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GENDERED MARITAL ROLES

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ABSTRACT

This study contributes to research on changing gender ideologies in marriage by focusing on a unique group of marriage innovators. We compare and contrast newlywed couples who chose covenant marriage, a new legal option in Louisiana primarily attractive to those of evangelical faiths, with couples who chose standard marriage. With quantitative and qualitative data from the Marriage Matters project (1997-2004), we explore how covenant couples solve the problem of endorsing gender traditionalism within an increasingly egalitarian society. Not surprisingly, the quantitative analyses demonstrate that covenants are more traditional than standards across indices of religious, marital, and gender attitudes. Covenant couples actively create a nuanced, complex story about harmony in marriage that involves women's subordination to men. In fact, covenants defuse the stigma of gender subordination by casting sanctified marriage as a service to God. More importantly, covenant couples routinely discuss a new hybrid form of gender traditionalism which incorporates emotional ethics of mutuality, respect, and egalitarianism. Thus, covenant spouses seem consciously intent on reconciling ideological impulses for both traditionalism and egalitarianism with respect to gender in their young marriages. Conversely, standard newlywed couples are far less adept or adroit at discussing gender obligations or roles, and frequently far less likely to be in agreement as spouses. They are more diverse and fragmented in their views about the roles femininity and masculinity play in marriage. We discuss the implications of these findings for research on struggles in contemporary marriage over the shifting terrain of gender roles.

Recent decades witnessed a decrease in strictly traditional attitudes about gendered responsibilities in marriage and a concomitant increase in the individualization of marriage (Cherlin 2004; Amato 2004; Twenge 1997; Wilkie 1993). However, some segments of society, such as evangelicals, continue to stand out for their adherence to traditional gender ideologies and for their heightened concern about family decline (Sanchez et al 2001; Wilcox and Bartkowski 2000; Wilcox 2004; Brooks 2002) . Evangelical discourse routinely focuses on men's authority and the necessity of a marital hierarchy involving women's subordination (Bartkowski 2001; Wilcox and Bartkowski 2000), a discourse which, in many respects, is in conflict with mainstream society's more egalitarian views. This societal mismatch poses a unique problem for modern day evangelical women and men entering and defining their place in marriage. This dilemma may be even more complex for those evangelicals who live in a state that offers the legal option of a covenant marriage. Although a covenant marriage has only limited legal differences from a standard marriage, symbolically covenant marriage is distinct from standard marriage. This symbolic distinction may afford individuals both a chance to publicly announce their conceptions of gender-traditional norms in marriage, and forge new marital norms that focus on a gender hierarchy with an egalitarian ethos of interdependency and respect.

Using quantitative and qualitative data from the Marriage Matters (1997-2004) dataset of newlywed covenant and standard couples in Louisiana, we employ a symbolic interactionist perspective to compare and contrast how covenant and standard couples assign meaning to their gendered and religious attitudes about wives' and husbands' obligations in marriage. We explain, for the covenant pioneers, how the legal reform of covenant marriage symbolizes a hybrid form of modern marriage that reconciles a strict marital gender hierarchy with spousal

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interdependency, mutuality and respect. First, we explore whether and how covenant couples differ from standard couples in attitudes about the place of religion and gender in marriage. We demonstrate how the effects of covenant marriage are distinct from religiosity, by examining the mediating and moderating effects of evangelism on religious, marital, and gender role attitudes. Second, we explore the rich story that covenant couples uniformly relate about how the covenant innovation serves as a tool to reconcile their desires for a traditional marital gender hierarchy with a mutually respectful and egalitarian emotional understanding of gendered obligations within contemporary marriage. Our primary goal is to investigate the ways covenant and standard couples differ in constructing stories about the meaning of gender in their young marriages, and the meaning of their marriages in wider contemporary society.

This study contributes to family studies research on struggles within contemporary marriage over traditional and egalitarian gender ideologies, by focusing on a nascent form of marriage, covenant marriage, in which the spouses consciously assert their gender traditionalism within a wider normative social context of individualism and gender egalitarianism within marriage. We show how covenant marriage serves as a countercultural tool that opposes mainstream movements toward individualism in marriage, but which also co-opts successfully some of the ideals of individualistic marriage, such as emotional egalitarianism and mutuality between spouses. With some exceptions, covenant couples may represent a unique form of marriage because they meld with deliberation and forethought opposing patriarchal and progressive elements in their visions of gender in marriage, seeking explicitly to short-circuit some of the gender hostilities and confusions problematic in newlywed marriages.

Background and Theoretical Framework

A Brief History of Covenant Marriage

In 1997, Louisiana became the first state to offer citizens the option of either a standard marriage or a covenant marriage. The covenant marriage license requires couples to sign an affidavit stating that they have undergone pre-marital counseling, that marriage is for life, that they have revealed all relevant information to their future spouse, and that they accept the restricted grounds for divorce in a covenant marriage. Those grounds are traditional fault-based reasons: adultery, a felony conviction that results in life imprisonment or death, physical or sexual abuse of a spouse or a child of the spouse, or abandonment. If a spouse cannot prove an acceptable fault-based reason for divorce, the couple may obtain a no-fault divorce. But they must wait approximately 2 years rather than 6 months for standard marriage, undertaking marital counseling during this longer waiting period (Nock, Wright, and Sanchez 1999). Many proponents argue that covenant marriage will promote greater marital commitment, prevent hastily made decisions to divorce, and promote healthier and happier marriages (see Nock, Wright, and Sanchez 1999 for a review). Though technically written as a law neutral with respect to religion, covenant marriage found its greatest support in evangelical communities.

Egalitarianism among Evangelicals

Research has shown that over the last several years, Americans have adopted more egalitarian attitudes (Zuo and Tang 2000; Mason and Lu 1988; Cherlin 2004). Zuo and Tang's (2000) study of married women and men from a longitudinal survey from 1980 to 1992 shows that both women and men have become more egalitarian in their gender ideologies. However, married women remain more liberal in gender attitudes than men and the sex difference remained fairly constant over the twelve years observed in the study. Research also shows that

while societal changes have moved towards more egalitarian attitudes, some segments of society stand out for their adherence to traditional marital norms (Wilcox 2004; Gallagher 2003).

The research consensus is that more conservative and fundamentalist religions, such as evangelical Protestants, endorse clearer distinctions between femininity and masculinity. Their gender attitudes are more traditional. Evangelical principles often call upon the husband to be the head of the family and for the wife to submit to her husband's leadership. As the head of the family the husband possesses somewhat more authority in decisions concerning his family; his ascribed duty is to ensure the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of his family. These studies also show that evangelicals feel the importance of God directing their families and a necessity for the husband to listen to God (Gallagher 2003, Bartkowski 2001, Gallagher and Smith 1999, Wilcox and Bartkowski 2000).

