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### A Study of Gender-Role Attitudes Among Contemporary White and African American Couples

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Andrews University  
School of Education

A STUDY OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES  
AMONG CONTEMPORARY WHITE AND  
AFRICAN AMERICAN COUPLES

A Dissertation  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

.

by  
Margaret Cecile Dust  
March 1995

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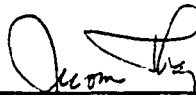
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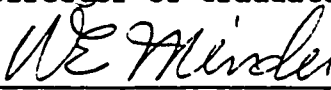
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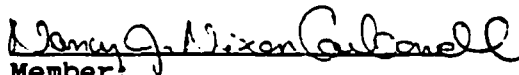
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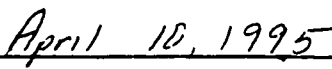
  
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**ABSTRACT**

**A STUDY OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES  
AMONG CONTEMPORARY WHITE AND  
AFRICAN AMERICAN COUPLES**

by

**Margaret Cecile Dust**

**Chair: Elsie P. Jackson**

**ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH**

**Dissertation**

**Andrews University**

**School of Education**

**Title: A STUDY OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES AMONG CONTEMPORARY  
WHITE AND AFRICAN AMERICAN COUPLES**

**Name of researcher: Margaret Cecile Dust**

**Name and degree of faculty chair: Elsie P. Jackson, Ph.D.**

**Date completed: March 1995**

**Problem**

Limited and conflictual studies have been completed on White and African American marriages and gender-roles. As a result, this study sought to compare perceptions of gender-roles in White and African American married couples. In addition, this study looked at relationships between gender-roles, length of marriage, and level of education in White and African American married couples.

**Method**

A total of 92 couples (26 African American, 33 White interacting married, 33 White non-interacting defacto)

participated in this study. The defacto couples served as a control group.

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory, Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey, and a demographics sheet were given to each couple. Statistical analyses included Pearson correlations and t-tests.

Five hypotheses were formulated. The first one was the positive association of masculinity and femininity in marriage. The second and third hypotheses dealt with the relationship between level of education and gender-role attitudes, and length of marriage and gender-role attitudes, respectively. The fourth hypothesis dealt with the similarity in gender-role attitudes among White married and White defacto couples. The fifth hypothesis dealt with the similarity in gender-role attitudes among White and African American married couples.

### Results

1. White married couples share similar attitudes about gender-roles. White defacto and African American married couples do not share similar attitudes about gender-roles.

2. There was a negative association between level of education and traditional gender-role perception in White married couples. No such relationship was found for White defacto and African American married couples.

3. There was no significant relationship between gender-role attitudes and length of marriage for any of the couples.

4. White and African American married couples do not share similar attitudes about gender-roles.

#### Conclusions

Differences in gender-role attitudes do exist among White and African American married couples. Whites are more traditional than African Americans. Since length of marriage is not a factor, individuals appear to marry partners who already possess the desired gender-role perceptions. Differences in race may be due to other variables such as history, economics, and culture.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	vii
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of Problem . . . . .	3
Purpose of Study . . . . .	3
Theoretical Framework . . . . .	3
Assumptions . . . . .	5
Research Questions . . . . .	6
Statement of Hypotheses . . . . .	7
Significance of Study . . . . .	8
Definition of Terms . . . . .	8
Delimitations of Study . . . . .	10
Organization of Paper . . . . .	10
II. LITERATURE REVIEW . . . . .	12
Gender-Roles and Marital Satisfaction . . . . .	12
African American Couples . . . . .	18
White Couples and Gender-Roles . . . . .	28
Differences and Similarities Between African Americans and Whites . . . . .	34
African American and White Couples . . . . .	41
Summary . . . . .	45
III. METHODOLOGY. . . . .	48
Research Questions. . . . .	48
Research Design . . . . .	49
Populations . . . . .	49
White Married Couples . . . . .	49
White Defacto Couples . . . . .	49
African American Married Couples. . . . .	50
Instrumentation . . . . .	51
Bem Sex-Role Inventory. . . . .	51
BSRI, Marital Satisfaction, and Gender-Roles . . . . .	54
Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey . . . . .	56
Variables . . . . .	58

	Data Collection . . . . .	58
	White Married and Defacto Couples . .	58
	African American Subjects . . . . .	60
	Coding. . . . .	61
	Treatment of Data . . . . .	61
	Hypotheses. . . . .	61
	Statistical Analysis. . . . .	62
	Summary . . . . .	62
IV.	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA. . . . .	63
	Introduction. . . . .	63
	General Characteristics of Study	
	Population . . . . .	63
	Descriptive Results of Instruments. . .	67
	BSRI Median Splits. . . . .	69
	Correlational Statistics. . . . .	73
	Inferential Statistics. . . . .	84
	Student t-Tests of the Three Groups .	84
	Results of Hypotheses Testing . . . . .	90
	Hypothesis 1 . . . . .	90
	Hypothesis 2. . . . .	91
	Hypothesis 3. . . . .	93
	Hypothesis 4. . . . .	94
	Hypothesis 5. . . . .	95
	Analysis of Results . . . . .	96
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND	
	RECOMMENDATIONS. . . . .	99
	Summary . . . . .	99
	Statement of the Problem. . . . .	99
	Overview of Related Literature. . . .	99
	Purpose of the Study. . . . .	104
	Methodology . . . . .	104
	Sample . . . . .	104
	Instrumentation. . . . .	104
	Analysis of Data . . . . .	106
	Findings and Discussion . . . . .	107
	Hypothesis 1 . . . . .	107
	Hypothesis 2 . . . . .	110
	Hypothesis 3 . . . . .	115
	Hypothesis 4 . . . . .	119
	Hypothesis 5 . . . . .	121
	Conclusions . . . . .	125
	Implications . . . . .	127
	Recommendations . . . . .	128

<b>Appendix . . . . .</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>A. QUESTIONNAIRES . . . . .</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>B. CONSENT FORMS. . . . .</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>REFERENCE LIST . . . . .</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>VITA . . . . .</b>	<b>166</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

1.	Demographic Characteristics of Subjects . . . . .	66
2.	M-FSRS Mean Scores. . . . .	68
3.	BSRI Mean Scores. . . . .	70
4.	BSRI Median Splits . . . . .	71
5.	BSRI Group Classifications. . . . .	72
6.	White Married Demographic Correlations. . . . .	74
7.	White Defacto Demographic Correlations. . . . .	75
8.	African American Married Demographic Correlations . . . . .	76
9.	White Married Couples' Demographics and Scale Correlations . . . . .	78
10.	White Defacto Couples' Demographics and Scale Correlations . . . . .	79
11.	African American Married Couples' Demographics and Scale Correlations . . . . .	80
12.	M-FSRS and BSRI Correlations. . . . .	83
13.	<u>t</u> -Tests Between White Married (WM) and White Defacto (WD) Couples . . . . .	85
14.	<u>t</u> -Tests Between White Defacto (WD) and African American (AA) Couples. . . . .	86
15.	<u>t</u> -Tests Between White Married (WM) and African American Married (AA) Couples. . . . .	87



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Thank you all who have been on this journey with me. Robert Louis Stevenson was wrong when he said "To travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive." The arrival is wonderful!

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Massive social change has been the hallmark of this century. Traditional images and perceptions of social roles played by men and women have been affected by these changes. Growth of personal, political, and economic freedoms in the affluent countries of Europe and America challenges traditional definitions of gender-roles: woman as wife and homemaker, man as husband and provider.

The study of how gender-roles are acquired and behaviorally displayed in different cultures is part of a long sociological and psychological tradition. Every society defines and labels culturally appropriate masculine or feminine behaviors for the sexes (Weiner, 1979). Gender-roles are directions for those behavioral qualities a society regards as appropriate for each sex. Expected roles exert considerable pressure on men and women to subscribe to certain patterns or bear the cost of being different in society.

In the 1990s, gender continues to be the most conspicuous social category by which we identify ourselves and others (Stangor, Lynch, Changming, & Glass, 1992; Zarate & Smith, 1990). Our children, by the age of 3, identify

themselves as girls and boys and use stereotypes to judge others (Biernat, 1991; Fagot, Leinbach, & O'Boyle, 1992). The beliefs are so universal that these perceived stereotypical ideas of men and women flourish in many countries (Williams & Best, 1982).

Although the behaviors typical of either sex are highly variable, there is general agreement within most societies as to what constitutes appropriate male and female behavior. During the latter half of this century, most notably in the United States, somewhat less constraining norms have developed for appropriate sex-typed conduct. These more flexible roles have been the focus of research by psychologists in the study of androgyny (Bem, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1984; Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976; Brehm & Kassin, 1993; Brown, 1986; Kaplan, 1976; Kaplan & Bean, 1976; Lubinski, Tellegen, & Butcher, 1983; Spence, 1983). Androgyny is the social style that is a balanced blend of male and female sex-typed behaviors and may appear to be the gender-role for this fast-changing world.

Even in the most highly industrialized Western countries, the question then is not whether gender-role stereotypes exist, but what influence they have on occupations, hobbies, calculation of femininity and masculinity, dress, family roles, and temperaments. This research adds to the growing body of evidence that gender-roles may influence our preferences and institutions, especially marriage.

### Statement of Problem

Scant research has been completed on married couples' perceptions of gender-roles in marriage. Of the limited studies that have been completed in the past, many reveal conflicting findings (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Atkinson & Huston, 1984; House, 1986; Maier, 1986; Russell & Wells, 1991; Schuchts & Witkin, 1989). As a result, distressingly little is known about the relationships of gender-roles and marriage, especially in contemporary marriages.

In addition, African American couples have been virtually ignored in this body of research (Brown, Perry, & Harburg, 1977; McNair, 1983; Taylor & Zhang, 1990; Thomas, 1990; Willis, 1988). Consequently, research is needed to include this ethnic and cultural group.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to investigate the perceptions of gender-roles within the marriages of contemporary White and African American couples using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory and Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey.

### Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the following theoretical frameworks of research concerning gender-roles, how they are influenced, and how they are defined. Social groups, in this case, were based on gender, masculine and feminine



(Brehm & Kassin, 1993). These social groups correspond closely to both anthropological ideas of universal masculine and feminine roles (Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1957) and sociological ideas of femininity and masculinity (Parsons & Bales, 1955). "New" social groups discovered or invented in the last two decades are also based on gender and include the androgynous and undifferentiated (Brown, 1986). Originally, masculinity-femininity was considered a single bipolar dimension (Gough, 1952; Guilford & Guilford, 1936; Hathaway & McKinley, 1943; Strong, 1943; Terman & Miles, 1936). However, in 1973, Constantinople summarized previous data and showed that masculinity and femininity are several dimensions, not a single bipolar one (Brown, 1986). These socially perceived dimensions of masculinity and femininity have changed over time (Brown, 1986; Lunneborg, 1970) despite the fact that postindustrial societies continue to differentially rear boys and girls, and encourage them to exhibit appropriate masculine and feminine behaviors (Brown, 1986).

Research by Bem (1974, 1975, 1976, 1977) and Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1974) has more recently shown masculinity and femininity to be independent dimensions; specifically, as masculinity increases, femininity does not decrease. One dimension may rise while the other falls, but they may also rise or fall together. Their research parallels the work of Constantinople (1973). He found masculinity-femininity to have several dimensions, unlike

the earlier studies of the 1930s and 1940s in which masculinity-femininity was considered a single unipolar dimension.

The BSRI and Personal Attributes Questionnaire (Spence et al., 1974) used to measure these independent dimensions are fairly equivalent measures (Lubinski et al., 1983), with modifications made by Bem (1977). These surveys measure gender-role temperaments. In terms of the two survey instruments, androgyny is psychological. It is present when an individual scores high on both masculinity and femininity.

These basic ideas of traditional gender-roles and androgyny and their measurements provide the framework on which this research was based.

#### Assumptions

Weiner (1979) inferred the following assumptions about sex roles from previous research:

1. Adjustment is a measurable concept.
2. Adopting a flexible lifestyle is more adjustive than one which is not so flexible.
3. Both femininity and masculinity have positive, healthy traits, such as decisiveness, compassion, warmth, and self-assertion.
4. Femininity and masculinity are not mutually exclusive.

5. Androgyny represents the merger of femininity and masculinity and is the most flexible gender-role.

6. Gender-roles exert a profound influence on personality and adjustment.

7. Sex-typing stifles individuals.

In addition, for this research, these assumptions were made:

1. Gender-roles determine the division of labor in the marriage.

2. Dividing personality activities and traits by gender-roles may create conflicts in the marriage and family (Cancian, 1987).

3. The majority culture impresses its perception of gender-roles on the minority culture.

#### Research Questions

Five major research questions served as the foci for this study:

1. Do the perceived gender-roles of husbands and wives continue to be traditional; i.e., are husbands more masculine while their wives are more feminine?

2. What is the relationship between gender-roles of married couples and their educational level?

3. What is the relationship between length of marriage and gender-roles?

4. Is interaction between married couples related to their shared perceptions of gender-roles; i.e., do married

interacting couples differ in these perceptions from married noninteracting couples (defacto)?

5. Are there any notable differences in the perceptions of gender-roles of married White and African American couples?

### Statement of Hypotheses

It was expected from the findings of this study that the following hypotheses would be corroborated.

Hypothesis 1: The measured masculine orientation of married African American and White husbands will be positively related to the feminine orientation of their wives, using both instruments.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between level of education in married couples and androgyny as measured by the BSRI and the M-FSRS.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between length of marriage and couples' similarity in measured attitudes toward their gender-roles, as measured by the M-FSRS and the BSRI.

Hypothesis 4: White married couples will share similar gender-role attitudes whereas White defacto couples will not.

Hypothesis 5: Both married White and African American couples will display similar attitudes about gender-roles on the research instruments.

### Significance of Study

This study explores, through the use of two self-report questionnaires, the current gender-role attitudes of married and defacto White couples and married African American couples. Since there is very little research in this area pertaining to African Americans, the results of this study will add to the descriptive database on gender-roles within the marriages of African American couples and will furnish counselors and psychologists with information about African Americans which could serve in providing a better understanding of their shared beliefs and presuppositions.

This research may benefit marriage counselors, counseling psychologists, and developmental psychologists as it will broaden and update existing knowledge on gender-role attitudes among couples in America.

### Definition of Terms

Terms used in this study are defined in the following manner:

Androgynous: In its psychological sense, an individual both masculine and feminine in about equal degrees (Bem, 1974; Brown, 1986).

Defacto: Married individuals, artificially paired by experimenters into a couple. These "couples" are married, but not to each other (Damusis & Mish, 1993).

Displayed: That gender-role--masculine, feminine, or androgynous--which is shown or exhibited to others in a visible way (Damusis & Mish, 1993).

Feminine: Personal characteristics representative of the following stereotypical qualities or traits: emotional, kind, altruistic, warm, and sympathetic (Brown, 1986).

Masculine: Personal characteristics representative of the following stereotypical traits or qualities: independent, aggressive, self-confident, active, and dominant (Brown, 1986).

Nontraditional Roles: Behaving in other ways than stereotypical masculine or feminine roles, as previously defined (i.e., nontraditional males will be warm and emotional).

Gender-roles: Customary function or part played by one sex or the other in society (i.e., males are providers, females are homemakers). Norms are established by each society for males and females.

Sex-typed: A core element in the creation of social distinctions between males and females (Epstein, 1988).

Traditional Roles: Historical sex roles of males and females in American society. These are masculine and feminine roles, previously defined.

Undifferentiated: As defined by Bem (1974), individuals who score low on both the masculine and feminine scales of the BSRI. These individuals possess few desirable traits of either males or females, according to society.

Welfare Ratio: As defined by Ball (1980), a ratio computed on an individual's health, happiness, and prosperity. The higher the ratio, the better off individuals perceive their lives to be.

#### Delimitations of Study

The sample was restricted to a nonrandomized convenience sample and better educated couples of the African American community.

#### Organization of Paper

This dissertation is organized into five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, significance of the study, the assumptions, research questions, hypotheses, definitions of terms, and the delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on attitudes about gender-roles and marital satisfaction, time and length of marriage and marital satisfaction, the socio-economic status of couples and marital satisfaction, gender-role differences and similarities of married African Americans, and married White and defacto American couples.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology and type of research, which includes the population and sample selection variables, research techniques, instruments, data collection, and statistical analyses.

Chapter 4 presents the findings and interpretations of the results.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study, discussion of the results, implications of the findings, and recommendations for further research.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The research literature served as a basis for the hypotheses tested by the present study and is presented in this section according to a collection of key content areas. Each content area is reflected in the hypotheses tested.

#### Gender-Roles and Marital Satisfaction

Gender-roles and attitudes in couples have been studied for many years (Babladelis, Deaux, Helmreich, & Spence, 1983; Bond, 1981; Holter, 1971; McBroom, 1987; Rogers, 1985; Russell & Wells, 1991; Weeks, O'Neal, & Gage, 1984). Holahan (1984) examined changes in marital attitudes using archival data from Louis Terman's Study of the Gifted in 1947. Holahan (1984) compared Terman's data with her own contemporary sample to ascertain whether attitudes in marriage had endured. Longitudinal comparisons in Terman's study had shown that couples became more egalitarian toward role relationships in marriage, especially the women. The contemporary sample was more egalitarian than the 1940 sample. Men in the contemporary sample showed more interest in the relationship aspects of marriage than their 1940 counterparts. Interestingly, marital satisfaction was lower

than the 1940 sample for both men and women in the contemporary group.

McBroom's 1987 study comparing 1975 and 1980 samples suggested a lessening in gender role traditionalism. Like Terman's sample of 1940, women changed considerably more than men. Weeks et al., (1984) compared a 1961 and 1972 group of subjects and found the 1972 sample to be more egalitarian than the 1961 group.

Gender-roles have changed, therefore, and since the 1960s there have been significant re-examinations of "masculinity" and "femininity" (Rogers, 1985). This has led to current views that encourage gender-role flexibility and placing equal value on the genders. This latter idea has been termed "androgyny" and is the basis of much research in the last two decades (Brown, 1986).

