Parenthood, Gender Ideology, and Relationship Conflict Among Young Adults

By

Ashley Faith Kim

Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Sociology

August 11, 2017

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

C. André Christie-Mizell, Ph.D.

Richard N. Pitt, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

What are the relationships among parenthood, gender ideology, and relationship conflict for young adults? Do these relationships vary by gender? The transition to adulthood includes the adoption of new roles (e.g., marriage, and parenthood) that are shaped by gendered expectations (Arendell 2000; Cha 2010; Glauber and Gozjolko 2011; Glenn 2016). Men and women approach the adoption of roles differently and are guided by internalized gender ideology, which shapes the timing and ordering of roles (Glenn 2016). Moreover, gender ideology or notions about how men and women should carry out their roles may cause a couple to experience conflict. To illustrate, married men are more likely to hold ideas that assign caring for the physical and emotional needs of children to mothers (Christie-Mizell 2006; Christie-Mizell et al. 2007). Such ideology may enable fathers to rationalize or justify not helping with everyday household responsibilities such as meal preparation, children's homework help, or bedtime routines (Offer 2016; Miller 2006; Hochschild and Machung 1989). In turn, shouldering the burden of childcare may result in stress that leads to less optimal parenting and a host of household tensions, including relationship conflict between spouses or partners (Dew and Wilcox 2011).

In this paper, I examine how parenthood shapes intimate partner relationships during young adulthood. Further, I assess whether gender ideology is one mechanism through which parenthood exerts influence over primary romantic relationships. The contemporary transition to adulthood may be especially important to study to the extent that current research indicates that that it differs dramatically than just a generation ago. Not only have gendered attitudes become more liberalized over time, but also young adults are completing education and taking on full-time employment at later ages. As a result, young adults often delay marriage and parenthood

until the late twenties or early thirties, compared to early or mid-twenties witnessed just a few decades ago. To the extent that gender ideology may shape the timing of role transitions, such as parenthood, together gender ideology and parenthood may shape role expectations and performance in ways that impact relationship quality and conflict.

This study adds to the research literature in three important ways. First, I investigate how gender ideology and parenthood shape intimate partner relationship conflict, utilizing longitudinal data for youth as they transition to adulthood. Assessing outcomes over time allows me to look at how parenthood at the beginning of the period of study as well as transitions to parenthood impact the level of dyadic arguing by gender. Second, I employ nationally representative data for three racial/ethnic groups: African Americans, Hispanics, and whites. Therefore, this effort represents an improvement over the use of more localized samples, where generalizability is more difficult. Third, the data allow me to estimate models that adjust for other important roles and transitions (e.g., employment and marriage) as well as multiple, other relevant factors (e.g., region of residence, urbanicity, household income) may be important for understanding how parenthood and gender ideology combine to influence relationship conflict.

CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

Background and Theory

The present study is guided by the theoretical framework known as the gender ideology perspective (Blair and Lichter 1991; Cunningham 2008; Greenstein 2000; Vespa 2009; Yarvorsky, Cohen, and Qian 2016). Gender ideology encompasses an individual's beliefs about how important roles are linked to gender. These beliefs not only categorize who should perform certain tasks related to marital and family roles, but also helps the individual personally identify the appropriate role expectations and performances for self. Though overlapping, gender ideology is not the same as gender identity. For instance, two people can identify as women (i.e., gender identity) who are mothers, but differ dramatically with respect to what they think being a woman and a mother implies in terms of appropriate behaviors (i.e., gender ideology).

While gender ideology may change over the life course, it has been persistent in shaping normative expectations for the division of labor in the home, including parenting. The gender-based division of family work reflects continuing gender inequality within American society, leading women to have more work hours on domestic tasks (Blair and Lichter 1991; Carlson et al. 2015; Bianchi et al. 2012; Pedulla and Thébaud 2015). To further understand how gender ideology shapes the relationships between relationship conflict and parenting by gender, I focus on what Risman (2004) refers to as the interactional level of gender as a social structure. This theoretical conceptualization situates gender as "structure" and the associated behavior as "habit." The interactional level that I focus on is manifest in gender ideology, representing attitudes that are shaped by larger institutionally patriarchal structures.

During the transition to adulthood, men and women face different cultural expectations while filling identical structural positions. Parenting is different for fathers and mothers due to

gendered expectations and racial differences. Habits, norms, and sanctions/rewards associated with men differ dramatically from that of women. For example, research shows that mothers of young children face intense pressure to forgo career-building and to care for their children full-time (Bell 2004; Villalobos 2015). Men do not face similar pressures; in fact, fathers of young children are encouraged to embrace the breadwinner role, rather than devote more time to fathering (Cha 2010; Townsend 2002; Stone 2007).

Relationship Conflict, Gender Ideology and Parenthood

Relationship conflict and couples arguing is normative insofar as all relationships encounter moments of disagreement and realignment (Bird 1997; Amato and Booth 2001; Pina and Bengston 1993). However, young parents as they must often simultaneously negotiate the role of parenting as well as how parenting changes their primary identities. Bird (1997) finds that having children increases parents' exposure to stressors, such as arranging child care, economic hardship, and responsibility for child rearing. Labor market discrimination and threats of economic instability continue for African American men, even married men with well-paying jobs (Glauber and Gozjolko 2011). This may explain in part why African American marriages are somewhat more equal than white marriages, in terms of earnings and housework (Gupta 2006; Daphne and Shelton 1997). Clearly, these stressors affect couples and individuals differently, shaped by race, gender, gender ideology, and region (Blair and Lichter 1991; Vespa 2009; Greenstein 2000; Yavorsky et al. 2016). Still, it is important to note here that relationship conflict is different from dyadic satisfaction and marital happiness. For the purpose of this paper, relationship conflict is operationalized as arguments within dyads. Stressors can speak to relationship conflict, however, arguing still requires agency, reflecting gendered hierarchies shaped by ideology.

