

What's Love Got To Do With It? Equality, Equity, Commitment and Women's Marital Quality

W. Bradford Wilcox, *University of Virginia*
Steven L. Nock, *University of Virginia*

Abstract

The companionate theory of marriage suggests that egalitarianism in practice and belief leads to higher marital quality for wives and higher levels of positive emotion work on the part of husbands. Our analysis of women's marital quality and men's marital emotion work provides little evidence in support of this theory. Rather, in examining women's marital quality and men's emotional investments in marriage, we find that dyadic commitment to institutional ideals about marriage and women's contentment with the division of household tasks are more critical. We also show that men's marital emotion work is a very important determinant of women's marital quality. We conclude by noting that "her" marriage is happiest when it combines elements of the new and old: that is, gender equity and normative commitment to the institution of marriage.

The last century has witnessed profound changes in the functions, character and stability of marriage. In particular, the concomitant rise in women's social and economic status, the relative decline in social and economic functions once associated with the family, and the increased cultural power of expressive individualism have all conspired to heighten the importance of the emotional life of marriage. The emotional functions and character of marriage have become particularly crucial for contemporary marital happiness and marital stability as other sources of satisfaction and/or stability – home production, childrearing, the gendered division of labor and religious authority – have migrated to other sectors or weakened (Bumpass 1990; Cherlin 2004). Sentiment is increasingly the tie that binds together contemporary marriages.

The literature on marriage suggests that the emotional character of marriage is an especially salient determinant of women's marital quality (Erickson 1993; Wilkie, Ferree and Ratcliff 1998). Women are particularly vested in the emotional quality of their marriages because they have long borne the primary emotional burdens of family life. Their stake in the emotional character of their marriages is also rooted in gendered patterns of childhood socialization that encourage female proficiency in and sensitivity towards emotional dynamics in relationships (England and Farkas 1986; Maccoby 1998; Thompson and Walker 1989). Furthermore, because other sources of marital satisfaction have declined, women should now place a premium on the emotional quality of their marriages that outweighs other potential sources of marital satisfaction. Indeed, recent evidence indicates that the emotional quality of marriage is a better predictor of divorce for wives than husbands (Nock 2001; Sayer and Bianchi 2000). For all of these reasons, the "emotion work" (Hochschild 1979: 561) that men do in marriage – and the assessments their wives make of this work – is, in all likelihood, a crucial determinant of women's marital quality.

We thank Paula England, Laura Sanchez and anonymous reviewers for Social Forces for their helpful comments. David Franz provided editorial assistance. This research was funded by grants to the first author from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Grant 90XP0048) and the Lilly Endowment (Grant # 2002 2301-000). Direct correspondence to W. Bradford Wilcox, Department of Sociology, University of Virginia, P.O. Box 400766, Charlottesville, VA 22904. E-mail: wbwilcox@virginia.edu.

Accordingly, using data from the second wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH2 [1992-1994]), this paper tests the relative importance of men's emotion work compared to a range of cultural and sociodemographic factors in determining women's marital quality. Drawing on Hochschild's work (1979, 1989), we define husbands' marital emotion work as any effort to express positive emotion to their wives, to be attentive to the dynamics of their relationship and the needs of their wives, or to set aside time for activities focused specifically on their relationship. After demonstrating the crucial import of men's marital emotion work, we then set out to determine the key determinants of men's emotion work in marriage. Specifically, we elaborate four theoretical models, which test the relative contributions that gender egalitarianism, normative commitment to marriage, gender equity and gender traditionalism make to men's marital emotion work (and women's marital quality).

Theoretical Perspectives on Marriage and Men's Emotion Work

A Companionate Model of Marriage

Many contemporary family scholars argue that egalitarian marriages are characterized by the kind of emotion work – affection, empathy, quality time devoted to intimacy – that makes for high-quality, stable marriages (Amato, Johnson, Booth and Rogers 2003; Blumstein and Schwartz 1983; Burgess, Locke, and Thomes 1963; England and Farkas 1986; Goldscheider and Waite 1991). What we call the *companionate* theory of marriage is predicated on three assumptions about the links between egalitarianism and marital emotion work.¹

First, spouses share similar work and family responsibilities. Such role sharing is supposed to increase the quality of emotion work in marriage by providing husbands and wives with common experiences and interests around which they can build conversations, empathetic regard, mutual understanding and the like. The companionate marriage stands in clear contrast to an older model of marriage where women specialize in expressive, private functions and men specialize in instrumental, public functions. The blurring or elimination of such gender roles, advocates of companionate marriage suggest, will result in a richer emotional life where, among other things, men do more marital emotion work.

Second, the elimination of patriarchal authority and power is seen as a key mechanism for promoting marital intimacy. Classical social theory has long noted the tensions between authority or power and intimacy (Weber 1978). The exercise of authority and power is usually associated with social distance, and marital theorists have argued that one of the reasons that men are less expressive in marriage is that they seek to protect their traditional dominance by limiting their expression of affect. Likewise, women's financial dependence on marriage has led them to cater to the emotional needs of their mates and to the emotional dynamics of the marital relationship in an effort to maintain the security of their marriages and to elevate their status within marriage. Women also have been socialized to minimize the expression of their own thoughts, desires and feelings – especially negative ones – for fear of jeopardizing their marriages (Blood and Wolfe 1960; Blumberg and Coleman 1989; Thompson and Walker 1989). By contrast, the companionate theory of marriage predicts that marriages characterized by an ethic of equal regard, as well as equal access to the labor force, will have higher levels of male emotion work and interpersonal honesty (Gottman 1994). In such marriages, women should feel like they have the power to speak their minds and men should feel a greater responsibility to shoulder their share of the emotion work associated with marriage.

Third, egalitarian-minded men are supposed to be more open to a “counter-stereotypical” masculinity conducive to marital emotion work (McQuillan and Ferree 1998). Traditionally, masculinity has been defined in opposition to all things feminine – including the ready and frequent expression of emotion, affection and vulnerability, as well as attentiveness to relationship dynamics (Gilmore 1990). By contrast, men who identify with the ethos of egalitarianism should embrace a counter-stereotypical masculinity, that is, “a style of manliness that is not afraid to accept influence from women, to recognize and express emotion, and to give cognitive room to the marriage relation as such.” (McQuillan and Ferree 1998: 223) For all these reasons, the companionate theory of marriage would predict that egalitarian relationships are characterized by more “interpersonal closeness, trust, communication and mutuality” that generate the kinds of experiences and emotional skills that foster marital emotion work on the part of men (Goldscheider and Waite 1991: 4). Thus, the companionate model of marriage suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Wives in egalitarian marriages will be more satisfied with their marriages.

Hypothesis 1b: Husbands in egalitarian marriages will do more positive marital emotion work.

Given the strong hypothesized link between women’s marital quality and men’s marital emotion work, the companionate theory of marriage would predict – *ceteris paribus* – that more equal marriages are happier. Nonetheless, recent research on the link between marital equality and marital quality is mixed, with a number of studies finding that more traditional women have happier marriages (e.g., Amato and Booth 1995; Gager and Sanchez 1998; Sanchez, Wright, Wilson and Nock 2003; Wilkie et al. 1998; but see Amato et al. 2003). Of course, the lack of a clear connection between marital equality and women’s marital happiness may be because other institutional and cultural factors confound the association between egalitarianism and marital happiness for women.

Specifically, what we call the *institutional* and *equity* models of marriage (see below) may be required to understand the companionate theory properly. These models explore the possibility that conservative women enjoy higher normative and communal support for their marriages or maintain lower expectations of marital equality, both of which may affect the relationship between marital equality and marital quality. Alternatively, the companionate model of marriage may fail to accurately describe the dynamics of contemporary marriages; if this is the case, another perspective (the gender model of marriage described below) may offer a better account of women’s marital quality and men’s emotion work. Thus, we turn to three additional theoretical models in an effort to explain women’s marital happiness, and to explore the emotion work that men devote to marriage.