As Vannoy (1991) contends, marital disruption in modern-day societies may be a lag effect due to the incongruence of traditional gender-roles and post-industrial society. To be fully achieved, only those who develop capacities for intimacy and autonomy (less sex-typed gender-roles) will develop marital relationships that are satisfying.

Russell and Wells (1991) discovered that the more similar couples were, the better the quality of the marriage. Husbands seemed to believe in innate gender-roles more than wives did, but when the couple shared similar values of education and religion, their belief systems

reduced disagreement on innate gender-roles (Mirowsky & Ross, 1987). In 1989, Schuchts and Witkin hypothesized that over time in a marriage, especially in the transition from being newly married to parenthood, individuals move toward more traditional gender-roles.

Studies have compared contemporary gender-roles, such as androgyny, with traditional gender-roles based on sex-typing. Rim (1980) found when comparing masculinity, femininity, and androgyny with the means of influence in marriage that androgynous wives and husbands used fewer authoritative, accommodative, dependent, and last-resort means. Thus, androgynous couples used more positive means to influence their marriages than traditional gender-role couples did, who used more negative means such as giving-up and being more dependent in their attempts to influence the marriage.

In Peterson's (1990) research, marital fairness and satisfaction, or the subjective balance between spouses' gains and losses, and gender-roles were evaluated across the family-life cycle. The life cycle was defined as preparental, childbearing, full house, launching, and empty nest. When gender-roles were perceived as being equal, androgynous husbands were perceived as receiving more benefits from the marriage than wives. Divorce resulted in shifts in gender-roles (MacDonald, Ebert, & Mason, 1987). It led to greater masculine traits for both sexes, but not greater feminine traits or androgyny. Seutter (1981) and

Haaga (1988) found no differences between the sexes when related to marital satisfaction. Bowen and Orthner (1983) and Gillespie (1989) discovered in their research that the modern wife and traditional husband dyad led to greater levels of marital dysfunction. Other configurations, such as modern wife and modern husband, or traditional wife and modern husband showed greater levels of satisfaction.

Careers have been studied in relationship to marital satisfaction and gender-roles. In 1990, Ray stated that nontraditional gender-role attitudes and husbands' approval of their wives' careers led to greater marital satisfaction. Even in research done in India, androgyny and wives' employment were positively related to wives' decision-making authority and satisfaction in the marriage (Shukla & Kapoor, 1990). Androgyny proved to be the single most powerful predictor of marital satisfaction when careers and marriage were correlated (Hope, 1980; Kay, 1982).

House (1986) found that gender-roles had no influence on marital satisfaction and the couples' careers. Atkinson and Huston (1984) found a relationship between the extent to which wives worked and their gender-role attitudes. Gender-roles and tasks were significantly related in Krausz's (1986) work, where she found there was an absence of egalitarian role behavior in working couples. Individuals fell into the traditional roles. Employed women had lower femininity, and their partners, slightly lower masculinity,

than nonemployed women and their partners (Cunningham & Antill, 1984).

Nevertheless, whether one documents studies by variables, or even historically by date, there were mixed results from correlating work, motherhood, and communication with marital satisfaction and gender-roles. In 1980, Craddock found that traditional males and egalitarian females had lower marital satisfaction. Holton (1983) found traditional wives to be less disclosing in marriage than either traditional husbands or modern wives and husbands. Androgynous husbands and wives were less apt to seek counseling for marital problems than traditional couples (Baucom & Aiken, 1984). Undifferentiated gender-roles resulted in lower marital satisfaction (de Turck & Miller, 1986); androgynous gender-roles resulted in higher satisfaction (Maier, 1986). Terry and Scott (1987) discovered that job satisfaction was related to marital satisfaction for males, but gender-roles were highly related to females' marital satisfaction. This information would certainly show the importance of gender-roles in marriage.

Belsky, Lang, and Huston (1986) found a negative correlation between traditionalism and the transition to motherhood. They examined wives who describe their personalities in ways that deviated from traditional sex stereotypes and correlated it with the wives' perceptions of marital satisfaction. Their study revealed that as these wives moved into motherhood and the traditional sex

stereotype marital role increased, the greater was the decline in these wives' evaluations of the positive aspects of their marriage. Wives, therefore, who did not ascribe female sex-typed attributes to themselves (relative to those who do see themselves in traditional sex-stereotyped ways) evaluated their marriages less favorably as they moved from before to after parenthood. This was especially true when gender-roles shifted in the marriage to a more traditional sex-typed way with pregnancy.

Other variables correlated with marital satisfaction and gender-roles were: sibling-position configuration, where no differences were found (Ortiz, 1982); power-base perceptions where the husband's egalitarianism was positively related to better marital adjustment (Li, 1985); communication in marriage improved by egalitarianism (Pollock, Die, & Marriott, 1990); and rewards and equity in marriage with no differences between moderns and traditionals (Martin, 1985). Even religion has been explored and correlated with marital satisfaction and gender-roles. Fowers (1991) found that religion was a predictor of marital happiness for men, but not women. Women's satisfaction was related to egalitarian roles. Craddock stated in 1991 that similar religious orientation and egalitarian relationships were both necessary for marital satisfaction. Bowen (1987) confirmed other results, previously mentioned, when he showed that traditional husbands and modern wives had lower marital satisfaction.

No significant differences were found between marital satisfaction and gender-roles in Kassoy's (1988) research. Craddock (1988), as in previous research, showed that couples expressing egalitarianism were more satisfied in the areas of leisure activities, conflict resolution, family and personality issues, communication, and friends than those who were not. This was found to be true only for husbands, not wives, in Bowen's (1989) research.

Depression and marital satisfaction were correlated with gender-roles by Whisman and Jacobson (1989). They explained that depressed women had lower masculine scores than those nondepressed. Depressed wives also expressed greater dissatisfaction with decision making and distribution of household tasks in marriage than nondepressed wives. Peterson, Baucom, Elliott, and Farr (1989) reiterated the importance of androgyny in marital satisfaction to support parallel research. Finally, both Silk (1991) and Aida and Falbo (1991) stressed the importance of equality in marriage and its positive contribution to marital satisfaction.

#### African American Couples

Research on African American couples lags behind studies on White majority couples. Information is especially scanty on gender-roles and African American couples. From 1980 to 1990, only 114 or 17% of the articles appearing in the Journal of Marriage and Family (JMF)

included or were about African American families (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993). Only 15% of the empirical articles on African American families involved the analysis of data from African Americans alone. Additionally, of all the articles appearing in JMF from 1939 to 1990, only 2% of the articles used data collected solely from African Americans (Littlejohn-Blake & Darling, 1993).

Thomas (1990) looked at dual-career professional African American couples and found their biggest problems to be child care and division of household duties; women performed most of these duties. These couples also believed they had additional problems unique to their status: social isolation, racial discrimination, being the first generation of professionals in their families, and finally, their attempts to instill African American values while living in a White environment.

Taylor and Zhang (1990) also found racism to be a factor with married African American couples. They correlated the maritally distressed or nondistressed with internalized racism and negative stereotypes. Maritally nondistressed husbands reported lower levels of internalized racism than those distressed. Maritally distressed and nondistressed wives did not differ. Overall, the maritally distressed couples internalized negative stereotypes about themselves. The maritally nondistressed couples did not.

Zollar and Williams (1987) found that, overall, married African Americans were happier than unmarried African



Americans. However, marital satisfaction appeared to make a greater contribution to the overall happiness of wives than it did to the overall happiness of husbands.

Binion's (1990) research showed that racial differences are important in masculine/feminine identification. For African American women, there is a strong cultural component to the relationship between gender-role attitudes and sexual identity. In Binion's study (1990), African American women who were classified as masculine were more likely to be married than those classified as androgynous. Feminine and androgynous gender-role oriented women were more likely to have children, but masculine women who had children had more of them. Those women who were classified as masculine and undifferentiated were more liberal than feminine or androgynous classified women on measures of traditional gender-role ideology. Therefore, being masculine to African American women is not antithetical to beliefs about the desirability of stereotypic feminine role expectations. African American women are heavily invested in the mothering role.

Binion's 1981 study showed that as African American wives became more liberal, they produced daughters who were more liberal. Hershey (1978) and Binion (1990) had similar results for African American women. In Binion's (1990) study, as education increased, the women identified themselves as more masculine and undifferentiated. Binion

speculates that education gave these women more avenues for self-expression.

Ball and Robbins (1986a) have proposed an idea that may affect African American women and their relationship to their husbands' education. The disparities in education and the sex ratio between African American males and females may be accounted for by looking at the restricted field of marriage eligibles available to the women. This restricted field, or more women than men available for marriage in the African American community, may encourage the women to marry less-educated men to compensate for the lack of possible spouses. Binion (1990) found that education was the only variable that related to sexual identity in her African American women subjects. In her subjects, 40% of androgynous women, 55.2% of masculine, 44.4% of undifferentiated, and 22.7% of the feminine classified women had some college education. On the other hand, 6.7% of androgynous women, 17.2% of masculine, 11.1% of undifferentiated, and none of the feminine identified women were college graduates.

The convenience sample of this study's African American women were more masculine and educated than the White counterparts. This does support Binion.

Another problem for African American women is the pool of available men (Chapman, 1988; Farley & Bianchi, 1991). It is not the sheer number as Farley and Bianchi (1991) point out, but the lack of educated and employable men. An

estimated 40% of the African American male population is illiterate. Also, during their adolescence, there is an increase in substance abuse, homicide, suicide, and incarceration. Females are, therefore, left without partners and are forced to focus on education as a means to independence rather than reliance on a man (Chapman, 1988).

Marable (1991) focused on the African American male and his gender-role. The differences and conflicts between White and African American men can be traced back to our history of chattel slavery. The White male-dominated system dictated that the only acceptable social behavior of any African American male was that of subservience. However, as Marable (1991) points out, so much of what we believe about African American men are stereotypes. For instance, the majority of African American poor have been overwhelmingly female. Stack (1991) and Marable (1991) do, however, show that the African American male is facing an unprecedented crisis. And the Center for the Study of Social Policy (1991) has shown that only 55% of African American men are in the labor force. The rest are unemployed, or discouraged, in correctional facilities, or unaccounted for. This labor status has devastating consequences for African American women and their children. It also affects the gender-role of the African American male in his marriage and family (Stack, 1991).

The African American male, like all males in American society, must constantly earn and prove his masculinity on a

day-to-day basis (Turner, 1970). Being a "man" in America means having a good job, achieving, and providing for one's family (Fasteau, 1976). African American men are caught in a bind: What happens if they accept this notion of a "man" but are denied the resources to "prove" it?

Ball and Robbins (1986b) looked at African American husbands and their educational attainment. Education is often used as an indicator of socioeconomic status and general lifestyle. As Ball and Robbins (1986b) point out, education would be highly correlated with income, but the association with behavior and attitudes may be more complex. They predicted a positive relationship between education and family life satisfaction. It would seem that higher education would lead to higher incomes and the capability to perform many other roles. It would also seem that these roles might be less subject to discrimination. As Ball and Robbins (1986b) state, however, research prior to 1986 showed inconsistent results when associating education and family life satisfaction. Their research also showed no relationship between education and family life satisfaction. Whites also showed no consistent results when associating education and family life satisfaction, perhaps because of inconsistency in methodology (Ball & Robbins, 1986b).

Chapman (1988) looked at the consequences for the African American family caused by the males' lack of employability. She argued that the gulf will widen for the sexes. Chapman (1988) believed unorthodox ways of relating

could begin to occur, such as older women and younger men, communal households of women, mate sharing, and cross-cultural dating and marriage.

In the early 1980s, DeJarnett and Raven (1981) showed that African American husbands endorsed the ideology of male dominance. It was also shown that lower-class African American wives were more apt to accept male dominance in marriage. Gray-Little's (1982) research found that husband-dominant African American couples reported the highest marital quality. Similarity in self-reported power was also associated with higher marital satisfaction. Power was measured by examining the subject's perception of the decision-making structure in the marriage through the SIMFAM game which measured assertiveness and effective control, and that subject's marital satisfaction. Power was classified as egalitarian, wife- or husband-dominant. Again, husband-led couples had the most positive scores for all the marital quality indices and husband-wife similarity (agreement) on those measured was predictive of higher marital quality.

Later researchers discovered other differences. African American women with high adjustment levels in marriage reflected more nontraditional household task performances. Men, however, were more adjusted if they expressed more traditional household task performances. Income and education did not appear related to marital adjustment (McLaughlin, 1985).

Pope (1989) tested congruence between gender-role attitudes and conjugal-role behaviors and couples' ability to moderate stressful events in their marriages. The African American couples in his research endorsed traditional gender-role attitudes, with females being more traditional. These results are different from earlier research (Zollar & Williams, 1987). Marital adjustment for these couples meant moving away from egalitarian roles to more traditional roles.

Whites are facing these changes, but not to the same degree (Farley & Bianchi, 1991). Farley and Bianchi point out that African American and White children are more likely to experience family disruption and separation from the father today. But there are growing racial differences. These differences translate into a dissimilar family experience for White and African American children.

Carlson and Videka-Sherman (1990) tested androgyny in the middle years after many years of marriage in African American marriages. They used an increase in femininity/decline in masculinity for males to indicate evidence of androgyny and a decrease in femininity/increase in masculinity as evidence of androgyny in females. Subjects were a national sample. Many lifespan psychologists have begun to observe that one of the hallmarks of mid-life is a shift in gender-roles. However, there is surprisingly little empirical support for such an idea (Carlson & Videka-Sherman, 1990). And in their own

study, Carlson and Vedeka-Sherman found no evidence for the conclusion that there is a gender-role reversal in the middle aged.

Ball (1991) looked at marriage, life satisfaction, and age in African American women. He found that age (older) was related to satisfaction in marriage for these women. But Ball (1991) did not look at gender-roles. In fact, satisfaction in marriage was related to age if these women were married. But, if some of these women were single, divorced, or widowed, they were not necessarily less satisfied on a global satisfaction measure. Age seemed to be the factor related to satisfaction as single women (younger) were less satisfied. There seemed to be a desire to be married among single women as they might have seen singlehood as rejection rather than a choice.

Ball and Robbins (1986b) studied African American women and men. They found that older married women were significantly more satisfied, but not married men. Marriage and family for African Americans are associated with more difficulties and may not be conducive to highly satisfying lives. These problems may be particularly pronounced for men who in many instances have difficulty in providing adequately for their families. African American men suffer from two handicaps: race and class. Problems in the provider role can lead to difficulty in spousal relationships (Ball & Robbins, 1986b).

Binion's (1990) research on African American women found no relationship between age and sexual identity. Though not significant, feminine subjects were slightly older than androgynous ones, which in turn, were slightly older than masculine and undifferentiated subjects. African American women face a duality, or have to play multiple roles in their culture (Binion, 1990).

Stolz's (1986) work suggested an explanation for African American women's duality. He related African American women's masculinity with length of marriage. They may have traditional gender-role attitudes due to a fear of being rejected if they do not adhere to socially sanctioned roles. African American women were seen as departing from their established feminine roles since society viewed homemakers and wage earners, which they were forced to be, as mutually exclusive (Malson, 1983). African American women have to be more masculine or androgynous to make it in the world of work. At the same time, they must hold traditional beliefs about their female role to have meaningful relationships with their men.

Staples (1988) discussed the evolution of marriage and African Americans. He points out how White marriages were patriarchies sustained by the economic dependence of the wife. African American marriages were more egalitarian and the wife was not economically dependent on the husband. In addition, wives had dual roles of worker and mother. African American women often took care of two households:



their own and their employer's. This created role overload and led to tension and marital dissolution in African American families (Staples, 1988).

African American husbands have also had their roles undermined as husbands and fathers. They have had their influence reduced in the home, while their wives' expanded. There is more tension in the marriage. The husband may become more active on the streets, which allows for an exaggerated masculinity or defense mechanisms like aggressive independence (Wilkinson & Taylor, 1977).

Farley and Bianchi (1991) support Staples's (1988) research in their study. Economics are a major factor in the differences between White and African American marriages. They show that African American women's earnings have increased dramatically vis-a-vis their men. Marriage for African American women might become less attractive under these conditions.

#### White Couples and Gender-Roles

This study also compared White married couples, who interacted with another, and defacto, married couples. Defacto couples are defined as those whose individuals are married, but not to each other. They are, merely, artificially matched. They serve as a valuable control for comparison to the interacting, married couples.

Alpert, Richardson, Perlmutter, and Shutzer (1980) and Locksley (1982) found no differences in men, women, perceptions of roles or marital attitudes, and gender-roles.

Other studies report differences in perception of gender-roles. Kassner (1981) showed that males preferred traditional marriages, whereas females preferred egalitarian ones. Craddock's (1983) subjects, regardless of sex, showed differences. Subjects possessing egalitarian expectations had significantly higher levels of satisfaction in communication, conflict resolution, personality issues, leisure activities, and family and friends. Those with higher education had more egalitarian gender-role attitudes in the 1984 study of Khoo, Krishnamoorthy, and Trlin. The majority of Catholics were found to have more traditional attitudes than non-Catholics, and women who were less traditional were more likely to expect to work. Men's gender-role attitudes made no difference in this study.

Even love has been correlated with gender-roles. Five components of love were related to gender-role orientation. Traditionals were characterized by romantic dependency and compatibility, whereas nontraditionals emphasized communicative intimacy. Females scored higher on communicative intimacy than males (Critelli, Myers, & Loos, 1986). Gerber's (1990) study of defacto couples, gender-roles, and attractiveness showed that partners who were described as being in a traditional relationship with the husband as leader were stereotyped as being highly attractive. Those

with egalitarian partnerships were next in attractiveness, with the wife, as leader in the remaining couples, being the least attractive.

