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EXPERIENCE OF GENDER ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND NEGOTIATION IN SECOND
GENERATION DESI COUPLES

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University New England

In partial fulfillment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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EXPERIENCE OF GENDER ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND NEGOTIATION IN SECOND
GENERATION DESI COUPLES

This dissertation, by Deepa Patel, has
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

EXPERIENCE OF GENDER ROLE EXPECTATIONS AND NEGOTIATION IN SECOND GENERATION DESI COUPLES

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Due to the lack of research on the Desi community, this qualitative study was the first of its kind to investigate the process of gender role expectation and negotiation style among second generation Desi couples. Previous research provided awareness of unequal treatment amongst the male and female genders within the patriarchal structure of the Desi community. However, this study provided a unique understanding on Desi couples' perspective on gender dynamics. Six couples, ages 25- 35, who were married for at least 3 years and identified as second generation Desi were interviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding of gender role experiences. With in-depth interviews, phenomenological qualitative research on the experience of gender role expectation and negotiation explored these factors: influence of gender role and gender role development, division of labor, dismantling patriarchy, unconscious bias, financial decisions, becoming parents, conversations on gender roles, and conflict resolution. These six couples self-reported how their relationship is impacted by gender role dynamics as they create an egalitarian relationship. Some suggestions for therapeutic interventions are included in the clinical considerations. The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also discussed. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA (<https://aura.antioch.edu>) and OhioLINK ETD Center (<https://etd.ohiolink.edu>).

Keywords: Desi, Desi couples, gender roles, gender norms

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With Maharaj and Swami's grace, everything is possible. I thank Maharaj and Swami for where they have led me and pray that they continue to bless my journey. It is you who I trust, understand truth from, experience guidance by, find me in.

Dedication

To my Ba.

Your strength was consistently tested as the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system continued to be envious of your achievements. Your resilience in conquering the patriarchal system created a pathway for me to experience the joy of being an Indian- Desi woman of color. It is only due to your courage and kindness that I can create my own purpose. I am forever indebted to your dedication to me.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The meaning and purpose of marriage in society has changed over the past century. In the 21st century, it is becoming a more universal common practice to marry for the fundamental reason of love. However, marriage based on the premises of love would have been considered absurd in traditional marriages around the world until the late 19th century. Traditional marriage was a union based on arranged alliances, economic security, and politics (Coontz, 2004). Globally, marriage was a gesture to gain wealth and privilege. In addition, marriage used to depend on a clear division of labor and authority. With the women's rights movement gaining more momentum in the 19th and 20th centuries, women moved away from being the property of male counterparts. This shift in roles and individuality of women created a new meaning of what marriage meant (Connelly, 2000).

Gender role attitudes have become more egalitarian in the United States since the civil rights movements of the 1960s. As immigrants, first generation Desi families battle to maintain traditional gender roles and/or struggle to construct a new gender identity since society places males as the gender of preference, power, and privilege (Kallivayalil, 2004). Second-generation Desis may experience a fusion of gender role attitudes in their bicultural identity (Farver et. al, 2002). Also, gender role attitudes and beliefs may be highlighted more during the time of marriage and the structure of gender dynamics is challenged. It then becomes imperative to understand how second-generation Desi couples regulate what gender roles mean in their marriage.

The impact of gender roles on relationship quality among Desi couples in a broader lens has been previously explored (Dasgupta, 1998; Inman et al., 2001; Masood et al., 2009; Sandhya, 2009). Existing literature has provided relevant information on how assimilation affects gender

role dynamics, the pressure to carry traditional cultural values impacts gender attitudes, and the outcome of a more egalitarian relationship among South Asian couples (Dasgupta, 1998; Inman et al., 2001; Masood et al., 2009; Sandhya, 2009). In her study of India couples, Sandhya (2009) found that gender expectations and differences impacted overall marital satisfaction. It is clear that the research suggests gender role attitudes are particularly relevant in the South Asian community. It is noteworthy to mention research among Desi couples primarily focuses on South Asian couples who are predominantly Indian couples of Hindu faith. Studies focused on this particular population fail to account for the vast array of Indian and South Asian experiences due to the diverse cultural backgrounds in South Asian countries. The Desi experience shares a commonality of what it means to have a South Asian ethnic background despite the many ethnicities that make up the community. Desi, used as a descriptor, encompasses cultural loyalty, geographical background, and validates the pan-ethnic experiences. For this research, the term South Asian will be used when making a reference to literature that used South Asian to describe the population studied.

Despite the various research on Desi couples' experience with gender, no study has explored how second-generation Desi couples experience the negotiation of gender role attitudes within their marriage. The unique contribution of this study is learning about the process of gender role impact on a second-generation Desi couple. What is yet to be discovered is the experience of second generation Desi couples, whose parents immigrated to the U.S., in navigating cultural messages around gender roles within marriage.

As mental health services are becoming accessible and normalized for Desi people (Arora et al., 2016), it is essential that mental health clinicians recognize the history of gender roles that second generation Desi couples bring into their current relationship, in order to learn about the

internal and external cultural influence within Desi couples' marriage. In addition, understanding how gender roles in their relationships are negotiated, discussed, and normalized would help clinicians learn about gender structures that are being constructed, so that they may help Desi clients navigate presenting barriers. The findings of this study will help clinicians learn how second-generation Desis experience traditional gender role attitudes in their marriages, which will enable them to facilitate critical conversations that explore the foundation of the romantic relationship. I seek to explore the discussions second generation Desi couples partake in regarding their gender role ideologies in order to create awareness on strengths and barriers couple experience when working through gender norms and a deeper understanding on which phenomenon Desi couples live.

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological qualitative research study is to discover the process of gender role negotiation and gender role expectations held by second-generation Desi couples. Four primary research questions will guide the exploration of the gender role negotiation process among second generation Desi couples. The overarching research question seeks to understand experience of gender role negotiation and expectations in second-generation Desi couples living in the U.S. In order to investigate the subjective experiences of Desi couples, the following questions will be utilized:

1. What does gender roles (primary breadwinner; household utility; male privilege acceptance) mean for the couple and how is it related to the perception of gender roles for a second-generation Desi living in the U.S.?
2. What perceptions and enactments of gender role development exist for second generation Desi couples living in the U.S.?

3. What is the experience, both physically and emotionally, of second-generation Desi couples' negotiation processes of gender role expectations in marriage?
4. How do second-generation Desi couples experience gender role expectations in marriage?

Definition of Terms

Desi

Derived from Sanskrit meaning region/land/county, is often used when referring to people, places, or things that are from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka.

South Asians

Population descended from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives

Western vs Eastern

Western culture consists of America and European countries, whose values tend to center on individualism. Eastern countries, such as India, Pakistan, China, etc, tend to hold collectivist perspectives. For the purpose of this research, the Western and Eastern cultures are defined in such a way to differentiate gender ideologies and how traditional and egalitarian values are represented in marriages. The difference between Western and Eastern cultural norms validates the process of assimilation for immigrants and the second generation.

Second- generation

For the purpose of this study, a Desi person who was born and/or raised in the United States and both parents are immigrants.

Arranged marriage

A marital union where parents or family have chosen the partner for the bride or groom.

Semi arranged marriage

A marital union where parents or family suggest partners for the bride or groom and the bride/groom are provided the opportunity to refuse the relationship.

Love marriage

A marital union where the bride and groom have chosen each other based on love and connection versus parental suggestion.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

In the 20th century, the Western world assimilated into marriage as a partnership around two people who experience romantic love. However, the underlying influence of economic security, classism, and education-level still influences decisions about romantic love marriages. South Asian/ Desi communities are gradually shifting to the same movement of marrying on the premise of love; however, marriage still is more traditional. In modern-day India, it is not uncommon for parents to have a major role in their children's decision of when and who to marry. Even though arranged marriages are popular in the culture, the shift of marriage being for love has allowed for semi-arranged marriages to exist and love marriages to be more accepted. Additionally, love marriages are more common among the Desi community that grew up or were born in Western world. The community now navigates two sets of cultural ideologies, societal pressures, and gender norms due to the vast range of messages received based on Western and Eastern value systems. Within this chapter, the misogynist history of marriage in India is explored in correlation to the impact that history has on the Desi community that migrated to the States. Explored in this chapter is the assimilation of Western culture for the Desi community and the impact it has had on the concept of marriage.

History of Arranged Marriage in India

Historically, Hindu marriage practices, have been derived from laws interpreted in the Dharma Shastras (sacred texts), which have their roots in the Vedas, the oldest surviving documents from the Vedic period in Indian culture (Vivekjivandas, 2010). Therefore, ideas about arranged marriages in modern India have been normative since the Vedic religion gradually gave way to classical Hinduism. Vedic scriptures were written by male sages who inhabited the areas across the Indus river, long before the word "Hindu" came to be associated with religion.

"Hindu" was a Mughal word for the people who lived across the Indus River (Vivekjivandas, 2010). The Manu Samhita, written in 200 BC, is a religious discourse that outlines duties, rights, laws, code of conduct, and virtues practiced by a life of sanctified dharma (Vivekjivandas, 2010).

The Manusmriti, an ancient legal text, describes eight types of marriages in Hinduism and influenced the way arranged marriage was set up. The types include Brahma Vivaha, Daiva Vivaha, Arsha Vivaha, Prajapatya Vivaha, Gandharva Vivaha, Asura Vivaha, Rakshasha Vivaha, and Paishacha Vivaha (Maharajh & Amin, 2015). Brahma Vivaha is the highest-ranking since the man gets married after completing Brahmacharya Ashram (the stage of learning and studenthood). Daiva Vivaha is the second-highest rank, wherein the bride's parents find her a suitable groom to marry. Similarly, Arsha Vivaha, where the bride is married to a Brahmin in return of gifts, is the third rank. Gandharva Vivaha is the most similar to love marriages. The remaining types of marriages are used less often because they involve the woman being forced to marry the groom, likely because of abduction, as an exchange of gifts, or illegal seduction. Thus, it is likely that arranged marriage in contemporary India is most closely tied with Daiva Vivaha and Gandharva Vivah's types of marriage.

In some parts of India, maintaining the caste system is an important determinant of arranged marriage. During the Vedic period, the caste system became very rigid, and Indian society was divided into four Varnas (social division): Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishnavs, and Shudras (Sankaran et al., 2017; Smith, 1994). This social stratification influenced the practice of arranged marriages in that upper caste families did not want their children to marry outside their caste or community (Chaudhry, 2013). The Varna system was so rigid that Hindus were barred from marrying outside their caste and even outside their sub-caste (Chaudhry, 2013; Smith, 1994). By recognizing the importance of the caste system in arranged marriages still today, the

influence and importance of the Vedic period must be considered to understand what arranged marriages look like today, both in India and among Indian Americans.

Domestic gender roles in modern-day India are heavily impacted by the meaning derived from the ancient text (Nongbri, 2016). Ancient text, deciphered by men, states the roles and duties of women. Even though women were to be respected for their household duties, the text limits the independence of women. According to the text, women were born to bear children, particularly a son, and should do this for their husband (Mahalingan, 2007). Modern-day India culture still emphasizes this cultural value of women becoming mothers and birthing a son, which has an impact on gender role development and enactment (Dupree et al., 2013).

Gendered Marital Roles and Desi Culture

The Manusmriti was created with patriarchal influences and overall did not view women as having basic rights to independence (Nongbri, 2016). In this document, women were required to follow the patriarchal law. Women essentially had to live under the guardianship of a man in all stages of life, whether with her father when she was unmarried or her husband when she married (Nongbri, 2016). As patriarchal values grew stronger in India during the Brahmanical and Medieval periods, the position of women in the society also degraded. As well, the concept of marriage and women's role in marriage changed (Maharajh & Amin, 2015). The practice of asking for a woman's consent for marriage was generally eliminated; however, rituals like dowry, child marriages, exchange marriage, and other customs began to get eliminated as the culture became progressive (Maharajh & Amin, 2015). Arranged marriages became the most prevalent way of marriage in India among Hindus especially (Menon, 1989).

Women have traditionally faced complicated and limited autonomy as a consequence of arranged marriages and redefinitions of love (other than romantic love) in the Desi culture. Some

women have been able to advance in the social hierarchy (e.g. Indira Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Kiran Bedi) and gain independence from their nuclear families. For others, financial insecurity prevents them from having influence over who they marry. Women were and are often forced to sacrifice their personal wants and desires in order to marry. These factors influenced the level of autonomy a woman in India was presented with. To this day in rural areas of India, women are particularly lacking in financial resources. They are trapped in an even more rigid system of cultural subservience to men due to this factor (Gupta, 2005).

Marriage has been an important social institution in Hinduism; it is thought to be a vital step on the path to liberation from the recurrent cycles of life and death. A woman's most important role is to support her husband on his journey for *moksha*, which is the ultimate liberation. Further, men arrange seven out of the eight forms of marriage outlined by Hindu text. Fathers also play a critical role in the selection of spouses. Again, it is only the Ghandarva form of marriage that females are involved in selecting a spouse. It is apparent that the ways in which patriarchy functions together with religious values oppress women.

Migration to the United States

Desis entered the United States in large numbers in the 1960s when the U.S. government passed the U.S. Immigration Act. President Johnson repealed immigration quotas, which resulted in an influx of Desis into the U.S. primarily from India (Sodowsky & Carey, 1987). According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010's report, around 5.4 million Desis currently live in the U.S. and Indian Americans make up the largest subgroup in the South Asian American community (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Many Desi immigrants were educated professionals who sought the "American dream" of better educational and economic opportunities for themselves and their children (Rahman &

Paik, 2017; Williams, 2019). As they became naturalized U.S. citizens, they were able to sponsor family members who also aspired to follow the same American dream. Many highly educated South Asians in the fields of engineering and medicine grew to call America home. In the 1970s and 1980s, more immigrants from South Asia sought the land of opportunity (Chandras, 1997; Williams, 2019). These immigrants were largely shop or restaurant owners or engaged in other family-owned businesses. The South Asians that came to the U.S. in 1965 held graduate degrees, especially medical degrees (Sheth, 2001). The second group came through family sponsorship and overall had lower education levels which led to a higher unemployment rate for these new South Asians (Sheth, 2001). Many South Asians settled in large cities such as Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles (Sheth, 2001).

From 2000 to 2010 the influx of Indians in the United States almost doubled (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Around 27,000 thousand immigrants obtain green cards or visas (Rahman & Paik, 2017). Many of these immigrants were receiving permanent residence and sponsoring family members. Another reason for the influx was due to the number of foreign students that were from India. Indian immigrants have become the third-largest immigrant group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Regardless of the growth and success Indians have brought to the U.S., racial and religious profiling existed in the form of discrimination and unfair treatment (Manohar, 2008). For many Indian immigrants, ethnicity and class divide in the U.S. made it difficult to marry outside their ethnic group (Manohar, 2008). Most immigrants struggled to maintain a bicultural identity; they were caught between perceptions of Indian and American cultural values (Manohar, 2008). For Indians, the conflict heightened in the context of marriage. Many Indian immigrants returned to India to get married (Jain, 2013).

Finding a Spouse

For those new immigrants who tried to find an Indian spouse in the U.S., ethnic newspapers such as the *Indian Tribune* placed matrimonial advertisements. These ads were considered brief *biodatas*, documents that contain one's demographic information and parents' demographic information as a resource to be sought out for marriage. Biodatas also included citizenship, weight, height, skin color, education, and caste. An example of an advertisement could look similar to this:

Jatt Sikh Sidhu family based in Patiala seeks a suitable match for their son, born October 1992, 6' tall, non-drinker, turbaned, family oriented from sports background, Masters in Information Technology, Distinction Holder, currently working as a Software Engineer in Hyderabad for a MNC firm from USA. The girl should be tall, professionally qualified, Canadian, USA immigrant or citizen from decent educated family. Call: 81466-41699. CL19124639 (Brides Wanted, 2019).

Currently, many of these ads have moved from newspapers to online spaces, including dating sites such as shaadi.com and bharatmatrimony.com. For many second-generation youths in the U.S., the practice of matchmaking occurs during Desi weddings, family gatherings, and parties. Parents and peers will ask about prospective "candidates" for their children. Parents will gather information from multiple candidates and pass the information down to their children in the hope that their child will explore or establish a relationship with one of the candidates. This approach is much different than the traditional arranged marriage concept where families would only investigate two or three suitors, and thus it has changed arranged marriages to become more of a semi-arranged procedure.

Acculturation/Assimilation

Many Desi youths have to deal with cultural change and dual cultural upbringing such as conflict of acculturation and challenges of assimilation (Farver et al., 2002). Often, they find themselves stuck between their parent's conservative values and their Western, more liberal ideals. Being brought up in traditional belief systems, arranged marriages were considered the only option, or parental engagement in suitors was highly expected (Menon, 1989). However, as second-generation Desis learned about negative Western stereotypes of arranged marriages and being exposed to the Western ideology of love and marriage, second-generation Desi's thoughts were often left conflicted. The predominant conflict between Desi parents and their second-generation children is the different expectations each group has for one another (Kumar & Shukla, 2021).

CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW

Romantic relationships have been formally investigated across disciplines in many ways for more than a century. Numerous studies measure relationship quality based on gender equity in the household with regard to marriage and the impact of gender roles on couples' marital satisfaction (Brooks & Bolzendahl, 2004; Ciabattari, 2001; Pollitt et al., 2018). Most of the data is based on the Western population, majority White middle class, and lacks data on how couples negotiate household labor. An even smaller amount of literature explores the nature of how second-generation Desi couples discuss, evaluate, navigate, and negotiate the implications of gender ideologies on their marriages. One of the objectives of this study is to provide more information on the experiences of gender role negotiations for second-generation Desi couples. Additionally, this study aims to explore what influences second-generation Desi couples' negotiation of gender roles in their marriages.

Existing research on marital relationships of South Asians, specifically Indians, indicates a correlation with gender role and marital satisfaction (Ahmad & Reid, 2008; Allendorf, 2012; Jibeen, 2019; Sandhya, 2009; Shukla & Kapoor, 1990). For instance, a study done by Sandhya (2009) shows that gender ideology is correlated with marital satisfaction when gender effects, such as power and control, influences the fulfillment of intimacy. Previous research also highlights the identity struggles of second-generation South Asians who experience bicultural identity with regard to romantic relationships (Farver et. al, 2002; Netting, 2010; Roy, 2002).

