believe the division of household labor and child-rearing responsibilities is

fair. The data will be used to determine if there is a discrepancy between perceived

endorsement of egalitarian ideology and the degree to which this ideology is practiced

within the marriage through these theoretical constructs (decision-making and

perceived fairness). Due to the covert nature of benevolent sexism, it is possible that

some men and women might believe in egalitarianism, yet unknowingly endorse

aspects of benevolent sexism.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Historical Context of Sexism in the United States

Sexism is a term coined in the mid-20th century that refers to the belief or attitude that one sex is inherently superior to, or more competent than, the other (Zinn, 2003). This includes gender discrimination based on a set of culturally defined characteristics distinguishing male from female. Sexologist John Money in 1955 first introduced the distinction between biological sex and gender as a role fitting into social norms. Money's meaning of the word became widespread in the 1970's when the feminist movement embraced the distinction between biological sex and gender as a social construct (Zinn, 2003). The effects of sexism, sometimes subtle and sometimes overt, are still evident in women's legal status, the job market, education, health care, and relationships (Zinn, 2003).

The job market is one area in which sexism has been prevalent on an overt institutional level. Historically, in the United States, women have been paid less than men for the same work (Christopher & Wojda, 2008; Zinn, 2003). This disparity eventually led to the passing of the U.S. Equal Pay Act in 1963. At that time, women earned approximately 58 cents to the dollar earned by men. Today, women in America continue to make strides toward gender equality. This progress is particularly evident in education. Between 2007 and 2008, women earned approximately 60% of associate degrees, approximately 57% of bachelor's degrees, 61% of master's degrees, and 50% of first professional and doctoral degrees (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Women also continue to reshape the workforce. In 2000, women owned an estimated 9

million businesses, and by 2009, women accounted for 46% of the U.S. workforce and roughly 50% of the corporate, managerial, and professional specialty positions (Rhode Island Affirmative Action Professionals [RIAAP], n.d., U.S. Department of Labor [USDOL], 2009).   Even so, the gender divide is still increasingly visible in high-level management and government positions, as well as in wage earnings. In 2002, women accounted for only 15% of Fortune 500 companies, and only 2.7% of top earners (RIAAP, n.d.). Similarly, women held only 15% of congressional positions in the United States in 2008 (USDOL). Today, even though women outpace men in earning college degrees, women in the United States are estimated to earn roughly 75 percent of their male counterparts' earnings (Christopher & Wojda, 2008). Additionally, when women go home from their jobs, they are more likely than men to carry the burden of child rearing and house work (Zinn, 2003). In the 48 years since the passing of the U.S. Equal Pay Act, equal pay in the work place remains elusive, as does equal division of labor in the home (RIAAP, n.d.; USDOL, 2009). On June 5, 2012, the GOP blocked the Fair Pay Bill, advocating equal pay for women. This status quo persists in spite of legislation, media attention, and advocacy for gender equality.

Michel Foucault (1990) states, "Power is not an institution and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical (sic) situation in a particular society" (p. 93). Counteracting or simply understanding the effects of sexism requires more than fighting for equal institutional power as men. It is evident from the lack of progress that has resulted from this fight that it is much more complex than that. It is about how both men and

women choose to embody social practice. Understanding the degree to which men and women internalize sexism requires an exploration into historical and social context, as well as a look into both men's and women's roles in upholding the institution of sexism.

Marital Power, Decision-making, and Division of Labor

Bertrand Russell (1938) references the complexity of power in his statement: "The fundamental concept in social science is Power in the same sense in which Energy is the fundamental concept in physics. Like Energy, Power has many forms" (p. 4).

For decades, social psychologists have debated the definition of power as it relates to marriage (Komter, 1989; Lips, 1991). Many theorists who study power dynamics in relationships argue that different aspects of power such as dominance, influence, and authority are completely different constructs altogether (Cromwell & Olsen, 1975; Lips, 1991). This likely explains why different measures of marital power do not correlate well with one another. Cromwell and Olsen (1975) defined power as three domains: power bases, power processes, and power outcomes.

Power bases involve resources such as economic, knowledge, education, socio-economic status, and communication skill (Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993). The person with greater resources theoretically holds greater power in the relationship. Power processes involve strategies that partners use to gain control (Cromwell & Olsen, 1975). These might involve interactional styles, direct versus indirect communication, coercion, violence, and emotional withdrawal (Lips, 1991). The third domain, power outcomes, relates to who makes the final decision or

"gets their way" (Cromwell & Olsen, 1975). Power outcomes include control over money, division of household labor, and decision-making (Cromwell & Olsen, 1975; Tichenor, 1999). "Final say" measures, first developed by Blood and Wolfe in 1960, have been the most broadly used measure of marital power (Frieze & McHugh, 1992; Lips, 1991). It is essential to keep in mind that whoever has "final say" as a power outcome can be misleading if the say was granted by the more powerful spouse (Frieze & McHugh, 1992; Lips, 1991). Non-decisions and the act of preventing issues from being raised are also representative of power. Because of this possibility, exploring the influence of more implicit conceptualizations of power like Ambivalent Sexism Theory could shed some light onto why studies relying on "final say" measures produced inconsistent findings relative to marital satisfaction (Lips, 1991). For instance, final say could be granted based on gendered domains of behavior, such as, hypothetically, a wife getting final say on which stove to buy since she does more of the cooking or a husband deciding which computer to buy because technology is a more traditionally male domain. Ambivalent Sexism Theory might suggest that, if such a couple endorsed benevolent sexism, neither the husband nor the wife would be dissatisfied with the final outcome of those decisions.

Studies on post-modern marriages, in which couples move toward ideals of egalitarianism, have indicated that control over economic resources is not correlated with increased sharing of domestic work, even though such control results in more equally shared decision-making outcomes (Hochschild, 1989; Tichenor, 1999). Over the last several decades, many heterosexual couples have experienced a shift from the traditional model of wife as the homemaker and husband as the breadwinner to both

men and women sharing the responsibilities of both paid work and household labor. Women do less hours of household labor in an average week than previous cohorts and men are doing more than their previous cohorts. Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard (2010) found that women married to egalitarian minded men did less hours of household labor than their traditional counterparts, but not with an increase in the number of hours of household labor performed by their husbands. When wives spend less time on household labor in dual-earner households, it is not generally due to husbands taking on a larger share, but due to outsourcing (Hothschild, 1989). Nonetheless, women still perform a greater proportion of household labor than men, up to twice as much, even when working full time outside the home (Coltrane, 2000, 2010; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). This finding was found to be true in all industrialized nations (Braun, Lewin-Epstein, Stier, & Baumgartner, 2008). In addition to doing most of the household labor, women are also in charge of managing, planning, and organizing these tasks. Even when husbands are contributing more time to domestic tasks, wives are responsible for making sure the job gets done (Ferree, 1991; Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). Bird (1999) also found that married women performed more hours per week of household labor than single women did, while the amount married men did was less than that of unmarried men. This finding suggests that behaviors around domestic labor change in marriage. In fact, Wilkie, Ferree, & Radcliffe (1998) found that husbands' gender role beliefs carry greater weight than wives' in determining the division of household labor. Further, Sibley et al. (2009) studied the effect that men's level of endorsement of benevolent sexism had on women's level of endorsement over a four-month period.

They found that women's level of benevolent sexism changed in proportion to match that of their male partners.

Not only does the overall allocation of chores indicate a clear gender bias among dual-earner couples, but the division of specific tasks also illustrates the issue of segregation of labor among household chores. Wives, for example, spend almost 75% of their total time performing household labor in only four tasks: cooking, dishes, laundry, and cleaning (Blair, 1998; Gupta, 2007). Most often, household labor is classified into stereotypically female and stereotypically male tasks. Stereotypically female tasks are routine, on-going, non-discretionary, and very time consuming. Stereotypically male tasks are intermittent, done occasionally, are more flexible, are less time consuming, and are often outsourced. These tasks include household repairs, car maintenance, and yard work (Lachance-Grzela & Bouchard, 2010). In addition, Gupta (2007), in a study sampling 914 married women employed full time, found that with respect to household labor and childcare, women spend as much of their income toward domestic expenses as they would if they were single, having less money leftover for personal spending. He suggested that despite the sharing of resources that characterizes marriage, women carry the burden financially for household work and childcare as well.

Strazdins and Broom (2004) examined the relationship between the overload of emotion work that women put forth in marriage and their emotional distress in relation to the perceived overload. Emotion work includes such actions intended to improve the psychological wellbeing of others as caring for family members, showing empathy, warmth and appreciation, listening, and providing advice. What these

researchers assert is that spouses view domestic work as an extension of emotion work because of the notion that it is performed to show care (Strazdins & Broom, 2004). These researchers found that, in a sample of 102 couples, both men and women equally regarded the burden of emotion work as skewed, though men continued to allow their spouses to carry the burden. They also found that the overload of emotion work negatively affected women's sense of feeling loved, increased marital conflict, and increased women's risk of depression. They did not find this same effect for men.

Women who hold more power than their husbands in terms of economic resources often relinquish their decision-making power in order to ensure their marriage feels more consistent with societal norms (Tichenor, 1999). Though women may exert significant influence in their family, cultural expectation compels them to at least appear to have less power (Lips, 1991). Komter (1989) explored how gender ideology shapes hidden power in marriage. Komter's in-depth qualitative study focused not on power outcomes such as who makes the decisions or who does the housework, but, rather, on the function of power processes and mechanisms that can explain why change toward gender equity is slow. Though Komter's research is more than twenty years old, it is relevant in understanding hidden power inherent in norms about gender identity as formal and institutionalized male power decreases in Western societies. Komter's findings provided the basis for much of the subsequent research on hidden power processes in marriage (Tichenor, 1999; Zipp, Prohaska, & Bemiller, 2004). She found that women desired change in the areas of domestic labor, child-care, finances, and leisure activities, while men did not desire the same

change. Though women desired change, they were unlikely to directly ask for more equity in these areas. She also found that when women did not indicate a desire for change, it was because of resignation ("It's all up to me in the end") where if men did not indicate a desire for change, it was due to satisfaction with the status quo. Komter (1989) found that women felt high degrees of guilt around "bothering" their husbands with their "small problems" (e.g., desiring help around the house). Finally, she found that, even with men and women who endorsed egalitarian beliefs, women reported lower self esteem than did their husbands, and that wives held higher esteem for their husbands than husbands held for their wives.

Power "is not just about trying to get a spouse to agree with your opinion in a dispute, but rather, it also has a more subtle face that may unconsciously shape one's preferences" (Zipp et al., 2004). Steven Lukes (as cited in Komter, 1989) states,

> Is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as divinely ordained and beneficial? (p. 942)

Zipp et al. (2004) found that women changed their responses to questions in interviews when they knew how their husbands had answered the same questions. They found that wives tended to agree with their husbands' known answers more than husbands did when they knew their wives' answers. These researchers found that wives continued to maintain agreement with their husbands whether the husband was present in the room or not, indicating the presence of a more implicit power than simply the possibility of direct husband dominance.

Perceived Fairness Paradox

Despite the gender imbalance in the division of household labor, wives rarely view the imbalance as unfair (Braun et al., 2008; Coltrane, 1989; Ferree, 1991; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). Married women tend not to perceive their portion of household labor as unfair until they contribute at least 66% of the total labor, where married men begin to perceive their own contribution to household labor as unfair when they perform at least 36% (Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). This research indicates an apparent disconnect between equity and equality in wives' perceptions of the fairness of distribution of labor and that both men and women believe that wives performing the bulk of domestic work is fair. Working wives who endorse more traditional values are more likely to see an imbalance in the distribution of household labor as appropriate and fair than those who endorse more egalitarian ideologies; however, women with more egalitarian ideologies also often view uneven labor division as fair (Greenstein, 1996; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994). In short, "egalitarian" does not necessarily imply "equitable".

Research on perceived fairness suggests that husbands and wives are not merely trying to reduce their workload or increase that of their spouse, but, rather, are considering their own workloads to carry symbolic meaning of "being a wife" or "being a husband" (Greenstein, 1996; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001). Women may perform more household labor because it allows them to behave consistently with their female gender identity, and men may resist doing more stereotypically female household tasks to protect and reinforce their identities as men. Brines (as cited in Stevens et al., 2001) found that

husbands who made more money than their wives viewed their roles as "breadwinner" as compensating for doing household labor, while men who made less money than their wives did less household labor to protect their sense of masculinity within the marriage. Brines (as cited in Stevens et al., 2001) suggested that husbands' lack of contribution in household tasks, even when they had more time availability and made less money than their wives, represented "doing gender." They validated their masculinity by refusing to perform household labor. Greenstein (1996), when replicating Brines' work, found that both spouses neutralized "non-normative" gendered behavior by overcompensating in their traditional household roles. This conception of "doing gender" is consistent with Tichenor's (1999) claim that women may give up their power in order to have their marriages conform to societal expectations. Steil and Weltman's (1991) interviews of 60 dual-earner couples also revealed that wives who earned more money than their husbands were concerned about arousing competitive feelings in their husbands. This finding was not found for men who earned more than their wives.

Several studies have explored possible reasons why women might perceive performing twice as much domestic labor as their husbands as being fair. Lavee and Katz (2002) examined the relationship between division of household labor, perceived fairness, and marital satisfaction in a sample of over 1,000 Israeli men and women. These researchers found that perceived fairness had a positive mediating effect on marital satisfaction for women but not for men, supporting Coltrane's findings (Coltrane, 2000). Lavee and Katz (2002) also hypothesized that egalitarian beliefs moderated the effect of perceived fairness on marital satisfaction. They found

that men perceived the division of labor to be fair regardless of the imbalance in the division, while transitional (endorsing both traditional and egalitarian beliefs) and egalitarian women found the division to be unfair. These researchers measured egalitarianism by the degree to which respondents believed household labor should be shared if a woman works outside the home. This single item assumes the man is working full time outside the home and does not take into account other aspects of gender-role ideology. Though these results offer some insight into those who might be in cultural transition, they may not be representative of the American population. Lennon and Rosenfield (1994) found that women's perception of fairness of the division of household labor in their home was affected by the context of their lives. Those women who had fewer alternatives to marriage and less economic resources were more likely to view performing a large share of the housework as fair, while women with more alternatives viewed the same division as unjust. Additionally, women whose relative contribution to family income is relatively high were also more likely to view division of household labor as unfair. These findings are consistent with Braun et al. (2008) who found in data representing 25 countries that time availability and resource dependence significantly affected perceptions of fairness. Based on research in occupational health, Lee and Waite (2010) attempted to explain the differences in perceived fairness on an effort/reward imbalance (ERI). Research in occupational health based on ERI posits that an employee's subjective comparison between the effort expended and rewards received is crucial to job satisfaction, and when the perception that rewards are not adequate for effort expended tends to lead to a reduction in effort and motivation, and to feelings of

helplessness, unfairness, and injustice (Lee & Waite, 2010). As the ERI model

suggests with employees, wives evaluate the efforts they put forth against the rewards

they receive, which include affection and gratitude (Ferree, 1991; Hochschild, 1989).

Therefore, if a wife feels that she does not receive credit for all she does at home, she

is more likely to feel taken advantage of and, as a result, to feel the exchange is

unfair. Lee and Waite's (2010) findings are consistent with the argument that spouses

who spend time together create commitment and solidarity through the little

exchanges of daily life, tending to strengthen the bond between the partners. As a

result, each tends to be more concerned about the marital relationship and the family

as a whole than do partners who spend time together only rarely. These researchers

argue that this solidarity and focus on the group increases the chance that wives

perform a larger share of household tasks, and that they evaluate as fair an objectively

unequal contribution from their spouse. Similar to this research utilizing the ERI

model, Kawamura and Brown (2010) introduced the concept of "mattering" as a

predictor of wives' perceived fairness of the division of household labor. In a marital

relationship, mattering refers to an individual's perception of the level of concern

one's spouse has for the individual, that is, how much a wife perceives she matters to

her husband. Kawamura and Brown found that the degree to which a wife felt like

she mattered to her husband correlated to her perception of fairness in uneven

division of domestic labor.

Relational Satisfaction in Egalitarian Relationships

Bernard (1981) explores the general structure of the role of provider and its

implications for gender identity beliefs and expectations. Though this article was

written in 1981 and does not explore modern sociological implications of the price of the "good-provider" role, the literary historical account provides a contextual underpinning for much of the research being done on what it means to be a husband or a wife. According to Bernard's historical account, the husband/father as the "provider" role was entrenched in traditional American society for only about 150 years, beginning in the 1830s. Previous to this time, husbands and wives worked side by side, both providing material goods for their families. As "providing" became increasingly dependent upon working outside the home, new powers for the "provider" emerged, and the powers shared by the housewife declined. There grew a gendered division of labor. Gender became associated with the work site as well as with the work itself. Emotional expressivity and nurturance were not a part of being a good provider (Bernard, 1981; Zinn, 2003). As affluence spread, the role of the "provider" became more and more competitive, as did the drive for women to become married to a "good provider." Men were judged as "men" by the level of living they provided their families and not doing so meant that he did not measure up as a man, putting him in a position to define his gender by his ability to provide. Likewise, women's gender identity became shaped by how supportive they were and how well they took care of the home. As women began moving into the workforce, they had to be careful not to co-opt the only position that defined a man's gender identity within a marriage. Bernard's historical account provides insight into why the demise of the "good provider" role might lead husbands and wives in egalitarian relationships to compensate for this loss.

