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A COMPARISON OF HUSBAND-WIFE
PERCEPTIONS OF FEMINISM
AS RELATED TO MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Sociology
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Leonard R. Decker

August 1976

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College,
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the degree Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at
Omaha.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, for their engendering of farmland qualities which have proven very applicable to the attainment of my academic goals and, also, to my partner-in-the-pursuit-of-life, Libby Decker, for her unwavering support as a source of both sanity and sweetness during those all-too-often trying times in this endeavor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is the end product of much more than my own solitary efforts. I am indebted to the time, consideration, and scholastic wisdom of a variety of people.

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I am grateful for the numerous contributions of my committee members, both as individuals and as a group. Thank you.

A special note of appreciation is extended to the different faculty and graduate students who offered their own observations and suggestions throughout the time spent on the thesis.

Finally, a special note of thanks to Dr. Lynn Dobrofsky who initially aroused my interest in feminism and consequently led to the selection of this particular thesis topic.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The primary purpose of this thesis is to attempt to discover the type and degree of relationship between married persons' perceptions of feminism and their marital adjustment. More specifically, it is aimed at exploring and describing the influence of discrepant interpretations of feminism by man and wife on their marital adjustment.

Background Information

The feminist movement is very active in today's American society. After a state of relative dormancy between the 1920's and 1960's the women's movement has injected itself into the mainstream of life in America. One instigation of this re-emergence of feminism was Betty Friedan's book, The Feminine Mystique, in 1963. Since then, feminism has been promoted by various writings, speeches, and protests.

These writings, speeches, and protests have rendered critical commentaries on a wide variety of American institutions. Most notable among institutions which feminists find objectionable are the present structures of economics, education, occupations, and marriage and the family. This researcher is primarily

interested in feminism's critique of marriage and the family.

A perusal of current feminist literature indicates that the vast majority of writers and researchers in this area are women. This is probably the initial provocation which led this particular sociology student to decide to do research on feminism and its effects. This researcher is of the opinion that there is an unrealized need for a male perspective to accompany predominantly female (feminist) criticisms of society since both sexes (in cooperation) are probably necessary to effect desired feminist changes, and further, since both sexes are affected (in one way or another) by any feminist-advocated changes which are accomplished.

This writer's more specific attention to feminist influences on American marriage and family is founded upon a single personal conviction: the conviction that American marriage and family represents a potentially fertile seedbed for feminist changes which will spread to other sectors of society. Feminist modifications of American marriage and family will affect other segments of society, too. This will occur largely as a result of feminist indoctrination of children with feminist beliefs, values, and attitudes. Adults who have been instilled with non-traditional, feminist ideas (especially ideas with regard to sex roles, sexual identities, and the purpose of marriage and family) will likely attempt to bring about other feminist modifications throughout society.

This perspective on feminism and its possibilities for change entails several assumptions: first is the assumption that

feminism will continue as an active social movement in American society; second is the assumption that the family is a primary source of socialization for children; and third is the assumption that individual persons of like persuasion are capable of uniting and effecting large-scale change in a society. All three assumptions are debatable. The least questioned among the three is the assumption that families are key agencies of primary socialization as can be attested by examination of any marriage and family and most introduction to sociology textbooks. Assumptions one and three remain to be confirmed by the passage of time, although there is some historical precedent for assumption three in other areas of endeavor, such as women's suffrage, prohibition, and civil rights.

It must be conceded that since this study is being conducted by a male researcher, it is suspect of possible "male" types of prejudice in this preponderantly female-oriented area of investigation. However, this writer views himself as somewhat sensitized to selective sex biases which may often attend this kind of research and has made an earnest effort to control for their effects on the research process. Also, as previously hinted at, this writer believes that a male perspective on feminist philosophy is necessary to complement the female perspective because feminism advocates changes which affect both sexes. The methods of objective scientific investigation are not the exclusive property of any group, and knowledge which transcends particular viewpoints

is more likely to emerge if persons with a variety of biases research a topic and freely communicate concerning their findings.

Marlene Dixon (1969) claims that three important social developments made a rebirth of the women's struggle inevitable. First, although women came to make up more than a third of the labor force their salaries and position among workers did not improve. Women were more occupationally disadvantaged in the 1960's than they had been twenty-five years earlier. Second, "the intoxicating wine of marriage and suburban life was turning sour; a generation of women woke up to discover their children grown and a life (roughly thirty more productive years) of housework and bridge parties stretching out before them like a wasteland" (Dixon, 1969: 58). Disillusionment ran high among younger women as a result of a sobering contradiction between the drudgery of suburban life and the adolescent dreams of romantic love and womanly fulfillment obtained as wife and mother. Third, "a growing civil rights movement was sweeping thousands of young men and women into a moral crusade--a crusade which harsh political experience was to transmute into the New Left" (Dixon, 1969: 58). Within this New Left, traditional political ideologies and cultural myths (including traditional sexual mores and sex roles) began to disintegrate in an explosion of rebellion and protest (Dixon, 1969: 58).

This renewed feminist movement takes a position very critical of traditional marriage and family patterns. Again, according to Dixon (1969), the institution of marriage is the

chief vehicle perpetuating the oppression of women. It is through the role of wife that the subjugation of women is maintained (Dixon, 1969: 60). There are three types of subjugation from Dixon's (1969: 60-63) perspective: (i) economic subjugation based upon occupational limitations imposed upon wives; (ii) status subjugation resulting from a wife's social worth being wholly dependent upon and merely an extension of her husband's social status; (iii) sexual subjugation founded upon an ideology of male supremacy which asserts the biological inferiority of women.

Kathleen Gough (1971: 770), a feminist anthropologist, states:

The family was essential to the dawn of civilization, allowing a vast qualitative leap forward in cooperation, purposive knowledge, love, and creativeness. But today, rather than enhancing them, the confinement of women in homes and small families--like their subordination in work--artificially limits these human capacities.

Emma Goldman (1917) refers to marriage as primarily an economic arrangement, an insurance pact. Protection of the woman is the true curse of marriage. "The institution of marriage makes a parasite of woman, an absolute dependent" (Goldman, 1917: 235).

Jessie Bernard (1970) believes these and other feminist critiques are preparing us for what future technology holds in store. The two main functions of Victorian women--childbearing and housekeeping--are being vastly reduced. Our thinking about women in the past hundred years or so has centered on a being most of whose adult life was dedicated to childbearing, child rearing, and household management. Everything else had to adjust itself

to these rock-bottom fundamentals. Yes, she could enter the labor force, but not at the expense of these major duties. They always had to take priority. Home and family had to come first: it was the law of nature. Everything was arranged to fit this conception of women, marriage, birth, and career (Bernard, 1970: 41). Bernard (1970: 42) says that radical feminists are preparing us for a world in which reproduction is going to be only a very minor part of a woman's life--a world in which men and women are going to have to relate to one another in ways quite removed from reproduction, both in marriage and outside of it.

Margaret Mead (1972) uses the term "cultural dilemma" to refer to the present situation regarding women's rights in our society. American "society has been organized to make young people want to marry, want to have children, to make the woman want to stay at home and look after them, and make the man want to work and toil to support his children so that there will be another generation" (Mead, 1972: 176). In the few years that a woman has two children and raises them she cannot earn her place in the community along with her right to respect and a fair share in the economy. "She has to have also a right to work in some way and contribute to the wider society" (Mead, 1972: 179). Unless there are changes in our lifestyle and adequate provision to associate homemaking with other contributions, to dignify homemaking and to pay for it adequately, there is very little hope of raising the status of women in the United States (Mead, 1972: 181).