However, research documents how contemporary societal egalitarianism has influenced this ideology of headship and submission within marriage (Bartkowski 2001; Gallagher 2003; Gallagher and Smith 1999; Wilcox and Bartkowski 2000; Wilcox 2004). These studies show that although lay Evangelicals are traditional in attitudes, they incorporate modern ideals of egalitarianism into their language and typify marriage in a unique way as a hierarchical union of equals (Bartkowski 2001; Gallagher 2003; Gallagher and Smith 1999). This newer doctrine describes husbands as advocates for their families who subordinate their personal interests, and who solicit the wife's advice in family decisions. In this version of evangelism, wives "choose" to submit and offer this submission as a gift to husbands who have "earned leadership" through compassion (Gallagher and Smith 1999; Gallagher 2003). In fact, Wilcox (2004) noted the increase of an egalitarian ethos in traditional evangelical rhetoric and termed these men "soft

patriarchs," stating that they are more likely to be emotional and dedicated to their wives and children compared to their non-evangelical counterparts.

Thus, these studies find that evangelicals are a very heterogeneous population with respect to interpretations and expressions of religious ideologies about gender in marriage. Some evangelicals have incorporated elements of egalitarianism into their gender attitudes. Yet, evangelicals continue to be known for their resistance to the modernization and secularization of marriage (Gallagher 2003). However, some limitations persist in this body of research. First, no research addresses whether the choice of a covenant marriage assists evangelical couples to signal to society (or their God) about their endorsement of traditional gender roles, and also affords them symbolic tools to effectively negotiate the unique terms of gender traditionalism in their marriage. Second, the extent that evangelicals see God as an active participant or as the organizing basis for a gendered marital relationship has not been closely examined.

While Gallagher (2003) and Bartkowski (2001) find that evangelicals see gender as somewhat hierarchical and prescribed by God, they did not address whether evangelicals see marital gender roles as a service to God. The degree that a couple sees their marriage as divinely sanctified or sees God as an active participant could be of dramatic symbolic importance in how couples perceive and internalize their "God given" gender roles. Certainly, the extent to which covenant marriage may serve as a matchless public symbol to demonstrate spouses' perceptions of the Godliness of their gendered marriages is absent in the literature. Last, this previous research has used samples of individuals. Bartkowski (2001) used couples, but his study was limited to qualitative data. No previous research has used couple-level data with a combination of quantitative and qualitative data.

A Symbolic Interactionist Perspective on Covenant Gender Identity

Symbolic interactionism focuses on how individuals use symbols, language and interactions to understand, interpret, and enact normative expectations of their social roles (White and Klein 2002). According to this perspective, women and men learn norms of gender appropriate behavior through socialization. One goal of gender socialization is to legitimate social differences between women and men by defining them as normal biological predispositions (West and Zimmerman 1987). Evangelicals often employ language about natural and biological differences to justify their hierarchical gender norms. However, evangelicals also use arguments about "Godly design" to explain gender differences. Evangelicals ground their beliefs and expectations about gender norms in specific divine traits. The symbolic interactionsim view sees gender as a social creation involving normative expectations, and people are held accountable by others for their gendered behavior (West and Zimmerman 1987; West and Fenstermaker 1995). Within this context, evangelicals' more traditional, often patriarchal ideologies may occasionally stand as a direct social challenge to mainstream society's more egalitarian attitudes.

Therefore, a symbolic interactionist perspective suggests that couples who choose the covenant innovation use covenant marriage as a symbolic tool to legitimate the dissonance associated with their counter-normative beliefs about marriage as a religious institution complete with hierarchical gender norms. The covenant marriage law will be symbolically valuable to these couples as a marker of their beliefs in the divine properties and responsibilities of hierarchical gender norms, which they see as reaffirming their belief and service to God. Thus, in this study, we are not interested in covenant marriage solely as a legal reform, but rather are focused on exploring covenant marriage as a symbolic innovation to which couples bring their values about gender, religion, and marriage.

Hence, in our argument, a covenant marriage serves primarily as a *symbolically* different form of marriage, separate from the "standard" marriage offered to heterosexual couples. Though there are minimal legal differences, the fact that covenant marriage is "set apart" from standard marriage may give couples who choose it a chance to shed the normative expectations associated with modern marriage and pioneer new norms for how gender will be displayed in their marriage.   Plausibly, spouses who are both covenant and evangelical may be the most traditional in their conceptions about gender and marriage. However, not all who choose covenant marriage are evangelical. A covenant marriage may be a palatable symbol for non-evangelicals as well to express that their conceptions of marriage and gender are more traditional than those held by mainstream society.

Even though evangelical rhetoric is fairly strict concerning gender hierarchy, lay evangelicals internalize these roles in a variety of different ways. Studies of evangelicals have demonstrated how they tailor their conceptions of the headship/submission model to fit their unique circumstances (Bartkowski 2001; Gallagher 2003; Gallagher and Smith 1999; Wilcox and Bartkowski 2000, Wilcox 2004). Couples may be just as creative with their conceptions of the purpose of covenant marriage. Indeed, the covenant status implies a deep respect for marriage and the view that the purpose of marriage exists external to individualistic needs. Thus, both spouses may use covenant marriage as a symbolic means to subordinate their own personal desires in order to make their marriage work as a gendered "team." The covenant status may be a useful tool for evangelicals to engage in gender negotiations based on respect, mutuality, and interdependence. In fact, covenant couples may be practicing an emergent gender display which incorporates both a belief in a strict divinely-ordained gender hierarchy in marriage with values that endorse principles of mutuality and egalitarianism.

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Do covenant married couples represent a fusion of two gendered extremes: a strong belief in traditional attitudes and a more keen mutual focus on interdependency between the spouses within marriage? The covenant status may help justify their non-normative views of a rigid gender hierarchy within marriage, while also providing spouses the tools to negotiate a more mutual, emotionally egalitarian understanding of gendered responsibilities. In sum, we use a symbolic interactionist perspective to explore covenant couples as apparent social innovators who are actively reworking conflicting gender norms in marriage.

> H_{1Quant}: Covenant married couples may be significantly more traditional in religious, marital, and gender role attitudes than standard married couples, and the within-couple attitude gap between covenant married spouses may be smaller than the attitude gap between standard married spouses.
>
> H_{2Quant}: Covenant marriage may have a unique effect on wives' and husbands' traditional attitudes which is not simply an artifact of evangelism. However, evangelism may act as a moderator, such that the interaction between covenant marriage and evangelism is associated with much greater overall traditionalism in attitudes.
>
> H_{Qual}: Covenant married couples, as compared to standard married couples, may be intensely focused on crafting a uniformly shared narrative. They may have a coherent story about the Godly meaning of gender in their marriages and the beneficial place of their own gendered marriage in wider society that is consistent across the couples.
>
> - Far more than standards, and perhaps by virtue of their socially innovative status, a core element of the covenant married story may typify femininity and masculinity as divinely appointed and deployed in marriage as a service to God. Their stories routinely may justify the complex fusion of a

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belief in a strict marital gender hierarchy with an ethic of emotional egalitarianism and mutuality.

- Conversely, the standard married, both across and within couples, may be more likely to be diverse and fragmented in their narratives about the meaning of gender in marriage. In fact, standard married couples, regardless of their religiosity, may be far more likely to perceive gender ideologies and roles as individualistic, idiosyncratic matters of personal or couple choice rather than as an organizing features of marriage with inherent social responsibilities and normative expectations.

