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DIVISION OF LABOUR AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT ACROSS THE TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD AMONG FEMINIST AND TRADITIONAL COUPLES

by

Angela Nell Haig

B.A., University of Manitoba, 1986

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS in the Department of Psychology

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Simon Fraser University

December, 1989

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Division of Labour and Marital Adjustment Across the Transition to Parenthood Among Feminist and Traditional Couples

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Abstract

The present study seeks to clarify the impact of feminist versus traditional belief systems on the division of labour and dyadic adjustment during the transition to parenthood. This was investigated in a short-term longitudinal study in which sixty-three traditional and feminist couples participated. During the third trimester of pregnancy each member of the couple completed individually measures of sex role attitudes, division of labour, and dyadic adjustment. At eight weeks postpartum, each subject worked alone to complete the division of labour and dyadic adjustment scales again, as well as a social desirability scale and a measure of infant crying. In addition, 11 couples were interviewed after their postpartum assessment was completed. As hypothesized, couples spent proportionately more time doing traditional household tasks, and proportionately less time doing non-traditional household tasks, after their baby was born. Furthermore, women did more than twice the number of hours per day of household labour and childcare at eight weeks postpartum. Contrary to expectations that feminist couples would show a less marked movement toward a traditional postpartum division of labour than couples with more traditional attitudes, there was no difference found between feminist and traditional couples on the postpartum division of labour. Unlike the trend documented in the literature, no
decrease in dyadic adjustment was found after the birth of the first child. Nor did a fussy or frequently crying baby result in lower dyadic adjustment scores postpartum, as hypothesized. Women remain responsible for household labour and childcare, but it is the fathers' willingness to participate that determines the extent of their burden.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my senior supervisor, Dr. Meredith Kimball, for her unfailing support and constructive criticism. I would also like to express my appreciation to Dr. Elinor Ames for her input on earlier drafts of this manuscript. I am grateful to Dr. Ray Koopman for his statistical consultation, as well as his patience. A special thanks goes to Todd Mason, who interviewed the men in this study. I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by Joan Foster and Sandra Vermeulen, whose assistance with the statistical programs was greatly appreciated. I am indebted to the Grace Hospital, Douglas College, and the Greater Vancouver Childbearing Association for allowing me to solicit subjects in their classes. I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to my friends Karen, Pat, Doug, and Sue, for their support. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the couples who participated in this research, who donated unstintingly their time, effort, and honesty.
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Division of Labour and Marital Adjustment Across the Transition to Parenthood Among Feminist and Traditional Couples

The decision to have children is an important one, for the consequences last a lifetime. The arrival of the first child is a significant event. Whether one examines the social, psychological, or physical aspects of bearing one's first child, the effect the child has on all aspects of the parents' experience is pervasive, undeniable, and irreversible.

The birth of a first child marks the beginning of the parents' reproductive career (Miller & Sollie, 1980). As Miller and Newman (1978) summarize, it may affect other reproductive decisions such as when or if to have another child. It often influences vocational or educational decisions, although more markedly for women than men. It certainly alters the dynamics of one's relationships with significant others. Spouses or partners in particular are seen in a new light; now they are parents as well as lovers. As a result of these changes, spouses' sexual relationships are altered.

The arrival of the first child also changes one's self concept, and influences the parents' future adult psychological development. The parent-child relationship is
unique in that, unlike a marital or common-law relationship; it cannot be dissolved. Therefore, there is no solution, short of giving up the child for adoption, for those who have trouble coping with the changes that accompany the birth of a first child.

This transition to parenthood has sparked much research over the years. Early researchers referred to the birth of the first child as a time of crisis for the family (Dyer, 1963; LeMasters, 1957). More recently, investigators have objected to the extreme distress implied in the word crisis, and have renamed the period one of transition (Cowan, Cowan, Coie, & Coie, 1978; Entwistle & Doering, 1980).

Regardless of terminology, there are several factors around the birth of the first child whose interrelationships merit examination. Marital, or dyadic, adjustment is of central interest. Researchers seek to document and understand the changes which occur in a relationship as it shifts from two people, to a family. As the parents incorporate the newborn into their lives, how does the infant's fussiness, or amount of crying, affect the couple's relationship? Also important is the manner in which couples divide the household labour, and the impact of sex role attitudes on this division. These are just some of the variables that have been the subject of considerable research and scholarship in the transition to parenthood literature.
Dyadic Adjustment

Marital adjustment, or the more inclusive term dyadic adjustment, is defined by Spanier (1976) as a dynamic process rather than a state. There are certain processes that are assumed to be essential in a cooperative and working dyadic relationship. A well-adjusted relationship is described as one in which the partners communicate openly and interact frequently, rarely disagree on marital issues that are considered important, and reach resolutions to conflict in a manner agreeable to both parties (Sabatelli, 1988). Spanier (1976) describes the dyadic relationship in terms of dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion, and affectional expression, all of which can be measured along a continuum from maladjustment to good adjustment. Often cited in the literature is a curvilinear pattern of marital adjustment such that the middle or childrearing stage of marriage is most difficult (Schram, 1979). However, Margolin, Tavolic, and Weinstein (1983) found these middle years troublesome for maritally distressed couples only. Couples with a good marital foundation prior to having children had low levels of marital complaints in the childrearing years.

The transition to parenthood literature documents a moderate decline in marital quality after the birth of the first child in a majority of the longitudinal studies. Some studies found these declines using researcher-created measures of the marital relationship (Feldman & Nash, 1984;
McHale & Huston, 1985; Miller & Sollie, 1980). The same pattern was found in studies using the Locke-Wallace or Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Belsky, Lang & Rovine, 1985; Belsky, Spanier & Rovine, 1983; Cowan, Cowan, Heming, Garrett, Coysh, Curtis-Boles & Boles, 1985; Waldron & Routh, 1981). Two studies showed nonsignificant declines in measures of the marital relationship (Ryder, 1973; White & Booth, 1985). Only one study recorded an increase in marital satisfaction (Meyerowitz & Feldman, 1986). However, this study was the only one to ask couples to retrospectively compare their present situation after the birth of their first child with an earlier period in their marriage. It is quite likely that a retrospective report such as this is more sensitive to biased perceptions on the part of the respondents.

Recent research also documents that this time of transition results in more distress for the wives than the husbands (Belsky et al., 1985; Harriman, 1985; Hobbs & Wimbish, 1977; Waldron & Routh, 1981). Problem areas include fatigue or loss of sleep (Ames & MacWilliam, 1989), money problems (Hobbs, 1985), less sexual satisfaction (Cowan et al., 1978; Meyerowitz & Feldman, 1966), emotional upset, interruption of routine habits (Hobbs, 1965), worry over personal appearance (Russell, 1974), and division of labour (Cowan et al., 1978).
Sex Role Attitudes

Sex role attitudes are beliefs about appropriate behaviour for men and women. Research in this area has burgeoned since the late 1960s with the revitalization of the feminist movement. Mason, Czajka, & Arbor (1976) used United States national survey data to analyze the sex role attitudes of women. Their data include a survey done prior to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as well as data collected in 1970 and 1973-1974. The data show a consistent shift toward more egalitarian views. Attitudes about equality of educational and vocational opportunities were less conservative than attitudes about division of labour within the home, but a liberal shift was evident in both spheres.

The momentum of the trend toward egalitarian attitudes evident in the 1960s and early 1970s has waned in recent years. Helmreich, Spence, and Gibson (1982) have mapped sex role attitudes over the span of eight years, from 1972 to 1980. Their results demonstrate that women are consistently less conservative than men, and that young men and women are reliably more liberal in their attitudes than their parents. Furthermore, college students' attitudes are only modestly correlated with those of their parents. Within families, spouses' attitudes correlate positively (approximately .40).

Between 1972 and 1976, both men and women demonstrated significant movement towards egalitarian attitudes, continuing the course of the previous decade. However, between 1976 and 1980, the trend toward egalitarian
attitudes levelled off. Male students showed no general attitude change, whereas some of the attitudes of female students shifted in the conservative direction. Specifically, relative to 1976, women students in 1980 endorsed less strongly the statement that a woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage. In comparison to 1976, the following items were more strongly endorsed: "Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers" and "the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children." In the vocational realm, women disagreed less strongly in 1980 than their counterparts did in 1976 about the following items: "It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks" and "there are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted."

Within the transition to parenthood literature, the impact of feminist versus traditional sex role attitudes has received very little attention. In a study by Gladieux (1978), the pregnancy experience for traditional and modern women was compared. Traditional women were found to be more assured of a satisfying, low-anxiety pregnancy experience. Women with traditional beliefs tended to marry men with traditional beliefs, and their role as expectant mother was supported by the husbands and relatives in their social network. Gladieux found the pregnancy experience of modern women to be more variable. Often, they were uncomfortable
with the feelings of dependency developed in the second and third trimester. As well, both modern women and their spouses had more ambivalent feelings about parenthood and marriage.

Power and Parke (1984) have postulated a social support model for predicting the ease of transition to motherhood. One of the social network supports is ideological support, or, the degree to which the woman's social network supports the ideological basis of her decisions. Examples of ideological support include the partner who encourages his spouse to continue her career after the birth of a child, or the in-laws bolstering the new mother's belief that it is important to stay home full-time with the child.

Congruence between the mother's role behaviour and desires or beliefs is considered important in facilitating a mother's adaptation to her new role (Power & Parke, 1984). For example, if a mother believes in the importance of exclusive maternal care rather than day care, yet must work outside the home for financial reasons, it is not surprising that her adaptation to the maternal role may not be smooth (Power & Parke, 1984).