An Institutional Model of Marriage

One reason that the companionate model may have difficulty predicting women’s marital happiness is that gender egalitarianism tends to be associated with lower levels of normative support for the institution of marriage, as well as lower levels of participation in institutions that provide social support to marriage, such as religious organizations (Chafetz 1995; Wilcox 2004). Traditional women may be happier because they are more likely to endow the institution of marriage with high moral significance and/or be affiliated with religious institutions that provide social support for marriage. Such women may be better able to

negotiate the contemporary challenges of marriage and to retain their happiness because of these social and normative supports.

Specifically, the *institutional* model of marriage predicts that women are happier in their marriages if they are strongly committed to the institution of marriage, if they are involved with institutions that lend social support to marriage, and if they share the normative and social sources of their commitment to marriage with their husbands. First, normative and social support for the institution of marriage may be associated with strong legitimization pressures. Wives who have a strong normative commitment to the institution of marriage may feel greater internal pressure to construct a “family myth” that they are happy (Hochschild 1989: 43). Such a myth would legitimize their investments in their own marriages and their self-imposed dependency upon their husbands. Likewise, women who are actively involved in a religious organization may feel greater social pressure to remain committed to their marriages regardless of the behavior of their husbands. Accordingly, these women may also more be inclined to view their marriage in a positive light to legitimize their investment in married life.

A second, related point is that a high level of normative and social support for the institution of marriage may also promote women’s marital happiness by fostering an altruistic mindset that makes wives less likely to continuously monitor the relationship to see if it is serving their individual interests. Although a growing number of Americans, influenced by the cultural logic of “expressive individualism” (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler and Tipton 1985), act as self-interested agents who bargain over their marital roles and interests in an effort to maximize their personal fulfillment (Bumpass 1990; Cherlin 2000), other Americans conceptualize their marriages along more institutional lines (Wilcox 2004). These Americans see marriage as a sacred institution in the Durkheimian sense that the relationship is accorded extraordinary value. Hence, the marital relationship is supposed to trump the individual interests of partners, calling forth virtues such as fidelity, sacrifice and mutual support (Bahr and Bahr 2001). In this setting, exchanges between marital partners are often conducted according to an “enchanted” cultural logic of gift exchange where spouses give one another gifts that vary in value, may or may not be reciprocated, and often have some kind of symbolic value above and beyond their immediate instrumental value (Bourdieu 1990: 126; Bahr and Bahr 2001; Wilcox 2004). Women who are deeply committed to the institution of marriage, and who identify with this enchanted view of marriage, are probably less likely than more individualistic women to keep an ongoing account of how the relationship is or is not serving their own interests. This willingness to avoid looking at the marriage in a self-interested fashion is probably associated with fewer critical evaluations of the marital relationship. This should lead to higher levels of marital quality for women (Brines and Joyner 1999; Wilcox 2004).

Third, wives who share high levels of normative and social support for the institution of marriage with their husbands should enjoy a higher degree of marital well-being – apart from whether or not this shared commitment actually leads to distinctive marital behavior on the part of their husbands. This shared dyadic commitment appears to engender a sense of marital well-being in wives (and husbands). Specifically, wives who believe that their husbands are committed to the marriage respond with greater personal commitment to their marriage and express greater marital happiness (Nock 1995). This may be, in part, because shared commitment engenders a sense of relational security and a long-term view of the marital relationship, which allows women to face the ordinary stresses, challenges and conflicts associated with married life without worrying that these challenges pose a threat to the survival of their relationship (Brines and Joyner 1999; Nock 2000). In other words, a shared commitment to marriage fosters a spirit of trust that, in turn, makes women happier about the current state of and future prospects for their marriages. In sum, the institutional theory of marriage predicts that women will be happier in their marriages when they have higher levels

of normative and social support for the institution of marriage and when they share their commitment to marriage with their husbands.

For similar reasons, we predict that men who adopt a more institutional approach to marriage will do more positive marital emotion work than those who do not. First, one of the central norms of modern marriage is that married people provide emotional support to one another. Marriage, now more than ever, is about meaningful conversation, empathy, affection and spending leisure time together. Nevertheless, such emotion work is often particularly hard for men, who have been traditionally socialized to be less expressive (Maccoby 1998; Thompson and Walker 1989). However, men who are committed to the institution of marriage should feel a greater moral responsibility than other men to signal their belief in the sanctity of marriage by investing emotionally in their marriages (Wilcox 2004).

Second, men who are strongly committed to marriage are likely to have a third party with a vested interest in the success of their marriage. Scholars have noted that marital commitment is often linked to cultural norms fostered and reinforced through communal ties, religious participation, and extended family networks (Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy and Waite 1995). Specifically, men who are actively involved in religious congregations – which generally offer social support and control on behalf of the institution of marriage – probably face informal and occasionally formal pressure to make greater investments in their marriage.

Finally, men who share a high level of normative and social commitment to the institution of marriage with their wives are likely to enjoy high levels of marital trust, which in turn makes them more likely to devote themselves to their marriage. Men who share a commitment to the institution of marriage with their wives are more likely to trust their spouses and to engender greater trust in them, in large part because of their commitment to the ideals of marital fidelity and permanence. This marital trust, in turn, enables men to make investments in their marriages without worrying about maintaining an ongoing account of goods and services exchanged in the marriage (Amato and Rogers 1999; Blumstein and Schwartz 1983; Brines and Joyner 1999). Thus, they are able to conduct their marriages according to the “enchanted” logic of gift-exchange in which gifts can be given even when there is no immediate expectation of reciprocity and, indeed, where one seeks not to keep an explicit accounting of the marital pattern of exchange for fear of dissipating the spirit of enchantment that permeates the intimate relationship (Bourdieu 1990: 126; Bahr and Bahr 2001; Wilcox 2004). Thus, the institutional theory of marriage would predict the following:

Hypothesis 2a: Wives who possess high levels of social and normative commitment to marriage will be more satisfied with their marriages, especially if they share this commitment with their husbands.

Hypothesis 2b: Husbands are more likely to do positive marital emotion work if they have high levels of social and normative commitment to marriage, especially if they share this commitment with their wives.

An Equity Model of Marriage

With the dramatic changes in women’s labor force participation and cultural norms surrounding gender roles since the 1960s, along with men’s failure to take up an equal share of household labor, it is not surprising that the division of household labor has emerged as a crucial source of conflict for many contemporary marriages (Blair and Johnson 1992; Greenstein 1996; Hochschild 1989). Indeed, women who perceive housework arrangements as unfair are more likely to report lower levels of marital happiness (Blair and Johnson 1992; Greenstein 1996).

But objective inequality in the division of household labor does not always lead to perceptions of inequity, and consequently feelings of marital unhappiness, on the part of women. Here, *equity* theory notes that perceptions of justice in the division of family responsibilities are shaped – among other things – by the ideological commitments of women (DeMaris and Longmore 1996; Sanchez 1994; Sanchez and Kane 1996; Thompson 1991). Traditional women adhere to a gender ideology that suggests that women have a natural or innate orientation towards care giving and domestic labor. Thus, they are more likely to see housework as a feminine task, which makes them less likely to view inequalities in the division of household labor as unfair. This willingness to accept continuing inequalities in the division of household labor makes traditional women less likely to suffer marital conflict and lower levels of marital happiness (Blair and Johnson 1992; Greenstein 1996; Hochschild 1989). For such wives, standards of *equity* are more complex than simple *equality*.

Equity theory may also help us understand men's marital emotion work and women's assessments of that work. Traditional women may encourage higher levels of emotion work from their husbands, albeit indirectly, by making fewer demands upon them precisely because they do not equate equality and equity in a one-to-one fashion (Nock 2000). Chafetz (1995) argues that women committed to a liberal gender role ideology are more likely to be angered by marital inequality and to initiate marital conflict as a consequence. This conflict, in turn, may discourage positive emotion work on the part of men. She also argues that more progressive women have higher expectations of intimacy than their peers. Equity theory would thus predict that gender role traditionalism leads to lower female expectations of men's marital emotion work and to higher levels of such work. Thus, equity theory leads to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3a: Traditional wives have lower expectations of marital equality in the division of household labor and emotional work; consequently, they will be happier with their marriages and the marital emotion work they receive because they do not associate equity with equality.