Most research on marital satisfaction indicates that traditional couples in which the husband is the "provider" and the wife is the "homemaker" are more satisfied with their relationships than more egalitarian couples in which both spouses provide financially, with the dissatisfaction in egalitarian couples affecting women significantly more than men (Blair, 1998; Coltrane, 2000; Glass & Fujimoto, 1994; Lavee & Katz, 2002). In fact, research indicates that women in egalitarian marriages are much more likely to want a divorce than women in traditional marriages due to perceived unfairness in division of domestic labor (Blair, 1998; Frisco & Williams, 2003). Studies consistently show that there is more relationship distress in dual-earner couples when the division of labor is perceived as unfair or when wives earn more money than their husbands (Hochschild, 1989; Tichenor, 1999; Tichenor, 2005; Wilkie et al., 1998). Mickelson et al. (2006) found, also, that women with egalitarian attitudes felt less emotionally supported by their husbands. Other research suggests that dissatisfaction in egalitarian couples might be the result of a disruption in identity (Pasley, Kerpelman, & Guilbert, 2001).

Several researchers have found that both men and women in egalitarian marriages attempt to protect the husband's status when the wife earns more (Brines & Joyner, 1999; Coltrane, 1989; Greenstein, 1996; Hochschild, 1989; Tichenor, 1999; Tichenor, 2005). Brines & Joyner (1999) argued that, when spouses do not conform to the expected work pattern of husband as "breadwinner" and wife as "homemaker," they ''are likely to compensate by adopting gender traditional behaviors elsewhere in the marriage'' (p. 351). She found, for example, that in marriages where the wife was the primary breadwinner and the husband was economically dependent on the wife,

husbands tended to engage in compensatory gender display by suppressing the amount of housework they contributed. The act of "doing gender" may explain the difference in perceptions of fairness. While "doing gender," wives are to act as the primary housekeeper and the primary emotional and physical caregiver for family members while being less committed to labor market work than their husbands. Moreover, not "doing gender" results in sanctions. When spouses who do not engage in activities consistent with expectations about appropriate behavior of husbands and wives, they may face negative evaluations of their roles in the marriage, either from their spouse or from other members of society (Brines & Joyner, 1999). As a result, when facing situations in which their performance as a wife or a husband could be evaluated negatively, spouses display gender to manage the situation. Coltrane (1989) interviewed 20 fathers who carried the significant part of the childcare load and found that society (families of origin and peers) often questions men's involvement with the house and childcare work. Other men told the interviewees that they were "making them look bad" and that they were "being controlled by their wives." Coltrane also found that women might be reluctant to lose their nurturer identity through giving up primary responsibility of the home and children.

Research on young adults' expectations about their future marriages indicated that both young men and young women believe that egalitarian relationships are ideal, but that their expectations for future division of household labor and childcare responsibilities are more gender imbalanced than egalitarian (Schroeder, Blood, & Maluso, 1993; Askari, Liss, Erchull, Staebell, & Axelson, 2010; Orrange, 2002). Askari et al. (2010) asked 358 unmarried, heterosexual participants with no children

the percentage of chores they ideally wished to complete and the percentage they actually expected to complete. What they found was that men desired and expected an egalitarian division of labor, while women projected that they would actually engage in a disproportionate amount of the household labor and child-care. Women, but not men, expected to do significantly more chores than they ideally wanted. In a qualitative study of MBA and law students (Orrange, 2002), there was evidence of a similar discrepancy. For example, young men in the sample desired a wife who would be career oriented yet simultaneously willing to sacrifice her career for her children (Orrange, 2002). These young men realized that it would be difficult to find such a wife, understanding that professional women would most likely prefer an egalitarian relationship to a traditional one. This pattern could be interpreted as indicating that some young men understand that an egalitarian relationship is desirable and possibly more socially acceptable than a traditional relationship. However, these men may also realize that having a less egalitarian relationship may better fit their desire for their own career advancement. The young women in the sample reported desiring egalitarian relationships but expressed doubt that they would find partners dedicated to such a relationship (Orrange, 2002).

Women with traditional attitudes may expect fewer rewards than women with egalitarian attitudes for the same amount of labor because they feel that they are doing what they are supposed to do in that household labor reflects and perpetuates cultural understandings of family, love, and personal fulfillment. Women with egalitarian beliefs give up their power, even plan to give up their power before entering into marriage, in order to perpetuate those same cultural understandings,

though with the expectation of some sort of reward. These beliefs may be the result

of gender socialization and the idea that caretaking is an essential role for women.

Robinson and Hunter (2008) reviewed depictions of family work in popular

advertising and found that most advertising depicting families with children show

mothers and fathers in traditional gendered roles. Such advertising sets a standard for

what is considered "normal" for men and women in their married roles.

Ambivalent Sexism Theory

Simply stated, sexism is the assignment of roles and privileges as a function of

gender (Forbes et al., 2007). Peter Glick and Susan Fiske (1996) hypothesized that

sexism is a much more complicated construct than the mere assignment of lesser roles

and privileges to women than men based on a simple possession of power. Glick and

Fiske pioneered an effort to explore the social embodiment of sexism in the creation

of ambivalent sexism theory (1996). Those adopting ambivalent sexism

simultaneously hold both negative and positive feelings toward women dependent on

their adherence to traditional roles. Though men dominate in many facets of society

cross-culturally, they also rely on women to give birth to and nurture their children,

for domestic labor, and to fulfill sexual needs (Glick & Fiske, 1996). As such, this

dyadic dependency creates a unique system in which the powerful, dominant group

must depend on members of the subordinate group. This dependency is different from

most relationships between those with in-group and out-group status. What came out

of this research was Ambivalent Sexism Theory, which posits that gender traditional

ideology is manifested in both hostile sexism and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske,

1996; Moya et al., 2007). Ambivalent sexism theory examines the interaction

between benevolent and hostile sexism, and how both men and women embody this discourse as an incarnation of cultural norms.

While hostile sexism demonstrates direct and overt hostility toward women, benevolent sexism projects subjectively complimentary stereotypes of women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism assumes that women are inferior to men by "recognizing and reinforcing patriarchal ideals by portraying women as needing men to protect and provide for them" (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Yet, it is subjectively complimentary because it distinguishes women as wonderful, pure creatures whose love is required for men to feel whole and complete (Glick & Fiske, 1996). In spite of its complimentary façade, like hostile sexism, benevolent sexism encompasses attitudes related to power, gender differentiation, and heterosexuality. These benevolent attitudes have become embraced as positive since they seem outwardly protective against overtly hostile and prejudiced attitudes toward women or that which is deemed feminine.

Within benevolent sexism are three sub-factors, which are viable second order constructs: protective paternalism, complimentary gender differentiation, and celebration of heterosexual intimacy (Chapleau et al., 2007; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Moya et al., 2007). Protective paternalism is the position that men have societal power that is not available to women, thus men should provide for women (Chapleau et al., 2007). Chapleau et al. (2007) suggest that "complimentary gender differentiation" incorporates an idealization of women and is the belief that women have ladylike personality traits, such as purity and virtue, which are not common in men. And, lastly, heterosexual intimacy is the view that women are necessary as

romantic partners for men (i.e., every man should have a women whom he adores) (Chapleau et al., 2007; Glick & Fiske, 1996; Moya et al., 2007).

Glick and Fiske (1996) also hypothesized that hostile and benevolent attitudes toward women are complementary components of sexism common among past and present societies. They do not exist separate from each other, but, rather, work in unison as a larger discourse to maintain men's societal power. Several studies (Abrams et al., 2003; Feather, 2004; Sibley et al., 2007; Yamawaki, 2007) have found this complementary nature to be true. These researchers found that hostile sexism and benevolent sexism are significantly and positively correlated and work together to maintain, justify, and reflect societal gender inequality. From this research, it seems clear that benevolent sexism maintains gender inequality by predicting favorable feelings toward women in traditional gender roles, whereas hostile sexism predicts negative feelings toward women in non-traditional roles. If women want the favor of men and to avoid their hostility, they will behave in traditional gender appropriate ways. In a modern context in which social movement and increasing gender equality threaten traditional male dominance, hostile sexism is directed most strongly at women who challenge men's power and status (feminists and career women) as well as toward women who use their sexual allure to gain power over men (temptresses). On the other hand, men idealize and protect those women who do not threaten their power and status (mothers, lovers, and homemakers) (Sibley et al., 2007). This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the Madonna/whore syndrome (Sibley et al., 2007). These same studies have also indicated that the more a society endorses benevolent sexism, women included, the higher the level of hostile sexism

and the more likely women will "put up" with acts of hostile sexism. Yamawaki (2007) found that the vast majority of people in American society consider a benevolent attitude toward women as socially desirable behavior, women and men alike.

Although the intent to protect women seems on the surface to be positive, it is important to keep in mind that the consequences of such positive intent can be harmful and detrimental to women and that benevolent sexism is still, in fact, a form of sexism. Benevolent sexism is a much more insidious form of gender oppression than hostile sexism because it serves the purpose of justifying and perpetuating a system that includes the more direct and overt hostile sexism (Glick et al., 2000). Especially in highly sexist societies, men provide both the threat (hostile sexism) and the solution to the threat (benevolent sexism and the protection and affection it offers). Women in these societies are presented with an impossible choice—they can reject benevolent sexism and face the consequences of hostile sexism, or accept benevolent sexism and avoid hostile sexism (Glick et al., 2000). Ambivalent sexism, the interplay between benevolent and hostile sexism, sets women up to believe in and uphold such a system. The result is the maintenance and justification of the system itself and consequences, which result from such a system, including the acceptance of beauty ideals and rape myth acceptance.

Research suggests that the "velvet glove" approach (Jackman as cited in Franzoi, 2001) of benevolent sexism is much more insidious and effective than the overt expressions of hostility traditionally seen as sexism. "Velvet glove" refers to a soft and gentle presentation of sexism. This approach is more effective because

women are less likely to recognize and challenge it, and thus, may willingly participate in its continuation. Jost's system-justification theory (Jost & Kay, 2005) proposes that subordinate groups, in this case women, often believe reinforcing myths that justify the status quo, but also that acceptance of these ideologies is arbitrated because overtly hostile attitudes about one's group contradicts individual and group interests. Contrary to how hostile sexist attitudes affect women and myths about women, prejudice beliefs that are seemingly benevolent may be seductive to subordinate group members because they do not appear to contradict self and group interests as hostile beliefs do. Such benevolent beliefs include, but are not limited to, women as more gentle than men or women needing to be protected from danger. In line with system-justification theory, women want to have positive beliefs about themselves, but they also want to see social and political systems that affect them in a positive light, so they therefore endorse benevolent sexist beliefs and behaviors (Sibley et al., 2007). In fact, women, but not men, who were exposed to benevolent sexism items on the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory subsequently rated society as fairer (Jost & Kay, 2005). Jackman (as cited in Glick et al., 2000) points out how effective paternalistic prejudice is, such as that in benevolent sexism, in gaining compliance from the subordinate group. Whereas hostile sexism punishes women who do not conform to acceptable traditional gender roles, benevolent sexism serves to reward those women who do conform to these roles. Paternalism gains its persuasive power by infusing acts of dominance with affection, making it even more effective when initiated by intimate male partners. Also, women who highly endorse benevolent sexism tend to express increased support for hostile sexism over time

(Sibley et al., 2007). This pattern is consistent with system-justification theory in that some women may begin to actively participate in a belief system that maintains gender inequality rather than hold unfavorable opinions of themselves as a group.

Another way in which women perpetuate and justify this system is through the corresponding ambivalent sexism they have toward men. Glick and Fiske explored this in 1999 (as cited in Chapleau et al., 2007) and found that ambivalent sexism toward men reveals women's conflicted relationship with the more powerful in-group—men. It was found that women resent men for their higher status, yet heterosexual women distinctively depend on men as protectors, providers, and romantic partners. Most often, this resentment comes in the form of "safe jabs" (Glick & Fiske, 2000), which allow women to express their dissatisfaction with patriarchy, yet acknowledge the inevitability of male domination. Benevolent sexism toward men reinforces women's need to seek men's company and justifies men's higher status. Benevolent sexism toward men, just as that toward women, has three sub-factors: maternalism, complementary gender differentiation, and heterosexual intimacy (Chapleau et al., 2007). Maternalism stresses women's superiority over men in the domestic realm while simultaneously justifying women's servitude to men (i.e., men need women to care for them at home because they can't do it on their own). Complementary gender differentiation represents women's appreciation for men's stereotypical abilities, which misleadingly explains why men, and not women, are in power (i.e. men keep it together in a crisis). Finally, heterosexual intimacy is the belief that women are incomplete without the romantic involvement of a man (i.e., every woman ought to have a man she adores). This benevolent attitude toward men

is sometimes referred to as the "glass slipper effect" (Rudman & Fairchild, 2007).

Rudman and Fairchild (2007) examined the potential costs to women of romantic

socialization through exposure to fairy tales. She found that, on average, women in

her study automatically associated male romantic partners with chivalry and heroism,

suggesting a cognitive link between romance and protection. Moreover, women who

believed this link also reported low interest in personal power, including high-paying

occupations, advanced education, and volunteering for leadership roles. As a result,

Rudman and Fairchild suggested that women may suffer from a glass-slipper effect

such that their personal ambitions may be subdued by an implicit belief that power

might best be gained indirectly, through intimate relationships with men. Rudman

and Fairchild's research illustrates one example of how women's participation in

ambivalent sexism and endorsement of benevolent sexism may be an anchor for their

compliance to other system-justifying beliefs, such as the acceptance of beauty ideals

and rape myths.

Feminist theorists have stated for some time that beauty standards and practices

are seen as conduits for women's oppression (Forbes et al., 2007). Beauty ideals

have changed throughout time. In the 1920's flat-chested flappers were idealized, in

the 1940's it was the voluptuous sweater girl, and in the 1970's it was the emaciated

waifish super model. Since the human genome has not changed during the time that

separates the flapper from the emaciated model, it seems safe to assume that beauty

ideals are socially constructed. Franzoi (2001) hypothesized that the types of

behaviors in which women engage to manage their appearances are at least in part a

manifestation of benevolent sexism. She found that women who scored high on the

benevolence portion of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory placed more importance on body esteem and were more likely to enhance their appearance with cosmetics. These women were more likely to engage in grooming practices that provide them with the means by which to more closely match the beauty ideals that men seek. This enhancement of perceived attractiveness may strengthen a woman's influence over men in some areas, but it weakens her in other areas. For instance, previous studies indicated that female job applicants who wear cosmetics tend to be judged as less capable than those who wear less make-up (Forbes et al., 2007). Though they may be seen as more attractive, they are also seen as more weak and helpless.

Rape myth acceptance is one of the more researched areas of the effects of benevolent sexism. Rape myths are stereotypical beliefs about rape that serve a cultural function in which a woman is put at a disadvantage (Abrams et al., 2003). Abrams et al. (2003) stated that rape myths could be defined as "descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (i.e. about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims, and their interaction) that serve to deny, trivialize, or justify sexual violence exerted by men against women" (p. 111). These beliefs blame the victim, pardon the perpetrator, and trivialize the violence. Stereotypical views of gender, both benevolent and hostile, inform these myths. In the case of heterosexual relations, society expects men to be dominant, powerful, and sexually aggressive. Conversely, women are expected to be passive, submissive, and sexually unenthusiastic (Yamawaki, 2007). Women are stereotyped as the guardians of sexuality, as benevolent sexism speculates that women are more virtuous and pure than men. These perceptions place most of the responsibility for sexual morality on

women (Abrams et al., 2003). These traditional gender role attitudes, which are inherent parts of ambivalent sexism, are one of the significant predictors of rape myth acceptance and are strongly liable for rape proclivity and negative attitudes toward rape victims (Yamawaki, 2007). For example, people who highly endorse the belief that women are pure and special believe women should, therefore, be protected. However, this belief implies that women must behave in ways that allow them to be protectable.

This principle is evident especially in situations involving acquaintance rape, or date rape. Individuals who score high on benevolent sexism tend to assign more blame to the victim of an acquaintance rape than to a stranger rape victim (Abrams et al., 2003). This suggests that perceptions surrounding the appropriateness of the victim's behavior may have some influence on the participants' reactions to the victims of acquaintance rape. The belief that women who are "ladylike" deserve protection may transform into the perception that women who violate that stereotype are responsible on some level for making themselves vulnerable to a sexual attack (Chapleau et al., 2007). For instance, if she was drinking alcohol, dressed provocatively, or trusted a strange man, she may have brought it on herself. Cassidy and Hurrell (as cited in Abrams et al., 2003) had participants read a vignette depicting a date rape. The vignette was accompanied by either a photograph of a victim dressed provocatively or by a picture of a victim dressed conservatively. Those who viewed the photograph of a provocatively dressed victim were significantly more likely to see the victim as being responsible for her attacker's behavior than were participants who viewed the photograph of the conservatively dressed victim. In line

with the complementary gender differentiation construct under benevolent sexism, participants felt that the victim behaved inappropriately for a "lady" by being provocatively dressed and no longer deserved protection status. The only sub-construct of benevolent sexism that is negatively correlated with rape myth acceptance is protective paternalism. Protective paternalism includes the belief that men have the responsibility to use their higher status and power to protect women and is associated with less willingness to excuse men's sexually aggressive behavior as being elicited by the victim in some way (Chapleau et al., 2007; Yamawaki, 2007). Protective paternalism recognizes that men have physical and cultural advantages over women and those advantages should not be exploited. As such, individuals who score very high in protective paternalism may be more likely to blame the male attacker because they perceive him to be stronger and more powerful than the female victim (Chapleau et al., 2007).