Data and Methods

Quantitative Data

The data are from the Marriage Matters project, funded by the National Science Foundation. The quantitative data are from a five-year, three-wave longitudinal survey of newlywed covenant and standard couples married in Louisiana in 1998-1999. Participants were identified by randomly selecting seventeen parishes proportionate to size. From these parishes, all of the covenant marriage licenses and matching standard marriage licenses filed next to the covenant licenses were selected, producing 1,714 valid licenses. Of these couples 323 were never found or refused to participate in the study. This project uses the first wave of the study, which was administered in 1998-2000, approximately three to six months after the participants' weddings. The response rate for this wave is 69%. An additional 142 couples are excluded from this study because either the wife or the husband did not have valid measures across the three dependent measures. The effective sample size is 500 couples (For a more detailed description of the data see Nock et al 2003).

Dependent Measures

Importance of Religious Homogamy

The first index measures respondents' attitudes towards religion and the importance of shared religiosity in marriage. The mean of the four questions is used and the respondent had to answer at least three questions. Responses ranged from not important (1) to very important (5). The items included: "The partners agree about religious matters," "How important is religious faith in your life," "How important is religious faith in your partner's life," "When you were first thinking about getting married, how important was it to you that you and your partner felt the same way about religion." The Cronbach alphas for all four variables are 0.85 for covenant wives, 0.85 for covenant husbands, 0.83 for standard wives, and 0.82 for standard husbands.

Perceived Permanence of Marriage

The second index measures the respondent's feelings about the permanence of marriage. This index consists of the mean of three questions and the respondent had to have answered at least two questions. The response categories for this scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The items included: "Long waiting periods to get a divorce give people time to get over their anger and work out their problems," "Marriage is an unbreakable covenant with God, not just a contract recognized by the law," and "Marriage is a lifetime relationship and should never be ended except under extreme circumstances." The Cronbach alphas for all three variables are 0.55 for covenant wives, 0.64 for covenant husbands, 0.57 for standard wives, and 0.64 for standard husbands.

Gender Role Attitudes

The third index measures the respondent's gender role attitudes. The index assesses respondent's gender roles attitudes with response categories ranging from strongly disagree (1)

to strongly agree (5) for five measures. The index consists of the mean of the five questions and the respondent had to have answered at least two questions. The items included: "All in all, family life suffers when the wife has a full-time job," "A husband's job is to earn money, a wife's job is to look after the home and family," "It works best when the man earns the money and the woman takes care of home and family," "Taking care of children should be mainly a woman's responsibility," and "By nature, women are better than men at making a home and caring for children." The Cronbach alphas for all five variables are 0.80 for covenant wives, 0.77 for covenant husbands, 0.76 for standard wives, and 0.79 for standard husbands.

Focal Independent Measures

Covenant Marriage

Covenant marriage is a dummy variable measuring whether the couple is covenant (1) or standard married (0).

Evangelism

Steensland et al's (2005) coding technique is used to determine whether the respondent belongs to an Evangelical Protestant denomination. This technique distinguishes the many modern forms of evangelical denominations. Couple's evangelism is a dummy variable measuring whether both spouses self-reported an evangelical religious denomination (1) or all other non-evangelical religious, non-religious, or refusal combinations (0).

Couple's Religiosity

Couple's religiosity consists of the wife's and husband's reports of religiosity across four items. The first item is "How often do you attend religious services?" which has eight response categories ranging from never to several times a week. The second item is "Do you and your partner attend services together?" which has four response categories ranging from never to yes,

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always. The third item is "how often do you pray?" which has six response categories ranging

form never to several times a day. The last item is "I regard myself as a religious

fundamentalist," which has five response categories ranging from strongly agree to strongly

disagree. Couple's religiosity is a summed index of the wife's and husband's separate responses

that they always attend church together, attend church at least once a week or more, pray several

times a day, and agree or strongly agree that they consider themselves religious fundamentalists.

Couple religiosity ranges from 0 to 8.

These measures consist of proximal and distal religious constructs. The constructs are

significantly associated with greater global marital adjustment, more perceived benefits from

marriage, more verbal collaboration, less marital conflict, and less use of verbal aggression

(Mahoney et al 1999). Religiosity is also an important control for a selection effect into

covenant marriage, with couples with more active, mutually-shared religious lives more likely to

select covenant rather than standard marriage.

Control Measures

Human Capital

Human capital is measured with education, work activity, and income. The wives' and

husbands' separate education measures include four categories: less than a high school

education, only a high school education, some post-secondary education, and possessing a

college degree. Work activity is measured with wives' and husbands separate reports of hours

worked last week. A work activity difference measure subtracts husband's weekly work hours

from wife's weekly work hours. Wives' and husbands' individual income is measured with 12

categories ranging from no income to $100,000 or more. The family income measure is created

by averaging the summed wife and husband income brackets. Relative husband/wife difference

in income is measured by two dummy variables. If the wife and husband indicated an income that was within $10,000 of each other than they were indicated as having the same income. If the wife reported an income greater than $10,000 of what her husband indicated than the couple was coded as the wife receiving more income than her husband. The reference group is couples where the husband indicates income greater than $10,000 of his wife's income.

Education is associated with more egalitarian attitudes (Kane 1995; Keysar and Kosmin 1995). Own employment hours are associated with decreased traditionalism among wives and increased traditionalism among husbands (Cassidy and Warren 1996). The difference measure in couple employment hours is associated with decreased traditionalism if wives work more than their husbands and increased traditionalism if wives work less than their husbands (Kane and Sanchez 1994). Wives earning less income than their husbands is associated with increases in traditionalism (Baxter and Kane 1995). Income can be a significant predictor of traditionalism (Kane and Sanchez 1994).

Family Capital

Family capital is measured by multiple indicators of marriage and cohabitation histories and parental status. Cohabitation history is a dummy variable with three categories: no past cohabitation for either spouse; the spouses cohabited with just each other; and any other type of cohabitation. Marriage history is a dummy variable that consists of four categories: whether the wife or husband has had a previous marriage, whether they both have been previously married, and whether the current union is a first marriage for both spouses. Two sets of dummy variables measure parental status. The first set measures immediate presence of children with two dummy variables representing one child present in the household and two or more children present. The second dummy variable measures whether either spouse has non-residential child/ren.

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Individuals who cohabit are significantly less likely to endorse traditionalism than individuals who do not cohabit (Smock 2000). Marital and family disruptions significantly decrease traditionalism for individuals (Sanchez and Gager 2000).

Age and Race

Couple's race/ethnicity measures with dummy variables whether the spouses are both white, both black, or of other racial/ethnic combinations. The wife's and husband's separate ages in years are measured at the time of their marriage.

Age increases traditionalism (Myers and Booth 2002) and being a black couple rather than a white couple or mixed race couple is associated with more traditionalism (Kane 2000).

Appendix table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the independent measures by covenant marriage status and evangelism.