Traditional and Egalitarian Marriages

An important aspect of marriage is the management and division of household roles. The societal shift towards more egalitarian gender roles in marriages has occurred over the past few decades with the rise of the feminist movement (White & Klien, 2002). Egalitarian marriage is defined by partners sharing in the decision-making process regarding family roles/functions

(Schwartz, 1994). The roles and functions of the family are not divided based on the gender of a partner; instead, they are decided based on each partner's attitude towards the role (Schwartz, 1994). Schwartz (1994), shared that when couples believed that equality and equity were established in their relationship without a need for hierarchical order, they experienced happiness in their marriage. Couples aim for a collaborative approach in their marital roles in an egalitarian relationship, which is incorporated in the process of accepting influence. Accepting influence refers to openness and willingness to hear and understand a partner's experience (Gottman, 1992). Although typically men struggle with accepting influence more than women, it is necessary for both partners to validate their partners opinions (Gottman, 1992). However, dismantling patriarchy and accepting the influence within marriage, have shown higher relationship satisfaction (Gottman, 1992).

In contrast with egalitarian marriages, traditional marriages occur when partners in heterosexual relationships fulfill the roles of marriage based on their traditional gender roles. In a traditional marriage, the husband's role is to provide for the family while the wife is the homemaker (Coontz, 2004; Schwartz, 1994). A hierarchical relationship is built with the husbands traditionally having more power and being the partners who make the important decisions (Coontz, 2004; Schwartz, 1994). In traditional marriages the wives are typically taking care of children and maintaining household chores such as cleaning and cooking. Studies have shown discontent in overall marital satisfaction when traditional roles are accepted without question (Coan, 1997; Gillespie et al, 2019). The following subsections, arranged marriage versus love marriage and the impact of traditional marriage, emphasize how traditional or egalitarian relationships can influence gender roles. It is useful to understand how the type of marriage, egalitarian or traditional, influences the gender role structure, and how Desi people function within those parameters.

Arranged versus Love Marriage

It is important to recognize that within the Desi culture traditional marriages can show up in arranged marriages, while egalitarian marriages are more predominant within love marriages (Bowman & Dollahite, 2013; Tahir, 2021). Arranged marriages and love marriages may create different foundations regarding gender roles. Netting (2010) found that South Asian women felt that husbands were more loving and egalitarian in love marriages. Noting the findings in these studies, it is clear that gender ideologies, relationship equality, and cultural scripts in relation to gender can be influenced by the type of marriage that is established. Although the focus of this chapter is not meant to explore how arranged and love marriages impact second generation Desi gender ideologies, it is critical to acknowledge the influence of the type of marriage when discussing traditional versus egalitarian marriages.

Historically, marriages in India have been arranged; however, the adoption of the Western idea of marriage as a partnership primarily between two people allowed love marriages to become more common. In most Desi cultures, marriage is seen as a union between two families rather than a union between two people (Manohar, 2008). The spouse would be selected by the family from within their social and cultural network and generally within the same religion and caste. Love marriage, defined as the marriage of choice where the parents and other community members have no role in arranging the alliance, has been considered to be dangerous and deviant (Harlan & Courtright, 1995). Marriage is thought to have an impact on the reputation of the entire family and the ‘immoral’ conduct of a woman who selects her own spouse has been thought to bring shame to the entire family.

Living in the United States, children of immigrant Desi parents are exposed to the culture of love marriage from an early age, and studies have indicated this heightens the desire for love marriages (Jain, 2014). Interestingly, in the selection of a partner, South Asian women tend to

follow traditional guidelines and choose to marry men within their own caste and religion (Mehrotra, 2016). Further research needs to be conducted on learning Desi women's experiences with these traditional guidelines within their marriages. A focus of this research study is to gather more information on the influence of gender ideologies and the experience of negotiating gender roles.

Impact of Traditional Marriage

In traditional South Asian marriages, the husbands provide financially, and wives are responsible for household work and domestic responsibilities (Khandelwal, 2009). Ahmad and Reid (2008) examined the level of South Asians partners' adherence to the traditional ideology of marriage and the impact on their overall happiness in marriage. They argue that South Asians living in the West have the added pressure of social and economic change that requires them to modify their roles in the union (Ahmad & Reid, 2008). The research emphasized how the act of listening helps couples discuss traditional roles to better the marriage. Their research included 114 married participants, 37 of whom were second-generation born/raised in Canada. Participants completed the revised relationship adjustment survey, listening styles in committee relationship questionnaire, and the traditional orientation to marital relationship scale, with results examined through ANOVA and t-test analyses. The results indicated that the less a partner strived for equality to exist in the traditional roles the lower they ranked themselves in listening, which in turn led to lower scores on marital satisfaction. Essentially, the study showed that regardless of having a traditional marriage with traditional gender ideologies, couples felt overall satisfaction in their marriages if they advocated and listened to their partners when discussing gender roles.

Although the study indicated how listening and making an effort to understand each partner helped South Asian couples feel more satisfied in their relationships, they functioned

along with traditional marital expectations. The results indicated that couples were willing to observe traditional roles and feel satisfaction in their marriage when they learned how to communicate in-depth. Essentially, couples learned to create a first-order change in their relationship dynamics and equated the feeling of being heard as a form of equality. Research focusing on second-order change (challenging traditional roles) is limited due to the rigid function of traditional marriages in the Desi culture. Thus, it is beneficial to conduct research on how Desi couples challenge gender roles of traditional marriages as they may have acculturated towards an egalitarian marriage.

Marital Satisfaction

According to Myers et al. (2005), marital satisfaction is an individual's feeling about the marriage partnership and is associated with one's psychological well-being. Marital quality and satisfaction are explored within Western culture, and less in non-Western cultures (Allendorf, 2012). Typically, within South Asian marriages, marital satisfaction is explored by comparison of happiness in arranged marriages versus love marriages. However, recent studies on South Asians have started to define and observe marital satisfaction, factors that created fulfillment in marital satisfaction and overall happiness for South Asians (Allendorf, 2012; Jibeen, 2019; Sandhya, 2009). Given the impact of marital satisfaction on well-being and limited study on marital satisfaction, it is important to study the influences, particularly gender norms, on marital satisfaction especially within the South Asian community.

Allendorf (2012) aimed to study marital quality by interviewing 46 members of a small West Bengal village. Allendorf (2012) described the dimensions of marital quality that created happiness in marriages for these participants. Allendorf (2012) found that the dimensions of marital quality were love, peace, understanding, communication, trust, and balance. Within this

study it was found that a factor of love, taking care of each other, was a foundation of marital happiness. Taking care of each other was influenced by gender norms such as the husband making money to take care of them [spouse] and wives making food. Other dimensions of quality were also influenced by gender norms such as balance. Results in this study defined balance as loving people within the family equally. Women were expected to primarily love their husbands, children and in-laws versus their natal family. While husbands were expected to find a balance of love toward his parents and wife. However, participants of this study experienced gender dynamics more as gender complementarity versus gender inequality.

Allendorf (2012) found focusing on gender norms distracts from the power of balance in the marriages studied. This study presented traditional gender norms and how it influences dimensions that create marital happiness. For the couples in this research study, traditional presenting marriages felt equal due to communication, trust and understanding. My research aims to understand the second-generation Desi experience and explore how acculturation and assimilation influence their gender norms. It is beneficial to learn ways that second generation Desi couples understand love, peace, communication, understanding, trust and balance as they may have aimed to create an egalitarian marriage.

A study done by Jibeen (2019) explored gender roles and communication styles in 115 first generation Pakistani married immigrants living in Toronto. Jibeen (2019) used the Relationship Assessment Scale, Acculturative Stress Scale, Social Role Questionnaire and Behavioral Affect Rating Scale to explore the influence of acculturative stress, such as gender roles and communication style, on marital satisfaction. The Jibeen (2019) study found a connection between acculturative stress, communication styles, gender roles and marriage satisfaction with Pakistani immigrants. Participants who experienced higher acculturation stress

had a lower level of marital satisfaction. Also, warm communication style decreased acculturative stress which in turn increased marital satisfaction. Equal gender roles increased marital satisfaction when acculturative stress was low. This is important data because it signifies a correlation between gender roles and communication style/acculturative stress. Yet, there is no further information in the literature on the gender role negotiation process to increase marital satisfaction and lower acculturation stress. The aim of my study is to explore the impact of acculturation and communication style on second generation Desi couple's gender roles.

The literature lacks information on what gender role expectations were held by the couples and details surrounding the negotiation of gender roles if the couples experienced some acculturative stress. Also missing from the results of the literature is understanding the process of creating a warm healthy communication style. The research study being conducted aims to provide information on experiences of what gender role expectations are carried within a couple dynamic, and then in turn process of communication style. This research calls for more attention to the process of connection between assimilation/bicultural identity, communication style, gender roles and marital satisfaction with a focus on meaning making of gender roles.

In Sandhya's (2009) study of marital happiness in 91 couples in India, tenets of marital happiness and the role of conflict and intimacy were explored. She found Indian couples, similar to American couples, carry a desire for empathy, validation and support to build bonds of intimacy and conflict. In the study, wives experienced less intimacy than husbands due to the lack of their husband's ability to give them attention, to be helpful in daily affairs and to be thoughtful. Her study suggested gender ideologies impacted fulfillment of intimacy needs, and power and control still exist between sexes. Sandhya (2009) proposed that the lack of change in equalization of gender roles could be contributed by the socialization of gender expectations and

the different resources men and women have. Women are expected to cater to men and men still hold higher earning potential from their jobs. Sandhya (2009) discussed that the women in this study had higher education, and that may have increased the desire for more supportive gestures by their husbands. Despite the research highlighting the significant influence of gender roles on marital happiness, little research has been done to explore how an egalitarian shift creates marital happiness. Learning more about how couples experience marital satisfaction by unpacking gender roles may provide awareness on what supports second generation desi couples' marital happiness.

Gender Role Attitudes

Attitudes towards gender roles impact marriage because they reflect an individual's beliefs about their own and their partner's marriage and family responsibilities (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). Ramu (1988) conducted a study in South India where 149 households of both spouses were interviewed. The researcher interviewed 312 married women and men about their marital roles and distribution of power. Within this sample, there were 14 households where only one spouse was interviewed. In Ramu's (1988) study, perceived gender roles and distribution of power was explored. Ramu (1988) found that traditional values influenced the perception of gender for both men and women. In that, men were viewed as breadwinners and women were viewed as homemakers, even when women held a job. Ramu (1988) concluded, "the socio-economic environment is not yet conducive for a dramatic shift in the traditional perceptions of sex roles" (p. 224). Ramu (1988) found that the husbands maintained power to make critical decisions regardless if they asked their wives to share their thoughts on such decisions. As women receive greater opportunities in education and employment, there is a shift towards egalitarian gender role attitudes. However, additional research is needed to explore the shift. The

shift towards equality among genders is developing and learning more about how couples negotiate how the change impacts their roles and functions in marriage is critical.

Historically in Desi culture, the tenets of patriarchy have ensured largely traditional gender role norms with very strict roles for men and women. In a study with Indian college students in the U.S., Subrahmanyam (1998) explored gender roles amongst Indian men and women. Both men and women spoke of believing in equality and felt like everyone should be treated equally especially with regard to employment and financial freedom. At the same time, for male students an ideal woman was still one who prioritized him, children and family. If there was a scenario where one needed to sacrifice a career, the men felt like women would engage in that type of adjustment. Subrahmanyam (1998) also found that male students preferred an arranged marriage, in hopes that the women experienced lower expectations to become working women and be the ones to give up their careers if need be. Women preferred a choice in finding a partner in hopes of knowing that the partner would accept their lifestyle and more fluidity would exist on how to stabilize a family. The study concluded that traditional gender roles were still in place even if equality was desired. Even in 2020, women may experience similar struggles. With the women's movement progressing within the past several decades, this study aims to understand how women are currently recognizing traditional gender roles and what impact their ideology has on the overall romantic relationship.

A study by Juvva and Bhatti (2006), shared insight on two different experiences of women in modern society. The study looked at two case studies of Indian couple therapy sessions where the first case explored the husband's expectation of a traditional wife, and the second case explored the husband's expectation of a modern wife to dissociate from traditional ideals of a woman. This study provided an insight on the influence of unpacking internalized

expectations regarding gender role attitudes. Regardless of the traditional or egalitarian structure of the marriage, each partner carried their own belief about their partner's responsibilities. The findings of this study highlight that naming the gender role attitudes created a healthy dynamic within each of the couples. Based on those findings, a purpose of this research study is to understand if second generation Desi couples name and communicate their attitudes towards gender norms and roles, and if so, what is the experience in these conversations for both partners.

The studies conducted by Subrahmanyam (1998) and Juvva and Bhatti (2006) both highlighted how household tasks ended up being divided through traditional norms even when traditional gender norms were less of an obligation to fulfill. These gender ideologies and how they are impacting gender roles among the Desi community may impact second-generation Desi couples who reside in the United States to this day. Understanding how couples manage their ideologies can create a functioning path to negotiate how gender norms would be represented in order to experience marital satisfaction.

Division of Domestic Labor

Studies have shown a correlation between marital satisfaction and division of household labor within traditional and egalitarian relationships. Becker (1991) argues that having the role of provider for males and homemaker for women increased marital satisfaction within traditional marriages. On the other hand, Oppenheimer (1994) argues that when roles are flexible and not assigned, the fluidity eliminates burden on any one partner. When the responsibilities are evenly distributed, it creates a satisfying partnership. A recent study conducted by Khawaja and Habib (2007) explored Middle Eastern husbands' involvement in housework and the psychosocial health impact on their wives. The extensive study exploring 1652 married couples found wives experienced marital satisfaction and happiness when their husbands were involved in household

tasks and responsibilities. The differences in conceptualizations of the division of labor from a traditional and egalitarian perspective also impacts the Desi community.

Indian culture, rooted in patriarchal tenets, has and still to some extent, valued marriage with traditional gender roles. Singh and Bhayana (2015) sought to understand marital stress within South Asian marriages. They explored the experiences of four married couples and the concepts of marriage, acculturation, division of roles and communication (Singh & Bhayana, 2015). In their study they found that household chores presented as a problem for all four couples. The husbands came into the marriage without having any experience of household labor while the wives carried the desire of an egalitarian relationship. They resolved their conflicts by engaging in more of an egalitarian approach or outsourcing. These findings indicate that there is a perception between gender role attitudes and ideologies and marital satisfaction.

Jain (2014) used a qualitative research design combining ethnographic and grounded theories to explore the connection between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction. Interviews were conducted with 6 married, educated Asian Indian couples between the ages of 22 and 50 who had at least one child. Only 2 of the 12 participants were born in the U.S. The findings of the study revealed that couples were moving towards an egalitarian approach in sharing the duties around the house. The couples reported increased marital satisfaction as a result of egalitarian gender role attitudes. From that research, it appears that more couples are sharing household responsibilities and remain satisfied. The progression towards an egalitarian marriage is relevant because it indicates that change within equality can happen for Desi couples. With this in mind, this research aims to further the exploration to understand the experience of gender role negotiation and expectations in second-generation Desi couples living in the U.S.

Although the flexibility around whose roles and responsibilities around household tasks created satisfaction in some marriages, a study done by Daminger (2019) interviewed 35 couples individually resulting in 70 interviews exploring more of the cognitive labor that went into fulfilling household tasks. The literature divided cognitive labor into four parts: anticipating needs, identifying options for filling them, making decisions, and monitoring progress. Daminger (2019) suggested women take on anticipating needs and identifying options for filling them more than men do. There is a lack of literature on the influence of cognitive labor within an egalitarian marriage among the Desi community. The impact of cognitive labor is yet to be explored within the Desi community, and this research study will contribute to exploring the impact of cognitive labor within couples' marriages.

Gender and Equality

Inequality among genders appears to be consistent within the literature on South Asian Americans (Dasgupta, 1998; Inman et al., 2001; Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). For example, studies have consistently explored the opinion that South Asian American women face unique familial and cultural pressures that differ from men even though family dynamics are said to impact both men and women (Dasgupta, 1998; Inman et al., 2001; Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). South Asian communities have placed a heavy burden on women to maintain traditional values (Collins, 2005). According to Abraham (1998), cultural practices in India shaped an environment that encouraged patriarchy. Within the culture, women were expected to maintain unconditional self-sacrifice and nurturance (Mehta, 2009).

Talbani and Hasanali (2000) conducted a qualitative study in which they had in-depth interviews with 22 South Asian adolescent females who immigrated to Canada. The three key elements that were identified from the interviews were 1) difference in the treatment of boys and

girls got at home, 2) girls did not have as much authority, and 3) girls did not receive similar flexibility in talking to the opposite sex that a boy did. In the interviews, the girls spoke of a desire to change the social norms but there was the pressure of conforming to the cultural beliefs. The results indicated that the girls felt more stressed, depressed, and anxious regarding the idea of breaking from ethnic norms. Thus, the participants felt like conforming was their best option due to the lack of representation of women in power.

Farver, Bhadha and Narang (2002) stated that in Asian-Indian immigrant families, “traditional attitudes toward gender-typed behavior may be intensified by parental concern for the relatively permissive attitudes held towards adolescent girls in Western societies,” (p. 13) and consequently, parents monitor daughters more closely than sons. In the present day, where female empowerment has progressed, how Desi females navigate conforming gender roles and how their role is negotiated in romantic relationships is yet to be studied. In addition, there are very few studies on how Desi males perceive the feminist movement’s impact on their gender role and negotiation of their gender role in romantic relationships.

Parental Influence on Gender

Within the Desi community, it is common for parents and grandparents to have an influence on the child's ethnic identity (Shariff, 2009). Most of these parents are first generation immigrants who are working on preserving and continuing their cultural traditions (Kallivayalil, 2004). Recognizing that traditional Desi culture embodies a patriarchal system, the cultural traditions that influence the second generation can carry either some of those patriarchal beliefs or trauma related to those beliefs. These circumstances could strongly impact gender ideologies and gender role norms, and my research seeks to understand what experiences contribute to a Desi person’s ideologies.