Division of Labour

The division of labour within a couple's relationship has become a topic of increased study. Until recently, women and men were assumed to have different spheres of activity, such that women were responsible for the home, and men for labour outside of the home. Since the 1940s, this
pattern has shifted, as more women have joined the paid work force (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1983). Earlier studies, such as Meissner, Humphreys, Meis and Scheu (1975), found that women in the paid work force do less housework than homemakers, but husbands of employed wives do the same amount of housework as husbands of homemakers. Similarly, Coverman and Sheley (1986) examined men's housework and childcare time between 1965 and 1975, and found there was no significant change in men's mean housework and childcare time during this decade. Recent studies have documented a shift toward husbands of wives in the paid work force contributing more. Nyquist, Slivken, Spence, & Helmreich (1985) found a clear relationship between the employment status of the wife and the degree of responsibility assumed by the wife or husband for traditionally feminine tasks. Wives employed full-time had more help from their husbands than wives employed part-time or those not employed outside the home. However, in less than two percent of the couples did the husband and wife share household tasks equally or the husband contribute more. In families with children, mothers' paid work has been found to be a significant predictor of fathers' participation in family work, such that the greater the number of hours the wife engaged in paid work, the greater the husband's participation in household and childcare tasks (Barnett & Baruch, 1987). Fathers whose wives were not employed in the paid work force did 20% of the childcare tasks, whereas fathers whose wives
worked outside the home did just over 30% of the child care tasks. Of the time spent by both parents on traditionally feminine household chores, fathers with wives who were not in the paid work force did an average of 16% of the tasks, while fathers with wives employed in the paid work force increased their participation to 19% (Barnett & Baruch, 1987). Clearly, men's participation in household work has not kept pace with women's participation in the paid work force.

Certainly there are other factors beyond employment status of the wife that influence the division of labour within the home. Meissner et al. (1975) argue that the division of labour is determined by the higher value society places on paid outside work compared to housework. Thus, husbands' work is significantly more valued than wives' work. Furthermore, women's first obligation is to household work, and men's first obligation is to their paid employment. Hence, the husbands view their wives' income as "help", just as their own participation in household tasks is considered "helping out" their wives.

Another variable influencing the division of labour is sex role attitudes. Beckman and Houser (1979) designed a study that tested the relationship between wives' sex role attitudes and household labour. They found low but significant positive correlations between attitudes and reported behaviour. Specifically, women who scored low on sex role traditionalism did fewer feminine household tasks
than did those high on sex role traditionalism. In 1984, Atkinson and Huston reported that sex role attitudes of both husbands and wives were significantly positively correlated with the degree to which husbands participated in traditionally feminine household tasks. This result was repeated in a study by Barnett and Baruch (1987), who found that fathers with liberal attitudes toward the male sex role did proportionately more feminine household chores than those with more traditional attitudes. Thus for example, the more liberal the partners' sex role attitudes, the more the husbands washed the dishes or did the dusting.

Similarly, Atkinson and Huston (1984) found that the more liberal the husband's sex role attitudes, the more the wife participated in traditionally masculine household chores such as barbequeing or taking out the garbage. In the realm of child care, Barnett and Baruch (1987) found that fathers whose wives held liberal attitudes about the male sex role spent more interaction time with their children.

Within the transition to parenthood literature, the most consistent result is that after the birth of the first child, the division of labour becomes more traditional (Cowan et al., 1978; LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981; Stafford, Backman & Dibona, 1977). LaRossa and LaRossa (1981) explain this in terms of a scarcity of free time which puts couples in an oppositional stance toward each other. Cowan et al. (1978) argue that in times of stressful transitions, couples rely on the traditional examples of their family of origin.
Cowan and Cowan's (1988) more recent work included item analyses of their "Who Does What" questionnaire. Women do more household tasks than men prior to the birth, and continue to bear the heavier load of household and family tasks after the birth (Cowan & Cowan, 1988). However, the authors report a trend toward greater specialization, such that tasks that were shared by both partners prior to the birth of their child were more often the sole responsibility of one parent or the other after the birth.

Although Atkinson and Huston's (1984) childless sample demonstrated no relation between gender identity, defined as the extent to which one sees oneself as possessing masculine or feminine characteristics, and division of labour, the addition of children to the family complicates the relation. Belsky, Lang & Huston (1986) found a significant interaction between gender identity, division of labour, and marital satisfaction. For those women who described their gender identity as instrumental rather than expressive, their evaluation of marital quality decreased as the division of labour became more traditional. Belsky et al. (1986) offer the explanation that these highly instrumental women were required to behave in ways that were foreign to their self-concept. Because they were low in expressivity, the requirements of nurturing a newborn may have been stressful. In addition to coping with the demands of a newborn, the new mother was taxed with increased
housework. These two sources of stress may have influenced negatively her assessment of marital quality.

Ruble, Fleming, Hackel and Stangor (1988) offered another possible explanation for the decrease in marital quality during the transition period. They found that violated expectations with regard to division of labour and childcare responsibilities contribute to women's dissatisfactions with their marital relationship after the birth of a child. Feelings of inequity, and the tensions this can produce, are likely to be especially high for women who consider an equal division of labour to be important (Ruble et al., 1988). Therefore, Ruble et al. (1988) suggested that Belsky et al.'s (1986) findings could be parsimoniously explained by assuming that those women whose marital quality decreased the most were also those whose expectations regarding household and childcare labour were most violated. This interpretation is corroborated by Cowan and Cowan's (1988) finding that at six months postpartum, men were doing much less than they or their wives expected in the prepartum assessment.

Because there is a demonstrated relationship between division of labour and marital satisfaction for women during the transition to parenthood, it may be productive to speculate on the existence of a further link between the two variables. This link may be the degree of satisfaction with the division of labour. Although they did not address the transition to parenthood specifically, Benin and Agostinelli
demonstrated that husbands and wives were satisfied with different divisions of household labour. Husbands were most satisfied with an equal sharing of household tasks, especially if the number of hours both partners spent on household tasks was relatively small. Once their absolute number of hours spent doing household chores increased, their satisfaction with the division of labour decreased. Conversely, wives' satisfaction was not affected by the absolute number of hours worked, but by the degree to which their partners shared women's traditional chores. They were most content when the division of labour was equitable (or favoured them) and their partner participated in traditionally feminine household tasks. Unfortunately, this study included childcare with the division of labour variables, making the differential impact of these distinct variables impossible to determine.

The definition of division of labour is another key measurement issue. Some researchers measure division of labour in terms of who has responsibility for the task (Nyquist et al., 1985), whereas others are more interested in who actually performs the task (Cowan & Cowan, 1988). Furthermore, although it is less expensive and faster to have only one spouse (usually the wife) report on the household activities of both partners, this method assumes that spouses are accurate estimators and reporters of their partner's activities, an assumption that may not be warranted (Warner, 1986). The most popular method of data
collection in earlier studies measured the relative responsibility of each spouse for tasks, but it was criticized because equal weighting was given to tasks which took different amounts of time, like taking out the garbage and making the dinner (Warner, 1986). This deficit was improved upon in more recent studies by weighting tasks according to how often they had been performed, based on the assumption that the frequency with which the task was performed would be an accurate indicator of the amount of time the task required (Stafford et al., 1977).

Another method is the reconstruction approach, where the respondents are asked to recall how much time they spent doing a particular task during a prescribed period. This method is not without its problems, as periods of 24 hours may be too short to reflect the pattern of housework for a respondent, whereas week-long periods, for example, may be subject to recall bias and a tendency to report in a socially desirable manner (Warner, 1986). Finally, the activity log or time-budget approach has become most popular in recent years (Warner, 1986). In this method, the respondents keep a diary of activities done as they perform them. The advantage of this method is that it can catch the subtle patterns of household behaviour in a way that the other methods cannot; it is, however, much more expensive in terms of time, money, and respondent attrition (Warner, 1986).
Infant Crying

Most research on the transition to parenthood has assumed that the role of the infant is a passive one. In contrast, Lamb (1979) and Belsky (1981) have argued that the infant is an active agent in its surroundings, and as such, may influence the experience of the parents. There have been few studies that have examined the role of a trying or difficult baby during the transition to parenthood. Hobbs (1985) found that fathers of infants who required more health care had higher crisis scores than other fathers. No relationship between greater health care needs and mothers' crisis scores was found. This finding was replicated by Hobbs and Cole (1976). Russell (1974) found that having active babies (those who cried, had feeding and sleeping problems, and/or a serious illness) was related to significantly higher crisis scores for men, whereas women's scores only approached significance.

Wilkie and Ames (1986) found that infant crying was correlated with mothers' lower evaluation of the infant, and greater negative statements regarding parenthood. Infant crying was also found to be related to fathers' anxiety and concerns over lifestyle changes due to the baby's birth. Furthermore, as babies cried more, fathers rated themselves as less powerful husbands and their partners as less powerful wives and mothers. This finding was partially replicated by Mason (1989), who found that as crying increased, fathers rated their spouses as less powerful
mothers, but their ratings of their partners as wives was not affected. Thus, while mothers localized the source of the problem as external to themselves, fathers were more likely to blame themselves and their partner for the difficulties of a crying infant. Wilkie and Ames (1986) speculated that the father may consider his role to be supportive of his partner, while believing that she remains primarily responsible for the infant. Thus, infant crying may contribute in this manner to marital tension (Wilkie & Ames, 1986). Because six, eight, and 10-week old infants cry an average of two and three quarters, two, and one and a half hours per day, respectively, the possible impact of the child upon his or her parents is considerable (Brazelton, 1962).

While not measuring infant crying per se, Easterbrooks and Emde (1984) reported results that lend corroborative support to the link between infant crying and marital adjustment. They found infant intrusiveness, defined as the number of appeals by the infant for parental attention while the parents are engaged in a marital communication task, to be negatively related to mothers' but not fathers' marital adjustment.

The Present Study

The present study seeks to clarify the impact of feminist versus traditional belief systems on the division of labour and dyadic adjustment during the transition to parenthood. Previous research has demonstrated a low to
A moderate correlation between sex role attitudes and division of labour (Araji, 1977; Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Beckman & Houser, 1979). These correlations suggest that patterns of household division of labour are at least partly ideologically based (Meissner et al., 1975). The assumption underlying this research has been that an equal division of household labour would be the behavioural expression of egalitarian attitudes. The impact of sex role attitudes during the period of transition to parenthood has been given only cursory attention (Gladieux, 1978).

Criticisms have been directed at studies that have not studied childless control groups for comparison with couples expecting or rearing their first child (White & Booth, 1985). It has been argued that investigators cannot be sure that the changes that take place would not have happened without the birth of a child. The Cowan et al. (1985) data suggest that there are indeed some changes that occur in a relationship over the course of time that are unrelated to the birth of a child. However, they propose that having a child accelerates and accentuates the process of change that is observed in childless couples.