Suzanne Keller (1971: 7) supports Mead's position in stating:

If women cannot afford to make motherhood and domestic concerns the sole foci of their identities, they must be encouraged, early in life, to prepare themselves for some occupation or profession not as an adjunct or as a last resort in case of economic need but as an equally legitimate pursuit. The childbearing of girls must increasingly be geared to developing a feminine identity that stresses autonomy, non-dependency, and self-assertion in work and in life.

In light of this current re-evaluation of a previously sacrosanct institution, it seems worthwhile to attempt to discover the direction and degree of influence that the feminist movement exerts on individual marriages. There is a need for theory and research on stresses produced in marriages by feminism and on the types of adaptations to feminism that are tenable and that contribute to the stability of marriage relationships.

Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical approach employed herein is based on the framework espoused by Armand L. Mauss in Social Problems as Social Movements (1975). Mauss begins with a very fundamental epistemological concept in sociology--the social construction of reality (Berger, Luckmann, 1967). The concept "social construction of reality" implies that there is no such thing as a single "objective" definition of reality; there are only various (and sometimes competing) realities, each of which is defined by a different group, public, or culture (Mauss, 1975: 4). This phenomenon of constructing what is "real" occurs in the physical, as well as

social, realms of life. Thus, the same basic data or "facts" (whether they be physical or social) yield different meanings or realities to different groups or segments of society.

Whether or not generalized agreement about what is true or factual (referred to as "consensual reality") exists in some objective sense does not really matter, for, as W. I. Thomas (1923: 42) pointed out, whatever people believe to be real will be real in its consequences.

Some form of consensual reality or social definition of reality is indispensable for social and psychological well-being. It is by means of some "brand" of defined reality that one is able to live and operate in a society. And it is by means of the socialization process between individual persons and their families, peers, and various other aspects of society that they come to believe in and act upon whatever is learned as being "truth."

There are two main sources or parameters of consensual reality. (i) Formal consensual reality is a social definition of reality based upon systematic collection of empirical evidence by persons or institutions generally regarded as authorities while (ii) informal consensual reality is a social definition of reality based upon accumulated traditions (traditions that may or may not have originated from systematic experience) and widely told stories that are taken to be typical of some fact and represented in such forms as folklore, myth, and anecdotes (Mauss, 1975: 8-9). It is the combination (in varying proportions) of these two types of

consensual reality that comprise numerous groups' collective definition of reality.

Today's feminist movement is one of the more outspoken collectivities espousing its own unique definitions of the situation of women in American society. Feminists are now more active than at any other time in pointing out the types of situations (and their consequences) that put women on the receiving end of male-oriented proclamations (definitions) of reality (the situation) as they are perceived in our society. In terms of the interpersonal relationships between men and women, feminists are criticizing present male-authored definitions of the situation and are offering new and revolutionary perceptions of what is and what should be the situation of men and women in society. In this redefining process, feminism takes on the character of a social movement as a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about large-scale change in the social order by noninstitutionalized means (Wilson, 1973: 8).

Feminists have cited the various beliefs, attitudes, and values of sexism in American society and have constructed an ideology of change by means of a re-definition of the situation which presents and legitimates a desired future state of affairs. Thus, the purpose statement of NOW (National Organization for Women) explicitly proposes "to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, assuming all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (Freeman, 1973: 799).

Literature Review

A review of the literature reveals that a great deal of scholarly effort has been devoted to exploring and describing feminism and its effects. The most general topical category of investigation is that of "sex roles." Besides criticism of present marriage and family structures, additional sub-areas of study include (i) female employment and occupations, (ii) sexual identities, and (iii) women's place within social institutions. The literature in sociology shows a distinct lack of consideration of the relationship between marital adjustment and husband-wife disagreements about feminism as such. There has, to be sure, been considerable work done in the aforementioned areas but these areas are peripheral to the primary concern of this thesis.

In regard to these areas of peripheral interests, Mirra Komarovsky (1946) has researched the subject of sex roles and found that women at an Eastern college suffered uncertainty and insecurity because the norms for occupational and academic success conflicted with the norms for the traditional feminine role. In more recent research (Komarovsky, 1973) it was discovered that men also experienced contradictory normative expectations. The normative expectation of male intellectual superiority appears to be giving way to the ideal of intellectual companionship between equals, at least on the campus Komarovsky studied. She also found that attitudes toward working wives were permeated with ambivalences and inconsistencies. The ideological supports for the traditional sex

role differentiation in marriage are weakening, but the emotional allegiance to a modified form of the traditional pattern is still strong (Komarovsky, 1973: 884).

Of theoretical import on the effects of feminism is Robert Whitehurst's (1974) view concerning violence in husband-wife interaction. His contention is that the long-run effects of society becoming more equalitarian (as a result of adopting feminist behaviors) will most likely include less violence between husbands and wives. However, Whitehurst suggests that in the short run this trend toward egalitarianism will result in more violence between husbands and wives because the idea of male superiority is still the dominant ideology of our society (Whitehurst, 1974: 75). As a result, greater equality between the sexes will lead to strain and frustration for males attempting to retain their superior position and also, according to the hypothesis of this thesis, a lesser degree of marital adjustment, especially if one of these males' wives is actively pursuing equalitarian interests and goals.

One consequence of this present ideology of male superiority in American society may be the "inexpressive male" (Balswick, Peek, 1971: 363). Boys are taught that emotional expressiveness is incompatible with masculinity. Balswick and Peek (1971) postulate two types of inexpressive males: the "cowboy" who, although he possesses feelings toward women, does not or cannot express them; and the "playboy" who is a non-feeling person unaware of even unexpressed emotional feelings toward women. This lack of

expressiveness becomes a source of anxious defensiveness when the male personality exhibits an exaggerated need to maintain a masculine image and it also inhibits him from experiencing and expressing his passive and dependent traits (which have been culturally defined as feminine) without feeling a heavy sense of guilt (Goldberg, 1973: 432). The counterpart to feminists' demonstrations that women are treated as "objects," specifically sex objects, is the realization that the male is also treated as an "object"; "a status symbol whose attractiveness is measured by his earning capacity, the status of his profession or job and the amount of his power" (Goldberg, 1973: 435). It should be noted that these views of Balswick, Peek, and Goldberg are in the realm of "popular" sociology and do not necessarily coincide with this researcher's perspective on the topic under investigation.

The traditional formulation that a woman finds happiness and fulfillment as mother and homemaker is interpreted by feminists as an outgrowth of the more basic sexual identity definition-- "that she finds happiness and fulfillment not only through her man's life but by virtue of having a man" (Hole, Levine, 1971: 197). Furthermore, traditional social and occupational structures have contributed to the following assessment:

Women are dirt searchers; their greatest worth is eradicating rings on collars and tables. Never mind real estate boards' corruption and racism, here's your soapsuds. Everything she is doing is peripheral, expendable, crucial, and non-negotiable. Cleanliness is next to godliness (Kennedy, 1970: 442).

Francine D. Blau (1975: 224-225) presents an overview of women in the labor force by which she concludes that "occupational segregation restricts the employment opportunities open to women; it results in lower earnings for women, owing to the oversupply of labor available for 'women's jobs'; and it permits the low status accorded women by society at large to be carried over to predominantly female occupations, which are generally regarded as less prestigious or important than other occupations." In addition, Shirley Bernard (1975) claims that a study of the economic facts thoroughly discredits the cliché that women own most of the wealth of the nation. "Men, not women, earn, own, and control most of the wealth of this country" (Bernard, 1975: 241).