Defining Marital Satisfaction for This Study

A wide variety of terms are used to describe the overall quality of a romantic relationship. Terms such as marital satisfaction, quality, adjustment, and happiness are often used synonymously (Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). Generally, marriages are studied in terms of satisfaction or adjustment (Graham, Diebels, & Barnow, 2011). Research on marital satisfaction typically includes assessing one or more of four different constructs: attitude toward the marriage, spousal agreement about the functioning of the marriage, satisfaction with affection and sex, and shared activities and time spent with spouses (Heyman et al., 1994). Norton (1983) defines adjustment as both marital interactional process and outcome

of that process. He describes process as including such areas as how the couple communicates, how they solve problems, and how much agreement exists between spouses in a variety of areas, whereas outcome is simply the subjective appraisal of degree of happiness felt in the marriage. Marital adjustment is, therefore, multifactorial. For example, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), which is the most widely used measure of relationship satisfaction (Graham et al., 2011), assesses for level of agreement in such areas as philosophy of life, religious matters, sexual relations, and matters of recreation. Because disagreement is not synonymous with satisfaction, focusing on the simple evaluation of degree of satisfaction allows the researcher to separate subjective evaluation from the predictors and consequences of subjective evaluation involved in adjustment (Heyman et al., 1994; Norton, 1983). For example, a couple might not agree on the ideal number of times to have sex in an average week or what they prefer to do for recreation, but these areas of disagreement may not necessarily equate to unhappiness in the marriage. For the purposes of this study, global satisfaction rather than adjustment will be the construct measured.

Chapter III: Methodology

Introduction to Methodology

This study utilized a mixed methods approach. In mixed methods approaches, one method is used in conjunction with another in order to provide insight into analysis of the data (Creswell, 2003). This study employed a sequential procedure (Creswell, 2003) that began with a quantitative method in which hypotheses were tested and followed with a qualitative method in order to explore deeper meaning with a random selection of twenty of the participants. Creswell noted that mixed methods approaches have the potential to neutralize bias inherent in any single method. Each single method possesses its own strengths and weaknesses.

Major characteristics of traditional quantitative research include a focus on deduction, confirmation, hypothesis testing, explanation, prediction, standardized data collection, and statistical analysis (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Major characteristics of traditional qualitative research include induction, discovery, exploration, hypothesis generation, and qualitative analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative purists maintain that social science inquiry should be objective, meaning time- and context-free (Nagel as cited in Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In purist quantitative research, the researcher strives to remain emotionally detached and eliminate all bias. Qualitative purists, on the other hand, argue that time- and context-free generalizations are not only undesirable, but are impossible. They posit that research is value-bound (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Both purist camps believe that quantitative and qualitative methods cannot and should not be mixed (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed

methods, as a third research paradigm, moves past the either/or argument of quantitative *versus* qualitative to a dialectic that draws from the strengths of both.

The goal of this study, given the nature of sexism as a social construct that includes experience, culture, attitudes and intentions, was to not take for granted the researcher's underlying assumptions or the assumptions or interpretations of participants that may get lost in quantitative measures. Items within the quantitative measures themselves are not free of value or meaning, nor are the constructs being measured (Creswell, 2003). Interpretive processes are helpful in drawing out the complex meanings and thoughts around what satisfaction and egalitarianism mean in regards to marriage.   Holistic phenomena such as experience, culture, attitudes, and intentions would not be taken into consideration in a purely quantitative method. This study sought to not just determine if a correlation exists, but also to explore some supplemental meaning of those relationships, should any be found.

Because the priority of this study is reductive in that the correlation between specific attitudes will be assessed, the quantitative aspect of this study was dominant and was collected first. Beginning with the quantitative portion of the study reduced the possibility of the exploratory and meaning processing nature of the qualitative portion to inform participants' responses on the quantitative measures. For this reason, data was collected sequentially rather than concurrently (Creswell, 2003). The quantitative portion consisted of each participant filling out an inventory assessing his/her level of endorsement of benevolent sexism and an inventory assessing his/her level of marital satisfaction. Participants also responded to items indicating their level of perceived fairness in the division of household and

childrearing responsibilities as well as items indicating who makes the final decision in specific areas of their married lives.   The qualitative results were used to supplement the findings of this primarily quantitative study. Specifically, participants were asked to provide their own interpretation of the meanings of such constructs as marital satisfaction, being a good wife or husband, and their decision-making process.

Criteria for Participant Selection

Potential participants were required to have lived with their spouses for at least five years to minimize the honeymoon effect. Married persons actively involved in marital therapy, domestic violence proceedings, or divorce proceedings were also excluded. Only participants identifying themselves as holding egalitarian beliefs were included. The initial participant pool included 218 married men and women. Eighteen participants who had not lived with their spouses for at least five years were excluded. One was excluded because they were, at the time of the survey, involved in the courts for domestic violence; three were excluded for taking steps to dissolve their marriages; nine were excluded who were participating in couples therapy; four were excluded who did not identify themselves as having egalitarian beliefs. Egalitarian beliefs were operationalized as the belief that a husband and a wife are equal partners. It was possible that both spouses of married couples took part in the project, but it was not required. This decision was made to maximize the size of the participant pool. Thirty-seven participants chose to self-exclude after reading consent or answering the demographic questionnaire. Participants were not excluded on the basis of age, education, race, ethnicity, or any other demographic variable.

Recruitment of Participants

Participants were recruited through personal networking, social media, flyers, DBT listserv, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) groups, and neighborhood blogs. A Facebook page was developed for the research study. An email was sent to personal contacts asking them to "like" the research page. All personal contacts were requested to reach out to their own personal contacts with a link to the research study's Facebook page. Instructions and a link to the study materials on SurveyMonkey were accessible on the Facebook page. All potential participants through personal networking were asked to "like" the research study's Facebook page. Most research participants were recruited via personal networking and social media. Three hundred flyers were passed out, resulting in two participants. The research study was posted through a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy listserv, resulting in five participants. The researcher contacted all Parent Teacher Associations in the Seattle School District requesting either a face-to-face meeting with the PTA board to present the research study or a posting in their monthly newsletters presenting the study. Two Parent Teacher Associations posted in their monthly newsletters and one invited the researcher to present to their board. PTA contacts resulted in six participants. An invitation to participate in this study was posted on both the West Seattle neighborhood blog and the Central District neighborhood blog. The blog postings resulted in three participants.

Potential participants were given a brief statement outlining the purpose of the study as having to do with marital satisfaction without alluding to sexism. This level of deception was necessary to ensure participants did not attempt to read and study

about ambivalent or benevolent sexism before filling out the measures for this study.

Potential participants were screened for limiting criteria before being allowed to

answer the study questionnaires. Qualifying participants read and electronically

signed informed consent (Appendix D) before taking part in any aspect of this study.

The consent form included an electronic signature that read, "I have read and

understand the information explaining the purpose of this research as well as my

rights and responsibilities as a participant. Answering 'yes' to the question below

indicates my consent to participate in this research, according to the terms and

conditions outlined above." All participants whose spouses also took part in this

study were informed that they are not to share their responses with their spouses until

after both had completed all questionnaires and open-ended questions. Participants

were asked to confirm at the end of their participation that they did not share their

responses with their spouse by answering 'yes' or 'no' a simple question: "I did not

share my responses with my spouse while either of us was responding to survey

items, nor was I told how to respond to items by my spouse." Each participant who

successfully completed a study packet was offered the option to be entered into a

drawing to win a $75 gift card to Amazon.com.

Measures

 Demographic Questionnaire (Appendix F). Demographic information was

collected by a researcher-constructed questionnaire.

 Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fisk, 1996)). In order to assess

participants' endorsement of benevolent sexism, participants completed Glick and

Fiske's (1996) Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI). The ASI is a 22-item self-report

measure that assesses both benevolent and hostile sexism in two separate subscales, consisting of 11 items each (hostile items include 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18 and benevolent items include 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, and 22). Every item is scored on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 to 5 as follows: 0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree somewhat, 2 = disagree slightly, 3 = agree slightly, 4 = agree somewhat, and 5 = agree strongly. Items 3, 6, 7, 13, 18, and 21 are reverse scored. Scores on each subscale are averaged in order to achieve a hostile and benevolent sexism score with higher scores representing greater sexism. Sample items from the hostile sexism subscale include: "Women are too easily offended" and "Feminists are seeking for women to have more power than men." Sample items from the benevolent subscale include: "In a disaster, women ought to be rescued before men" and "Women should be cherished and protected by men." The ASI was normed on over 2000 male and female participants, the majority of whom were undergraduate students.

Reliability of the ASI was established through analysis in six separate studies. Reliability of the benevolent sexism subscale in these six studies ranged from .73 to .85 and in the hostile sexism subscale ranged from .80 and .92 as assessed by coefficient alpha. Peter Glick, PhD granted permission to use this measure.

Norton Quality of Marriage Index (Norton, 1983). To assess marital satisfaction, a global satisfaction measure was chosen. The 6-item Quality of Marriage Index (QMI) (Heyman et al., 1994; Norton, 1983) asks participants to rate 5 global statements (i.e., "We have a good marriage") expressing satisfaction with their marriages from 1 (very strong disagreement) to 7 (very strong agreement), as well as a single item inquiring about overall degree of satisfaction with the marriage with 1

representing "very unhappy" to 10 representing "perfectly happy." The sum of these items results in scores ranging from 6 to 45, with higher scores representing increased satisfaction with the marriage. The QMI has established very high internal consistency (a = .97), good convergent and discriminant validity, and reasonable (and comparable to other measures) ability to classify distressed versus non-distressed partners. Studies indicate (Heyman et al., 1994) that the QMI is highly correlated with more commonly used measures of marital satisfaction such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

Marital Decision-Making Scale (Beach & Anderson, 1993). Beach and Tesser (as cited in Beach & Anderson, 1993) developed the Marital Decision-Making Scale (MDMS) to assess four different aspects of marital decision-making: whether the couple agreed with the decision, whether the participant or spouse primarily made the decision, whether the decision is important or not to the participant, and whether or not the decision was important to the spouse. Because the present study is exploring only decision outcome and not perceived importance of decisions, only the "Who Decides" final say portion of this survey will be utilized. Areas assessed include decisions about how much to work, how many children to have, how to spend free time, how to spend money, when to have sex, among others. Each item is scored on a 4-point Likert scale in which participants rate decision-making outcomes where 1 = Entirely my decision, 2 = Mostly my decision, 3 = Mostly my spouse's decision, and 4 = Entirely my spouse's decision. Scores are summed with lower scores indicating that the participant makes more of the final decisions and higher scores indicating the spouse makes more of the decisions. No reliability or validity data was

available for this measure, though it has been used in published research. Permission

was granted by Dr. Steven R. Beach to adapt and use this measure.

Perception of Fairness Survey (Appendix G). Most research on perceived

fairness of the division of domestic responsibilities utilizes data from the National

Survey of Family and Households (NSFH). The NSFH is a large-scale longitudinal

study designed to look at changes in the American family. The present study will

utilize the items from the NSFH measuring perceived fairness of household labor

division. The survey includes five main categories: cooking, cleaning, household

management, yard work, and childcare. There are three short sections to the survey.

In the first section, two global perceived fairness items are scaled from 1-4 with 1 =

very unfair, 2 = somewhat unfair, 3 = somewhat fair, and 4 = very fair. In the second,

each item representing one of the five main categories is scored on a 4-point Likert

scale where 1 = Very unfair to me, 2 = Somewhat unfair to me, 3 = Somewhat fair to

me, and 4 = Very fair to me. And, in the third, each item representing one of the five

main categories is scored on a 4-point Likert scale where 1 = Very unfair to my

spouse, 2 = Somewhat unfair to my spouse, 3 = Somewhat fair to my spouse, and 4 =

Very fair to my spouse. For the purposes of this study, only perceived fairness to self

sections were utilized with higher scores representing higher perceived fairness

toward spouses and lower scores representing higher perceived fairness toward one's

self. Information from the National Survey of Family and Households can be found

at http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/nsfh/.

Qualitative questions. Participants are to respond to these questions with no

more than 250 words. Supplemental qualitative information will offer a depth of

exploration into the constructs measured by the ASI, QMI, MDMS, and perceived fairness questions that should provide richness to the quantitative results. The goal of the qualitative questions was to draw out the complex meanings and thoughts around the constructs measured by the chosen quantitative measures. Qualitative interpretation posits that it is impossible for researchers to separate themselves from the biases they might bring to a topic (Richards, 2005). Based on this, it is important not to assume that participants all have the same ideas around the meanings of marital satisfaction, being a good wife, being a good husband, and decision-making. Quantitative measures limit the ability to explore these assumptions. Holistic phenomena such as experience, culture, attitudes, and intentions are not taken into consideration in surveys. As such, questions pertaining to "meaning" were developed with the expert consult of my research committee for this study. Questions asked include: What does marital satisfaction mean to you? What does it mean to you to be a partner in a marriage? What qualities make a "good" wife and how do those qualities exist or not exist in your marriage? What qualities make a "good" husband and how do those qualities exist or not exist in your marriage? How do you go about making decisions in your marriage? The length of answers to these questions was controlled in order to maintain a manageable amount of data to interpret. The information gathered from participant responses served to supplement the quantitative findings. The quantitative measures can answer the question "Is there a significant correlation?" between variables, while the qualitative questions can answer the question "What do these constructs mean?" to the participants. The qualitative data

for this study was meant to enhance or elaborate on the results from the quantitative portion of the study rather than to get convergent findings.

Procedures for Data Collection

Permission to ask for volunteers to participate in this study was requested from the Antioch University Seattle Institutional Review Board. Fliers (Appendix A) were distributed to friends and colleagues who were asked to post and distribute wherever convenient for them (neighbors, bulletin boards, community centers, etc). Flyers were also distributed to individuals attending a Seattle Mariners baseball game. A social media page (Facebook) was developed and utilized to recruit participants. Principals of Seattle area elementary and middle schools and PTA leaders were called, given a brief synopsis (Appendix B) of the study, and asked permission to distribute a letter to parents (Appendix C) either directly or via students. Participants were screened to determine eligibility for inclusion in the study via an email address created for the purposes of this study. Participants were screened a second time at the beginning of the online survey materials. Participants who met eligibility requirements were provided informed consent (Appendix D) before participating further in the study and were advised of their rights (Appendix L). Measures were administered via an online survey software program called SurveyMonkey (Canoune & Leyhe, 1985). Participants were given the alternate option of filling out the measures in pencil and paper format during two established dates at a central location. No participants requested the paper and pencil option. In order to maximize sample size, the online survey program was set up so that all questions had to be answered. Before recruiting participants, five people piloted the study materials in order to

determine the estimated amount of time needed to complete filling out materials and to assess clarity of instructions. The amount of time it took to answer survey materials in the pilot study ranged from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. To protect the security of responses and privacy of the participants, answers to the measures remained confidential. Each participant was assigned a numerical code that was used to identify demographic information and responses. Each participant was instructed to use his or her assigned code and was not asked to put identifying information on of the study materials. The researcher created a master list that matched names and contact information (Appendix E) to the assigned codes, which was stored in a separate location from the data. Distinguishing wives from husbands occurred by having the code number preceded by an -F for wives and an -M for husbands. All forms and data were kept in a secure location separate from contact information forms. The researcher's computer was protected by a password that was inaccessible to anyone except the researcher. SurveyMonkey data was secured by a different password than the researcher's computer.

Hypotheses

H1. Higher levels of benevolent sexism would have a positive relationship with levels of marital satisfaction in married individuals who describe themselves as egalitarian minded.

H2. The relationship in H1 will be moderated by gender such that the relationship will be stronger for women than for men.

H3. Higher levels of endorsed benevolent sexism will have a positive

relationship to levels of overall perceived fairness in married individuals who

describe themselves as egalitarian minded.

H4. The relationship in H3 will not be moderated by gender in that this

relationship will not be significantly stronger for women or men.

H5. Higher levels of benevolent sexism will have a positive relationship with

levels of   decision-making outcomes in married individuals who describe

themselves as egalitarian minded.

H6. The relationship in H5 will be moderated by gender such that the

relationship will be significantly stronger for women than for men.

H7. Higher levels of perceived fairness will have a mediating effect between

benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in married women who describe

themselves as egalitarian minded.