Gender Ideology. Gender ideology is mostly set on an axis with egalitarian and traditional at the two extremes (Halimi et al. 2016). Davis and Greenstein (2009) identify gender ideology as inclusive of dimensions such as belief in separate spheres based on gender, primacy of breadwinning and the breadwinner role, working women and relationship quality, motherhood and the feminine self, household utility, and male-privilege acceptance. Ridgeway (2011) argues that gender remains a primary frame through which women and men continually define who they are, how they expect others to behave, and how they will behave. Gender ideology is also shaped differently by race and class. Johnson (2013) finds that Black women develop specific strategies to make sense of obstacles and gender-related messages they receive from society. Due to financial obligation and historical oppression, Collins (2000) shows how Black families are typically more egalitarian with women working more often. Yavorksy et al. (2016) also show how gender ideology intersects many different identities, such as race and social class. African American men, while viewing traditional gender division as a sign of success, face labor discrimination and structural racial inequality (Glauber et al. 2011). Therefore, white men earn more and face less structural constraints regarding employment and pay (Glauber et al. 2011).

Similarly, fathering experiences are also shaped by class, education, and race. Glauber and Gozjolko (2011) find that only the most privileged groups of men (e.g., white men with college degrees) can alter work and family practices to align with gender ideologies. With less advantaged men, including African Americans and white men without college degrees, gender ideology and labor market behavior are more fragmented (Glauber and Gozjolko 2011).

Gender ideology is also fluid, changing over an individual's life course and exposure to new social settings with gendered expectations, such as parenthood and marriage (Vespa 2009). However, these gendered expectations often align with broader gender inequality of what is

assumed as 'natural', operating under normative gendered norms. Vespa (2009) finds that changes in gender ideology are often consequences of new social situations and roles that are deeply embedded within gendered expectations. Therefore, one can expect that gender ideology and its impact on relationship conflict may vary by parenthood and gender. For example, African Americans have faced a history of constraint that has led to more flexible marital roles as compared to whites (Burgess 1994), while whites' marriages are often defined by less egalitarian roles (Landry 2002).

Parenthood. Parenthood provides a very fundamental framework through which the definition of individuals reifies traditional gender ideologies and the nuclear, traditional family (Arendell 2000; Coltrane 1996; Glenn 2016; Dew and Wilcox 2011; Miller 2007). Even with a shift towards egalitarian gender roles as a society, the birth of one or more children is associated with a shift in gender roles towards a less egalitarian direction for both young men and women (Fan and Marini 2000). These shifts can be understood and explained several different ways. First, the birth of children aligns parents' gender ideology more consistently with long standing normative expectations of gender roles, leading to less egalitarian ideologies. Normalized expectations of gender roles are magnified (Fan and Marini 2000; Arendell 2000; Glenn 2016), limiting women's time for nonfamilial roles. Also, time demands of parenthood conflict with the time available for other activities, pushing this shift towards traditional gender ideology (Fan and Marini 2000; Hochschild and Machung 1989), showing the flexibility of gender ideology during the transition to adult roles. The idea of intensive, completely child-centered mothering is not as central for Black women and sharing family roles is more normative for Black parents (Collins 2000; Landry 2002). But for men, parenthood is often defined by taking care of the family and being a provider (Cohen 1987; Chesley 2011). It is also important to note that historically

marriage and parenthood are often selective of individuals with less egalitarian ideology (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1992). This selective process is especially the case now that young adults continue education into later ages, while postponing parenthood and marriage into their thirties (Shwartz 2015; Berg 2007).

The interplay between parenthood and gender ideology. Parenthood provides an arena for gender ideology to play out, often framing expectations of roles and responsibilities. At a cultural level, those transitioning to parenthood continually engage with cultural ideals to navigate what 'good' mothering and fathering looks like. Patriarchal norms interact with gendered norms to ensure that women provide intensive caregiving, where mothering is completely child centered and self-sacrificing (Arendell 2000).

The idealized model of motherhood is derived from the situation of the white, American, middle class mother and has been projected as universal (Glenn 2016). Patricia Hill Collins (1999) challenges this dominant narrative, arguing that women of color have historically had to weave between public and private labor spheres, shifting motherhood from an exclusive private labor to a collective work shared with other family members of women in the community. Segura (1991) showed how Mexicana mothers do not dichotomize social life into public and private spheres, but they view employment as one workable domain of motherhood. Chicanas, on the other hand, express higher adherence to stay-at-home motherhood ideologies. Segura explains the differences as being due to the economic situations of families, labor market structures, and women's divergent conceptualizations of motherhood (Segura 1991).

CHAPTER III - SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

The primary goal of this research is to explore the relationships among parenthood, gender ideology, and relationship conflict and how these relationships vary by gender. Relatively little research has examined these relationships for a contemporary sample of youth transitioning to adulthood. In terms of parenting, I assess the impact of parenthood and transitions to parenthood on levels of relationship conflict. Further, gender ideology is operationalized on a continuum that ranges from egalitarian to traditional. Controlling for a host of other relevant factors (e.g., race-ethnicity, age southern region, urban residence, education, income, employment, and marriage), main and interaction effects of parenthood and gender ideology are accounted for.

This study has four hypotheses. First, I hypothesize that parenthood (H1a) and transitions to parenthood (H1b) will be positively associated with relationship conflict. Second, I anticipate that traditional gender ideology, compared to egalitarian (H2a) and moderate (H2b) will be positively related to relationship conflict. Third, I hypothesize that gender ideology will moderate the impact of parenthood on relationship conflict, such that parents with traditional gender ideology will have lower conflict, compared to those with egalitarian gender ideology (H3a) and moderate gender ideology (H3b). Finally, I further hypothesize that gender ideology will influence the impact of the transition to parenthood on relationship conflict, such that young adults transitioning to parenthood with traditional gender ideology with have lower conflict than their counterparts with egalitarian gender ideology (H4a) and moderate gender ideology (H4b).

CHAPTER IV - DATA AND METHODS

Data for this study are drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) and the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth – Young Adult (NLSY-YA) sample. Respondents in the NLSY were interviewed each year from 1979 to 1994 and every other year after 1994. African Americans, Hispanics, and economically disadvantaged white youth are overrepresented, and initial ages ranged from 14 to 22 years old. In 1994 and biennially thereafter, youth born to the women of the NLSY and who were 15 years of age and older were surveyed for the young adult sample (NLSY-YA). This survey gathered information germane to social, emotional development, delinquent activities, substance use, employment, marriage, parenthood, and the quality of intimate relationships.