In short, it appears that a re-evaluation of sexuality itself is central to feminism's crusade for female participation in society as equal counterparts to men. Aside from physiological distinctions that form the foundation for the labels of "male" and "female," there are also societal prescriptions of what types of behavior correspond to these labels. The traditional characterizations of women as passive, dependent, and emotional and of men as aggressive, active, and instrumental have come under heavy criticism by feminists. These feminist criticisms may well be leading to dramatic transformations in American marriage and family behavior patterns.

The specific interests of this study center around the relationship between husband-wife perceptions of feminism and the

degree of marital adjustment experienced in a marriage. The question being asked is how husband-wife disagreements about feminist ideas (on such things as sex roles and identities, child-rearing practices, and career development) affect the marriage relationship. If husband-wife disagreement on feminism is common and does create marital conflict, then radical changes in family structure may be occurring. If married males and females perceive feminism quite disparately and also experience poor marital adjustment within the traditional marriage and family structures, the stage is set for the emergence of alternative forms of this institution.

Of possible importance in relating disagreement about feminism to marital adjustment are Judith Long Laws' (1971) criticisms in her feminist review of marital adjustment literature. In reviewing the methodological and conceptual shortcomings of current research frameworks and findings, she concludes that there is sufficient evidence for the belief that "marriage is not good for women" (Laws, 1971: 483). She further concludes that the following are the traditional rationales and associated popular premises upon which marriage as an institution is founded and researched:

- a. Love finds its noblest expression in monogamy.
- b. Sex finds its noblest expression in monogamy.
- c. Marriage serves an essential function for society in providing and socializing future citizens.
- d. Motherhood is the arena life provides for the achievement of intimacy and generativity.
- e. A fella needs a girl to call his own (Laws, 1971: 510).

In view of her evaluative commentary on the present state of marital adjustment literature, the continued emergence of feminism may result in novel interpretations of marital adjustment along with novel measuring instruments.

Hypothesis

In using Mauss's theoretical perspective (which is based upon the social construction of reality) as a springboard this writer is proposing a theoretical framework focused on socially-influenced individual constructions of reality. By this is meant personal definitions of the situation as derived from the interweaving effects of both social and individual values and attitudes. A socially influenced individual construction of reality is the compromise of one's personal beliefs, values, and attitudes with his perception of a particular society's socially-accepted beliefs, values, and attitudes.

The particular definition of the situation to be investigated are individual married persons' definitions of feminism and of what feminism means to them personally. Furthermore, this researcher hypothesizes that agreement about these individual constructions of reality has an effect on a marriage's degree of marital adjustment as measured by a standardized test specifically designed for this purpose.

More precisely, the following hypothesis is submitted for empirical investigation:

The greater the disparity between a husband and wife's interpretation of feminism, the greater the degree of marital maladjustment in their marriage.

Thus, the independent variable consists of disparity between husbands' and wives' perceptions of feminism and the dependent variable consists of the degree of marital adjustment within marriages.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The basic methodology employed was that of the mailed questionnaire survey. A systematic random sample of married students attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha was obtained from the master roster of students enrolled for the Spring 1976 semester. A primary reason for deciding to study this specific population was the probable exposure of married students to feminist ideas and writings by way of their coursework and through the general social atmosphere of a university setting. It was also thought that the married students of the University of Nebraska at Omaha possessed similarities with other groups of married students, thus acquiring a certain degree of representativeness and enabling more valid generalizations about the total population of married college students. Lastly, the convenience of easy access to names and addresses of sample members contributed to the choice of this particular population.

The sampling procedure used a computer program which initiated the sample with the twentieth name on a list of married students and then selected every tenth name after the initial choice. The decision to begin with the twentieth name was made by means of a table of random numbers. The computer programmer at the

University of Nebraska at Omaha computer facilities also asserted that the file of married students had a totally random arrangement.

The final list of married students contained 254 names and addresses. An individual questionnaire, along with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return mailing, was sent to each of the first 125 usable names and to each of their spouses. Names considered unusable were those that had incomplete addresses or women's names which did not include their maiden name in conjunction with their married name. This latter condition indicated the possibility that the woman listed was not married. Of the first 125 couples mailed to, a total of sixty matched couple questionnaires (120 individual questionnaires) along with approximately a dozen unmatched questionnaires (only one spouse responding) was received. Obtaining this response rate required a follow-up phone call to as many unheard-from respondents as could be contacted through the telephone directory or directory assistance. To acquire seventy-five couples for data analysis a second mailing of questionnaires was sent to the next forty names on the list of married students. This was done in the same fashion and employed the same criteria for selection as the first mailing. From these forty couples, a total of twenty matched couple questionnaires (forty individual questionnaires) along with several unmatched questionnaires (only one spouse responding) was received. This response rate was again obtained by means of follow-up phone calls to non-respondents. Thus, out of a total sample of 165 couples, usable data was received from

eighty couples, an overall response rate of 48%.

The questionnaire is composed of three sections. Section I consists of thirty items expressing feminist and traditional beliefs about women. Each statement possesses standard response options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). The items for this feminism scale are modifications of statements from four different sources:

(a) A collection of sex role attitude items and scales used in national sample surveys (Mason, 1975).

(b) A questionnaire prepared by Carol Tavris (1971) which appeared in the February 1971 issue of Psychology Today.

(c) A "Questionnaire on Feelings toward Women and Masculinity" (Farrell, 1974).

(d) A questionnaire entitled "Roles of Women" that is designed to measure feminism and was furnished by Dr. Deana Finkler of the University of Nebraska at Omaha psychology department.

All the feminism items were pretested and found to correlate with one another in a direction suggesting they all measure some aspect of feminist philosophy. This was accomplished by administering a version of the questionnaire used in this study to twenty couples, mostly other graduate students and their spouses, who were willing to respond to it. Questionnaires were returned by twelve of the twenty couples. Thus, pretest data was comprised of responses on twenty-four individual questionnaires.

The pretest data analysis consisted of a frequency count

of each item's response categories along with Pearson correlation coefficients and t-tests for significance between each of forty-five items in the original feminism scale and all other individual items in the scale. Fifteen scale items were eliminated because they did not correlate with certain items selected for their high face validity or because they correlated in the inappropriate direction with regard to the item's ostensible feminist or non-feminist meaning.

To increase heterogeneity of feminist issues covered, items from three overlapping categories are included. The first set of ten items (see appendix) deals with feminist ideology; the second set of ten items deals with specific sexual roles and identities; and the third set of ten items deals with child-rearing and socialization practices.

Section II requests background information. The background variables considered in this research are age, children, length of marriage to present spouse, Catholicism, income, education, and sex. It was felt that each of these variables might be related to both the dependent and independent variables of this study, and hence, of use for elaborating the hypothesized relationship.

Section III consists of two separate parts. Part one of section III is composed of the Locke-Wallace short marital adjustment test (Locke, Wallace, 1959: 252) and part two of section III is composed of the Edmonds short-form marital conventionalization scale (Edmonds, 1967: 686). The marital adjustment

test measures "accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time" (Locke, Wallace, 1959: 251) and the marital conventionalization scale measures "the extent to which married persons distort the appraisal of their marriage in the direction of social desirability" (Edmonds, Withers, Dibatista, 1972: 102). The latter and the background variables served as control variables when testing the main hypothesis of the study.