Hypothesis 3b: Husbands married to traditional wives will do more emotion work because they experience less spousal unhappiness with the division of domestic labor.

The institutional and equity models of marriage may also help us better understand the relationship between egalitarianism and marital happiness. One of the reasons that the companionate model may have difficulty predicting marital happiness is that women who identify with egalitarian ideals of marriage may have higher expectations of equality in the division of household labor and marital emotion work that are not easily met. Another reason that the companionate model may have difficulty predicting marital happiness is that women who identify with egalitarian ideals of marriage may have lower levels of normative and communal support for their marriages. By adding factors associated with the equity and institutional models of marriage, we will see if the companionate theory is vindicated after controlling for other factors that may confound the relationship between companionate factors and marital quality, as well as the relationship between companionate factors and men's emotion work. Specifically, we hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4a: After controlling for factors associated with the institutional and equity models of marriage, indicators of a companionate marriage will be positively related to wives' marital quality.

Hypothesis 4b: After controlling for factors associated with the institutional and equity models of marriage, marital egalitarianism will be positively related to husbands' marital emotion work.

The Gender Model of Marriage

Finally, it is possible that the institutional and equity models of marriage do not account for the association between women's traditionalism and their marital happiness. It may be that the companionate model of marriage fails to take into account the ways in which contemporary women and men remain committed, even if only tacitly, to gendered marriages.

Specifically, the *gender* theory of marriage suggests that men and women are considerably invested in "doing gender" even when they embrace an egalitarian gender role ideology (West and Zimmerman 1987). A range of sociocultural factors account for the plausibility of the gender perspective. Specifically, over the life course, women and men are socialized to embrace gender-typical patterns of behavior (Maccoby 1998; Thompson and Walker 1989). In turn, the dispositions acquired over the life course are reinforced by a range of ongoing cultural and social pressures – e.g., cultural conventions, gendered inequalities in the labor force, etc. (Coltrane 1989; Ferree 1991). For these reasons, women and men face strong internal and external pressures to produce gender in their marriages (Atkinson and Boles 1984; Berk 1985; Greenstein 2000).

Thus, women may be happier in marriages where they are able to successfully produce gender. Likewise, men who are married to more traditional wives may be happier and, accordingly, more likely to give their wives positive emotion work (Amato and Booth 1995; Nock 1998; Wilkie et al. 1998). Contrary to the expectations of the companionate model of marriage, the gender model of marriage would predict that marriages that are strongly gendered make women happier and make men more likely to engage in marital emotion work. If controls for institutional and equity factors do not vindicate the companionate model of marriage, we would have some evidence for the gender theory of marriage. Thus, our hypotheses derived from the gender model run as follows:

Hypothesis 5a: Wives will be happier in marriages characterized by gender-typical practices.

Hypothesis 5b: Husbands will be more inclined to do positive emotion work in marriages characterized by gender-typical practices.

Data and Methods

We analyze data drawn from the second wave of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH2 [1992-1994]), a nationally representative sample of adults age 23 and older. We use data from NSFH2 because the first wave of the survey (NSFH1 [1987-1988]) does not have as many measures of positive marital emotion work. NSFH2 re-interviewed 10,008 of NSFH1's 13,007 original respondents for a response rate of approximately 77 percent. NSFH2 also interviewed current spouses of its original respondents who were married in the second wave. Response rates averaged slightly more than 80 percent for the spouses of married respondents (Bumpass and Sweet 1995; Sweet, Bumpass and Call 1988).² For our analyses, we rely on a subsample of 5,010 couples drawn from NSFH2. The statistics and analyses used for this study are based on weighted data, adjusted for oversamples of African-Americans and Hispanics and for attrition from NSFH1 to NSFH2.

Table 1: Four Theories of Marital Functioning

A Companionate Model	An Equity Model
<p>Egalitarian patterns of work, earning, and housework in marriages foster greater emotional intimacy and more emotion work on the part of husbands. They do so by creating marital role homogeneity, and by eliminating patriarchal patterns of power and authority, thereby allowing husbands to take a progressive approach to their marriage that includes more emotion work on their part.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1a:</i> Wives in egalitarian marriages will be more satisfied with their marriages.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 1b:</i> Husbands in egalitarian marriages will do more positive marital emotion work.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 4a:</i> After controlling for factors associated with the institutional and equity models of marriage, indicators of a companionate marriage will be positively related to wives' marital quality.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 4b:</i> After controlling for factors associated with the institutional and equity models of marriage, marital egalitarianism will be positively related to husbands' marital emotion work.</p>	<p>Wives who perceive housework arrangements as unfair are more likely to report lower levels of marital happiness. But wives who hold traditional gender attitudes expect less equality in the division of housework and less emotion work from their husbands. Consequently, traditional wives are less likely than their more progressive peers to view the division of household labor as unfair, or their husband's emotion work as inadequate.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 3a:</i> Traditional wives have lower expectations of marital equality in the division of household labor and emotional work; consequently, they will be happier with their marriages, and the marital emotion work they receive, because they do not associate equity with equality.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 3b:</i> Husbands married to traditional wives will do more emotion work because they experience less conflict related to spousal unhappiness with the division of domestic labor.</p>
An Institutional Model	A Gender Model
<p>Husbands and wives who are integrated into institutions that endorse marriage (e.g., churches) and who share a high commitment to the institution will construct a "family myth" that they are happy with their marriage. This commitment will also make spouses more likely to trust one another and to adopt a long-term view of their relationship; accordingly, they are more likely to adopt a logic of gift exchange, rather than market exchange, in their marriages and to experience the benefits this logic accords marriage.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2a:</i> Wives who possess high levels of social and normative commitment to marriage will be more satisfied with their marriages, especially if they share this commitment with their husbands.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 2b:</i> Husbands are more likely to do positive marital emotion work if they have high levels of social and normative commitment to marriage, especially if they share this commitment with their wives.</p>	<p>Because wives – even wives with egalitarian attitudes – have been socialized to value gender-typical patterns of behavior, wives will be happier in marriages with gender-typical practices in the division of household labor, work outside the home, and earnings. Because husbands – even husbands with egalitarian attitudes – have been socialized to value gender-typical patterns of behavior, husbands will be happier in marriages that produce gender-typical patterns and will be more inclined to invest themselves emotionally in their marriages than husbands organized along more egalitarian lines.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 5a:</i> Wives will be happier in marriages characterized by gender-typical practices.</p> <p><i>Hypothesis 5b:</i> Husbands will be more inclined to do positive emotion work in marriages characterized by gender-typical practices.</p>

Dependent Variables

We focus on three different dependent variables: women's marital happiness, women's satisfaction with the love/affection and understanding they receive from their husbands, and the quality time men devote to intimate interaction with their wives. To measure marital happiness, the NSFH2 asked married respondents: "Taking things all together, how would you describe your marriage?" Responses ranged from 1 "very unhappy" to 7 "very happy." This serves as our measure of *women's marital happiness*.

We rely on one indirect measure and one direct measure to tap the positive emotion work that men do in their marriages. The first dependent variable that taps men's positive emotion work – *husbands' love/affection and understanding* – is taken from wives' reports of their happiness with such emotion work. Specifically, wives were asked how happy they were with the "love and affection you get from your spouse" and with the "understanding you receive from your spouse." Responses ranged from 1 "unhappy" to 7 "very happy" (we use the average of the two responses, Cronbach's alpha = .898). Here, we rely upon spousal reports because the NSFH2 did not ask respondents directly about the marital emotion work they performed. There are advantages and disadvantages to this empirical strategy. On the one hand, these measures do not suffer from self-report bias since they are derived from the partners of the men under study. On the other hand, wives' happiness with different dimensions of their husbands' emotion work may have more to do with their own standards for spousal emotion work than with the actual amount of marital emotion work that their husbands are doing. This is an especially important limitation in light of equity theory's prediction that ideological commitments may cause wives to lower their emotional standards. Accordingly, the results from these indirect measures of men's marital emotion work must be viewed in a more tentative light than results derived from direct reports of marital emotion work.