This study utilizes data from the 2010 and 2012 waves of the NLSY-YA. Because I am interested in parenthood and conflict with a spouse or partner, I further limit the sample to those respondents 18 and older who are living on their own (not in their parents' homes or in an institutional setting such as dorms) in the 2010 wave. To setup reasonable expectations for causal inference, all independent and control variables come from the 2010 wave, with my dependent variable, relationship conflict, measured in 2012. The analyses for this project utilizes complete cases analysis and have a sample size of 2,230, with an age range of 18 to 35 in 2010. The female and male subsamples are inclusive of 1,257 women and 973 men, respectively. The analyses below are weighted to correct for the oversampling of African American, Hispanic, and disadvantaged white respondents. Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1. A full set of bivariate correlations for all study variables can be found in Appendix A.

Dependent variable

The NLSY-YA includes four gender ideology questions that pertain to those in committed relationships whether with a spouse/partner or boyfriend/girlfriend. These items query whether the couple argues about: 1) showing affection to each other; 2) the amount of time spent together; 3) seeing or dating other people; and, 4) about friends. These four items were scaled together to create a relationship conflict scale, ranging from 4 (lower relationship conflict) to 16 (higher relationship conflict). The Cronbach's alpha for relationship conflict indicated high reliability (α=.63).

Independent Variables

Parenthood and gender ideology are the main independent variables of interest. *Parenthood* is coded 1 (non-parent = 0) for respondents who reported having children as of the 2010 wave of the data. For those who became parents by the 2012 wave, I coded transition to parenthood as 1 and compared them to their counterparts who did not experience the birth or adoption of new or another child during the period of study.

Gender ideology is created from six questions that gauge the young adults' attitudes toward appropriate roles for men and women, with respect to family and work. Respondents were asked to strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly disagree with the following statements: 1) "A women's place is in the home, not the office or shop"; 2) "Wife who carries out full family responsibilities does not have time for outside employment"; 3) "Employment of wives leads to more juvenile delinquency"; 4) "It is much better if man is the achiever outside of the home and the woman takes care of home and family"; 5) "Men should share housework with women"; and, 6) "Women are much happier if they stay at home and take care of their children".

Gender ideology is coded from 6 (egalitarian attitudes) to 24 (traditional attitudes) with a Cronbach's alpha indicating high internal reliability (α=.75). In auxiliary analyses, not shown for the sake of brevity, I divided the scale into various divisions (e.g., thirds, quartiles, quintiles) to conceptualize more traditional versus more egalitarian respondents. The best fit for these data is thirds, which I operationalize as traditional, moderate, and egalitarian ideology (Perrone et al., 2009). For the sake of brevity, in this study going forward I use traditional, moderate, and egalitarian as single modifiers referring to gender ideology.

Control Variables. I adjust the multivariate models below for race-ethnicity, age, southern region, urban residence, education, income, employment, and marriage. I created dummy variables to distinguish race-ethnicity and compare African Americans and Hispanics to whites. Age is measured in years, and I compare those who live in the southern region (1=yes) of the country to all others. I also differentiate those living in urban areas (1=yes) from respondents who reside in small towns or rural areas. Education is measured in years and income is in thousands of dollars. I also hold constant employment for those employed in 2010 and for those who transition to employment, during the period of study (2010-2012). Similarly, I account for individuals who reported marriage (1=yes) in the first wave and those transitioning to marriage (1=yes) during the period of study.

CHAPTER V - ANALYTIC STRATEGY

My analytic strategy was accomplished in two steps. First, I generated descriptive statistics and compared men and women on each study variable. Second, multivariate analyses were conducted, using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models. All analyses were estimated by gender, with three models. The first model shows the main effects of parenthood and gender ideology, controlling for all relevant variables. Next, I demonstrate whether parenthood and transitions to parenthood moderate the impact of gender ideology on relationship conflict in the second and third model, respectively. To illustrate, the second model, which includes an interaction by parenthood and gender ideology, takes the form:

$$conflict_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 parent_i + \beta_2 ideologyt_i + \beta_3 parent_i \times ideologyt_i +$$

$$\beta_4 \mathbf{DEMO}_i + \beta_5 \mathbf{RSES}_i + \beta_6 \mathbf{AROLES}_i + \varepsilon_{i,}$$

where relationship conflict ($conflicty_i$) for respondent i is a function of parenthood ($parent_i$) and gender ideology ($ideology_i$) controlling for demographics ($\mathbf{DEMO}_i$), residence and socioeconomic status ($\mathbf{RSES}_i$), and adult roles ($\mathbf{AROLES}_i$). Lower-case variables such as $conflict_i$ represent single scalar variables or categorical variables, whereas upper-case variables such as $\mathbf{DEMO}_i$ represent vector variables indicating that more than one type of demographic factor is encompassed in $\mathbf{DEMO}_i$.

CHAPTER VI - FINDINGS

Descriptives

Table 1 presents weighted descriptive statistics for this sample. The asterisks in the table correspond to *t*-tests and chi-square tests that compare means and proportions for men and women in the sample. Fifty-six percent of the sample is composed of women, while African Americans and Hispanics make up 13.50% and 7.46% of the sample, respectively. Women have a mean household income of $14,300, with the incomes of men being significantly higher at $18,300. The average amount of education completed was 13 years, with women completing more years of education. Men were more conservative (11.63) compared to women (10.70). The percentages of men (87.68%) and women (82.72%) employed are statistically different. For those transitioning to employment, however, there were no proportion differences between men and women. For the sample, 19.87% was married, with 22.37% of women and 16.94% of men reporting marriage. When compared to young adults transitioning to marriage, there are no proportion differences between gender with 14.44% identified as transitioning to marriage. Parents make up 19.64% of the sample, with 24.67% of women and 13.75% of men being parents. Of the sample, 8.46% is transitioning to parenthood with no proportion differences between gender. When looking at region, 37.10% of the sample was from the south, with 25.73% living in rural areas and 72.90% living in urban areas. There were no proportion differences between gender for region.

Multivariate Findings for Women

H1a predicted that parenthood would be positively associated with relationship conflict and H1b predicted that the transition to parenthood would be positively associated with relationship conflict. Controlling for demographic characteristics and socioeconomic status,

Table 2 shows these predictions for women. With the exception of changing the reference group for gender ideology, Model 1 and 2 include the same covariates. These models show that the transition to motherhood increases relationship conflict among women and Blacks, reporting more relationship conflict compared to whites. Further, being employed, transitioning to employment and marriage negatively impacts relationship conflict. With respect to hypothesis 1, I do not find support for H1a that parenthood is positively associated with relationship conflict; however, as I predicted in H1b, the transition to parenthood increases relationship conflict.