Very broadly, the analysis of data consisted of correlating married couples' disagreement scores for responses of their interpretation of feminism (section I of the questionnaire) with their scores for responses to the test of marital adjustment (part one of section III of the questionnaire). Four different measures of disparity between husbands' and wives' interpretations of feminism were employed. Hopefully, this increased the credibility of results obtained by varying the likelihood that they are "artifacts" of the measurement procedures used (Cronbach, 1958: 358-359). These four slightly different measures of disparity were also intended to aid in controlling for the oversimplifying effects of global measures of agreement (Cronbach, 1955: 191).

These four measures differ in the manner in which discrepancies between husband and wife responses to specific items are weighted:

a) Measurement one is an absolute difference score in which each of the responses are assigned number values and then subtracted, disregarding the algebraic sign, to arrive at an absolute disparity

score between husband and wife responses;

b) Measurement two is a dichotomized disagreement score in which just agreement and/or disagreement between husband and wife responses to an item is measured, ignoring magnitude of disagreement;

c) Measurement three is a "compromise" disagreement score where no disagreement on an item is recorded unless the direction of husband and wife agreement-disagreement with an item differs (as with measurement two), but where weight is given to magnitude of husband-wife disagreement (as with measure one);

d) Measurement four is the signed or algebraic difference resulting from subtracting a husband's summary feminism scale score from his wife's summary feminism scale score.

The standard scoring system of the marital adjustment test consisted of summing designated scores for each response such that the higher the total sum score, the greater the degree of marital adjustment experienced in the marriage.

The standard scoring system of the marital conventionalization test consisted of summing the number of responses which represent appraisal of one's marriage in the direction of social desirability. The higher the score the greater the degree of marital conventionalization.

Fortran programs were used to find the four different disagreement scores for each couple and the marital adjustment score for each couple.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to:

a) correlate these scores using couples as the unit of analysis and using the regular parametric correlation coefficient and t-tests for significance;

b) find partial correlations (parametric) controlling for:

(1) husband's marital conventionalization scale score

(2) wife's marital conventionalization scale score

(3) both husband and wife marital conventionalization scale score

(4) education

(5) age

(6) number of children

(7) religion

(8) income

(9) length of marriage to present spouse

(10) various combinations of the above

The feminism scale was checked for Likert-scale properties by finding a summary feminism score for each individual respondent and then correlating these scores with responses for each separate item in the scale, using individuals as the unit of analysis, and employing parametric correlation coefficients. Summary feminism scores consisted of the sum of scores on each of the thirty items in the feminism scale, assigned so that high scores correspond to "feminist" answers for each item.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

A test for correlation of individual feminism scale items with composite scores of individual husband's and wife's feminism revealed that only one of the items (no. 6) had a correlation coefficient of less than .30 for both husbands and wives. The range of correlation coefficients for husband's feminism extended from .1290 to .66 and for wife's feminism from .0673 to .7255. The direction of each item's correlation was appropriate for its particular expression of feminist or non-feminist meaning.

A total of four part-whole correlation coefficients were less than .30. Item 6, which correlated very low with both husbands' and wife's summary measures of feminism, reads "Men are much better off than women." The other two low correlation coefficient items may be the result of varied male-female interpretations of what constitutes a feminist type of orientation. The median feminist-scale-total-with-individual-items correlation was .4404 for husbands and .5726 for wives.

The following tables give demographic information and combined couple, as well as individual, scores for the major areas of interest in this study:

TABLE I

SEPARATE HUSBAND-WIFE CHARACTERISTICS

		Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
AGE	Husband	29.887	6.382	35(20-55)
	Wife	28.587	6.521	38(18-56)
EDUCATION	Husband	16.177	2.177	8(12-20)
	Wife	14.700	2.218	9(11-20)
MARITAL CONVENTION- ALIZATION	Husband	4.912	3.879	13(0-13)
	Wife	5.112	4.170	13(0-13)
FEMINISM	Husband	83.300	9.510	50(59-109)
	Wife	88.675	11.236	52(64-116)
YEARS MARRIED		6.063	4.689	21(1-22)
CHILDREN		1.112	1.201	5(0-5)

TABLE II

COMBINED HUSBAND-WIFE CHARACTERISTICS

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Maximum Possible
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	215.487	47.576	232(59-291)	316.0
FEMINISM	171.975	18.756	84(129-213)	240.0
MARITAL CONVENTION- ALIZATION	10.025	7.156	26(0-26)	30.0

As indicated in Table I, the mean age is thirty for husbands and twenty-nine for wives. These figures are higher than the computed mean age of twenty-five for the entire University of Nebraska at Omaha student population. This overall mean age of twenty-five is based on age-group frequency statistics obtained from the University of Nebraska at Omaha Office for Institutional Research. These age frequency counts were taken from total student enrollment figures at the University of Nebraska at Omaha for the 1974-75 academic year. Since there is no evident reason for a major shift from this mean age of twenty-five to have occurred since then, it is safe to assume that the calculated mean husband and wife ages in this study are higher than the mean age of the entire student population for the Spring 1976 semester at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Thus, it appears that married students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha are typically about four to five years older than unmarried students.

Husband respondents had typically completed a four-year college education while their wives typically had completed two years of their college education. Husband and wife conventionalized their marriage to about the same degree as indicated by a correlation coefficient of .5808 between husband and wife marital conventionalization. The individual feminism scores for husband and wife do not exhibit a marked difference: wife's scores are, on the average, only about five points higher than husbands' scores--roughly half of a standard deviation. The mean number of years married was six and

the mean number of children was one.

The measures of central tendency for combined couple scores of marital adjustment, feminism, and marital conventionalization (see Table II) illustrate moderate, middle-of-the-road propensities in all three areas for this particular sample of married college students.

The following figures show proportions of the various religious affiliations as surveyed in this research:

- in 26.2% of the couples, both partners were Catholic.
- in 12.5% of the couples, one partner was Catholic and the other was of a different religious affiliation.
- in 35.0% of the couples, both partners were Protestant.
- in 22.5% of the couples, one partner was Protestant while the other was of a different religious affiliation.
- in 3.8% of the couples, neither partner was of Protestant or Catholic religious affiliation.

The modal income response category was "four," the \$12,001 to \$25,000 income bracket.

The measures of disparity between husbands' and wife's scores of their interpretations of feminism varied in the manner in which discrepancies between husband and wife responses to specific items were weighted:

- a) measurement one is an absolute difference score (ABSDIF) in which each of the responses are assigned number values and then subtracted, disregarding the sign of the differences, to arrive at

an absolute disparity score between husband and wife responses;

b) measurement two is a dichotomized difference score (DICHOT) in which a value of zero is assigned if both husband and wife agreed or disagreed in their response to a particular item. A value of one was assigned to each item that one spouse agreed with and the other disagreed with. These instances of disagreement-of-direction-of-response (as represented by the value of one) were then summed to give one dichotomized difference score for each couple;

c) measurement three is a "compromise" disagreement score (COMPRO) where no disagreement is recorded unless the direction of agreement-disagreement for the item differs (as with measurement two), but weight is given to magnitude of disagreement (as with measurement one) when direction of response for husband and wife do differ;

d) measurement four is an algebraic difference score (FEMDIF) of wife's and husband's summary feminism scores. It is obtained by subtracting a husband's summary feminism score from his wife's summary feminism score. (The rationale for this is that the wife's expected score will usually be higher than her husband's score and that cases where husbands are more feminist than wives may not be equivalent to cases where the wives are more feminist than their husbands for purposes of predicting marital adjustment.)