H8. Higher levels of perceived decision-making power will have a mediating

effect between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in married women

who describe themselves as egalitarian minded.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis of demographic data was gathered via SurveyMonkey's

built in analysis tools. The purpose of this study was not to prove causality, but to

establish if there is a significant correlation between endorsement of benevolent and

marital satisfaction in married women and men who have been living with their

spouses for at least five years. Linear regression analysis was used to determine the

relationships between the endorsement of benevolent sexism and perceived fairness, decision-making outcome, and marital satisfaction. (See Figure 1.)
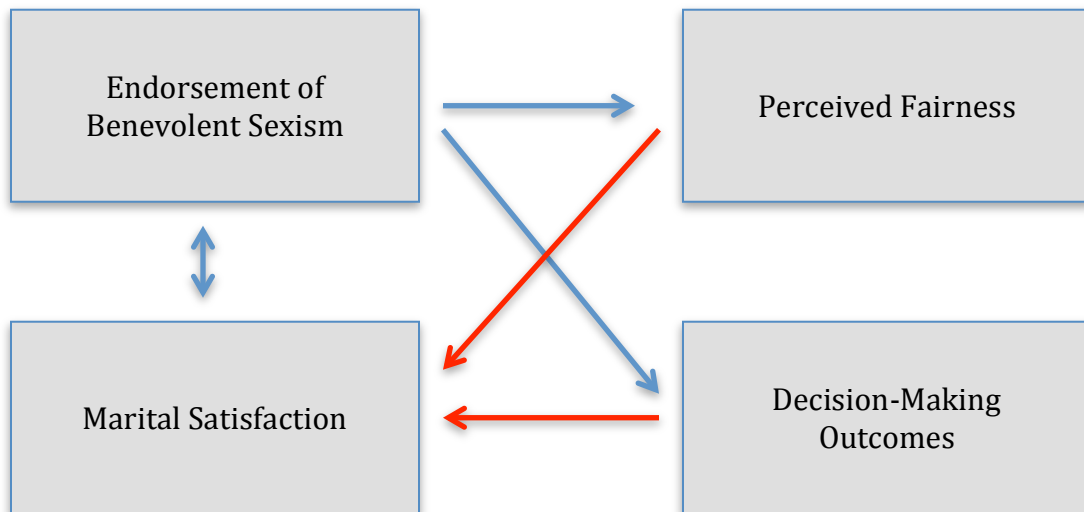
Figure 1. Conceptual model of endorsement of benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction and their relationship with perceived fairness and decision-making outcomes.

Quantitative data was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics-Version 21.0 software. Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (2013) for SPSS was used to analyze moderation and mediation effects. The PROCESS macro uses a regression-based path analytic framework for estimating direct and indirect effects in mediation and moderation models (Hayes, 2013).

To minimize the probability of Type 1 error, a significance of .05 was selected for the alpha level. To minimize the probability of Type II error, a power level of .80 was used to detect a medium effect. Using an a-priori sample size calculator for multiple regression of two variables, a sample size of 67 was suggested based on a statistical power of .80 and an alpha of .05. Because moderation analysis often yields Type II errors, an alpha of .10 will be accepted (Aguinis, 2004).

The first two steps followed the traditional Baron and Kenny (as cited in

Preacher & Hayes, 2004) steps. Step one of the quantitative analysis was to regress the dependent variable, marital satisfaction, on the independent variable, benevolent sexism using linear regression analysis (Independent Variable ⟶ Dependent Variable). This step determined if benevolent sexism was a predictor of marital satisfaction. This step, and all subsequent steps, was performed for all participants together with moderation analysis performed to determine if gender affected the relationship. Step two of the analysis was to regress the first mediator variable, perceived fairness, on the independent variable, benevolent sexism (Independent Variable ⟶ Mediator). This step determined if the independent variable was a significant predictor of the mediator. If the mediator was not associated with the independent variable, then it could not be considered a mediator. I did not follow the Baron and Kenny (as cited in Hayes, 2013) model for the third step. I did a more sophisticated analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS. This macro was used to perform moderation and moderated mediation effects. For the moderated mediation, the macro used "bootstrapping." Bootstrapping is a nonparametric approach to effect-size estimation and hypothesis testing that makes no assumptions about the shape of the distributions of the variables or the sampling distribution of the statistics. Bootstrapping essentially randomly "re-samples" from the existing sample and, therefore, can be applied to small samples with more confidence (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). I assessed significance for mediation effects by looking at the indirect effect's confidence intervals for each group (i.e., males vs. females)—if the intervals didn't cross "0," then the mediation was considered significant (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

This step involved demonstrating if when perceived fairness and benevolent sexism are used simultaneously to predict marital satisfaction, the significance of the relationship, if one exists, between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction alone is less powerful. In other words, if the mediator were to be removed from the relationship, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables would be noticeably reduced. (See Figures 2 and 3.)
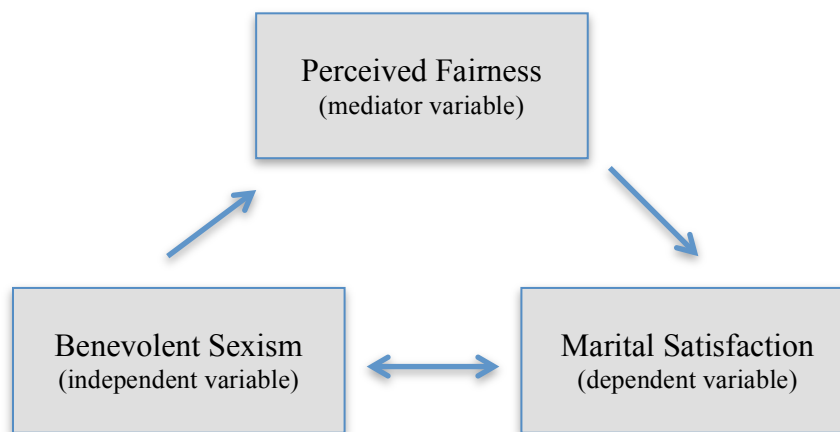
Figure 2. Conceptual mediation model for first mediator variable: Perceived fairness.
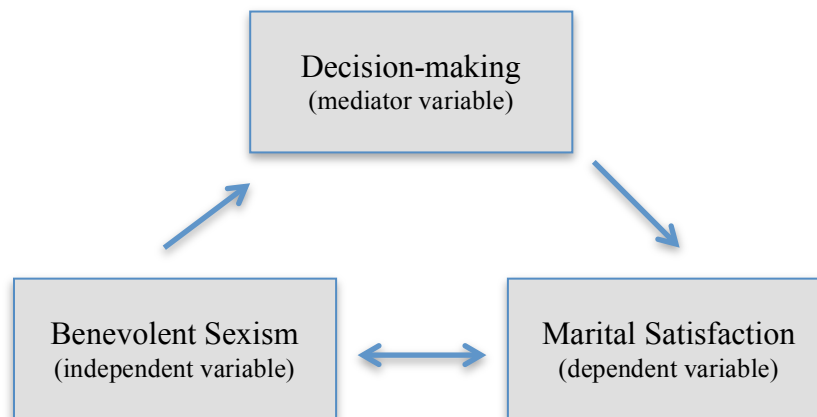
Figure 3. Conceptual mediation model for second mediator variable: Decision-making outcome.

In order to control the quantity of qualitative data, responses from twenty randomly chosen participants (ten male and ten female) were analyzed. Data was read three times with an eye for themes, patterns, and relationships. Participant responses were annotated using electronic comments. Memos of themes, patterns, or relationships that emerged from the data were maintained on a master electronic document. Quotes from qualitative responses were used to supplement and add depth to the quantitative findings. A summary of the themes is included in the results.

Chapter IV: Results

Descriptive Statistics

Participants for this study included 42 men (29%) and 104 women (71%). Study participants were allowed to freely define their racial identity with 130 describing themselves as Caucasian (89%). Four of the participants defined their racial identities as human (3%), six as Asian (4%), and five defined themselves as mixed race (3%). One of the Caucasian participants identified themselves as being racially white and ethnically Hispanic. Two of the participants that identified as mixed race defined themselves as Caucasian and Hispanic. One defined as Caucasian and Asian. One participant defined their race as Jewish.

With respect to age, 13 participants (9%) were between the ages of 20 and 29, 69 were between the ages of 30 and 39 (47%), 25 were between the ages of 40 and 49 (17%), 21 were between the ages of 50 and 59 (14%), 12 were between the ages of 60 and 69, and 6 were between the ages of 70 and 79 (4%). For 115 of the participants (79%), their present marriage was their first marriage. Twenty-four participants (16%) had been married a total of 2 times, 6 (4%) had been married a total of 3 times, and 1 (1%) had been married 6 or more times. Participant ages and number of marriages are listed in Tables 1 and 2. Length of time married to their present spouse ranged from 6 months to 49 years with a mean of 13.6 years (M = 13.6).

With respect to furthest point in education, none of the participants had less than a high school diploma or GED. Twelve participants (8%) had either a high school diploma or GED. Fourteen (10%) had obtained an Associate's Degree, 42 (29%) completed a Bachelor's program, 48 (33%) had completed a Master's

Table 1

Age of Participants in Years

		Number(N)	Percentage(%)
20-29	Men	3	7.14
	Women	10	9.62
30-39	Men	22	52.38
	Women	47	45.19
40-49	Men	5	11.9
	Women	20	19.23
50-59	Men	5	11.9
	Women	16	15.38
60-69	Men	4	9.52
	Women	8	7.69
70+	Men	3	7.14
	Women	3	2.88

Table 2

Total Number of Marriages per Participant

		Number(N)	Percentage(%)
1	Men	35	83.33
	Women	80	76.92
2	Men	5	11.9
	Women	19	18.27
3	Men	2	4.76
	Women	4	3.85
4	Men	0	0
	Women	0	0
5	Men	0	0
	Women	0	0
6	Men	0	0
	Women	1	0.96

Degree, and 30 (20%) had completed a Professional Degree (PhD, PsyD, JD, MD, ND, etc). More participants focused their studies on social service oriented careers than other areas of study. Table 3 lists highest degree completed and all participant careers are listed in Table 4.

Participants were asked to disclose how many hours per week of household labor they perceive themselves as performing as well as how many hours per week

Table 3

Highest Completed Level of Formal Education

		Number(N)	Percentage(%)
<12 years, no GED	Men	0	0
	Women	0	0
High School diploma or GED	Men	4	9.52
	Women	8	7.69
Associate Degree	Men	7	16.67
	Women	7	6.73
Bachelor Degree	Men	14	33.33
	Women	28	26.92
Masters Degree	Men	8	19.05
	Women	40	38.46
Professional Degree	Men	9	21.43
	Women	21	20.19

Table 4

Participant Higher Education Area of Study

	Number(N)		Number(N)
Psychologist/Therapist	28	Agriculture	1
Social Work	6	Mathematics	2
Nurse/Health Care	5	Digital AUdio Engineering	1
Education	7	Lawyer	4
Engineering	4	Government	2
Finance	1	Sociology	3
Business	7	Nutrition	1
English/Literature/Creative Writing	7	Real Estate	1
Public Administration	1	Philosophy	1
Speech Therapy	2	Social Sciences	1
Computer Science	3	CBP	1
Multimedia	1	Human Development/Family Studies	1
Veterinary Technology	1	Liberal Arts	1
Architecture	1	Undisclosed	74
Environmental Science	2		

Note. CBP was the response given by the participant. It is unknown what the letters CBP represent.

they perceive their partners as doing. In general, men did not perceive their spouses

as performing as much household labor as women perceived themselves as doing. In

many cases, women perceived their spouses as doing more household labor than the

men perceived themselves as doing. These results are listed below in tables 5 and 6.

Five of the participants (3%) described themselves as unemployed, eight (5%)

of them as underemployed, 113 (77%) as employed, 10 (7%) as stay-at-home parents,

and nine (6%) as retired. All ten of the stay-at-home parents were women. Only 118

(83%) of the participants chose to disclose how many hours per week they worked at

paying jobs. Of these participants, more women worked less than full time than men.

Only five participants worked between 0 and 9 hours and only five worked 10 to 19

hours per week, all ten of them women. Participant average hours worked per week

at a job are listed in Table 7. Average participant income in dollars earner per year

are listed in Table 8.

Table 5

Perceived Amount of Household Labor Performed by Self

Hours		Number (N)	Percent (%)
0-2	Men	1	2.38
	Women	3	2.88
2-4	Men	3	7.14
	Women	16	15.38
4-6	Men	8	19.05
	Women	13	12.5
6-8	Men	5	11.9
	Women	6	5.77
8-10	Men	5	11.9
	Women	10	9.62
10-12	Men	4	9.52
	Women	8	7.69
12-14	Men	4	9.52
	Women	7	6.73
14-16	Men	3	7.14
	Women	6	5.77
16-18	Men	2	4.76
	Women	1	0.96
18-20	Men	5	11.9
	Women	6	5.77
20-22	Men	0	0
	Women	5	5.77
22-24	Men	0	0
	Women	3	2.88
24+	Men	2	4.76
	Women	20	19.23

Note. Quantity of labor in hours per week.

Table 6

Perceived Amount of Household Labor Performed by Spouse

Hours		Number (N)	Percent (%)
0-2	Men	2	4.76
	Women	14	13.46
2-4	Men	5	11.9
	Women	13	12.5
4-6	Men	4	9.52
	Women	16	15.38
6-8	Men	5	11.9
	Women	8	7.69
8-10	Men	3	7.14
	Women	12	11.54
10-12	Men	5	11.9
	Women	12	11.54
12-14	Men	3	7.14
	Women	2	1.92
14-16	Men	1	2.38
	Women	5	4.81
16-18	Men	2	4.76
	Women	0	0
18-20	Men	4	9.52
	Women	6	5.77
20-22	Men	5	11.9
	Women	4	3.85
22-24	Men	1	2.38
	Women	3	2.88
24+	Men	2	4.76
	Women	9	8.65

Note. Quantity of labor in hours per week.

Table 7

Average Hours Worked per Week

Hours		Number(N)	Percentage(%)
0-9	Men	0	0
	Women	5	5.88
10-19	Men	0	0
	Women	5	5.88
20-29	Men	4	12.12
	Women	14	16.47
30-39	Men	7	21.21
	Women	18	21.18
40-49	Men	16	48.48
	Women	37	43.53
50-59	Men	5	15.15
	Women	6	7.06
60-69	Men	1	3.03
	Women	0	0
70+	Men	0	0
	Women	0	0

Note. 44 participants opted to not respond to this item.

Table 8

Monthly Income

		Number(N)	Percentage(%)			Number(N)	Percentage(%)
No income	Men	6	14.29	70,000-79,999	Men	6	14.29
	Women	12	11.54		Women	7	6.73
< 5,000	Men	0	0	80,000-89,999	Men	3	7.14
	Women	6	5.77		Women	9	8.65
5,000-9,999	Men	1	2.38	90,000-99,999	Men	2	4.76
	Women	3	2.88		Women	4	3.85
10,000-19,999	Men	2	4.76	100,000-119,999	Men	5	11.9
	Women	6	5.77		Women	3	2.88
20,000-29,999	Men	4	9.52	120,000-149,999	Men	3	7.14
	Women	7	6.73		Women	1	0.96
30,000-39,999	Men	1	2.38	150,000-179,999	Men	1	3.38
	Women	9	8.65		Women	3	2.88
40,000-49,999	Men	0	0	180,000-199,99	Men	1	2.38
	Women	14	13.46		Women	1	0.96
50,000-59,999	Men	2	4.76	200,000+	Men	3	7.14
	Women	11	10.58		Women	2	1.92
60,000-69,999	Men	2	4.76				
	Women	6	5.77				

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis. A priori power analysis was conducted to determine the appropriate number of participants needed to have adequate power for analysis. Soper's (2010) on-line statistical calculator indicated that, with two predictors (mediator variable and dependent variable), 67 participants would be required with an alpha level set at .05 with a desired statistical power of .80 and a medium effect size of .15. Because this study did not obtain the male sample size necessary to achieve adequate power with a medium effect size, the analyses may be underpowered.

Data was entered into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics-Version 21.0 software and then double-checked for accuracy. Data were prepared for analysis by dummy coding gender (1 = male, 2 = female) and performing preliminary analysis by obtaining the means and standard deviations for all variables. These variables included benevolent sexism, perceived fairness, decision-making outcomes, and marital satisfaction. Items 3, 6, and 13 on the

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory were reverse coded as indicated by scoring instructions

and only the items representing benevolent sexism (1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20,

and 22) were included in the scoring.

Linear regression was conducted with SPSS software to determine main

effects. Moderated regression analysis was conducted using Hayes' (2013)

PROCESS macro for SPSS. Bootstrapped moderated mediation analysis was

conducted using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro set to 1000 bootstrapped resamples.

This study hypothesized that higher levels of benevolent sexism would have a

positive relationship with levels of marital satisfaction in married individuals who

describe themselves as egalitarian minded (H1) and that this relationship would be

moderated by gender such that the relationship would be stronger for women than for

men (H2). Linear regression analysis with benevolent sexism entered as the

independent variable and marital satisfaction entered as the dependent variable for

men and women combined revealed a non-significant negative relationship between

the two variables ($\beta = -.067$, $p = .419$). The beta weight was negative suggesting that

marital satisfaction increases as benevolent sexism goes down, though not

significantly. Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size

for this analysis (R sq = .0045) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicts

marital satisfaction only by 0.45%. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes'

(2013) PROCESS macro (2013) indicated that the relationship between benevolent

sexism and marital satisfaction did not depend on gender ($p =.83$, 95% CI = -0.58 to

0.46 interaction). The moderation effect was non-significant. In order for a

significant moderation effect to exist, the confidence intervals cannot cross zero. The

confidence intervals did cross zero and the *p* value was .83, indicating that there was not a significant interactional effect of gender on the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction. Contrary to hypotheses, the relationship was not stronger for women. This study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is also no relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in women.