The third dependent variable of interest – a measure of the quality time a husband spends with his wife – is provided by husbands who were asked, in the past month, "about how often did you and your wife spend time alone with each other, talking, or sharing an activity." Responses ranged from 1 "never" to 6 "almost every day." This measure taps the extent to which a husband devotes himself to spending time on emotion work associated with the marital relationship. We consider this a measure of *relationship quality time*.

Independent Variables

To test the *companionate model of marriage*, we rely on eight variables that measure marital egalitarianism in belief and practice. First, we constructed a *husbands' gender egalitarianism* scale using four attitudinal measures (Cronbach's alpha = .575). Specifically, respondents were asked if they approved or disapproved of "mothers who work fulltime when their youngest child is under age 5." Respondents were also asked their opinion of the following three items: "Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed;" "It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family;" and, "If a husband and wife both work fulltime, they should share housework tasks equally." Responses to these items were averaged and coded from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating higher levels of gender role liberalism. We also constructed a measure of *wives' gender egalitarianism* using the same measures and techniques (Cronbach's alpha = .600). Third, we created two dummy variables to measure wives' labor force participation. Female respondents working 40 hours a week or more were coded as *wives working fulltime*. Women working 1 to 39 hours a week were coded as *wives working parttime* (women who do not work for pay are the reference category). Fourth, we measured *equality in*

breadwinning by creating two dummy variables. The first is for wives who earn between 33 percent and 65 percent of household income, and the second for wives who earn 66 percent or more of household income (the deleted reference group is wives who produce less than a third of household income). Finally, we measured *equality in the division of household labor* by creating one dummy variable for husbands who do between 33 percent and 65 percent of household labor, and another for husbands who do 66 percent or more of household labor. We also use the measures of gendered marital practice to assess the utility of the gender model of marriage.

To test the component of *the institutional model*, focusing on shared normative commitments to marriage, we created two scales of marital commitment based on the respondent's agreement (from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree") with the following five items, which emphasize that marriage is the ideal site for sexual activity and childrearing, and the importance of marital fidelity: "It is all right for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no interest in marriage;" "It is all right for unmarried 18 year olds to have sexual relations if they have strong affection for each other;" "It is all right for a couple with an unhappy marriage to get a divorce when their youngest child is under age 5;" "When a marriage is troubled and unhappy, it is generally better for the children if the couple stays together;" and, "Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme circumstances." Where necessary, items were reverse coded so that higher scores reflected greater normative commitment to marriage. The five-item scale for men had a Cronbach's alpha of .654 and the five-item scale for women had a Cronbach's alpha of .659.

Respondents who scored in the top quartile of this scale were coded as having a high level of commitment to the institution of marriage. Respondents were then split into four groups: couples who shared a high level of commitment to the institution of marriage, only the husband was highly committed to marriage, only the wife was highly committed to marriage, or neither spouse was highly committed to marriage (the comparison category).

Another dimension of *the institutional model of marriage* is the extent to which individuals are integrated into social institutions that accord marriage normative importance, which we tap through three measures related to church attendance. Respondents were asked how often they attended church, from never to more than once a week (coded 0 to 8). Respondents were split into four groups: couples who attended church weekly together, only the husband attended weekly, only the wife attended weekly, or neither spouse attended weekly (the comparison category).

To test the *equity model of marriage*, we created three dummy variables that measure wives' sense of fairness with the division of household labor. Wives were asked: "How do you feel about the fairness in your relationship in [household chores]?" Responses ranged from 1 "very unfair to me" to 5 "very unfair to him." Women who reported any *unfairness in housework to them* were given a dummy value. Likewise, women who reported any *unfairness in housework to their husbands* were also given a dummy value. We also included a dummy variable for *wives who refused to answer the question*. Though clearly an imperfect measure, this variable is intended to tap the tendency to avoid "keeping the books" on matters of who does how much in the home. The omitted category is wives who reported that housework was "fair to both."

We also controlled for a number of different variables that might otherwise confound the relationship between our independent variables of interest and women's marital quality as well as men's emotion work. Specifically, we control for the following variables that are known to influence marital quality and dyadic relations: *age* of respondent and his wife, *length of respondent's marriage* (in years), the *number of preschool and school-age children* in the home, the *employment status of the respondent*, whether the husband or his wife have *ever been divorced*, the *couple's income* (\$10,000s, logged), the *education* of wife and husband

(from high school dropout to graduate school, coded from 1 to 6), *race/ethnicity* of the respondent (separate dummy variables for black and Hispanic with White/Anglo/Other the reference category), and the *region* of the couple (separate dummy variables for South, Northeast and North Central with West the reference category).³

For our statistical techniques, we rely upon a series of ordinary least square (OLS) regression models. The first model we test in each set of regressions incorporates measures designed to test the validity of the companionate model of marriage. The second model in our regressions adds measures designed to test the validity of the institutional model of marriage. The third model incorporates variables that assess the utility of the equity model of marriage. The third model also allows us to test the gender model of marriage by seeing if gender-typical patterns of marital practice predict higher levels of women's marital quality and men's emotion work even after controlling for institutional and equity factors. Table 3 incorporates a fourth model that includes measures of men's emotion work, which is designed to test the relative predictive power of men's marital emotion work, and women's assessments of that work, compared to other sociocultural factors. All equations were estimated with robust (Huber/White sandwich) standard errors that relax the formal assumption of independence of observations. Standard errors calculated in OLS will otherwise tend to be underestimated. Robust standard errors are suitable for the NSFH given that it relied on a cluster sampling and requires weighting.

Results

Table 2 reports means and standard deviations for women's marital quality, men's marital emotion work, and a range of independent variables. The data are weighted after applying sampling weights supplied by NSFH. These weights were normalized (making them sum to the original sample).

To test the five hypotheses regarding women's marital quality, we ran four regression models for the subset of married couples in NSFH2. Table 3, which focuses on wives' marital happiness, provides support for Hypotheses 2a, 3a and 5a, but no support for 1a or 4a. Model 1 indicates that wives who hold egalitarian gender attitudes, who work parttime, and who take a larger share of the family breadwinning responsibilities are less happy. Thus, none of the effects in Model 1 are in keeping with the companionate model's expectation that egalitarianism in practice and belief is associated with higher levels of women's marital quality.

Model 2, which adds measures of cultural and social support for the institution of marriage, reveals evidence in favor of the institutional model of marriage. Women who share high levels of church attendance and normative commitment with their husbands are happier than their peers. Wives' greater happiness when their husbands share their own commitment to marriage may indicate that shared commitment promotes trust and a sense of relational security.

Model 3 provides support for the equity model of marriage insofar as women who report that the division of household labor is unfair are significantly less happy in their marriages than women who report that the division of household labor is fair. Moreover, Model 3 further reduces the effect of gender role ideology; it also reduces the effect of part-time work to insignificance. However, it increases the negative effect of male household labor. This suggests that women who are not concerned about the fairness of household labor are less happy when their husbands do more housework.

Taken together, Models 2 and 3 provide some support for the notion that one reason that the companionate model has not gathered much empirical support is that marital egalitarianism is also associated with lower levels of institutional commitment to marriage and with higher standards of equality, both of which seem to diminish women's chances of

marital happiness. Nevertheless, even after controlling for institutional and equity factors, we still find no positive evidence for the companionate theory of marriage.

Indeed, Models 3 and 4 provide some support for the gender model of marriage insofar as women who earn a greater-than-average percentage of couple income – (potentially a marker of a husband's lack of success as a breadwinner) – and whose husbands take up a greater share of household labor report greater unhappiness. In other words, consistent with Hypothesis 5a, women who live in marriages characterized by less gendered patterns of earning and housework are less happy in their marriages.