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) produced the following results in the 1980s and 1990s: Robinson and Page (1988) found no differences between males and females when correlated with future orientations such as career and family. But a number of studies found those sex-typed as androgynous had advantages. Androgyny had significant adjustment advantages (Handal & Salit, 1988), had more liberal attitudes toward sexual expression (Johnson, 1989), were more sexually satisfied and better adjusted (Rosenzweig & Dailey, 1989), and preferred egalitarian marriages and an androgynous mate (Pursell, Banikiotes, & Sebastian, 1981). The other sex-typed individuals, masculine and feminine, had differing results. High femininity was detrimental to self-actualization (Faulkender, 1991) and was associated with stronger adherence to irrational beliefs (Coleman & Ganong, 1987). Higher masculinity scores were positively related to self-actualization (Faulkender, 1991).

Gender-roles have been correlated with marital satisfaction and pursuit of careers by husband and wife. Some theories have been posited to explain which marriages will succeed. The gender identities of both partners are considered critical variables in sustaining a marriage. When one or both spouses have traditional gender identities, pressure for change may result when the occupational

achievements of the wife exceed those of the husband. When they both have androgynous gender identities, they are more likely to be comfortable with this position (Hiller & Philliber, 1982). As more and more women enter the workforce, gender and gender-roles may come under extreme pressure. As Hertz (1991) pointed out, when both husbands and wives pursue careers, they unconsciously undermine the traditional structure of the family and marital roles. Moreover, if spouses try to adjust their careers to preserve the traditional family, they pose an implicit challenge to the masculine career model.

Results on married couples continue to be mixed. Work-related commitments and marital adjustment were correlated with gender-roles, and McArdle (1991) found no differences between spouses. Allen also found no differences in his married subjects when he correlated marital satisfaction and income with gender-roles (1987). Others found differences. Gender-roles were more egalitarian in households where women were employed (Shelton, 1990); and, although there was equity in Rachlin's 1987 study, women felt more overloaded. Women who were more modern than their husbands were more willing to negotiate process power. Traditional women were more willing to accept their husbands' positions (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1989).

When younger and older couples were compared, younger couples had less traditional expectations concerning family roles and work. Interestingly, however, younger subjects

did disagree more often over family roles and work (Keith & Schafer, 1986). Dual-career and younger couples were associated with more shared activities than older couples (Keith & Brubaker, 1977). Elderly couples continue to maintain very traditional gender-roles (Healy, 1988), thus age does seem to be a factor in maintaining traditional gender-roles.

Tasks in the household continue to be the woman's responsibility. Satisfaction with marriage is often associated with these tasks, and so attitudes toward them by the spouses are important. These attitudes are often, in turn, related to gender-roles. In 1977, Gross and Arvey showed that wives' satisfaction with their marriages was related to their homemaker roles. They were more satisfied if the husbands assumed responsibility for household tasks. Fourteen years later, women still did more tasks than men. The distribution of tasks to each gender has not changed appreciably over the years (Findlay & Lawrence, 1991). Blair and Lichter (1991) found the same pattern of sex-segregated work patterns.

Kimmons (1979) had looked at gender-roles and household tasks more specifically. He found that psychological androgyny was weakly related to housekeeping and car maintenance, the sexual role, and socialization of the boys in the family. Androgyny was negatively related to washing dishes for the wife and buying groceries by the husband. As androgyny rose, the desire to do these things declined. For

wives, a strong negative relationship existed between femininity and child care. As femininity increased, the desire to care for children decreased. In addition, androgyny was positively related to the importance of success on the part of the wife, but to age on the part of husbands. Androgynous wives were younger and shared equity in the roles of laundry and cleaning house. Ultimately, the strongest predictor of roles was the presence of children. Androgynous males were found to perform more household tasks if they had a high need for responsibility. Androgynous females performed household tasks without regard to a sense of responsibility (Gunter & Gunter, 1991).

Dual-career or dual-earner families are now the majority. Gender-roles also play a part here. Fathers in dual-earner families were more involved in child care than single-earner fathers, although both spent the same amount of leisure time with their children. Dual-earner fathers may also be spending more time with their children at the expense of marital relations (Crouter, Perry-Jenkins, Huston, & McHale, 1987). Interestingly, Burke and Weir (1976) found such a result many years earlier. Working wives were more satisfied, whereas husbands of working wives were less satisfied. Correlates of marital satisfaction such as husbands' expressive and nurturant characteristics took on more importance when the wife was employed (Cooper, Chassin, Braver, Zeiss, & Khavari, 1986).

The BSRI was utilized to measure couples and gender-roles, and how these roles affect marital satisfaction. Androgynous women had the highest self-esteem of all groups. However, no overall differences were found between men and women in self-esteem. Androgynous men were highest in marital cohesion, but no differences were found in marital satisfaction. Egalitarian beliefs did not necessarily lead to a higher incidence of fathers involved in child care (Levine, 1982).

Finally, do we seek a particular pattern of gender-role pairing in mate selection? Newman-Solowey (1989) found that both males and females choose partners who represent their own ideal self in gender-role classification. However, the prediction that a partner who represents the ideal would lead to greater satisfaction was not supported. Males seemed more traditional than females regarding what they look for in a mate.

#### Differences and Similarities Between African Americans and Whites

Similarities and differences between White and African American couples and their relationship with gender-roles are more difficult to research. Observations of African American couples and research on African American and White couples are not very prolific. African American couples have been ignored. African American husbands, especially, have not shown up in the literature.

McNair (1983) compared African American and White males with regard to gender-role attitudes and role strain resulting from the changing gender-roles of women. Traditional males had higher levels of psychological distress if they were in nontraditional marriages where both spouses worked. Nontraditional males had lower levels of distress. Lower-class individuals and African Americans expressed their distress through physical abuse, whereas upper-class individuals and Whites expressed their distress through passive-aggressive behavior or sexual dysfunction. Historical differences in social networks, economic roles, family, and gender-role ideology suggest that there are ethnic differences.

In another vein, male and female undergraduates, both African American and White, were asked about their views on women's rights and roles (Bailey, Silver, & Oliver, 1990). No differences were found between the races, but females were more liberal and profeminist than males.

African American women and their attitudes toward gender-roles have been measured more frequently than African American husbands. Copeland (1982) looked at the lower-class marriages of African American women and found that they are multiple-role women. They must be worker, mother, student, wife, and partner all at the same time, unlike Whites. Their marriages are more unstable. They rarely have the same opportunities that Whites have. Stereotypical and discriminatory practices prevent many of these women



from gaining access to mental health services. These practices and the many roles African American women must play have affected male-female relationships. Pyant and Yanico (1991) studied African American female college students and nonstudents. Relationships between gender-role identities and racial identity were not predictive of mental health in either sample.

Ball (1980) found differences in expressive functioning among African American women. He correlated overall life satisfaction, satisfaction with children and family life, their welfare ratio, and household income with marital status. Overall life satisfaction was not significantly different for the married, divorced, or widowed. It was lower for the separated and single. Family satisfaction was shown to be higher for the widowed and divorced, but lower for the single and separated. Satisfaction with children found no differences, except for those women who lived with friends or relatives and did not have a husband. Their satisfaction was lower. The welfare ratio was higher for those currently married, particularly if they had no children. Being single seemed to be the best predictor of dissatisfaction. It may be considered indicative of rejection rather than choice. The separated may have temporarily experienced trauma. Finally, age, social participation, and perceived health were highly correlated with satisfaction levels.

Scott (1990) and Copes (1990) both looked at African American women's gender-role identities. Scott (1990) correlated demographic variables (education, age, income, number of children) with the wives' career commitment and marital equity. Wives, in this study, though employed, did more of the household tasks and child care. They did share equally in decision making. Their gender-role identities had no effects on career commitment. Copes (1990) found that African American women endorsed non-traditional attitudes toward equality in the workplace, domestic chores, and power in the home, unlike Whites. Age was related to more traditional roles, and it was found that those who were more non-traditional were less depressed. Binion's (1981) research correlated childhood socialization experiences, attitudes toward mothering, psychological well-being, parental and family attributes, and self-esteem with gender-role identities and gender-role attitudes. Androgynous women were more likely to positively identify with both parents. Feminine- and masculine-typed women identified more strongly with the same-sex parent. Women reared with a father present had higher levels of self-esteem and had more liberal gender-role attitudes. The better educated a mother was, the more liberal was the daughter's belief about gender-roles. Feminine-typed women were raised in more religious households and were more traditional in ideology. Masculine-typed women were more likely to go to college, but were just as likely as feminine types to have children.

Differences were found between African American and White women (Binion, 1981). Whites were more undifferentiated, whereas African Americans were more androgynous. Androgynous African American women had higher self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and depression. However, ironically, African American women, though more androgynous than Whites, had more traditional attitudes about the female role than Whites. This suggests that gender-role attitudes and gender-role ideology may be separate personality issues for African American women.

Other studies have been completed by researchers looking at the differences between African American and White women and gender-roles. Interestingly, Bassoff and Ortiz (1984) looked at the differences between White and African American teenage girls, their cognitive values, how they anticipated life events in the future, and gender-roles. Consistent differences were found. African American teenagers valued good education, self-worth, and financial independence. Whites valued social relationships, marriage, and parenthood. Even though these aspirations represent fantasy, consistent differences do exist between ethnic groups.

Rozee-Koker, Dansby, and Wallston (1985) found no differences between White and African American women and their identities as women. This research found an underlying commonality in the structure of their female identity. Willis (1988) also found no differences between

androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated African American and White women and their self-esteem. Masculine and androgynous women had the highest self-esteem, but there was only one racial difference between African American and White women. The difference was found in successive administrations of the BSRI. African American women differed from Whites only on the masculine scale. African American women scored higher on the masculine scale. Witter (1986) believed that her results showed that the perception of the female gender-role in the majority culture is beginning to influence minority cultures.

Marital dissolution was correlated with gender-role attitudes in 1977 by Brown et al. Their study reported that Whites and African Americans did not differ in their degree of traditionality of gender-role attitudes when correlated with jobs, family roles, and women in the home. There were other differences, however. Traditional Whites reported lower self-esteem, lower internal control, more distress, and less personal growth and well-being than traditional African Americans. When the added variable of culture was considered, results showed further differences. In 1985, Muller compared Whites, African Americans, and Black Haitian women. Haitian women had lower levels of achievement motivation than either White or African Americans. However, Haitian and African Americans felt stronger about the importance of role models than Whites. Women, both African American and White Americans, who had scored higher on

achievement motivation, also scored higher on the masculine and androgynous scales. Culture, therefore, may play a role in gender-roles and achievement. Dugger (1988) also found no differences between African American and White women on traditional marriage scales. Interestingly, at the same time, African American women were more likely to hold stereotypical views of boys' and girls' domestic roles.

When comparing African American and White newlyweds, Crohan and Veroff (1989) found education to be positively related to marital happiness for Whites, but to feelings of control for African Americans. Crohan and Veroff (1989) stated that it is likely that a sense of control in marriage may be related to feelings of personal control. Increased sophistication about relationships, which would most likely come with education, would play a role in heightening a sense of control in marriage (Crohan & Veroff, 1989). Education has different effects on Whites, African Americans, and their marriages.

There are, therefore, some differences between African Americans and Whites. African Americans express distress with physical abuse over changing gender-roles whereas Whites become passive-aggressive. It must be remembered that past discrimination has forced African American women into multiple roles. They tend to be more androgynous than Whites. Finally, although there are similarities, African American women may deal with roles and ideology as separate

issues. African American husbands continue to be an "unknown" in the area of gender-roles due to scant research.

#### African American and White Couples

Comparisons between White and African American couples are meager in the area of gender-roles and marital satisfaction. Some general studies are available comparing African American and White couples on different variables such as power sharing, dominance, and no-fault divorce. No differences were found between African American and White couples in task completion and power relationships (Geerken & Gove, 1974). Differences were found between working-class husbands and middle-class husbands. Working-class husbands were much more powerful in relationships (Mack, 1974).

Geerken and Gove's (1974) results suggest no differences between the marital roles of African Americans and Whites. However, they did find that marriage is better for White men and African American women than for White women or African American men. Geerken and Gove (1974) had compared the mortality rates of African Americans and Whites across sex and marital categories that are affected by psychological stress. Looking at the women, they speculated that married African American women, existing in a culture with a greater tendency for a matrifocal structure, most likely have more power and status than their White counterparts. In addition, African American married women, who have been widowed or divorced, appear to find their new

role less difficult than widowed or divorced White women, due to their power and status.

Looking at the men, Geerken and Gove (1974) found that the matrifocal tendency in the African American culture would, by definition, reduce the power and status of married African American men. This tendency presumably is the result of the inability of these men to support their families. It would be expected that African American men would manifest more psychological stress than married White males. Also, formerly married White males have much higher mortality rates than single White males. This suggests there is a considerable "shock" to married White men when widowed or divorced. In contrast, African American men, who benefit less from marriage than White men, experience less shock in being widowed or divorced.

In 1976, Eberstein, Isaac, and Frisbie looked at Public Use Samples from 1960 and 1970 to see if there had been changes in marital stability among Whites and African Americans. They found that African American marriages were more unstable than White marriages. The relative frequency of marital disruption among married women is higher in African Americans.

No-fault divorce, an invention of the 1970s, was examined in Nebraska in 1977 (Mazur, Stanley, & Berman) to see if there were any effects on marriages for Whites and African Americans. The researchers found that no-fault divorce significantly increased divorce rates in African

Americans, overall, but only in Whites over 50 years of age or who had been married more than 25 years. Cromwell and Cromwell (1978) discovered, contrary to the stereotype, that African American families were not matriarchal when perceptions of relative spousal dominance in conflict resolution and decision making were measured. Others found that African American couples were more apt to share household tasks than White couples (Ericksen, Yancey, & Ericksen 1979). However, husbands' income was negatively related to shared roles, and wives' education was positively related to shared roles (Ericksen et al., 1979). Willie (1981) supported Cromwell and Cromwell's (1978) study in that he also found that the idea of an African American matriarchy is a stereotype. He actually found this tendency of matriarchy more visible in White middle-class nuclear families.

Marriage is generally seen as beneficial to most people. Glenn and Weaver (1981) found this to be true when they looked at data from six national surveys. Marital happiness contributed far more to an individual's global happiness than any other kind of satisfaction. This was true for all groups except African American husbands.

Analysis of African American families in 1987 by Keir found them to be very similar to Whites. He studied middle-class families and showed that similarities existed in division of labor, in strategies for attaining equality, in wanting the best for their children, and in interactions



with others, even those of different races. When African Americans were looked at specifically, spousal differences did exist in that the wife was more traditional. She attended church, looked after extended kin, and maintained African American culture. Determinants of African American and White first marriages (Bennett, Bloom, & Craig, 1989) showed that increased education was negatively associated with the probability of marriage for Whites, but positively associated with marriage for African Americans.

Looking specifically at gender-roles in marriage for African Americans and Whites, James's (1982) study showed African Americans to be 42% androgynous whereas Whites were equally divided among masculine, feminine, and androgynous gender-role types. African American women (Balthazar, 1983) were found to be under greater normative pressure to work than White women when White and African American couples were compared. In Tucker, James, and Turner's work (1985) on gender-roles and marriage, gender-roles were found to be a factor in marital adjustment for African Americans, but not for Whites. Undifferentiated African Americans suffered significantly lower marital adjustment than masculine, feminine, and androgynous African Americans. Overall, Whites had higher marital adjustment scores than African American couples. Finn's work (1986) showed no differences in race and the use of physical force. However, gender-roles were related to use of physical force. Traditional gender-roles were the most powerful predictor of attitudes

supporting marital violence. Sex of the individual was not a predictor.

Research continues to favor the White majority. White couples and gender-roles have certainly been studied to a greater degree than any minority culture. Whites continue to have higher marital satisfaction scores.

### Summary

Research shows conflicting results when looking at marriage and gender-roles. Russell and Well's (1991) research showed that similar attitudes about gender-roles, such as both spouses favoring androgyny, enhances marital satisfaction. On the other hand, Peterson's (1990) research showed somewhat different results with husbands benefiting from equality of gender-roles while wives lost benefits in the marriage with equality. House (1986) found that gender-roles had no influence on marital satisfaction. However, it would seem that similar attitudes would enhance marriage because of agreement within the couple.

Time and length of marriage seem to be positively related to marital satisfaction (Schuchts & Witkin, 1989), as is employment of wife (Shukla & Kapoor, 1990), and religion (Fowers, 1991). Egalitarianism in marriage continues to be one of the best predictors of marital satisfaction (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Fowers, 1991).

When comparing African American and White couples, research continues to show conflicting results about gender-

roles and marriage. Differences were found by McNair (1983) and Binion (1981). McNair (1983) found that Whites, when distressed in marriage, became passive-aggressive while African Americans, when distressed, became abusive. Binion (1981), looking more specifically at gender-roles in marriage, found Whites to be "undifferentiated" whereas African Americans were more "androgynous." Binion's research (1981) showed that African Americans looked at gender-role attitudes and gender-role ideology in a very different light.

On the other hand, no differences were found by Bailey et al. (1990), Dugger (1988), Rozee-Koker et al. (1985), or Willis (1988).

Specifically looking at African Americans and not comparing them with Whites, Taylor and Zhang (1990) and Thomas (1990) confirmed the problems of racial and social isolation that African American couples face. Zollar and Williams (1987) found that African Americans who were married seemed happier than those who were not.

As Epstein (1988) has pointed out, humans, having a need to organize and categorize, have made gender-roles discrete elements in social life. This, in fact, may be real or representational. Our value judgments also organize and create categories. These, in fact, are organized and reorganized around our interpretations and perceptions. As a result, attributing capacities to "masculine" and "feminine" may cause a sorting and skewing of our

perceptions of reality. This research will, it is hoped, add to our empirical reality of "masculine" and "feminine" gender-roles.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of gender-roles within the marriages of contemporary White and African American couples using convenience samples of White married, White defacto, and African American married couples.