Belsky and Pensky (1988) caution that some comparison groups consisting of childless couples may not, in fact, be appropriate controls. Couples who do not have children may differ from those who do in a number of ways unrelated to bearing a child. For example, childless couples are not a homogeneous group with respect to the strength of their
conviction to remain childless. While some couples may be very careful to avoid pregnancy, other couples may "work" less hard at avoiding conception. Thus, even if a two-group design were employed in a transition to parenthood study, it would be impossible to determine whether it was the transition to parenthood or the motivation to become (or avoid becoming) parents that was responsible for the results.

Logically, the only appropriate comparison group would include those couples attempting to conceive a baby, because they would endorse a similar motivation to the couples who have achieved conception. However, couples who attempt conception but fail are likely to function differently in many respects from the couples who conceive. Furthermore, there is no easily definable time at which couples hoping to become pregnant cease to be an appropriate control. Therefore, due to the reasons listed above, no comparison group was used in the present study.

Much of the transition to parenthood literature focuses on the wives and mothers, often excluding the experience of husbands and fathers from study (Belsky et al., 1986; Harriman, 1983, 1985). Recent research, however, indicates that husbands experience the birth of their first child differently than do their spouses (Wilkie & Ames, 1986). Such evidence argues for a more inclusive research design that involves both spouses or partners. In the present research, both mothers and fathers were studied. Couples in
which both partners espoused egalitarian sex role attitudes were compared with couples in which both partners maintained traditional sex role attitudes. The relationship between these belief systems and the changes in division of labour and dyadic adjustment from the third trimester of pregnancy to after the birth of the first child was examined. In addition, the effect of infant crying on dyadic adjustment and division of labour was measured.

The following hypotheses were tested.

1. Both traditional and feminist couples will increase the proportional amount of time spent doing traditionally sex-typed household tasks with the birth of the first child (Cowan & Cowan, 1988; LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981).

2. Feminist couples will show a proportionately smaller increase in time spent doing traditionally sex-typed household tasks than traditional couples with the birth of the first child (Atkinson & Huston, 1984; Barnett & Baruch, 1987; Beckman & Houser, 1979).

3. There will be a significant decrease in dyadic adjustment from the third trimester to eight weeks postpartum for all couples (Belsky, Spanier & Rovine, 1983; Belsky, Lang & Rovine, 1985; Miller & Sollie, 1980).

4. Feminist couples will show a greater decline in dyadic adjustment scores than will traditional couples (Ruble, Fleming, Hackel & Stangor, 1988).

5. Couples with frequently crying infants will show greater
decrements in dyadic adjustment than couples with infants who cry less.
Method

Subjects

Subjects were 63 couples who were having their first child. To be included in the study, both mothers and fathers were required to be at least 18 years of age, in a marital or common-law relationship, and about to become parents for the first time. Disqualification resulted if the parents were aware that their child was very ill prior to birth, or if mother and child were required to stay in the hospital for more than two weeks after the delivery. Finally, to be eligible for participation in this study, both the mother and father were required to work outside the home prior to the birth of the baby. More specifically, for the mothers, this meant that they had to have worked outside the home until they quit for maternity leave. For those parents who were students, they were required to be contributing to the family income beyond the cost of their tuition, through work, scholarship, bursary or loan.

This volunteer sample was solicited from three childbirth education organizations in the Greater Vancouver area. One group of prenatal classes was run by a local hospital, another by a post-secondary college, and the third was an independent organization. The researcher went to 19 prenatal classes. Of the eligible couples, approximately one third agreed to participate. This modest response rate can be explained by the significant time commitment asked of
both partners, which some couples were unable or unwilling to donate.

It was anticipated that within many of the couples, the male and female partner would not hold the same attitudes about sex roles. Consequently, a large sample size was solicited so that there would be a large enough sample of like-minded couples to test hypotheses one, two, and four, whereas the entire sample would be used to test the remaining hypotheses.

Of the 74 couples who initially agreed to participate in the study, eight couples did not complete the prepartum questionnaires. Three additional couples did not complete the postpartum assessment and were dropped from the study. One of the couples could not be reached when it was time for the postpartum questionnaires to be completed. Another couple did not finish the postpartum questionnaires due to lack of interest. The third couple dropped out because the new mother was overwhelmed by her responsibilities and did not want the added stress of completing the questionnaires. Therefore, of the 63 couples to complete the study, 60 couples volunteered through the prenatal classes and the remaining three couples volunteered to participate after hearing about the study via word of mouth.

Women in the study ranged from 20 to 39 years of age, with a mean age of 27.8. Men in the study ranged from 22 to 45 years old, with a mean age of 29.1. The sample was composed largely of Caucasian couples, although 8% of the
sample was of Metis, Chinese, East Indian, Mexican or Filipino descent. Seventy percent of the couples stated that their baby was planned. Eighty-five percent of the infants were breastfed at the time of the postpartum assessment.

The sample was generally well educated. Of the women, 35.4% had received a Bachelor's or Master's degree at university, 40% had one to two years of community college or university education, and 24.6% had grade twelve education or less. Of the men, 38.4% had received a Bachelor's or Master's degree at university, 41.6% had one to two years of university or community college education, and 20% had grade twelve education or less. Although professionals and blue collar workers were represented in this sample, by far the largest occupational group was white collar workers, who accounted for approximately 70% of the sample for both men and women.

Measures

Attitudes Toward Women Scale

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS; Appendix A) is a 15 item self-report paper-and-pencil measure describing the rights, rules, and privileges women ought to have or be permitted (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Respondents indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with statements such as, "...A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage" or "...Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters." Ratings are
made on a four point scale ranging from "agree strongly" to "disagree strongly". The items are scored from 0 to 3, with higher numbers indicating a profeminist attitude. Scores range from 0 to 45. The scale's construct validity has been supported by the scores of different groups on the AWS. For example, women score higher than men, and college students score higher than their same sex parent. Also, engineering students score lower than undergraduate psychology majors, who in turn, score lower than psychology graduate students (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha, is .89 (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

**Dyadic Adjustment Scale**

Marital or relational adjustment was measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976.) The DAS (Appendix B) evaluates dyadic adjustment in four areas: 1) dyadic satisfaction 2) dyadic cohesion 3) dyadic consensus, and 4) affectional expression. The scale has 32 items with a total range of scores from 0 to 151. Content validity has been supported by the consensus of a panel of judges who reduced the original pool of 200 items to its abbreviated form. The criterion validity of the DAS has been confirmed by the fact that divorced and married couples were distinguished by their scores on the scale (Spanier, 1983). The construct validity of the DAS was tested in two ways. First, it was found to correlate with the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959), at .86 and .88 for married and divorced respondents, respectively. It can be
argued, however, that much of this relationship is made up of common method variance, as the DAS incorporated 11 of the MAT's 15 items. Secondly, a factor analysis of the scale resulted in the four subscales previously noted, leading the authors of the scale to claim that the DAS partially measured the theoretical construct of dyadic adjustment. The DAS has a total scale reliability alpha coefficient of .96 (Spanier, 1976).

**Division of Labour Chart**

Division of labour was measured with an activity log prepared by the author (Appendix C). The household activities about which the respondents monitored their participation were derived from the study by Atkinson and Huston (1984). They had chosen 26 activities based on pilot work and a review of the literature of studies using similar diary recordings. Atkinson and Huston (1984) then divided these tasks into three groups, feminine, masculine, or undifferentiated, according to whether the task was performed primarily by husbands or by wives, as measured in both previous studies and their own. In the present study, four additional items concerning childcare were appended to the list of household chores: diaper, bathe, nurse/feed, and hold/rock/soothe the baby. These childcare tasks were considered feminine chores.

Subjects were asked to record their activities in 15 minute intervals over a 24 hour period, according to the legend provided. This scale was to be completed on a
Wednesday and a Saturday so that a weekday and a weekend day were sampled.

CryScore

The amount of infant crying was measured by CryScore (Appendix D). Cryscore was taken from the Ames Crying Questionnaire (Ames, Gavel, Khazaie & Farrell, 1985), which was developed to investigate variables related to crying in infancy. A Principal Component Analysis of the questionnaire yielded five components, one being a measure of the amount of crying. Cryscore included the three items that loaded highest on the amount of crying component. Cryscores range from 0 to 11. Higher scores indicate more crying. Cryscore's claim to validity is strengthened by its correlation of .58 with the total amount of crying as measured by baby sleep records, a diary method of recording crying (Mason, 1989).

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS; Appendix E) was developed by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) to measure the need of subjects to gain approval by responding in a "culturally appropriate and acceptable manner." Subjects were asked to read each of the 33 items and indicate whether the statement was true or false as it pertained to them personally. Questions include the following: "I have never intensely disliked anyone," and "I resent being asked to return a favour." Concurrent validity was supported by correlations between the M-C SDS and the
Edwards Social Desirability Scale and the Lie scale of the MMPI, at .35 and .54, respectively. The authors explain that the correlation is lower than one would expect because, unlike the MMPI scale and the Edwards Social Desirability Scale, the M-C SDS measures social desirability unconfounded by pathology. The scale has an internal consistency coefficient of .88 and a test-retest correlation of .89 (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The MC-SDS was included in this study to check whether or not responses on the AWS would correlate with socially desirable responses.

**Interviews**

During the postpartum assessment, 11 couples were interviewed in order to garner qualitative information as a complement to the quantitative data. Interviews allow respondents to describe their experience exactly as they wish, unlike paper and pencil measures that force respondents to choose the best approximation from the provided responses. Thus, in order to flesh out the quantitative data, questions were asked about expectations regarding childrearing, dyadic adjustment, division of labour and childcare, and relationships with relatives and friends. The interview schedule is found in Appendix F.

**Procedure**

A short-term longitudinal design was implemented in this study. A volunteer sample of couples was solicited through prenatal classes in the Vancouver area. The study was described as an examination of the changes within a
family unit as a result of the birth of the first child. At the time of first contact during the third trimester of pregnancy, interested couples were given two test packets, one for each partner, and asked to fill them out separately. The packets included: general information, a consent form, the AWS, DAS, and the division of labour chart. Approximately one week later, the investigator arranged to meet the couple in their homes to collect the questionnaires.