H2a predicted that traditional gender ideology, compared to moderate, is positively related to relationship conflict. Moreover, H2b predicted that traditional gender ideology is positively related to relationship conflict, compared to egalitarian gender ideology. Both models 1 and 2 show that gender ideology has no effect on relationship conflict for women. Therefore, I do not find support for H2a and H2b.

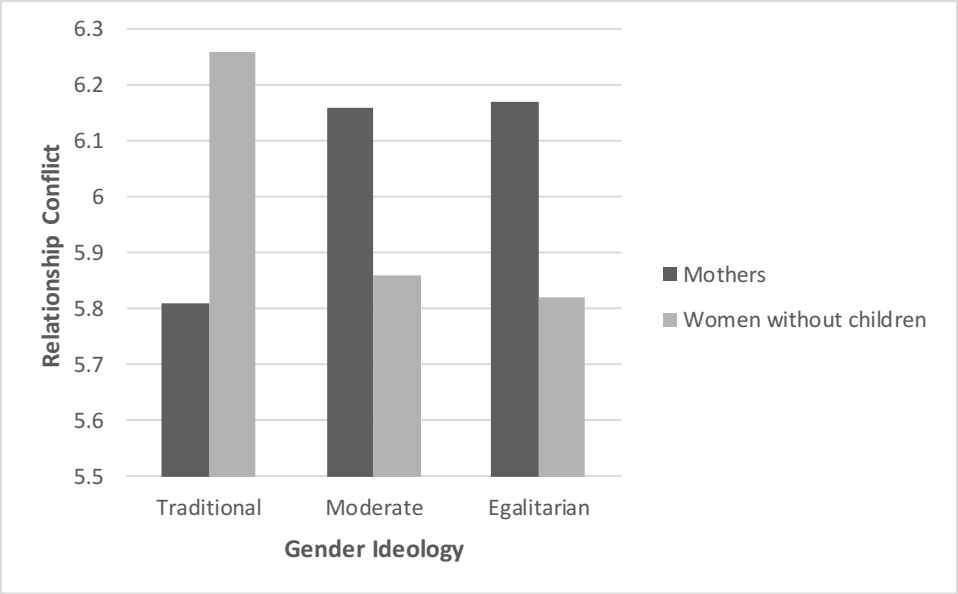

Figure 1. Interaction between Parenthood and Gender Ideology for Women.

H3 predicted that parenthood would moderate the influence and impact of gender ideology on relationship conflict. The interaction between traditional gender ideology and parenthood in

Table 2, Model 3 is significant and indicates that mothers with traditional gender ideology experience lower levels of relationship conflict, compared to mothers with egalitarian gender ideology (the omitted category). This finding provides support for H3a. Solving for the interaction, traditional mothers (5.81= 5.82 [constant] + 0.44 [*b* for traditional gender ideology] - 0.80 [*b* for parent x traditional]) argue less than mothers with egalitarian gender ideology (6.17 = 5.82 [constant] + 0.35 [*b* for parent]) and moderate mothers (6.16 = 5.82 [constant] + 0.35 [*b* for parent] + 0.04 [*b* for moderate gender ideology] - 0.05 [*b* for parent x moderate]). Figure 1 graphically displays this result. Note that the figure not only shows that traditional versus egalitarian gender ideology differentiates mothers, but women without children as well. Among women in our sample who do not have children, those with traditional gender ideology have higher relationship conflict than those with egalitarian gender ideology. That is, traditional gender ideology leads to lower arguing for mothers, but higher relationship conflict for women without children. Traditional women without children (6.26 = 5.82 [intercept] + 0.44 [*b* for traditional gender ideology]) argue more than egalitarian women without children (5.82 = 5.82 [intercept]) and moderate women without children (5.86 = 5.82 [intercept] + 0.04 [*b* for moderate gender ideology]).

Table 2, Model 4 tests for H3b, which predicted that mothers with traditional gender ideology would have lower relationship conflict than their counterparts with moderate gender ideology. Looking at model 4, traditional mothers argue less than moderate mothers and egalitarian mothers, as hypothesized. Solving for the interaction, traditional mothers (5.81 = 6.26 [constant] - 0.45 [*b* for parent]) argue less than moderate mothers (6.16= 6.26 [constant] - 0.45 [*b* for parent] - 0.40 [*b* for moderate gender ideology] + 0.75 [*b* for parent x moderate]) and egalitarian mothers (6.17 = 6.26 [constant] - 0.45 [*b* for parent] - 0.44 [*b* for egalitarian gender

ideology] + 0.80 [*b* for parent x egalitarian]). The effects of parenthood are contingent on gender ideology. Again, model 4 shows that among women in the sample who do not have children, those with traditional gender ideology (6.26 = 6.26 [intercept]) have higher relationship conflict than those with moderate gender ideology (5.86 = 6.26 [intercept] - 0.40 [*b* for moderate gender ideology]) and egalitarian gender ideology (5.82 = 6.26 [intercept] - 0.44 [*b* for egalitarian gender ideology]).

Table 2, Model 5 and 6, which predicted H4a and H4b did not show any significant results. Therefore, model 5, which predicted young adults transitioning to parenthood with traditional gender ideology would have lower conflict than egalitarian (H4a), had no support. Model 6, which predicted young adults transition to parenthood with traditional gender ideology would have lower levels of conflict than those with moderate gender ideology (H4b) was also not supported.

Findings for Men. Table 3 presents the results for men, testing predictions and showing sociodemographic characteristics, including gender ideology, parenthood, and relationship conflict. Hypothesis 1, looking at parenthood, predicted that parenthood (H1a) and the transition to parenthood (H1b) would be positively associated with relationship conflict. None of the models support this hypothesis, with parent and transition to parenthood having no significant effect on relationship conflict. Looking at the controls, being Black (b=1.05, $p<.001$) as compared to white positively affects relationship conflict. Education also has a positive effect on relationship conflict (b=0.90, $p<.05$).