Qualitative Data

This study also draws on in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted in Louisiana in June 2003 with 42 of the respondents who had participated in the original survey. These interviews were conducted mostly in the respondents' homes, but also in various public places as well. Of the interviewees, 21 were from covenant spouses who were still married at the time of the interview (13 women, 9 men), 2 were from covenant spouses who had separated (1 woman, 1 man), 12 were from standard spouses who were still married at the time of the interview (6 women, 6 men), and 5 were from standard spouses who were divorced or separated (4 women, 1 man). Most of the respondents are white, with some blacks, and a few Hispanics.

Interracial, interethnic, and interfaith marriages are also represented in the interviews. The sample includes a large spectrum of religious affiliations and denominations. The standard married respondents reported more diverse religious affiliations and denominations than the

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covenant couples. Among the covenant married couples, a majority of them are from

Evangelical faiths and conservative Protestant denominations (Deines et al 2005). The covenant

and standard respondents represent a wide age range from early 20's to late 70's with most in

their late 20's to early 50's. They vary in education, ranging from high school dropouts to

professional degrees. Most respondents had at least some college education. Respondents also

varied in terms of social class, ranging from the working poor and under-employed to upper

class.

Results

We begin this analysis by demonstrating the uniquely differing religious orientations

of covenant married as compared to standard married couples. Table 1 presents descriptive

statistics for religious denomination for wives and husbands by marriage type. Covenant

married spouses are far more likely to be evangelical and homogamously so than standard

married spouses. If fact, more than twice as many covenant as standard marriages consist of

couples in which both partners are evangelical. Among covenants, 83% of wives and 67% of

husbands report evangelical denominations, and a majority of couples (64%) report being

jointly evangelical. In comparison, among standards, 49% of wives and 35% of husbands

report being evangelical, and 28% report being jointly evangelical.

[Table 1 about here]

Covenant Marriage and Endorsement of Traditional Religious, Marital and Gender Attitudes

We now focus on testing the hypothesis that covenant married spouses are more

traditional than standard married spouses, net of evangelism, religiosity, and other controls.

We use nested seemingly unrelated regression models to test whether covenant marriages are

more traditional than standard marriages. This technique allows for an unspecified residual

correlation for the pairs of dependent variables (Sanchez and Thomson 1997). Table 2 presents the seemingly unrelated regression equations for wives' and husbands' religious, marital, and gender role attitudes. Across all three attitude domains, and net of all controls, covenant marriage is associated significantly, and positively with traditionalism for both wives and husbands. Evangelism is associated strongly and positively with attitudes about the importance of religious homogamy ($p < .001$). However, evangelism has no significant effect on wives' or husbands' gender role attitudes or perceived permanence of marriage. In contrast to evangelism, religiosity is associated significantly and positively with all three attitude domains for both wives and husbands ($p < .001$).

[Table 2 about here]

The human capital measures have inconsistent effects on attitudes. The wife's education and her employment hours are associated with decreased traditionalism in gender role attitudes. The only other strong effects for human capital suggest that when wives earn more than their husbands couples are less likely to perceive marriage as permanent, as compared to couples in which the husband earns more than the wife. For husbands, having more employment hours than his wife is associated with increased gender traditionalism and couple's income is associated with lower perceived permanence of marriage. Surprisingly, in these full models, husbands' education and own employment hours are not associated with attitudes.

Among the family capital measures, children and divorce experience have significant effects while cohabitation history has no significant effects. Being married to a wife with divorce experience is associated with husband's lower gender role attitude traditionalism. The husband's previous divorce history reduces both wives' and husbands' perceived

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importance of religiosity, but has no effects on perceived permanence of marriage or gender role attitudes. Having more than one child in the household at the start of the marriage is associated significantly with gender role attitude traditionalism for wives and husbands, and increased perceived permanence of marriage for husbands. Children in the household at the start of the marriage have no effect on couples' perceived importance of religious homogamy, but the effect of non-residential children significantly lowers both wives' and husbands' perceived importance of religiosity, and husbands' perceived permanence of marriage. Last, wives and husbands in marriages in which both spouses are black perceive religious homogamy as more important than do jointly white spouses, and the effect of being a black couple reduces wives' gender role attitude traditionalism. Also, for husbands, age is positively significantly associated with perceived importance of religious homogamy and negatively associated with perceived permanence of marriage.

Evangelism as a moderator of covenant marriage.

In the previous analysis, we find that evangelism does not mediate the effects of covenant marriage on wives' and husbands' attitudes. The effects of covenant marriage on traditionalism remain robust, net of evangelical status, religiosity, and all other controls. These robust effects began in the bivariate equations and remained as nested domains as measures were added (analysis not shown). In a further analysis (also not shown), we tested for a moderating effect of evangelism on covenant marriage. Only a single interaction was significant for wives' perceived importance of religious homogamy, and the negative effect is in the opposite direction of our hypothesis. However, this dampening interaction effect on the perceived importance of religious homogamy is not surprising, given the large separate additive effects of covenant marriage and evangelical status. The combined coefficients indicate that non-evangelical standard married

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wives are least traditional about religious homogamy, evangelical standard married and non-evangelical covenant married wives are more and equally traditional, and evangelical covenant married wives are by far the most traditional, despite the dampening moderating effect.

Thus, the analyses indicate no moderating effects between covenant marriage and evangelism on marital and gender role attitudes, despite strong main effects for each. We argue that perceived religious homogamy may be very salient to evangelical and covenant wives. Thus, the interaction may serve to dampen what are large, powerful, and robust main effects of evangelical status and covenant marriage. With this exception, however, all other non-significant interaction tests indicate that covenant marriage affects attitudes in ways distinct from evangelism.

Covenant marriage and spouse gaps in attitudes

In a final analysis with the quantitative data, we test whether the effects of covenant marriage on wives' and husbands' attitudes can be constrained to be equal without worsening the overall model fit (analyses not shown). We find that the effects of covenant marriage on perceptions about religious homogamy and the perceived permanence of marriage can be constrained to be equal. Within couples, the effects of covenant marriage on religious and marital attitudes are the same. In contrast, the constraints test for gender role attitudes significantly worsens model fit. The effect of covenant marriage on gender role attitude traditionalism is a magnitude larger for wives than for husbands. We suggest that covenant- and standard-married husbands may be more similarly traditional and patriarchal in gender role attitudes, while the gap between covenant- and standard-married wives may be much larger, with standard married wives much more egalitarian in gender role attitudes than covenant married wives. This core gender difference across marital type may account for the substantially more

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pronounced effects of covenant marriage on gender role attitudes for wives as compared to husbands.

Narratives about the Gendered Implications of Divine and "Not-so-Divine" Marriages.

The quantitative analyses strongly support our hypotheses that covenant marriage is associated with greater traditionalism across all focal attitudes, and evangelism provides no mediating and minimal moderating effects. We now use grounded theory's open- and density-coding techniques with our qualitative data to explore the divergent meanings covenant spouses depict about their marriage as compared to standard spouses (Flick, Kardoff, and Steinke 2006). We find three core differences which greatly divide covenant and standard married spouses' visions of marriage. First, in dramatic contrast to standard couples, covenant couples are far more concerned with an appropriate performance of a patriarchal model of femininity and masculinity. They feel acutely accountable to God for this traditional gender display. Second, the covenant distinction serves as a tool which helps wives and husbands blunt the more negative implications of subordination and dominance in this patriarchal gender display. Third, covenant and standard married couples span a wide gulf concerning attitudes about marriage as an institution, with covenants far more likely to articulate an institutional, religious model while standards perceive marriage as deinstitutionalized, individualized, personal, and private.