#### Research Questions

This research was guided by the following questions:

1. Do the perceived gender-roles of husbands and wives continue to be traditional; i.e., are husbands more masculine while their wives are more feminine?
2. What is the relationship between gender-roles of married couples and their educational level?
3. What is the relationship between length of marriage and gender-roles?
4. Is interaction between married couples related to their shared perceptions of gender-roles; i.e., do married interacting couples differ in these perceptions from married noninteracting couples (defacto)?
5. Are there any notable differences in the perceptions of gender-roles of married White and African American couples?

### Research Design

This study was descriptive, correlational research using two surveys to assess the dependent variables of gender-role attitudes, education, length of marriage, and race among contemporary White and African American couples. The research involved answering two self-administered questionnaires that were designed to explore gender-role perceptions among the couples.

### Populations

The populations for this study were White married and defacto couples in northwestern Indiana and married African American couples of south Chicago, Illinois. The total sample consisted of 184 individuals of which there were 92 male and 92 female subjects.

#### White Married Couples

This convenience sample of subjects consisted of 33 White, true married couples. They represented relatives and friends of 22 Purdue Calumet University undergraduate students willing to respond to the survey materials. All of these subjects were from northwest Indiana.

#### White Defacto Couples

Another survey group consisted of male and female married subjects who were artificially paired. Out of an original sample of approximately 150 subjects who were not married to each other, 33 defacto couples were formed.

Males and females were matched to each other by age and length of marriage to form a defacto couple. These defacto couples were then matched against the White married couples on age, length of marriage, and displayed gender-roles. Males were classified as either "masculine-males" or "feminine-males." Females were classified as either "masculine-females" or "feminine-females." For instance, a defacto couple classified as masculine-male/feminine-female was then matched against similar displayed gender-roles in true married couples.

Matching White true married and defacto couples was necessary for validation of the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (M-FSRS; Damusis & Mish, 1993). The variables chosen--age, displayed gender-role, and length of marriage--were the obvious criteria on which to match the couples. In effect, the defacto couples represented a non-interacting match for the true married couples (Shavelson, 1981).

#### African American Married Couples

A convenience sample of 52 African American subjects, 26 females and 26 males, was drawn from one church congregation and college classes at a commuter campus on the southern end of Chicago. These subjects were married to each other and formed 26 couples.

### Instrumentation

#### Bem Sex-Role Inventory

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) is presented in Appendix A. This measure has received considerable review in the literature since it was developed in 1974. The inventory was constructed by Sandra L. Bem, Ph.D., to measure psychological androgyny. The BSRI treats masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions rather than as a bipolar dimension. Using Bem's inventory, subjects generate scores on the independent dimensions of masculinity and femininity. This allows assessment of the respondent as androgynous (high scores on both dimensions), undifferentiated (low on both), high masculine-low feminine, or high feminine-low masculine.

The BSRI's two scales are composed of items describing traditional masculine and feminine traits. The selected items reference common cultural definitions of sex-typed characteristics. The items were not selected on the basis of endorsement; i.e., if a characteristic was judged to be more desirable for a woman than a man in America, it was not necessarily qualified to be feminine.

The BSRI items consist of 60 adjectives and phrases describing personal characteristics. Twenty of the items are stereotypically masculine and 20 are stereotypically feminine. Twenty items serve as fillers. Individuals indicate on a 7-point scale (1 = never or almost never; 7 =



always or almost always) their preference for each of the 60 items.

The BSRI was introduced in the Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology in 1974. Bem (1974) used 444 male and 279 female students at Stanford University and 117 male and 77 female paid volunteers at Foothill Junior College as her normative sample. Employing coefficient alpha, Bem computed internal consistency scores for all groups on the two scales of masculinity and femininity. Reliability coefficients were acceptable, ranging from a low of .70 to a high of .86. No relationship between masculinity and femininity scores suggested empirical independence. Test-retest reliability for the two scales ranged from .89 to .93.

Although validity studies demonstrate that the BSRI's femininity and masculinity scales are correlated with gender-related behaviors, the manual provides no evidence of discriminant validity. Factor analysis of the BSRI suggests that masculinity and femininity are not factorially pure (Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979; Strahan, 1975; Walkup & Abbott, 1978; Waters, Waters, & Pincus, 1977). Masculinity scale scores load on two factors: "dominance/aggression" and "self-reliance/personal control." Femininity scores load on "interpersonal sensitivity/warmth" and a factor often correlated with biological sex, defined by three BSRI items: "Masculine," "Feminine," and "Athletic" (Lippa, 1985).

Validity data, therefore, remain somewhat meager, but the BSRI receives extensive research use (Payne, 1985).

As previously stated, the 20 masculinity and 20 femininity items in the BSRI were judged to be equally socially desirable for both men and women. Masculinity items include willingness to take risks, individualism, dominance, and assertiveness. Femininity items are sensitivity to the needs of others, loyalty, cheerfulness, and affectionateness.

Potential scores on each scale range from 20 to 140, with all combinations of femininity and masculinity possible: both could be high, both low, and one high and one low. Median splits both for the normative data supplied by Bem and based on local norms can be used to distinguish high and low scores. Four distinct gender-role groups are defined by the median splits: feminine, masculine, undifferentiated, and androgynous. If a subject scored above the median on femininity and below the median on masculinity, the individual was classified as feminine. If subjects scored below the median on femininity and above it on masculinity, they were classified as masculine. Scoring above the median on both feminine and masculine splits placed individuals in the androgynous category. Scoring below both median splits classified the subjects as undifferentiated. Masculinity and femininity then function as two independent dimensions and not as bipolar extremes of one dimension, as Bem (1974) intended.

### BSRI, Marital Satisfaction, and Gender-Roles

Sandra Bem's (1974) Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) has been used in hundreds of studies over the last 20 years.

Although the BSRI remains one of the more popular instruments used to measure gender-roles, studies of the measure's reliability and validity have produced mixed results--a characteristic of most scales which measure marital satisfaction and gender-roles (Brown, 1986).

A principal problem with the BSRI is the concept of androgyny. The research literature is inconsistent in its support for the construct. White, Speisman, Jackson, Bartis, and Costos (1986) utilized the BSRI to measure the relationship between intimacy and gender-roles in marriage. They found no differences. No differences were found at an earlier date between masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated sex-typed men and their marital satisfaction. However, nontraditional feminine sex-typed men did experience greater marital satisfaction than traditionally masculine sex-typed men (Navarro, 1983).

In some studies, empirical support has been developed for the measurement of androgyny. Self-disclosure between husbands and wives was positively associated with androgyny, older age, length of marriage, and number of children (Antill & Cotton, 1987). Marital adjustment or satisfaction was positively related with androgyny in the following studies: Ziegler (1982), Heynen (1982), Mashburn (1986),

Davidson and Sollie (1987), Zammichieli, Gilroy, and Sherman (1988), and Agarwal and Srivastava (1989).

In a somewhat similar vein, androgyny and the other sex types are related to marital satisfaction but without the same overall results, utilizing the BSRI. Marital adjustment was substantially, positively correlated with wives who displayed androgynous, feminine, or masculine traits, but in husbands, only femininity and androgyny were positively related to marital adjustment (Kalin & Lloyd, 1985). Younger couples were more egalitarian if they had been married for a shorter time, had fewer children, a lower male occupational status, and less male than female income (Antill, Cotton, & Tindale, 1983). This was unlike Antill and Cotton's (1987) research in which longer marriages had more egalitarianism. In the study by Antill et al. (1983), a correlation was found also between household tasks, egalitarianism, and marital satisfaction. If husbands were egalitarian, they performed more household tasks and their wives were happier. If husbands were traditional and wives egalitarian, men were less satisfied.

Expectations are also part of marital satisfaction. Gotthelf (1984) stated that traditional men experience their partners' behavior as falling short of their expectations. "Emergent" men did not report such feelings. Vernon's study (1981) reported significant findings only for women. Androgynous women, regardless of marital structure, were more satisfied in marriage. Children, gender-roles, and

marital satisfaction were explored in Watkinson's research (1984). He found only one relationship in his study. Androgynous, voluntarily childless males were most satisfied with their marriages. No other relationships were discovered between gender-roles, children, and marital satisfaction. Finally, how were marital problems perceived when couples were assigned gender-role types by the BSRI? Nowack (1984) reports that androgynous couples reported that religion, free-time, and not enough time together were their biggest problems. Traditional couples selected finances, household chores, and communication as their biggest problems.

The BSRI continues, then, to be one of the measuring instruments of choice for androgyny, despite acknowledged problems with both the concept and the scale itself (Brown, 1986).

#### Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey

The Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (M-FSRS) was also administered to all subjects (see Appendix A). It is an experimental measure consisting of 65 empirically keyed items validated earlier by Damusis, Keim, Jeneske, Peterson, & Southard (1992). The scale items require a 4-point Likert-type response (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) to attitudinal statements describing sex-typed behaviors, e.g.: "a husband's job comes before his

wife's"; "a woman should not ask a man for a date"; and so on.

Damuis and Mish (1993) validated the M-FSRS by comparing the performance of four criterion groups differing in their observed, displayed gender-roles: masculine males and females, and feminine males and females. These groups were formed by the research assistants of Damuis and Mish (1993). The research assistants were trained with a given description of a "masculine" male, "masculine" female, "feminine" male, and "feminine" female. Each research assistant picked one from each of the four groups, or was given a quota sample of four people. Again, these two males and two females had to meet the gender-role descriptions provided to the research assistants. The participants did not know they were being picked on their displayed gender-roles, but believed they were simply completing the BSRI and M-FSRS questionnaires. These subjects were later matched against the White married couples on age and length of marriage.

A predictable difference was found in the test performance of these four criterion groups consistent with their displayed gender-roles. Masculine males and feminine females did not differ in mean reactions to the M-FSRS items. However, masculine males were more conventional than feminine males, and feminine females were more conventional than masculine females. These typical sex-typed behaviors of "conventionality" or lack of "conventionality" were in

the direction that Damusis and Mish (1993) had predicted for males and females.

This offered support for the scale's validity as a measure of conventional attitudes toward gender-roles. A split-half reliability of .85 was obtained for the M-FSRS, suggesting the test items were internally consistent in their measurement of conventional attitudes toward gender-roles. The M-FSRS is in the process of being copyrighted.

### Variables

The major variable looked at in this study was gender-role perception by both married and defacto couples. In addition, associations were studied between education and gender-role attitudes, and length of marriage and gender-roles attitudes.

### Data Collection

#### White Married and Defacto Couples

This sample of White married and defacto couples was personally contacted at home by undergraduate students. The students acting as surveyors were enrolled in a psychological testing and measurement class at a medium-sized Midwestern commuter campus in northwest Indiana and conducted the survey as part of an assignment (Damusis & Mish, 1993). Each undergraduate student was trained on a displayed gender-role description and instructed to pick one masculine male, one masculine female, one feminine male, and one feminine female from his or her friends and family.

Some of the subjects were White true married couples. Others were married, but not to each other, and were later formed into White defacto couples (Damusis & Mish, 1993).

The researchers received permission from the Institutional Review Board Committee on Use of Human Subjects, Purdue University Calumet, and the Human Subjects Review Board, Office of Scholarly Research, Andrews University (see Appendix B), to conduct the study.

The undergraduate students, trained by the researchers, contacted the subjects at home, inviting them to participate in the study. After receiving the subjects' agreement, the students met them in their homes. At this time, the students advised the subjects of the nature of the study and gave them consent forms guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity.

All subjects were then provided with a test packet, containing the demographic information (see M-FSRS/Appendix A), the Bem Sex-Role Inventory, and the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (see Appendix A). The subjects were advised to sign the consent form and fill out the questionnaires, which took approximately 30 minutes.

Subjects filled out the forms separately, and upon completion these forms were collected by the undergraduate students, placed in sealed envelopes, numbered, and then given to the main researchers. The researcher never had contact with the subjects. The undergraduate students were provided with copies of the results of the study which they,



in turn, could distribute to those subjects who had requested them.

### African American Subjects

African American subjects were from one church congregation on the south side of Chicago. An oral announcement after services at the church by a graduate assistant of the researcher invited them to participate in the study. All couples contacted were true married individuals. Individuals agreeing to be subjects were then visited at home by the graduate assistant. Upon visiting the homes of the subjects, the graduate student advised them of the nature of the research, and requested their participation. If agreeing to participate, each member of the couple then was given a test packet containing consent forms advising them of their rights and confidentiality (see Appendix B), the demographic form, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory, and the Masculine Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (see Appendix A). The graduate assistant told the subjects the forms would take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The subjects were advised to fill out the questionnaires independently of their mates. The subjects were allowed to remain in the same room, but were not allowed to converse and were supervised by the graduate student.

The graduate assistant collected the test packets when completed. The test packets were put in sealed envelopes,

numbered, and returned by the graduate assistant to the researcher, who had no contact with the subjects.

### Coding

The data was entered directly into the computer by the researcher from the Bem Sex-Role Inventory, the Masculine Feminine Sex-Roles Survey, and the demographic information supplied by the subjects. No "coding" was necessary as all information was numerical and could be entered directly into a computer spreadsheet.

### Treatment of Data

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1: The measured masculine orientation of married African American and White husbands will be positively related to the feminine orientation of their wives, using both instruments.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between level of education in married couples and androgyny as measured by the BSRI and the M-FSRS.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between length of marriage and couples' similarity in measured attitudes toward their gender-roles, as measured by the M-FSRS and the BSRI.

Hypothesis 4: White married couples will share similar gender-role attitudes whereas White defacto couples will not.

Hypothesis 5: Both married White and African American couples will display similar attitudes about gender-roles on the research instruments.

### Statistical Analysis

Simple correlational analyses were used to establish relationships between the variables of education and length of marriage with gender-roles. Correlational analysis was also used to show associations between husbands and wives on gender-roles, and defacto males and females on gender-roles. t-tests for independent groups were utilized to compare differences between the three groups: White married couples, White defacto couples, and African American married couples. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level.

### Summary

Chapter 3 has summarized the study design and procedures, and data treatment for this research project.

The five research questions addressed the empirical relationships between gender-roles, education, length of marriage, cultural differences, and differences in sex-typed attitudes between White married, White defacto, and African American married couples.

The chapter also reviewed the two questionnaires, the M-FSRS and BSRI, sampling, delivery, return procedures, and data treatment. All phases of the research methodology investigated gender-roles in couples and how couples of different cultures compared.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of gender-roles within the marriages of contemporary White and African American couples using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory and Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey.

This chapter presents a statistical description of the three samples studied: White married couples, White defacto couples, and African American married couples. Inferential statistics also include t-test comparisons of the three samples on the principal surveyed characteristics. The section concludes with a presentation of the results of the correlational analysis, testing the relationships predicted in the hypotheses, followed by a qualitative discussion of the findings.

#### General Characteristics of Study Population

The subjects in this study were a sample of White married couples, White defacto couples, and African American married couples. All subjects were from the northwest Indiana and Chicago area. There was a total of 92 couples:

33 White married, 33 defacto, and 26 African American married couples.

The White married males were an average of 39.12 years old and the females were 35.82. The males were married at a mean age of 27.12, whereas the females were 24.39. The couples were married approximately 12 years (males = 12.00; females = 11.42). Husbands had a mean of 2.04 brothers and 1.78 sisters, whereas wives had a mean of 2.04 brothers and 1.82 sisters. The husbands had an average of 14.56 years of education, whereas their wives had 13.56 years.

White defacto couples were similar in age (males = 39.03; females = 35.82), age at marriage (males = 27.18; females = 24.00), and number of years married (males = 11.85; females = 11.82) to their White married counterparts. The variables of age and length of marriage were comparable for the White married and defacto couples because these variables were the ones the White couples were matched on for the original validation study of the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (Damusis & Mish, 1993).

White defacto males had a mean of 2.14 brothers and 1.88 sisters. White defacto females had an average of 2.14 brothers and 2.21 sisters. Education was not reported for the White defacto couples because they were not part of the analysis of education, gender-roles, and marriage in this research.

African American married couples were married an average of 11.19 years. The husbands married at an average

age of 29.46 years, whereas their wives were 27.31. The husbands were now 40.65 years of age whereas their wives were 38.50. Husbands had an average of 2.17 brothers and 2.33 sisters, whereas wives had a mean of 2.80 brothers and 3.12 sisters. African American married males had a mean of 15.04 years of education whereas their wives averaged 15.96 years.

Table 1 gives the demographic characteristics of all the subjects ( $n = 92$  couples).

There were no significant differences in the average age and age at marriage for the males in all three groups, when a series of  $t$ -tests was applied (see Tables 13, 14, and 15). African American males were slightly older than their White counterparts by approximately 2 years. African American females were also slightly older in age and age at marriage than their White counterparts. All the groups' averages for years of marriage were 11 to 12 years.

Of the criterion groups in the study, all males and White females had approximately the same number of brothers, whereas African American females reported a slightly higher number. This observation also held for the number of sisters. The total number of siblings was similar in both White groups. African American males were surrounded by a slightly larger number of siblings, with African American females reporting the greatest number of brothers and sisters. In effect, the African American sample came from larger families.

TABLE 1  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBJECTS (N = 92 couples)

Sex	Variable	White Married			White Defacto			Black Married		
		N	Means	Std.Dev.	N	Means	Std.Dev.	N	Means	Std.Dev.
Male	Age	33	39.12	10.48	33	39.03	10.15	26	40.65	11.36
	Age at Marriage	33	27.12	6.45	33	27.18	7.49	26	29.46	8.11
	Years Married	33	12.00	10.74	33	11.85	9.30	26	11.19	9.03
	Number of Brothers	26	2.04	1.26	22	2.14	1.69	18	2.17	1.21
	Number of Sisters	23	1.78	1.10	24	1.88	1.05	18	2.33	1.11
	Years of Education	18	14.56	3.66	0	0.00	0.00	26	15.04	3.01
Female	Age	33	35.82	10.59	33	35.82	11.18	26	38.50	9.57
	Age at Marriage	33	24.39	5.50	33	24.00	5.98	26	27.31	7.62
	Years Married	33	11.42	10.48	33	11.82	10.54	26	11.19	9.03
	Number of Brothers	23	2.04	1.49	29	2.14	1.98	20	2.80	1.69
	Number of Sisters	22	1.82	0.98	29	2.21	1.19	19	3.12	2.20
	Years of Education	18	13.56	2.31	0	0.00	0.00	26	15.96	1.37

Males had more years of education than females among White married couples. The African American sample was better educated than the White sample, with females exhibiting the highest levels of schooling for the two married groups.