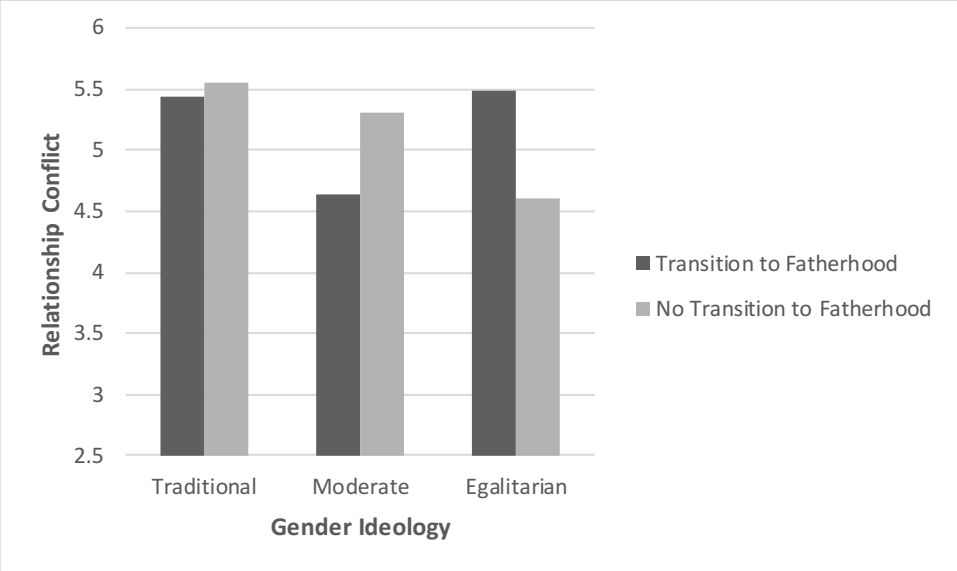

Figure 2. Interaction between Transitioning to Parenthood and Gender Ideology for Men.

Hypothesis 2 assesses whether traditional gender ideology increases relationship conflict more so than egalitarian (H2a) and moderate (H2b) gender ideology. All models support these hypotheses. All models show that traditional men argue more than egalitarian and moderate men. All controls remain the same.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that traditional parents would experience less relationship conflict as compared to egalitarian (H3a) and moderate parents (H3b). I do not find support for hypothesis 3. Table 3, Model 5 and 6 assessed H4a and H4b but did not find any support. However, Model 5 did find that men with moderate gender ideology who are transitioning to fatherhood during the period of the study have lower levels of conflict as compared to men with egalitarian gender ideology transitioning to fatherhood. Solving for the interaction, transitioning fathers with moderate gender ideology (4.63 = 4.61 [constant] + 0.87 [*b* for new parent] + 0.70 [*b* for moderate gender ideology] - 1.55 [*b* for new parent x moderate]) argue less than transitioning fathers with egalitarian gender ideology (5.48 = 4.61 [constant] + 0.87 [*b* for new

parent]) and transitioning fathers with traditional gender ideology (5.44 = 4.61 [constant] + 0.87 [*b* for new parent] + 0.94 [*b* for traditional gender ideology] - 0.98 [*b* for new parent x traditional]. Figure 2 graphically displays this result, showing not only young adults transitioning to fatherhood but also men who are not transitioning to fatherhood. Figure 2 shows barely any difference in traditional young adults transitioning to fatherhood and not transitioning. Young men transitioning to fatherhood with egalitarian gender ideology experience similar levels to men with traditional gender ideology both transitioning and not transitioning to fatherhood. Men with moderate gender ideology transitioning to fatherhood experienced the lowest levels amongst those transitioning to parenthood for young men. Their relationship conflict levels are similar to men with egalitarian gender ideology not transitioning to fatherhood. When assessing young men in their transition to fatherhood, men with moderate gender ideology experience the lowest levels of relationship conflict, without much of a difference between transitioning men with traditional and egalitarian gender ideology. Compared to young men not transitioning to fatherhood, men with egalitarian ideology argue the least, while men with traditional ideology argue the most.

For men, all models were unchanged in significance of main effect variables and control variables. In all six models, gender ideology was a significant predictor of relationship conflict with egalitarian men arguing less than moderate and traditional men. Black men argued more than white men and men with higher levels of education argued more. Only in model 5 was parenthood significant, when gender ideology was a moderator. Transitioning fathers with moderate gender ideology argued less than transitioning fathers with egalitarian ideology.

CHAPTER VII - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, I demonstrate how parenthood and gender ideology affect relationship conflict for young adults. My study and findings contribute important theoretical insights to the literature on relationship conflict and parenthood. In contrast to earlier studies that show how parenthood and gender ideology operate together, my work demonstrates that for mothers, gender ideology is not as predictive of relationship conflict. In other words, gender ideology is more salient to men and fathers than to women and mothers. By examining young adults through parenthood and gender ideology, I highlight the changing dynamics of intimate relationships through conflict. In addition, by breaking down gender ideology into three separate categories of traditional, moderate, and egalitarian, I add to the literature through highlighting the unique significance of moderate gender ideology, which is often overlooked.

In my work, I find that women transitioning to parenthood have higher levels of relationship conflict as compared to women who are not mothers. Gender ideology did not have an effect on relationship conflict; rather, it serves as an important moderator. There may be a few explanations for these results. One explanation for why women transitioning into motherhood have higher levels of conflict than women without children, while men are unaffected, can be tied to intensive mothering. As discussed earlier, intensive mothering is the idea that mothering is completely child-centered and self-sacrificing. Hays (1996) found that intensive mothering ideals left mothers feeling pressured for time and largely guilty and inadequate. Miller (2007), adding to the literature, revealed that mothering is fraught with unrealistic assumptions constructed by gendered discourse and representation. One surprise of the postpartum months was that all but one of the women interviewed in a previous study were shocked to learn that

mothering did not come "naturally" or instinctively as previously believed (Miller 2007). Dew and Wilcox (2011) also find that women transitioning to motherhood have declines in marital satisfaction. They contribute the decline to intensive motherhood, increased housework associated with inequity, and a decrease in emotional intimacy. Intensive mothering may be more intense in affecting new mothers due to a surprise in how unrealistic the expectations of 'natural mothering' may be. Girls are raised from a young age to mother; therefore, when actually stepping into the transitional role, the discrepancy of expectations and reality may be more stark (Glenn 2016; Arendell 2000).