Upon the birth of the child, a congratulatory card was sent to the couples. At eight weeks postpartum, a second questionnaire packet was mailed out. Eight weeks postpartum was chosen to eliminate the confound of postpartum depression, which has a period prevalence of 21% and a spontaneous resolution of 72% of the episodes by eight weeks (Whiffen, 1986). Therefore, by eight weeks postpartum, the significant relationship between postpartum depression and marital adjustment was minimized.

The first wave of postpartum questionnaires were due to be sent out in the mail before all of the prepartum questionnaires had been completed. Consequently, the sample was divided into traditional and feminist congruent couples on the basis of an incomplete sample of AWS scores that had already been collected in the prepartum assessment. The provisional mean scores on the AWS for this sample were 36 for men, and 39 for women. Hence, those couples who both scored above their respective means were classified as
congruent feminist couples, whereas those couples who both scored below their respective means were classified as congruent traditional. Couples in which one partner scored above the mean and the other partner scored below the mean were considered non-congruent. Those couples who had AWS scores within two points of the means were considered congruent, although it was recognized that some of them would likely receive a new classification when the final means were computed.

Once all of the prepartum questionnaires were collected, the mean AWS scores were computed again. Based on the total sample, the mean scores were 35.0 (S.D. 6.0) and 38.8 (S.D. 4.38) for men and women, respectively. Thus, two couples who had been provisionally classified as congruent were re-classified as non-congruent. At the postpartum assessment, congruent couples, whether feminist or traditional, received the MC-SDS, DAS, Cryscore, and division of labour charts. Non-congruent couples received the MC-SDS, DAS and the Cryscore. There were 16 traditional couples, 25 feminist couples, and 22 non-congruent couples. After approximately one week, the investigator made arrangements with the couple to pick up the questionnaire at their home.

During the first wave of postpartum assessments, the investigator asked all of the couples in the congruent category if they would consent to an interview (Appendix F). It was explained that this was something extra, and that
they should not feel obliged to participate if they did not wish to. Interested couples were interviewed in their homes, or in one case, an office. A male undergraduate student who had experience interviewing fathers during the transition to parenthood spoke with the fathers while mothers were interviewed by the author. It was felt that having same-sex interviewers would encourage both the men and women to speak comfortably about sex roles, a socially sensitive topic. Efforts were made to ensure privacy during the interviews so that husbands and wives could not hear one another answer the questions. The interview schedule included nine questions, and interviews ranged in length from approximately 10 to 60 minutes. Within the time constraints of the study, 13 couples were approached for an interview and twelve couples gave their consent. The data from one of the interviews was discarded because the respondents were one of the couples provisionally classified as congruent who were re-classified as non-congruent.
Results

Division of Labour

Hypotheses 1 and 2

To test the hypothesis that traditional and feminist couples would increase the proportional amount of time spent doing traditionally sex-typed household tasks during the transition to parenthood, proportions from the division of labour chart were analyzed using a time (2 levels) x sex role (2 levels) repeated-measures ANOVA. The levels of the variable time were prepartum and postpartum. The levels of the variable sex role were feminist and traditional. As previously mentioned, the couples were classified as traditional or feminist according to each partner's score relative to the mean score for men and women. When both partners scored above their respective means, they were classified as a feminist couple, and vice versa. The division of labour was computed by summing the time women spent doing traditionally feminine tasks with the time men spent doing traditionally masculine tasks, divided by the total time spent doing household tasks. This proportion was computed twice, once including childcare tasks, and once excluding childcare tasks. Table 1 presents the mean proportions and standard deviations on the division of labour and childcare measure from this analysis. As shown in Table 2, when childcare tasks were excluded, there was no significant difference between the division of
Table 1
Division of Labour Proportion Means and Standard Deviations with Undifferentiated Tasks Included

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post w/o Childcare</th>
<th>Post w Childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>0.544</td>
<td>0.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>0.527</td>
<td>0.545</td>
<td>0.660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Sum of Squares</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Mean Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexrole</td>
<td>0.00142</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.96424</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.05037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.00163</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR x Time</td>
<td>0.00154</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.05213</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.02698</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
labour pre- and postpartum. However, as indicated in Table 3, there was a main effect of having a child on division of labour when childcare tasks were included, F(1,39) = 23.82, p<.00001. Thus, hypothesis 1 was confirmed when division of labour included childcare tasks. As indicated in Tables 2 and 3, there was no interaction between sex role attitudes and change in the division of labour from pre-to postpartum. Thus, hypothesis 2, that feminist couples would become less traditional in their postpartum division of labour than would their traditional counterparts, was not confirmed.

**Dyadic Adjustment**

**Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5**

To test the hypothesis that dyadic adjustment would decrease during the transition to parenthood, couples' average dyadic adjustment scores were analyzed using a time (2 levels) x sex role (3 levels) x cry (2 levels) repeated-measures ANOVA. The within subjects variable was time of measurement that included the prepartum and postpartum levels. The levels of the sex role variable were feminist, traditional, and non-congruent. The levels of cry were high and low. The mean Cryscore was 2.59 (S.D. 2.27). Couples whose babies scored below the mean were classified as the low cry group, whereas couples whose baby scored above the mean were classified as the high cry group. Table 4 presents the pre- and postpartum means and standard
### Table 3

**Summary Table of Time by Sex Role**

Repeated Measures ANOVA Including Childcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexrole</td>
<td>0.03975</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.03975</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.25194</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.03210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.50766</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50766</td>
<td>23.82*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$SR \times Time$</td>
<td>0.01497</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01497</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>0.83126</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.02131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.00001
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex role grouping</th>
<th>Trad</th>
<th>Trad</th>
<th>Egal</th>
<th>Egal</th>
<th>Noncon</th>
<th>Noncon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crys score grouping</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepartum DAS Mean</td>
<td>116.06</td>
<td>114.93</td>
<td>120.11</td>
<td>119.73</td>
<td>122.75</td>
<td>116.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>11.65</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>7.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postpartum DAS Mean</td>
<td>115.28</td>
<td>114.00</td>
<td>121.67</td>
<td>122.43</td>
<td>125.75</td>
<td>119.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>19.55</td>
<td>11.58</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>8.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
deviations on the DAS from this analysis. Table 5 summarizes the results of the analysis of variance. Contrary to hypothesis 3, there was no decrease in dyadic adjustment from the prepartum to postpartum measurement. Furthermore, the hypothesized interaction between sex role attitudes and dyadic adjustment from pre- to postpartum was not confirmed. Contrary to hypothesis 4, feminist couples did not show a greater decline in dyadic adjustment scores than traditional couples. Finally, hypothesis 5 was not confirmed. Couples with frequently crying babies did not demonstrate greater decrements in dyadic adjustment than couples whose infants cried less.

Post Hoc Comparisons

Two post hoc analyses of variance were performed on the division of labour data in an attempt to clarify the movement toward a traditional division of labour. Upon examining the data more closely, it was apparent that four tasks made a large impact on the couples' proportion reflecting traditionality of the division of labour. These tasks were neither feminine nor masculine tasks, but undifferentiated tasks. They were done about equally by men and women in the Atkinson and Huston study (1984) from which these tasks were taken. The undifferentiated tasks were: run errands, make an expensive purchase, pay bills, and budget, plan, or review expenses. Table 6 reflects the division of labour pre- and postpartum in terms of the average number of hours spent doing feminine, masculine and
### Table 5

Summary Table of Time by Sex Role by Cry

Repeated Measures ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexrole</td>
<td>827.22670</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>413.61335</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cry</td>
<td>166.89229</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>166.89229</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR x Cry</td>
<td>236.53819</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>118.26910</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>9902.41766</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>176.82889</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>63.64512</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63.64512</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x SR</td>
<td>76.19346</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.09673</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x Cry</td>
<td>1.53015</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.53015</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x SR x Cry</td>
<td>2.02198</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.01099</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1259.99067</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22.49983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6
Mean Number of Hours Spent Doing Feminine, Masculine, and Undifferentiated Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th></th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th></th>
<th>Undifferentiated</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre  Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1.20 .73</td>
<td>1.59 3.23</td>
<td>.56 .58</td>
<td>3.35 4.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>1.54 1.60</td>
<td>1.15 2.50</td>
<td>.72 .90</td>
<td>2.95 3.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>.28 .17</td>
<td>2.70 9.43</td>
<td>.69 .43</td>
<td>3.67 10.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>.54 .45</td>
<td>1.35 2.54</td>
<td>.77 .60</td>
<td>3.75 4.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
undifferentiated tasks. During the prepartum period, men spent .56 hours per day and women spent .69 hours per day doing undifferentiated tasks out of a total of 3.35 hours and 3.67 hours per day for men and women, respectively. Whereas men’s contribution to household labour and childcare increased to 4.52 hours per day, women’s number of hours doing household labour and childcare more than doubled to 10.03 hours per day in the postpartum period. Consequently, the inclusion of the undifferentiated tasks in the denominator of the proportion had the effect of decreasing the proportion, making couples appear less traditional in their division of labour.

To eradicate the dilution of the proportion reflecting degree of traditionality of the division of labour, the undifferentiated tasks were removed from the proportions so that the time women spent doing traditionally feminine tasks plus the time men spent doing traditionally masculine tasks was summed, and divided by the total amount of time men and women spent doing masculine and feminine tasks. Table 7 presents the mean proportions and standard deviations excluding the undifferentiated tasks. The ANOVAS were performed twice, once including childcare, and once excluding childcare. The division of labour did not become more traditional when childcare was excluded from this post hoc analysis (Table 8). However, Table 9 demonstrates that the division of labour and childcare becomes more traditional from pre- to postpartum even when
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post w/o Childcare</th>
<th>Post w Childcare</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>.649</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.650</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.235</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Sum of Squares</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Mean Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexrole</td>
<td>0.00056</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.83900</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.04715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.00079</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x SR</td>
<td>0.00079</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.82218</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.02108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

Summary Table of Time by Sex Role Repeated Measures ANOVA
Including Childcare and Excluding Undifferentiated Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexrole</td>
<td>0.01747</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01747</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>1.36556</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.03501</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>0.12576</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.12576</td>
<td>6.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time x SR</td>
<td>0.00969</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00969</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>0.80408</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.02062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.01
undifferentiated tasks are also removed from the analysis, \( F(1,39) = 6.10, p<.01 \). Thus, like the results of the a priori analysis, there was an increase in the proportion of time spent doing sex-typed tasks after the birth of the first child. As with the planned analysis, there was no difference evident between the feminist and traditional couples along this dimension.