The Symbolic Importance of Gender Identity in Covenant Marriages

Covenant married couples are considerably more likely than standard married couples to express a view of marital gender roles as divinely inspired. Accordingly, they copiously discussed how a successful marriage hinges on a heartfelt performance of gender-traditional responsibilities. In turn, many covenant spouses felt that God appreciates and rewards a wife's and husband's acknowledgment of the divinity of traditional gender roles. Many covenant

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spouses, but especially wives, perceive their performance of appropriately traditional gender roles as a service to God, a service God helps them execute. These two covenant married wives illustrate this view:

> And the real way you're supposed to see submission is that he is supposed to get all of his guidance from God being the head of the household …my part is to be submissive, and if I'm submissive in God's eyes, if I'm doing what he wants me to do, then God's still going to bless the family.

> When I'm really aggravated with [husband] or I'm not feeling like he's meeting my needs. My flesh would say, "Well, I'm not gonna meet his. Forget it. Forget that." and immediately the Holy Spirit says, "No, that's not your job. Your job is to meet his needs no matter what." You know? So, I have to…I get convicted. Sometimes I'm doing it because I'm serving the Lord and not because I want to serve him.

Both these wives discuss their belief that God observes their gendered behavior and aids them in their gender-traditional responsibilities. The first wife discusses her belief that God will reward her for her submission, but she is demonstrably clear that she submits to God, not necessarily her husband. In her view, God, and not her husband, evaluates her performance of submission. The second wife also discusses how she submits indirectly to God via a proxy submission to her sometimes aggravating husband. A covenant husband said that through his covenant, "I now have a clearer understanding of what it means to be a servant leader. I must serve my wife even when I believe she is wrong, or I feel that I am being wronged." In these ways, covenant couples routinely discuss their perceptions that God helps them overcome personal wants and resentful feelings to help them negotiate marital compromise.

For many standard couples, the special place of gender in their own marriage was not a focal point for discussion at all, though standard spouses generally believed in substantial differences between women and men in society. Standards are less likely than covenants to share a coherent vision about the perceived purpose of gender in marriage and even less likely to attribute their understanding of gender as organized by Godly inspiration. Standard spouses are

more likely to attribute gender differences to biological predispositions or socialization, but infrequently mentioned Godly design. In some instances, standard married spouses dismissed religion outright for its gendered vision of marriage. For example, one standard married wife openly rejects the specific submissive wifely role that she feels the Bible endorses:

> I have a lot of issues with a faith where the woman is supposed to play a particular role because that's what the Bible says. I feel like the Bible is up for interpretation …I don't believe that somebody who's not in my marriage can tell me that I should be subservient. When they don't know me and they don't know [my husband], they don't know our relationship. I don't agree with that.

A religious standard married husband also dismisses a strict gender hierarchy in marriage:

> The whole point of [submission] loses its force if you look at the wife and what the husband's attitude toward the wife is supposed to be. Then, what you're saying is kind of a tautology, you're supposed to be submissive to yourself, cause you and your husband's interests are the same.

In reality, this standard husband was exceptional because he most closely discussed marriage in the same manner as covenant husbands, with a deliberate focus on creating a Godly loving relationship. But he still dismisses a husband headship/wife submission marriage model as illogical. As a religious man, he argues that wives and husbands should submit equally to each other. He conceives of gender distinctions in more neutral ways, and flatly rejects a marital gender hierarchy.

In sum, overwhelmingly, most covenants shared a tight, cogent story about gendered expectations within a divinely-inspired marriage. The clean narrative resonated across interviews. Standard married interviews were far less coherent about gender in marriage, and far more diverse in conceptions about the meaning and performance of wifely and husbandly obligations.

Covenant Marriage as a Tool to Soften Subordination and Nurture Interdependency

The vast majority of covenant spouses uniformly asserted the necessity of a patriarchal gender hierarchy in marriage, in which husbands head households and wives submit to male authority. But covenants' interviews were also extraordinary for their intense, targeted, self-conscious discussions about the equal necessity to soften the subordination dimension of submission via careful, deliberate attention to ethics of mutual respect, interdependence, and often emotional egalitarianism. Covenant spouses seem unique for their active, though sometimes tenuous, construction of a marital relationship bridging two quite opposite extremes – strict gender hierarchy and warm peer equitability. Their interview transcripts often showed pages of single-minded concentration on the treatment of gender as a singular tool to interact with the spouse in caring, typified as sacred, ways.

In their view, covenant husbands must be mindful and receptive to a wife's wants, needs, and intellect, and wives must reciprocally respect a husband's concerns and hopes. As mentioned, they spoke of gender roles as a means to subordinate selfish wants and desires in marriage, and instead as a means to actively meet each other's needs. As discussed by the husband and wife in this covenant marriage:

> My duty, I felt at the time, maybe the first couple of months of our marriage, was to pretty much listen to my wife, as to what she might want out of a husband. I think my role was to just listen, instead of thinking of what I should do, because I do not want to be worried about what I should do, or me in a sense. I do not want it to be about me, I think that it should be about us, I have a listening ear for her, she has a listening ear for me.

> I think that is how God designed it so we can meet each others needs. He can do for me what I need, and I can do for him what he needs, that is how God designed it to work. I think it is not anymore for one or the other's benefits. I think it is pretty much equal.

They each deploy gender to simulate a language of reciprocity. This husband actively tailors the meaning and boundaries of his gender appropriate behavior based on his wife's wants. He sees marriage, and gender in marriage, as requiring that he incorporate his wife's views into his own.

He confidently believes his wife reciprocates – "I have a listening ear for her, she has a listening ear for me." In turn, the covenant wife discusses how their gender roles are complementary. She believes that since their gender roles focus explicitly and thoughtfully on meeting each other's needs then their roles are equitable – "He can do for me what I need, and I can do for him what he needs." The use of vivid parallel metaphors appeared with great frequency across covenant married interviews.

In sharp contrast, most standard couples do not distinctly focus on gender in their marriage and therefore were not consciously tailoring the meanings of gender to their ways of interacting and nurturing each other. For many standard couples, gender roles happened accidentally, while for covenant couples, gender roles were purposeful. However, like covenant spouses, many standard spouses often discussed important principles or qualities in marriage, such as compromise, selflessness, and open communication. Standard couples sometimes mentioned the necessity of selflessness in marriage to assure marital success.

This representative standard wife discusses the qualities she finds important to make a marriage work:

> Some people are just not built to give themselves and receive from someone else, the kind of relationship you have to cultivate in a marriage. They are just not built like that. They're not built to…You have to be really unselfish in a marriage, most of the time. It's not all about love, and la-dee-da and flowers. It's about compromise, compromise and acceptance. We do it every day, every week, and every month of a year.