Dasgupta and Warriar (1996) explored the lives of 10 married Indian women's experiences while living in the United States. Most of the women shared that their families had placed a great deal of importance on marriage, motherhood, and religion. This led many of the women to believe that acceptable female roles included only those centered on being a "devoted daughter, nurturing wife, and sacrificing mother" (Dasgupta & Warriar 1996, p. 246). Families placed much emphasis on what the wife was expected to do in order to satisfy her husband and family. If the wife adhered to the traditional female gender expectations, then the husband would be happy and the marriage would be a 'romantic fantasy.' No such behavior was expected of men. Emphasis was placed on what 'she' should be, not on what 'he' should be. All of the participants strongly believed that it was the wife's duty to sacrifice unquestioningly and yield to all of the husband's wants and wishes (Dasgupta & Warriar 1996).

One of the goals of this research study is aimed to understand what factors influence the decisions about gender role assignment and fulfillment in second-generation Desi couples. Although previous research indicates a correlation between parental influence and gender ideologies, there is a lack of research exploring the experience of the navigation process of Desi couples.

Second Generation Experience of Bicultural Identity

Parental approval is still extremely important for a majority of Desi Americans who are influenced by Western culture (Netting, 2010). Many feel obligated to return the sacrifices their parents have made in providing for them in immigrating to the United States. Many Desi American youths have to approach cultural change and dual cultural upbringing (Farver et. al, 2002). Often, they find themselves stuck between their parent's conservative values and their Western, more liberal ideals (Farver et al. 2002), further indicating that second-generation Desi

adolescents are challenged to create a sense of self-identity through competing and conflicting cultural allegiances, resulting in potential refusal to choose between being “either American or Asian Indian” (p. 341). Also, Roy (2002) shares that the emotional struggles of Indian youth, particularly for females, exist due to being concerned about what the opinions of others mean and what is deemed as culturally appropriate.

Second generation Desis experience the conflict between the Eastern and Western culture’s value systems they are raised with. However, they are more and more open to egalitarian ideas when it comes to dating, marriage, as well as gender roles within marriage. In the study done by Dasgupta (1998), she found that there were clear differences in the attitude toward gender equality between the young men and women of the second generation with women being more egalitarian. Dasgupta (1998) examined Indian immigrant parents and their second-generation children on how attitudes presented towards women, what dating meant, and anxiety that was experienced. The study indicated that the daughters felt more anxiety due to traditional values on female autonomy and dating. In essence, the study validated that second-generation woman experience familial and cultural pressures which increases anxiety, yet differs for second-generation men. Although there is a gap in studies discussing bicultural identity, the studies mentioned above share that some second generation Desi people experience the burden of expectations surrounding their bicultural identity especially in relation to gender. Literature is lacking an understanding of the process Desi couples experience in unpacking those gender role expectations that they may have carried.

Conclusion

The research review provides insight into how bicultural identity impacts romantic relationships and the correlation between gender roles and marital satisfaction. Studies have

validated and shown that there is a connection between gender roles with marital satisfaction (Ahmad & Reid, 2008; Coan, 1997; Gillespie et al, 2019; Sandhya, 2009). In addition, literature contributes to the idea that gender ideology and roles are culturally impacted. Navigating multiple cultures can be challenging for the Desi community. However, there are limitations to the literature. The lack of recently published literature is a major limitation. The Desi community is an underrepresented group within psychological research and the community's hesitancy in discussing mental health may be a factor in the limited available research (Karasz et al., 2016; Masood et al., 2009; Patel & Shaw, 2009). With that, to the best of my knowledge, the studies within this literature review are the most up-to-date studies on the various topics. My research serves as a stepping stone to discuss second generation Desi couples' impact on gender norms within their marriage.

With the recent women's movement and rise of equality there can be an impact on marriages that requires exploring. Another limitation of previous research is that most studies did not interview/survey couples as a dyad (Ahmad & Reid, 2008; Balagopal, 1987; Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996; Sandhya, 2009; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). Learning how gender ideologies impact the relationship can be more thoroughly understood with the dyad interviewed.

The purpose of this research study is to discover the experience of gender role expectations and negotiation process within second generation Desi couples. We understand that Desi couples have been conditioned to function within a patriarchal society, and that has influenced their understanding and functioning of gender roles in a marriage. Also, literature acknowledges the transition to more egalitarian structures in marriage and the marital satisfaction that is experienced within egalitarian marriages. Second generation Desi's experiences of this transition from traditional to egalitarian approach and shift in gender roles and norms is yet to be

recognized through the lens of a couple. A transcendental phenomenological qualitative study is implemented to gain a better understanding of the experiences of Desi couples in relation to gender roles or norms that they practice.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand how second-generation Desi couples living in the U.S. experience gender role negotiation and expectations in their current romantic relationships. With the egalitarian mindset being prevalent in the Western culture and an increasing rise of the feminist movement, attitudes, and feelings about gender roles and norms may alter in South Asian marriages (Gupta, 2005). Thus, there is also an interest in understanding how factors such as traditional values versus egalitarian values impact couples' negotiation on gender ideologies and gender roles.

In order to gain an understanding of how second-generation Desi couples experience gender role negotiation and expectations, a transcendental phenomenological qualitative inquiry with a social constructivism framework was implemented. In this chapter, the qualitative inquiry, philosophical beliefs, and specifics of the transcendental phenomenological research method will be further described. Additionally, this chapter outlines the research questions that describe the need for the study, the process of participant requirements, data collection, and data analysis.

Inquiry Paradigm

The interpretive lens for this study is framed by social constructivism. Social constructionism considers the creation of constructs and understanding between people and within societies (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kukla, 2000). Social constructivism places emphasis on the truth that is socially constructed and ever-changing. Through this lens, realities exist based on our social context and interactions. From a social constructivist approach, a researcher shares each participant's reality as constructed through human interaction and the participant's lived experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Kukla, 2000).

Social constructivism includes the concept of power and hierarchy, which need to be considered when studying gender relations. Gender norms and roles are considered social constructs in this view (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020). In this sense, we learn that the expression of gender is highly impacted by outside influences; family expectations, cultural expectations, and patriarchy. An example of this is how “society pressures women into jobs like teaching, student affairs, and childcare; and subsequently steers women away from jobs in business, technology, engineering, mathematics, and academic provostships” (Pasque, 2013, p. 104). In addition, society also underrepresents males who are actively present and caring for their families (Ellemers, 2018). Overall, these outside influences impact society’s expectations for men and women and place them in precarious positions (Ellemers, 2018). For this study, a social constructivist approach is not to change women or structures of male dominance, but rather explore their subjectivity, family, and personal identity, in which men and women define gender roles.

From this viewpoint, as the researcher, my goal is to assume that participants’ views on the phenomenon contribute to the construction of their own reality and experiences. Additionally, the goal of social constructivism within this study is to gather how social interactions, cultural norms, historical norms, and beliefs may manifest in participants’ own lived experiences and the implications of those experiences. I explore the couple’s relationship with gender roles. This framework strongly aligns with the study goals of exploring lived experiences in second generation Desi couples’ gender role ideologies.

Ontology

When exploring ontology, one is learning about reality and the nature of humans in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As a qualitative researcher from the social constructivist

approach, reality is seen in various ways (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reality exists from experiences. In essence, our reality is constructed from our thoughts, and there can be multiple realities. Viewing research from a constructivist ontological framework, the purpose is to understand the subjective experience of reality and multiple truths in the participant's stories. This stance is important for this study because it assumes the participant's reality is created by their own experience of the phenomenon.

Epistemology

Epistemology is the exploration of what counts as knowledge and the relationship between researching and what is being researched (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The goal of the subjective epistemological stance is to develop an understanding of the participants' realities. Qualitative researchers attempt to minimize the distance between themselves and the participants to gather in-depth their individual reflections (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The epistemological orientation of constructivism assumes that knowledge is transactional and subjectivist and best found through co-constructed meaning with the researcher and the participants acting as partners in the creation of knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This stance is also consistent with Moustakas' (1994) methods that recommended participant voices be maintained through the process and connected to one another at the end. By conducting interviews with the participants and asking for clarification on nuanced information, knowledge will be co-created.

Axiological

Axiological beliefs inform the values of a study, acknowledge research is value-laden and that biases are present (Creswell & Poth, 2018). "Researchers "position themselves" by identifying their "positionality" in relation to the context and setting of the research" (Creswell & Poth, 2013, p. 20). My gender, race, relationship status, personal experiences all impact my

social position and that is memoed and bracketed in relation to the study. This belief is strongly tied with the epoche process that is incorporated in this transcendental phenomenological research.

Methodology

The methodological orientation process inquires about the research procedure (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this research project, a transcendental phenomenological qualitative methodology is applied. Qualitative researchers typically gather multiple forms of data, such as interviews, observations, and documents; rather than relying on a single data source (Creswell, 2013). This approach is an appropriate approach for this study as it encourages researchers to seek to understand the context or setting in which participants address a problem or issue (Creswell, 2013). Since there is little known about the experiences of second-generation Desi couples, implementing a qualitative study provides a method in understanding important aspects of their lives. I strive to understand the cultural truths of my participants through in-depth semi-structured interviews, and a qualitative methodology will help clarify the actual lived experiences of second-generation Desi couples in the U.S.

The rationale for using a qualitative design for this study is grounded in how the framework and objectives of qualitative research align with the research topic. The purpose of qualitative research begins with gathering a rich and complex understanding of the nuances of a phenomenon. The research is aimed to understand and explain the phenomenon of gender role negotiation within Desi couples. Based on the aim and research questions for this study, a quantitative research method would not be the appropriate methodology. A quantitative inquiry would seek to confirm the hypotheses about the phenomena, while this study aims to learn and explore the phenomena.

Phenomenological Research Design

Phenomenology is a research approach that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Husserl, 1931; Neubauer et al., 2019). Phenomenological design is a method for understanding the objects that appear before us. Husserl (1931) believed that the perception of the reality of an object, a participant, is dependent on the subject, the researcher. With this lens, phenomenology provides the researcher with the opportunity to describe what they have learned from the experiences of the participants (Husserl, 1931; Neubauer et al., 2019). The researcher aims to grasp the essence of the participant's experiences by removing biases on what we are told is true by setting aside beliefs, assumptions, and prejudgments they hold about the subjective experiences (Husserl, 1931; Neubauer et al., 2019). A phenomenological study examines how participants understand the phenomenon from many sides and perspectives to make meaning of the experience (Husserl, 1931; Neubauer et al., 2019). Through phenomenology, the experience being explored is focused on discovery and understanding of the phenomenon. The research question in phenomenological studies is the focus and guide of the study that is deliberately constructed to explore the rich and layered meanings of the phenomenon (Husserl, 1931; Neubauer et al., 2019).

The premise of the research design is to learn the experience of second generation Desi couples in terms of gender role negotiation. By utilizing the phenomenological qualitative design, I was guided to inquire about the experiences of gender role negotiation in second generation desi couples by making an effort to remove subjective experiences and assumptions that I may hold (Moustakas, 1994). The research aim is to learn "what" they experience and "how" they experience it, (the two main questions phenomenology addresses according to Moustakas 1994). In this study, the experiences of second-generation Desi couples are

interpreted, and I looked to make meaning of these experiences. This research design is most appropriate for this study because of the focus on the lived experiences of Desi couples who are second generation and impacted by gender ideologies. A phenomenological design allowed me to examine the experience of gender ideologies through perception and experiences.

Transcendental

Transcendental phenomenology is most useful when “the researcher has identified a phenomenon to understand, and as individuals who can provide a description of what they have experienced” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004, p.32). A transcendental phenomenological approach to qualitative research is the focus of my study. Transcendental phenomenology provides a means to understand the essence of a phenomenon making every effort to remove the subjective experiences, assumptions, and ideas of the researcher to focus purely on the experiences of those experiencing the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The approach assumes that reality is internal to the participant and what appears in their own consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). Transcendental phenomenology is useful for describing the phenomenon using the participants’ experiences, perceptions, and voices.

Within this approach, the researcher needs to separate themselves from their biases to accurately understand and explore the participant. Preconceptions are assessed and neutralized in transcendental phenomenology, and using a triangulated investigator helped me in that process. Through epoche, a researcher’s subjectivity is reported during the data collection and analysis process. Moustakas’s (1994) transcendental phenomenological method for data collection and analyzing steps of reading data, making meaning of data, re-reading data, creating themes, comparing data, and writing descriptions was implemented and further discussed in those sections.

Epoche. Epoche is a process in which the researcher sets aside their preconceptions, biases, or beliefs for what is being experienced and described by the participants themselves (Moutakas, 1994). In addition, the participant's narrative is meant to be interpreted and made meaning through the participant's lens and not the researchers. Epoche is a critical part of the phenomenological methodology and will be used to be mindful of presupposition while collecting data. With my lived experiences of gender role ideologies within the Desi community, I attempted to put those experiences aside to achieve epoche. To bracket away any preconceptions, I created memos. Memos had personal reflections and reactions to thoughts I had throughout the research process, feelings regarding data analysis, and overall beliefs that arose when conducting the research study.

Role of the Researcher. Being South Asian specifically of Gujarati Indian descent is valuable to me in creating representation in Western research. Gender norms have held a significant impact on my upbringing. Typically, South Asian communities have patriarchal gender norms (Dasgupta, 2000). The impact of these gender norms required my adult self to question, challenge, disrupt, and restructure what gender meant to me and how I wished to embody it in my relationships. After being established in a committed heterosexual relationship with a South Asian man of Pakistani descent, the pattern of questioning, challenging, disrupting, and restructuring occurred to reframe gender norms. My personal experience led me to explore how other South Asians experienced a gender norm shift from the narrative they were brought up with. Research surrounding the topic of experiences of South Asian regarding gender norms in romantic relationships and how gender norms are negotiated/discussed was limited; however, I gained prior knowledge from the research that was explored. To further my understanding, I

became motivated in gathering more information around the topic of gender role negotiation, particularly with a phenomenological qualitative approach

Study Participants

Phenomenological researchers are interested in all facets of the phenomenon until a unified experience is established, thus requiring a range of participants. (Eagleton, 1983; Moustakas, 1994; Husserl, 1931). A criterion is created to find a range of 5- 25 people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Moustakas' (1994) criteria for research participants include: participants have to experience the phenomenon, are interested in understanding the meanings of the phenomenon, willing to be engaged in long interviews, permitting the researcher to audio record the interview, and have the data published. Moustakas (1994) also suggests that a researcher considers using varied participants with race, gender, age, religions, and ethnic and cultural factors.

Population Criteria

The Desi population largely consists of people with Indian, Pakistani, Bengali, and Sri Lankan descent. Although in-person interviews were the primary way to collect data, due to COVID-19 participants were from many states and interviews were held in Zoom meetings. Participants for this study needed to meet the inclusion criteria of:

- identifying as a second-generation Desi who was born or raised in the United States,
- married for at least 3 years to ensure they have experience of the phenomenon,
- in a heterosexual relationship,
- at least 18 years old.

Participants who were excluded from this study were people in less than 3 years of marriage, partners who have only been living together and not married, and raised in a country of Desi origins (must be second generation raised in a Western country).

The inclusion criteria of married couples in this study are established to understand the experiences of Desi couples in relation to gender roles or norms. It is more critical when couples are living together to assess gender roles. However, culturally, Desi couples cohabit after marriage and most recently after an engagement. It is still considered taboo for couples to live together when they are not married within this community (Bhushan, 2017).

The exclusion criteria of being in a nontraditional marriage and/or queer relationship are established due to a lack of research on the outcomes of LGBTQIA+ Desi couples. Conducting a study on the LGBTQIA+ identified Desi couples would require more inquiry than just how gender roles impact their relationship outcome. A deeper understanding of the experience of a Desi member of the LGBTQIA+ would be best explored in other research. In order to maintain internal validity and to not confound the primary research questions, this study focused on the experience of heterosexual couples only. In future research, suggest that the study be replicated with same-sex/same-gender couple to uncover the nuances in their experiences. Since previous studies have shown gender roles to impact heterosexual Desi couples (Dasgupta, 1998), this construct is being explored.

Sampling

While conducting phenomenological studies, it is critical to know who is sampled, what type of sampling is used, and how many people will be participating in the study (Creswell, 2013). For this study having a criterion would mean selecting individuals to participants in order to honor the phenomenon of the study and inform them of the research problem (Creswell, 2013,

p. 157). In this study, I used purposeful criterion sampling and snowball sampling. These sampling techniques allowed me to inquire about a specific population that met the criteria in understanding the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). With purposeful criterion sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals who share similar experiences (Creswell, 2013). In addition to criterion sampling, I also used snowball sampling to recruit participants.

Snowball sampling invites initial participants to reach out to people in their community about the research study (Creswell, 2013). Sharing that, snowball sampling would be useful to explore the second generation Desi population. Snowball sampling can be a useful technique when the population being studied is interconnected. With the Desi community being more private, there is a potential for difficulty in accessing Desi couples. The hope would be that couples who participated would share the study with friends and family members to recruit more participants.

Recruiting Desi people for research has barriers that are important for researchers to learn and adapt to (Brown et al., 2014; Dupree et al., 2013). The barriers that were presented in the study conducted by Brown et al. (2014) were bilingual resources, cultural sensitivity, lack of consideration on family involvement, and being able to understand the expectations of the research. Being able to speak and understand Hindi and Gujarati helped me understand most of the languages/buzzwords that were used during the interview. Identifying as a second generation Desi is critical because I was able to empathize and understand how a particular conversation needed to be approached differently (Dupree et al., 2013). In addition, being in the community provided me with more insight on when cultural/ religious events occurred and how that would impact scheduling. Brown et al. (2014) shared that family involvement within the South Asian community was critical (Brown et al., 2014). The family involvement impacted participant's

decisions in participating and duration of time to commit to the decision and wanting to include family in the research. To address these concerns and those of the expectations of the research, the informed consent will discuss confidentiality and expectations.

The goal of this research study is to understand the collective experiences of Desi couples. This study includes in- depth interviews with 6 married couples, being an appropriate sample size for this phenomenological research study. 12 people's experiences were accounted for in this study. Previous research shows that a sample size of 5 to 10 participants for phenomenology is well saturated (Creswell, 2013; Mason 2010). Setting 6 couples as participants as a sample size for this study allowed for the preservation of depth within data analysis and avoided unnecessary repetition.

Recruitment

To gain access to the Desi community, I used multiple online platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. The post was a recruitment ad with the option to directly email me. If participants deemed themselves fit according to the inclusion criteria, they were also able to provide their name and email address via messenger on either social media platform. I reached out to those who had provided contact information. Every participant's inclusion requirements were reconfirmed, and then they received an email regarding informed consent, description of research, and demographic questionnaire. Once the informed consent was signed by both spouses, a meeting time for an interview was discussed.