The assumption that women will probably attain a higher feminism score than men was a realistic expectation since less than one-fourth of the sample (nineteen out of the eighty couples)

recorded instances in which the husband's feminism score was higher than his wife's feminism score. It should be noted that, whenever appropriate, the necessary reversal of certain items' response values was done to remain consistent with the intention to have higher summary scores represent stronger agreement with feminism.

The following table presents the modal disagreements between husband and wife responses to selected feminism scale items: * **

TABLE III

HUSBAND-WIFE DIFFERENCES IN ITEM RESPONSES		
	Husband	Wife
<u>Item</u>	<u>Mode</u>	<u>Mode</u>
11	2	1
15	2	1
17	3	4
20	2	1
25	3	4
29	2	3
30	3	4

* NOTE: These measures of central tendency for the above-listed feminism scale items are based upon response values of (SA)=4, (A)=3, (D)=2, (SD)=1, or the reverse weightings, where appropriate.

** The items referred to can be examined in a sample questionnaire in the Appendix.

Typical male responses were quite similar to typical female responses to items in the feminism scale. The modal male and female responses to all scale items, excepting those listed, were identical. According to the table the only item which more often than not

registered disagreement as such between an "average" husband and an "average" wife was item 29. This item read as follows: "The university should provide free child care for students with children." The fact that more wives than husbands agreed with this statement can be interpreted as additional evidence of women's propensity to agree with feminist propositions--especially as child care is one of the fundamental tenets of feminist ideology and in light of the additional fact that child care is traditionally designated as part and parcel of the wifely role. The overall homogeneity of husband-wife responses to items in the feminism scale are attributable to either a true similarity of views toward feminism between husbands and wives or else the collaboration of husbands and wives in responding to scale items. This researcher tends to give more credence to the latter explanation since responses were obtained in a self-report type of format.

Table IV shows measures of central tendency and dispersion of the four measures of husband-wife disagreement about feminism employed in this research:

TABLE IV

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON DISCREPANCY MEASURES

Discrepancy Measure	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Maximum Possible
ABSDIF	18.200	6.257	29(6-35)	90
COMPRO	9.887	5.514	25(1-26)	90
DICHOT	7.313	3.556	17(1-18)	30
FEMDIF	5.375	9.032	41(-15-26)	90

As shown, the mean of the ABSDIF measure is larger than the mean of the other three measures. This indicates that the ABSDIF measure records the greatest amount of disagreement in husband-wife responses to items in the feminism scale. The disagreement-in-response is based upon the assignment of response values such that SA=4; A=3; D=2; SD=1. Thus, the ABSDIF measure is set up to record the greatest variety of possible disagreements in husband and wife responses to the feminism scale items. However, this measure is "contaminated" by merely "expressive" degrees of agreement or disagreement, such as cases of D versus SD or A versus SA. The DICHOT measure records only instances of agreement-disagreement in husband-wife responses to items of the feminism scale. This is done by assigning a value of zero to occurrences of a husband and wife both either agreeing or disagreeing with an item or a value of one to instances where one spouse agrees with an item and the other spouse disagrees with the same item. The COMPRO measure included and improved upon the recording abilities of the DICHOT. Besides instances of true agreement-disagreement, the COMPRO also takes account of the degree or intensity of agreement-disagreement in husband-wife responses to scale items. Thus, the COMPRO measure may be the most valid of the three absolute-difference measures of husband-wife disagreement. However, the COMPRO is not sensitive to direction-of-response where the FEMDIF measure is sensitive to this property. The FEMDIF measure records algebraically subtracted differences of husband and wife summary feminism item response

scores that are based on the same assignment of numeric values used in the ABSDIF measure. This is the equivalent of subtracting husband responses from wife responses for each individual item, then summarizing. Unlike the other three measures, FEMDIF contrasts cases where husbands are more feminist than wives with cases where wives are more feminist than husbands, rather than disregarding direction of disagreement.

A noteworthy relationship between variables other than marital adjustment and disagreements about feminism was discovered among the matrices of Pearson correlation coefficients. Number of children correlated $-.3077$ with husband's feminism and $-.2233$ with wife's feminism. This negative association can be interpreted to mean that children are massive consumers of parental time and resources. Perhaps a husband and wife look for an efficient division of labor to meet these demands and the traditional marriage lifestyle (or a slight modification of it) may seem to be the most expedient response to childrearing responsibilities. Thus, it seems that feminist attitudes do not coincide with parental responsibilities, especially among fathers.

In looking at the relationship between marital adjustment and discrepant views of feminism (as appraised by four different measures of discrepancy), the following variables were controlled for: husband's age, years married to present spouse, children, income, husband's education, husband's marital conventionalization score, wife's age, wife's education, wife's marital conventionalization

score, combined feminism scores of husband and wife, and Protestant and Catholic religious affiliation. Protestantism and Catholicism were treated as separate "dummy variables" whereby a score of one was recorded if and only if a person designated himself as a member of the religions in question.

The following table lists the zero-order correlations and partial correlations controlling for all the above-mentioned variables in relating marital adjustment to disparate husband-wife perceptions of feminism: * **

TABLE V

COMPARISON OF ZERO-ORDER AND TWELFTH-ORDER ***
PARTIAL CORRELATIONS OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT
WITH DISCREPANCY MEASURES

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>COMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.2100 S=0.031	-.0668 S=0.278	-.1377 S=0.112	-.2690 S=0.008
TWELFTH-ORDER PARTIAL CORRELATIONS ***				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>DOMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.2674 S=0.014	-.1221 S=0.162	-.2381 S=0.026	-.3333 S=0.003

*Marital adjustment (as presented in all tables) for each couple was obtained by adding together the husband-wife pair of scores from their individual tests for marital adjustment.

**Levels of significance for all correlations are recorded immediately under the correlation figures and indicated by S=.

***The variables controlled for in the twelfth-order partial correlations are: husband's age, years married to present spouse, children, income, husband's education, husband's marital conventionalization score, wife's age, wife's education, wife's marital conventionalization score, combined feminism scores for husband and wife, Protestantism, and Catholicism.

The strength of the positive relationship between marital maladjustment and differences in perceptions of feminism is increased to about .30 when extraneous variables are controlled, especially in the case of the COMPRO measure which recorded the highest increase in correlation coefficient value. This can be interpreted as evidence of the construct validity of the COMPRO measure as compared with the other measures of feminism differences.

Closer examination reveals the presence of marital conventionalization as a suppressor variable.¹ The correlation between marital adjustment and marital conventionalization is .7082. The following table presents the correlations of adjustment with disagreement controlling marital conventionalization only:

TABLE VI

CORRELATION OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT WITH DISCREPANCY MEASURES
WHEN MARITAL CONVENTIONALIZATION IS CONTROLLED

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>COMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.2100 S=0.031	-.0668 S=0.278	-.1377 S=0.112	-.2690 S=0.008
PARTIAL CORRELATIONS CONTROLLING FOR MARITAL CONVENTIONALIZATION ONLY				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>COMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.3130 S=0.002	-.2473 S=0.014	-.3333 S=0.001	-.2894 S=0.005

¹For a complete description of suppressor variables see Babbie (1973: 293).