This standard wife, like many of the standard spouses, adeptly describes three normative expectations for marriage – selflessness, compromise, and acceptance. But she is very unlike covenant spouses in that she does not link these qualities to any prescriptions about gender roles in marriage. In their discussions of strategies for marital success, standards often used gender neutral language like "people" and "spouses" to discuss how selflessness and communication

were attained through disembodied individual, not gendered effort. Standard spouses were likely to describe their spouses as individuals and attribute spouse differences in their marriages to individual differences.

They saw a good marriage, close communication, and intimate connection as an individual, personalized achievement. Few mentioned external institutions or agents, such as family or religion, as providers of role models or norms for their own individually-chosen ethical deportment in marriage. In fact, standard spouses often carefully mentioned that these ethics of care and communication were independent, separate from religion and God. A standard wife said, "Frequent open, honest communication is key. We take responsibility for our own actions and decisions, instead of projecting on each other or a 3rd party, such as God."

In short, standard spouses cared deeply about the success and potential stability of their marriages, but denied the power of gender roles as meaningful in the shaping of experiences and qualities in their marriages. Conversely, covenant spouses seemed to undertake gender roles as the great project on which marital success hinges. They feel that they must confront the consequences and importance of gender. Hence, gender roles were of much greater salience to covenants than standards, and they felt gender roles needed careful management and performance to assure marital success and stability. Covenants, very unlike standard married spouses, directly linked a marital gender hierarchy to expectations for fluid, responsive mutuality, interdependence, and respect in marriage.

Institutionalization versus Individualization: A Clash of Marital Cultures

Accounting for the difference in the salience and centrality of gender, a clear demarcation between covenant and standard couples concerns their differing beliefs about marriage as an institution. Covenants felt acutely aware of a need to create a gendered marriage which fuses

hierarchy and submission with ethics of care and interdependence because they see marriage as a religious institution. In their symbolic order, marriage is an institution which brings them into incontrovertible relationship with God. They routinely described God as a fully present member in their marriage. The covenant marriage encourages them to remember that their marriage is for God. They believe that they entered an institution with gendered obligations which bind them in sacred service to God.

On the other hand, standard spouses are far more heterogeneous concerning perceptions about the purpose of religion and God in marriage. In fact, standards were unlikely to talk of marriage as an institution at all, but instead more frequently used language typifying marriage as a personal commitment contracted for private reasons. Covenant spouses were more likely than standard spouses to conceive and relate to marriage as an institution which requires service for a higher purpose. Two contrasting views from a covenant husband and a standard wife, respectively, demonstrate this key distinction:

> I'm in this because I've made a commitment and this is the most important thing and in the way I view what a marriage is, it's my job… When you got married, the Lord entered into the covenant and he's not going to back down because he can't because he's God. But I could if I wanted to, but I'm not going to do that because I made a vow.

> To me it was a lifetime commitment, that I was making, and it was not related to God, or covenant, or holy, or anything else. It was my choice to make a lifetime commitment. I would not break [it]. It was purely that, a decision for a contract…a personal contract, in my sense of the word.

For the standard wife, her marriage is a matter of choice, a freely chosen commitment which she will uphold for the personal reason that she does not conceive of herself as one who breaks contracts. In her view, the larger purpose of marriage and the driving force for its longevity can be typecast as individualized. The covenant husband believes God cannot leave his marriage, so the covenant symbol, the vow, reminds the husband that he will not leave either.

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Along these lines, most spouses also discussed how covenant marriage serves as a unique tool to negotiate agreement and neutralize instability during marital conflicts. As one covenant wife says, "One time we got into an argument and I looked at him and I was like, 'we have a covenant marriage' you know? It's just a stronghold in our life that we've got a covenant marriage. It's meaningful for us." Another covenant wife reports that, "Because God was so involved in our marriage. Because of that covenant, God was so involved in our marriage that we were gonna honor that no matter what happened." These wives see their covenant marriage as symbolic of their long-lasting commitment. Their covenant marriage signals their belief that their marriage will endure. They want and cultivate a symbol that announces that they expect to uphold a high standard in which spouses subordinate their own personal wants for the good of the marriage.

Several covenants spoke in this way, asserting that regardless of their perhaps changing feelings, they cannot divorce because they entered into an institution and relationship with God which prohibits this option. They entered a Total Institution. Many spouses who chose covenant marriage saw the new law as a convenient symbol of their belief in a Christian marriage and as a public manifestation of their commitment to God. They frequently referred in politicized ways to what they saw as a more secular, individualized mindset of spouses in standard marriages. Some directly spoke of their marriage as a spiritual marriage which stands as a countercultural move against contemporary mainstream society. According to this covenant husband, "I do not like our society, in the direction that it is headed. Maybe that is kind of [why] I did not base my marriage on that."

Covenant couples shared clear, concise stories about how they perceive God as a member and guiding force of their marriage. They perceived their actions within the religious institution

of marriage as service to God. They tied their identities and gender roles to this conception. On the other hand, many standards seemed understandably confused by the sequence of questions about whether they perceived marriage as a religious institution. Religion was often individually important to standard spouses, but rarely a central, coordinated dynamic in their marriage, as illustrated by a contrast between first two covenant wives and last a standard wife:

> It's not about you. In your life, you gotta realize that in marriage, it's not about you. It's about your relationship. It's about God.

> God is the God of our relationship; he is our source of purpose, motivation, and commitment, and our source of love, being love in action.

> I don't know. I don't know…Serve God [with our marriage] is kind of weird for me. I don't…I don't think… No…

The covenant wives clearly articulate the purpose of God and religion both within their marriages and in their lives. In their eyes, God is the ultimate guiding force within their marriage and they see their marriage as serving God. The standard wife, on the other hand, is not sure how to respond. These particular interview questions were sometimes invalid for the standard spouses. Standard spouses discussed the importance of personal happiness, along with spousal respect and selflessness, but they were unlikely to couch ethics of care, interdependence, or sacrifice in terms of obligations inherent in marriage as an institution, religious or otherwise.

Conclusions

Covenant couples comprise a distinct group who fuse two extreme conceptions of gender. They incorporate a strong respect for traditional religious, marital, and gender role attitudes with an unusually keen focus on interdependency and equitability between spouses. In short, as newlyweds, they are hyper-focused on the marital project of gender. Their gender sensitivity arises from their efforts to soften a marital gender hierarchy which endorses submission with an emotional ethic of egalitarianism. Covenant spouses believe that God plays an active role in this

complex process, by monitoring their successful performance of gender roles, and offering

guidelines for the subordination of their more individual, corrosive wants and desires. They see

themselves as social innovators because of their dedication to what they see as a non-normative

marriage outside the bounds of society's expectations about marriage. On the other hand,

standard spouses had diverse feelings about femininity and masculinity in marriage, but most did

not organize their marriage around any clear beliefs about gendered responsibilities within

marriage as an institution. These covenant and standard couples represent a cultural divide with

unique, disparate philosophies about marriage, and women's and men's place within marriage.