Model 4 indicates that men's positive marital emotion work, and women's satisfaction with that work, are significant predictors of women's marital quality. In fact, model fit increases notably with the addition of the two measures of emotion work, from an adjusted R-squared of .078 in Model 3 to an adjusted R-squared of .533 in Model 4. Wives' marital happiness and their happiness with the affection and understanding they receive from their husbands are very strongly related, with one sharing half the variance of the other: $r = .731$. The correlation between wives' marital happiness and men's quality time is weaker: $r = .212$. This means that women's assessments of men's love, affection and understanding (and to a lesser degree, men's quality time) is by far the most powerful predictor of women's marital quality in our models, which include a range of potential factors that might influence women's marital quality.⁴ The emotion work of husbands outweighs any effect of gender traditionalism, household labor and commitment to marriage. Note also that this emotion work appears to mediate the effects of many of the variables associated with the gender, institutional, and equity models of marriage.

The finding that men's marital emotion work (and/or wives' perceptions of it) plays a crucial role in influencing women's marital quality, and may mediate some of the effects associated with the gender, institutional and equity variables, motivates our interest in two measures of men's positive emotion work in marriage: wives' happiness with the love, affection and understanding they receive from their husbands, and the one-on-one quality time that men devote to their wives.

Table 4, which explores women's happiness with the love, affection and understanding they receive from their husbands, provides strong support for Hypotheses 2b and 3b, mixed support for Hypotheses 1b and 5b, but no support for Hypothesis 4b. Contrary to the expectations of the companionate theory, Model 1 of Table 4 indicates that women's gender role liberalism and women's labor force participation are associated with lower levels of women's happiness with the affection and understanding they receive from their husbands. Only husbands' contributions to household labor are positively associated with wife's happiness in this marital domain.

Here again, however, we are interested in testing how the *institutional* and *equity* models of marriage may account for the surprising failure of factors associated with the companionate marriage to predict higher wife reports of men's marital emotion work. Models 2 and 3 in Table 4 are consistent with the *institutional* model, suggesting that wives who share church attendance with their husbands and a personal commitment to the institution of marriage are more likely to report greater happiness with their husband's affection and understanding. The institutional effects reduce the effect of wives' gender egalitarianism to non-significance. This means that one of the reasons that traditional women are happier with their husbands' emotion work is that they tend to share with them higher levels of commitment to the institution of marriage. Moreover, the positive effect of men's household labor is reduced to insignificance; suggesting that some wives report greater happiness with their husbands' affection and understanding when their husbands do more household labor because this may signal some degree of commitment to marriage.

Model 3, which adds measures of wife reports of the fairness of the division of household labor, indicates that perceptions of fairness in the division of household labor also play a key role in influencing wives' reports of happiness with their husband's affection and

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Married Men (1992-1994)

	Mean	S.D.
Sociodemographic Factors		
Wife's age	46.08	14.39
Husband's age	49.04	15.07
Length of marriage	23.54	15.29
Preschool children	.23	.55
School-age children	.73	1.06
Husband works full-time	.67	.47
Husband works part-time	.06	.24
Husb. ever divorced	.17	.38
Wife ever divorced	.16	.36
Couple income (LN)	10.48	1.51
Wife's education	2.61	2.76
Husband's education	2.74	3.29
Black	.07	.26
Hispanic	.07	.25
South	.35	.48
Northeast	.20	.40
North-central	.24	.43
West	.21	.41
Companionate/Gender Factors		
Husband's gender role egalitarianism	1.90	.70
Wife's gender role egalitarianism	2.10	.74
Wife works full-time	.32	.47
Wife works part-time	.21	.41
Wife earns 33-65% of couple income	.36	.48
Wife earns 66%+ of couple income	.08	.27
Husband does 33-65% of housework	.44	.50
Husband does 66%+ of housework	.10	.31
Institutional Factors		
Spouses share weekly attendance	.26	.44
Only husband attends weekly	.06	.24
Only wife attends weekly	.11	.32
Spouses share normative commitment to marriage	.15	.35
Only husband has high commitment to marriage	.12	.33
Only wife has high commitment to marriage	.11	.31
Equity Factors		
Wife doesn't report hhl fairness	.03	.16
Wife considers hhl unfair to her	.30	.46
Wife considers hhl unfair to husband	.05	.22
Dependent Variables		
Wives' marital happiness	5.97	1.33
Wives' happiness w/ affection & understanding	5.55	1.52
Husbands' quality Time	4.78	1.38
N (Minimum, Maximum Unweighted N)	4603	5010

Table 3: OLS Coefficients for Regression of Wives' Marital Happiness (1992-1994)

	1	2	3	4
Sociodemographic Factors				
Wife's age	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Husband's age	.01	.01	.01	.00
Length of marriage	-.01	-.01	-.01	.00
Preschool children	-.08	-.09	-.07	.00
School-age children	-.10	-.11	-.10	-.02
Husband works fulltime	-.06	-.07	-.06	-.01
Husband works parttime	-.05	-.05	-.06	-.07
Husband ever divorced	-.22	-.21	-.19	-.05
Wife ever divorced	.02	.04	.04	.02
Couple income (LN)	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.02
Wife's education	.00	.00	.00	-.01
Husband's education	.00	-.01	.00	-.03
Black	-.33	.33	-.32	-.14
Hispanic	-.18	.16	-.19	-.15
South	-.03	-.04	.00	.07
Northeast	-.09	-.07	-.03	.03
North-central	-.01	.00	.04	.09
Companionate/Gender Factors				
Husband's gender role egalitarianism	.00	-.04	-.02	.01
Wife's gender role egalitarianism	-.10	-.07	-.04	.00
Wife works fulltime	-.08	-.09	-.06	.05
Wife works parttime	-.15	-.16	-.09	.03
Wife earns 33-65% of couple income	-.18	-.18	-.14	-.15
Wife earns 66%+ of couple income	-.26	-.27	-.24	-.17
Husband does 33-65% of housework	-.04	-.05	-.12	-.06
Husband does 66%+ of housework	.10	.09	-.07	-.08

Institutional Factors					
Spouses share weekly attendance	.12	*	.11	.03	
Only husband attends weekly	-.08		-.09	.00	
Only wife attends weekly	.01		.03	.02	
Spouses share normative commitment to marriage	.24	**	.19	.06	
Only husband has high commitment to marriage	.02		.04	-.01	
Only wife has high commitment to marriage	.02		.04	.02	
Equity Factors					
Wife doesn't report hhl fairness			-.24	-.03	
Wife considers hhl unfair to her			-.62	-.08	***
Wife considers hhl unfair to husband			-.03	.09	
Emotion Work					
Wives' happiness w/ affection and understanding				.64	***
Husband's quality time				.04	***
(Constant)	6.80		6.97	2.69	
Adjusted R ²	.03		.08	.53	
N (unweighted)	4603				

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Note: Models estimated with robust standard errors.

Table 4: OLS Coefficients for Regression of Wives' Happiness with Husbands' Affection & Understanding (1992-1994)

	1	2	3
Sociodemographic Factors			
Wife's age	.00	-.01	.00
Husband's age	.01	.01	.01
Length of marriage	-.01 **	-.01 *	-.01 **
Preschool children	-.10 *	-.12 *	-.09 *
School-age children	-.13 ***	-.14 ***	-.12 ***
Husband works fulltime	.03	-.05	.00
Husband works parttime	.08	.07	.11
Husband ever divorced	-.24 ***	-.22 ***	-.23 ***
Wife ever divorced	.01	.03	.00
Couple income (LN)	-.01	-.01	-.02
Wife's education	.02	.01	.01
Husband's education	.06 **	.05 *	.06 **
Black	-.33 ***	-.33 ***	-.26 ***
Hispanic	-.19	-.16	-.13
South	-.13	-.15 *	-.10
Northeast	-.21 **	-.18 *	-.08
North-central	-.11	-.11	-.06
Companionate/Gender Factors			
Husband's gender role egalitarianism	.00	-.05	-.03
Wife's gender role egalitarianism	-.10 **	-.06	-.04
Wife works fulltime	-.21 ***	-.22 **	-.16 *
Wife works parttime	-.26 ***	-.27 ***	-.19 **
Wife earns 33-65% of couple income	-.02	-.03	.05
Wife earns 66%+ of couple income	-.11	-.11	-.11
Husband does 33-65% of housework	.05	.03	-.08
Husband does 66%+ of housework	.20 *	.19	.03
Institutional Factors			
Spouses share weekly attendance		.14 *	.12 *
Only husband attends weekly		-.12	-.11
Only wife attends weekly		-.01	.02
Spouses share normative commitment to marriage		.36 ***	.23 **
Only husband has high commitment to marriage		.10	.07
Only wife has high commitment to marriage		.08	.05
Equity Factors			
Wife doesn't report household labor fairness			-2.36 ***
Wife considers household labor unfair to her			-.83 ***
Wife considers household labor unfair to husband			-.22 *
(Constant)	5.71	6.05	6.33
Adjusted R ²	.03	.04	.15
N (unweighted)	5010	5010	5010