I also find that mothers with traditional gender ideology argue less than moderate and egalitarian mothers, which can be understood in several ways. First, there are symbolic meanings attached to partners' housework tasks (Pina and Bengston 1993). As discussed earlier, even with a shift towards egalitarian gender roles as a society, the birth of one or more children is associated with a shift in gender roles towards a less egalitarian direction for both young men and women (Fan and Marini 2000). Wives and mothers with more egalitarian beliefs are less likely to view unequal power relations as legitimate and are less likely to associate women solely with the family (Hochschild 1989). Pina and Bengston (1993) find that the household labor that husbands contribute is seen as more important to egalitarian women and when housework is uneven, egalitarian women feel less supported, going back to the symbolic meaning attached to household labor. The same study found that this is not the case for traditional women; rather, traditionalism in gender ideology lessoned the influence of unequal spheres in the household. (Pina and Bengston 1993). Traditional mothers are also more likely to be in relationships with traditional men, aligning ideologies and lessoning relationship conflict. Traditional mothers also have more responsibilities in the home, devoting more time and energy than men (Dew and

Wilcox 2011). Therefore, traditional mothers may simply not have the time to engage in relationship conflict as often as moderate or egalitarian mothers, who may be working outside of the home.

For women, being employed, transitioning to marriage, and being moderate or egalitarian in gender ideology decreased relationship conflict. Aligning with research, these relationships show that having different roles is important in decreasing relationship conflict. Instead of being seen as only a mother, being a spouse and worker is beneficial in a relationship (Villalobos 2015; Christopher 2012; Carr 2004). However, once women become mothers, traditional mothers argue less. The flip in these gender ideology dynamics in conjunction with adult roles may be understood through several explanations. Villalobos (2015) found that women who experience insecurity or lack of connection in certain aspects of life draw on ideals of intensive mothering for closeness and centrality. This explains why traditional women argue more than egalitarian and moderate women while traditional mothers argue less than egalitarian and moderate mothers.

When looking at men, gender ideology is predictive of relationship conflict, with traditional and moderate men fighting more than egalitarian men. Ciabattari (2001) found a reduction in men's gender role conservatism over the past thirty years. Therefore, it may be possible that men who still identify as traditional have particularly strong values, especially in 2012. These strong values may result in more concrete, gendered expectations, leading to more relationship conflict. One surprising result was that new fathers with moderate gender ideology have less relationship conflict than fathers with egalitarian or traditional ideologies. Pleck (2010) finds that there is growing involvement of fathers in family life, while Gerson (2010) finds that a growing number of men favor egalitarian relationships. Offer (2016) reveals that parenting is entrenched in social norms of "good parenting", with mothers and fathers having different

expectations. Therefore, it may be that moderate fathers do not have a concrete set of expectations of parenting or gender ideology that sets them up with guidance, allowing them more leniency in navigating transitions to adult roles, such as parenting. In addition, with a general, societal push towards egalitarian ideology in conjunction with young adults transitioning into parenthood leaning towards conservatism, these trends may put more pressure on men. This pressure may particularly affect those transitioning into parenthood with egalitarian ideology to fulfill certain characteristics of fathering and being a partner.

It is not surprising that gender ideology is indicative of relationship conflict for men, but a moderator for women. Schwab et al. (2016) found that men often obscure emotional lives, reproducing hegemonic masculine ideals, which stems from patriarchal society, legitimatizing men's superior position through masculine traits (e.g., violence, competitiveness, emotional restraint). The study also showed that with men's identities are at times resistant or complicit with said hegemonic gendered norms (Schwab et al. 2016). With women working and continually having to deal with cognitive dissonance over how their gender ideology and roles' alignment or misalignment, it may be that the salience of gender ideology is not as strong as for women. For example, even if traditional women believe and want to be a stay-at-home mother, there is often economic need to work. Men, however, dealing with societal norms of masculinity, may have stronger ideologies that are confirmed through social roles.

One limitation of the study is the inability to examine race explicitly. Much work has found that parenting, relationship conflict, and gender ideology are formed by race and culturally defined (Arendell 2000; Bell 2004; Cha 2010; Christie-Mizell 2006; Christie-Mizell et al. 2007; Collins 2011; Daphne and Shelton 1997; Glenn 2016). Although the data are nationally

representative, the data do not have the power to generalize to racial minorities, specifically examining within group heterogeneity.

As family structures are changing, so are the intimate relationships of young adults transitioning into parenthood. Examining gender ideology, parenthood, and relationship conflict in conjunction is important to understand interventions, support, and changing family dynamics. Gender ideology may not function the way that we thought, and it is changing. As demonstrated with my study, gender ideology is still predictive of relationship conflict for men, but parenthood is a strong predictor of relationship conflict for women. These findings are important in shaping mediation for intimate relationships and understanding how gender ideology and parenthood affect young adults.

REFERENCES

Amato, Paul R. and Alan Booth. 2001. “The Legacy of Parents' Marital Discord: Consequences for Children's Marital Quality.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81:627-638.

Arendell, Terry. 2000. “Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship Conceiving and Investigating Motherhood: The Decade's Scholarship.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62: 1192 1207.

Bell, Susan E. 2004. “Intensive Performances of Mothering: A Sociological Perspective.” *Qualitative Research* 4: 45-75.

Blair, Sampson L. and Daniel T. Lichter. 1991. “Measuring the Division of Household Labor.” *Journal of Family Issues* 12:91-113.

Bianchi, Suzanne M., Liana C. Sayer, Melissa A. Milkie, and John P. Robinson. 2012. “Housework: Who Did, Does or Will Do It, and How Much Does It Matter?” *Social Forces* 91: 55-63.

Bird, Chloe E. 1997. “Gender Differences in the Social and Economic Burdens of Parenting and Psychological Distress.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 59: 809–823.

Blair-Loy, Mary. 2003. Competing devotions: Career and family among women executives. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buchanan, Tom and Nikesha Selmon. 2008. “Race and Gender Differences in Self-Efficacy: Assessing the Role of Gender Role Attitudes and Family Background.” *Sex Roles* 58: 822 – 836.

Cech, Erin A. 2013. The self-expressive edge of occupational sex segregation. American Journal

of Sociology 119:747-89.

Cha, Youngjoo. 2010." Reinforcing separate spheres: The effect of spousal overwork on the employment of men and women in dual-earner households." *American Sociological Review* 75 (2): 303-29.

Chesley, Noelle. 2011. "Stay-At-Home Fathers and Breadwinning Mothers." *Gender and Society* 25:642-664.

Christie-Mizell, C. André. 2003. "Bullying: The Consequences of Interparental Discord and Child's Self Concept." *Family Process* 42: 237-251.