In order to check for the possibility that scores on the AWS reflected a socially desirable response bias, the scores on the AWS and the MC-SDS were correlated for men and women separately. No significant correlations were found, making very unlikely the possibility of a response bias on the AWS scale.

**Interviews**

Three traditional and eight feminist couples were interviewed. Their responses have been tabulated in frequency counts. Because there was no clear differentiation between the statements made by the three traditional couples and the rest of the couples interviewed, the results below are not divided according to the sex role attitudes of the participants.

**Expectations**

Ruble et al. (1988) argued that one of the most salient variables in the decrease in marital quality from pre- to postpartum was the role of violated expectations. In an attempt to garner information about this possible influence,
couples were asked whether having a baby was different from their expectations.

The most frequent response to this question was communicated by seven of the women and two of the men out of a total of 22 interviewees. They said that having a baby was more work than expected. Five of the men complained that having a child had caused a lack of spontaneity in their lives, whereas only two women mentioned that they could no longer "just get up and go". Three women and two men remarked that the lack of sleep and the interruptions to their sleep were worse than expected. Three women and one man expressed experiencing more anxiety and worry over their infant's crying, or health in general, than they had expected.

Two men and a woman related that they were overwhelmed by the responsibility of their child, of the "24 hourness of it". Finally, two interviewees, one mother and one father, remarked that they had expected their infants to be able to do more for themselves and not be so totally helpless. One mother pithily commented that, "I guess I imagined that I was having a child, and not a baby that couldn't do anything but eat, sleep and shit." These complaints were tempered by three women and one man who claimed that their baby's smile made it all worthwhile.

Some answers were unique to women. For example, three women experienced worse postpartum blues than they had anticipated, and two specifically labeled breastfeeding as a
contributor to postpartum blues. One found breastfeeding physically painful, and both mothers complained that it restricted their freedom more than any other part of childcare. One quarter of the women stated that they missed the ability to control or organize their environment, which they had enjoyed in the paid work force. One woman said, "From the moment my water broke, I felt like I totally lost control, lost control of my life for a couple of weeks." Another woman explained, "I'm the kind of person who starts something and likes to finish it - but it just doesn't work that way anymore." On a positive note, two women relayed the information that they enjoyed watching their child's development.

One mother and one father suggested that there could have been a lot more information in the prenatal classes about the first few postpartum months in order to better prepare parents for what was to come. One woman said:

"We never got told at prenatal what the first week would be like when I got home. It's not easy. It really isn't. At times you just sit there and cry and think what am I doing wrong?"

Another woman echoed the sentiment that she was ill prepared for the changes that her baby brought into her life.

"It's such a fantasy until you have a baby and then it really does change. It really is nothing like you can imagine and I thought to myself that it was totally guaranteed that it wouldn't be that different. I knew there were going to be some changes, but I didn't realize the changes that were going to happen. It's not like a toy or something that you can put aside and forget about..."
Effect of Infant on pre-existing relationships

Hypothesis 5, that couples with infants who cry more will have greater decreases in dyadic adjustment, is consistent with the arguments of Lamb (1979) and Belsky (1981) that infants may influence the experience of their parents. Although this hypothesis was not confirmed quantitatively, the logic that infants may influence their parents' experience was pursued in the interviews by asking couples two questions. The first question asked whether having a baby had affected their relationship with their partner.

Six men and two women revealed that having a baby brought them closer to their spouse. This response was particularly marked among the men, of whom six made this claim, whereas only two women did. In terms of time, six women and one man reported that they had less time for their partner. Three women and one man commented that their sexual relationship had altered. Two said that this was due to fatigue, whereas two remarked on their decreased interest. Three women and one man stated that they had become more easily irritated due to fatigue, and two men mourned the loss of spontaneity in their relationship with their partner. On a more positive note, two women and three men said that they now viewed their relationship with their spouse as part of a three-way dynamic that included the newborn child. Finally, one woman and one man remarked that
they had come to appreciate a new side to their partner's personality of which they had never before been aware.

The second question investigating the effect of the infant upon pre-existing relationships queried whether having a baby affected the couple's relationships with parents, relatives, and friends. Four men and two women denied that their relationship with their parents had changed due to the birth of the baby. However, two women and one man felt that their relationship with their parents had become closer. Clearly, the birth of a child made some of the new parents view their own mothers differently. Five women and two men offered that they felt that they were closer to their mother now, and understood her better. One woman said, "Maybe it made me a little closer to my mom because now I know what she's gone through". On the other hand, one woman described her first postpartum week living with her mother. She had expected their relationship would be as smooth as ever, but she was quite surprised.

I would have thought my mother would understand, but she was taking everything personally. I was saying "Jesus Mother, it's just postpartum blues, you know, it's nothing you've done. I just want to be alone or I want to cry". She was so worried that she was doing something. She's had two kids. You would think she'd understand...so it was incredibly frustrating that she was taking everything so personally. I wasn't up for dealing with it. I just did not want to deal with her emotions. I was more concerned with me and the baby. I just didn't want to deal with her.

Regardless of the positive or negative changes in their relationships with their parents, three men and three women remarked that they saw more of their parents since the birth
of their child. Finally, two women complained that their mothers-in-law gave too much unwanted advice about childcare.

Seven men and two women maintained that there had been no change in their relationships with other relatives since the birth of their baby. Four men and one woman claimed that they saw or heard from their relatives more often. One quarter of the women suggested that they were no longer as close to other relatives as they had been prior to the birth of their child.

Fully half of the respondents, five mothers and six fathers, related that they were no longer as close to their friends as they had once been. On the other hand, two women and two men remarked that their social circle had altered so that they now spent more time with friends who had children.

Satisfaction with the Division of Labour and Childcare

As noted, reliable increases in the sex-typed division of labour have been documented in the literature. Because this sample included couples who claimed that the equal division of household labour and childcare was important to them, two questions were posed in an attempt to measure their satisfaction with the division of household labour and childcare. In addition, congruent with Cowan and Cowan's (1988) assertion that division of labour is one of the largest sources of conflict postpartum, couples were asked if it was, indeed, a source of conflict between them.
In response to the first question about whether they would change the division of labour if they could, seven men and seven women interviewed claimed that they would not. However, the remaining third of the sample had definite ideas about how they would change the division of household labour if they could. Five men offered that they wished they could do more. One man said, "I'd participate a lot more...straightening around the house, running odd errands...to make it easier for Shirley." One husband reported, "If anything, I should probably do more. She complains once in a while that I don't do enough but I'm better now than I used to be." The wife of this man viewed the problem in a slightly different way.

I would like to see Ned do a bit more. He's very good if I ask him to do something but I wish I didn't have to ask. He doesn't realize I do little things around the house that I'd like him to do.

In fact, this theme that the women have to ask their husbands to do chores around the house was an issue for two women in the sample. Clearly, some women felt that household labour was their responsibility, because four women remarked that their husbands occasionally "helped out". Interestingly, no men made the same claim. Finally, one man and one woman each said that their ideal solution would be to hire a housekeeper. Three women commented that they would gladly give up cooking.

1. The actual names of the interviewees have been changed to protect their anonymity.
Two thirds of the men and women in the sample stated in response to the query about changing the division of childcare that they would change it if they could. The clearest desire for one third of both the women and the men was that they wished that the father could help with the feeding. Because the vast majority of the mothers were breastfeeding, this desire was unattainable. Clearly there was a conflict between work and childcare for the fathers. Three of the men communicated that they would like to do more, but that work got in the way. One woman also mentioned that her partner’s work was an issue. For three women, the time when their partner arrived home from work at the end of the day was the time they most wanted a break from childcare and were sometimes denied it when their partner did not take the baby to relieve them. One father explained that he knew his wife really wanted him to hold the baby so that she could do something else, but he was so exhausted from a day at the office that he just needed to rest for a while before taking on the responsibility of the child. Two mothers complained that their partners had only changed disposable diapers, never cloth ones. Although none of the women expressed this attitude, one of the fathers explained that the mother was better at childcare. A third husband endorsed the similar belief that babies should be closer to their mother than their father. The opposite attitude was expressed in this quotation from a mother.

I realize now that anybody—a husband or a wife—can do it. They are acquired skills. A man could be
as much a nurturer as a woman could be. Neither one is predispositioned (sic) to it.

One woman talked about the prevailing belief that childcare is primarily the mother's responsibility. She remarked, "Men say 'I'm babysitting tonight.' It sounds like they are saying it's my job and he is doing me a favour." Another father expressed this attitude, albeit not explicitly. "I take care of her mostly when Susie is tired, but if she gets to be a problem, then I will give (the baby) to her."

The final question regarding division of labour and childcare asked whether the partners discussed how to divide the household tasks and childcare, and if it was a source of friction. Six women and four men reported that they did discuss the division of household labour and childcare with their partner. In addition, five men and five women (not five couples) admitted that this was a source of conflict or friction with their partner. One couple argued over priorities about household chores; they sometimes had different ideas about what should be done first. One woman commented that, "The housework is (a source of friction) because I always seem to do it because I'm home all day."

"Another woman complained that division of household labour was a source of conflict because her partner never "picked up after himself". Later in the interview she continued, "I have often wondered to myself - is there no changing this or what? I've tried lots of things." Only one couple commented that there was friction between them over division
of childcare. The wife spoke of feeling deserted by her husband when he went to bed before the infant was asleep for the night. She would have felt more supported had her husband stayed awake with her. Her husband recognized that she wanted him to remain awake, but he wished that she could understand how hard it was to go to work in the morning after five hours of sleep. One woman and one man felt that their lack of sleep was responsible for most of their arguments over division of labour and childcare.

Beliefs about Mothers' and Fathers' Roles

Although the AWS was included in the study to measure attitudes about appropriate sex roles for women and men, two sets of questions designed to extract the same information were posed to the interviewees. Couples were asked if they had any strong beliefs about mothers' and fathers' roles prior to having a baby and whether those beliefs had changed after the birth of their child. Five women and two men maintained that prior to having their child, they had wanted equal participation by both partners in childcare. Two women and three men remarked that, prior to the birth of their child, they had learned traditional beliefs from their parents.