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

understanding. Women who report any unfairness, or especially who fail to respond to the question regarding housework fairness, are significantly more likely to be unhappy with the emotion work they receive from their husbands. Model 3 also shows that wives' labor force participation continues to predict lower levels of happiness in this domain, even after controlling for a range of sociocultural factors. This provides evidence for the gender perspective insofar as it shows that increasing commitments to paid labor (for wives) are likely to result in more critical assessments of husband's emotion work. In sum, Model 3 shows that variables associated with the institutional, equity, and gender models have a robust effect on women's happiness with the love, affection and understanding they receive from their husbands. But we find little evidence in support of the companionate theory of marriage.

These findings documented in Table 3 could mean one of two things. Women's happiness in this domain may represent actual behavior on the part of men. In this case, that would mean that men who share their wives' commitment to the institution of marriage, whose wives perceive the division of household labor as fair, and whose wives do not work are more likely to be affectionate and empathetic towards their wives. But women's happiness with this type of positive marital emotion work may also be an artifact of lower expectations of such emotion work. In that case, women who share a high level of normative commitment to the institution of marriage with their husbands, who are more likely to see the division of household labor as fair, and who do not work outside the home have lower standards of emotional intimacy, which makes them happier with the love and affection they receive from their husbands even if their husbands do not do more of this emotion work than other men.

Table 5, which focuses on men's reports of sharing quality time with their wives, provides support for Hypotheses 3b and 5b, and no support for Hypotheses 1b, 2b, and 4b. Though we find no support for the companionate model, Models 1 through 3 provide evidence for the gender theory of marriage. Men who are married to more traditional-minded women and to homemakers (the reference group) are more likely to devote themselves to spending quality time with their wives (the coefficient for full-time work is negative, but significant at only .10).

Model 2 provides no support for the institutional model of marriage insofar as it relates to religious expression. Men who are not weekly attenders, but whose wives are, do less of this type of marital emotion work. Nor is there evidence that normative commitment to the institution of marriage is important. This suggests that Model 2 is tapping an absence of an important type of marital homogamy, which is known to be associated with higher levels of intimacy, more than it is tapping marital commitment.

But the most striking finding in this table is found in Model 3, where women's perceptions of equity in the division of household labor are strongly related to men's reports of quality time. This finding is striking because we would expect to find that the equity model helps to account for women's assessments of men's emotion work, as it does in Table 3, but not the actual emotion work that men do. Specifically, men who are married to women who report unfairness in the division of household labor spend less quality time with their wives than men whose wives report that the housework is "fair to both" husband and wife. This finding suggests one of two conclusions: first, women who are not happy with the division of household labor – and probably the level of equality in their marriages more generally – may enter into conflict with their husbands or disengage emotionally from their marriages in ways that suppress their husbands' emotion work; alternatively, women who are not happy with the division of household labor may have higher expectations of marital equality *and* male emotion work that lead them to enter into conflict with their husbands or to disengage emotionally from their marriages in ways that cause husbands to decrease the time they spend with their wives. In any case, the consistent predictive power of equity across both measures of men's marital emotion work strongly suggests that perceptions of housework fairness, and marital equality in general, are intimately bound up with the health of "her" marriage.

Table 5: OLS Coefficients for Regression of Husbands' Quality Time (1992-1994)

	1	2	3
Sociodemographic Factors			
Wife's age	.00	.01	.01
Husband's age	.01 **	.01 **	.01 **
Length of marriage	-.01 ***	-.01 ***	-.01 ***
Preschool children	-.34 ***	-.33 ***	-.33 ***
School-age children	-.26 ***	-.25 ***	-.25 ***
Husband works fulltime	-.21 **	-.21 **	-.20 **
Husband works parttime	.06	.06	.07
Husb. ever divorced	-.17 **	-.17 **	-.16 *
Wife ever divorced	.08	.09	.09
Couple income (LN)	-.03	-.03	-.03
Wife's education	.01	.01	.02
Husband's education	.09 ***	.09 ***	.09 ***
Black	-.35 ***	-.34 ***	-.33 ***
Hispanic	.29 **	.29 **	.29 **
South	-.08	-.09	-.07
Northeast	-.15 *	-.15 *	-.13
North-central	-.01	-.01	.01
Companionate/Gender Factors			
Husband's gender role egalitarianism	.00	-.01	-.01
Wife's gender role egalitarianism	-.07 *	-.08 *	-.07 *
Wife works full-time	-.10	-.10	-.09
Wife works part-time	-.13 *	-.13 *	-.11
Wife earns 33-65% of couple income	.03	.04	.05
Wife earns 66%+ of couple income	-.03	-.02	-.01
Husband does 33-65% of housework	.04	.04	.01
Husband does 66%+ of housework	.01	.01	-.02
Institutional Factors			
Spouses share weekly attendance		.01	.00
Only husband attends weekly		-.08	-.08
Only wife attends weekly		-.16 *	-.16 *
Spouses share normative commitment to marriage		-.01	-.03
Only husband has high commitment to marriage		.11	.12
Only wife has high commitment to marriage		.08	.08
Equity Factors			
Wife doesn't report household labor fairness			-.19
Wife considers household labor unfair to her			-.24 ***
Wife considers household labor unfair to husband			-.22 *
(Constant)	4.48	4.48	4.48
Adjusted R ²	.15	.15	.16
N (unweighted)	5010	5010	5010

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Note: Models estimated with robust standard errors.

Table 5 is also significant because it provides additional evidence for the gender model of marriage and against the companionate model of marriage. Models 1 through 3 indicate that no measure of egalitarianism in practice or belief is associated with higher levels of men spending quality time with their wives. Indeed, in keeping with the gender model of marriage, wives' gender egalitarianism and work outside of the home leads to less positive emotion work on the part of husbands.

Overall, then, Tables 4 and 5 indicate that companionate marriages are not characterized by higher levels of men's positive emotion work nor by higher levels of women's happiness with the affection and understanding they receive from their husbands. Even though the institutional and equity models do reduce the negative associations between companionate factors and husbands' emotion work, they do not entirely eliminate these associations. Thus, consistent with the gender model of marriage, it would appear that women who are in marriages that are characterized by more traditional gender beliefs and practices are happier with the emotion work they receive *and* do receive more such emotion work from their husbands. Table 3 also indicates that women who share a high commitment to marriage with their partners are more inclined to view their husbands' emotion work through a rose-colored lens. Finally, consistent with the equity model of marriage, Tables 4 and 5 suggest that women who are not concerned with the equality of the division of tasks or who think they are fair are happier with the positive emotion work they receive and get more of that emotion work from their husbands.

Discussion and Conclusion

Recent work indicates that marital quality declined over much of the past four decades, although the rate of decline seems to have leveled off in the 1990s (Glenn 1991; Rogers and Amato 1997; Popenoe and Whitehead 2004). The research to date suggests that this development may be, in part, a product of the fact that women with increasingly egalitarian gender role attitudes are married to men who have not adopted a sufficiently egalitarian approach to marriage (Amato and Booth 1995; Chafetz 1995). Insofar as we find strong support for the *equity* model, this study suggests that part of the decline in marital quality is indeed related to the continuing mismatch between women's attitudes and marital equality. Moreover, we saw evidence that women who are more egalitarian-minded and more upset with the division of household labor receive lower levels of positive emotion work from their husbands, perhaps because they are more likely to initiate conflict with their husbands. Thus, rising expectations among women for marital equality may also have the unintended effect of lowering investments in marital emotion work on the part of men; this, in turn, may be associated with declines in marital quality for American women.