Christie-Mizell, C. André. 2006. "The Effects of Traditional Family and Gender Ideology on Earnings: Race and Gender Differences." *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 27:48-71.

Christie-Mizell, C. André, Jacqueline M. Keil, Aya Kimura, and Stacey A. Blount. 2007. "Gender Ideology and Motherhood: Exploring Race Differences in Earnings." *Sex Roles* 57: 689–702.

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. Black Feminist Thought. New York: Routledge.

Coltrane, Scott. 1996. Family Man: Fatherhood, Housework, and Gender Equity. New York: Oxford University Press.

Correll, Shelley J. 2004. Constraints Into Preferences: Gender, Status and Emerging Career Aspirations. *American Sociological Review* 69:93-113.

Cunningham, Mick. 2008. "Influences of Gender Ideology and Housework Allocation on Women's Employment Over the Life Course." *Social Science Research* 37(1): 254–267.

Daphne, John and Beth Anne Shelton. 1997. "The Production of Gender among Black and White Women and Men: The Case of Household Labor." *Sex Roles* 36: 171-193.

Davis, Shannon N., and Theodore N. Greenstein. 2009. "Gender Ideology: Components, Predictors, and Consequences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 87-105.

Dew, Jeffrey and W. Bradford Wilcox. 2011. "If Momma Ain't Happy: Explaining Declines in Marital Satisfaction Among New Mothers." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73: 1-12.

Dow, Dawn Marie. 2016. "The Deadly Challenges of Raising African American Boys: Navigating the Controlling Image of the 'Thug'." *Gender and Society* 30:161-188.

Fan, Pi-Ling and Marini, Margaret Mooney. 2000. "Influences on Gender-Role Attitudes During the Transition to Adulthood." *Social Science Research* 29: 258-283.

Gerson, Kathleen. 2010. *The Unfinished Revolution: How a New Generation is Reshaping Family, Work, and Gender in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Glauber, Rebecca and Kristi L. Gozjolko. 2011. "Do Traditional Fathers Always Work More? Gender Ideology, Race, and Parenthood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73: 1133 1148.

Glenn, Evelyn N. 2016. *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*. New York, NY: Routledge Press.

Goldscheider, Frances K. and Calvin Goldscheider. 1992. "Gender Roles, Marriage, and Residential Independence." *Sociological Forum* 7: 679-696.

Greenstein, Theodore N. 2000. "Economic Dependence, Gender, and the Division of Labor in the Home: A Replication and Extension." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62: 322-335.

Gupta, Sanjiv. 2006. "Her Money, Her Time: Women's Earnings and Their Housework Hours." *Social Science Research*: 975 – 999.

Halimi, Hyriam, Els Consuegra, Katrien Struyven, and Nadine Engels. 2016. "The

Relationship Between Youngsters' Gender Role Attitudes and Individual, Home, and School Characteristics: A Review." *Sage Open* 2016:1-19.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell and Anne Machung. 1989. The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home. New York, NY: Viking.

Landry, Bart. 2000. Black Working Wives: Pioneers of the American Family Revolution. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Miller, Tina. 2007. "'Is This What Motherhood is All About?' Weaving Experiences and Discourse through Transition to First-Time Motherhood." *Gender and Society* 21: 337 - 358.

Offer, Shira. 2016. "Free Time and Emotional Well-Being: Do Dual-Earner Mothers and Fathers Differ?" *Gender and Society* 30: 213-239.

Pedulla, David S. and Sarah Thébaud. 2015. "Can We Finish the Revolution? Gender, Work Family Ideals, and Institutional Constraint." *American Sociological Review* 80: 116 - 139.

Perrone, Kristin M., Stephen L. Wright, and Z. Vance Jackson. 2009. "Traditional and Nontraditional Gender Roles and Work- Family Interface for Men and Women." *Journal of Career Development* 36: 8-24.

Pina, Darlene L., and Vern L. Bengston. 1993. "The Division of Household Labor and Wives' Happiness: Ideology, Employment, and Perceptions of Support. *"Journal of Marriage and the Family* 55: 901 – 912.

Pleck, Joseph H. 2010. Paternal Involvement: Revised Conceptualization and Theoretical Linkages with Child Outcomes. In *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, edited by Michael E. Lamb. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Ridgeway, Cecilia. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern*

World. New York: Oxford University Press.

Risman, Barbara J. 2004. “Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism.” *Gender and Society* 18:429-450.

Segura, Denise. 1991. "Ambivalence or Continuity? Motherhood and Employment among Chicanas and Mexican Immigrant Women." *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 20:119-150.

Schwab, Joseph R., Michael E. Addis, Christopher S. Reigeluth, and Joshua L. Berger. 2016. “Silence and (In)visibility in Men’s Accounts of Coping with Stressful Life Events.” *Gender and Society* 30: 289-311.

Singley, Susan G. and Kathryn Hynes. 2005. “Transitions to Parenthood Work-Family Policies, Gender, and the Couple Context.” *Gender and Society* 12:376-397.

Stone, Pamela. 2007. *Opting Out?: Why Women Really Quit Careers and Head Home*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Townsend, Nicholas W. 2002. *The Package Deal: Marriage, Work, and Fatherhood in Men’s Lives.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Vespa, Jonathan. 2009. “Gender Ideology Construction.” *Gender and Society* 23: 363 - 387.

Yavorsky, Jill E., Philip N. Cohen, and Yue Qian. 2016. “Man Up, Man Down: Race-Ethnicity and the Hierarchy of Men in Female-Dominated Work.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 57: 733-755.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Means, Percents and Standard Deviations (SD) for All Study Variables.
National Longitudinal Survey of Youth - Young Adult Sample

	Male		Female	
	(*N*=973)		(*N*=1,257)	
Variables	Mean/ Percent	SD	Mean/ Percent	SD
Relationship Conflict				
Relationship Conflict (4 low to 16 high)	6.59	2.47	6.32**	2.36
Demographic and Socioeconomic Status				
White	78.47	-	79.54	-
African American	13.63	-	13.38	-
Latino	7.90	-	7.08	-
Age (years)	23.52	3.67	23.40	3.73
South	38.05	-	36.29	-
Urban	78.82	-	72.96	-
Rural	25.36	-	26.05	-
Education (years completed)	12.79	2.62	13.09***	2.58
Household Income	1.83	2.28	1.43***	2.22
Adult Roles and Gender Ideology				
Employed	87.68	0.38	82.72**	0.45
Newly employed	10.08	0.38	12.53	0.40
Married	16.94	0.46	22.37**	0.51
Newly married	14.58	0.43	14.31	0.44
Parent	13.75	0.38	24.67***	0.50
New parent	7.87	0.32	8.97	0.34
Gender Ideology (6 liberal to 24 conservative)	11.55	2.86	10.63***	3.28