Thus, the marital conventionalization variable concealed the even stronger positive relationship between marital maladjustment and discrepant views of feminism. This positive relationship between marital maladjustment and disparate views of feminism is supplemented by a strong relationship between marital adjustment and a tendency to idealize marriage in the direction of social desirability.

A very weak explanatory relationship² exists between marital adjustment and feminism disparities when husband's education is controlled for. The following table presents zero-order correlations as compared with partial correlations controlling for husband's education:

TABLE VII

CORRELATION OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT WITH DISCREPANCY MEASURES
WHEN HUSBAND'S EDUCATION IS CONTROLLED

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATIONS				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>COMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.2100 S=0.031	-.0668 S=0.278	-.1377 S=0.112	-.2690 S=0.008
PARTIAL CORRELATIONS CONTROLLING FOR HUSBAND'S EDUCATION				
	<u>ABSDIF</u>	<u>DICHOT</u>	<u>DOMPRO</u>	<u>FEMDIF</u>
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT	-.1741 S=0.064	-.0409 S=0.361	-.1049 S=0.180	-.2503 S=0.014

²For a complete discussion of explanatory relationships see Babbie (1973: 288).

Thus, these figures illustrate the very small, but consistent, tendency for husband's education to "explain away" the positive relationship between marital maladjustment and discrepant views of feminism. Since husband's education explains away less than five percent of the observed relationship between adjustment and disagreement, and since the relationships controlling for all variables (as shown in table V) are significant, the explanatory effects of husband's education do not negate the main hypothesis.

No other control variables had noteworthy effects as test variables. The net relationship between marital adjustment and discrepant views of feminism (about .30) is moderate, but noteworthy, because other predictors such as income and sexual satisfaction independently account for some variation in marital adjustment. Due to its limited reliability, marital adjustment, like most social science measure, cannot in any case correlate very highly with any variable.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The most important conclusion to be reached as a result of this research is that, for the population under study and the indicators used, there is a noticeable and consistent positive relationship between disparate husband and wife perceptions of feminism and the degree of marital maladjustment experienced in their marriage. This positive relationship became more apparent when the effect of marital conventionalization was controlled, and was reduced only slightly by controlling for husband's education. Thus, the main hypothesis of this study was confirmed.

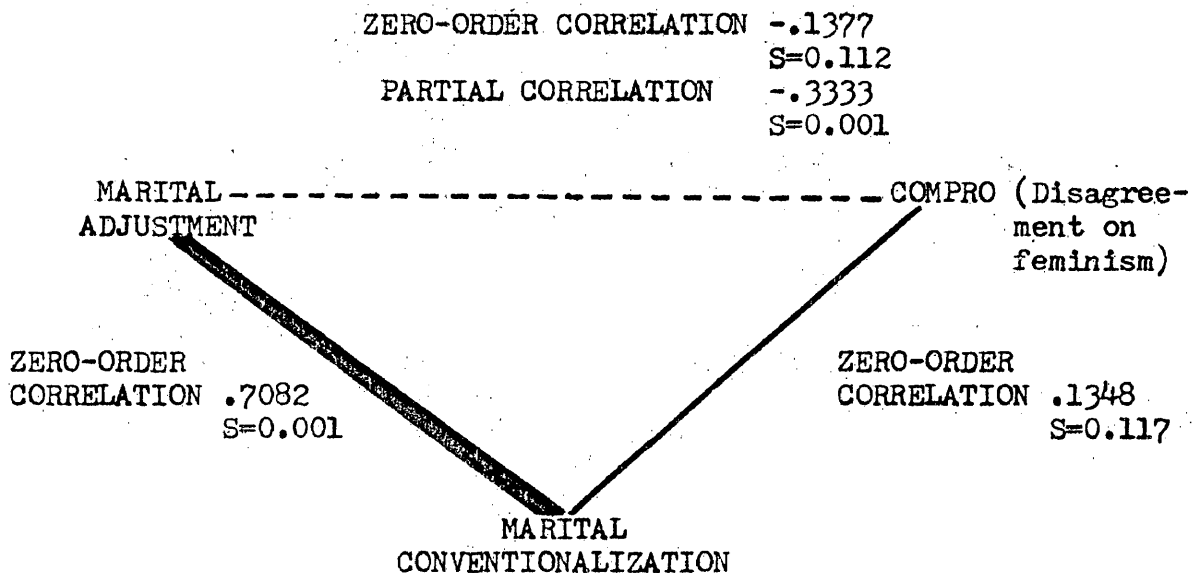
The notably strong positive relationship between marital adjustment and marital conventionalization in conjunction with marital adjustment's negative relationship with differences in perceiving feminism deserves comment. One plausible explanation is that some student married couples both conceive and portray themselves as rather traditional in their marriage lifestyle at the expense of feminist orientations. Those couples that experience a high degree of marital adjustment idealize their marriage toward perceived social desirability and do not consider and/or incorporate feminist principles into their marriage. For them, it appears that whatever discrepancies exist in husband-wife perceptions of feminism which are detected by "paper-and-pencil" measures (such

as the questionnaire used in this study) are differences that do not become very prominent within the marriage relationship itself. Put simply, maybe the more conventional married couples seldom talk about feminist ideas thus lessening the negative impact that disagreement about such ideas would otherwise have on marital adjustment.

The following diagram shows this suppression relationship.*

SUPPRESSION RELATIONSHIP
FOR MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AND HUSBAND-WIFE FEMINISM DIFFERENCES
AS INFLUENCED BY MARITAL CONVENTIONALIZATION

FIGURE 1



* COMPRO refers to the compromised discrepancy measure and was selected for illustrative use because it exhibited the greatest increase in value (of all four discrepancy measures) when marital conventionalization alone was controlled for.

Thus, as presented, there is a marked increase in the positive relationship between marital maladjustment and disparate husband-wife interpretations of feminism when marital conventionalization

alone is controlled for. There is a weak, but important, positive relationship between the COMPRO measure and marital conventionalization. The very strong positive relationship between marital adjustment and marital conventionalization suggests that these two phenomenon overlap in bringing out the positive feelings that marriage partners have for one another and their marriage, thus creating a kind of "positive marital atmosphere" in which potential disruptions that are rooted in feminist types of orientations have no place.

✕ There appear to be two issues, one minor, the other major, that are integrally linked to this research and worthy of comment and discussion. Of minor concern is the degree of correlation between the tests of marital adjustment and marital conventionalization. Of major concern is the face validity of the test for marital adjustment.

That marital adjustment correlates highly with marital conventionalization has been a finding of other researchers. Edmonds (1967: 687) found that marital conventionalization scales correlate about .63 with the Locke-Wallace short scale of marital adjustment. Edmonds, Withers, and Dibatista (1972) discovered that marital adjustment scales, in general, and the Locke-Wallace scale in particular, are heavily contaminated by subjects' tendencies to distort the appraisals of their marriages in the direction of social desirability. However, the fact that the present research results concerning marital adjustment and marital conventionalization

do coincide with these earlier findings is of no consequence for the observed positive relationship between discrepant husband-wife perceptions of feminism and the degree of marital maladjustment experienced in their marriage, since the original hypothesized relationship was found to remain true, and indeed to be strengthened when the "contaminating" effects of marital conventionalization were controlled for. Thus, any corrupting effects which marital conventionalization may have had on the test for marital adjustment have been eliminated from the principal finding of this research.