Of course, not all covenant marriages were marked by the motives of reshaping marital

gender relations and protesting secular marriage. Some covenant marriages involved unions in

which a rigid unyielding patriarch struggled with a wife flailing, and failing, to meet his

expectations. A few covenant marriages were accidental, the covenant chosen almost

capriciously or haphazardly over the standard option. Similarly, not all standard marriages were

marked by a deinstitutionalized secular orientation. As a standard wife said, representative of

several of the more religious standard spouses, "I don't think there are many absolutes in

marriage, other than faithfulness, respect, love and a healthy reverence for God. Who works,

who takes care of the house – none of these things are right or wrong. A couple must have a

commitment to something greater than the other person. For us, it is God." On the whole,

though, spouses who elected covenant marriage differed from even the more religious of the

standard spouses by considering themselves as social innovators, providing a public service by

their example.

Discussion

This study expands upon previous research by moving beyond analyses of the key

differences between evangelical and non-evangelical spouses (Gallagher and Smith 1999; Gallagher 2003; Bartkowski 2001). We contribute to this research by the examination of a new emergent family form, one in which couples are intent on making a strong counter-normative public statement about what they admittedly see as their non-normative ideas about gender and marriage. Gallagher and Smith (1999) examined how evangelicals interpret their principles in a society that has experienced an economical and ideological shift that requires both spouses to work. They found that evangelicals see husband headship as symbolic and granted to men who have earned the title, while at the same time, they are practicing pragmatic egalitarianism. Our research also demonstrates how covenants are working on a bifurcated process, which incorporates gender traditional and gender-progressive values.

This project examines how some individuals employ covenant marriage to symbolize their belief in institutional religious marriage that supports a strong marital gender hierarchy. The legal reform of covenant marriage nominally only set restrictions on divorce, prescribed pre- and marital counseling, and extended waiting periods. However, this small group of social innovators saw this legal reform as a revolutionary symbolic tool to assert their independence from what they see as the individualized, deinstitutionalized marriage of mainstream society. Those drawn to covenant marriage have an unusual social desirability problem; they seek to rework marriage in modern America in such a way as to intensify traditional gender roles. They know that they may be seen as regressive on gender roles, despite their Herculean and Minervan efforts to reconcile gender regressive and progressive elements in their marital responsibilities. Thus, they keenly feel their deviance. Covenant marriage provides them a state-sponsored tool to neutralize this problem.

They feel that their covenant marriage is a potent symbol, useful in overcoming the

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dissonance connected to the conflict between their conceptions of God's ultimate authority on gender roles in marriage and society's more egalitarian normative stance on marriage. West and Zimmerman (1989) concluded that individuals evaluate whether a successful display of gender has taken place in relation to their audience. When covenants display their normative views concerning gender, they feel that they are not doing gender primarily for mainstream society, but rather they are doing gender for God too. In fact, they feel that they are "doing gender" and "doing marriage" on behalf of God for the benefit of society.

A few limitations weaken the validity and generalizability of this study. First, the survey instrument lacked an item addressing beliefs about husbands as spiritual leaders of families. This theme abounded across our covenant qualitative interview transcripts and was simply absent or muffled in the standard married spouse face-to-face interviews. Unfortunately, most of our quantitative gender role items measured attitudes about men's financial providership or homemaking, but not attitudes toward moral or spiritual leadership. Also, our panel study of newlyweds was restricted to Louisiana, the first state to implement covenant marriage. Thus, we cannot generalize to covenant and standard couples in other states with covenant marriage, such as Arkansas or Arizona, or to states with features of covenant marriage, such as Oklahoma.

Research shows that over the last several decades, society shifted toward more egalitarian attitudes (Zuo and Tang 2000; Booth and Myers 2002). This shift tentatively marginalized the notions of distinct gendered responsibilities for wives and husbands (Cherlin 2004; Amato 2004). These weakened norms give individuals more freedom to define the boundaries of their interpersonal relationships, but may be a key facet of the individualization and deinstitutionalization of marriage. As part of a counter-cultural movement, covenant couples reinstitutionalized marriage, at least for themselves, by reconstituting gender roles with reified

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patriarchal elements and egalitarian emotional ethics co-opted from mainstream society. This study serves as an unusual case study of a sub-culture in society which, with diligent awareness, undertook a social experiment to "tinker" with marriage and its contemporary meaning. A few selected covenant marriage because that was the option their priest offered and they wanted a church wedding, but they were the exception. Instead, most covenants were deliberate and methodical about their perceived need for a covenant, rather than standard marriage.

The implications of this research are threefold. First, covenant marriage appears to be a genuinely palatable tool for spouses with self-perceived non-normative views about gender and marriage to publicly announce their marital deviance as an act of protest and social intervention. Second, methodologically, this study demonstrates the usefulness of mixed methods when exploring the shifting terrain of emergent gender and family forms. Third, this study suggests that much might be learned about the social landscape of intimate relationships and emergent family forms which are deinstitutionalizing and, in this case, reinstitutionalizing marriage by rigorous, multi-method studies of other social innovators. In fact, we recommend a future study address the symbolic meaning of marriage for the social innovators in Massachusetts who embraced the new, potentially legally, politically, and socially contested, gay marriage law. Certainly, covenant marriage has highly symbolic, cultural value for these mostly religious, heterosexual couples, both as a public statement as well as a private union. Much might be learned about the changing institution of marriage with a parallel multi-method study of gay married couples' feelings about the public, as well as private value of marriage and spousal responsibilities.

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Table 1. Religious Homogamy by Marriage Type

Standard

Husbands	Wives					
	Evangelical	Mainline	Catholic	All Other/None	Missing	**Total**
Evangelical	103	4	12	7	6	**132**
	27.6%	1.1%	3.2%	1.9%	1.6%	**35.4%**
Mainline	10	11	8	3	0	**32**
	2.7%	2.9%	2.1%	0.8%	0.0%	**8.6%**
Catholic	18	8	51	5	0	**82**
	4.8%	2.1%	13.7%	1.3%	0.0%	**22.0%**
All Other/None	14	3	10	19	2	**48**
	3.8%	0.8%	2.7%	5.1%	0.5%	**12.9%**
Missing	39	12	20	4	4	**79**
	10.5%	3.2%	5.4%	1.1%	1.1%	**21.2%**
Total	**184**	**38**	**101**	**38**	**12**	
	49.3%	**10.2%**	**27.1%**	**10.2%**	**3.2%**	

Covenant

Husbands	Wives					
	Evangelical	Mainline	Catholic	All Other/None	Missing	**Total**
Evangelical	194	4	4	1	1	**204**
	63.8%	1.3%	1.3%	0.3%	0.3%	**67.1%**
Mainline	3	11	1	0	0	**15**
	1.0%	3.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	**4.9%**
Catholic	12	2	10	0	0	**24**
	3.9%	0.7%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	**7.9%**
All Other/None	2	0	2	2	0	**6**
	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	**2.0%**
Missing	42	3	7	1	2	**55**
	13.8%	1.0%	2.3%	0.3%	0.7%	**18.1%**
Total	**253**	**20**	**24**	**4**	**3**	
	83.2%	**6.6%**	**7.9%**	**1.3%**	**1.0%**	

Table 2. Seemingly Unrelated Regression Analysis for the Three Dependent Measures (N=500)