For some, their current beliefs were decidedly traditional. For instance, one mother and two fathers endorsed the opinion that mothers should have the primary responsibility for childcare. Similarly, one quarter of the men and a single woman said that it was the father's job to
provide for the family. Fully one third of the women and none of the men made a special point of saying that they thought it was important for the mother to stay home with her baby at least for a while.

Several of the parents interviewed endorsed opinions that could be considered discrepant. For instance, one father recalled that, "My father never really held a baby, held me until I was four months old. I think that's wrong. I think he should have been in there from day one." Later, the same father made clear the extent to which he believed the father should be involved. For him, there was a line over which fathers must not cross. He said, "The mother is the primary caregiver, especially if breast feeding. The fathers are secondary."

One mother spoke of one of the subtle barriers to paternal participation in childcare. She said, "It's more fun to have equality but trust has to develop first (that the father is a competent caregiver)." Similarly, one father spoke passionately about how difficult it was to alter the patterns learned in one's youth.

If anybody had a traditional husband and wife relationship, it was our family (of origin) for sure. Father would always send the kids to mother if they needed their face wiped or were crying...that's why I don't look at it that way. You have to catch yourself sometimes because I think there is a strong influence there of seeing what my father did and trying to catch myself halfway through and going No No, that's not the way I want to do it.

One father was fervent in his belief that rigid sex roles were wrong. He said:
It bugged me...the idea that women were good at something because they were women. I can prepare meals and clean as well as any woman. I don't think they are better mothers, it's just how you feel about the baby.

The second question designed to tap sex role attitudes stated that most couples became more traditional in their roles with the birth of the first child. The interviewees were then asked if this described their situation, and how they felt about it. Eight women and seven men of the 22 interviewed agreed that their roles had become more traditional since the birth of their child. Many regarded this as a temporary situation that would change as the baby developed and the mother resumed her employment in the paid work force.

A common theme for many of the interviewees was the role that economics played in their decisions about who would be the primary caregiver. Three women remarked that they had considered a less traditional role division whereby they would work outside the home and their husbands would be the primary caregiver. All three couples abandoned this proposal because it was unfeasible economically. In all three cases, the female partner earned significantly less money than her partner, and with a new child to support, they could not afford the drop in income.

Economics also determined the roles of one couple in an unusual situation. The father was the primary caregiver. The couple had originally planned that the mother would stay
home, but when the father was injured on the job, they changed their plans. Because the father could make more on his compensation cheques than the mother could make on unemployment insurance, they decided that she should join the paid work force and he would be the primary caregiver. This arrangement had worked well. However, the couple was considering moving to a small town. The mother expressed her concern that her partner would receive a cool reception at the hands of the conservative townspeople, who might not accept their role exchange.

One woman who had not considered altering her traditional role as primary caregiver nonetheless commented that economics had diminished her choices.

Also our economics doesn't (sic) lend to having it any other way. The higher paying jobs are for the men. Childcare is not overly abundant. It's not government supported so it's expensive. Because I'm not in a career where I'm making a lot of money it's not worth my while to get somebody else to look after her. So that also is why we chose the traditional roles. It's just not economically feasible.

One husband continued, in part, this line of reasoning in the following quote.

I'm the breadwinner now. It's been conscious (the decision), but I haven't volunteered to become that part, it just kind of came by default. If Jan's career was better paying or more important, I wouldn't want her forsaking her career to raise children unless she wanted to.

One mother talked about the traditional roles she and her partner were fulfilling:

It scares me a little bit, because I don't particularly want to be like my mom and dad. But I also feel confident that we don't have to let that happen.
Conversely, three women and one man offered that they were very happy with the mother staying at home, and that they were content with the roles they were fulfilling. The same woman quoted above, who spoke of the impact of economics upon her decision not to rejoin the paid work force, speculated:

I guess that's the way we are supposed to be. Social biological roles. It goes back to the beginning of how it was meant to be. The birth of the baby having released all the hormones and everything makes you want to feel that way.

Finally, one mother reported that she expected to feel differently about the traditional roles she and her husband had adopted. "Right now I feel fine. I project a couple of months into the future...it might be different."

Additional Comments

Because of the structured nature of the interview, the interviewees were given an opportunity at the end of the formal questions to add any comments they felt were important.

Two women revealed that their sense of themselves had altered, and that they felt that they had lost, at least temporarily, their identities as separate persons independent of their status as a mother. One woman complained that she had to remind her husband that she was still herself, apart from her role as a mother. Another woman described her feelings that there were no boundaries between herself and her infant.

You lose a lot of who you are when you have a baby. The baby thinks of he (sic) and you as one person. You
start to feel that way too, that he and I are as one after a while. There is no separation from this kid. He may as well be still inside me because even though he's outside, he's still a part of me, especially if you're breastfeeding. You really are tied to them, I guess.

Finally, a woman spoke of her anxiety about being a new mother and her feelings of wanting to escape into the paid work force.

It's easy on bad days with Ruth to want to go back to work. It's not a want, but a need to go back to something I'm familiar with. That's (work is) a comfort zone for me. So whenever I'm feeling insecure and inadequate...(I want to go back to work.) It's a case of taking the confidence I gleaned from having worked and transferring those skills and equating them to childrearing.
Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the changes that occur in the transition to parenthood in terms of dyadic adjustment and division of labour. Congruent with the literature, the results of this study confirm that the division of labour becomes more traditional with the birth of a first child. Contrary to the literature, there was no decrease in dyadic adjustment found in this sample at two months postpartum. The reasons for this are a function of research design, the sample studied, and other more specific effects.

As hypothesized, there was a significant increase in the proportional amount of time spent doing sex-typed household tasks and childcare after the birth of the first child. This increase happened in spite of the fact that the division of labour prepartum was quite traditional, leaving little room for movement toward an even more traditional arrangement.

The traditional division of labour at the prepartum assessment reflected a high level of one household chore in particular. Couples commonly made improvements to their homes or apartments prior to the birth of their baby. During the prepartum assessment, it was common for the investigator to be shown the new "baby's room", or the final additions to the home being worked on in order to be completed prior to the baby's delivery. Making home improvements such as carpentry and painting, or simply
fixing things around the house are all traditionally masculine tasks, and the men in this sample were doing these tasks with great frequency at the prepartum assessment. The additional time men spent making home improvements had the effect of increasing the degree of the traditional division of labour. Goldberg, Michaels, and Lamb (1985) argued that the third trimester of pregnancy is the most egalitarian division of labour throughout the transition to parenthood. If this were so, the increased time men spent doing this masculine task would be a variable countering this egalitarian effect.

The division of labour did not become significantly more traditional if childcare was excluded from the postpartum assessment. This result coincides with the observations of McHale and Huston (1985) that the transition to parenthood did not decrease the willingness of men and women to do chores traditionally assigned to the opposite sex. Rather, the increased traditionality reflects the fact that the women did almost all of the childcare, a traditionally feminine task. However, this result does not match the subjective accounts of those couples who were interviewed. It was certainly their impression that, with one exception where the traditional roles were reversed, the new mother was doing a larger proportion of the household labour postpartum than she had done prepartum. Lacking objective data, it may have been very difficult to assess
who was doing what during the postpartum weeks without
confounding calculations of household labour with childcare.

As mentioned previously, upon perusal of the initial
ANOVA test of the division of labour, it became apparent
that the four undifferentiated tasks had a great impact on
the proportions reflecting traditionality of the division of
labour. Running errands, making an expensive purchase,
paying bills, and budgeting, planning, or reviewing expenses
are the four categories that are performed equally by women
and men. Clearly, couples were making expensive purchases
with regularity in the third trimester of pregnancy. Cribs,
changing tables, clothing, and diapers all had to be
purchased before the arrival of the child. Also, when the
men were working on the additions to their homes, the couple
would make large purchases in order to furnish them.
Because these undifferentiated tasks accounted for a
substantial amount of the prepartum proportion, but far less
in the postpartum proportion, their effect was to obscure
the degree of sex-typing employed to divide household
labour.

If the unit of analysis is changed from the couple to
the individual, one can see that undifferentiated tasks
account for a larger part of the total time spent on
household labour and childcare by men than by women,
especially in the postpartum period. These data match
Meissner's (1977) finding that men prefer to do household
tasks that have at least one of the following characteristics:
clearly defined parameters as to what the job is, and when it is done; an element of discretion as to when the job must be done; and a greater proportion of leisure included. The undifferentiated tasks listed above all include one of these criteria.

One of the most salient reasons for the increase in the sex-typed division of labour postpartum, at least in the first eight weeks, is the fact that 85% of the mothers in the sample were breastfeeding their infants. The implications of this fact are monumental. It means that the mother must be present for all feedings, which effectively limits her time away from the infant from one to four hours at a time, depending upon the feeding schedule. In addition, the fact that the child is being breastfed precludes the possibility of the father taking a turn at night, which would significantly diminish the mother's strain of trying to function under conditions of sleep deprivation. All of the mothers in the study took some time off from their paid work to recover from the delivery and become acquainted with their infant. Thus, in those early postpartum weeks they were in the home most of the day. Because they were in the home, it seemed natural and logical to them to do the household labour as well as the childcare.

It was the investigator's impression that the prenatal classes were a great influence upon the expecting parents as well. Certainly the prevailing notion in the prenatal classes attended by the parents in this sample was that
breastfeeding, rather than bottle feeding, was the choice to make. The pressure to breastfeed was so great that two mothers of the 11 interviewed complained that they wanted to quit but felt pressured not to quit or guilty about wanting to quit. They felt as though they were "bad mothers" for not wanting to breastfeed, as if they did not love their children.