But the findings in this study also lend support to *institutional* and *gender* accounts of this decline in marital quality. From an *institutional* perspective, we find that shared church attendance and normative support for the institution of marriage are associated with higher levels of women's marital happiness. Thus, declines in religious attendance over the past four decades (Steensland, Park, Regnerus, Robinson, Wilcox and Woodberry 2000), along with the liberalization of attitudes to divorce and extramarital sex (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001), may also account for recent shifts in marital quality insofar as they reduce the social and normative supports that foster higher investments in marriage. From a *gender* perspective, our findings suggest that increased departures from a male-breadwinning/female-homemaking model may also account for declines in marital quality, insofar as men and women continue to tacitly value gendered patterns of behavior in marriage. Specifically, we find that the gendered character of marriage seems to remain sufficiently powerful as a tacit ideal among

women to impact women's marital quality even apart from the effects of the continuing mismatch between female gender role attitudes and male practices. Of course, this is also indicative of the fact that we find virtually no evidence for the *companionate* model, since women are not happier in marriages marked by egalitarian practices and beliefs. (For a summary of our findings, see Table 6.)

Our findings also speak to the role of emotion work in women's global marital quality. First, it is important to highlight our finding, judging by the dramatic increase in model fit, that men's emotion work (and women's assessments of that work) is the most *crucial* determinant of women's marital quality. It is more important than patterns of household labor, perceptions of housework equity, female labor force participation, childbearing, education and a host of other traditional predictors of global marital quality. This finding suggests that the functions, character, and stability of contemporary marriages are intimately tied to their emotional well-being.

We find little evidence in support of the *companionate* model of marriage when it comes to men's emotion work. For the most part, marriages that are more egalitarian in belief and practice are not marked by higher levels of men's positive emotion work or by women's happiness with such emotion work. Instead, we find modest evidence that wives' gender traditionalism is independently related to higher levels of men's positive emotion work in marriage. We also find evidence that homemaking wives report greater happiness with their husband's emotion work, and may be more likely to receive such work from their husbands. In other words, adherence to traditional beliefs and practices regarding gender seems to be tied not only to global marital happiness but also – surprisingly enough – to expressive patterns of marriage.

We also find evidence for the institutional model of marriage, which stresses the importance of social and normative support for marriage. Wives who share high levels of church attendance are more likely to report happiness with their husband's emotion work in marriage. Moreover, wives who share a normative commitment to marriage with their husbands are more likely to report happiness with the emotion work done by their husbands, probably because they seek to legitimate their own investment in married life. Thus, socially-conservative practices and (possibly) beliefs appear to be linked to lower expectations of marital emotion work on the part of women. But it is also possible that they are associated with more expressive marriages. In any case, women who share a commitment to the institution of marriage with their husbands express greater happiness with the expressive state of their relationship.

This study also demonstrates that women who are not happy with the fairness of the division of household labor are less satisfied with their husband's positive emotion work and less likely to receive such emotion work. We suspect that higher expectations of intimacy and equality among women, especially more egalitarian-minded women, have led them to view their husbands' emotion work more critically; we also suspect that these expectations have increased marital conflict and – in turn – dampened men's marital emotion work (Chafetz 1995; Hochschild 1989). To repeat Chafetz (1995: 78): "The typical marriage has been increasingly reconceptualized by many women as short on intimacy and equality and therefore unacceptable." Thus, the irony here is that – at least over the short term – the increased popularity of companionate ideals of marriage seems to have contributed to a decrease in the prevalence of the companionate marriage in practice.

Future research should seek to reconcile our findings regarding the association between gender egalitarianism and women's marital quality with other research that comes to different conclusions about the nature of that association (Amato et al. 2003). New research should also explore whether women's expectations about marital equality are indeed linked to marital conflict and, in turn, lower levels of men's emotion work. Future research should also do more to distinguish different types of married women, insofar as women with distinct orientations

Table 6: Summary of Significant Associations Between Independent Variables and Wives' Marital Quality (1992-1994)

	Associations		
	Marital Happiness	Affection/ Understanding	Quality Time
Companionate/Gender Factors			
Husband's gender role egalitarianism	ns	ns	ns
Wife's gender role egalitarianism	-	-	-
Wife works full-time	ns	-	ns
Wife works part-time	-	-	-
Wife earns 33-65% of couple income	-	ns	ns
Wife earns 66%+ of couple income	-	ns	ns
Husband does 33-65% of housework	ns	ns	ns
Husband does 66%+ of housework	ns	+	ns
Institutional Factors			
Spouses share weekly attendance	+	+	ns
Only husband attends weekly	ns	ns	ns
Only wife attends weekly	ns	ns	-
Spouses share normative commitment to marriage	+	+	ns
Only husband has high commitment to marriage	ns	ns	ns
Only wife has high commitment to marriage	ns	ns	ns
Equity Factors			
Wife doesn't report household labor fairness	ns	-	ns
Wife considers household labor unfair to her	-	-	-
Wife considers household labor unfair to husband	ns	-	-
Emotion Work			
Wives' happiness w/ affection and understanding	+		
Husband's quality time	+		

to the worlds of work and family may be influenced differently by the factors associated with the companionate, institutional, equity, and gender models (Hakim 2001). Finally, future research should focus explicitly on the direction of causality. Some of the association between women's marital quality and shared religious attendance we found might reflect the fact that happily married women are more likely to attend church (Booth, Johnson, Branaman and Sica 1995). Longitudinal data should seek to determine how much of the association between women's marital quality and our institutional, equity and gender factors is attributable to these factors and how much of it is attributable to the effect that high-quality marriages have on women's religious attendance, normative commitment to marriage, sense of fairness and willingness to engage in traditional gender practices.

In conclusion, our results suggest that the road to successful "new families" (Goldscheider and Waite 1991) is more circuitous and difficult than originally thought. While it is true that changes in men's behavior are required for this transformation (Goldscheider and Waite 1991), it also appears that contemporary couples could benefit from a heightened

appreciation of the role that shared religious practice and normative commitments to marriage play in supporting women's marital quality *and* the expressive dimension of marital life. Our results also suggest that more traditional beliefs and practices regarding gender play a positive role in the quality and expressive character of many women's marriages, even apart from the dramatic shifts in gender role ideology in the last few decades. At least for many American women, this study indicates that "her" marriage is most happy when it combines elements of the new and old.

Notes

1. Our use of the term companionate is to be distinguished from Burgess' use of the concept in that we link a contemporary companionate theory of marriage to gender role egalitarianism (Burgess, Locke and Thomes 1963).
2. The primary concern with using NSFH2 is that some of the couples that were married in NSFH1 are divorced at NSFH2. Since divorce is, in all likelihood, negatively related to women's marital happiness and men's marital emotion work, we suspect that our sample under-represents couples that had lower levels of marital quality and male marital emotion work at NSFH1. Accordingly, we may have fewer observations of our dependent variables at lower values than we would otherwise observe, and reduced variance. This suggests that the size of any sociocultural effects in NSFH2 may be smaller than they would have been at NSFH1. Such bias, even with adequate power, would tend to work against discovering statistically significant relationships. Following standard practice, we do not interpret a lack of statistical significance to imply an absence of an effect.
3. We include region as a control variable because religious attendance and gender egalitarianism are both strongly associated with region.
4. We also analyzed the same set of factors for men's marital happiness (tables available upon request). We found that a model that includes all these factors, including women's emotion work, has an R-squared of .441. This suggests that wives' emotion work, and husbands' happiness with it, is about 20 percent less important for men's global marital happiness than it is for women's global marital happiness.