	Religious Homogamy				Permanence of Marriage				Gender Ideology			
	Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife		Husband		Wife	
	β	seβ	β	seβ	β	seβ	β	seβ	β	seβ	β	seβ
Constant (Standard)	2.73***	0.18	3.08***	0.18	4.14***	0.20	4.06***	0.21	2.82***	0.23	2.59***	0.24
Covenant (Non-evangelical)	0.23***	0.06	0.22***	0.06	0.41***	0.07	0.38***	0.07	0.14*	0.08	0.41***	0.08
Evangelical	0.27***	0.06	0.23***	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.01	0.07	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.08
Couple's Religiosity	0.19***	0.01	0.19***	0.01	0.09***	0.01	0.08***	0.02	0.07***	0.02	0.08***	0.02
HUMAN CAPITAL												
Own Educational Attainment												
(Less than High School)												
High School	0.05	0.10	-0.01	0.10	-0.13	0.12	0.07	0.13	-0.06	0.13	-0.27†	0.15
Some College	0.09	0.11	0.02	0.10	-0.07	0.12	0.05	0.13	0.06	0.14	-0.23	0.15
College	0.06	0.10	-0.01	0.11	-0.18	0.12	-0.03	0.13	-0.07	0.14	-0.39*	0.15
Own Employment Hours	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.00†	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.01**	0.00
Husband wife difference in employment hours	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.00*	0.00	0.00	0.00
Couple Income (Husband makes more)	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.02	-0.05*	0.02	-0.02	0.02	-0.04	0.03	-0.02	0.03
Couple make the same	-0.05	0.09	-0.05	0.09	-0.14	0.09	-0.09	0.10	-0.00	0.11	-0.10	0.11
Wife makes more	-0.08	0.10	-0.18†	0.10	-0.26*	0.11	-0.16	0.11	-0.05	0.13	-0.02	0.13
FAMILY CAPITAL												
(No past cohabitation)												
Cohabited just together	0.01	0.09	-0.04	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.02	0.10	-0.19†	0.11	-0.13	0.11
All other cohabitations	-0.11	0.08	-0.14†	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.09	0.00	0.10	0.07	0.10
(First marriage for both)												
Wife previously divorced	0.02	0.11	0.09	0.11	0.01	0.12	-0.10	0.13	-0.39**	0.14	-0.22	0.15
Husband previously divorced	0.22*	0.10	0.23*	0.10	-0.08	0.11	0.06	0.11	-0.14	0.13	-0.12	0.13
Both previously divorced	-0.05	0.11	0.01	0.11	-0.23†	0.12	-0.16	0.13	-0.04	0.14	-0.05	0.15
(No children present)												
One child present	-0.05	0.07	-0.09	0.07	0.06	0.08	-0.07	0.08	0.05	0.09	-0.06	0.10
More than one child present	0.02	0.09	-0.04	0.09	0.19*	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.25*	0.12	0.28*	0.12
(No non-residential child/ren)												
Non-residential child/ren	-0.36***	0.08	-0.24**	0.08	-0.26**	0.08	-0.11	0.09	-0.12	0.10	-0.01	0.10
AGE AND RACE												
Age	0.01**	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.01*	0.00	-0.01†	0.01	-0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
(Both white)												
Both Black	0.20*	0.09	0.19*	0.09	-0.01	0.10	-0.02	0.10	-0.18	0.12	-0.41***	0.12
Other racial composition	0.00	0.08	0.13	0.08	-0.10	0.09	-0.03	0.09	-0.11	0.10	-0.07	0.11
Adjusted R squared		0.49		0.48		0.36		0.25		0.13		0.23

†=0.10 One-tailed test.
 *=0.05 **=0.01 ***=0.001 Two tailed test.

Appendix
Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for Control Variables

| | Covenant | | | | Standard | | | |
| | Evangelical (n=175) | | Non-evangelical (n=55) | | Evangelical (n=91) | | Non-evangelical (n=179) | |
Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
HUMAN CAPITAL								
Wife's Education:								
Less than High School	0.03	0.18	0.05	0.23	0.10	0.30	0.06	0.23
High School	0.29	0.46	0.20	0.40	0.44	0.50	0.34	0.48
Some College	0.29	0.45	0.24	0.43	0.31	0.46	0.19	0.39
College	0.39	0.49	0.51	0.50	0.15	0.36	0.41	0.49
Husband's Education:								
Less than High School	0.03	0.17	0.05	0.23	0.11	0.31	0.08	0.27
High School	0.38	0.49	0.22	0.42	0.47	0.50	0.38	0.49
Some College	0.22	0.41	0.29	0.46	0.23	0.42	0.18	0.38
College	0.38	0.49	0.44	0.50	0.19	0.39	0.36	0.48
Wife Employment Hours	30.42	18.36	29.58	18.76	29.19	18.44	29.75	18.66
Husband Employment Hours	41.65	15.64	43.42	17.04	36.20	19.02	42.55	19.33
Husband wife difference in employment hours	11.23	25.18	13.84	19.33	7.01	25.68	12.80	25.33
Husband makes more	0.62	0.49	0.67	0.47	0.55	0.50	0.65	0.48
Couple make the same	0.14	0.35	0.16	0.37	0.25	0.44	0.20	0.40
Wife makes more	0.24	0.43	0.16	0.37	0.20	0.40	0.15	0.36
Couple income	5.30	1.91	5.23	1.88	4.68	1.81	5.19	1.90
FAMILY CAPITAL								
No past cohabitation	0.54	0.50	0.38	0.49	0.26	0.44	0.18	0.38
Cohabited just together	0.36	0.48	0.13	0.34	0.18	0.38	0.18	0.38
All other cohabitations	0.10	0.30	0.49	0.50	0.56	0.50	0.64	0.48
First marriage for both	0.67	0.47	0.67	0.47	0.53	0.50	0.55	0.50
Wife previously divorced	0.06	0.23	0.09	0.29	0.04	0.21	0.14	0.35
Husband previously divorced	0.10	0.30	0.11	0.31	0.10	0.30	0.13	0.34
Both previously divorced	0.17	0.38	0.13	0.34	0.33	0.47	0.18	0.39
No children present	0.77	0.42	0.76	0.43	0.55	0.50	0.60	0.49
One child present	0.15	0.36	0.10	0.43	0.25	0.44	0.23	0.42
More than one child present	0.09	0.28	0.14	0.36	0.20	0.40	0.17	0.37
No non-residential child/ren	0.85	0.36	0.85	0.36	0.71	0.45	0.77	0.42
Non-residential child/ren	0.15	0.36	0.15	0.36	0.29	0.45	0.23	0.42
AGE AND RACE								
Wife's Age	27.61	7.33	28.02	6.35	29.78	10.17	30.55	8.05
Husband's Age	29.42	7.78	29.44	7.03	32.97	11.57	32.74	9.33
Both white	0.81	0.40	0.78	0.42	0.79	0.41	0.78	0.42
Both Black	0.09	0.29	0.09	0.29	0.13	0.34	0.08	0.28
Other racial composition	0.10	0.30	0.13	0.34	0.08	0.27	0.14	0.35