The women in the present study spent 10.03 hours per day postpartum on household chores and childcare, while the men spent eight hours a day at their place of paid work, then put in another four and a half hours of household labour and childcare at home. If one did not consider the conditions under which women labour it would appear that women had the easier load because they worked two and a half hours less per day. However, the division of labour measure used in this study does not account for the myriad of times that the child is asleep or quietly resting, but the mother remains responsible. The father has large sections of time throughout every day when he is not responsible for his child, but the mother remains "on the job" even when her child is sleeping. Furthermore, unlike paid work there are no scheduled coffee breaks. Mothers must work under conditions of sleep deprivation whilst trying to recover from the trauma of delivery. There is no starting and ending hour to the job. It is continuous, without a break, one day after the next.
As previously noted, the trend toward the increased
sex-typing of the division of labour has been questioned by
Goldberg et al. (1985). They argue that there is a
fundamental error in the research design in most
longitudinal studies of the transition to parenthood because
couples are measured once during the third trimester of
pregnancy, and again in the postpartum period. They submit
that there is a curvilinear relationship in the division of
labour such that in early pregnancy the division is
traditional, becoming more egalitarian during the third
trimester of pregnancy, and returning to the baseline in the
postpartum months. Thus, Goldberg et al. (1985) argue that
most of the studies in the literature inflate the degree to
which the division of labour becomes traditional in the
postpartum weeks. However, Belsky and Pensky (1988) rebut
this proposal and suggest that the direction of change is
accurately depicted, even if the size of the change is
exaggerated. Furthermore, they argue that these results may
accurately reflect the phenomenological experience of the
family. This area of contention will not be resolved until
more longitudinal studies that follow families from early
pregnancy to several months postpartum support or refute the
findings of Goldberg et al. (1985).

Another perspective from which to examine these results
is the sociological theory of the power relationship between
the couple. The assumption is that household labour is a
job which is mostly unrewarding and therefore, people will
try to avoid doing it if they can. Hence, a spouse or partner will do household labour to the extent that his or her relative power in the relationship is low (Kamo, 1988). The key to power is essentially income. Men gain power in the household to the extent that women are economically dependent upon them (Chafetz, 1988). In fact, husbands' incomes have been found to be negatively correlated to the amount of household labour they perform (Kamo, 1988).

Conversely, the income of wives is not related to the amount of household labour that their husbands perform when both partners are employed full time.

This power relationship based primarily on income earned is self-reinforcing (Chafetz, 1988). Men can avoid doing household tasks because they have the advantage in terms of power in the relationship. Using this power in an explicit manner to avoid doing household tasks most often remains an unexercised option as society has defined household labour as "women's work". Thus, women do the work as their role demands. Because women often do a double day of work in the paid work force and in the home, this leaves them less able to compete with men for the higher paying jobs which would increase their power. In this way, the power differential between women and men is maintained.

In relation to the transition to parenthood, this theory can also explain the finding that women do the lion's share of household labour and childcare after their baby is born. All of the families in this study enjoyed dual
incomes prior to the birth of the baby. During the postpartum weeks, all of the mothers quit work either permanently or for a couple of months. Because they were no longer employed in the paid work force, their economic contribution to the household declined dramatically. Thus, according to the power theory, so did their power in their relationship, and their ability to negotiate the division of household labour. As much as this theory has intellectual appeal, it does not seem to match the subjective experience of the couples interviewed. None of the 11 couples interviewed spoke in terms of the power each partner wielded within their relationship.

Although the division of labour and childcare became much more traditional during the postpartum period, there was no evidence that dyadic adjustment decreased as well. Undoubtedly the clearest explanation for the lack of an expected decline in dyadic adjustment was the time of the postpartum assessment, which may have been too early to register an effect. Eight weeks postpartum was chosen as the earliest possible measurement time that would coincide with research designs in the literature as well as substantially decrease the confound of postpartum depression. However, the majority of studies in the literature that document a significant decline in dyadic adjustment assessed this variable at three months (Belsky et al., 1983; Goldberg et al., 1985; Ryder, 1973) or at six
months postpartum (Cowan & Cowan, 1988; LaRossa & LaRossa, 1981).

Although the decline in dyadic adjustment in the literature is a reliable, significant one, the size of the effect is modest. Cowan and Cowan (1988) document that, in studies using the Locke-Wallace or the DAS scales, the average decline from prepartum to postpartum scores was approximately four to 10 points. Couples generally decreased from around 125 to 115 after the birth of their child, with most parents rating their prepartum adjustment higher than the norms collected by the scales' developers who reported a mean of 114.8 (S.D. 17.8) for married couples. The means of the present sample were below the average cited by Cowan and Cowan (1988) but above the norms reported by Spanier (1976) with a prepartum mean of 118.3 (S.D. 8.5), and a postpartum mean of 120.2 (S.D. 11.5).

What seems to have happened with the present sample is that, at the time of measurement, their dyadic adjustment scores had not yet begun to fall. The theory that there is a baby or postpartum "honeymoon" has been put forward by some investigators (Entwistle & Doering, 1980; Miller & Sollie, 1980). An alternative interpretation is that, while experiencing the difficulties of the early postpartum months, it may be easier for parents not to acknowledge or to de-emphasize any problems they may have, as a method of coping with them (Cowan & Cowan, 1988). Perhaps once new parents become accustomed to the changes wrought by having a
child, and feel like they are in control of their lives once again, they can afford to discuss their problems without disrupting an adaptive coping mechanism. It was certainly evident from the interviews done in this study that many of the parents considered their relationship with their partner to be "on hold" for the time being. The focus of their lives was undeniably upon their newborn child, not their relationship.

On the other hand, it was sometimes necessary during the interviews to reassure mothers that it was "normal" to feel ambivalent about their child. The same reluctance to discuss complaints or ambivalence surrounding their relationship with their partner may also be demonstrated here.

Finally, the interviews revealed that the mothers sometimes felt that they lost their identity as separate people from their child. Similarly, new mothers commented that when their partner loved their child, it made them feel "good" or "special". It may be that at this early postpartum stage, attention and love directed at the newborn infant may be interpreted as directed at the mother also because the boundaries between mother and infant are so tentative. Hence, it requires a return to a sense of self distinct from the child in order to recognize the strain in the dyadic relationship.

Also evident in the interviews was a feeling that the couples were definitely experiencing a transition period;
one that would pass. Consequently, it is possible that the attributions made by the new parents focussed on the difficulties of the situation, rather than the difficulties with their partner. One would expect that this attribution would be made less often, once life with a child became more stable.

The hypothesis that couples with babies who cried frequently would experience a greater decline in dyadic adjustment was not demonstrated. The explanations given above regarding time of postpartum assessment and situational attributions still apply here. It is also possible that the amount of crying that the infant engages in at eight weeks is important. According to Brazelton (1962), normal infants cry an average of two and three-quarter hours per day at six weeks postpartum. However, by eight weeks the average crying per day has decreased to two hours (Brazelton, 1962). It is quite likely that because of the contrast, the infant would seem to be crying relatively little, and in turn, influencing less her or his parents' interaction. Anecdotally, it is interesting to note that one couple found that their child’s sense of timing was unfortunate, because as soon as they had the opportunity to make love, their child would cry, effectively squelching the moment.

Just as there was no overall decline in dyadic adjustment, neither was there an interaction between sex role attitudes and dyadic adjustment. Again, to the extent
that the timing of the postpartum assessment was too early to demonstrate any decrease in dyadic adjustment, it would also be too early to reveal an interaction. However, one cannot assume that the timing of the measurement explains this result entirely.

The sample in this study had higher AWS scores than the norms reported by Helmreich et al. (1982) or by Atkinson and Huston (1984). Helmreich et al. (1982) reported mean scores of college students as 29.5 and 26.0 whereas Atkinson and Huston (1984) listed means of 30.8 and 27.7, for women and men, respectively. In the present study, the means were 35.0 and 39.0 for men and women. Because the difference in the means is so large, a difference in the samples is indicated. The most obvious difference is the manner in which the sample was solicited. Atkinson and Huston (1984) contacted couples whose names had been drawn from public marriage license records. As such, none of their sample consisted of cohabitating couples. The degree to which this may have affected the AWS scores of the sample is unclear.

In contrast, the solicitation of couples from prenatal classes resulted in a sample that was largely middle class, caucasian, and fairly well educated. Furthermore, it may be that since this study required significant time and effort from both partners, those couples who held more traditional beliefs that the man's role in parenting is limited may not have volunteered. Clearly, the solicitation of the sample
in this manner resulted in higher average scores and less variability of reported sex role attitudes.

This peculiarity of the sample has an important impact upon the results. First, the higher mean AWS scores compounded with a restricted range may account for the lack of differentiation between traditional and feminist couples on the DAS. Remember, this lack of differentiation between feminist and traditional couples was also reflected in the interviews. In other words, couples in the sample were too alike in their attitudes about sex roles to be discriminated in any meaningful way. Logically, this inability to characterize the sample in terms of traditional and feminist couples would extend to any scale, including the division of labour measure. There was a hypothesized interaction between sex roles and division of labour such that feminist couples would become less traditional in their division of labour postpartum relative to traditional couples. This hypothesis was not confirmed, perhaps because the higher scores and restricted range on the AWS rendered the traditional and feminist groups too similar in terms of attitudes.

It was considered that in view of the high AWS scores, the couples may have been responding in a socially desirable manner. Consequently, the scores on the AWS were tested for a correlation with the scores on the MC-SDS. There was no significant correlation. This could be interpreted as refuting the hypothesis that subjects were responding in a
socially desirable manner. However, this may be more parsimoniously explained by the restricted range of the AWS scores reducing the correlation between the two variables. It is conceivable that an existing relationship between the two variables may not have been noted, due to this restricted range.

As well as the limited range of the AWS scores and the early timing of the postpartum assessment period, there may be other factors influencing the results. Recall that the logic behind the hypothesis that feminist couples would experience a greater decline in dyadic adjustment than traditional couples was based upon the assumption that an egalitarian division of household labour and childcare would be the behavioural expression of feminist sex role attitudes. Because these data from this study clearly show that the division of labour becomes more traditional postpartum, something must mediate between the knowledge of this inequity and the partners' perceptions of their relationship. Perhaps the new parents are simply overwhelmed by the changes brought about by their newborn baby. Considerations of feminist political ends are rendered powerless in the face of the day to day struggle to cope. The new circumstances brought about by having a baby may be so overwhelming that feminist attitudes become unrelated to dyadic adjustment and division of labour and childcare. Cowan and Cowan (1988) suggest that it is partly a problem of ideology being ahead of work-family and male-
female arrangements. For example, it is an unusual career that allows a father flexible hours in order to do childcare. Similarly, as evidenced in the interviews in this study, the unequal wages earned by men and women result in women staying at home to care for their children, instead of a more equal sharing of this role. As well, the lack of subsidized childcare renders many couples helpless to change the traditional roles with which they have been saddled. When the postpartum situation is regarded from this point of view, the idea that couples make attributions that are situational rather than characterological seems a reasonable response.