References

- Amato, Paul R., and Alan Booth. 1995. "Changes in Gender Role Attitudes and Perceived Marital Quality." *American Sociological Review*. 60: 58-66.
- Amato, Paul R., and Stacy J. Rogers. 1999. "Do Attitudes Toward Divorce Affect Marital Quality?" *Journal of Family Issues* 20: 69-86.
- Amato, Paul R., David R. Johnson, Alan Booth and Stacy J. Rogers. 2003. "Continuity and Change in Marital Quality Between 1980 and 2000." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65: 1-22.
- Atkinson, Maxine P., and Jacqueline Boles. 1984. "WASP (Wives as Senior Partners)." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 46:861-870.
- Bahr, Howard M., and Kathleen S. Bahr. 2001. "Families and Self-Sacrifice: Alternative Models and Meanings for Family Theory." *Social Forces* 79: 1231-1258.

- Bellah, Robert, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. Harper.
- Berk, Sarah Fenstermaker. 1985. *The Gender Factory*. Plenum Press.
- Blair, Sampson Lee, and Michael P. Johnson. 1992. "Wives' Perceptions of the Fairness of the Division of Household Labor: The Intersection of Housework and Ideology." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 54: 570-581.
- Blood, Robert O., and Donald M. Wolfe. 1962. *Husbands and Wives*. Free Press.
- Blumberg, Rae L., and Marion Tolbert Coleman. 1989. "A Theoretical Look at the Gender Balance of Power in the American Couple." *Journal of Family Issues* 10: 225-250.
- Blumstein, Philip, and Pepper Schwartz. 1983. *American Couples: Money, Work, Sex*. Morrow.
- Booth, Alan, David Johnson, Ann Branaman and Alan Sica. 1995. "Belief and behavior: Does religion matter in today's marriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 57: 661-671.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press.
- Burgess, Ernest W., Harvey J. Locke and Mary M. Thomes. 1963. *The Family: From Institution to Companionship*. Prentice-Hall.
- Brines, Julie, and Kara Joyner. 1999. "The Ties that Bind: Principles of Cohesion in Cohabitation and Marriage." *American Sociological Review* 64: 333-355.
- Bumpass, Larry L. 1990. "What's Happening to the Family? Interactions Between Demographic and Institutional Change." *Demography* 27: 483-498.
- Bumpass, Larry L., and James A. Sweet. 1995. "Cohabitation, Marriage, and Union Stability: Preliminary Findings from the NSFH2." NSFH Working Paper No. 65, Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. 1995. "Chicken or Egg? A Theory of the Relationship between Feminist Movements and Family Change." Pp. 63-81. *Gender and Family Change in Industrialized Countries*. K.O. Mason and A. Jensen, editors. Clarendon Press.
- Cherlin, Andrew J. 2000. "Toward a New Home Socioeconomics of Union Formation." Linda Waite, editor. *The Ties that Bind: Perspectives on Marriage and Cohabitation*. Aldine de Gruyter.
- _____. 2004. "The Deinstitutionalization of American Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 848-861.
- Coltrane, Scott. 1989. "Household Labor and the Routine Production of Gender." *Social Problems* 36: 473-90.
- Demaris, Alfred, and Monica Longmore. 1996. "Ideology, Power, and Equity: Testing Competing Expectations for the Perception of Fairness in Household Labor." *Social Forces* 74: 1043-1071.
- England, Paula, and George Farkas. 1986. *Households, Employment, and Gender*. Aldine de Gruyter.
- Erickson, Rebecca J. 1993. "Reconceptualizing Family Work: The Effect of Emotion Work on Perceptions of Marital Quality." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55: 888-900.
- Ferree, Myra Marx. 1991. "Feminism and Family Research." Pp. 103-21. *Contemporary Families*. A. Booth, editor. National Council of Family Relations.
- Gager, Constance T. and Laura Sanchez. 1998. "Two as One? Couples' Perceptions of Time Spent Together, Marital Quality, and the Risk of Divorce." Office of Population Research.
- Gilmore, David. 1990. *Manhood in the Making*. Yale University Press.

- Glenn, Norval D. 1991. "The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60: 261-270.
- Goldscheider, Frances K., and Linda J. Waite. 1991. *New Families, No Families? The Transformation of the American Home*. University of California Press.
- Gottman, John M. 1994. *What Predicts Divorce?* Erlbaum.
- Greenstein, Theodore N. 1996. "Gender Ideology and the Perceptions of the Fairness of the Division of Household Labor: Effects on Marital Quality." *Social Forces* 74: 1029-1042.
- _____. 2000. "Economic Dependence, Gender, and the Division of Labor in the Home: A Replication and Extension." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 62: 322-335.
- Hakim, Catherine. 2001. *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1979. "Emotion Work, Feeling Rules, and Social Structure." *American Journal of Sociology* 85: 551-575.
- Hochschild, Arlie, and Ann Machung). 1989. *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*. Viking.
- Maccoby, Eleanor. 1998. *The Two Sexes*. Harvard University Press.
- McQuillan, Julia, and Myra Marx Ferree. 1998. "The Importance of Variation Among Men and the Benefits of Feminism for Families." Pp. 213-225. *Men in Families: When Do They Get Involved? What Difference Does it Make?* A. Booth and A. Crouter, editors. Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Nock, Steven L. 1995. "Commitment and Dependency in Marriage." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57: 593-514.
- _____. 1998. *Marriage in Men's Lives*. Oxford University Press.
- _____. 2000. "Time and Gender in Marriage." *Virginia Law Review* 86: 1971-1987.
- _____. 2001. "The Marriages of Equally Dependent Spouses." *Journal of Family Issues* 22:755-775.
- Popenoe, David, and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. 2004. *The State of Our Unions: 2004*. National Marriage Project, New Brunswick, NJ.
- Rogers, Stacy J., and Paul R. Amato. 1997. "Is Marital Quality Declining? Evidence from Two Generations." *Social Forces* 75: 1089-1100.
- Sanchez, Laura. 1994. "Gender, Labor Allocations, and the Psychology of Entitlement in the Home." *Social Forces* 73:53353.
- Sanchez, Laura, and Emily W. Kane. 1996. "Women's and Men's Constructions of Perceptions of Housework Fairness." *Journal of Family Issues* 17: 358-387.
- Sanchez, Laura, James D. Wright, Julia C. Wilson and Steven L. Nock. 2003. "Covenant Marriage Turns 5 Years Old." *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* 10: 169-188.
- Sayer, Liana C., and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2000. "Women's Economic Independence and the Probability of Divorce." *Journal of Family Issues* 21: 906-943.
- Steenland, Brian, Jerry Z. Park, Mark D. Regnerus, Lynn D. Robinson, W. Bradford Wilcox and Robert D. Woodberry. 2000. "The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art." *Social Forces* 79: 291-318.
- Stolzenberg, Ross M., Mary Blair-Loy and Linda J. Waite. 1995. "Religious Participation in Early Adulthood: Age and Family Life Cycle Effects on Church Membership." *American Sociological Review* 60: 84-103.

- Sweet, James A., Larry L. Bumpass and Vaughn Call. 1988. "The Design and Content of the National Survey of Families and Households." NSFH Working Paper No. 1, Center for Demography and Ecology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Thompson, Linda. 1991. "Family Work: Women's Sense of Fairness." *Journal of Family Issues* 12: 181-196.
- Thompson, Linda, and Alexis Walker. 1989. "Gender in Families: Women and Men in Marriage, Work, and Parenthood." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51: 845-871.
- Thornton, Arland, and L. Young-DeMarco. 2001. "Four Decades of Trends in Attitudes Toward Family Issues in the United States: The 1960s Through the 1990s." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 63: 1009-1037.
- Weber, Max, editor. 1978. *Economy and Society*. University of California Press.
- West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1:125-151.
- Wilkie, Jane R., Myra M. Ferree and Kathryn S. Ratcliff. 1998. "Gender and Fairness: Marital Satisfaction in Two-Earner Couples." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60: 577-594.
- Wilcox, W. Bradford. 2004. *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*. University of Chicago Press