### Descriptive Results of Instruments

The results of the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey are reported in Table 2 for all three groups. The Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey (M-FSRS) is reported as a single score. This score measures the perception of one's gender-role as either "conventional" or "not conventional." The M-FSRS is a self-report measure consisting of attitudinal statements describing sex-typed behaviors.

All three groups were compared on the M-FSRS. All of the husbands scored an average of 10 to 16 points higher than the wives, suggesting that males are more conventional in perception of gender-roles than are females.

White married wives scored about 10 points higher on the M-FSRS than either the sample of African American married or White defacto females, suggesting more conventional attitudes toward male and female gender-roles. There were no significant differences on the M-FSRS between males in all three groups.

The Bem Sex-Role Inventory reports two scores for each subject: a masculine (MASC) and a feminine (FEM). Table 3



TABLE 2

## M-FSRS MEAN SCORES

Sex	N	Means	Standard Deviation
<b>White Married</b>			
Male	33	152.76	20.70
Females	33	142.42	16.63
<b>White Defacto</b>			
Male	33	150.88	20.07
Females	33	135.73	20.64
<b>African American Married</b>			
Male	26	149.23	16.28
Females	26	133.15	17.74

shows the means and standard deviations on the BSRI for all three groups of couples.

When comparing the three groups, African American married males scored the highest on the Masculine scale of the BSRI compared to both the White married and White defacto males. Their scores on the BSRI Feminine scale were similar to those of the White defacto males.

African American married females obtained the highest scores on the BSRI Masculine dimension, whereas both White female samples had substantially lower yet similar scores on the same measure. All three female groups were substantially alike in their mean scores on the BSRI feminine dimension. Interestingly, African American wives' scores were very similar on both the BSRI Masculine and BSRI Feminine scales. This was also true for the White defacto husbands.

#### BSRI Median Splits

Spence et al. (1974) and Strahan (1975) recommended classifying subjects in a fourfold classification scheme, which Bem adopted in scoring the BSRI (Bem, 1984). A single Femininity and single Masculinity median are calculated on the combined sample. Calculating median splits on both the masculine and feminine scores produces four groups: undifferentiated (low on masculine, low on feminine); androgynous (high on masculine, high on feminine); feminine

TABLE 3  
BSRI MEAN SCORES

Sex	Scale	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>White Married</b>				
Male	MASC	33	103.64	14.54
	FEM	33	90.45	10.94
Females	MASC	33	96.88	15.87
	FEM	33	102.85	10.62
<b>White Defacto</b>				
Male	MASC	21	97.86	12.41
	FEM	21	95.14	11.35
Females	MASC	19	96.05	16.95
	FEM	18	102.44	11.63
<b>African American Married</b>				
Male	MASC	26	107.42	14.37
	FEM	26	94.42	11.54
Females	MASC	26	102.15	17.89
	FEM	26	101.50	12.50

(low on masculine, high on feminine); and masculine (high on masculine, low on feminine).

The median splits for the three groups are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4  
BSRI MEDIAN SPLITS

Groups	Masculinity	Femininity
White Married	101	97
White Defacto	97	100
African American Married	104	99
All Groups	102	99

There were no significant differences. However, using Bem's formula for median splits and classification scheme for masculine and feminine individuals, Table 5 was produced to show the "trends" in the three groups. As shown in Table 5, the mean scores of White married couples were below the combined splits on both the masculinity and femininity median. They could, on a comparative basis, be considered as more "undifferentiated" than the other samples. The White defacto couples were below the median split on masculinity and above on femininity. This suggests a more "feminine" group.

**TABLE 5**  
**BSRI GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS**

<b>Group</b>	<b>UNDIFF. (low FEM/ low MASC)</b>	<b>ANDROGY (high FEM/ high MASC)</b>	<b>MASC (high MASC/ low FEM)</b>	<b>FEM (low MASC/ high Fem)</b>
<b>White Married</b>	<b>XX</b>			
<b>White Defacto</b>				<b>XX</b>
<b>African American Married</b>			<b>XX</b>	

Finally, African American married couples were high on masculinity, but equal with the overall median split on femininity. Suggestively, the African American married couples tended toward a more masculine category.

### Correlational Statistics

As part of the data analysis, relationships between demographic variables were reviewed. They are reported for each of the three groups in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Results of a simple correlational analysis of the associations between the prominent demographic characteristics in the White married couples' sample are presented in Table 6. Some of the presented relationships are trivial and obvious, e.g., a direct relationship between age and years married. Other relationships provided contextual background on the status of the sample studied. For example, age, years of marriage, and the number of brothers in their families were inversely related to the female sample's educational level.

The correlational results for demographic characteristics of the White defacto couple sample are presented in Table 7.

Outside of the trivial relationships between age and years married, there were no background characteristics that correlated significantly for the White defacto couples. Although they do not have a direct bearing on the purposes of the research study, these data provide a characterization

TABLE 6  
WHITE MARRIED DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATIONS

		Male					
		Age	Years Married	Age at Marriage	Number of Brothers	Number of Sisters	Years of Education
Female	Age	.90**	.80**	.13	.04	-.10	-.26
	Years Married	.77**	.94**	-.31	.00	-.10	-.28
	Age at Marriage	.27	-.24	.83**	.08	.03	.04
	Number of Brothers	-.01	.07	-.13	-.36	-.20	-.13
	Number of Sisters	-.08	-.17	.17	.35	-.21	.01
	Number of Siblings	.20	.18	.02	-.03	-.17	-.26
	Years of Education	-.52**	-.61**	.26	-.64**	-.11	.38

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

Note: Sample sizes range from n = 18 to n = 33.

TABLE 7  
WHITE DEFACTO DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATIONS

		Male				
		Age	Years Married	Age at Marriage	Number of Brothers	Number of Sisters
Female	Age	.61**	.65**	.02	-.13	.08
	Years Married	.63**	.80**	-.22	-.15	.01
	Age at Marriage	.05	-.19	.28	.01	.13
	Number of Brothers	.20	.34	-.15	-.09	-.03
	Number of Sisters	-.23	-.23	-.02	.01	.13
	Number of Siblings	.02	.16	-.16	-.08	.04

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

Note: Sample sizes range from n = 22 to n = 33.



TABLE 8  
AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIED DEMOGRAPHIC CORRELATIONS

		Male					
		Age	Years Married	Age at Marriage	Number of Brothers	Number of Sisters	Years of Education
Female	Age	.84**	.67**	.44*	.09	-.16	-.16
	Years Married	.71**	1.00**	-.13	.46	-.09	-.20
	Age at Marriage	.22	-.35	.70**	-.43	-.08	.04
	Number of Brothers	.19	.24	.00	.22	.31	.08
	Number of Sisters	.57*	.32	.43	-.28	.15	.10
	Number of Siblings	.47*	.32	.27	-.03	.17	.04
	Years of Education	.08	.02	.10	-.01	-.29	.00

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

Note: Sample sizes range from n = 18 to n = 26.

of the convenience samples that participated.

Results of similar analyses for the African American married couple sample are shown in Table 8. For African American couples, family structure in the form of the number of sisters of the female was positively related to the male partner's age.

There were some significant relationships between the family structure variables and other demographic features of the couples for the White married sample. For females, educational level was negatively related with their male partner's age, years of marriage, and number of brothers.

Tables 9, 10, and 11 display the results of correlations between the demographic variables and the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory.

Table 9 provides the results for White married couples. The BSRI Masculine scale scores of White married males were positively related to the number of brothers they had. For White married females, educational level was negatively related to the males' scores on the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey. The more conventional males are, the lower the wives' educational level. Also, wives' educational level was negatively related to their own M-FSRS scores, showing once again that conventionality increased with fewer years of education. The wives' BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to years of education.

TABLE 9  
WHITE MARRIED COUPLES' DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCALE CORRELATIONS

	Male						Female					
	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	Sis	Educ	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	Sis	Educ
<b>MALE</b>												
M-FSRS	.01	.12	-.17	.12	-.17	-.17	-.05	.11	-.31	.09	-.02	-.37*
BSRI MASC	.02	-.01	.05	.50**	.32	-.26	.07	.05	.04	-.09	.26	-.27
BSRI FEM	.25	.22	.02	.03	-.26	-.08	.14	.10	.08	.25	.30	.00
<b>FEMALE</b>												
M-FSRS	-.03	.02	-.08	.15	-.06	-.43	-.03	.01	-.07	.19	.15	-.59**
BSRI MASC	.02	-.14	.26	.04	.18	.21	-.15	-.21	.11	-.09	.31	.48*
BSRI FEM	.02	.13	-.18	-.07	.09	-.06	.11	.22	-.20	.17	.31	-.29

Note: Ysmr = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

TABLE 10  
WHITE DEFACTO COUPLES' DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCALE CORRELATIONS

	Male					Female				
	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	Sis	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	Sis
<b><u>MALE</u></b>										
M-FSRS	.34*	.34	.04	-.55**	-.34	.07	.14	-.11	-.25	-.26
BSRI MASC	.13	-.33	.46*	.48	.24	-.22	-.30	.10	.01	.10
BSRI FEM	.09	-.06	.16	.17	.33	-.23	-.22	-.03	-.03	.28
<b><u>FEMALE</u></b>										
M-FSRS	-.04	-.20	.20	.23	-.27	-.23	-.09	-.28	-.09	.27
BSRI MASC	.08	.11	-.02	-.31	.06	-.15	-.20	.07	.13	.24
BSRI FEM	.08	.20	-.16	.20	.18	-.10	.07	-.33	.08	.12

Note: Ysmr = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

TABLE 11  
AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIED COUPLES' DEMOGRAPHICS AND SCALE CORRELATIONS

	Male						Female					
	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	Sis	Educ	Age	Ysmr	Mage	Bro	SIS	Educ
<b>MALE</b>												
M-FSRS	.23	.33	-.05	.50*	.17	-.42*	.13	.33	-.22	-.02	.20	-.16
BSRI MASC	.13	-.01	.18	-.34	.10	.46*	.02	-.01	.03	.15	.09	.01
BSRI FEM	.03	.00	.04	-.53*	-.40	-.07	.12	.00	.15	.17	.11	.13
<b>FEMALE</b>												
M-FSRS	.09	.07	.05	.06	.50*	-.06	.06	.07	-.01	-.23	-.03	-.20
BSRI MASC	.54**	.53**	.17	.13	-.18	-.33	.61**	.53**	.14	.12	.32	.16
BSRI FEM	-.37	-.34	-.14	-.44	-.44	.28	-.28	-.34	.05	-.15	.32	.15

**Note:** Ysmr = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

Table 10 shows the results for the White defacto couples.

White defacto male M-FSRS scores were positively related with age and negatively related to the number of brothers. Having fewer brothers was associated with more conventional attitudes toward gender-roles. Their BSRI Masculine scores were positively associated with age. There were no significant relationships for females.

Table 11 presents the results of the same correlational analysis in the relationship between African American married couples' demographic characteristics and research scale scores.

The relationships between the M-FSRS scores for African American married males and their number of brothers were positive. The more conventional males had more brothers. Their M-FSRS scores were inversely related with their years of education. As the males became more conventional, they had fewer years of education. However, their BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to years of education. Their BSRI Feminine scores were negatively related to the number of brothers they had, just the opposite of their M-FSRS scores, and yet similar in meaning. As the males became more feminine (less conventional), they had fewer numbers of brothers. In addition, their BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to their age and years of marriage. They became more masculine as they aged.

As females' BSRI Masculine scores increased, their own age and years of marriage also increased, like their husbands.

The extent of relationships between the Masculine Feminine Sex-Roles Survey and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory was established for males, females, and each of the three sampled groups.

Table 12 gives the results of the M-FSRS and BSRI scale correlations for all three samples.

There were three significant correlations for White married couples between their M-FSRS scores and the BSRI measures. Male partner M-FSRS scores were directly related to female M-FSRS scores ( $p < .01$ ), suggesting they mutually agreed on what male-female relationships should be. Also, the female's endorsement of conventionality (M-FSRS) was directly related to the BSRI Masculine scores of their male counterparts. Female BSRI Feminine scores also increased as male BSRI Masculine scores increased ( $p < .05$ ), suggesting that manly men were more likely to be paired with womanly women.

Table 12 also displays the results of the M-FSRS and BSRI scale correlations for White defacto couples. Approximately one-third of the White defacto sample, male and female, did not answer the BSRI. Their failure to do so was due to administrative problems. Research assistants failed to introduce the BSRI, as part of the questionnaire packet, to all of this sample. Subsequently, the subject

TABLE 12  
M-FSRS AND BSRI CORRELATIONS

		Males		
		M-FSRS	BSRI MASC	BSRI FEM
White Married Couples				
	M-FSRS	.46**	.38*	-.10
Females	BSRI MASC	-.12	-.03	.19
	BSRI FEM	.08	.40*	.06
White Defacto Couples				
	M-FSRS	.04	.03	.17
Females	BSRI MASC	.26	.34	-.02
	BSRI FEM	-.02	-.34	.39
African American Couples				
	M-FSRS	-.01	.23	.05
Females	BSRI MASC	.19	.04	.20
	BSRI FEM	-.01	.07	.31

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.



loss for analysis of the intercorrelations between the M-FSRS and the BSRI Masculine and Feminine scales is based on a smaller sample for the White defacto group. These intercorrelations, in all cases, did not achieve statistical significance for that group. However, a review of Table 12 reveals strong correlations for the White Married couples whereas the African American couples were no different than the White defacto couples. The results, therefore, were influenced by the smaller sample size and showed no significant correlations.

There were no significant correlations between the M-FSRS and BSRI scales for African American married couples.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Student t-Tests of the Three Groups

Students'  $t$  were used to determine the differences between the three samples on the major demographic and scale variables. Tables 13, 14, and 15 give the results of the comparisons.

Table 13 shows the results of the  $t$ -tests comparing sampled characteristics of males and females from the White married and defacto couples. No relationships were found to be statistically significant between the two White groups. This comparison provides evidence that the two samples were not different from one another on those measured

TABLE 13  
t-TESTS BETWEEN WHITE MARRIED (WM) AND WHITE DEFACTO (WD) COUPLES

	WM N	WD N	WM Mean	WD Mean	WM S.D.	WD S.D.	t
<b>Male</b>							
M-FSRS	33	33	152.76	150.88	20.70	20.07	.369
Age	33	33	39.12	39.03	10.48	10.15	.035
Yrsm	33	33	12.00	11.85	10.74	9.30	.060
Mage	33	33	27.12	27.18	6.45	7.49	-.035
Bro	26	22	2.04	2.14	1.26	1.69	-.225
Sis	23	24	1.78	1.88	1.10	1.05	-.288
BSRI MASC	33	21	103.64	97.86	14.54	12.41	1.477
BSRI FEM	33	21	90.45	95.14	10.94	11.35	1.485
Education	18	0	14.56	.00	3.65	.00	-----
<b>Female</b>							
M-FSRS	33	33	142.42	135.73	16.63	20.64	1.429
Age	33	33	35.82	35.82	10.59	11.18	.000
Yrsm	33	33	11.42	11.82	10.48	10.54	-.150
Mage	33	33	24.39	24.00	5.50	5.98	.274
Bro	23	29	2.04	2.14	1.49	1.98	-.187
Sis	22	29	1.82	2.21	.98	1.19	-1.222
BSRI MASC	33	19	96.88	96.05	15.87	16.95	.173
BSRI FEM	33	18	102.85	102.44	10.62	11.63	.123
Education	18	0	13.56	.00	2.31	.00	-----

**Note:** Yrsm = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

TABLE 14

## t-TESTS BETWEEN WHITE DEFACTO (WD) AND AFRICAN AMERICAN (AA) COUPLES

	WD N	AA N	WD Mean	AA Mean	WD S.D.	AA S.D.	t
Male	M-FSRS	33	150.88	149.23	20.07	16.28	.334
	Age	33	39.03	40.65	10.15	11.36	-.569
	Yrsm	33	11.85	11.19	9.30	9.03	.268
	Mage	33	27.18	29.46	7.49	8.11	-1.100
	Bro	22	2.14	2.17	1.69	1.21	-.062
	Sis	24	1.88	2.33	1.05	1.11	-1.333
	BSRI MASC	21	97.86	107.42	12.41	14.36	-2.359*
	BSRI FEM	21	95.14	94.42	11.35	11.54	.209
	Education	0	.00	15.04	.00	3.01	-----
							86
Female	M-FSRS	33	135.72	133.15	20.64	17.74	.497
	Age	33	35.82	38.50	11.18	9.57	-.957
	Yrsm	33	11.82	11.19	10.54	9.03	.237
	Mage	33	24.00	27.31	5.98	7.62	-1.836
	Bro	29	2.14	2.80	1.98	1.69	-1.195
	Sis	29	2.21	3.11	1.19	2.20	-1.793
	BSRI MASC	19	96.05	102.15	16.95	17.89	-1.129
	BSRI FEM	18	102.44	101.50	11.63	12.50	.248
	Education	0	.00	15.96	.00	1.37	-----

Note: Yrsm = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

\*  $p < .05$ , two-tailed.