A concern for face validity in the test for marital adjustment is to be expected in research of this kind. The research of Locke and Wallace (1959: 255), designers of the short-form marital adjustment test used in the present study, concluded that this test "clearly differentiates between persons who are well-adjusted and those who are maladjusted in marriage." However, the labels of "adjusted" and "maladjusted" tend to be of a somewhat arbitrary nature. The point of this writer's concern for what a marital adjustment test measures is the realization that different marriage lifestyles entail different definitions of marital adjustment, especially if one is dealing with the marital adjustment of feminism-oriented marriages in contrast to more traditionally-oriented marriage lifestyles. For example, is the adjustment of a marriage in which both partners pursue their own separate careers comparable to the adjustment of a marriage in which the husband pursues an occupational career and his wife doesn't? What

elements are common and what elements are different in the adjustment which takes place in these two kinds of marriage lifestyle?

The definition of marital adjustment used in this study (as measured in section I of part III in the questionnaire found in the Appendix) is that of "accommodation of a husband and wife to each other at a given time" (Locke, Wallace, 1959: 251). An inspection of this study's test for marital adjustment reveals that what is being assessed is a couple's adaptation to one another in terms of: marital happiness, family finances, leisure and recreation activities, sex relations and affection, conventionality, philosophy of life, dealing with in-laws, conflict resolution, activities engaged in together, regrets over getting married, and confiding in one's mate. An affirmation that all of these areas are relevant characteristics to test for in attempting to assess the presence of marital adjustment is made by Edmonds, Withers, and Dibatista (1972: 98) when they claim that the Locke-Wallace short-form marital adjustment scale "is by far the most carefully validated and most widely used device for measuring marital adjustment." Thus, there is evidence for assuming that the test for marital adjustment in this study did indeed measure the marital adjustment of sample married couples.

But is this same conceptual and methodological framework for measuring marital adjustment validly applicable to either traditional or non-traditional marriage forms? Some feminists suggest that it is not. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild (1972) writes that wives,

in general, report a smaller degree of marital satisfaction than men. This is the result of socializing women to have generalized, broad expectations of fulfillment and self-actualization in marriage and motherhood in contrast to men who have been socialized to expect fulfillment and self-actualization mainly from work and secondarily from marriage and fatherhood (Safilios-Rothschild, 1972: 66-67). Jessie Bernard (1970: 41) claims that early research on marriage revealed women to be making far more of the adjustments than men and instruments for measuring the success of marriage yielded results of women evaluating their marriages lower than men.

Judith Long Laws' previously mentioned review of marital adjustment literature indicts marriage and family research on two pertinent counts: a) an overrepresentation of traditional marriage forms in the marriage and family literature and b) evidence to the effect "that normative definitions of marriage act to suppress female sexuality; that the child-bearing complex acts to reduce the wife's feelings of efficacy and even her relative power within the family, that damaging conflicts and powerful sanctions are set up to divorce the wife from the exercise of her talents and assertion of her personhood in the world outside the family, particularly as this takes the form of paid work" (Laws, 1971: 483). Thus, Laws charges a lack of scholarly attention given to non-traditional marriage forms and that traditional marriage forms are based upon an oppressive role for the woman.

The relationship between these accusations, especially

the latter of the two, and measuring marital adjustment is that a "self-fulfilling prophecy results when the questions researchers ask or fail to ask reflect traditional prejudices" (Eshleman, 1974: 505). Examples are traditional prejudices whereby the wife's role is dictated by her biological capabilities of conception and child-bearing and a sexual division of labor founded upon an obscure belief in the superiority of the male sex. Hence, the crux of Laws' feminist critique of marital adjustment literature hinges upon her evidenced supposition that present research frameworks reflect "traditional stereotypes of women and marriage, and adjustment as being determined by the actualization of these stereotypes" (Eshleman, 1974: 505).

The research and results of this study cannot offer any specific criticisms and/or suggestions pertaining to the presently employed test for marital adjustment. Its guilt or innocence as reflecting "traditional stereotypes of women and marriage, and (marital) adjustment as being determined by the actualization of these stereotypes" in conjunction with its intrinsic ability or inability to measure the concept of marital adjustment as it is experienced in either feminist or non-feminist marriages remains to be ferreted out by additional investigative efforts.

Nonetheless, this researcher believes that general suggestions for future inquiries concerning marital adjustment are in order.

Theoretically, it may well be appropriate to begin applying a more pluralistic perspective to the field of marital adjustment.

Besides the apparent element of husband-wife consensus on specific marital issues, (as measured by the Locke-Wallace short-form marital adjustment test of this study) it may be meaningful to consider numerous facets of social interaction and role theory in exploring for additional aspects of marital adjustment. Disagreement as such (though it makes for lower scores on the Locke-Wallace scale of marital adjustment) is not necessarily a sign of "maladjustment" in all types of relationships, if handled properly.

Sociologist Edwin L. Lively (1969: 112) emphasizes the social interactional aspects of marital adjustment: "The family does not function in a vacuum. The adequacy of internal interaction is influenced by events in the larger social system." One of these events in the larger social system which marriage and family structures must contend with is the contemporary feminist social movement. Married persons, as individuals and as couples, must deal with what feminism is espousing.

A role theory perspective (Dyer, 1962) on marital adjustment delineates the following "points of conflict" in the marriage situation:

1. If the norms and personal preferences of the husband are in conflict with those of the wife.
2. If the role performance of the husband does not agree with the role expectations of the wife.
3. If the role performance of the wife does not agree with the role expectations of the husband (Dyer, 1962: 373).

Role theory "possible methods of adjustment" to these "points of conflict" are the following:

1. In conflict point one, the couple needs to clarify to each other their norms or personal preferences so that each knows exactly the point of view of the other. . . .
2. In conflict situations two and three, the possibility of adjustment are the same:
 - a. The husband (or wife) can change his role performance completely to meet the role expectations of his partner.
 - b. The husband (or wife) can change his role expectations completely to coincide with the role performance of the partner.
 - c. There can be a mutual adjustment, each partner altering some. The husband (or wife) can alter his role to a degree and the partner alters his role expectations to a similar degree so that role performance and role expectations are compatible. . . .
3. . . . In some cases the couple might recognize a disparity between role performance and role expectations or between norms and also acknowledge that change is difficult or impossible and could 'agree to disagree.' In such cases the one partner recognizes and respects the position of the other without accepting or adjusting to it (Dyer, 1962: 373-374).

These role-theory considerations can be a very important aspect to a couple's experience of marital adjustment, qualifying the equation of "disagreement" with maladjustment that is so prominent in the Locke-Wallace scale.

Methodologically, research in marital adjustment should strive to obtain data using methods other than forms of self-report on the part of respondents. Alternatives to self-reported data about attitudes and behaviors may also contribute to the alleviation of social desirability effects, featured as marital conventionalization in the field of marital adjustment. Meanwhile, as long as research approaches focus on verbalization, rather than behavior, it will be necessary to try to control for whatever "halo" effects this might have on the data obtained.