This study hypothesized that higher levels of benevolent sexism would have a positive relationship to levels of perceived fairness in married individuals who describe themselves as egalitarian minded (H3) and that this relationship would not be moderated by gender (H4). Linear regression analysis with benevolent sexism entered as the independent variable and overall perceived fairness entered as the dependent variable revealed a non-significant negative relationship between the two variables (β = -.106, *p* = .203). The beta weight was negative suggesting that perception of fairness to one's self increases (lower mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly. Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .011) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 1.1%. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness exists did not depend on gender (*p* = .095, 95% CI = -0.68 to 0.05 interaction). Though the confidence intervals did cross zero, the *p* value was marginal, suggesting a marginal interactional effect (Aguinis, 2004) of gender on the relationship between the variables. Because *p* was marginal, the conditional effects of gender (men: *p* = .60, 95% CI = -0.23 to 0.40; women: *p* = .02, 95% CI = -0.42 to -0.04) were examined. These results do not

support the hypothesis (H4) that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness would not be moderated by gender.   These results support the hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness (H3) for women, but not for men. Contrary to hypotheses, the relationship was stronger for women than for men. This study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness in men.

This study hypothesized that higher levels of benevolent sexism would have a positive relationship to levels decision-making outcomes in married individuals who describe themselves as egalitarian minded (H5) and that this relationship would be moderated by gender such that the relationship will be significantly stronger for women than for men. (H6). Linear regression analysis with benevolent sexism entered as the independent variable and overall perceived fairness entered as the dependent variable revealed a non-significant negative relationship between the two variables (β = -.106, p = .203). The beta weight was negative suggesting that perception of fairness to one's self increases (lower mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly. Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .011) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 1.1%. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness exists did not depend on gender (p = .095, 95% CI = -0.68 to 0.05 interaction). Though the confidence intervals did cross zero, the p value was marginal, suggesting a marginal interactional effect

(Aguinis, 2004) of gender on the relationship between the variables. Because p was marginal, the conditional effects of gender (men: $p = .60$, 95% CI = -0.23 to 0.40; women: $p = .02$,

95% CI = -0.42 to -0.04) were examined. These results do not support the hypothesis (H4) that the relationship between benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes would not be moderated by gender. These results support the hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes (H3) for women, but not for men. Contrary to hypotheses, the relationship was stronger for women than for men. This study failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes in men.

This study hypothesized that higher levels of perceived fairness will have a mediating effect on the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in married women who describe themselves as egalitarian minded, meaning that benevolent sexism indirectly affects marital satisfaction through perceived fairness. In mediation, the independent variable and the mediator are correlated (a path), and the mediator and the dependent variable are correlated (b path) creating an implied causal path that links the three variables. The independent variable indirectly affects the dependent variable because the independent variable affects the mediator, which affects the dependent variable (see Figures 2 and 3). The relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable (c path) were looked at because it can provide useful information about the main effects. However, instead of examining the difference between c and c' as in

Baron and Kenny's (as cited in Hayes, 2013) method, Preacher and Haye's (2004)

more sophisticated, powerful approach using bootstrapping was used to determine

mediating effects. Bootstrapping resolves the assumption that the participant

population fits a normal distribution. Using bootstrapping, no assumptions about the

shape of the sampling distribution of the statistic are necessary when conducting

inferential tests (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Before performing the mediation model, each of these paths was analyzed for

a main effect, without taking gender into account. Though no significant relationship

was found between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction (b = -.106, *p* = .20),

moderated regression analysis on the independent variable benevolent sexism and

overall perceived fairness (*a* path) revealed a significant negative relationship

between the two variables for women (B = -.228, *p* = .02, 95% CI = -0.42 to -0.04)

and linear regression analysis on overall perceived fairness and the dependent

variable marital satisfaction (*b* path) revealed a significant positive relationship

between the two variables (β = .382, *p* = <.001). Because there was a significant

relationship on both the *a* and the *b* paths, a moderated mediation analysis was

performed using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro, specifying 1000 bootstrapped

resamples. The analysis revealed a significant mediation effect for women

(95% CI = -0.26 to -0.01). The confidence intervals did not cross zero, indicating a

mediation effect. In contrast, the analyses revealed that there was not a significant

mediation effect for men (95% CI = -0.09 to 0.19 interaction) because the confidence

intervals crossed zero. Results supported the hypothesis that benevolent sexism

indirectly affects marital satisfaction through perceived fairness for women, but not for men.

This study hypothesized that higher levels of decision-making outcomes will have a mediating effect on the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in married women who describe themselves as egalitarian minded, meaning that benevolent sexism indirectly affects marital satisfaction through decision-making outcomes. Before performing the mediation model, each of paths was analyzed to determine a main effect, without taking gender into account. Though a significant relationship was found between benevolent sexism and decision-making ($\beta = .290, p = <.001$), linear regression analysis on decision-making outcomes and the dependent variable marital satisfaction (b path) revealed a non-significant positive relationship between the two variables ($\beta = .042, p = .61$). Because there was not a significant relationship on both the a and the b paths, a moderated mediation analysis was not performed. As such, the hypothesis that decision-making outcomes mediate the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction was not supported.

Qualitative analysis. After participants completed the quantitative questionnaires, they had the opportunity to answer five optional open-ended questions:

1. What does marital satisfaction mean to you?

2. What qualities make a "good" wife and how do those qualities exist or not exist in your marriage?

3.   What qualities make a "good" husband and how do those qualities

exist or not exist in your marriage?

4.   What does it mean to be a partner in your marriage?

5.   How do you go about making decisions in your marriage?

Ten responses from male participants and ten from female participants were

randomly chosen for analysis. Several themes emerged in participant responses to

these questions.

The theme of togetherness emerged from the responses to the question, "What

does marital satisfaction mean to you?" Togetherness was described in a variety of

ways. The terms used most frequently to indicate the importance of a sense of

togetherness were "team" and "partner." One male participant stated that marital

satisfaction is having "a partner in this journey of growing old, raising a family, etc."

One of the wives stated that marital satisfaction was "feeling like you are a team and

not separate beings on your own." Two male responses suggested that marital

satisfaction meant being together without the need for anyone else. One response was

"Being happy in my current marriage and not needing to seek outside enhancements

to feel satisfied" and another stated, "When the relationship with my spouse is the

only stress free part of my life." None of the female responses suggested that

togetherness meant that marital satisfaction meant having a partner at the exclusion of

others.

Gender differences emerged as a theme as well. Male responses used words

like "balance" and "sacrifice" in their responses, while female responses included

such descriptions as "safety," "security," "unconditional," and "support." Another

gender difference that emerged was disappointment in several wives' responses. One wife stated "For example, sometimes I feel it's unfair that I do all the cleaning and dishes and laundry" while another wrote "I manage the household finances, but feel burdened by stress over low bank account balances and how to pay for bills, whereas the overall income is enough, just my husband keeps it in his business." The randomly chosen responses to the question "What does marital satisfaction mean to you?" can be found in Appendix M.

Selflessness and sacrifice were themes that emerged from both male and female participants responses regarding qualities that make a good wife. One wife described her role as "Taking care of my child first and my husband second (even though I'm sure I should fall in there somewhere, it typically doesn't happen often)." Another stated "I believe I am a good wife in that I have a greater perspective on the household than that of my private self interest." One husband states that a good wife is "loving, caring, selfless, sacrificial" and another described a good wife as having "empathy, sharing, and sacrifice." One husband described sacrifice as a wife intuitively knowing her husband's boundaries. He wrote, "She knows when to engage and when to avoid. She knows how to help and when she is not needed. She communicates clearly and honestly and likes to help. She is there when you need her but also gives you time to yourself and your friends and hobbies." Sex emerged as a subtheme of sacrifice in description of a good wife. One wife, though she indicated that husbands and wives are "equal" and that "a good wife should have the same qualities as a "good husband," wrote "when it comes to the bedroom, even though I am not always in the mood, I am perfectly willing to relieve his stresses." Another

wife stated "I am willing to have sex when he has more desire and I wouldn't necessarily choose to at that moment." One husband indicated that a good wife would "enjoy sexual pleasures and willingly seek them out" and another stated that he would "like my wife to be sexually compatible, considerate of my needs and willing to take half the monetary and work burden of keeping a marriage and household going. I feel that my sexual needs and my wife's don't always line up." Sacrifice emerged in female responses indicating guilt about not being good enough wives. Wives gave responses such as "I definitely try my best to be supportive but I could probably listen to myself more, and think about what I am saying and the impact it might have" and "I know I often fail, but I try to get better at it every day." Another wife wrote, "Well, I certainly don't like to clean, and love to sleep in. I also have a complicated personal history so I don't 'put out' as often as I 'should'. I feel guilty for all this."

Gender role differences arose as a theme in participants' descriptions of what qualities make a "good husband" and which qualities make a "good wife." Men tended to describe egalitarianism as a quality that makes a good husband while wives tended to describe good husbands as having traditional gendered qualities. One husband wrote, "I don't think this whole 'working together to make each other's lives better because you love each other and want them to be happy and have a good life' thing is gendered. It's not like the woman has to be caring and the man has to be rich or some shit. The things that make a good partner make a good partner, no matter the gender of each, either, or both." Another husband indicated a stance of egalitarianism at the same time that he suggested that gender differences do exist. He wrote, "The

same qualities that make a good wife a good wife will make a good husband a good

husband. There should be no difference with regard to sex other than each partner

being mindful that in each circumstance there are gender differences but in the end it

is about unconditional understanding." Two of the men described a good husband in

traditional gendered ways. One stated that a good husband is "leading where she

can't" and another stated, "In our marriage a good husband provides an income that

allows for my spouse to be comfortable enough to explore those things that add

meaning, like school." Female participants tended to more often describe good

husbands in more traditional terms such as "protector" and "provider." Though

husbands tended to describe good husbands in egalitarian terms, wives tended to

voice disappointment in their husbands' lack of egalitarianism. One wife wrote, "I

feel like most of my needs in a husband are met the majority of the time though I

might appreciate a little more help with chores and the financial miscellany."

Another wife wrote, "My husband doesn't help as much around the house as he

could, and doesn't always appreciate my contributions to the household and

financially." A third wife stated that a good husband is "someone who cares about

his spouse, helps out, and provides appropriately. My husband does not do the 'guy'

things in a marriage such as support the family financially, take care of car care, or

yard care without multiple prompts and interventions on my part" while another said

her "biggest complaint tends to be division of household chores—like the fact that he

doesn't cook or clean (if he would even just pick up after himself that would be nice!)

or do yard work. And that I'm left 'nagging him' to help." Participant responses to

the questions regarding qualities that make a good husband and qualities that make a good husband can be read in Appendices N and O.

Gender differences emerged as a theme in responses to the question, "What does it mean to be a partner in your marriage?" Male responses tended to include a theme of "sharing." One participant stated that being a partner is "sharing the work load. Sharing money" while another participant stated "being a partner means to share in the carrying of the load of the needs of the household and family." Another husband responded, "Partnership is sharing. Sharing problems, sharing successes, sharing pains and sharing joys. A partner helps earn money, helps spend money, helps plan." Female responses tended to have a theme of giving, whether it be "support," "caring," or "consideration." One wife wrote "It means helping and supporting one another in all our spheres of influence: domestic, professional and social." Another wife stated that being a good partner requires "compromise and communication. Giving equally whenever possible, and giving more if needed. If a disagreement occurs, you need to listen to your partner openly and respond with how you honestly feel about it. And at times you may need to let go of something that you disagree with, especially if you can see that it matters more to the other person." Participant responses to the question "What does it mean to be a partner in a marriage?" can be found in Appendix P.

Size and type of decision emerged as themes in how male participants made decisions in their marriages. One of the husbands wrote, "Well, if it's a small decision (day to day stuff, small purchases) then I, or she, will just make it." Another husband stated, "Personal items, lunches, etc. are not discussed and doesn't

need to be. Small purchases for personal use are also not necessary to discuss."

Collaboration (or lack of) also emerged as a theme. Several female responses

indicated using "pros and cons" as a strategy for equitable decision-making. One

wife wrote, "We have very open channels of communication, so we usually talk

through stuff first and bounce ideas off each other to come to a consensus." Several

responses indicated a lack of collaboration. One husband wrote, "Most of the time I

let her do so [make the decision] because I don't care about much of the minutia—

whereas she oftentimes does. If I care, we have a discussion. I let her know my

feelings and we discuss—I find that because I typically give her carte blanche for

most decisions, when I speak up, she knows it is an important issue and she

oftentimes accommodates my wishes." Another husband wrote, "She makes more

money, so I generally defer to her preference when making monetary decisions."

One of the wives indicated, "We talk about them together, and then usually end up

going with what my husband wants" and another wife wrote, "No formal process. I

check in with my spouse to get his input; I do not often get the same courtesy."

Responses to the question, "How do you go about making decisions in your

marriage?" can be found on Appendix Q.

Exploratory analysis. Post hoc sub analyses were conducted on individual

perceived fairness items (cooking, cleaning, household management, yard work,

children) because women traditionally perform some tasks more often while men

traditionally perform other tasks. Linear regression analysis on benevolent sexism

and perceived fairness regarding cleaning tasks for men and women combined

revealed a significant negative relationship between the two variables

(β = -.171, p = .042). Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .124) was medium, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 12.4%. Beta weights were examined to determine the level of predictability of benevolent sexism on marital satisfaction. The beta weight was negative suggesting that perception of fairness pertaining to cleaning tasks to one's self increases (lower mean score) as benevolent sexism increases. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding cleaning tasks did depend on gender (95% CI = -0.86 to -0.07 interaction). The confidence intervals did not cross zero, indicating that there was a significant interactional effect of gender on the relationship between the variables. The interaction was -.24 to .44 for men and -.57 to -.17 for women. These results suggest that increased levels of endorsed benevolent sexism in women would have a positive relationship to increased levels of perceived fairness regarding cleaning tasks in women and did not have a positive relationship to perceived fairness regarding cleaning tasks for men.

Linear regression analysis on benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding cooking tasks for men and women combined revealed a non-significant negative relationship between the two variables (β = -.061, p = .468). Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .062) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 6.2%. Beta weights were examined to determine the level of predictability of benevolent sexism on perceived fairness regarding cooking tasks. The beta weight

was negative suggesting that perception of fairness pertaining to cooking tasks to one's self increases (lower mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly for men and women combined. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding cooking tasks did depend on gender (95% CI = -0.77 to -0.04 interaction). The confidence intervals did not cross zero, indicating that there was a significant interactional effect of gender on the relationship between the variables. The interaction was -.11 to .52 for men, -.39 to -.02 for women. These results suggest that increased levels of endorsed benevolent sexism in women have a positive relationship to increased levels of perceived fairness regarding cooking tasks in women and did not have a positive relationship to perceived fairness regarding cooking tasks for men.

Linear regression analysis on benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding household management tasks for men and women combined revealed a non-significant negative relationship between the two variables (β = -.094, p = .263). Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .028) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 2.8%. Beta weights were examined to determine the level of predictability of benevolent sexism on perceived fairness regarding the performance of household management tasks. The beta weight was negative suggesting that perception of fairness to one's self increases (lower mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly for men and women combined. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship

between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding household tasks did not

depend on gender (95% CI = -0.69 to 0.11 interaction). The confidence intervals

crossed zero, indicating that there was not a significant interactional effect of gender

on the relationship between the variables. These results suggest that increased levels

of endorsed benevolent sexism in women do not have a positive relationship to

increased levels of perceived fairness regarding household management tasks in

either men or women.

Linear regression analysis on benevolent sexism and perceived fairness

regarding yard work tasks for men and women combined revealed a non-significant

negative relationship between the two variables (β = -.091, p = .328). Based on

Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis

(R sq = .053) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness

by 5.3%. Beta weights were examined to determine the level of predictability of

benevolent sexism on perceived fairness regarding yard work tasks. The beta weight

was negative suggesting that perception of fairness to one's self increases (lower

mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly for men and

women combined. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS

macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived

fairness regarding yard work tasks did not depend on gender (95% CI = -0.66 to 0.05

interaction). The confidence intervals crossed zero, indicating that there was not a

significant interactional effect of gender on the relationship between the variables.

These results suggest that increased levels of endorsed benevolent sexism in women

would did not a positive relationship to increased levels of perceived fairness regarding yard work tasks.

Linear regression analysis on benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding childcare tasks for men and women combined revealed a non-significant positive relationship between the two variables (β = .103, p = .382). Based on Cohen's guidelines (as cited in Hayes, 2013), the effect size for this analysis (R sq = .080) was small, meaning that benevolent sexism predicted perceived fairness by 8.0%. Beta weights were examined to determine the level of predictability of benevolent sexism on perceived fairness regarding performance of childcare related tasks. The beta weight was positive suggesting that perception of fairness to one's self decreases (higher mean score) as benevolent sexism increases, though not significantly for men and women combined. The gender moderation analysis using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro indicated that the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness regarding childcare tasks did not depend on gender (95% CI = -0.75 to 0.21 interaction). The confidence intervals crossed zero, indicating that there was not a significant interactional effect of gender on the relationship between the variables. These results suggest that increased levels of endorsed benevolent sexism did not have a positive relationship to increased levels of perceived fairness regarding childcare tasks for either men or women.

Chapter V: Discussion

The present study was conducted to investigate the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction in married individuals who perceive him or her selves to be egalitarian. This study further sought to examine the mediating effect of perceived fairness and decision-making outcomes on this relationship. Results did not support a direct relationship between marital satisfaction and benevolent sexism, but did support an indirect relationship with perceived fairness as a mediator. Results did not support decision-making outcome as a mediator in the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction, though it did suggest that benevolent sexism had an effect on decision-making outcomes.