TABLE 15

## t-TESTS BETWEEN WHITE MARRIED (WM) AND AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIED (AA) COUPLES

	WM N	AA N	WM Mean	AA Mean	WM S.D.	AA S.D.	t
Male							
M-FSRS	33	26	152.76	149.23	20.70	16.28	.700
Age	33	26	39.12	40.65	10.48	11.36	-.528
Yrsm	33	26	12.00	11.19	10.74	9.03	.302
Mage	33	26	27.12	29.46	6.45	8.11	-1.213
Bro	26	18	2.04	2.17	1.26	1.21	-.330
Sis	23	18	1.78	2.33	1.10	1.11	-1.547
BSRI MASC	33	26	103.64	107.42	14.54	14.36	.981
BSRI FEM	33	26	90.45	94.42	10.94	11.54	-1.327
Education	18	26	14.56	15.04	3.65	3.01	-.468
Female							
M-FSRS	33	26	142.42	133.15	16.63	17.74	2.029*
Age	33	26	35.82	38.50	10.59	9.57	-.990
Yrsm	33	26	11.42	11.19	10.48	9.03	.088
Mage	33	26	24.39	27.31	5.50	7.62	-1.674
Bro	23	20	2.04	2.80	1.49	1.69	-1.523
Sis	22	19	1.82	3.11	.98	2.20	-2.414*
BSRI MASC	33	26	96.88	102.15	15.87	17.89	-1.178
BSRI FEM	33	26	102.85	101.50	10.62	12.50	.440
Education	18	26	13.56	15.96	2.31	1.37	-4.217**

Note: Yrsm = number of years married; Mage = age at marriage.

\*p < .05, two-tailed. \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

characteristics. However, as was made clear by the results presented in Table 12, the relationships between the principal measures used in the study were significant in the White married sample but not significant for the White defacto couples, despite their similarity on all the measures.

Table 14 provides the results of the  $t$ -tests comparing White defacto and African American married males and females on the major demographic and scale variables.

One of the measured characteristics was significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) between the White defacto and African American married couples. The BSRI Masculine scale scores for males in the African American sample were greater than those for the White defacto males.

Table 15 gives the results of the White married and African American married couples on the  $t$ -tests comparing demographic and scale means.

The  $t$ -tests revealed significant differences on three characteristics of these two groups. There were significant mean differences in the wives' M-FSRS scores, the number of wives' sisters, and the wives' years of education. White married wives were scored as significantly more conventional than African American wives on the M-FSRS. African American wives had a significantly higher mean number of sisters. They also had a significantly higher number of years of education than White married wives. The significantly higher education level of the African American female sample

is due to the highly selective group this specific sample represents. It was a sample collected following a church service. Granted, it is not typical of a cross-section of African American females. In some of the observations that are made, it can be justifiably interpreted as due to selection bias. This methodological problem is characteristic of all convenience samples. However, the lack of a relationship between the measures of gender-roles for males and females within the African American sample, so prominent in the White married sample, suggests there may be differences in the content of relationships between these two groups.

In summary, the  $t$ -tests produced the following results:

1. There were no significant differences on any measures between the White married and White defacto couples.
2. White and African American married females were significantly different on the M-FSRS scale with White married females producing higher scores, suggesting a more conventional outlook than African American wives.
3. They were also significantly different on the number of sisters, with African American married females having a larger number.
4. Finally, there was a significant difference in number of years of education with African American married females having a significantly higher number of years of education.

5. White defacto and African American husbands were significantly different on the BSRI Masculine scale with African American married males scoring much higher than the White defacto males.

### Results of Hypotheses Testing

In this section each of the hypotheses is examined individually. The data related to each hypothesis are presented.

#### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states: The measured masculine orientation of married African American and White husbands will be positively related to the feminine orientation of their wives, using both instruments.

This hypothesis, which expresses the expected association between the masculine orientation of husbands and feminine orientation of their wives was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson  $r$ ). Table 12 provides the correlation matrices for relationships between measures relevant to the test of this hypothesis.

For the tabled coefficients, the critical values of  $r$  are .349 with 30 degrees of freedom for significance at  $p < .05$ , and .449 with 30 degrees of freedom for significance at  $p < .01$  for White married males. For African American married males, the critical value of  $r$  is .388 with 24 degrees of freedom at  $p < .05$ , and .496 with 24 degrees of freedom at  $p < .01$ . The responses of White

married males on the M-FSRS demonstrated a positive relationship with those of their wives. In effect, the more conventional and masculine the attitudes of White married males toward gender-roles, the more conventional and feminine the attitudes of their wives. The obtained  $r$  was .46 ( $p < .01$ ). The BSRI Masculine scale scores for husbands in this sample were positively related to the wives' M-FSRS score. Masculine husbands were married to more conventional wives. The  $r$  was .38 ( $p < .05$ ). In addition, BSRI Masculine scale scores of husbands were positively related to the BSRI Feminine scale scores of their wives. More masculine responses by husbands were associated with more feminine scores by their wives. The  $r$  was .40 ( $p < .05$ ).

This hypothesis was not supported by the scale responses for African American married couples. There were no significant Pearson Product Moment correlations between the husband's masculine and wife's feminine scale scores for this sample.

It appears that Hypothesis 1 received only partial support. The expected findings were obtained for the White married sample but not for the African American married sample.

## Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states: There will be a positive relationship between level of education in married couples and androgyny as measured by the BSRI and the M-FSRS.



As presented in Table 9, there was a negative relationship between husbands' M-FSRS scores and their wives' years of education for the White married couples. Husbands who endorsed more conventional or less androgynous gender-roles were more likely to be married to wives with fewer years of education. The obtained  $r$  was  $-.37$  ( $p < .05$ ). Wives' M-FSRS scores were also negatively related to their years of education ( $r = -.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Wives who expressed more conventional gender-roles had fewer years of education. On the BSRI Masculine scale, their scores were positively related to their years of education. More masculine wives had more years of education ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The husbands' years of education were not related to their responses on any of the scales.

The comparable correlational data for African American husbands and wives are presented in Table 12. African American husbands' years of education were negatively related to their M-FSRS scores. More conventional or less androgynous males were less educated. The  $r$  was  $-.42$  ( $p < .05$ ). Their BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to years of education consistent with the results of the M-FSRS. African American husbands expressing higher masculine scores (more "conventional") were less well-educated. There were no significant relationships between the M-FSRS scale scores and years of education in the African American wives' sample.

Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported. White married couples, but not African American married couples or White defacto couples, were more androgynous with increasing years of education.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states: There will be a positive relationship between length of marriage and couples' similarity in measured attitudes toward their gender-roles, as measured by the M-FSRS and the BSRI.

Table 9 provides results for White married couples. The Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the M-FSRS and years of marriage were not significant for either husbands or wives. The BSRI scales and years of marriage correlations were also not significant for husbands or wives.

Similar correlations for White defacto couples are presented in Table 10. There were, also, no statistically significant correlations for White defacto couples between the scales scores and years of marriage.

Correlations for African American married couples' scale scores and years of marriage are found in Table 11. Years of marriage for the couples were significantly related to the wives' BSRI Masculine scores. The  $r$  was .53 ( $p < .01$ ). Although the relationship between the wives' BSRI Feminine scale scores and the couples' years of marriage was not statistically significant, the correlations were

negative or in a direction opposite to the BSRI Masculine scale relationship to years of marriage. This suggests that wives in this sample were more masculine with increasing years of marriage. This finding seems to contradict Bem's contention that age and years of marriage lead to the development of more androgynous personal interests (high on masculinity and femininity). There were no other significant correlations for years of marriage and scale scores.

Hypothesis 3 was, therefore, not supported by the data. The absence of any significant positive relationship between years of marriage and the M-FSRS and BSRI suggests that the characteristics measured by these scales are not altered or changed much by the tenure of a marital relationship. The greater masculine orientation of African American wives who were married longer raises a number of speculative issues regarding cultural differences in the marital experiences of the study's African American sample.

#### Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states: White married couples will share similar gender-role attitudes whereas White defacto couples will not.

Married couples demonstrate similar attitudes toward gender-roles. This hypothesis would be supported by positive correlations for the White married couples in their performance on the M-FSRS and BSRI scales. Table 12

provides a review of these results. Consistent with the hypothesis, the scores on the M-FSRS for White married couples displayed a positive relationship ( $r = .46$ ,  $p < .01$ ), whereas the scores of the matched White defacto couples were unrelated. Clearly, the scores of White married males with more conventional attitudes toward appropriate gender-roles were related to those of their wives.

Additional relationships for the scale scores of the White married couples are also presented in Table 12. Husbands' BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to their wives' M-FSRS scores ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .05$ ). More conventional gender-role attitudes by wives were directly related to their husbands' self-reported masculinity. The wives' BSRI Femininity scores were inversely related to their husbands' BSRI Masculinity scores. In effect, feminine wives in this sample were more likely to be married to masculine husbands. The  $r$  was  $.40$  at  $p < .05$ . This suggests that shared gender-role attitudes are descriptors of their marital relationship.

Hypothesis 4 is supported as shown by the significant correlations.

#### Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 states: Both married White and African American couples will display similar attitudes about gender-roles on the research instruments.

The prediction that African American married couples would express similar scores on the BSRI and M-FSRS gender-role scales was not supported. The pattern of correlations produced by African American married couples was different from those found in the White married sample. As shown in Table 12, no relationships were found to be significant for the African American married couples on the scales. There was evident similarity and agreement in gender-role attitudes among the White married couples compared to the African American sample.

#### Analysis of Results

Overall, the research outcomes partially supported the hypotheses concerning White married and defacto couples, but provided little support for the same predictions among this research sample of African American married couples. In general, the conventional attitudes toward gender-roles and their masculine orientation as expressed by White married males were related to the conventional attitudes and feminine orientation of their wives. The sample group of African American married couples displayed neither of these trends. These results may reflect a selection bias. The sample of African American married couples was chosen for convenience and consisted of a limited group. Additional sampling from cross-sections of the African American married population could potentially change the presently obtained results.

The observed association between self-reported attitudes and preferred gender-roles within the White married couples was unrelated to their years of marriage. This result suggests that their mutual gender-related values may have led to entry into a marital relationship, rather than gender-roles serving as an outcome of mutual influence on those attitudes. In effect, their commonality of attitudes as to what is appropriate behavior for men and for women drew them together rather than grew as their marriage matured.

On the other hand, years of marriage and expressed attitudes toward gender-roles were related for the African American married couples. The length of marriage for this sample of couples was not related to an androgynous orientation as postulated in Hypothesis 3. The sampled African American wives rated themselves as more masculine as their years of marriage increased. They were not androgynous. Does this suggest that the role of the African American wife changes through the years in marriage? Does the African American wife become more masculinized in order to cope with the cultural and social pressures on maintaining her marriage, experiences that are not as critical for the White married couple? This finding suggests that the attitudes of African American married couples toward their gender-roles and their behavioral expectations for these roles changed more as a result of

their marital experiences with their partner than those of the White married sample.

Hypothesis 2, suggesting there would be a relation between years of education and androgyny, received mixed support. Years of education and self-described gender-roles were unrelated for White married males and demonstrated a moderately strong relationship for African American husbands. Of the latter group, the subjects with more years of education expressed more conventional attitudes toward gender-roles.

The education levels of White and African American married women in this survey sample were differentially related to their expressed attitudes toward what constituted appropriate gender-roles and their self-described femininity. Greater education was related to higher BSRI Masculine scores among the sample of White married women. The educational level of African American married women was not related to their measured attitudes toward gender-roles and feminine orientation. These results then are an imperfect beginning template for understanding the relationship between cultural and social differences and self-definitions of appropriate gender-role behavior in a marriage.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research, implications, discussion of the results, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. The summary briefly describes the statement of the problem, review of the literature, the purpose of the research, methodology, and findings. Based on the results, conclusions and recommendations are given.

#### Summary

##### Statement of the Problem

Despite our perception of changing gender-roles over the last two decades, our knowledge about these changes in contemporary couples is limited. Up-to-date research on couples and the effects of gender-roles on marriage remains scant and conflicting, especially in African American couples.

##### Overview of Related Literature

Throughout the years, researchers have studied gender-roles and attitudes in couples (Babladelis et al., 1983; Bond, 1981; Holter, 1971; McBroom, 1987; Rogers, 1985; Russell & Wells, 1991; Weeks et al., 1984). Holahan (1984)



looked at changes in marital attitudes using Louis Terman's Study of the Gifted in 1947. Men in the contemporary sample were more interested in the relationship aspects of marriage than their 1940 counterparts. Marital satisfaction was lower than in the 1940 sample.

Gender-roles have changed since the 1960s. There has been a significant re-examination of "masculinity" and "femininity" (Rogers, 1985). This has led to gender-role flexibility. This latter idea has been termed "androgyny" (Brown, 1986).

Marital satisfaction has been studied extensively and correlated with many variables such as careers (House, 1986), sibling configuration (Ortiz, 1982), power-base perception (Li, 1985), and gender-roles (Bowen, 1987; Craddock, 1980; Hansen, 1987; Holton, 1983; Maier, 1986). Vannoy (1991) contends that marital disruption in modern-day societies may be a lag effect due to the incongruence of traditional gender-roles and post-industrial society.

Satisfaction in marital relationships, gender-roles, and the BSRI have also been researched extensively (Agarwal & Srivastava, 1989; Antill & Cotton, 1987; Bem, 1974; Brown, 1986; Gotthelf, 1984; Mashburn, 1986). Although the BSRI has problems (Brown, 1986), researchers continue to use it to categorize individuals into androgynous, undifferentiated, feminine, and masculine gender-roles.

Differences in White and African Americans and gender-roles are a more recent phenomenon studied (Bailey et al.,

1990; Ball, 1980; Copes, 1990; McNair, 1983; Pyant & Yanico, 1991; Scott, 1990; Witter, 1986). Copeland (1982), who looked at lower-class marriages, found that African American women are multiple-role women who often face discriminatory practices, unlike their White counterparts who do not. Binion's 1981 research of White and African American women was a study in contrasts. African Americans were more androgynous whereas Whites were more undifferentiated. Dugger (1988) found no differences between White and African American women on traditional marriage scales. Conflictual information is prevalent on this topic.

When studying only African American couples, research is scanty. Taylor and Zhang (1990) and Thomas (1990) found racial discrimination to be a factor for African Americans and this put pressure on the marriage. DeJarnett and Raven's (1981) research found that African American males endorsed male dominance. Gray-Little's study of 1982 seemed to endorse this view when husband-dominant marriages reported the highest marital satisfaction. Later research by Pope (1989) contradicted these findings. Regardless, African American marriages are under more of a strain due to the White majority culture impressing its values on them.

Comparisons between African American and White couples, their gender-roles, and marital satisfaction are lean. Studies have shown differing results (Balthazar, 1983; Bennett et al., 1989; Cromwell & Cromwell, 1978; Eberstein

et al., 1976; Finn, 1986; Geerkin & Gove, 1974; James, 1982; Mack, 1974; Mazur et al., 1977; Willie, 1981).

The Public Use Samples used by Eberstein et al. (1976) utilized White and African American couples' data to establish that African American marriages were more unstable than White marriages when controlled for age. Utilizing national survey data in 1981, Glenn and Weaver found marriage to be the major factor contributing to global happiness. This was characteristic of all groups, except African American males. Willis (1988) debunked the idea of an African American matriarchy, showing that middle-class Whites actually had a matriarchy in their own nuclear families. Keir's (1987) work actually showed African American and White families to be similar except for African American women, who were more traditional. These studies, along with the previous ones mentioned, showed conflicting results.

Gender-role research has primarily been done on White couples. The exception is White defacto couples where little research is available. Researchers are generally interested in males and females, not the "couple." Some experimenters found no differences between men, women, and gender-roles (Alpert et al., 1980; Locksley, 1982; Robinson & Page, 1988); while others found differences on egalitarian views and higher satisfaction in the couple's relationship (Craddock, 1983); higher education and egalitarianism in the relationship (Khoo et al., 1984); communicate intimacy

(Critelli et al., 1986); wife as leader being least attractive (Gerber, 1990); advantages of androgyny (Handal & Salit, 1988); higher femininity correlated with more irrational beliefs (Coleman & Ganong, 1987); and higher masculinity more positively related to self-actualization (Faulkender; 1991). These studies produced uneven results making it difficult to draw conclusions about defacto couples.

White married couples and gender-roles have been studied extensively (Allen, 1987; Blair & Lichter, 1991; Burke & Weir, 1976; Cooper et al., 1986; Findlay & Lawrence, 1991; Hertz, 1991; Keith & Brubaker, 1977; Levine, 1982; Rachlin, 1987; Shelton, 1990). Gender-roles were correlated with many variables in studies such as dual-earner families. Crouter et al. (1987) wondered if in dual-earner families fathers might be spending more time with their children at the expense of the marriage.

Others, like Newman-Solowey (1989) and Epstein (1988) researched the importance of gender-roles in mate selection and gender-roles as a means to categorize our social life. Hiller and Philliber (1982) found difficulties in relationships when the wives' occupational achievements exceeded that of the husbands'. This did not occur when both husband and wife tested as androgynous.

Gender-roles may come under more pressure as women continue to work in ever-increasing numbers. Hertz (1991) stated that this situation of dual-earner couples leads to

an undermining of traditional marital roles and an implicit challenge to the masculine career model.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate perceptions of gender-roles within the marriages of contemporary White and African American couples using the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory.

### Methodology

#### Sample

The subjects for this study were 33 White married couples, 33 White defacto couples, and 26 African American married couples. Couples were drawn from northwest Indiana and south Chicago by students and the researcher, using convenience sampling. Participation was voluntary on the part of the couples.

#### Instrumentation

Demographic information, such as age, education, years married, siblings, and work schedules, was gathered on the couples. Each subject filled out the Bem Sex-Role Inventory and the Masculine-Feminine Sex-Roles Survey.

The BSRI is used to measure psychological androgyny. Masculinity and femininity are treated as independent measures, not opposites of a bipolar dimension. Scores are generated for androgynous, undifferentiated, masculine, and

feminine gender-roles by subjects who answer on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The items are cultural definitions of sex-typed characteristics (Bem, 1974). Analyses of the BSRI (Pedhazur & Tetenbaum, 1979; Walkup & Abbott, 1978) have not found the BSRI to be factorially pure, but the BSRI continues to receive extensive research use (Payne, 1985).