To further understand the experiences of the populations, participants were invited to share the study with people in their network that fit the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Recruitment for this study was conducted in such a way that diversity would still be recognized

within the participant pool. For example, inclusion criteria did not limit religious affiliation, socioeconomic, geographic region, ability status, or education level.

Data Collection

For this study, I used Moustakas' (1994) data collection process for transcendental phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) stated that collecting rich data interviews with open-ended questions will provide rich knowledge. Data in this study consisted of inclusion criteria, demographic questionnaires, and interviews. The semi-structured interview questions (Appendix D), based on literature review and personal experience, were in-depth and open-ended. Couples answered a wide range of topics regarding the process of gender role negotiation.

Interview

Once participants were contacted and inclusion criteria were reconfirmed, informed consent was provided. Informed consent information (Appendix A) contained clear and precise language regarding study description, participation involvement, risks involved, benefits to participation, confidentiality, and contact information of myself and the IRB chair. The informed consent clarified the commitments needed by the participants, including the need to be interested in what is being studied, the time dedication to the process, and audio recording policies/consent. The informed consent also included IRB approval and contacts of the IRB president and the committee chair. Participants had the option to resign from those affairs if they were at any point uncomfortable and were not pressured into participating or committing to the research study. Also, participants will have access to the final research article. Prior to the interview, I confirmed that both individuals from the couple signed and returned the informed consent along with a demographic questionnaire. Demographic questions (Appendix C) included information about age, gender, ethnicity, religion, education, and marital information.

All semi-structured interviews were with the couple together. The purpose of interviewing the couple together was also to gather rich data. I used observational data techniques to explore the relationship in more depth. An example of this was being aware of which partner was more dominant, and then creating space for the more silent partner. This allowed me to ask follow up questions to explore their perceptiveness. Interviews were conducted as virtual interviews on a secure platform such as Zoom. Interviews ranged between an hour and half to an hour and fifty minutes. All the interviews were conducted via Zoom due to COVID-19. One of the couples was in Chicago, and the rest were from various locations throughout the US.

To ensure trustworthiness, I kept field notes and journaled throughout the process. During the interviews, I would have a section in my notes for observations of the participants and a section for me to use brief denotes of my feelings. I would later journal about how specific interviews resonated with me and what emotions arose in conversations for me. After each interview I took time to debrief in that way and used that information to guide me in interviewing other participants.

Interview Protocol. As mentioned previously, research questions were based on information from the literature review, research goals, and personal experiences. To understand the phenomenon being studied, I asked the participants questions and any follow-up questions to clarify nuances. During each interview, I recorded using Zoom recording features. The interviews were audio and video recorded, based on participants consent. As the researcher, I came with questions and a notepad to write down notes, comments, and observations. Due to COVID-19, all the interviews were done through Zoom and the conversations, for both participants and I, took place in quiet, private locations in the home or office. Before the

interview started, I reiterated the purpose of the study, reviewed the participation guidelines, and received verbal consent to participate in the study. Interviews were conducted in a timely manner and aimed to hold participants' perspectives, truths, and narratives.

Data Storage and Security

All audio interviews, interview transcripts, and signed informed consent papers were stored in a folder on a password-protected computer and password protected file folder. Any written data was scanned into my computer and stored in a password protected computer into appropriate folders; field notes, memos, audit trail. Each interview was uploaded onto Zoom storage cloud and initially transcribed by zoom transcription software. The transcription software was secure and HIPPA compliant. Then, each video and transcription were downloaded onto a personal laptop to further accurately transcribe. The transcripts use pseudonyms. All digital files will be destroyed five years after publication (Creswell and Poth, 2013). Each participant has an individual folder (ex. Participant #) in a password protected folder labeled as Participant Data Collection. Each participant folder has their informed consent, audio recording, and transcript.

Data Analysis

For this research, the purpose is to learn the experiences of second generation Desi's gender role negotiation and expectations of gender roles in their current romantic relationships. The curiosity lies in what general themes are presented through the data collection process. Data was analyzed through Moustakas' (1994) process of phenomenological reduction to get textural descriptions, imaginative variation for structural description, and intuitive integration for shared essence. The phenomenological reduction includes bracketing, horizontalizing, organizing invariant qualities and themes, and constructing textual descriptions (Moustakas', 1994). The

imaginative variation stage includes structural descriptions and themes of the experiences. The intuitive integration includes the textual structural synthesis.

Phenomenological Reduction

The process of phenomenological reduction requires the researcher to bracket a personal perspective in order to view the data through curiosity. The researcher is meant to unpack the components of the phenomena by reducing subjective perception (Moustakas, 1994). This process challenges the researcher to neutralize their personal belief to understand and engage the experiences of participants.

The first step in phenomenological reduction is the process of horizontalization. The process of horizontalization starts with viewing each statement as having equal value and bracketing my personal preconceptions (Moustakas, 1994). I listened repeatedly to the audio while reading and rereading transcripts to become familiar with the interviewee and information gathered. During this time, I looked for significant statements made by the participants. A list of significant statements was made for each transcript.

Then, the phase of the invariant constituent starts. The purpose of this stage is to serve as a filter and narrow down statements to then cluster those statements into themes. During this stage, the list of significant statements that were found from a transcript were reviewed for irrelevant statements to the phenomena or repetitive statements. I removed those into a list of irrelevant statements. The remaining data that has been filtered, are called horizons (Moustakas, 1994). There were note cards for each horizon grouped/labeled with its respective transcript. From there, I started to cluster the horizons into themes to gather the core themes of experience (Moustakas, 1994). The notecards of horizons were compiled by clustering them from common words or ideas into a theme. It was an ongoing process where horizons moved from one theme to

another or themes changed into a new theme. Once clustering was completed, I validated that the themes created matched the messaging of transcripts, field notes, and observations.

The next step was constructing textual descriptions. Textural descriptions are rich information of the phenomenon describing the “what” of the phenomenon to convey a full description of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Since textural descriptions of the data focus on vividly describing the participant’s experiences, I gathered verbatim examples such as specific quotes to describe the phenomenon. I revisited the transcript each time a textual description was created to ensure that the description is true to the participants narrative. Then, I integrated all the textural descriptions into a full textual description narrative.

Imaginative Variation

This phase serves as a foundation for textual descriptions to have context. It is the process to describe the background and in what context that illuminates the textual description of an experience. During this phase, the ‘how’ is established by “recognizing the underlying themes or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon” (Moustaka, 1994, p. 101). To build the “how”, I revisited the transcripts to search for structural elements such as the structure of time, space, relation to self, and relation to others. Essentially, the structural description included details on possible influences on participants’ experiences and how the participants arrived at their current experience.

Intuitive Integration

During this phase, there is an integration of textual and structural descriptions of all the participants to develop a synthesis of the shared essence of the experienced phenomenon. I wrote a synthesis of the phenomenon to share with the reader what participants experienced and how they experienced it.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical issues arise at many stages of a qualitative research study and a researcher needs to plan for them (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In order to plan and address ethical issues, a researcher needs to come from the framework of being sensitive to the participant's experiences and limit their exposure to risk (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This framework can be used during the research process which consists of pre- conducting of the study, beginning of the study, data collection, data analysis, reporting data, and publication. In essence, ethics is embedded within an entire structure of this research study.

Prior to conducting the study, I have university approval by submitting to the institutional review board. The IRB process ensures the welfare of participants who would be recruited for the study by three principles: respect, beneficence, and justice (Antioch University, 2013). Respect is accounted for at the beginning of conducting the study by voluntary informed consent. Informed consent must be collected for each person who is being interviewed. The informed consent highlights potential risks, benefits of the study, confidentiality, and a statement that participation is voluntary and there will not be any penalties for discontinuing participation.

The principle of beneficence aims to reduce the risk of harm for participants. During the beginning of the research study, ways to reduce risk are confirming that participation is voluntary and respecting cultural norms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the data collection stage, discussing the purpose of the study, acknowledging power imbalance, and providing reciprocity are ways to reduce risk (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, data is stored in a secure location to protect participants during this stage. When analyzing data, the privacy of participants is honored by creating fictitious names (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Also, the data is accurately reported based

on participants' narratives. Lastly, to reduce the risk of harm for participants they are informed about who will profit from the research that is conducted (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

It is important to maintain justice for participants and that they are treated fairly. Any inclusion criteria that are created must be established based on the research problem. When recruiting participants, for this research project it is critical to not discriminate based on religion, type of marriage (arranged or love), or socioeconomic reasons.

Trustworthiness

Establishing rigor and trustworthiness are critical to producing a substantial transcendental phenomenological research study. Building trustworthiness and credibility requires the researcher to understand their stance and transparency. It is vital for the researcher to provide accurate and precise documentation of how the data is collected. It is also important for the researcher to provide a source of evidence in how trustworthiness is built through field notes, audit trail, memos, and journaling.

My interest in the current study stemmed from observations of gender norms in my Desi community, as well as personal experiences in my romantic relationship. I am a second generation Desi Hindu of Gujarati Indian descent who was raised in the Midwest of the United States. Although I am not married, I would fit most of the qualifiers of this study. With that, I attempted to examine my own level of objectivity. My identity and ethnicity may have impacted the level of vulnerability participants engage in. Essential tools were self-examinations, field notes, audit trail and using a triangulated investigator.

In phenomenological qualitative research, credibility is how the results of the study are believable from the participants' perspective (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Assuring credibility means that the researcher understands the participant's narrative. Participants were given the

option to have copies of the transcription for the purpose of being able to check the accuracy of their experience. To reinforce member checking and utilization of the co-researchers', follow up interviews were considered as an option to share findings or collect feedback on themes of the findings. However, participants did not reach out for transcriptions to be co-researchers.

In continuing to address ethical considerations, transferability, dependability, and confirmability will all be accounted for. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of phenomenological qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this research study, the researcher is responsible for transferability. I accounted for transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research purpose, the role I hold throughout the study, data collection methods, and how the data was analyzed.

Dependability essentially refers to how replicable the study is. Dependability emphasizes the need for the researcher to have trackable variability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Meaning the researcher needs to describe what changes occur and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed, meaning all aspects of the research have been investigated (Kirk & Miller, 1986). To ensure dependability and conformability, an audit trail documented the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. The audit trail gathered information on the decisions made throughout the research project. As a researcher, my role is to provide field notes about research sampling, research materials, data management, and how themes were categorized.

Lastly, to ensure the quality of this research and account for trustworthiness, I was reflexive about my role in the research process by writing memos and using a triangulated

investigator. My background and position will influence what I investigate in an interview and how I investigate in an interview (Malterud, 2001). For instance, concerns of heightening tension within the relationship were valid, and in those moments therapeutic techniques were utilized. Also, my background impacts which themes I find most relevant and what is concluded from those findings (Malterud, 2001). By writing memos, I provided more insight into the position, beliefs, and values I hold. The memos were also used to write out biases, fears, and experiences. Within my journal, I also included notes surrounding my process of collecting, analyzing, and processing data. Another way to account for my role in the research process was by using a triangulated investigator. A triangulated investigator was a colleague within the same field to evaluate the analysis process. This helped in creating diverse views on the analysis.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the experiences of the six Desi couples that partook in this study. In addition, a description of the six couples along with the key findings from the in-depth interviews is provided. Questions that guided the interviews (Appendix D) cultivated findings that were clustered into themes. These themes fell under specific categories umbrellaed under domains (Appendix E). The chapter will start with the process of the research which explores the data collection process and the impact of COVID-19 throughout the study. Continuing onto exploring how my identity impacted the research, then the description of participants and lastly major findings.

Researcher

Being a second generation Desi in a long term relationship with another Desi influenced my desire to learn more about other Desi couples who navigated their relationship around gender social constructs. Growing up with misogynistic guidelines, I learned how those teachings impacted my connection with my partner. Through my own introspection as a marriage and family therapist and doing self of the therapist work, I discovered my identity as a woman is preset to the ideals of men within society. From social media and conversations with other Desi women I learned that my experience was communal. However, I wanted to know the ways couples navigated this lived experience. In an ethical way, my identity helped me navigate interviewing the couples who experienced how the misogynistic structure of Desi culture influenced them. I believe being Indian and going through my own journey of unpacking gender norms individually and within my romantic relationship helped me connect with participants. That connection built a safe space to discuss a vulnerable topic. Additionally, participants would use naïve language or common terminology (ex. auntie or uncle to describe an adult that is a

generation older) to communicate with me. To me it felt like they were being honest and a non filtered version of themselves because of the comfort that was experienced.

Participants

The study included six couples who all fit the specific requirements for participation. All of the participants identified as Desi, and were all Indian. The couples were married for at least three years and were born and raised in the U.S. Each couple's demographic is provided along with a brief description. In addition, I choose pseudonyms for each couple.

Table 1

Couple Demographic

Participant Demographic	n	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	6	50
Male	6	50
<i>Age</i>		
25-30	3	25
31-35	9	75
<i>Race</i>		
South Asian	12	100
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Indian	12	100
<i>Religion</i>		
Hindu	9	75
Agnostic	1	8.8
Christian	2	16.7
<i>Education</i>		
Bachelors	7	58.3
Masters	3	16.7
Doctoral	2	
<i>Socioeconomic</i>		
Middle	6	50
Upper Middle	6	50
<i>Length of Marriage</i>		
3-5 years	8	66.6
6-10 years	4	33.3
<i>Children</i>		
None	8	66.6
Birth to 1 year	2	16.7
2- 4 years	4	33.3

One out of the six couples were Christian, and the rest identified as Hindus and/or had Hindu upbringing. Two of the couples had children and one couple was expecting their first child. Each of the couples were in a love marriage and had been dating their partner before marriage. More information about the dating experience will be explored in each couple's individual profile. All the participants had a university degree and a few people had higher education degrees. The participants socioeconomic status was middle class or higher.

Couple Profile

Background information on the couple will provide context on what has influenced their knowledge of gender roles and how they have come to understand it within their romantic relationship. The profiles allow the reader to discover how the couple's romantic relationship developed and each individual's (within the relationship) personal family dynamics.

Couple I: Sapna and Vinod

Sapna and Vinod met through mutual friends in 2009 when they were in high school. They started dating around that time and throughout college. After college Sapna's parents felt that the couple dated for a significant period of time and should get married. The couple did and have been married for 5 years. Sapna is an only child and Vinod was raised with an older half-brother and a cousin who was like a brother. When Sapna and Vinod got married, they moved into a condo duplex that was shared with Vinod's parents, siblings and the siblings' partners. The roles and responsibilities at that time were more traditional, and Sapna felt like at times it was self-imposed due to the nature of the culture and upbringing. Currently, Sapna and Vinod shared they have a better communication style and understanding of expectations that help navigate roles around the house.

Couple II: Simran and Raj

Simran and Raj were dating for 2 years before they got married and it was primarily a long distance relationship. As they were doing an engagement ceremony, they came to find out to both of their surprise that they were signing a marriage license with the priest. Simran and Raj agreed to marriage, although they felt like they did not experience the typical fiancé partnership. With the long distance and lack of fiancé partnership, they relied on each other's laid back personalities and conversations leading up to this point. What they did not get to experience is the real life application of what living together would look like. Moving in with Raj's brother and sister in law initially made it challenging as they waited for their house to be built. Raj and his brother grew up with a single mother, which contributed to his maturity and willingness to do more around the house. Simran grew up with a brother as well and really felt the difference in how they were raised. Simran's present day feminism comes from the aversion of messages her mother and grandmother enforced on her. Simran is working on unpacking those messages and how they show up today and Raj is understanding them. To them their fights seem like trivial matters, and try to think of the bigger picture.

Couple III: Preeti and Prem

Preeti and Prem started dating when Preeti was 19 and Prem was 20. Over the course of 10 years they learned how to grow together. They lived together for about 7 to 8 years and for the past 3 years they have been married. Preeti views scenarios in life through a social justice lens while Prem is more pragmatic about his approach. These different approaches shape their conversations about gender. Along with gender, their childhood dynamics influenced their pragmatic or social justice orientation. Preeti grew up as an only child seeing her mom work and become financially independent, yet be traditional with cultural ideals. She also grew up feeling like her parents were not a good example of an ideal romantic relationship. Prem grew up with

siblings and immigrant parents. His dad was the primary financial provider, while his mom was a stay at home parent despite her Master's degree.

Couple IV: Jodha and Akbhar

Jodha and Akbhar had a long distance relationship when they first started talking in college. They shared how their first conversation was around 11 hours on the phone. To both of them it was really important to be communicative. From the beginning they established that it was critical that each of them stay open to the others feedback. This created space to talk about the injustices either of them felt. Conversations around gender started to be more prominent when Jodha's brother had a baby girl and the couple saw how grandparents were raising her. They became more overt when the couple had their son. Jodha and Akbhar have similar outlooks on gender equality, patriarchy, and feminist theory and that make it easier to have these conversations. Jodha grew up with a sister and 2 cousins- girl and boy. She saw a lot of unfair treatment. Akbhar grew up with an older brother. They did not discuss gender growing up, but Akbhar did question certain cultural dynamics. They both grew up with awareness that things were not fair in the household towards women.

Couple V: Sadhana and Vivek

Sadhana and Vivek dated for three years and have been married for 3 years. Most of the time they were dating it was long distance, but they did live together towards the end in secret. The long distance for them allowed for communication to be prompt and effective. Both of them grew up with parents who have higher education and/ or professional jobs. Vivek's mom is a cardiac technician, and his dad is an engineer. Sadhana's dad worked as a chemical engineer then got his MBA later in life, while her mom is a bank teller. Sadhana and Vivek and their respected siblings were raised to really prioritize their education. For Sadhana and her sister the emphasis

on equal education was critical. Also, both Sadhana and Vivek were excused from the chores due to the emphasis on studies. Although Sadhana felt like she would use it as an excuse while it was not expected of Vivek. They grew up with mothers doing traditional household chores along with their day jobs. Both of them were able to reflect on the traditional Indian gender roles and able to highlight how their families functioned similarly. Although they see gender showing up in their dynamic it is more personality/ preferences that are highlighted in their conversations. They feel like this might be different once they have their baby.

Couple VI: Anjali and Rahul

Anjali and Rahul were the only Christian couple in the study and the only couple with two kids. They dated for five years and have been married for 9 years. They are also the longest married couple in this study. The couple shared that they did not have many conversations around expectations they had of one another or how they wanted dynamics to go. They started living together and experienced a lot of fighting in the beginning. Rahul shared that as a Christian man he carried some traditional thoughts of what a wife meant and also based his role as a husband per what the Bible shared. Anjali wanted to start her marriage differently than what she saw her parents have. Over the course of nine years and having two children they have been able to have more conversations about how to establish a more egalitarian relationship.