One of the most interesting findings of the interview data was the new parents' impressions of how their relationships had changed with their parents, particularly with their mothers. Fischer (1988), in her study of adult daughters and their mothers, describes the alteration of the mother-daughter relationship from being role complements (as mother-daughter) to role colleagues (as mother-mother). This change, in conjunction with the greater interaction between mothers and daughters who live close to each other, results in daughters viewing themselves and their mothers differently. Although Fischer (1988) did not include new fathers in her study, there is reason to believe that at least some of these observations apply to them as well. After all, two men out of the 11 men interviewed commented that they felt closer to their mother after having had a
child. They explained that they understood her better. This increased understanding stems from being able to view themselves from the dual role perspective of parent and child (Fischer, 1986). Suddenly, decisions made about the new parent when she or he was a youth that may have seemed harsh and inflexible then, now become more understandable in the face of the responsibility and depth of feeling they have for their own child.

Finally, Fischer (1986) comments that when a daughter becomes a mother, the hierarchical relationship between the new mother and grandmother becomes less problematical for a number of reasons. First, relative to the newborn child, both the mother and grandmother are adults, and there appears to be less need on the part of the new mothers to establish independence and prove that they have reached adulthood. Secondly, the focus of mothering is turned upon the grandchild, rather than the mother. Finally, although the new mother is undeniably an adult, in the early postpartum period she may turn to both her husband and her mother to be nurtured or "mothered" while she attempts to cope with the demands of a newborn.

One of the strongest features of the present study is the time-budget method used to measure division of labour. Unlike questionnaires that ask who is responsible for what chores, or estimations of the number of hours spent doing each chore, this method provides a more accurate reflection of the couple's activities. These charts are likely to have
less bias than other methods because they require respondents to check off their behaviour as they engage in it, rather than relying on estimations and retrospective reports. Future research of division of labour would benefit from the continued use of this method.

Future research should ideally include more qualitative data as well as the quantitative data. Qualitative data adds a dimension of rich information that colours the quantitative data, and renders it more easily understood. As well, it serves as a catalyst to consider explanations not formally hypothesized in the initial stages of research.

The vast majority of studies in the transition to parenthood investigate the intact, caucasian, middle-class, heterosexual couple. Unfortunately, these studies leave us uninformed about the transition experience of single mothers or fathers, persons of colour, working class, or gay or lesbian couples. The study of the transition to parenthood would benefit from the inclusion of these populations in research, and would advance our understanding of this developmental period beyond the experience of the nuclear family, that no longer represents the life circumstances of so many.
APPENDICES
Appendix A

Attitudes Toward Women Scale

The statements listed below describe attitudes which different people have. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about the following by circling A, B, C, or D for each.

Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.
A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in the household tasks such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.
A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.
A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

A woman should be as free as a man to propose marriage.
A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly
Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of man.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly

Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.

A Agree Strongly
B Agree Mildly
C Disagree Mildly
D Disagree Strongly
Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.

A Agree Strongly  
B Agree Mildly  
C Disagree Mildly  
D Disagree Strongly

Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.

A Agree Strongly  
B Agree Mildly  
C Disagree Mildly  
D Disagree Strongly

In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children.

A Agree Strongly  
B Agree Mildly  
C Disagree Mildly  
D Disagree Strongly

Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than the acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.

A Agree Strongly  
B Agree Mildly  
C Disagree Mildly  
D Disagree Strongly

There are many jobs which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.

A Agree Strongly  
B Agree Mildly  
C Disagree Mildly  
D Disagree Strongly
Appendix B

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

Most persons have disagreements in their relationships.

Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

(Circle A, B, C, D, E, or F for each)

Handling family matters

A Always Agree
B Almost Always Agree
C Occasionally Disagree
D Frequently Disagree
E Almost Always Disagree
F Always Disagree

Matters of recreation

A Always Agree
B Almost Always Agree
C Occasionally Disagree
D Frequently Disagree
E Almost Always Disagree
F Always Disagree

Religious matters

A Always Agree
B Almost Always Agree
C Occasionally Disagree
D Frequently Disagree
E Almost Always Disagree
F Always Disagree

Demonstrations of affection

A Always Agree
B Almost Always Agree
C Occasionally Disagree
D Frequently Disagree
E Almost Always Disagree
F Always Disagree
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<th>Friends</th>
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<td>A  Always Agree</td>
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<td>B  Almost Always Agree</td>
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<td>C  Occasionally Disagree</td>
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<td>D  Frequently Disagree</td>
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<td>E  Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<td>F  Always Disagree</td>
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<th>Sex relations</th>
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<td>B  Almost Always Agree</td>
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<td>C  Occasionally Disagree</td>
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<td>E  Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<td>F  Always Disagree</td>
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<th>Conventionality (correct or proper behaviour)</th>
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<td>F  Always Disagree</td>
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<th>Philosophy of life</th>
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<td>E  Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<td>F  Always Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws</th>
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<td>A  Always Agree</td>
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<td>E  Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<td>F  Always Disagree</td>
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### Aims, goals, and things believed important

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Always Agree</th>
<th>B Almost Always Agree</th>
<th>C Occasionally Disagree</th>
<th>D Frequently Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amount of time spent together</strong></td>
<td>A Always Agree</td>
<td>B Almost Always Agree</td>
<td>C Occasionally Disagree</td>
<td>D Frequently Disagree</td>
<td>E Almost Always Disagree</td>
<td>F Always Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Making major decisions</strong></td>
<td>A Always Agree</td>
<td>B Almost Always Agree</td>
<td>C Occasionally Disagree</td>
<td>D Frequently Disagree</td>
<td>E Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Household tasks</strong></td>
<td>A Always Agree</td>
<td>B Almost Always Agree</td>
<td>C Occasionally Disagree</td>
<td>D Frequently Disagree</td>
<td>E Almost Always Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leisure time interests and activities</strong></td>
<td>A Always Agree</td>
<td>B Almost Always Agree</td>
<td>C Occasionally Disagree</td>
<td>D Frequently Disagree</td>
<td>E Almost Always Disagree</td>
<td>F Always Disagree</td>
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</table>
Career decisions
A Always Agree
B Almost Always Agree
C Occasionally Disagree
D Frequently Disagree
E Almost Always Disagree
F Always Disagree

How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your relationship?
A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?
A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

Do you confide in your mate?
A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never
Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?

A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

How often do you and your partner quarrel?

A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

How often do you and your mate "get on each other's nerves"?

A All the time
B Most of the time
C More often than not
D Occasionally
E Rarely
F Never

Do you kiss your mate?

A Every day
B Almost every day
C Occasionally
D Rarely
E Never

Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?

A All of them
B Most of them
C Some of them
D Very few of them
E None of them
How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate?

Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?

A Never
B Less than once a month
C Once or twice a month
D Once or twice a week
E Once a day
F More often

Laugh together

A Never
B Less than once a month
C Once or twice a month
D Once or twice a week
E Once a day
F More often

Calmly discuss something

A Never
B Less than once a month
C Once or twice a month
D Once or twice a week
E Once a day
F More often

Work together on a project

A Never
B Less than once a month
C Once or twice a month
D Once or twice a week
E Once a day
F More often

There are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused some differences in opinion or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Check yes or no for each item)
Being too tired for sex. Yes____ No____

Not showing love. Yes____ No____

The dots on the following line represent different degrees of happiness in your relationship. The middle point, "happy", represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the dot which best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, in your relationship.

---

EXT-   FAIRLY    A LITTLE    HAPPY  VERY  EXT-   PER-
       REMELY    HAPPY  HAPPY   HAPPY  REMELY   FECT
       HAPPY

Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?

____I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any lengths to see that it does.

____I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.

____It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can't do much more than I am doing right now to keep the relationship going.

____It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing right now to keep the relationship going.
Appendix C

Please complete this chart on Saturday. Every fifteen minutes check off the activity(ies) that you are doing.

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<th>8:00 A.M.</th>
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<td>Buy wife's clothes</td>
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<td>8:00</td>
<td>Make an expensive purchase</td>
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<td>8:30</td>
<td>Straighten up, put things away</td>
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*Note: The table is a schedule for daily tasks.*
Appendix D

Cryscore

The following questions concern your baby's behaviour.

Please rate these aspects for the past week.

1. Approximately how many times per day does your baby cry?
   
   ____ Less than five times. (0)
   ____ Between five and nine times. (1)
   ____ Between ten and fifteen times. (2)
   ____ More than fifteen times. (3)

2. How long does the single longest crying episode last each day?

   ____ Less than two minutes. (0)
   ____ Two to five minutes. (1)
   ____ Five to ten minutes. (2)
   ____ Ten to thirty minutes. (3)
   ____ Longer than thirty minutes. (4)

3. How long does an average crying episode last?

   ____ Less than two minutes. (0)
   ____ Two to five minutes. (1)
   ____ Five to ten minutes. (2)
   ____ Ten to thirty minutes. (3)
   ____ Longer than thirty minutes. (4)
Appendix E

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out at a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I wasn't seen I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I have felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.

15. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.

16. I am always willing to admit when I have made a mistake.

17. I always try to practice what I preach.

18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed obnoxious people.

19. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.

20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.

21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.

22. At times I have really insisted on having thing my own way.

23. There have been occasions when I have felt like smashing things.

24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.

25. I never resent being asked to return a favour.

26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.

28. There have been times when I have been quite jealous of the good fortune of others.

29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.

30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.

31. I have never felt that I have been punished without cause.

32. I sometimes think that when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.

33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.
Appendix F

Interview Schedule

1. Was having a baby different from your expectations? (If yes) How is it better? How is it worse?
2. Has having a baby affected your relationship with your partner? (If yes) How?
3. Has having a baby affected your relationship with your parents? relatives? friends? (If yes) How?
4. Would you change the division of household labour if you could? (If yes) How?
5. Would you change the division of childcare if you could? (If yes) How?
6. Do you discuss with your partner how to split up household labour and childcare? Is it a source of conflict or friction between you and your partner?
7. Did you have any strong beliefs about mothers’ and fathers’ roles prior to having your baby? How do you feel about it now?
8. Most couples find that they become more traditional in their roles with their first child. Was that the case with you? How do you feel about it?
9. As a transition to parenthood researcher, is there anything that I have neglected to ask that you think is important for me to know?
References