Implications of the Present Study

This study did not support the hypothesis that, as the level of endorsed benevolent sexism increased in married women, so would levels of marital satisfaction. Previous research on egalitarian relationships (Henry et al., 2007; Mickelson et al., 2006; Ono, 2006) indicated that women were less satisfied in their marriages then were men. The present research explored whether endorsement of benevolent sexism by married women who consider themselves to be egalitarian would positively influence marital satisfaction. Though the results trended in the direction expected, in that as benevolent sexism increased so did marital satisfaction, the relationship was weak. The women who participated in this study indicated on the Norton Quality of Marriage Index that they were overwhelmingly satisfied with their marriages. The mean marital satisfaction score on a 7-point Likert scale for women was 6.21. The male participants were also overwhelmingly endorsed high

levels of marital satisfaction with a mean score on the QMI of 6.27. The participants

in this study scored a mean of 2.56 on the benevolent sexism portion of the ASI,

which is considered "relatively sexist" with a cut-off of 2.5 (Glick, 1996), therefore

the lack of significant results was not necessarily due to a lack of benevolently sexist

ideologies in the sample. Because marital satisfaction scores were clustered at the top

of the range, it cannot be conclusively stated that benevolent sexism does not have an

effect on marital satisfaction without more variation in the satisfaction scores.

Measures used in this study were "face valid," meaning that it was relatively

clear what the items on the measures were assessing. It is possible that, because a

large portion of participants held careers in psychologically minded fields where

social justice is oftentimes a focus, participants answered ASI items in a manner more

consistent with an egalitarian ideal. Moya et al. (2007) also found that women who

tend to endorse egalitarian ideologies tend not to endorse indicators of benevolent

sexism. In relatively egalitarian cultural contexts, such as that in the Seattle area, it is

possible that sexist beliefs were covered with an equalitarian "veneer" as a way of

conforming to social desirability meaning that social desirability influenced responses

to the ASI in that those who perceive themselves as egalitarian minded would

consciously deny endorsement of benevolently sexist beliefs. This type of response

bias was not controlled for in the quantitative portion of this study. Benevolent

sexism is a subtle form of sexism, and while it serves to reinforce the dominant

patriarchal ideologies, its subtle form may produce more subtle or complex effects

that this study did not directly investigate. Additionally, it is possible that while

benevolent sexist beliefs may be present, women may not be aware of them and,

therefore, it does not impact the quality of their relationships.

Interestingly, female respondents more often than males indicated marital dissatisfaction in their qualitative responses, predominantly regarding division of labor, though this dissatisfaction was not evident on quantitative responses. It is possible, that, as Lee and Waite's (2010) findings indicated, those spouses who spend time together create commitment and solidarity through the little exchanges of daily life, tending to strengthen the bond between the partners. The result of this day-to-day connection in Lee and Waite's (2010) research was that each partner tended to be more concerned about the marital relationship and the family as a whole than did those partners who spend time together only rarely. Participants in the present study overwhelmingly described their spouses as partners with whom they feel connected and with whom they enjoy spending time. It is possible that this sense of connectedness compensated for wives' dissatisfaction in their husbands' contributions to household labor. One participant stated this best in her response to the question "What does marital satisfaction mean to you?":

> Having the relationship be an important source of happiness in life. Enjoying the time we spend together, and making a point of spending time together not because we feel any obligation to, but because we both enjoy it. Feeling cared for and supported unconditionally, knowing that my partner has my best interests at heart, and feeling confident that we can work through just about any problem as a team rather than as opponents.

Gender differences presented in responses to the qualitative question, "What does marital satisfaction mean to you?" Consistent with Ambivalent Sexism Theory, both husbands and wives used language that had gendered connotations. Men spoke more of marital satisfaction being a partnership while women included feelings of safety and security as being a factor. Previous research on marital satisfaction in

egalitarian couples found that men were more satisfied and tended to do less household labor than their wives, even when their wives work full time. Similar to men in previous research, the men in this study tended to not carry the full burden of financial responsibility in providing for their families, due to their wives working full time outside the home. Additionally, many of the men in the present reaped the benefit of their wives performing a greater share of the household labor. Assuming that the idea of partnership to the men means that wives are partners in the financial burden of the household, then the results of the present study in regards to men are consistent with previous research in which men have higher levels of marital satisfaction when their wives share financial burdens and continue to take care of household labor duties.

Consistent with previous research (Lavee & Katz, 2002; Voydanoff & Donnelly, 1999), perceived fairness of household labor division, rather than equal exchange of labor, seems have a positive relationship to marital satisfaction. Perception of fairness is not synonymous with equal sharing of domestic labor, which could indicate that unequal division of labor does not necessarily predict marital dissatisfaction. Participants in this study responded with high levels of marital satisfaction, though wives clearly performed the majority of the household labor. This finding is not different than that of previous research indicating that, despite the increased number of dual-earner marriages, women tend to take on a larger burden of household and child-rearing responsibilities than their male partners (Bernard, 1981; Ono, 2006; Robinson & Hunter, 2008). Furthermore, the majority of hours spent by

women performing household labor were spent doing cooking, cleaning, laundry, and dishes.

Previous research had not investigated the relationship between benevolent sexism and perceived fairness, nor had it explored the possible indirect effect of benevolent sexism on marital satisfaction through perceived fairness. This study found a strong mediating effect of perceived fairness on the relationship between benevolent sexism and marital satisfaction. Interestingly, exploratory analysis found the strongest mediating effect on perceived fairness on cleaning, cooking, and childcare responsibilities. Several researchers (Braun et al., 2008; Coltrane, 2000; Ferree, 1991; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994) found that wives rarely view the imbalance of household labor as unfair. It is possible that, due to the characteristics of this study's population, benevolent sexism showed up in more subtle ways, such as through perceived fairness, than being endorsed in the statements on the ASI. In the present study, it was evident that a consequence of benevolent sexism such as perceiving an unequal distribution of household labor as fair was apparent. Sexism has been found to impact women's mental health in a number of negative ways (Jost & Kay, 2005). One important aspect of mental health is relationship quality. Given the extensive interactions between women and men, it is important for therapists to consider the ways that sexism may impact these interactions, especially in regards to quality or satisfaction in romantic relationships.

It is also possible that wives' senses of "togetherness" influenced their perceptions of fairness given Kawamura and Brown's (2010) study that found wives were more likely to perceive an unfair division of labor as fair if she felt like she were

important to her husband. Another possibility is that the women in this study were, despite their egalitarian ideals, "doing gender" as is suggested by some previous research (Greenstein, 1996; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Lavee & Katz, 2002; Stevens et al., 2001). Bernard (1981) and Zinn (2003) both suggest that the demise of the "good provider" role may lead both husbands and wives in egalitarian relationships to compensate for this loss. Because nurturance and emotional expressiveness were not associated with being a good provider, women's identities as wives may be shaped by how well they take care of the home and by how emotionally supportive they are.

The emotional work of "being a wife" was more evident in qualitative responses from both husbands and wives. Descriptions of a "good wife" more often utilized emotion language than descriptions of a "good husband." One wife's response suggested her position as performing such emotional work:

> I think a good wife is a facilitator and a support. I think that women can tend to be better listeners so I think it is an attribute of a good wife to listen to both her husband and herself. I definitely try my best to be supportive but I could probably listen to myself more, and think about what I am saying and the impact it might have.

This wife described herself almost as if she were the force behind her husband. She facilitates, she supports, and she listens. One husband summed up the emotion work expected of a wife when he stated, "She would at times 'baby' me a bit" and another with his words that a good wife is "supportive and can make the husband feel special." It is possible that the emotional work contributed by the wives reinforced their sense of mattering to their husbands, therefore increasing the likelihood that they would perceive it to be fair to perform a greater portion of household labor.

Another important finding was the guilt felt by several wives for not performing their roles as wives as well as they believed that they should. Komter (1989) found that wives who endorsed egalitarian ideologies reported lower self-esteem than did their husbands. Though the present study did not specifically measure self-esteem, several wives commented on their perceived shortcomings in how they perform as a spouse. One wife stated:

> I think a 'good wife' is someone who cares about what her husband feels, who tries to be the best person she can be and wants the best for them as a couple. When the chips are down she is there, even if the dishes aren't always done and it's soup and sandwiches for dinner too many times. She listens not just to answer back but to really hear his opinions, dreams and concerns. I hope I rise to this. I know I often fail, but I try to get better at it everyday (sic).

Another wife wrote, "Well I certainly don't like to clean, and love to sleep in. I also have a complicated personal history so I don't 'put out' as often as I 'should'. I feel guilty for all this." A third wife stated:

> I believe a good wife takes care of her husband by being a considerate spouse. She cooks for him. If he's busy, she picks up the slack. If she needs help, she asks for it instead of demanding it. She loves him for who he is and is there for him through the good times and bad times. In my marriage, I cook for my husband. I try to help him out but am not always great about doing so. I mostly demand his help but I'm a bit compulsive regarding that; patience isn't my strong point. I do love my husband for who he is but I have to remember that I should support him whether I agree with him or not.

Another wife didn't indicate directly that she feels a need to perform better, but did suggest how difficult it was for her to perform her perceived role when she wrote that a good wife is "someone who can take care of the home and the needs of the family; this is hard because I am often exhausted after work and cannot always cook, clean, and keep track of everything." All four of these wives suggested some form of sacrifice as being a part of their role and a sense of incompetence in sacrificing to a

satisfactory level. Interestingly, husbands did not complain that their wives were not cleaning adequately, though three husbands indicated dissatisfaction in the quantity of sex their wives engaged in. It is possible that wives' perceived inadequacies negatively affect their self-esteem. Relationship satisfaction represents a very important aspect of mental health for both women and men; however, women's experiences within relationships are different than men's (Yakushko, 2005). For example, some argue that women place more importance on social relationships, even at times to the detriment of their own needs. Additionally, women are more likely than men to devalue their relationship capabilities (Yakushko, 2005). The clinical implications of this are vast. These issues are relevant to both individual and marital therapists working with such women. The influence of covert power influences such as perceived fairness and benevolent sexism are important to address in order to shed light on how the subtleties of such influence affect women's perceptions of themselves.

While this study did not find that decision-making outcomes had a mediating effect between ambivalent sexism and marital satisfaction, there was a correlation between benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes. The present study is the first to explore the relationship between benevolent sexism and decision-making outcomes. Previous research investigating decision-making outcomes in dual earner marriages found that women who make more money than their husbands tended to make fewer decisions within their marriages (Tichenor, 1999). This study found that as benevolent sexism increased, decisions were deferred to the spouse in both male and female participants. It is possible that, as Lips (1991) suggests, married women

in the workforce may engage in the process aspect of decision-making, but relinquish final say in order to "appear" to have less power. This theory may explain why wives overwhelmingly describe the decision-making process in their marriage as being one of open discussion and pros and cons despite the evidence that they, in the end, allow their husbands to make decisions as benevolent sexism increases. Because this study did not compare dyads to each other, it is unclear whether or not responses indicated perceptions as to who has final say in decisions or the reality as to who makes those decisions.

Limitations of the Present Study

The current study had a number of limitations that should be addressed in future research. This study has limitations in generalizability based on the variables within the participant sample. Though the research design intended a diverse, randomly sampled population, most participants resulted from networking. Consequently, all participants were college educated. Many held educations that contain content that specifically addresses social justice issues such as psychology or social work. Most participants reside in Seattle, WA, which is known to be a politically liberal geographical area. While this study sheds some light on how benevolent sexism is associated with marital satisfaction, the effects are clearly generalizable only to the specific societal context of the demographic represented in this study. A higher degree of variability in individual characteristics of the participants would provide a higher degree of generalizability. Realistically, results from this study can only apply to the demographic characteristics represented in the present sample. In addition to limits in generalizability, this study solely looked at

the relationship between variables, therefore, causation cannot be assumed. While the results provide interesting information to add to the current understanding of the many ways that sexism may impact women, it does not explain how this relationship is constructed.

Another limitation of the present study was in the use of final say to determine decision-making power in the marriages. Decision-making processes are much more difficult to measure than decision-making outcomes. It is unknown if final say was granted by a more powerful spouse, if issues were prevented from being raised by a spouse, or if non-decisions occur as a covert acts of power. As a result, measuring decision outcomes may not provide an accurate measure of covert power in a marriage.

Because the responses of individual members of dyads were not compared in the present study, it was not possible to determine if there were actual inequities in the marriages. Information could only be inferred based on the perceptions of individual participants.

Finally, because all data was gathered via online surveys, it is possible that participants did not respond within a private and confidential environment. It cannot be verified that participants did not collaborate with spouses, friends, or family in their responses. As Zipp et al. (2004) found in his research, women changed their responses to questions when they knew how their husbands answered questions. While all participants were requested more than once not to discuss their answers with their spouses until both had finished the surveys, this cannot be substantiated.

Directions for Future Research

As sexism is a cultural construct, which is passed on through the process of socialization, variations in culture across different regions of the United States suggest importance for future studies to gain a national sample to ensure that differences based on regional differences are accounted for. Additionally, this study looked specifically at heterosexual relationships. While it made sense in this study examine heterosexual relationships, it is unclear whether or not experiencing sexism in general also might impact relationships for non-heterosexual couples. Similarly, this study did not gather information related to racial/ethnic backgrounds. It is important that future research in this area study large enough samples of diverse populations in order to gain a deeper understanding of how the effects of benevolent sexism are different between demographic variables such as age, religion, race, nation of origin, educational background, family of origin history, etc. Future research in this area may help determine which populations are most vulnerable to the effects of benevolent sexist beliefs. Longitudinal studies may uncover specific variables that either sustain or reduce benevolent sexism.

Historically, research on sexism has focused on the negative effects on women, but has not similarly attended to the possible negative effects on men. It has been typical that men have been focused on as perpetrators and, therefore, not as victims of the systemic influences of sexism. Future research should consider detrimental effects on men as well as on women. It would also be beneficial to explore the effects of benevolent sexism on dyads. While participants may hold benevolent sexist beliefs, this does not necessarily mean that they experience

benevolent sexism in their relationships. It might be worthwhile for future studies to investigate if such sexist experiences in the relationship relate to relationship quality. Longitudinal research might include outcome studies in which open discussion of how benevolent sexism is enacted within couples engaged in therapy to determine whether or not making the implicit aspects of sexism explicit has a positive therapeutic effect.

This study relied heavily on self-report measures. In self-report measures there is always the chance that reporting may be skewed by perception and socially desirable. Future studies may look at other forms of reporting that may produce more accurate results, especially given the discrepancies that were apparent between the quantitative and qualitative data in the present study.

Future exploration into the effects of covert power could further inform interventions into relationship difficulties. For example, it would be worthwhile for therapists to explore sexism that women have experienced in general (as opposed to just specifically to the context of their intimate relationship) when clients come to therapy with relationship problems to understand on an individual basis how such events may have impacted the client's experiences leading up to and within their intimate relationship. Furthermore, this study offers support for the idea of exploring socio-cultural factors in the context of therapy as a means to assist the client in seeing their experience in a larger social context.

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Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

Marital Satisfaction Study

Be part of an important marital satisfaction research study

• *Are you between 19 and 65 years of age?*

• *Have you lived with your spouse for at least 5 years?*

• *Do you believe that men and women are equal partners in marriages?*

If you answered YES to these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a marital satisfaction study.

The purpose of this research study is to explore variables that affect marital satisfaction in married individuals who consider their relationships to be based in equality. Benefits include providing valuable information that will likely inform marriage counseling. Participants will be entered into a drawing for a payment incentive.

Male and female married individuals between the ages of 19 and 65 who are not presently involved in domestic violence legal proceedings, divorce proceedings, or marriage therapy are eligible to participate.

This study is being conducted via computerized administration through Antioch University Seattle.

Please call Monique Brown at (206) 457-3092 or email at maritalsatisfactionresearch@gmail.com for more information.

Appendix B

Recruitment Synopsis

Recruitment synopsis for telephone calls

Hi, my name is Monique Brown. I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Psychology at Antioch University Seattle. I am conducting research for my dissertation that will explore the importance of various aspects of marriage and how those relate to satisfaction within marriages. As a result of my research, I hope to provide important clinical information for clinicians who work with couples and families. I am wondering if you have a minute to hear how you can help me facilitate this project?

I need to access a fairly large number of married men and women. I thought that reaching parents of school aged children might be an effective way to reach my potential participant pool. I have a letter summarizing my research that I would like to send home to the parents of your students. I am wondering if it would be possible to send such a letter home with the students of your school.

Appendix C

Letter to parents

Dear parents,

I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Psychology at Antioch University Seattle. While attending Antioch, I have become increasingly interested in my work with couples and families.

I am conducting research for my dissertation that will explore the importance of various aspects of marriage and how those relate to satisfaction within marriages. As a result of my research, I hope to provide important clinical information for clinicians who work with couples and families. I hope that this information provides insight to clinicians in their treatment planning to better serve their clients. I am hopeful that the information you could provide will have a significant impact upon how various relationship dynamics affect egalitarian-minded marriages.