Findings

The findings are organized into four domains. The first domain is understanding gender roles. This domain highlights how traditional Desi culture, specifically the misogyny and messages received growing up, family of origin and cultural/religious reinforcement influence gender. To gather a deeper understanding of gender roles, how family ideals and internalized messages influence enactment of gender roles is also explored in domain one. Domain two

describes gender role development within the couple's relationship and the impact of equality and dismantling patriarchy. The third domain is gender role expectations. This domain unpacked the couples' unconscious, how financial decisions impacted them, and how becoming parents challenged gender role expectations. Domain four is the discussion of gender roles. Couples' conversations on gender roles and how they come to resolution around gender dynamics are addressed.

Domain I: Gender Role Understanding

The couples were asked about the various ways gender roles were presented in their lives. The couples shared commonality around traditional Desi gender ideologies being either carried out or grew up seeing traditional Desi gender roles being emphasized. There were two categories in this domain: influences of gender roles and influences on gender role development. All the couples highlighted how family of origins played a role in unpacking their personal relationship with traditional gender roles and how family ideals influenced how they presented in their romantic relationships.

Category I: Influence of Gender Roles

This category addresses how multigenerational cultural influences and intergenerational discourse impacts the lives of these couples. The couples all talked about the different ways culture, family of origin, and/or cultural and religious reinforcement impacted their understanding of gender roles. Two themes emerged around the influence of gender roles. The first theme is the multigenerational influence of gender roles incorporating traditional Desi culture, misogyny and messages received by the participants. The second theme is intergenerational influence exploring how family of origin and cultural/ religious reinforcement influences gender roles.

Theme I: Multigenerational Culture. Several of the participants were able to share that growing up in a Desi culture was not an egalitarian lifestyle. Most shared their experience of traditional Desi culture and the meanings they attached to those experiences. For one of the couple, Jodha and Akbhar, Jodha explained how family dynamics impacted their understanding of gender roles in this quote:

His grandma was so traditional that during your period you couldn't come near her. And when he [Akbhar] was younger, he saw the injustice and asked why is my mom having to sit there by herself while the rest of us are eating. He's gotten into fights with his grandma about things like that. And that was well before we met, you know, so like he's always had this viewpoint and it just makes it easier. I think it also makes a difference because my grandma lived with us growing up. My dad's mom. And I think that helped enforce gender roles even more. She was like a typical mother in law, like 'I'm going to sit here and my daughter in law's my slave, who is going to cook for me and take care of me and take care of my son'. And I think that's made a big difference as well for us.

All six women shared how interactions with family members in a traditional Desi home shaped their gender role expectations. Rima stated, "My mom and grandmother definitely try to force me to learn how to cook and said 'you need to know how to make rotlis'". She shared that she was a headstrong person and rejected traditional gender roles and still felt like it was forced on her to learn traditional gender roles. Sapna shared:

The gender norms that I had been raised with, and it was my dad more than anybody that had always wanted me to know, 'you're the daughter in law, you have to do it.' We as women are kind of taught as young girls that you're going to have to learn how to cook or

whatever. And we're told that you're gonna have to learn it and you just have to figure it out.

Preeti said, "My mom was always like 'there are things you need to do in the home and learn how to do in the home so that you can do that in your future and take care of whoever's part of that home' and tell me the role of a women by saying 'women don't do that, women in our community don't do that'. Anjali shared how traditional desi culture impacted her identity in this quote:

What I'm not supposed to do as a girl was a lot of what got brought up. So I remember when I was graduating high school, I wanted to go away to school and my brother told my dad that all these Indian girls go to school and become whores. And then that immediately ended any chance to go to colleges of my choice. Then my dad had me enrolled in a local college. And he was just very controlling about even me being in school. They would never do that to my brother, my brother went away to school...pledged a frat... my parents financed everything for him.

Jodha shared an example where she felt that she was mistreated due to her gender in this statement:

From my dad's side all my uncle's are useless. They sit around and they wait to be served hand and foot. I had one of my uncle's once ask me to fold this laundry for him. And I was like, look he is an older man let me do it for him. And I said 'give me two minutes'. And he was like, 'you need to learn to do this because this is a woman's duty'. And I looked at him and I just sat there. I was like, I'm not folding your laundry...you can fold it yourself. I just sat on the couch until my aunt came home and I said your husband just said this to me.

Sadhana's experience was unique in that her mom was more supportive of her being treated fairly. Still, the influence of traditional gender norms are shared in this quote:

My mom is actually very progressive I feel. So she's always talked about her feeling equal as a woman even growing up. She felt like that kind of like laid the seeds for that feeling of wanting equality and the fact that her parents emphasized equal education. I think that contributed to that. I remember she used to tell me when she first got married that on my dad's side it was three brothers and it was their mom largely that raised them. So their mom really spoiled them in terms of like they never had to do anything. So my dad brought that, you know, carried that into the marriage and so initially when she got married. She didn't know what was right or wrong. You know, so he would give her laundry and stuff to do. And my mom initially was like washing the laundry and you know they didn't have a washing machine. So it's like physically on the stone and stuff like that. And after a while she was just like 'whoa, no, I'm not doing this, you can do it'. So she started to kind of lay the groundwork for, you know, splitting up chores and errands when she was early in her marriage. I feel like I hear a lot of feminists talk from my mom so that definitely shaped me.

Four of the male partners also provided insight in multigenerational cultural influence on gender roles. Vinod shared what he saw in terms of gender roles, "growing up in my household was more what my dad said goes." Rahul added, "There was definitely things like the manner of the men who are supposed to take care of things. The men are supposed to be the head of the household. Right, things of that nature." Vivek's experience is similar to those in stating, "So we didn't have to do anything. In fact, we were basically told not to do anything really." There was resistance for challenging traditional gender norms from Raj's perspective:

I will say that when I grew up around my family and whenever I would go in the kitchen and I was like, I want to cook or I want to cut. They would be like ‘no, no, like, you should go’, you know, ‘do something or go play’.

Subtheme I: Misogyny. Four women shared how they experienced misogyny in the Desi culture. Sapna said, “My dad was explicit, ‘why aren't you doing this, like, why didn't you do this or have you done this or what did you do this week’, it was like weekly check-ins”. Sapna continued to share, “traditionally, they [women] would be cooking the food and the men eat first and the women eat last.” Jodha had similar remarks, “Little things like in the Indian community in general, at least in my experience all the women sit and cook, and then all the men get to eat first.” Simran’s experience was:

I always had to learn. I knew how to cook, clean and laundry, all that stuff as a kid, but like my brother didn't have to learn until he was about to go into college. So it was a lot of that, where my younger brother was treated differently because he is the guy versus me and so...I internalized that as in like...I just hated that a lot.

Anjali shared similar remarks of her brother not having to do as many chores:

In my opinion it was very, very apparent that boys are valuable. I had an older brother and then me and my younger sister, and my dad was very much favorable to my brother to the point where they're both like very toxic masculine energies that we try to stay away from at this point. And I see it kind of seeping into the grandkids, too. My dad is very very vocal about gender roles and who should be doing what, even though. Like he grew up cooking. He grew up cleaning or putting us to work to clean..you know like he did more than he claims to have done, but he's very outspoken about what men should be doing and what women should be doing.

Theme II: Intergenerational Influence. All six couples shared what they witnessed in regards to family values around gender roles. Raj shared, “I do remember what I've seen. It's like a lot of it is the wife cooks and cleans and does all the house stuff and then the man goes to work and all the manly stuff.” His wife Simran expressed similar remarks, “Definitely growing up, my mom did all the cooking and cleaning the house.

Rahul and Anjali shared that they came into the marriage being influenced by what they saw at home and both were traditional ways of life. While Rahul tried to recreate his experience, Anjali wanted to change those gender norms. They quoted:

Rahul: What I grew up seeing was my dad did the finances. He took care of stuff at home and my mom cooked, cleaned and worked on upkeep of everything and stuff like that. There's really no traditional gender roles in our marriage, but probably not the case when we were walking into the marriage. The first couple of years because there was like, based on what we saw in our homes, there's expectations created and things like that. But I would say very quickly, we realized that probably wasn't gonna fly.

Anjali: I saw how much it sheltered my mom, but my dad was also very much into getting us involved in the everyday things like the bills and how to fix things. So I grew up doing it and knowing it and seeing how my mom not having that exposure, not really trusting herself to know it and take care of things...how that kind of handicapped her.. so we didn't really...I didn't want to start our marriage like that.

Similarly, Sapna and Vinod shared what was and was not expected from each of them based on what they grew up seeing. Vinod elaborates on how what they saw impacted their romantic relationship. The couple shared:

Sapna: She [her mom] was still expected to do all the housework cleaning, cooking and mop. Mom was up at 4am and she would do a full sweep, a mop, make sure that the tea was ready in the morning, lunch, and dinner was prepared for the day. So like all of these dishes had to be completely clean and wipe down before she left for the day. There was nothing in the sink. The bathroom was cleaned every on a specific day, it was like very structured schedule. But dad would be like why is this pen moved, he's a very OCD type person in terms of how he organized the stuff. So mom also cleaned to that compulsive level.

Vinod: Just seeing my mom always doing everything and I told Sapna like I'm never going to lay everything on your plate. Like, if I can help in any which way I'm going to help out, but growing up in my household I've never had to always do those things. So I don't know. Like when I do the laundry, I need to move it right after...I need to hang them right after. Because growing up I never was taught to do it. So even on my end, it's still a learning curve because it's new to me. For women I think it's drilled in their heads like if you do this one part, then you have to do the other part too. For guys, I think it's the exact opposite. If you never learned it then there's gonna be a learning curve for you and you're never gonna get it right the first time. It's going to take multiple, multiple times of doing it over the years to then it becoming second nature. So I think my parents were a big influence on me.

Vivek shared what he saw growing up and stated the traditional gender norms:

My mom used to do all the cooking. But then again, she would feel guilty if my dad helped with the cooking. And so she wouldn't let him. Also, in a sense, it's kinda like she feels the duty but sometimes she would kind of appreciate his help, but you know she

kind of felt like she owned the kitchen, I guess, and then so my dad never really cooked at all. But he did do a lot of other things. For example, paying the bills, taking out the trash. He pretty much did all that. All the the handy jobs around the house. So he used to take care of all those any phone bills or utilities, you know, all those things

Prem gave his understanding on family values of traditional gender dynamic and how they played out in his household:

My mom didn't work. She stayed at home. There's three of us kids. She kind of did everything in the house, she made meals, she drove us to all of our soccer practices. She kind of did all that right. My dad worked and he had one job but he really had two jobs. So he was gone all the time and he worked and did all that stuff. And again, same kind of thing like by virtue of him kind of earning all the money in the house...he also kind of controlled the purse strings. And then, you know, same thing on the other side like just kind of implicitly my mom was doing the other stuff. And why did my mom quit her job. I think there's probably an element of. Yeah, my dad probably had said you should stay home with the kids. Then there's probably also just element of, you know, a lot of women have this problem, and I see what my friends do too, which is that the woman doesn't earn enough money to justify having her job.

Subtheme I: Cultural/ Religious Values. Two of the women talked about how cultural and religious values were rooted in gender hierarchy and how those were imposed. In reflection of her wedding, Preeti said,

My mom said we should have all the traditional customs [for the wedding], where you have to wash his feet, which I was really upset about. And I was like, you can't do that mom and dad. And they were like, no, we have to do that for the groom.

Jodha shared the religious values that were enforced within her family values,

So the moment our niece gets her period, there is going to be a clear difference in how she's [grandmother] going to treat her granddaughter versus her grandson. And I'm like, that's not fair. She is pretty strict when it comes to, like, don't touch me, don't touch the kitchen, don't go near the god room, don't go here like she's very strict about these things.

Rahul, the only Christian male in the study, reflected on the biblical sayings and stated:

So we're also Christian. So, you know, biblically there's also things that talk about, you know, the role of the man in the house and stuff like that. So I know my dad would quote different things like that. So that's why I probably came in thinking like, this is my job. I'm the man. But what I did see was that there was really fair treatment of all of us at home and my dad treated my mom very well. And my dad did most of the cooking at home.

Category II: Influence on Gender Role Development

This category discusses the theme of internalized messages constructed by family values. The six wives shared a few examples of their family morals and ethics around gender roles that influenced their own construction of gender ideology. Each of the wives discussed their emotional experiences of the different messages that they internalized.

Theme I: Internalized Messages of Family Values. Two of the wives talked specifically about how they acted due to gender roles that were rooted from family gender ideology. Simran explained:

When my parents had parties I always had to serve the guests like water or chai. I had to be the one to go put puri on their plate and ask them what they want to eat or give them whatever. Whereas my brother could just like play video games in the basement so.. It

felt like I was their server kid... it's honestly, what I felt like. I think just seeing my mom hosting dinner parties, now I've had to really consciously make the effort to not feel so easily uptight and chill out about these things [serving guests] when hosting our friends. I feel like consciously I've noticed that a lot more and learned to not feel as guilty as I used to do before.

Sadhna highlighted the influence of family values on her gender expectations in the following quote:

I did not have a lot of gender expectations imposed by his parents, let's say. The respected parents don't really get in on that kind of stuff. But I feel like a lot of women, for example, do marry into a family with expectations and I don't think that on the grand scheme of things I had to experience any of that. If anything, I would hear it from his grandmother more than from his parents. So there's definitely a generational gender difference. Things that come more from his Grandma, like you know, cooking meals and dressing a certain way. You can tell there's a certain expectation of how things are done.

A commonality amongst the six wives were feelings of self-pressure or guilt that presented when unpacking gender role norms. Sapna shared, "It was a lot more like self pressure as opposed to actual any actual explicit pressure in terms of what I could or could not do or was or was not supposed to do". Jodha, Simran and Preeti shared how pressure and guilt impacted each of them and in which ways those emotions showed up:

Jodha: Sometimes I feel like I do cave into the societal pressure. I tell him to go eat first, just because I'm like I don't want everyone to be like looking at us and be like, 'oh my god there they are, again, doing their whole we are going to be equal thing'. I don't want people to react like that sometimes. It just bothers me.

Simran: I still kind of felt guilty about it just because I obviously heard from my grandmother, my mom all these people, 'oh girls have to do this, like, don't let your husband do this,' or even after I got married 'Simran, make sure you wake up like early in the morning and make chai for everyone in the house'. So I initially I kind of felt like weird and awkward and guilty about it. I've had to really consciously make the effort to work on the guilt. When we do have friends over I had to not to feel so easily uptight about these things because our friends like 'Simran, chill like just sit and drink with us, like, no, we can get our own shit like we can we can get our own beverages and stuff.' I think after getting married I feel like consciously I've noticed that a lot more whereas before I didn't realize that. But I've also made the conscious effort to not keep doing that and like totally chill out a little bit more when it comes to like having people over and stuff. And not feeling as guilty as I used to do before and it's something that like I work on myself a lot.

Preeti: I think that he [Prem], like most members of the dominant group in any society are oblivious to issues that other people face. And so while he can be very pragmatic about it, I, also maybe because I'm a girl and been socialized this way, have all sorts of like emotions that come up. I would hire someone to clean my house... I would feel really guilty because my mom never really did that. You know, even when we order out...I'm like, that's so expensive I could make this at home... so those emotions...I think especially that guilt, he doesn't feel. Because he is so pragmatic.

Domain II: Gender Role Enactment

In order to explore how Desi couples negotiate gender roles, it is important to explore and discuss how they enact gender roles. Couple's experiences in establishing gender roles impacts

how gender roles contribute to their everyday life functions. Couples were asked how they divide household tasks and what the process looked like. This domain looks at what factors contributed to their gender role development. The two categories in this domain are division of labor and dismantling patriarchy. Couples discussed ways they divided household labor and shared the impact of equality in their relationship.

Category I: Division of Labor

The couples discussed how they implemented balance within their marriages. For many of the couples, they believed in dividing chores and household tasks evenly. There were multiple couples that discussed what it meant to remove traditional gender roles within their marriage. The two themes that emerged in this category are egalitarian approach and shifting traditional roles.

Theme I: Egalitarian Approach. Six male and female participants shared how they implemented an egalitarian approach in their marriage and five of the six individuals explained how by not conforming to traditional roles influenced equality. Simran talks about how it is important to assess availability when dividing household chores and how they distanced themselves from gender conforming household chores. Simran says:

How we split up work in the house and stuff like it's dramatically different than how like even my parents do it. We both just split things evenly, or if he's busy, then I'll do it or if I'm busy then he'll do it. It's not really based upon our gender roles, it's just really based upon our like everyday habits of what we ended up just developing from our general consensus that like we're just going to split it 50/50.

This mentality also existed in Sapna's relationship as well and she shared the importance of playing to their strengths:

We made it a point to be like, ‘okay, if you can cook. I will do all the cleaning. I will take care of putting it away and organizing the fridge and doing the dishes and setting up the dishwasher.’ It's not based on male or female, just based on what we actually enjoy doing. And so that's been a lot of it. We try to take half and half to whatever extent. And then the last two years, I've been in part time school so he was doing work from home at the time. And so he had much more time flexibility and was actually doing almost all of the housework like groceries, laundry, cleaning, feeding me. And I was pretty much just bread winning. And when we originally got married, I wasn't working. So I had taken on more of the responsibility. So it has never been really a defined thing, but there are definitely times where I'm like hey can you take care of this. Or he'll say, like, I don't have the energy today, can you do whatever it may be. So that's kind of where we're at right now.

Akbar shared how assessing availability and playing to their strengths impacted how he and Jodha engaged in household chores:

We never divided our responsibilities, it's just whoever just does it. For me, based on my personality...when she finished cooking... I like to clean. I think I'm very organized and clean. I'm always that way. And she's the same way also. It's just who has that time. What we do is never like a we divided it into household chores. It's just certain things one person is better at doing than the other. And over time, we accepted that okay, you can take care of these things, you take care of these things and eventually over time, they'll merge. Ideally, on certain days, if I don't want to do stuff because I had a long work day, I want to be able to eventually get to a point where I can feel more comfortable that if I

don't do it she'll go ahead and do it. And she'll be accountable for something if I'm gone for a busy day of work. There needs to be a balance in that.