Finally, if feminism, as a social movement, redefines such phenomena as marriage lifestyles, sex roles and identities, and if feminists' childhood socialization practices alter developing children's (be they male or female) definition of these phenomena, the stage is set for the emergence of greatly modified behavior patterns in all these areas. With such changes occurring, there must also come a willingness to re-evaluate present conceptual and research design frameworks so as to insure their suitability for investigating these novel social behavior patterns.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This research has attempted to discover and describe the type and degree of relationship that exists between disparate husband-wife interpretations of feminism and the amount of marital adjustment experienced in a marriage. The population studied was that of University of Nebraska at Omaha married students and their spouses. A systematic random sample of 165 couples was taken from the population and a mailed questionnaire was used to elicit responses from members of the sample. Replies from eighty matched couples of the sample confirmed the hypothesis of the study, namely, that the greater the disparity between husband and wife's interpretation of feminism, the greater the degree of marital maladjustment in their marriage. The positive relationship between discrepant husband-wife views of feminism and the degree of marital maladjustment experienced was strengthened to the .001 level of significance when the effect of marital conventionalization was controlled for. Thus, it is appropriate to conclude from this research that among the observed sample of University of Nebraska at Omaha married students and their spouses the existence of incongruent husband-wife perceptions of feminism contributes to a lack of marital adjustment within the marriage relationship itself.

However, there are weaknesses in this research; it could definitely be improved upon. To begin with, the use of interviews would have ensured a higher response rate than the 48% return rate of this study. More importantly, private interviewing of each husband and wife would probably yield increased validity of responses and eliminate the chance for husband and wife collaboration in responding to survey items.

In terms of specific suggestions for future studies of this nature, there should be (if there presently is not) a perennial concern for conceptual and methodological validity in attempting to measure marital adjustment. This research has implied that there is a growing need to recognize the various kinds of goals for various kinds of marriage lifestyles; e.g., a woman's desire to be a full-time wife and mother in a traditional marriage setting versus a woman's desire to be an active professional in addition to wife and mother in a more feminist-oriented marriage setting. More specifically, there is a need to attempt to acknowledge feminist kinds of orientations in sociological investigations of marital adjustment, since it appears that these feminist kinds of orientations are being transformed into feminist kinds of marriage lifestyles that may well result in feminist kinds of marital adjustment. Sociologists need to at least investigate Judith Long Laws' (1971) "rape of the Locke" and determine if it was justified or not.

The results of this research, in spite of its limitations, will hopefully lend themselves to "lighting the path" toward expanded

endeavors for increased validity of measures of marital adjustment as influenced by emerging trends in marriage lifestyles.

APPENDIX

1.

QUESTIONNAIRE

FEMINISM AND MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is a questionnaire concerning various aspects of feminism and its relation to marital adjustment. Your responses will provide the data for my thesis as a sociology graduate student.

Your answers will be kept in the strictest confidence and your identity will remain absolutely anonymous. Being as honest as possible in your responses will add greatly to the validity of my research.

Directions:

The questionnaire you have received is identical to the one your mate has received. Please do not consult one another or compare your answers in filling out the questionnaire. It is best for you to complete the questionnaire individually and privately and then mail it back to me in the enclosed envelope.

Please circle the category response which most closely represents your own attitude toward the statement. The meaning of the abbreviations used is as follows:

SA means Strongly Agree.

A means Agree.

D means Disagree.

SD means Strongly Disagree.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

Respectfully,

Leonard R. Decker

Please turn the page and begin.

Part I

1. It's about time women did something to protect the injustices they've faced for years.
SA A D SD
2. If women don't speak up for themselves, nothing will be done about their problems.
SA A D SD
3. Women should have an equal chance with men to participate in all levels of political institutions.
SA A D SD
4. Economic independence is crucial to a woman's personal independence.
SA A D SD
5. Personal liberation for a woman isn't possible without organizing with other women.
SA A D SD
6. Men are much better off than women.
SA A D SD
7. U.S. society exploits women as much as it exploits blacks.
SA A D SD
8. Women should be able to obtain an abortion on demand.
SA A D SD
9. The Equal Rights Amendment should be added to the U.S. Constitution.
SA A D SD
10. The behavior of women who picket and participate in protests is unwomanly.
SA A D SD

11. By their very nature, men are better suited than women to assume positions of leadership and authority.

SA A D SD

12. It would be wrong for a woman to work if her husband didn't want her to.

SA A D SD

13. Motherhood and the family provide a woman with all she needs.

SA A D SD

14. For a woman, marriage should be more important than a career.

SA A D SD

15. It is a woman's moral duty to give her husband at least one child.

SA A D SD

16. Women with children should not work outside the home unless it is financially necessary.

SA A D SD

17. There should be equality between men and women in salaries, promotions and hiring.

SA A D SD

18. Husband and wife should share equal responsibility for housekeeping.

SA A D SD

19. The childbearing function of woman gives her a natural role as protector of the child and maintainer of the home.

SA A D SD

20. Even after the children are old enough for school, the wife should not take up a full-time career outside the home.

SA A D SD

21. Children who go to good day care centers develop just as well as children who stay at home with their mothers.
- SA A D SD
22. Children of working mothers tend to be as well adjusted as children of non-working mothers.
- SA A D SD
23. There should be an end to courses for boys only or for girls only in the school system.
- SA A D SD
24. It is important for a mother to prepare her daughter for the duties of being a wife.
- SA A D SD
25. Parents should encourage independence in their daughters just as much as in their sons.
- SA A D SD
26. A girl is entitled to the same freedom from regulation and control that is given to a boy.
- SA A D SD
27. Young girls are entitled to as much independence as young boys.
- SA A D SD
28. There ought to be more day-care institutions for children.
- SA A D SD
29. The university should provide free child care for students with children.
- SA A D SD
30. Girls should learn to do such chores as mowing the lawn, washing a car, and taking out garbage.
- SA A D SD

Check the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please consider each column before answering.

	We Always Agree	We Almost Always Agree	We Occa- sionally Disagree	We Fre- quently Disagree	We Almost Always Disagree	We Always Disagree
38. Handling family finances						
39. Matters of recreation						
40. Demonstra- tions of affection						
41. Sex relations						
42. Friends						
43. Convention- ality (right, good, or proper conduct)						
44. Philosophy of life						
45. Ways of dealing with in-laws						

46. When disagreements arise, they usually result in:
 ___ husband giving in.
 ___ wife giving in.
 ___ agreement by mutual give and take.

47. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?
 all of them.
 some of them.
 very few of them.
 none of them.
48. In leisure time do you generally prefer:
 to be "on the go"?
 to stay home?
 Does your mate generally prefer:
 to be "on the go"?
 to stay home?
49. Do you ever wish you had not married?
 frequently.
 occasionally.
 rarely.
 never.
50. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would:
 marry the same person?
 marry a different person?
 not marry at all?
51. Do you confide in your mate:
 almost never?
 rarely?
 in most things?
 in everything?

Read each statement and decide whether it is true as applied to you. If it is true as applied to you, circle the letter T. If it is false as it applies to you, circle the letter F.

52. T F There are times when my mate does things that make me unhappy.
53. T F My marriage is not a perfect success.
54. T F My mate has all the qualities I've always wanted in a mate.
55. T F If my mate has any faults I am not aware of them.
56. T F My mate and I understand each other completely.
57. T F We are as well adjusted as any two persons in this world can be.

58. T F I have some needs that are not being met by my marriage.
59. T F Every new thing I have learned about my mate has pleased me.
60. T F There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my mate.
61. T F I don't think anyone could possibly be happier than my mate and I when we are with one another.
62. T F My marriage could be happier than it is.
63. T F I don't think any couple could live together with greater harmony than my mate and I.
64. T F My mate completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.
65. T F I have never regretted my marriage, not even for a moment.
66. T F If every person in the world of the opposite sex had been available and willing to marry me I could not have made a better choice.

THANK YOU!

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