In order to complete my research, I will need about 30 minutes of your time. This time will be at your convenience. Research material will be available on SurveyMonkey for computerized administration. Paper and pencil administration will be available if requested. In exchange for your time and consideration, I will be happy to provide you with the results of your own marriage survey results if both parties agree as well as the results of my research findings. In addition, each couple participating in my dissertation research will be entered into a random drawing for your choice of a $75 gift card to Amazon.com.

Your child's/children's school has graciously allowed me to request your assistance by allowing me to distribute this letter to the parents of their students. If you and your spouse are interested in participating in my study and consider yourselves an egalitarian-minded couple, please contact me at (insert contact information) and I will send you a few screening questions and more information regarding the survey process.

Again, thank you for all of your consideration and I look forward to your participation in my research.

Monique Brown, MA, LMHCA
Doctoral Candidate, Antioch University Seattle

Appendix D

Participant consent form

Informed Consent and Confidentiality Statement

Dear Research Participant:
You are invited to participate in a research study on various influences to marital satisfaction. Your participation will contribute to increasing societal awareness about the dynamics that influence marital relationships. Also, your participation will help counselors and therapists to better understand and meet the needs of what potentially lies beneath conflicts and depression that results from marital stress.

I am conducting this research to fulfill dissertation requirements as required by the clinical psychology program at Antioch University Seattle. The data collection portion of the research will take place from late July 2012 through December 2012. One goal of the research is to gather information about relationship satisfaction. You will be asked to anonymously complete four short questionnaires that gather personal information about you and your marital relationship.

If you decide to participate in this research, it should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes to read and complete the items on the questionnaires. Your consent to be a research participant is strictly voluntary and should you decline to participate or should you choose to drop out at any time during the study, there will be no penalties. Questionnaires can be filled out anonymously online, or, if preferred, you may choose one of two designated dates to fill out the survey packet in pencil and paper format.

There are no anticipated physical or psychological risks in this study. However, if you feel distress at any time during participation by the questions asked, you may stop immediately and contact the following hotline to find services to help you. 1-866-4CRISIS (King County 24 hour crisis line)

While there may be no direct benefits from your participation in this study, your involvement may contribute to a better understanding of marital satisfaction. In addition, your participation may help with the development of effective treatment options for people who experience distress in their marital relationships. Additionally, upon completion of survey materials, you will be entered into a drawing to receive a $75 gift card to Amazon.com.

As a research participant, information you provide will be kept anonymous. No names or other identifiers will be recorded on any of the instruments used, and demographic data will be stored in a separate locked location from questionnaire responses. Data files will be maintained for a minimum of 5 years, and if the study results are published, they will continue to be maintained at least five years from the date of publication. Electronic data will be stored in a password-protected file on a personal computer of the researcher, and paper data will be stored in a locked file in the researcher's home office.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the study or your participation in the study, you may contact me, Monique Brown at

maritalsatisfactionresearch@gmail.com. This research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Antioch University/Seattle, Washington. If you have questions about the ethical approval of the study, you may contact the IRB Committee chairperson, Dr. Alejandra Suarez, at asuarez@antioch.edu.

I, _____, have read and understand the information explaining the purpose of this research as well as my rights and responsibilities as a participant. My signature below indicates my consent to participate in this research, according to the terms and conditions outlined above.

Signature_____ _____
Date_____

Print Name:_____
_____ _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix E

Participant contact form

Participant contact form

I have signed the Consent Form agreeing to participate in a study about how certain relationship dynamics affect marital satisfaction that has been approved by the Antioch University Seattle Institutional Review Board. I understand that my responses to this questionnaire are voluntary and that I can choose to change my mind and not participate at any time. Furthermore, I understand that I will not be identified by name in any this research or publications resulting from this study.

I also agree that I will not discuss my responses with my spouse until after we both have turned in our completed study packets.

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Contact Information

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City:_____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Appendix F

Demographic Questionnaire

Please fill in correct and accurate responses to the following:

1. Circle your age bracket

   (20-29)   (30-39)   (40-49)   (50-59)   (60-69)

2. How many times have you been married, including this marriage?

   (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)   (6 or more)

3. How long have you been married in your current marriage?   _____ years
   _____ months

4. Choose the highest level of formal education you have completed:.
   ( ) less than 12 years without high school diploma or GED
   ( ) high school diploma/GED
   ( ) 2 year associate degree*
   ( ) 4 year college*
   ( ) Masters degree*
   ( ) Professional degree (MD, ND, JD, PhD, etc)*
   *What is your highest degree in? _____

5. What is your current occupational status?
   ( ) Under-employed
   ( ) Employed
   ( ) Looking for work
   ( ) Stay- at- home parent

6. If employed or under-employed per previous question, how many hours per week to you spend working a paying job?

( ) 0-9   ( ) 40-49
( ) 10-19   ( ) 50-59
( ) 20-29   ( ) 60-69
( ) 30-39   ( ) 70+

7. How many hours per week to you personally spend doing household labor, including childcare responsibilities?

( ) 0-2	( ) 10-12	( ) 20-22
( ) 2-4	( ) 12-14	( ) 22-24
( ) 4-6	( ) 16-18	( ) 24+
( ) 8-10	( ) 18-20	

8. What is your personal income, from your job, before taxes?

( ) no income
( ) under 5,000
( ) 5,000-9,999
( ) 10,000-19,999
( ) 20,000-29,999
( ) 30,000-39,999
( ) 40,000-49,999
( ) 50,000-59,999
( ) 60,000-69,999
( ) 70,000-79,999
( ) 80,000-89,999
( ) 90,000-99,999
( ) 100,000-119,999
( ) 120,000-149,999
( ) 150,000-179,999
( ) 180,000-199,999
( ) 200,000+

9. With what race do you identify? _____

10. With what religion do you identify? (Write none if you don't identify with a religion.) _____

11. In a typical week, how many hours do you generally spend doing household chores? (Including childcare responsibilities, but not including playing with children) (If none, enter "0")
_____ # hours per week

12. In a typical week, how many hours does your spouse generally spend doing household chores? (Including childcare responsibilities, but not including playing with children) (If none, enter "0")
_____ # hours per week

13. How many children presently live with you and your spouse?

(0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (more than 5)

14. If you have children presently living with you and your spouse, what are their ages?
_____

15. Please circle the most correct answer for who typically does or oversees the following tasks the majority of the time in your home. Choose N/A if the item is not applicable to you.

Folding the laundry…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Changing towels and sheets…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Grocery shopping…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Making breakfast…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Making lunch…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Making dinner…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Lawn/yard maintenance…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid

help)…..(N/A)

Car repairs…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Cleaning the house…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Paying the bills…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Bathing children…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Getting children ready in the morning…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Driving the kids to activities…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Disciplining children…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Taking out the trash…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Playing with children…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Put children to bed…(you)…..(your spouse).....(shared equally)…..(paid help)…..(N/A)

Appendix G

Perceived fairness survey

Perceived Fairness

1. How fair do you think the arrangement of household chores is to **<u>you</u>**?

   1. Very unfair
   2. Somewhat unfair
   3. Somewhat fair
   4. Very fair

2. How fair do you think the arrangement of household chores is to **<u>your spouse</u>**?

   1. Very unfair
   2. Somewhat unfair
   3. Somewhat fair
   4. Very fair

PFS

The next set of questions deals with your perception of division of household labor tasks during the typical week. When answering, please consider not simply the one task, but how it fits into the whole picture of housework.

For the following categories, how fair do you perceive the division of household tasks to be to **yourself** during the typical week?

	Very unfair to me	Somewh at unfair to me	Somewh at fair to me	Very fair to me
1. Cooking (planning and preparing meals, etc.)	1	2	3	4
2. Cleaning (dishes, vacuuming, laundry, etc.)	1	2	3	4
3. Household management (phone calls, bills, errands, etc.)	1	2	3	4
4. Yard work (trash and lawn care, etc.)	1	2	3	4
5. Children (watching, changing diapers, bathing, homework, etc.)	1	2	3	4

For the following categories, how fair do you perceive the division of household tasks to be to **your spouse** during the typical week?

	Very unfair to my spouse	Somewh at unfair to my spouse	Somewh at fair to my spouse	Very fair to my spouse
1. Cooking (planning and preparing meals, etc.)	1	2	3	4
2. Cleaning (dishes, vacuuming, laundry, etc.)	1	2	3	4
3. Household management (phone calls, bills, errands, etc.)	1	2	3	4

4. Yard work (trash and lawn care, etc.)	1	2	3	4
5. Children (watching, changing diapers, bathing, homework, etc.)	1	2	3	4

Appendix H

Qualitative questions

Supplemental Questions

- What does marital satisfaction mean to you?

- What does it mean to you to be a partner in a marriage?

- What qualities make a "good" wife and how do those qualities exist or not exist in your marriage?

- What qualities make a "good" husband and how do those qualities exist or not exist in your marriage?

- How do you go about making decisions in your marriage?

Appendix I

Participants' rights

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation and without penalty. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins. You can contact the researcher at maritalsatisfactionresearch@gmail.com. Your questions will be answered, unless answering them would interfere with the study's outcome, within 48 hours.

Appendix J

Randomly selected participant responses to the question:

What does marital satisfaction mean to you?

Men's Responses

Loving, caring, selfless, sacrificial, understanding, equal parts, respectful

When the relationship with my spouse is the only stress free part of my life.

As a team we use each other's strengths during both challenging and enjoyable day to day activities as fairly as possible. Hopefully created a sense of fairness. Even though some chores are handled entirely by just one of us.

Being a partner in life with them and having a stronger bond with them than anyone else.

Marital satisfaction is having a solid and stable foundation, a partner in this journey of growing old, raising a family, etc. Being able to have fun and be serious. Able to adapt to each other's needs and interests as we get older.

Being happy in my current marriage and not needing to seek outside enhancements to feel satisfied.

That by being in intimate partnership with another, we become capable of actualizing who we are and could be. I have become more and more comfortable with who I am and my place in the world, and I owe that to a marriage where that is how I am seen and how I see my partner. I would not be who I am without her. We have each other's back.

Partnership. Keeping our individuality while experiencing togetherness.

Continuing to grow as individuals as well as together in a supported, fun, sexy, understanding relationship of trust.

Both partners cherish each other, have a shared vision of how to spend their time together, support each other's personal growth

Women's Responses

Having the relationship be an important source of happiness in life. Enjoying the time we spend together, and making a point of spending time together not because we feel any obligation to, but because we both enjoy it. Feeling cared for and supported unconditionally, knowing that my partner has my best interests at heart, and feeling confident that we can work through just about any problem as a team rather than as opponents.

Contentment, feeling heard and understood. Feeling like you are a team and not separate beings on your own.

mostly it means security, safety and trust

It means open and healthy communication. Being respectful of each other and having each others back. It's about having someone to come home to that loves you unconditionally and is happy to see you and spend time together. It's about making new agreements and changing and growing together and individually. It's about making no assumptions. Also raising a family together and parenting children together.

Partnership, communication, happiness, shared interests. I feel strongly that both partners in a relationship should bring equal abilities (both earning-related and functional/task related) to the relationship. For example, sometimes I feel it's unfair that I do all the cleaning and dishes and laundry - but I do them well and to my satisfaction. To put it in perspective, my husband does all the repairs, building, fixing, and "man" things without complaint because he's better at those tasks than I am and does them well. It's a balance. We both also earn relatively equal salaries so there is rarely any discussion about money. And it doesn't hurt that he's my best friend.

Support and safety first, we're on the same team. Then novelty, playfulness

Marital satisfaction, to me, means being able to talk to your spouse about anything and everything knowing that he will always be there no matter what. And in turn this means that I will not go anywhere and will stay strong and work through any issues we may endure together.

One that we have and I cherish: Having the ability to spend time together and feel like ourselves, unselfconsciously, not wondering about what we will talk about or what we will do--a sense of ease in being together. One that I miss: More money power equality. When I started to bring in money, my husband cut down what he contributed to the household, making me often feel like "I can never get ahead." I manage the household finances, but feel burdened by stress over low bank account balances and how to pay for bills, whereas the overall income is enough, just my husband keeps it in his business. He is generous with kid school expenses and summer camps, but I could use a bit more for kid activities, transportation, etc. Another area that turned out to be more important in the long run than I guessed some 24 years ago: having some real commonalities in political and philosophical outlooks and values. We have mostly been well matched in this arena from the get-go, and have grown in parallel, also in and a bit out of religious observance.

Feeling supported, loved and appreciated.

It means supporting the other person through whatever they need help with, listening to them, having empathy. Feeling like you aren't a burden for asking something of them.

Appendix K

Randomly selected participant responses to the question:

What does it mean to you to be a partner in a marriage?

Men's responses

Looks like I may have gotten ahead of myself on those last questions. I can be a bit more specific though. A good partner in any romantic relationship is someone who supports you and that you can rely on. Who pushes you to be the best version of yourself both through explicit encouragement and because you want to be the partner that they deserve. Someone who goes on adventures with you; who's always down to try new things and new places and who you travel well with. A person who respects you when she doesn't agree with you, and who cares enough about that to always try to understand you. ...God, this sounds cheezey. You've just got to believe me when I tell you that my partner is just the best.

Your marriage partner should be your world.

Sharing the work load. Sharing money.

It DOES NOT mean that both parties have the same role and/or responsibilities. It DOES mean that both parties are using their strengths to build each other up, put the other first, and trust that their spouse is doing the same.

Partnership is sharing. Sharing problems, sharing successes, sharing pains and sharing joys. A partner helps earn money, helps spend money, helps plan.

Equal share in chores/duties around the house. No one person is forced to do everything.

Trust each other to make decisions individually, but also rely on each other to help make decisions.

Being a partner means to share in the carrying the load of then needs of the household and family. To always have an open and honest line of communication.

I think to be a true partner, one should be willing to take at least half the work and monetary burden of being married. -And really be willing to do more than half, just out of the kindness of your heart/love for your partner. You should do your best to be considerate of your partner's needs when making decisions that affect the both of you and in general.

Partner is an excellent description for the meaning of a marriage in my view. Important decisions get made together, with input from each side being equally important. We don't try to "covert" the other person to our own opinion. There is a willingness to take risks and be vulnerable on each side, which is the cornerstone for keeping the relationship moving. We also both have a commitment to grow and learn, so that we don't get caught in the trap of doing the same thing the same way and expecting different results.

Women's responses

It means to support the other and the relationship as a whole, but to also maintain and strengthen yourself as an individual. I see us as a team and the better each of us are, the better WE are.

Even in a partnership, there has to be a leader. To me, being a partner means trusting my husband to lead our family in a loving way. It also means that we talk through any decisions that need to be made. Neither of us make a (big) decision without talking to the other. It means that if you see something that needs done, you just do - you don't think "well, that's not really my job". It also means that you don't hold onto hurts or complaints - you talk about them and work through them. Once you've worked through them, you don't bring them back up.

It means being equally involved in making decision that affect both of us equally, while giving him more of a say in decisions that affect him more, and weighing my own opinion more highly in decisions that affect me more. It means helping my partner solve problems and supporting him through hard times, as well as sharing good times. It means considering the impact on him of any decision I make. It also means asking for what I need and making it as easy as possible for him to provide it, and likewise trying my best to provide what he needs.

It means helping and supporting one another in all our spheres of influence: domestic, professional and social. We like to make things fair, for example, when my husband goes to band practice and I am responsible for putting both our daughters down to sleep, he will let me sleep in the next day or take bedtime duty the next night. We also like to do the household chores we most prefer, for instance I am a self admitted terrible cook and he loves to cook so he cooks most of the food while I have no problem doing the dishes.

Paying attention to one another's needs, taking into consideration what is important to the other, and making an effort. Communication, caring, kindness, love.

Compromise and communication. Giving equally when ever possible, and giving more if needed. If a disagreement occurs, you need to listen to your partner openly and respond with how you honestly feel about it. And at times you may need to let go of something that you disagree with, especially if you can see that it matters more to the other person.

I need to listen, to be a cheerleader, but I also need to help solve problems. I should invest more time in myself so I can be a better person for my family.

I need to do my fair share of what needs to be done. I need to help solve problems that come up. I need to listen and share. I need to try to be a person in my own right so I can add some interest to the relationship.

Partner is when you consider the well-being of everybody involved and not just yourself. When you have shared goals and not just personal goals. When you are willing to

sacrifice sometimes because you know that your partner will do the same. When each partner feels like he/she is contributing the same amount of energy to make this work and nobody feels taken advantage of or that they are giving too much or too little.

Equal sharing and investment in all members of family, in ensuring smooth day-to-day function, and in achieving family goals. Requires hard work, honesty, good communication, patience, and kindness.

Appendix L

Randomly selected participant responses to the question:

What qualities make a "good" wife and how do those qualities exist or not exist in

your marriage?

Women's responses

I think a good wife is a facilitator and a support. I think that women can tend to be better listeners so I think it is an attribute of a good wife to listen to both her husband and herself. I definitely try my best to be supportive but I could probably listen to myself more, and think about what I am saying and the impact it might have.

Helping my husband being a good man by trusting him with his decisions and trusting him to be a good husband and a good dad - not trying to control everything he does. Allowing him to help me and not be so prideful that I won't accept his help. (that one is hard for me!) Keeping a sense of fun going - nurture the friendship that attracted us to each other in the first place.

I think being a good wife means being there for my husband when he asks for help but anticipating those moments when he may not verbalize his desire for support but giving it anyway. It means listening and commiserating to how his day at work went. It means being on the same page with our future plans and sharing our hopes and dreams with each other. Not cheating or keeping secrets. I don't play head games with him or try to manipulate him to get something I want.