Jodha talked about a point in her marriage where she felt more confident with how they divided household tasks:

Neither of us were opposed to being the one to go clean or anything. I had really severe postpartum anxiety and depression after I had my son. And I wasn't working at that time. And I was struggling. I was in a very dark, very scary place. And he basically did everything in those days, like he changed the diapers, he would make sure that I had food. He did everything and I think that was when I realized that we don't really have to be this is my role and that is your role. If he has a busy day at work, I'm going to do the extra work at home.

Rahul's quote below shows how equality around division of labor was formed in his relationship:

I can't think of anything gender roles wise that we've like put on each other like where there's an expectation that I do something because I'm a guy, and she does something because she's a girl. I think we've gotten to a place where we kind of know what the other brings to the marriage and to the family. So I don't think there's any conflict related to gender roles.

Preeti's approach to experiencing equality was slightly different. Preeti noted, "I don't think there's anything he won't do, because he's a dude. I guess we theoretically believe in equality and like 50/50 gender roles, it's just the way it's kind of played out in our life is not equal as it should be."

Theme II: Shifting Traditional Roles. Two couples talked about how their relationship at times may have looked traditional or can still look traditional, but how they have navigated through circumstances that works for their relationship. Anjali and Rahul's conversation unpacked how their relationship shifted over the years out of traditional gender roles:

Anjali: In the beginning, I feel like I was very much like trying to cook and clean and I cared about doing all that stuff. But it was also very overwhelming.

Rahul: There was a period of time, I would say in the beginning where Anjali did a lot of cooking, cleaning, stuff like that. And then she worked night shift as a nurse. And so I would say there was a very long period of time where I did all the cooking. Probably not as much cleaning or at least the way that she would prefer to see me clean. I did laundry, but didn't do like full on top to bottom house cleaning

Anjali: No you washed it, it was not folded most of the time, or just on the guest room bed there'd be like four loads of laundry.

Rahul: Yes... I think there was a period in the beginning where we kept each other out of certain conversations. But I would say in nine years. I think either one of us can cook, either one of us can clean, either one of us can handle the finances, either one of us can make money, either one of us can change diapers and take care of the kids and all that. I think over time there's really no traditional gender roles in our marriage, but probably not the case walking into the marriage.

Prem and Preeti made it a point to share that their relationship from the outside would look like a traditional marriage. Their interaction is quoted:

Prem: I think it plays out in a relatively traditional way. I mean, she cooks dinner, I take the dog out in the evening, I will make breakfast sometimes. You know she does more of

the cleanup or like you know, I make more money. From that perspective I would say it plays out in a relatively traditional way. But again, that's not really because we've had a conversation, specifically about it. Or because it necessarily is like our intention for it to play out that way. It just has kind of happened to play out that way.

Preeti: And I found that a lot of the way that I was brought up or raised or socialized kind of ultimately meant that I do take on it like more responsibility in the house, since I don't make as much money. I just do lots of stereotypically female things. And I guess those are all just a result of what practically the job that I do, or the fact that I like to cook, or like I just make more variety of food because my mom made me learn. Someone once told me that, like, the best way to have things done in the house is actually to never do the same thing all the time because if you actually do all the things at least once or periodically...you are always reminded of how much work there is. You can always respect the contributions that the other person is making to other people in your house. So I think we, you know, we try to switch off bathrooms or cooking or taking the dog out and things like that. So you're always aware of how much they're putting into chores.

Preeti later in the interview also shared:

I had a typical nine to five job and it got really hard because I thought I still had to do all the things that I was doing. And so we would fight a lot about it. And then we discovered two things. One is that our situations are different now and we had to find a different schedule and different chores. Second he kind of let me see that we should just outsource things that I can't do anymore, which is, I think, something that had never occurred to me because I was working from home and I was a grad student so it's easy for me to do all the things at home. But then I was like, well, we could just, if we're too tired or can't take

the dog out...we could send him to daycare. We can order in and instead of me having to cook every day, or, you know, we haven't yet, but we could get someone to clean the house. I don't have to clean the house every two weeks on our own. That kind of stuff. So I think it took some adjusting. And it took some practical changes in the way that we live our lives.

Category II: Dismantling Patriarchy

This category addresses what influenced couples to desire a relationship with nonconforming gender norms and participate in experiencing nonconforming gender norms. There were commonalities among the couples with the various ways nonconforming gender norms showed up within their marriages. The couples also talked about the experiences that shaped their need to advocate for gender equality. The following three themes address the shared issues that these couples have regarding gender roles: unpacking male privilege, establishment of equity, and egalitarian approach.

Theme I: Unpacking Male Privilege. Two women participants shared statements on how male privilege impacted their gender role dynamics, two men participants contributed their thoughts discussing the importance of recognizing their individual responsibilities as men, and one couple discussed a combination of the male privilege impact on their gender roles and responsibilities of men.

Sapna's frustration around not seeing men contribute to household maintenance led to her calling out unfair treatment in this quote:

My dad's not working right now but she [Sapna's mom] is working. And with that she is cooking breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner, And she's constantly frustrated and exhausted, including venting to us like all the time. And that has led to me getting into it

with my dad about how he is being useless in the house right now. And I'm like 'you're not even financially contributing', which may or may not be mean to say to him but it's true. Like, now you're expecting...when we think about traditional male, female gender...my understanding of history is, the reason they came to be that way is because the man was going to work, and the woman was not. That's how it works. Now, if the woman is going to work...she can't do everything in that [household task], it just doesn't work. You need to help out with the kids. You need to help out with the household chores. What exactly are you contributing to a marriage, there's no sense of equality left. In exploring messages that were directly focused on her gender, Preeti mentioned how her husband's male privilege shows up in their marriage in this quote:

My mom will be like women don't do that, women in our community don't do that, girls don't do that. And I think that's as specific as it gets right. So, I would say that maybe the privilege of being male allowed him [Prem] to not have those conversations.

Jodha and Akbhar's conversation shed light on why it was important for male privilege to be unpacked in their marriage:

Jodha: I feel like a lot of times I'm not allowed to say some of these things, no matter how much I want to say them or no matter how much I truly believe in it. There's certain things that society is not going to be open to hearing about what I'm trying to say, especially like our family. And those are the kind of conversations where I'm like I kind of needed more backup on this one.

Akbhar: And it's important for me to be aware. That's what she makes clear, 'just because you're not like that... I need you to be open when other people are like that', to at least speak up on their behalf, because she can't say anything. It's the man's responsibility to

acknowledge that there is a gender inequality and it's our responsibility to talk about it amongst our gender. We don't do that. I don't, I don't really like to talk to my brother about these things.

In Vinod's marriage, he described what influenced how he viewed his gender role and how it evolved. Vinod said:

I was heavily influenced by the women in my family. And that really showed me like you know it doesn't always have to be what the man says. It's like everyone can be right. It's not a one way or the highway kind of deal. But you just gotta open avenues and listen to what people are saying. So it's been things like that, or even like doing action. So the laundry, I'll turn on the laundry but then the whole day goes by and I forgot to move it into the dryer. It's things like that where I started to realize, and started to make sure... with laundry I set the timer like or put a reminder my phone. Because it's as simple as just taking laundry and moving it into the dryer. I don't want Sapna, you know, to feel like I have to tell you to do every part of doing the laundry. So, things like that I do now set reminders or something of that nature. It just helps both of us.

Raj talked about how he challenged gender norms by sharing:

I've always been raised by a female and was reinforced that it doesn't matter if you are a woman or man...you learn how to do this. So guys can also be in the kitchen. Or you know, do laundry. If someone said you're not allowed to do this, I go, 'why not?, why does it matter if I can cook or not, it's better that I can feed myself'.

Theme II: Establishment of Equity. Three women talked about not conforming to stereotypical gender roles. Simran said, "I hated how I was treated so then I ended up just rejecting whatever was told to me when it came to girls versus boys roles or jobs and stuff to a

point where I just said no. I know what my strengths are and I know what his strengths are.”

Sapna also felt strongly about asserting her values in quote:

Every time we hang out with people and it doesn't matter whose house we are at, the boys need to know that they need to clean up their dishes. Like you don't get to just sit there and leave it. Nobody's coming up and picking up after you and your food. I've been pretty open about pushing back on the female gender norms and being like, I'm not going to take on this responsibility by myself. But I think that is a conversation that's been more common I think with our generation.

Jodha agreed on what values needed to be stated in sharing:

A lot of people are like 'oh you're so lucky'. I'm like, no, I'm not lucky that he does half of the work in a house. It's not just my house. And he lives in our house and we both have to do work. If I'm having a busy day, he's going to do more. If he's more busy today, I'm going to do more. I think that's just kind of how it worked with us. I learned more about what it means to be a feminist and I do go on long rants about how this is unfair and unjust but it's never directed at him, it's more like I hate that society is like this. And he understands it.

Domain III: Gender Role Expectations

This domain discusses participants' perspectives of gender role expectations. This domain offers a deeper understanding on how expectations are managed. The first category unpacks how unconscious bias shows up in navigating gender roles. The second category explores what expectations are carried surrounding financial decisions. The third category addresses gender role expectations that were navigated around parenting.

Category I: Unconscious Bias

Conversations about gender roles focused on tangible ways they either showed up or were challenged; however, some of the participants were able to share how gender roles existed in less discrete ways. Also, participants were able to discuss how men experienced gender roles. The two themes emerge in this category: invisible labor and man's job.

Theme I: Invisible Labor. Four of the wives identified that they must provide more direction to their husband in getting household tasks accomplished. Preeti said, "Women struggle because they're always a manager of the house and the burden of telling them [men] what to do, is also a burden. In addition to doing half the work. And so then you really do two thirds of the work. And that's very true in our house... he's just not as competent in the home as I was trained to be growing up. And by the time I explain to you how to do this task, I could just do it. So sometimes I end up doing that".

Sapna had similar assertions in her quote:

There is an untold extra pressure that women have to do, where you have to delegate it out for them [men]. I read an article and the entire thread is just about the guy saying, 'well, you never asked' and the female in the relationship saying, 'yeah, I shouldn't have to ask if it is important. Like, you need to just speak up and offer'. He [Vinod] does that a lot of the time...when I saw that I was like, you know, this is a very real thing that a lot of women feel. He [Vinod] said, do you feel that way? And no, not most of the time, but there's definitely times when I feel like if I didn't tell you the bathroom wouldn't get cleaned or if I didn't actually tell you, you won't notice that this needs to be vacuumed.

Another participant, Jodha, reflected on her experience in delegating. Jodha shared:

We [the couple] do have those conversations where I'm like, why is running the household my job? Why do I have to remember all of these 50 things that we're out of? If

I asked you, hey, we have any toilet paper left in the garage, the answer is 'um, I don't know'. You spend more time in the garage than me, you should know this more than I do, you know, little things like that. We did get into a pretty big argument about when I take longer to get ready when we're going out. I'm like, you're ready so you would always go to the car with our son, and then be annoyed at me like, 'why did you take so long to come to the car'. But I'm like, I have to remember the outfit, the backup outfit, the backup backup outfit. I have to remember the water bottle, the snacks. I do remember all these things. And he did start changing a little after that. And now, if I'm going to the store, he will remember to be like...we are out of toilet paper...we are out of this...we're out of that. He always gets annoyed at me when I go shopping. Because it takes a long time. But that's the one thing, my mother in law's always on my side. She's like, because when she goes shopping, She remembers the 50 other things you need in the house. You go shopping...you're gonna grab the one bag of potatoes that we needed. You're not going to think oh wait, we're out of cilantro. Oh, wait, we're out of this. So...that's definitely, I think gender role based.

Anjali shared the expectations she carries:

If I said dishes need to get done. He'll do the dishes. But for me, if the dishes need to get done that means the whole kitchen needs to get clean. If you do one thing, things just pile on. Like oh I got to put this stuff away and all the stuff in the cupboard. I gotta put all the dishes up so I can clean the counter. It like kind of piles on whereas for him. It's like well you said this task had to get done...so I did the task. And I can't really, you know, expect him to look beyond that.

Theme II: Man's Job. Critically thinking of power and privilege, people in positions of power and privilege are meant to unpack and understand the weight of holding those positions (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2019). While the subjected people take up space to shed light on their marginalized lived experiences (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2019). This section, however, provides insight on how three of the women from this study preserved traditional male roles. Sapna quoted:

I wish I did know more about how often does the car need oil changes to happen or fixing the backyard or how to use the drill or whatever it may be, like, because I do just rely a lot on him to figure that out. I'm mostly bad with tech and because he's in tech and it's something he's very passionate about. But there have been times when I FaceTime him to use the frickin remote control because I'm like, what did you do there are so many wires. I sometimes worry that we're so focused on making sure the men know how to do the women's gender norms...that I definitely feel guilty. Like you did all the men stuff today and you did the cooking and the cleaning. And now I'm not taking anything back away from you, like, if we're going to really get to an equal future. I should also be able to take care of myself with a hammer, like it needs to not just be one way.

Jodha and Simran emphasized how traditional male chores play out in their marriages:

Jodha: Things that are typically seen as male roles, he does do a lot of them. He'll take the trash out.

Simran: He does more of the handy things around the house.

Category II: Financial Decisions

Participants were asked about the connection between financial decisions and gender roles. All the couples discussed the influence of financial decisions within three themes: breadwinner, financial responsibility, and financial independence.

Theme I: Breadwinner. One male participant and one couple shared how they navigated gender roles when there was one primary breadwinner. In exploring how financial contribution impacts gender roles, Prem quoted:

So I make more money than she does, and I work in finance, so I know more about that. So she's an informed individual. She has her own bank account. She makes decisions about her own kind of daily expenses and things like that. But ultimately when it comes down to the bigger picture decisions. It's always done in consultation with me and I generally tend to have the final say on that kind of stuff. I always tell her, like, 'listen, I'm happy to stay home and do things. You just got to make enough money to support us.' Like if she goes and gets a job that pays five times where I'm making then okay well she gets to call the shots but that just hasn't been how it's played out.

As a couple Sapna and Vinod shared:

Sapna: I think that when the person is not financially contributing for better for worse, that person does tend to take on more of the household gender roles. Like the traditional female roles of cooking, cleaning, doing the stuff in the house because then the other person needs to focus their time on work, and I think we just kind of try to acknowledge that the person probably also feels a financial burden of being the breadwinner. I know when I was not earning money. I know I felt like more like... I needed to contribute and often felt like the last year or whatnot, did you feel that way?

Vinod: Yeah. I think especially like when you're working from home. It was like, okay, what can I help out with so I'm not adding any more stress levels right. Because the worst thing is like you're the main contributor financially, which means like you have your nine to five or whatever it may be, and then you come home to your household stress, which is like your errands and your chores.

Theme II: Financial Responsibility. A few participants were able to share that they felt like traditionally financial management was the husband's job, and the participants desired a collaborative conversation about finances. Akbhar's thoughts on financial decisions are:

We see that the previous generation did not have that dialogue and issues could arise. Whereas, it helps if we are both on the same thing. It's also practical...at some point I need her to know just as much of what's happening in the finance side in savings or bank or 401k because God forbid something happens. The burden shouldn't fall under her because she didn't have knowledge and didn't have access, right, money's together from day one. There was never an argument on it.

Raj and Simran dialog explain how they understood their responsibilities in quote:

Raj: So I feel like there is no hiding from her. I feel traditionally it was 'okay you don't worry about it. You don't need to know how much money we have'. That's not how we do it because I feel like she has to do it because if something happens to me she has to know what's going on. We have a joint account. And I'll tell her hey this is what's going on this is what I changed up.

Siman: It's not like I don't know or because I get all the emails. I always look and stuff too. So it's not like he's hiding anything. I get a lot of anxiety from handling money... so

he definitely takes the lead with dealing with all that stuff. But like I'm on the same page. So it's not like I never not know what's going on with our finances or anything.

Theme III: Financial Independence. Only one participant discussed that in her egalitarian marriage it was important for her to have some financial freedom. The want for financial independence steamed from dynamics she witnessed growing up. Anjali quoted:

I guess in the homes we grew up in was shared bank accounts and all that stuff and I had no intention of ever doing that just because I'm like you know it's always nice to have your, your own account on the side in case anything happens. And I think it also kept some semblance of independence, even though it's not really. I mean, we both know each other's accounts and stuff so like we really wanted access... you have it. Even before our marriage, it was really important for me to be independent, like in all ways even as far as choosing a career. I chose my career, partly for the fact that I knew what it would get me financial independence.

Category III: Becoming Parents

This category emphasized the experience of being parents who are navigating gender roles dynamics. Two of the six couples had children, and in the theme of raising children they discuss roles and responsibilities in relation to gender roles. Fostered

Theme I: Raising Children. The participants who had children explained how having children furthered the conversations about gender roles. These participants discussed how they aimed to raise their children. Jodha and Akbhar shared how it has been important to have conversations about gender roles:

Akbhar: We have a son. And when we were thinking of kids we were very on board like 100% agree that our upbringing and how we are and how we are with each other is going to translate, always, regardless of the surroundings. That's when we really started having a lot of conversations about these topics.

Jodha: For me, it really hit our distinct thinking about what gender roles when we had a kid. Especially when we had a boy. I was like, he is not about to sit there and be useless, like you're the little prince of the house and don't do anything. We've definitely had conversations about what if we have a girl. What are we going to do when our girl ends up having her period? Like, what are we going to do if we have a girl and then your brother [Akbhar's brother] has a boy and like your mom's [Akbhar's mom] like, 'my granddaughter comes down to the kitchen all day with me'. Because I have family who did that. She told the girl to come stand with her in the kitchen. The granddaughter comes down with her in the kitchen and the grandma told the grandson and 'you don't worry, you can just stay there with the other men'. And I'm like, I don't want to set that example at all. The kids need to be treated equally, regardless of their gender.

Rahul provided his insight on being a dad to a young girl in quote:

I mean, I think it's really important, especially as I see how my oldest is being treated differently in our family unit. I think about Anjali's parents, and you know the preferential treatment of our nephew, and it's one of those things that's been so eye opening to me recently that I feel like I need to remind her [daughter] and tell her that she's worth more than gold. And it was just one of those things like just to like make her realize that like nobody should be talking to her in a way that makes her feel badly. Nobody should be touching her in a way that's uncomfortable or hurts, and she shouldn't

have to take that from anyone. So I see us raising, I mean...we hope two very strong independent women that are going to grow up and hopefully make an impact in the world, and not think that they should be held back by anyone because they're this, that, or the other thing. And I see the importance of fostering that so much more now because even at a young age, she's already been treated differently by family members and that's what's going to happen in society when she goes to school and she's interacting with friends. So I think there's going to be different treatment. We like even now, like we when we put her to bed... we tell her... you know you are beautiful, you are kind, you're sweet, you're strong, you're funny. Words of affirmation is her love language. Like, it just makes her feel so great. And so we like to remind her of that all the time.