However, many studies have used the BSRI to categorize individuals and research sex differences and quality of drawings on the Draw-A-Person (Aronoff & McCormick, 1990); sex and stereotypical differences in romantic relationships (Bailey, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1987); coping strategies and gender-roles (Lukman, 1983); which classification in husbands is best for wives and their marital satisfaction (Murstein & Williams, 1983); psychological well-being and gender-roles (Patton, 1984); and which of the BSRI classifications preferred androgynous spouses (Pursell et al., 1981). These researchers clearly preferred the BSRI as their measuring instrument, despite its problems.

The M-FSRS is an experimental measure consisting of 65 empirically keyed items validated earlier (Damusis et al., 1992). Subjects respond on a 4-point Likert-type scale that measures conventional attitudes toward gender-roles (Damusis & Mish, 1993). A split-half reliability of .85 suggests that the M-FSRS is internally consistent in its measurement of conventional masculine and feminine attitudes.

### Analysis of Data

The first research question "Do the perceived gender-roles of husbands and wives continue to be traditional; i.e., are husbands more masculine while their wives are more feminine?" led to the correlational analyses of Hypotheses 1, 4, and 5. The second research question "What is the relationship between gender-roles of married couples and their educational level?" led to the analysis of Hypothesis 2. The third research question "What is the relationship between length of marriage and gender-roles?" led to the correlational analysis of Hypothesis 3. The fourth research question "Is interaction between married couples related to their shared perceptions of gender-roles; i.e., do married interacting couples differ in these perceptions from married noninteracting couples (defacto)?" led to the analysis of Hypothesis 4. The fifth research question "Are there any notable differences in the perceptions of gender-roles of married White and African American couples?" led to the analyses of Hypotheses 1 and 5. Hypotheses were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the Student's  $t$ -test. The significance level was set at .05. Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 were partially supported, primarily for White married couples, but not White defacto couples or African American married couples.

### Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are summarized by considering each of the five hypotheses that were analyzed.

#### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states: The measured masculine orientation of married African American and White husbands will be positively related to the feminine orientation of their wives, using both instruments.

This hypothesis was analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and the critical values of the sample correlation coefficient. There were significant positive correlations for White husbands with their wives, but no significant positive relationships were found for African American husbands and wives. The significant correlations were found at both  $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$  levels.

White married males had a positive relationship with their wives on the M-FSRS. Husbands' scores rose in masculinity or conventionality with rising scores in wives' femininity or conventionality. The BSRI showed similar results for husbands and wives. The BSRI Masculine scale for husbands was positively related to the BSRI Feminine scale for wives. Also, the BSRI Masculine scale for husbands was positively related to the wives' M-FSRS score. Husbands and wives became more conventional in their gender-roles, or husbands became more masculine and wives more feminine.



African American married couples showed no positive relationships in their measured masculine and feminine orientation. This part of the hypothesis was not supported.

#### Discussion

There may be different results for the couples because of sampling. The White married couples were chosen from a larger, more random pool of subjects. The African American couples were a convenience sample. Also, the African American sample did not fit the norm of African Americans, especially in education. This was a sample that was more educated than its White counterparts.

Different standards for gender-roles have high salience in distinguishing females and males in White culture, but not African American culture (Lewis, 1975). This conclusion seems to be true 20 years later, as Hossain and Roopnarine (1993) discovered in their research on child care, household tasks, and dual-earner African American parents. They found convergence in both household tasks and child care.

Results may differ for the White and African American married couples because of complex reasons between the races. Most research on gender-roles has been conducted on Whites. The issue of racial identity and sex roles has been scarcely touched. Much of our information, therefore, revolves around the White majority culture. Therefore, comparisons between these two groups are difficult at best.

Binion's 1981 research showed results only for women of both races. Masculine and feminine-typed women were both as likely to have children, but feminine-typed women were more traditional, and masculine-typed were more apt to attend college. More White females were classified as undifferentiated whereas African American females were more androgynous. However, African American females, although more androgynous, had more traditional attitudes about the female role than did Whites. Neither Rozee-Koker et al. (1985) or Willis (1988), however, found any differences between the races.

Returning to the same theme in 1990, Binion specifically studied psychological androgyny among African American females as compared to White females. She found similar results in 1990 as in 1981. Binion's African American subjects reported an androgynous sexual identity but had traditional beliefs about the female role. As Binion (1990) points out, if there are differences between cultures concerning gender-roles, this would imply that differences between males and females are cultural prescriptions and are not biologically determined. Another major problem is the complex role of gender-roles and the heterogeneity of the African American community. There are differences between the urban poor (Ladner, 1971; Stack, 1974) and the middle class (Gurin & Gaylord, 1976; Hershey, 1978).

Marable (1991) focused on the African American male and his sex role. The African American male, like all males in American society, must constantly earn and prove his masculinity on a day-to-day basis (Turner, 1970). Being a "man" in America means having a good job, achieving, and providing for one's family (Fasteau, 1976). African American men are caught in a bind: What happens if they accept this notion of a "man" but are denied the resources to "prove" it?

Binion's (1990) research showed that racial differences are important in masculine/feminine identification. For African American women, there is a strong cultural component to the relationship between gender-role attitudes and sexual identity. In Binion's study (1990), African American women who were classified as masculine were more likely to be married than those classified as androgynous. Being masculine to African American women is not antithetical to beliefs about the desirability of stereotypic feminine role expectations.

Results of studies show a cultural difference between Whites and African Americans. These differences may reflect the partial lack of support in the first hypothesis.

### Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states: There will be a positive relationship between level of education in married couples and androgyny as measured by the BSRI and the M-FSRS.

This hypothesis was tested with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and the critical values of the sample correlation coefficient. For White married couples on the M-FSRS, husbands' androgyny was positively related to their wives' number of years of education; and, wives' androgyny was positively related to their own years of education. There were no such results for husbands. On the BSRI, wives' masculine scores were positively related to their years of education. No such results occurred for husbands. African American wives showed no relationships, but the husbands' conventionality was negatively related with their years of education on the M-FSRS. On the BSRI, husbands' masculinity was positively related to their years of education. The hypothesis was partially supported for White married couples and African American husbands.

## Discussion

Education has been found to influence gender-roles and marriage, since it is often the basis for income. Bennett et al. (1989) found interesting results comparing Whites, African Americans, and education. As number of years of education increased, the probability of marriage for Whites decreased. African Americans were just the opposite. The probability of marriage for them increased as their years of education increased. Wives were studied by Ericksen et al. (1979). In these marriages, as education increased, sharing of roles in the marriage increased.

Although there were no significant correlations between African American women and education, other researchers have found results that support Hypothesis 2. Scott (1990) studied African American wives and found as education increased, there was more equity in the marriage. In Binion's (1990) study, as education increased, the women identified themselves as more masculine and undifferentiated. Binion speculates that education gave these women more avenues for self-expression.

Ball and Robbins (1986a) hypothesized that fewer African American men available for marriage forces African American women to settle for lower-educated spouses than themselves. Binion (1990) found that education was the only variable that related to sexual identity in her African American women subjects. Masculine women, followed by undifferentiated and androgynous, had the most education. The convenience sample of this study's African American women was more masculine and educated than the White counterparts. This does support Binion.

Looking at African American men and education, Hypothesis 2 was not supported by the results. On the M-FSRS, men's education was shown to increase with androgyny, but not on the BSRI. As men became more masculine, but not androgynous, their years of education increased. Sampling may be the problem. The male subjects in this research were more educated than the norm.

Ball and Robbins (1986b) looked at African American husbands and education. Education is often highly correlated with income, but the association with behavior and attitudes is more complex. Ball and Robbins (1986b) predicted a positive relationship between education and family-life satisfaction. Higher education should lead to higher incomes and the capability to perform many other roles. These roles might be less subject to discrimination. However, as Ball and Robbins (1986b) point out, research prior to 1986 showed inconsistent results when associating education and family-life satisfaction. Their research (1986b) showed no relationship between education and family-life satisfaction. Whites do not show consistent results when associating education and family-life satisfaction, perhaps because of inconsistency in methodology (Ball & Robbins, 1986b). The results for African American men in this study may be a result of sampling, but may also reflect the continuing inconsistency in research on education and gender-roles.

Crohan and Veroff (1989) compared African American and White newlyweds. They found education to be positively related to marital happiness for Whites, but to feelings of control for African Americans. Crohan and Veroff (1989) said that a sense of control in marriage might be related to feelings of personal control. Increased sophistication about relationships, which would most likely come with education, should play a role in heightening a sense of

control in marriage (Crohan & Veroff, 1989). Education has different effects on Whites and African Americans, and their marriages. The results in this study tend to reflect this continuing difference, but do not support Hypothesis 2.

Mirowsky and Ross (1987), citing Holter (1971) who argued that a belief in innate gender-roles becomes a major ideological prop for an ascriptive, gender-based stratification system in which males have the advantaged position, tested not only Holter's idea, but looked at how each partner's beliefs about gender-roles influenced the other partner, controlling for age and education. Their research showed that each partner's belief in innate gender-roles depends on the other's; or, the more one partner believed that gender-roles are innate, the more the other tends to; and conversely, when one partner believes it less, so does the other. Preferences for egalitarian versus traditional gender-roles, and theory concerning the social construction of reality, suggest that the belief in innate gender-roles may be associated with age and education. Belief in innate gender-roles decreases with education among both husbands and wives according to Mirowsky and Ross (1987). They found that in terms of their belief in innate gender-roles, the husband and wife respond the same way. The only difference, according to Mirowsky and Ross, is that the gender-stratification system justified by the belief assigns the husband to a position of dominance and the wife to a position of subordination.

The results found in Mirowsky and Ross (1987) appear to match the results in this study for Whites. Whites were also used in the Mirowsky and Ross study. The hypothesis is therefore probably reflecting a majority view.

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states: There will be a positive relationship between length of marriage and couples' similarity in measured attitudes toward their gender-roles, as measured by the M-FSRS and the BSRI.

There were no significant statistical results on either instrument for White married or White defacto couples.

African American married couples showed two statistically significant correlations. Wives' BSRI Masculine scores were positively related to years of marriage ( $p < .01$ ) for the couple.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the data, but showed an interesting development with African American wives becoming increasingly masculine as their years of marriage also increased.

Mirowsky and Ross (1987) studied the belief in innate gender-roles in couples. As discussed earlier, husbands' beliefs in innate gender-roles would help justify their position as superior in the relationship. Would age change this? For instance, would older persons believe in innate gender-roles more than younger people? If so, and if the husband and wife both influence each other, the amount of



influence might not be equal. Men tend to marry younger women, so it would logically follow that these husbands would have more influence, being older and more traditional. As a result, the husband's views would shape the wife's beliefs more. As Mirowsky and Ross (1987) point out, the level of egalitarianism has increased in the last decades. But the rate of change is between cohorts (1960 and 1980) rather than within them. This results in a cross-sectional association between age and preferences concerning gender differences. Older persons tend to be more traditional and less egalitarian.

Carlson and Videka-Sherman (1990) looked at androgyny in the middle years after many years of marriage. They used an increase in femininity/decline in masculinity for males to indicate evidence of androgyny and a decrease in femininity/increase in masculinity as evidence of androgyny in females. Subjects were a national sample. In their study, Carlson and Videka-Sherman found no evidence for the conclusion that there is a gender-role reversal in the middle-aged. Interestingly, though Hypothesis 3 was not statistically significant, in the end, the results tend toward those of Carlson and Videka-Sherman (1990).

African Americans' results were significant between wives' BSRI Masculine scores, and years of marriage for themselves and their husbands. Ball (1991) studied marriage, life satisfaction, and age in African American women. He found that age (older) was positively related to

satisfaction in marriage for women. But Ball (1991) did not look at gender-roles. Satisfaction in marriage was only related to age if these women were married. However, if some of these women were single, divorced, or widowed, they were not necessarily less satisfied on a global satisfaction measure. Age seemed to be the factor related to satisfaction as single women (younger) were less satisfied. There seemed to be a desire to be married among single women as they might have seen singlehood as rejection rather than choice.

Ball and Robbins (1986b) looked at African American women, men, and marital satisfaction. Older married women were significantly more satisfied than older married men. Marriage and family for African Americans are associated with more difficulties and may not be conducive to highly satisfying lives, especially for men. African American men suffer from two handicaps: race and class. Problems in the provider role can lead to difficulty in spousal relationships (Ball & Robbins, 1986b).

Binion's (1990) study on African American women found no relationship between sexual and age identity. Feminine subjects were slightly older than androgynous ones, who were slightly older than masculine and undifferentiated subjects. However, the result mentioned earlier, of masculine women having more children and being more liberal on a measure of traditional gender-role ideology, again points to the fact that African American women are less liberal than Whites.

White women may have more cultural freedom to express liberal gender-role attitudes in American society and in their domestic network than do African American women. African American women face a duality, or have to play multiple roles in their culture (Binion, 1990).

Stolz's (1986) work suggests another possibility to explain African American women's duality. He correlated African American women's masculinity with length of marriage. African American women may have traditional gender-role attitudes due to a fear of being rejected if they do not adhere to and participate in socially sanctioned roles. In addition, African American women have always participated in the labor force out of economic necessity. In fact, their participation was viewed as compulsory. Many of these women, who were wives and mothers and had to work, were praised, pitied, or viewed as "masculine." These women were seen as departing from their established feminine roles since society viewed homemakers and wage earners as mutually exclusive (Malson, 1983). African American women must be more masculine or androgynous to succeed in the world of work, but, at the same time, must hold traditional beliefs about their female role to have meaningful relationships with their men. Thus, for African American women, gender-roles and sexual identity may be separate personality issues. The results supported this idea, even though they were not in the direction predicted.

#### Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states: White married couples will share similar gender-role attitudes whereas White defacto couples will not.

This hypothesis was analyzed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, the critical values of the sample correlation coefficient, and multiple  $t$ -tests. Significant correlations were found for White married couples on husbands' and wives' M-FSRS, husbands' BSRI Masculine and wives' M-FSRS scores, and husbands' BSRI Masculinity and wives' BSRI Femininity scores. No significant correlations were found for White defacto couples. The significant correlations were found at both  $p < .05$  and  $p < .01$  levels.

White married couples displayed positive associations on the M-FSRS, and the husbands' BSRI Masculine scores and wives' M-FSRS scores. They showed a negative relationship between the husbands' BSRI Masculinity scores and wives' BSRI Femininity scores. White married couples showed similar attitudes about gender-roles on both instruments. More conventionality in husbands was accompanied by more conventionality in wives. Again, no such relationships were found for White defacto couples.

Multiple  $t$ -tests showed no significant differences between the two White groups. Hypothesis 4 was supported by correlations, but not  $t$ -tests.

## Discussion

Results, again, may be a result of sampling. As predicted, White married couples showed similar attitudes on gender-roles whereas White defacto couples did not. Differences between the two groups, as reflected in the  $t$ -tests, showed no significant differences between White married and White defacto wives. The results for White married couples mirrored the results obtained by Aida and Falbo (1991), who found that similarity in roles in marriage was reflected in a higher marital satisfaction index. Russell and Wells (1991) also found that similarity in gender-role attitudes produced better marriages. However, other researchers did not find this. Maier (1986) and Peterson et al. (1989) showed that those couples who were higher in androgyny had higher marital satisfaction.

Fowers (1991), in his study of gender-roles and marital satisfaction, points out many of the problems in studying gender-roles and marriage. This could help explain the continuing lack of consistent results. As Fowers (1991) shows, many studies use only a unidimensional measure of marital satisfaction, and many of these are not validated. Also, sample sizes become a problem. For instance, relatively small differences can produce statistically significant results in larger samples. The research done here used smaller sizes. Others have used national sample sizes. Finally, Fowers (1991) states that many studies do not report means and standard deviations, so it becomes

impossible to measure effect sizes. Very small effect sizes, such as .01, reflect sample size (generally large) rather than clear differences between the genders. Thus, Fowers (1991) states that although there may be gender differences in marital satisfaction, the differences may not be a major contributor to the variance in overall satisfaction.

Fowers (1991) concludes his study by saying that differing views on gender-role behaviors are endemic to unhappy and maritally distressed couples. Further, as Fowers (1991) points out, distressed wives are probably more dissatisfied than distressed husbands, because they bear the disproportionate brunt of household chores and parenting.

The results, therefore, showed differences between the White married couples and White defacto couples when viewing the correlations, but not the  $t$ -tests. Hypothesis 4 is supported by the Pearson  $r$  correlations. However, the difference between the two White groups was simply not great enough to be statistically significant.

#### Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 states: Both married White and African American couples will display similar attitudes about gender-roles on the research instruments.

When comparing African American and White couples, few differences emerged except in females. The differences in wives support Binion's (1990) research on African American

females. However, African American married couples, although showing no major differences from the White couples, did not display similar attitudes on gender-roles.

Research on White and African American couples remains meager. Some of the studies show differing results, but rarely are the same variables used, so comparisons are difficult. Geerken and Gove (1974) found no differences between White and African American couples. When Glenn and Weaver (1981) looked at marriage as a global happiness measure on six national surveys, African American and White couples were alike except for African American males, who did not rate marriage high on the measure. Opposite results were obtained from this research by Tucker et al. (1985), who found that gender-roles were an important factor in African American marriages, but not in White marriages. They also found that Whites had higher marital adjustment scores.

Earlier research on African American married couples may shed some light on why African American and White married couples are alike and different at the same time.

Staples (1988) discussed the evolution of marriage and African Americans. White marriages were patriarchies sustained by the economic dependence of the wife. African American marriages were not. The wife was not so economically dependent on the husband. Thus, African Americans had relationships ordered along psychological and social factors rather than economic compulsions to marry.

White female economic dependence forced these women into passive and subordinate roles. African American females were more economically independent, so they developed different ideas of equality unknown to most women in the 19th century. This trait was probably one of the predecessors to the modern women's liberation movement, but it produced tensions in African American marriages. In addition, wives had dual roles of worker and mother. They often took care of two households--their own and their employer's while serving as domestics. This situation created role overload and has led to tension and marital dissolution in African American families (Staples, 1988).