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

Table 2: Relationship Conflict Regressed on Selected Variables *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth- Young Adult Sample*

	Women (N = 1,257)											
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
Independent and Control Variables	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se
Demographic and Socioeconomic Status												
Black (1=yes)[1]	.74***	.18	.75***	.18	.75***	.18	.77***	.18	.75***	.18	.75***	.18
Hispanic (1=yes) [1]	.31	.23	.31	.23	.31	.23	.31	.23	.31	.22	.31	.23
Age (years)	.05	.03	.05	.03	.05	.03	.05	.03	.05	.03	.05	.03
South (1=yes)	.17	.12	.17	.12	.18	.12	.18	.12	.18	.12	.18	.12
Urban (1=yes)	-.07	.13	-.07	.13	-.07	.13	-.07	.13	-.07	.13	-.07	.13
Education	-.02	.03	-.02	.03	-.01	.03	-.01	.03	-.01	.03	-.01	.03
Income	-.04	.04	-.04	.04	-.04	.04	-.04	.04	-.03	.04	-.03	.04
Adult Roles and Gender Ideology												
[2]Employed (1=yes in 2010)	-.65**	.28	-.65*	.28	-.70*	.28	-.70*	.28	-.68*	.28	-.68*	.28
Newly employed (1=yes)	-.66*	.31	-.66*	.31	-.71*	.31	-.71*	.31	-.67*	.31	-.67*	.31
Married (1=yes in 2010)[3]	-.13	.16	-.13	.16	-.14	.16	-.14	.16	-.14	.16	-.14	.16
Newly married (1=yes)	-.44**	.17	-.44*	.17	-.45**	.17	-.45**	.17	-.45**	.17	-.45**	.17
Parent (1=yes in 2010)	.14	.18	.14	.18	.35	.26	-.45	.29	.16	.18	.16	.18
New Parent (1=yes)	.61**	.21	.61**	.21	.56**	.21	.56**	.21	.57	.47	1.98**	.35
Traditional Gender Ideology (1=yes)[3]	.20	.16			.44*	.19			.12	.17		
Moderate Gender Ideology (1=yes)[3]	.03	.13	-.16	.15	.04	.15	-.40*	.18	.06	.14	-.06	.16
Egalitarian Gender Ideology (1=yes)[4]			-.20	.16			-.44*	.19			-.12	.17
Interaction Terms												
Parent x Traditional					-.80*	.35						
Parent x Moderate					-.05	.31	.75*	.33				
Parent x Egalitarian							.80*	.35				
New Parent x Traditional									.51	.58		
New Parent x Moderate									-.28	.55	-.80	.46
New Parent x Egalitarian											-.51	.58
Constant	5.90		6.10		5.82		6.26		5.91		6.04	
Adjusted R Squared	.04		.04		.04		.04		.04		.04	

[1] Omitted category is White.
[2] Omitted categories are "never married" and "formerly married".
[3] Omitted category is egalitarian gender ideology.
[4] Omitted category is traditional gender ideology
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table 3: Relationship Conflict Regressed on Selected Variables *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth- Young Adult Sample*

	Men (*N*=973)											
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
Independent and Control Variables	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se	*b*	se
Demographic and Socioeconomic Status												
Black (1=yes)[1]	1.05***	.22	1.05***	.22	1.04***	.22	1.04***	.22	1.03***	.22	1.03***	.22
Hispanic (1=yes) [1]	.36	.26	.36	.26	.36	.26	.36	.26	.36	.26	.36	.26
Age (years)	.04	.03	.04	.03	.04	.03	.04	.03	.04	.03	.04	.03
South (1=yes)	-.09	.15	-.09	.15	-.08	.15	-.08	.15	-.12	.15	-.12	.15
Urban (1=yes)	-.22	.16	-.22	.16	-.23	.16	-.23	.16	-.24	.16	-.24	.16
Education	.09*	.04	.09*	.04	.09*	.04	.09*	.04	.09*	.04	.09*	.04
Income	-.06	.04	-.06	.04	-.06	.04	-.06	.04	-.06	.04	-.06	.04
Adult Roles and Gender Ideology												
Employed (1=yes in 2010)	-.45	.47	-.45	.47	-.50	.47	-.50	.47	-.48	.47	-.48	.47
Newly employed (1=yes)	-.90	.50	-.90	.50	-.94	.50	-.94	.50	-.90	.50	-.90	.50
Married (1=yes in 2010)[1]	-.12	.22	-.12	.22	-.15	.22	-.15	.22	-.13	.22	-.13	.22
Newly married (1=yes)	-.23	.21	-.23	.20	-.25	.20	-.25	.20	-.25	.20	-.25	.20
Parent (1=yes in 2010)	.35	.24	.35	.24	.31	.24	.27	.34	.36	.24	.36	.24
New Parent (1=yes)	-.22	.27	-.22	.27	.21	.63	-.21	.27	.87	.63	-.11	.42
Traditional Gender Ideology (1=yes)[3]	.88***	.20			.83**	.21			.94***	.21		
Moderate Gender Ideology (1=yes)[3]	.60**	.18	-.28	.16	.50**	.19	-.33	.17	.70**	.19	-.24	.16
Egalitarian Gender Ideology (1=yes)[4]			-.88***	.20			-.83**	.21			-.94***	.21
Interaction Terms												
Parent x Traditional					.58	.62						
Parent x Moderate					.93	.61	.36	.43				
Parent x Egalitarian							-.58	.62				
New Parent x Traditional									-.98	.75		
New Parent x Moderate									-1.55*	.73	-.57	.55
New Parent x Egalitarian											.98	.75
Constant	4.66		5.54		4.73		5.56		4.61		5.55	
Adjusted R Squared	.05		.05		.05		.05		.06		.06	

[1] Omitted category is White.
[2] Omitted categories are "never married" and "formerly married".
[3] Omitted category is egalitarian gender ideology.
[4] Omitted category is traditional gender ideology
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.