I think a 'good wife' is someone who cares about what her husband feels, who tries to be the best person she can be and wants the best for them as a couple. When the chips are down she is there, even if the dishes aren't always done and it's soup and sandwiches for dinner too many times. She listens not just to answer back but to really hear his opinions, dreams and concerns. I hope I rise to this. I know I often fail, but I try to get better at it everyday.

A good wife should have the same qualities as a good husband. Both are equal and should not feel they deserve any more than the other. I will add to this though, when it cause to the bedroom, even though I am not always in the mood, I am perfectly willing to relieve his stresses. And because of that I think he is more willing to do extra chores around the house when I ask. Although I am not the most diligent at getting things done around the house. I think I am still a good wife to my husband.

Taking care of my child first and my husband second (even though I'm sure I should fall in there somewhere, it typically doesn't happen often).

Well I certainly don't like to clean, and love to sleep in. I also have a complicated personal history so I don't "put out" as often as I "should". I feel guilty for all this.

I believe a good wife takes care of her husband by being a considerate spouse. She cooks for him. If he's busy, she picks up the slack. If she needs help, she asks for it instead of demanding it. She loves him for who he is and is there for him through the good times and bad times. In my marriage, I cook for my husband. I try to help him out but am not always great about doing so. I mostly demand his help but I'm a bit compulsive regarding

that; patience isn't my strong point. I do love my husband for who he is but I have to remember that I should support him whether I agree with him or not.

Someone who can take care of the home and the needs of the family; this is hard because I am often exhausted after work and cannot always cook, clean, and keep track of everything.

I believe I am a good wife in that I have a greater perspective on the household than that of my private self interest. At times, I resent how little personal time is left for me by the time all the many things I do are accomplished. But I also have pride in how hard-working I am and it gives me a sense of accomplishment to be raising 4 beautiful children and running the household, while working almost full time as a psychologist. I have a calm demeanor. I rarely get emotionally activated in a negative direction and I think my "mellow-ness" makes me relatively easy to live with. I am harmony seeking and tend to compromise. I am willing to have sex when he has more desire and I wouldn't necessarily choose to at that moment. I think my ability to sacrifice my exact preference to please my husband (and his ability to do the same at times) brings us closer. I believe a good husband or wife are open to experiences together and to the influence of another person at a deep level. I also believe that a good wife or husband has some other places to get some support needs met outside the marriage--like having close friends.

Male responses

Err... I don't like the term "wife" very much; it's too loaded with obedience and servitude. The phrase "good wife" raises my hackles still more. I prefer "partner" although that makes me sound like a gay hippie, which I don't really mind, but it does give the wrong impression. I guess what makes a good partner is someone who always has my back; who will do everything she can to support me and make my life easier, and who will let me do the same for her. That sense of secure and effortless mutual reliance is great. We totally have that in our relationship and it is amazing. I know that if I'm having a tough month she will be there to help me as I'm going through it, and she will stick it out until I make it though pretty much unconditionally. We make a great team and she is the star player. loving, caring, selfless, sacrificial, understanding, sense of humor, sarcastic, cooking ability, respectful

She listens, openly shows concern and interest without being asked, is not afraid to correct me when she feels I am wrong, and supports me when my vision becomes a bit Quixotic. She would at times "baby" me a bit. She would enjoy sexual pleasures and willingly seek them out. She would also be faithful and should expect the same of me. She would be a good mother. She would be my friend. In my marriage some of these exist; some do not. My spouse is supportive, and we share many interests and beliefs. She is not openly caring, but rather withdraws when I attempt to express feelings that are not entirely positive. She avoids unpleasantness. She is not physically affectionate, does not spontaneously hug me or give back rubs, etc. She is very shut down sexually. Our sex life is more or less nonexistent and extremely unremarkable when it does occur. This has been true since the beginning of our marriage.

The same qualities that exist in a good husband: Love and give all you have. Understanding. Empathy. Sharing. Sacrifice. It is continuing to care for child, cleaning, and cooking while the worker naps after a 14 hour work day. It is coming home and caring for the child, cleaning, and cooking after a 14 hour work day. If nothing else, empathy. It exists for us.

Supportive and can make the husband feel special.

Personally, I'd like my wife to be sexually compatible, considerate of my needs and willing to take half the monetary and work burden of keeping a marriage and household going. In my own marriage, I feel that my sexual needs and my wife's don't always line up, but that in almost every other way we are compatible.

A wife supports the family enjoys being a part of it and participates. My wife is depressed at the moment, she does not get enjoyment from the family functions not to mention work and our child's schooling. she still participates but with no joy

I don't have an idea of what makes a "good wife" per se. A good partner is one that realizes that both parties in a relationship have needs and work towards a fair negotiated balance between the 2. I believe that for the most part, my wife and I have that.

A "good" wife is a person that is your best friend. Someone you can build a life with and challenges you to grow and meet the demands of life. Someone who encourages you to take risks, especially those you are uncertain about. I have always thought this idea was a fantasy until I met my wife. We truly enjoy being together. There is very little pressure on either side, and we make each other smile at least 10 times a day. I know I can come to her with anything and will be supported, and in turn I provide the same for her.

She would listen and be interested in what your point of view and what your problems and concerns are. She would have her own views, her own life but would still be involved in yours. There's balance in everything we do together and apart. There's no "mine" and "yours" but there's still boundaries. She knows when to engage and when to avoid. She knows how to help and when she is not needed. She communicates clearly and honestly and likes to help. She is there when you need her but also gives you time to yourself and your friends and hobbies.

Appendix M

Randomly selected participant responses to the question:

What qualities make a "good" husband and how do those qualities exist or not exist in

your marriage?

Men's responses

I have a similar relationship to the word "husband" although probably not to the same extent. Anyway, I don't think this whole "working together to make each-other's lives better because you love each other and want them to be happy and have a good life" thing is gendered. It's not like the woman has to be caring and the man has to be rich or some shit. The things that make a good partner make a good partner, no matter the gender of each, either, or both.

Partnership, a willingness to make decisions according to need rather than exact mathematical equality. I think we do pretty well.

A good husband is sexually faithful, provides ample security (financial and material), cares for children, shares domestic obligations, listens, listens, listens. He must also be aware that men (at least of my generation) were not raised to be sensitive to the differences between men and women. e.g. putting down the toilet seat and lid is not hard, but is important for women who must sit on the thing. He must also know that his sense of humor and hers are different, and that he can easily say or do things that might irritate or even hurt her. Communication skills are essential and very important for a husband. Listen carefully; speak even more carefully.

The same qualities that make a good wife a good wife will make a good husband a good husband. There should be no difference with regard to sex other than each partner being mindful that in each circumstance there are gender differences but in the end it is about unconditional understanding

In our marriage a good husband provides an income that allows for my spouse be comfortable enough to explore those things that ad meaningful. Like school.

Supportive and can make the wife feel special.

I was depressed for 5 years, gained 60 lbs and was not active enough in our marriage or producing enough on the work front. I am not depressed for 1.5 years now, am going to school full time hopefully for a stable career in healthcare and half lost 20 lbs. maybe when I am working my wife will get out of her depression. I am also ill organized and not as good a cleaner or keep things tidy, my wife says I always work on things that are not necessary. We made the choice that I stay at home more because she had better insurance. My work satisfaction suffered and helped ease me in to depression and her appreciation of me suffered. She knows I take good care of the kids but she doesn't respect me for it.

Leading where she can't

Being willing to be vulnerable, not using coercion tactics, and a willingness to not divide tasks up into "his' and "hers." Sharing in all life's experiences, and being present enough

to know when something is off slightly or when your partner needs comforting. A person that encourages without being forceful and encourages his partner to take risks when she is passionate. I strive to live up to these ideals, and hope that I meet them on a consistent enough basis. I believe they do exist, and I also ask on a fairly consistent basis to ensure there isn't anything more my wife needs from me.

He would listen and be interested in what your point of view and what your problems and concerns are. He would have his own views, his own life but would still be involved in yours. There's balance in everything we do together and apart. There's no "mine" and "yours" but there's still boundaries. He knows when to engage and when to avoid. He knows how to help and when he is not needed. He communicates clearly and honestly and likes to help. He is there when you need him but also gives you time to yourself and your friends and hobbies.

Women's responses

I think a good husband is also supportive but is also a protector. To me in particular I need someone to see the bigger picture and help me prioritize. I feel like most of my needs in a husband are met the majority of the time though I might appreciate a little more help with chores and the financial miscellany.

I personally don't like the term good wife/good husband, since I feel that there is a prejudice behind that concept. Nevertheless, I would say that a "good" husband is a person happy with himself, who choose to married to start a journey of love, fun respect, and discovery with the woman he loves. Of course, as life is hard, imperfect, unexpected, a "good" husband should be able to deal with difficulties discussing openly with his wife and being able to seek for help if situations are getting out of hand for some reason. In my experience for men in general is more difficult to reach out for help (outside the family's privacy) Therefore I think that being able to talk through things with friends or even professionals would be a plus for a "good" husband.

A" good husband" is a good breadwinner and planner. My husband is a very hard worker but I make more money than he does. A lot more, like three times as much. He currently works part time and runs the household. He is a "good husband" in terms of maintaining the lawn and taking out the garbage and recycling.

A 'good husband' is someone you can count on when the going gets tough. A man of his word, you can trust him to come through. He listens and cares about your worries and celebrates your successes. He may not split the chores half and half, but he gives you a break when you make a mistake and picks up the slack when your too tired or you just want to relax with a book. He has a sense of humor and is a great role model for your kids. I have all of that most of the time. Is he perfect? Hell no! But he's just right for me and that makes him a great husband!

A good husband takes care of his wife. He provides for his family financially but will accept his fate if his wife is the bread winner of the family. He does his share around the

house and with the children. He likes to complete the yard work and take on projects to free up his wife's time to do other chores. He supports his wife's hobbies and is willing to babysit the kids when she has baseball association stuff to do. In my marriage, my husband doesn't always recognize my needs and wants. He is the bread winner of the family and does his fair share with the house work. He does play with the kids and helps by babysitting them when needed. He is not a fan of the yard work but is willing to do it. I get the drift he is not fond of my time spent on baseball association stuff because he gets "stuck" with the kids two to three times per month for the first six months of the year.

A good husband is a good provider and tries to take care of the family safety and needs. My husband has been a good provider. I have not always felt he was supportive of my needs.

my husband doesn't help as much around the house as he could, and doesn't always appreciate my contributions to the household and financially-but he is a good partner, supportive of my career and proud of my accomplishments. He is an excellent father and a good person, and is my perfect match even though he isn't "perfect."

Forgiveness, compassion, true love, listen, laugh, honesty, explore and support.

Someone who is loyal, caring, affectionate, hard working, honest, trustworthy. Someone who is interested in what i do and say (who i am) and pushes me to be better. i have all this in my marriage now. My biggest complaint tends to be division of household chores - like the fact that he doesn't cook or clean (if he would even just pick up after himself that would be nice!) or do yard work. And that i'm left "nagging him" to help.

Someone who cares about his spouse, helps out, and provides appropriately. My husband does not do the "guy" things in a marriage such as support the family financially, take care of car care, or yard care without multiple prompts and interventions on my part.

A good husband is a husband who is able to show love, affection, support, and protection. My husband does not demand things from me, but instead tells me what he needs and allows me to feel that I am doing a good job meeting those needs. He compliments me, not only on my appearance, but on things much deeper than that. He makes comments about my commitment to my family, how hard I work, and that he enjoys my sense of humor. We do not have children, but I enjoy watching him around my nieces and nephews and with our pets. He is handy and I really appreciate his ability to fix things and help me when I need it. He takes care of things and manages issues in our home that I am unable to do. I am in awe of his ability to build things and transform our home. He is kind to my family and even when I am mad at them, he does not speak ill of them, but tries to understand why they may be acting that way and helps to support me. I appreciate that he loves the things about me that I love in myself, the things that not everyone knows. My husband is kind, loyal, honest, and he has integrity. I am proud of him and enjoy him. Not only is it important to love your husband, but I feel that you have to like him. Like who he is, how he treats others, and how he makes you feel. I definitely have that in my husband.

Appendix N

Randomly selected participant responses to the question:

How do you go about making decisions in your marriage?

Men's responses

We discuss them with each other and our kids. Usually we reach an understanding, if not a consensus. Of course we use every tool at our disposal (e.g., brainstorming, force-field analysis, interpersonal confrontation techniques)

Well, if it's a small decision (day to day stuff, small purchases) then I, or she, will just make it. We both know that we don't have to sweat the small stuff and the other person will respect the decision and support it. If it's a larger decision (weekend plans, purchases in the 20-100 dollar range) we may shoot the other person a text to let them weigh in with any concerns or issues before we pull the trigger on it. And if it's a major decision (Life planning, career decisions, major purchases) we will discuss our options, talk about our opinions on it and what the emotions are reasons behind those opinions are. Then, if we aren't already in agreement, we will weigh the pros and cons of the options with the emotional investment of each of our opinions to find the option that will be the best for the person with the largest stake in the decision.

We pick our battles in all things. In some cases each of us is still getting to know what matters to the other. Part of sharing the responsibility of making our marriage work means we each let the other take the lead in the areas that matter to that person. Interpersonal relationships aren't rocket science; our success depends equally on me and my wife, and that fact is inescapable.

That depends entirely upon what sort of decision is being made. This question is hard to answer because decisions cover a gamut of topics. Some are intensely personal; some are purely material. What should we eat tonight? What should we plan to be doing in ten years? What sexual pleasures should we explore? What shall we do with excess money? See? Very different types of decisions. Very tough to generalize. I would say that we usually talk about things. Often, we delay talking until it is time to make a decision. We are not good at long-range planning. Personal stuff, like sex or illness, tends to be avoided if at all possible, at least by my spouse. I constantly check to be sure she is feeling well and is happy.

Like I do anything in my life. I factor in that which needs to be factored. My wife is my partner and I factor in how things will affect her as well as myself. Sometimes, knowing her insecurities, I will do things or make decisions that she may not like in the moment but are in no way designed to hurt her or upset her, even if they do in the moment. I do not want to reinforce her insecurities, contrarily I will do what I know in my heart is okay and she may be forced to be uncomfortable and upset in he moment AND I know she will grow from the experience. I am often respectful of her feelings, even if she doesn't always think so. I tend to be very selfless in my marriage but I am learning to take better care of myself. It's all a process and we are committed partners so I think we are on the right track

All decisions can be discussed. But it is also trusting that the other partner can make decisions independently that take into consideration both parties. Be considerate. Trust

your partner's ability to make independent decisions. Trust your partner to ask for help in making decisions. If unsure, discuss.

Almost all decisions that involve anything to do with the household is at least mentioned or discussed if necessary. Purchases for the family are at least quickly reviewed (like costco trips). Personal items, lunches, etc. are not discussed and doesn't need to be. Small purchases for personal use are also not necessary to discuss. It's best to be on the same page with my wife on the operation of our household and family. The actual discussion is usually quite simple. Here's the situation, here's the options, what do you think?

Mostly we try to make sure that we're both on the same page when it comes to making decisions. She makes more money, so I generally defer to her preference when making monetary decisions. We do our best to communicate.

On most things I cared less about things then she did and she made the decision. she makes good decisions but we made the decision because of better health care from her work to have me work less look after kids and she work more. I do all the financial decisions, I set up her 401k and her IRA because she has no interest in those things. I do the taxes and she just charges things to a credit card not knowing how much money is in the bank. she earns enough that she so far doesn't have to worry but if she were on her own I think she could get into trouble.

Most of the time I let her do so because I don't care about much of the minutia - whereas she oftentimes does. If I care, we have a discussion, I let her know my feelings and we discuss- I find that because I typically give her carte blanche for most decisions, when I speak up, she knows it is an important issue and she oftentimes accommodates my wishes.

Women's responses

We have very open channels of communication, so we usually talk through stuff first and bounce ideas off of each other to come to a consensus.

We make decisions together, especially if those decisions can affect both of us. I tend to push sometimes if I feel the urgency to make a decision, whereas my husband tend to be lazy at times. Most of the time he is okay with having me "nagging" a little, a kind of personal trainer let's say! I believe we compensate each other and really care for each other safety, so if a decision needs to be made for our own sake, we both don't waste time and act for the best. Conflicts arise, and arguments are there...., but in the end our decisions are the outcome of careful choices where each other's opinions have been considered.

We usually throw around different ideas, talk about the pros and cons, and usually come to the same decision. Wen we don't agree, one of us has to give. A I'd say we give pretty equally.

No formal process. I check in with my spouse to get his input; I do not often get the same courtesy.

Over the years, we've gotten much better about talking things through. My husband is very much a pro and con list maker and this seems to help guide and weigh our decisions.

We discuss any major decisions, and weigh in on the pros and cons. Ultimately whoever is most informed about the choices or has the more vested interest in the outcome probably carries more weight with his or her opinion, but we always come to a decision that both of us can support.

We discuss it a lot. Sometimes we make pro/con lists. Whatever will work at that time.

We talk about them together, and then usually end up going with what my husband wants.

Not at all gracefully. Usually one of us decides and the other lives with the consequences

We really communicate and talk and reach decisions together. We very rarely do anything with coming to the agreement together, and do absolutely nothing without discussing it with one another first.