In addition to the female role overload, African American husbands have had their roles undermined as husbands and fathers. Their contribution as breadwinners is relatively less than their spouses'. The married African American male has had his influence and status reduced in the home, whereas the wife's has expanded. This results in more tension in the marriage, and the husband may become more active on the streets. The streets allow for an exaggerated masculinity or defense mechanisms such as aggressive independence (Wilkinson & Taylor, 1977).

Farley and Bianchi (1991) support Staples's (1988) research in their study. Economics are a major factor in the differences between White and African American marriages. They show that African American women's earnings have increased dramatically vis-a-vis their men, whereas



White women's earnings relative to White men have not. Marriage for African American women might become less attractive under these conditions.

Another problem for African American women is the pool of available men (Chapman, 1988; Farley & Bianchi, 1991). The sheer number is not the problem, as Farley and Bianchi (1991) point out. It is the lack of educated and employable men. An estimated 40% of the African American male population is illiterate. During their adolescence, there is an increase in suicide, homicide, substance abuse, and incarceration. Females are left without partners and are forced to focus on education as a means to independence rather than reliance on a man (Chapman, 1988).

Chapman (1988) speculated on the consequences for the African American family caused by the males' lack of employability. She stated that the gulf will widen for the sexes, and this gulf could lead to different lifestyles for future generations. Chapman (1988) argued that unorthodox ways of relating could begin to occur, such as older women and younger men, communal households of women, mate sharing, and cross-cultural dating and marriage. This could have enormous consequences for African Americans with the possibility that they may end up with the single, unwed woman producing families and the middle-class woman postponing marriage for a career.

Whites are facing these changes, but not to the same degree as African Americans (Farley & Bianchi, 1991).

African American and White children are more likely to experience family disruption and separation from the father today. Still, there are growing racial differences. These differences translate into a dissimilar family experience for White and African American children. Can America afford this?

### Conclusions

Analyzing the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The first research question asked: Do the perceived gender-roles of husbands and wives continue to be traditional; i.e., are husbands more masculine while their wives are more feminine? Results suggest that White married couples share similar attitudes. If husbands are masculine and conventional, their wives are feminine and conventional. If husbands tend to have more liberal and androgynous views, so do their wives. White defacto couples do not share similar views. In African American married couples, wives and husbands did not share similar attitudes. Across groups, African American males displayed the highest values on the BSRI Masculinity scale, and White defacto females displayed the highest values on the BSRI Femininity scale. Except for African American and White married females, there were few differences between the couples.

2. The second research question asked: What is the relationship between gender-roles of married couples and

their educational level? Results for White married couples showed a negative association between gender-roles and amount of education. As wives became more androgynous, the amount of education they possessed increased. There were no such results for White married males. In African American couples, the opposite held true. There were no significant relationships between education and gender-roles for wives, but, for husbands, results were mixed. As they became more conventional, their years of education decreased, as measured by the M-FSRS. However, as they became more masculine on the BSRI, their years of education increased. Sampling could be the problem.

3. The third research question asked: What is the relationship between the length of marriage and gender-roles? No relationships were significant for White couples associating gender-roles and length of marriage. African American wives became more masculine with length of marriage, but the relationships were not significant. This result is not surprising in light of what research has shown concerning African American wives.

4. The fourth research question asked: Is interaction between married couples related to their shared perceptions of gender-roles; i.e., do married interacting couples differ in these perceptions from married noninteracting couples (defacto)? White married couples share similar attitudes about gender-roles. White defacto couples do not. These results beg the question of whether we become alike in

attitudes during marriage, or marry those individuals who share similar attitudes about gender-roles. Since length of marriage did not seem to affect gender-roles as shown in the previous research questions, it might be assumed that individuals marry those with similar attitudes.

5. The fifth research question asked: Are there any notable differences in the perceptions of gender-roles of married White and African American couples? White majority couples, especially White married couples, do not impress their views on African American couples. White married couples share similar attitudes on gender-roles. Clearly, African American couples did not share similar attitudes on gender-roles. Thus, the White majority culture is not impressing its views on the African American minority.

#### Implications

1. African Americans have not had White gender-role attitudes impressed on them. Mental health workers and others need to be aware that African Americans do not follow Anglo gender-roles.

2. African American marriages are under great stress due to past discrimination and present economic discrimination.

3. African American women are carrying the African American family due to duality of roles. Division of marital roles into stereotypical male and female roles is more characteristic of White families than African American.

4. Counselors and other mental health workers need to be aware that African American men and women were socialized to expect mothers to share in providing financial support and making family decisions.

5. African American men are more supportive of an egalitarian relationship (than their White counterparts), and expect a marriage in which husbands assist in household tasks and child-care duties.

6. All marriages may be based on marrying the gender-role one prefers at the onset, rather than a gender-role that may evolve during the marriage.

7. Bem's idea of androgynous partners suggested in 1974 has yet to come to fruition in White couples. It may have always been there in African American marriages

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, recommendations are proposed in the following area of research.

There is an increasing interest in the study of how self-defined gender-roles are related to partnership choices and development of marital attitudes. (It is not known how many differences there are, if any, in the ways cultural background and experiences dictate the initiation of a marital relationship and its subsequent development and modification are not known.) Are the personal preferences for playing out specific gender-roles a factor in the

durability and intensity of marital relationships? In particular, are cultural, ethnic, and racial factors determinants of how a couple defines what is appropriate gender-role behavior and how gender-roles change during marriage?

To facilitate further research, it is recommended that:

1. A larger, more random sample size be gathered on African American couples
2. The same instruments and variables be used to keep consistency (It is difficult to make comparisons across studies due to differing variables and measuring instruments.)
3. The design be changed from cross-sectional to longitudinal. Ideally, newlyweds should be measured and then followed for a number of years to ascertain any change in their attitudes.

## **APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRES**



# MASCULINE-FEMININE SEX-ROLES SURVEY

Indicate your degree of agreement with each inventory item by circling SA-for Strongly Agree, A-Agree, D-Disagree, and SD-Strongly Disagree.

	SA	A	D	SD
1. Men should volunteer to care for the children in order to give their wives a weekly night out.				
2. A mark of a real man is his ability to hold his liquor.				
3. Dresses rather than slacks are appropriate for a woman going to a casual party.				
4. Men have to protect and defend women when the need arises.				
5. A husband's job comes before his wife's.				
6. Men should work out 2 to 3 times a week to stay fit.				
7. Women should be the principal care-givers in families.				
8. Men are responsible for providing the major financial support of a family.				
9. Keeping up with fashion trends is a basic feminine activity.				
10. A woman's place is in the home, especially when the kids are young.				
11. All wives should realize their principal purpose is taking care of their husbands.				
12. You can't let others take advantage of you, even over minor issues.				
13. I wouldn't mind getting a tattoo.				
14. Swearing in public is no big deal.				

15.	Nothing is more satisfying than picking someone up on a night out.	SA	A	D	SD
16.	I enjoy riding a motorcycle.	SA	A	D	SD
17.	Reading romance novels is an enjoyable form of recreation.	SA	A	D	SD
18.	I prefer ballet to sporting events.	SA	A	D	SD
19.	Women's nightwear and lingerie should be lacy, filmy, and silky.	SA	A	D	SD
20.	People have the right to carry guns.	SA	A	D	SD
21.	Parents should share the responsibilities of raising children.	SA	A	D	SD
22.	A woman should forego personal satisfaction to make her man happy.	SA	A	D	SD
23.	Women are the heart most relationships and men are its brains.	SA	A	D	SD
24.	A woman should not ask a man for a date.	SA	A	D	SD
25.	Birth control is a woman's responsibility.	SA	A	D	SD
26.	Husbands have the right to discipline their wives.	SA	A	D	SD
27.	Wives have an obligation to satisfy their husbands sexually whenever they ask for it.	SA	A	D	SD
28.	Every man wants a good-looking woman on his arm.	SA	A	D	SD
29.	It's okay to be sensitive to a woman in private, but in public a man has to let her know who is the boss.	SA	A	D	SD

30.	I don't have any trouble admitting that I am sometimes scared.	SA	A	D	SD
31.	The man should be the primary wage-earner in a family.	SA	A	D	SD
32.	I like to play rough, physical sports.	SA	A	D	SD
33.	I like to hunt.	SA	A	D	SD
34.	Few experiences beat the joy of driving fast and taking some chances on the open road.	SA	A	D	SD
35.	You can tell a woman's attitude about herself by the way she dresses.	SA	A	D	SD
36.	Athletic, muscular women are unappealing.	SA	A	D	SD
37.	Women cannot be expected to do car repairs.	SA	A	D	SD
38.	Only wimps thing fighting doesn't solve anything.	SA	A	D	SD
39.	I can usually express how I feel very clearly.	SA	A	D	SD
40.	I enjoy staying out, drinking and cruising.	SA	A	D	SD
41.	A woman's career can never be more important than her children.	SA	A	D	SD
42.	A wife should never disagree with her husband in public.	SA	A	D	SD
43.	Preparing the family dinner is a major feminine responsibility.	SA	A	D	SD
44.	Above all else, a woman must be gentle and kind.	SA	A	D	SD
45.	I would get my son a doll for his birthday if he wanted one.	SA	A	D	SD
46.	When you get right down to it, its a man's world.	SA	A	D	SD

47.	Housework and meal preparation are women's work.	SA	A	D	SD
48.	Concern about personal appearance is a good measure of a woman.	SA	A	D	SD
49.	Nobody likes loud-mouthed women.	SA	A	D	SD
50.	Women who try to do traditionally male jobs are not very attractive.	SA	A	D	SD
51.	I would never have a homosexual as a friend.	SA	A	D	SD
52.	I would be offended if people thought I was gay.	SA	A	D	SD
53.	Women in bars alone are just looking for a pick-up.	SA	A	D	SD
54.	A man should keep his emotions in check.	SA	A	D	SD
55.	Crying is a normal response for a distressed woman.	SA	A	D	SD
56.	On a date the man is obliged to pay for dinner.	SA	A	D	SD
57.	A man should never let a woman drive when they go out together.	SA	A	D	SD
58.	Economic hardship is the only good excuse for a mother to get a job outside the home.	SA	A	D	SD
59.	In most important decisions over household issues, the man should have a greater voice.	SA	A	D	SD
60.	I play to win and hate losing any competition.	SA	A	D	SD
61.	Only men should serve in the armed forces.	SA	A	D	SD
62.	Men who take an interest in cooking and classical music are probably gay.	SA	A	D	SD
63.	Truck-driving is unladylike.	SA	A	D	SD

64. Gifts of flowers, candy and jewelry are appreciated by most women. SA A D SD

65. Men do not like sexually aggressive women. SA A D SD

-----  
Sex: M F Age:\_\_\_yrs. Marital Status: Married:\_\_\_ # yrs:\_\_\_  
Yrs. of Education:\_\_\_ Single:\_\_\_  
Number of Brothers:\_\_\_ Sisters:\_\_\_ Divorced:\_\_\_ # yrs:\_\_\_

# BEM INVENTORY

Developed by Sandra L. Bem, Ph.D.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone No. or Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_ 19 \_\_\_\_  
 If a student: School \_\_\_\_\_ Yr. in School \_\_\_\_\_  
 If not a student: Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

## DIRECTIONS

On the opposite side of this sheet, you will find listed a number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use those characteristics to describe yourself, that is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you each of these characteristics is. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

### Example: sly

Write a 1 if it is never or almost never true that you are sly.

Write a 2 if it is usually not true that you are sly.

Write a 3 if it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are sly.

Write a 4 if it is occasionally true that you are sly.

Write a 5 if it is often true that you are sly.

Write a 6 if it is usually true that you are sly.

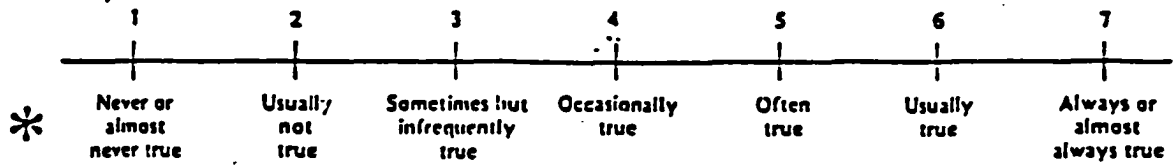
Write a 7 if it is always or almost always true that you are sly.

Thus, if you feel it is sometimes but infrequently true that you are "sly," never or almost never true that you are "malicious," always or almost always true that you are "irresponsible," and often true that you are "carefree," then you would rate these characteristics as follows:

Sly	3	Irresponsible	7
Malicious	1	Carefree	5

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Defend my own beliefs	
Affectionate	
Conscientious	
Independent	
Sympathetic	
Moody	
Assertive	
Sensitive to needs of others	
Reliable	
Strong personality	
Understanding	
Jealous	
Forceful	
Compassionate	
Truthful	
I have leadership abilities	
Eager to soothe hurt feelings	
Secretive	
Willing to take risks	
Warm	

Adaptable	
Dominant	
Tender	
Conceited	
Willing to take a stand	
Love children	
Tactful	
Aggressive	
Gentle	
Conventional	
Self-reliant	
Yielding	
Helpful	
Athletic	
Cheerful	
Unsystematic	
Analytical	
Shy	
Inefficient	
Make decisions easily	

Flatterable	
Theatrical	
Self-sufficient	
Loyal	
Happy	
Individualistic	
Soft-spoken	
Unpredictable	
Masculine	
Gullible	
Solemn	
Competitive	
Childlike	
Likable	
Ambitious	
Do not use harsh language	
Sincere	
Act as a leader	
Feminine	
Friendly	

	a	b	Class
R.S.			
S.S.			

## **APPENDIX B**

### **CONSENT FORMS**



**INFORMED CONSENT****ANDREWS UNIVERSITY****DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND  
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY****Berrien Springs, Michigan****A STUDY OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES  
AMONG CONTEMPORARY MARRIED AND DEFACTO COUPLES**

*Please listen to instructions from assistant. Please  
read consent form carefully.*

**PURPOSE OF STUDY**

Gender-roles affect individuals every day in every way. They affect our institutions such as marriage, as previous research and study has shown. Scientists would like to know just how gender-roles affect marriage. As a result, I am doing this research to find out how gender-roles affect modern day marriage. The surveys enclosed provide information to me so that I may study how gender-roles affect marriage. I am doing this research as part of the requirements for my Ph.D. degree.

The research is being done not only as a requirement for my Ph.D. degree, but also for these purposes: to investigate whether (1) There is a relationship between length of marriage, education and gender-roles.

(2) Married partners affect their spouse's view of their own appropriate gender-role. (3) Displayed gender-roles match measured gender-roles. (4) Whites and African Americans perceive their gender-roles the same way in marriage.

This study is being carried out from August 1 of 1993 to October 1 of 1993. However, it only requires 35 to 40 minutes of your actual time. The enclosed surveys can be completed in that amount of time.

#### FILLING OUT SURVEYS

These are the directions I ask you to follow:

- 1). Surveys may be filled out in pen or pencil.
- 2). Do not identify yourself in any way by name or address. The number on the survey has no meaning. It is simply to let me know how many surveys were distributed.
- 3). Please do not discuss your answers with anyone, even your spouse. Please do not show your survey to others, even your spouse. This protects your personal privacy.
- 4). Place both (yours and spouse) written consent forms in envelope provided. Give to assistant before filling out surveys. Remember to keep copy for yourself.

- 5). Please put both surveys (you and partner) in enclosed envelope and seal. Please do not put any marks on envelope.
- 6). Instructions for filling out the two surveys are enclosed and printed on each survey.

### PRIVACY

Your privacy in responding to the survey will be protected in the following manner:

- 1). If, after looking at the survey, you choose not to answer any of the questions, you may either destroy the survey or return it "blank" in the sealed envelope. Answering the survey is completely voluntary on your part.
- 2). If, after looking at the survey, you choose not to answer some of the questions, that is absolutely alright. Remember, again, your participation is voluntary.
- 3). Your identity will not be disclosed in any way, either verbally or in a published document. I will not know, in any way, who you are. Nor, is there any way that your answers can identify you, as an average answer is published for the entire group.

### COMPENSATION

No compensation will be given for filling out the surveys.

**CONTACTING INVESTIGATOR**

If, for any reason, you wish to contact me about the surveys, I can be reached by writing:

PROFESSOR MARGARET DUST  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY  
95TH AND KING DRIVE  
CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60628

or calling: (312) 995-2227

**INFORMED CONSENT****ANDREWS UNIVERSITY****DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND  
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY****Berrien Springs, Michigan****A STUDY OF GENDER-ROLE ATTITUDES  
AMONG CONTEMPORARY MARRIED AND DEFACTO COUPLES**

*Please sign and date this form if you agree to take part in this study. Place 1 copy in envelope provided. Keep 1 copy for your own information. Do not answer survey until you have done this.*

1. I agree to participate in a study regarding gender-roles in marriage. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate and that if I choose not to answer the enclosed surveys, I may do so without any negative consequences.
2. I have been told that the purpose of the study is for research and that the benefit for myself and others is a greater understanding of how gender-roles affect marriage.
3. I have read the entire contents of this consent form, along with the purposes, instructions, and guarantee of privacy. I have listened to the verbal

Page 6 of 6

explanation given by the assistant. My questions have been fully answered. I, therefore, give my voluntary consent to participate in this study. If I have additional questions or concerns I may contact:

PROFESSOR MARGARET DUST  
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY  
CHICAGO STATE UNIVERSITY  
95TH AND KING DRIVE  
CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60628

4. I have been given a copy of the "Informed Consent" form.

---

Signature of Subject

---

Date

---

Witness

---

Date

I have reviewed the contents of this form with the person signing above. I have explained potential risks and benefits of the study.

---

Signature of Investigator

---

Phone Number

---

Date

## REFERENCE LIST

## REFERENCE LIST

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