Domain IV: Gender Role Communication

This domain focuses on the processes participants used to engage in conversations about gender roles and how they resolved conflict regarding gender roles. All six couples highlighted the importance of communication in marriage in the first category: conversations on gender roles. Couples also shared the value in creating healing which is explored in the category of conflict resolution.

Category I: Conversations on Gender Roles

Many couples shared that they did not have explicit conversations on navigating gender roles. What helped most couples is dating and getting to know their partners. In this category the two themes that are explored are nonexistent conversation and learning your partner.

Theme I: Nonexistent Conversations. In talking about conversations that were or were not had Sapna said, “The gender norms definitely existed, and there were definitely gender roles, but they were never explicitly discussed or talked about.” Prem noticed similar embedded roles

while stating, “If we are talking about explicit conversations, they never happened. Right, if we talk about implicit conversations, then yes, those happened.”

For a few couples they noticed that similar personality traits and outlooks averted explicit conversations. Jodha said, “I wouldn't say we ever actually discussed it. We sort of were always on the same page. If there ever was to be a conversation it was because of a situation and even that more seems like ‘oh my god, I'm glad you're not like that’, as opposed to being like, ‘what do you think about this’. It was more like, ‘Oh my gosh, I'm so glad you're not like those people.’” Simran shared, “No [explicit conversations], I just think that we fell into a groove. I think we're pretty similar, as in we both have similar abilities and so it was never really a conversation of ‘oh, you have to do this or I have to do this.’”

Vivek quoted:

There's no actual discussions, back and forth, but it's funny because over time my mom had started to get upset about my dad not helping out in the kitchen or cleaning. But oddly enough, she didn't want that help before because of maybe the stereotypical Indian thinking like I should do everything. So I think she had some kind of internal struggle with following that gender traditional Indian way of thinking, but also feeling a little bit overwhelmed because it's different than maybe traditional Indian ways. Basically, she was working a full time job plus also being a full time at home wife. So I'd say I think she had a struggle with that. And I think that over the years that has created some kind of a struggle in their relationship. We never had any discussions, but it's almost like an observational phase from me watching that dynamic, I guess that I have probably assimilated certain ways into my life.

Rahul and Anjali shared the struggle of not having direct conversation and potential benefits of it. Anjali quoted:

I think it was like we just started living. We started butting heads and being like, why would you think that that's how we're gonna do things? And you know, it still happens I mean, not to that degree. But it still happens, and there will be points where we'll kind of like to get into it.

Rahul explained how pre marital counseling could have been important because he and Anjali came into the marriage with different ideals. He quoted:

You come in with an expectation and you don't quite realize how the other isn't going to operate like you. You think that they're going to operate a certain way, like we didn't really go through a strong marriage counseling or anything like that before we got married. But like friends of mine that have gone through that like legit marriage counseling through church or whatever have told me that they ask you the tough questions like 'hey, who's going to do this, who's going to do that, what's your expectation?' We didn't have those conversations when we got married and you know, neither of us had the conversation around who expects what from the other. And we just came in with things in our mind and how things should go, and when they didn't work... things exploded, and we got into fights or whatever. We just figured it out as we went along.

Theme II: Learning Your Partner. Each couple dated for a significant period before getting married and a few discussed the implications of that. Simran shared:

I think that because we actually dated each other and had a love marriage and we actually spent two years getting to know each other and how we were, I think that's why

we do so well. He knows that if I really don't want to do something, I'm not going to do something and he has learned that in our dating process. I'm just very headstrong about certain things. And opinionated about certain things. He knew that going into getting married and stuff. So it's never been an issue. And I think that because we had a love marriage we are able to accept each other. We were able to adjust to each other. And if anything does happen, we're more open to learning and adjusting

Akbhar stated:

So going into marriage, we kind of knew each other and we knew where we were on the playing field if you want to say. That there was no inequality there. That doesn't mean that I fully understand it and all emotions and everything that goes with the two different genders. But when it comes to equality or how we perceive gender, I think in this day and age, growing up in the US, and being exposed to that there shouldn't be any differences, made it very easy.

Category II: Conflict Resolution

This category includes one theme. The theme discusses communication styles that helped the couples navigate gender roles. In the subtheme, couples talked about how communication styles impact the trust that cultivates a healthy egalitarian marriage.

Theme I: Communication Style. In exploring how the couples create conflict resolution, four individuals shared their experience and importance of engaging in a healthy communication style. Vinod said, "I think it all just boils down to just solid communication and just having that expectation up front."

Sapna provided how conflict was managed in her marriage in quote:

We learned very early on like nine years ago, to give the other person space and then come back. And we've made a conscious decision to never go to sleep angry. So if that takes till four o'clock in the morning, it's taking till four o'clock in the morning and we're not going to sit angry and that has been a very conscious decision that okay I gave you 30 minutes to think about it. 'Are you calm?' Now we need to talk about this. And so that's kind of how we dealt with it.

Preeti explained how her process looked in quote:

So sometimes I will yell for like a couple minutes and then walk away and take deep breaths and then come back and be like, well, these are the reasons that I'm upset. This is how you're making me feel and then we'll try to resolve it. Some of our conflicts are very deep seated like this whole difference in values thing and we can't ever really resolve them. So we always have to find some sort of middle ground and compromise on that. And in terms of the way he reacts to the conflicts. He doesn't do a lot of yelling. He does a lot of like controlling his voice because he hated when his dad yelled and he doesn't want to be that person. So he will stay very silent and then try to list out things, like write them down. Very pragmatic.

Rahul shared what he learned about his communication style and how to improve it by stating:

I would say probably wasn't productive because I wasn't really good about expressing my feelings, because I was probably caught off guard that I was being yelled at. I remember even some of our harder conversations would happen via text or we'd write it. I'd write it down or she'd write it down like we leave each other notes or whatever because it was hard for me personally to verbalize that sort of stuff because I just wasn't used to that way of speaking. But I would say over time I probably got a bit more

confident in myself and what I brought to the marriage and that allowed me to be more open and honest with my communication.

Subtheme I: Trust. Being honest, open and engaging in action were skills that three individual participants emphasized in establishing trust within their romantic relationship. Vinod shared his thoughts:

I told her [Sapna] if you got something on your mind, you need to tell me. Whatever you're thinking about because I can't help you if you don't tell me. If you're just going to sit there and bottle it up, it's not doing good for anyone, not doing good for you or for me or for our relationship.

Akbhar shared:

So basically by action [developing trust]. I think it's one thing to have the dialogue. Another thing to act on it. Right, so it shouldn't just be me saying, hey, I can do this. I can do that means showing it over a span of time, and it becomes more believable or trustworthy. Just because I helped once in a while in the kitchen it won't make a difference, but if I do it consistently then she starts to understand, 'okay, he's not just saying it...he's actually going to do it'. I think that's where it came from.

Sadhana explained:

You know, I noticed that my mom fights for hours over this kind of stuff. But there was also this expectation to read her mind, that you know she wanted something to be done and how could no one have noticed. Because that was the, like, you know, she saw a sock on the floor and it's been bothering her for the last five hours and no one picked it up and she's like, 'I don't understand how does that not bother anybody'. So there's a lot of fights that originated from my dad not reading my mom's mind. And I think one thing I took

away from that, and just noticing everyone's general relationship dynamics is that we should communicate, over communicate, if you need to. I don't shy away from asking for help. Like, I won't. I will never expect something. I rarely expect and rather just say it, and if it still doesn't happen. Maybe they forgot. So there's, you know, a second time or third time, but if after, you know, saying it a couple times and it still doesn't happen... that's when I feel like it's worth fighting about or getting upset about. But I don't expect him to read my mind. I feel like sometimes he does internalize and so that can contribute to some friction. But you know, I always try to encourage him to be vocal and express his feelings. And then, you know, I also realized I have to do a better job at sometimes reading into what is going on in his mind. But generally, we try to err on the side of over communication to avoid the friction.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

This phenomenological study aimed to explore experiences of gender role expectations and negotiation in second generation Desi couples. The Desi community has been described to enforce a patriarchy structure and that has been passed on from generation to generation. However, for second generation Desi people, acculturation and assimilation of Western ideals, where women's rights movement is more advanced, goes against the norm of patriarchal society. With that, the findings of this study suggest that second generation Desis' navigate gender roles by unpacking the expectations and negotiating what gender roles look like for them. While many of the findings do correspond to previous literature that explores South Asian gender ideologies, there is unique understanding on the impact of gender norms among Desi couples. In this chapter, I will discuss both how the findings were similar to the literature, and the ways that the findings suggested new information about Desi couples. Also, I will share the findings of the study with reference to the theoretical framework. The chapter will conclude with limitations and implications of the findings and suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Influence

In my phenomenological research, I applied the theoretical framework of social constructivism to dissect participants' stories and the findings. The framework of social constructivism paves the way for individuals to create meaning of a construct based on their interactions with others and the environment that they live in (Vygotsky, 1978). The findings revealed how participants' truths about gender norms are based on their social context. The Desi couples needed to work through gender specific expectations that were constructed through interactions they had between themselves and their family of origins.

This study highlights how Desi tradition and cultural norms impact the understanding of gender dynamics. The findings show that as each Desi couple is impacted by gender dynamics, their understanding of gender norms is established by interactions with family or significant others. For example, Jodha and Akbhar started having conversations about gender norms when grandparents were starting to treat grandkids differently based on gender. Social constructivism would suggest that these gender experiences are a continuous interaction thus conversations will be continuous.

Discussion of Findings

This research study is one of the first of its kind to explore a dyad's experiences of gender role expectations and negotiation process. The findings were presented based on six second-generation Desi couples sharing their experiences of gender role expectations and how they negotiated gender roles amongst themselves. Findings supported previous literature about gender roles within the Desi community, and highlights a need for more research that will be discussed in clinical considerations.

Understanding of Gender Roles

The first domain is understanding of gender roles. This domain provides insight on the conception of gender identity for the second generation Desi couples, the messages contributed to their idea of gender roles, and the impact it had on them. Essentially, what the participants were told and what they saw and how it was internalized.

Multigenerational Culture. Within the findings, participants shared the influence of multigenerational culture on their conceptualization of gender roles. Some of these roles were imposed by grandparents, parents or other older family members. This study corroborates the findings of Dasgupta and Warrier (1996) who discussed how women experienced their families

placing an emphasis on wives adhering to the traditional female gender expectation, while that was not expected of men. They found that there was an emphasis placed on what 'she' should be, rather than what 'he' should be. According to the participants, it was made clear to them that women needed to know how to perform traditional household tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, because these would be the roles expected of them when they marry. Male participants were told that their role was to not do household chores and focus on being head of the household. For example, Raj was directly told to leave the kitchen when he wanted to help.

Pettys & Balgopal (1998) studied multigenerational conflicts among Indian American families. They found that older women carried a traditional outlook on marriage and older non-educated women rejected gender role change for the younger generation. Hearing all of the women participants describe the patriarchal and misogynist messages that were emphasized by their grandmothers and parents supports the suggestion that multigenerational culture influences the establishment of gender norms. Based on the findings, educated women experience the pressure of feeling obligated to carry out traditional gender roles, thus creating hurdles to establish an egalitarian relationship.

Intergenerational Influence. The couples from the research study highlighted witnessing traditional gender roles modeled for them. One participant, Rahul, shared that his father's Christian values influenced his gender role identity by outlining his responsibilities as a man. Other participants felt as if the gender roles limited the mother's independence and expressed a desire for their own romantic relationship to look differently from that of their parents. Ramu (1988) found that traditional values influenced the perception of gender for both men and women. Findings from the study suggest a similar outlook that couples are directly influenced by the gender roles they grow up seeing. Within this study, participants desired an

egalitarian romantic relationship due to the way traditional marriage was modeled for them. This indicates that intergenerational family dynamics directly affects second generation Desi couples gender role expectation and negotiation process.

Internalized Messages. Internalized messages were one of the major themes within the findings. According to all six women participants, they felt self-induced pressure or guilt when navigating gender roles. Many felt stuck in a double bind where advocating for themselves went against everything they learned growing up about their gender roles. This concept aligns with the literature that shares how “pressures for women to perpetuate South Asian culture and traditions by gender role behaviors may result in greater struggles” (Inman et al., 2001, p 24). The women participants discussed the guilt they experienced for standing up for themselves even when they found it important to promote fairness in a relationship. Desi women struggle with their own internal negotiation of gender role expectations. The women participants discussed the guilt they experienced for standing up for themselves even when they found it important to promote fairness in a relationship. Participants' experiences gave examples of the internal struggle women experience in a patriarchal society. Therefore, finding supports the perspective that second generation Desi women experience internal grievances when upholding and managing the expectations of a bicultural identity.

Enactment of Gender roles

The second domain examines how gender roles are represented within the couples marriage, and provides insight to the process of negotiating gender roles.

Egalitarian Approach. Findings in this theme emphasized that second generation Desi couples held firmly established beliefs about not implementing traditional gender roles and avoiding disagreements about who is responsible for various chores, similar to what was

highlighted in the studies discussed in the literature review (Dasgupta, 1998; Jain, 2014, Khawaja & Habib, 2007). Participants expressed beliefs surrounding the importance of having a 50/50 mindset on how household tasks are divided and stressed that any single task should not primarily be one person's job. They engaged in the process of an egalitarian approach that was similar to the findings from Dasgupta (1998), which suggest that second generation children's gender role attitude was more focused on fostering an egalitarian approach.

While it is true that the questions did not directly ask about marital satisfaction through an egalitarian approach, multiple wives share that they would not be in romantic relationships with their partners if their partners carried a traditional approach to marriage. Beliefs about marital happiness in an egalitarian marriage are documented in previous literature (Jain, 2014; Khawaja & Habib, 2007; Schwartz, 1994). However, the results of this study provide a unique contribution, as they focus specifically on what contributed to the couple's motivation for egalitarian partnership.

Shifting Traditional Roles. Participants shared that the desire to break down misogynist behaviors and patriarchy was going to be an ongoing battle within the Desi community. Similarly, Sandhya (2009) highlighted in her research, changes in Indian marriages have been a slow journey. Participants indicated that their egalitarian values are being constructed and will lessen traditional gender norms in generations to come. This was highlighted in the discussion with couple Anjali and Rahul. They shared that they walked into marriage carrying gender role expectations that were influenced by family dynamics, and over time and conversations those expectations became more balanced. Now, they are aiming to teach their kids about equality. This is important to address as it aligns with literature (Sandhya, 2009) that demonstrates shifting

traditional ideology is significant for the Desi community and that trend appears to be continuing.

Unpacking Male Privilege. From the findings of this research, I offered that male privilege played a critical role in gender role expectation and negotiation process. Some of the males participants came into their marriages without the experience of doing household chores and this is parallel to research done by Singh and Bhayana (2014). The study is the first to understand gender norms from both Desi partners in which participants reported that men who do understand women in the Desi culture are treated as subordinate. A suggested finding of this study, which has not been explored, is that some of the husbands directly communicated how they hold privilege and acknowledgement of privilege is not sufficient enough to dismantle the patriarchal structure in Desi communities. Two of the men discussed how tangible actions will help create fairness and that would require them to acknowledge their privilege. The findings from this study suggest that second generation men have a better understanding of male privilege. This proposed finding is supported by literature that underlines the influence of male privilege in heterosexual marriages (Levant, 2011; Silver et al., 2018). Based on the findings, understanding male privilege and acknowledgement of the difference in treatment between men and women in the Desi community can be important in establishing an egalitarian relationship.

Establishment of Equity. The women shared how even though they experienced guilt in standing up for themselves, they found it important to promote fairness in a relationship. The Talbani and Hasanali (2000) study examined the social and cultural experiences South Asian teenagers had when they immigrated to Canada. The literature found that the girls felt more stressed, depressed, and anxious when wanting to change the social norms. The pressure of conforming to the cultural beliefs made it seem like conforming was their best option.

Alternatively, women, along with the men, in the study I conducted, indicated that advocating for equity in a romantic relationship is critical and welcomed. The findings of this study suggest that both men and women in second generation Desi couples are working on establishing equity in relation to household tasks and maintenance. The findings also suggest, based on several couples highlighting how present-day societal conversations on topics such as gender may have impacted their gender ideologies, that couples who are influenced by the feminist movement are willing to change social norms.

Expectation of Gender Roles

The third domain consists of the couples' perspectives and experiences of gender role expectations within their marriage.

Invisible Labor. Within the findings of this study, four of the wives discussed the pressure that is involved in delegating tasks while also needing to do the task. Similar to Sonawat (2001) study that emphasized that women feel limited in the need to balance multiple roles within their marriage. Both Sonawat (2001) and the women in this study showed that women find themselves to be physically and mentally exhausted when carrying the bulk of these responsibilities.

The couples in this study outlined while being in more progressive relationships that they would share the responsibility of making decisions and monitoring progress. The participants in this study shared similar remarks to literature by Daminger (2019) who studied the cognitive labor of doing household chores. Daminger (2019) suggests that women take on anticipating needs and identifying options for filling them more often than their male counterparts. After receiving more insight on how their wives felt like they anticipated needs and worked on creating a way to fulfill them, a number of the husbands in this study made a more concerted

effort to apply more cognitive awareness surrounding household tasks. The form of interviewing the couples together encouraged more conversations around these invisible chores. For example, Sapna and Vinod were able to look directly at each other when discussing how invisible chores impact their relationship and they checked in with each other by confirming their thoughts. The information gained from these interviews suggests that men are willing to take on the invisible chores and will initially need to become aware of how they advocate for the women.

Man's Job. Participants voiced opinions of gender roles related to traditionally preferred female gender roles. The findings demonstrate that second generation Desis have a different understanding and meaning regarding how gender role dynamics exist within marriage. The findings offer a reminder that traditional male roles within a Desi patriarchal system are barriers to experiencing a more egalitarian marriage. Three wives shared the gender role assigned to their husbands. Traditional male roles such as taking the trash out, doing handy work, car maintenance or fixing technology were underlined as the husband's script. Organically, these three participants discussed for equality to exist, all roles in the home need to be either persons responsibility. These findings would suggest that the participants' own understanding of an egalitarian marriage and equality is represented by each partner being responsible for any task that needs to be done at home.

Financial Decisions. All the participants demonstrated a connection between financial decisions and gender roles and the findings provide a new insight into the Desi community. The current perspective of participants turned out to be an unexpected area of findings in this research study. All participants spoke of the ways in which financial contributions related to gender roles. Often traditional gender role attitudes are characterized by a clear household division of labor with the male being a breadwinner and the female being a homemaker (Inman

et al., 2001; Singh & Bhayana, 2014). This finding negates previous studies and suggest that the partner who contributed less financially typically did more household tasks either due to flexibility of time or desire to lighten the load of the primary financial contributor. The findings also suggested that couples placed an importance on both the husband and wife to have a deeper understanding of each other's or joint finances. These findings are unique because hearing the couples share how they carry a collaborative approach to finances supports the idea that second generation Desi couples are not only less conservative about financial division and are also not associating financial decision making to a gender role.

Raising Children. Participants with children shared the importance of raising children in a space where they do not experience the limitations of gender norms. These participants understood the generational impact on gender role ideology and their influence on children's identity. This aligns with the research that proclaims grandparents and parents influence on cultural identity (Shariff, 2009). Jodha stated that it was important to raise a conscious son and Rahul described the responsibility, as a girl dad, to affirm her worth. The findings describing the parental role of Desi couples illustrated responsibilities of socially aware parents. Not only did the couple share their own experiences of generational gender role distress, but also its impact on their parenting style. It is likely that second generation couples, who have children, are discussing gender role dynamics amongst themselves and family. It is also likely that these couples are challenging previous generations when couples execute boundaries around gender roles. Within the Desi community, it is critical to address gender dynamics with couples who are planning to or have children to unpack the multigenerational impact from traditional gender ideology.

Communication of Gender Roles

The last domain focuses on the process of gender role negotiation and the way conversations about gender roles appear in the participants' relationships.

Nonexistent Conversations. This is a very prominent theme within the study. Many participants emphasized that they did not have explicit conversations about gender roles prior to getting married. The findings of this research indicated that the couples prioritized communication in relation to gender roles within their marriage. This finding suggests that within love marriages, higher communication skills can help negotiate gender role dynamics that may appear in the future. Comparably, studies indicated that love marriages foster higher communication skills that are needed to discuss lifestyle choices (Netting, 2010; Subrahmayan, 1998).

Although explicit conversations did not exist for participants prior to marriage, participants shared they would not have married their partners if they felt like their partners embodied traditional gender roles. The findings suggest implicit conversations among one another influenced internalized expectations of each other. This aligns with the study done by Juvva and Bhatti (2006), which found that regardless of a traditional or egalitarian marriage, a couple's expectations of each other were implicitly communicated before and during marriage. A suggested finding of the research I conducted is by going through the experience of assimilation and acculturation, second generation Desi couples inherently carry egalitarian expectations of one another.

Learning your Partner. Participants reported that prior to getting married the couple spent time learning each other. The dating process made it much easier for couples to understand each other's values. The research findings imply that second generation Desi couples dated their partners for a significant period and established a love marriage that led to more of an egalitarian

marriage as opposed to a traditional marriage. Likewise, Netting (2010) hypothesized women felt like love marriages created more equality with household tasks and that they are starting to seek that type of marriage. One participant directly shared that being raised in the U.S. with this perceived equality among genders made it easier to come into marriage with an egalitarian framework. Not only does the dating process create a pathway to equality within couple's gender dynamics, but the hope is to encourage mental health providers to address broader issues in their treatment such as the influence of dating prior to marriage for Desi couples in order to create an egalitarian relationship.

Communication Style. In this study, the findings provided insight that couples did not expect their partners to be mind readers. Couples encouraged each other to be open and listen to each other about gender role experiences and expectations. When asked how couples maintained a healthy relationship around gender role negotiation process, four of the participants shared that a calm, warm, and healthy communication style was fundamental. The findings reflect Jibeen (2019) results of gender roles and communication styles. That is to say couples that embody warm communication styles decreased acculturative stress, which fosters the opportunity to discuss gender roles. The findings, within the research I did, identifies the importance of a warm communication style and highlights the connection amongst couples when they can provide this communication style to each other. The information gained from this insight is an example for mental health providers and marriage and family therapists to promote healthy communication with the couples.

One participant noted that conflicts arose in deeply rooted differences in values. It was important for the couple to compromise and find a middle ground due to these differences. Likewise, Ahmad and Reid (2008) found that when Indo-Pakistani couples listen to each other

they felt more complementary as a couple and highlighted that couples putting themselves in each other's shoes and listening to their partners encouraged communication among them. Similarly, the proposed findings of the current research study identify a connection between healthy communication styles and the gender role negotiation process. Based on the findings, understanding healthy communication style and acknowledgement of the gender role negotiation process between men and women in the Desi community can be important in establishing an egalitarian relationship.

Trust. The participants described their ability to explore gender role dynamics within their marriage was due to the foundation of trust. Three participants shared how honesty, healthy communication and tangible actions formed the couple's sense of trust within the marriage. Akbhar shared that actions with consistent change in behavior, along with understanding and communication, created trust within his marriage. Sadhana explained that over communicating about expectations each person carried for the other was what built trust in her relationship. This disaffirms previous work which focuses on how gender norms distract the couple from the complementarity nature of the romantic relationship (Allendorf, 2012). Desi couples' trust in the romantic partnership set a foundation for healthy communicating style. Which in turn, helped them navigate any gender role expectations that they carried. These findings share that it is imperative to discuss the level of trust within a Desi couple's romantic relationship.

Clinical Considerations

The findings of this study demonstrates that gender roles should be explored when working with Desi couples. Understanding the challenges that present in trying to establish an egalitarian marriage is powerful. The traditional Desi culture has patriarchal undertones that second generation Desis are working on unpacking and dismantling. From the findings, it can be

crucial to explore the physical, mental and emotional undertaking of creating a more just environment. By better understanding the factors impacting the Desi community, mental health professionals can learn ways to reach out and build a trustworthy relationship within the Desi community. I will provide suggestions for mental health providers, specifically marriage and family therapists (MFT), who aim to support the Desi community.

As systemic thinking is the foundation of marriage and family therapy, MFTs are able to consider the connection of individual, relational and macrosystemic factors over a course of time (Stanton & Welsh, 2012). MFT are using a systemic approach when conducting assessment and case conceptualization. Meaning, therapists will examine what variables are a part of the system, what kind of power do these variables have, what is the context of these variables, and the interconnection of those things. When working with Desi couples, a MFT (who is organically utilizing systemic approach) is addressing the connection of parents, family, ethnicity, gender to both the individual and relational factors. Naturally, by having a marriage and family therapist Desi couples can explore gender role dynamics within their romantic relationship and discuss the macrosystemic factors that influence gender roles.

The results of this study along with previous literature suggest several considerations for therapists when working with the Desi community. To start, there are negative presumptions about therapy for the Desi community (Karasz et al., 2016) and it is important to explore ways Desi couples would benefit from culturally competent marriage and family therapists. When working with the Desi community, culturally competent MFT's need to engage in an ongoing self-evaluation and become aware of their values, assumptions, and biases (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2019).

Inherently, MFTs need to engage in critical self-examination of their values and cultural differences. Strategies that can be utilized to gain that deeper reflection are receiving cross-cultural training, going to workshops focusing on minority dynamics, and/or conducting a cultural genogram. Also, therapists should take the time to educate themselves on the assimilation process and bicultural experience of second generation Desi individuals. The Desi community, similar to many minority groups, has experienced inappropriate, insensitive, and oppressive therapeutic service (Inman, 2006). These tools will strengthen the clinicians understanding of the Desi experience and provide a safe space for Desis.

Therapists need to be aware of the psychological trauma and influence of traditional Desi culture. The complexity of struggles of second generation Desi's experience when trying to establish individual foundation ranges from emotional guilt, trauma of emotional blackmail, shame and the burden of breaking generational cycles. All the participants discussed how multigenerational culture dynamics and intergenerational influence impacted their idea of gender roles. For marriage and family therapists to hold space for these various emotions, especially when trying to understand the impact of gender roles, addressing the multigenerational transmission process can be helpful. Therapists can explore the unresolved emotional reactivity second generation Desis carry by asking processing questions and drawing a cultural genogram (Thomas, 1998).

Sociocultural attuned marriage and family therapist, who have engaged in self-reflectivity, can serve as a great fit for the Desi community. Since sociocultural attuned therapists highlight the intersectionality of social context, culture, and power within a client's experience (Knudson-Martin et al., 2019), they can work with Desi women on exploring any guilt that is experienced when challenging gender roles and the burden of any invisible labor they carry.

Initially, therapists being curious about the power dynamic can allow Desi women to name these experiences for themselves. Further exploration of the patriarchal system within the Desi community can help Desi women unpack the internalized impact of the dominant culture. From the findings, the women shared how they felt when internalized messages of guilt would exist in times in which they conformed to more equal gender roles and burden of unnoticed cognitive labor that existed. Therapist focusing on this process would further allow Desi women to feel empowered and validated.

Based on the findings, second generation Desi couples are engaging in more explicit conversations about gender when raising children. Mental health practitioners can support second generation Desi parents by acknowledging the work that has and still is being done to confront any generational trauma caused by gender discrimination in the Desi community. For a minority therapist or Desi therapist, this can be an opportunity to join with the client due to the inherent clinical skills developed from acknowledging the intercultural multigenerational trauma. Non Desi or minority clinicians should work on developing credibility with the clients due to the cultural differences (Baptiste, 2005). Then, therapists can work with Desi couples on how to raise children in a more just way.

Strengths and Limitations

This research study was exploratory and first of its kind. This study filled a gap by looking at the process of a second-generation Desi couples' experience of exploring and negotiating gender roles. A strength of this study was exploring the dynamics of gender roles within a couple's marriage by interviewing the couple conjointly. Another strength was that the qualitative nature of this study allowed couples to self-report and share their journey as accurately to their truths. The findings from this research study are not intended to be a complete

representation of second-generation Desi couples; however, a strength of this study is that the findings can provide guidance for clinicians who work with the Desi community.

There are limitations to consider. First, the study focuses on heterosexual couples who have been married for at least three years. Although an explanation of heterosexual relationship criteria was provided in the methodology section, it would be important to include the LGBTQIA+ community to enhance the knowledge of how gender role negotiation happens within a more inclusive idea of a Desi couple.

The demographics of this study was another limitation of the study. There was little to no diversity of ethnicity and religion. The study was inclusive of all ethnic identities that qualified as Desi. However, the participants of this study all identified as Indian. Five of the six couples were from Hindu backgrounds. While the literature suggests these findings are consistent, future research should consider exploring how additional ethnicities' experiences might have impacted the findings.

The participants of this study held either bachelor's or advanced degrees. Previous literature and findings of this study suggest Desi people with higher education tend to seek/accept an egalitarian approach (Farver et al., 2002; Juvva & Bhatti, 2006; Pettys & Balgopal, 1998). A larger sample base may have helped to find generality.

The study was limited to Desi married couples. The findings may have documented rich textual descriptions by including couples in a committed relationship. A potential limitation of this study was interviewing the couples together. Although the training I have as a licensed marriage and family therapist helped navigate multiple people's experiences in the interviewing process, interviewing the couple together may have prohibited a participant from sharing all their

narrative. Even though detailed and in-depth interviews were conducted, information may have been lost that participants may have more willingly shared without their partner present.

Additionally, there was a limitation due to the contextual impact of the state of the world when the study took place. There may have been an increase in conversations regarding gender roles and dynamics impacted by gender due to COVID-19 and limited ability to outsource household tasks. Couples may have had to reassign gender roles or navigate them differently than they typically would have (Zamarro & Prados, 2021).

Future Research

This qualitative study is a step towards understanding the phenomenon of the experience of gender role expectations and negotiation process in second generation Desi couples. It is recommended that there is further exploration of mental health impact from navigating gender ideology within the Desi community. Within this research, females shared how self advocacy for gender equality impacted their mental health issues. They shared that at times they experienced guilt for not conforming to gender norms that society asks of them. In future research, it can be important to learn the different coping mechanisms Desi people engage in to manage their mental health, and discuss ways mental health providers can reflect those tools in sessions. Some of the Desi community struggles to find the benefit of therapeutic service and often deems therapy to be useless. By better understanding what factors prevent Desis from seeking psychological help surrounding their marriages, mental health professionals can learn ways to reach out and build a trustworthy relationship within the Desi community.

Although for this study saturation was met, increasing the participation sample would be important for future studies. In order to expand participation, future studies can include newlyweds or couples who have lived together for a significant period of time. Additionally,

couples in this study were interviewed together. Using the method of interviewing the couple together, then each partner separately and then the couple together again may provide further insight on couple marital satisfaction in relation to enactment of gender roles. The four step interview process would also allow for accuracy and clarification of participants' experiences.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore second generation Desi couples experience of gender role expectations and negotiation process. Many stories were shared on how gender norms and roles were developed and presented in romantic relationships. The experiences validated that second generation Desi couples are unpacking the traditional gender ideologies and advocating for equality in their romantic relationships. Equality is established in various ways; however, the couples all shared how parental influence impacted how they create equality in their respected romantic relationships. My hope with this research is to help the Desi community in understanding generational trauma and the influence on present experiences. My goal is to influence more people in the Desi community to acknowledge, validate and share their mental health concerns when they are struggling to break through barriers.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this research study. The purpose of the research is to understand the experience of gender role negotiation in second-generation Desi couples. The study aims to further understand how gender roles are developed and what influences them. Information obtained will be used as a reference point for increased research regarding Desi's experiences of gender role negotiation and expectations.

There are no major risks in the research. A benefit of the research is that clinicians will gain a better understanding of communication styles, role orientation, gender role expectations, and other factors that have an impact on marital satisfaction for second-generation Desi couples.

You will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will be about 1.5 hours, with possible follow-up calls or meetings that could potentially last up to six months. As part of the research study, audiotaping will be used to record the interviews. Recording will be used during the transcription process to ensure that accurate data is being transcribed. The recorded tapes will be encrypted to ensure privacy. Transcriptions will be done by the researcher under the supervision of her committee chairperson. The results of this study along with any transcripts may be published, as long as you are not identified and cannot be reasonably identified from it.

You have a right to privacy and all information identifying you will remain confidential unless otherwise required by law. All transcripts will be stored in a password protected electronic format. Only the researcher and her faculty sponsor will have access to the transcripts during this time, and no information on participants will be shared with any other individual. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to answer any of the questions asked. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. You have the right and responsibility to ask for more information if survey questions are unclear at any time. You have the right to review the data presented from the interviews before publication if you desire.

My signature below indicates that I have read the above information, agreed to voluntarily participate. I agree to participate in the study until I decide otherwise. I understand that the results of this study along with any transcripts may be published, as long as I am not identified and cannot be reasonably identified from it.

I, _____ understand and consent to all of the above.

Signature (Participant)

Date

If you have any questions about the study, may contact Deepa Patel or Janet Robertson via email.

Deepa Patel, LMFT

Janet Robertson, Ph.D, LMFT

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Chair of the Antioch University New England Institutional Review Board or Provost.

APPENDIX B: QUALIFYING QUESTIONS

1. Are you and your spouse both over the age of 18?
2. Are you and your partner either born or raised in the U.S.?
3. Do you and your partner identify as second-generation Desis? (For the purpose of this study, second-generation Desi is a Desi person who was born and/or raised in the United States and whose parents are immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc.)
4. Have you been married for at least 3 years?
5. Are you in a heterosexual relationship?

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your:

Age

Gender

Race

Ethnicity

Religion

2. What is your highest level of education?

GED, high school, some college, bachelors, masters, PhD

3. Do you consider yourself:?

Lower, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle, upper

4. Where did your parents immigrate from?

5. How long have your parents lived in the U.S.?

6. What are your spouses:

Age

Race

Ethnicity

Religion

7. How would you define the type of marriage you are in, or the process in which you got married?

Arranged, semi-, love, other

8. How long have you been married?

9. Do you have other family members living with you and your spouse? If so, who?

APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are gender roles discussed in your marriage?
 - a. What messages did you receive about your gender role (male/female) and how do those messages play out in your relationship?
 - b. When discussing chores or gender roles, does conflict arise during the conversation? If so, how is that managed? If not, what helps?
 - c. Would you want any role changed in your marriage? If yes, how would that be communicated and what would that conversation be like? If not, what keeps you satisfied with the way roles currently are?
2. Do you believe gender roles affect your relationship satisfaction?
 - a. Does having a love marriage or arranged marriage affect the roles you hold in your marriage?
3. How are household tasks (laundry, cooking, cleaning, caretaking, etc) divided up in your marriage? Who does what tasks?
 - a. Was there a discussion about how roles would be divided? If so, could you tell me more about how they were discussed?
 - b. Growing up, who did you witness performing these tasks? How did that influence your decision to divide roles up in this way?
4. Who provides the primary financial support in the household and how does the difference in income influence the household decision-making process?
 - a. How are financial decisions discussed and what contributes to that decision making process?

APPENDIX E: THEMES

Domain I: Gender Role Understanding

Category I: Influence of Gender Roles

Theme I: Multigenerational Culture

Subthemes I: Misogyny

Theme II: Intergenerational Influence

Subtheme I: Cultural/ Religious Values

Category II: Influence on Gender Role Development

Theme I: Internalized Messages of Family Values

Domain II: Gender Role Enactment

Category I: Division of labor

Theme I: Egalitarian Approach

Theme II: Shifting Traditional Roles

Category II: Dismantling Patriarchy

Theme I: Unpacking Male Privilege

Theme II: Establishment of Equity

Domain III: Gender Role Expectations

Category I: Unconscious Bias

Theme I: Invisible labor

Theme II: Man's job

Category II: Financial Decisions

Theme I: Breadwinner

Theme II: Financial Responsibility

Theme III: Financial Independence

Category III: Becoming parents

Theme I: Raising Children

Domain IV: Gender Role Communication

Category I: Conversations on Gender Roles

Theme I: Nonexistent Conversations

Theme II: Learning Your Partner

Category II: Conflict Resolution

Theme I: Communication Style

Subtheme I: Trust