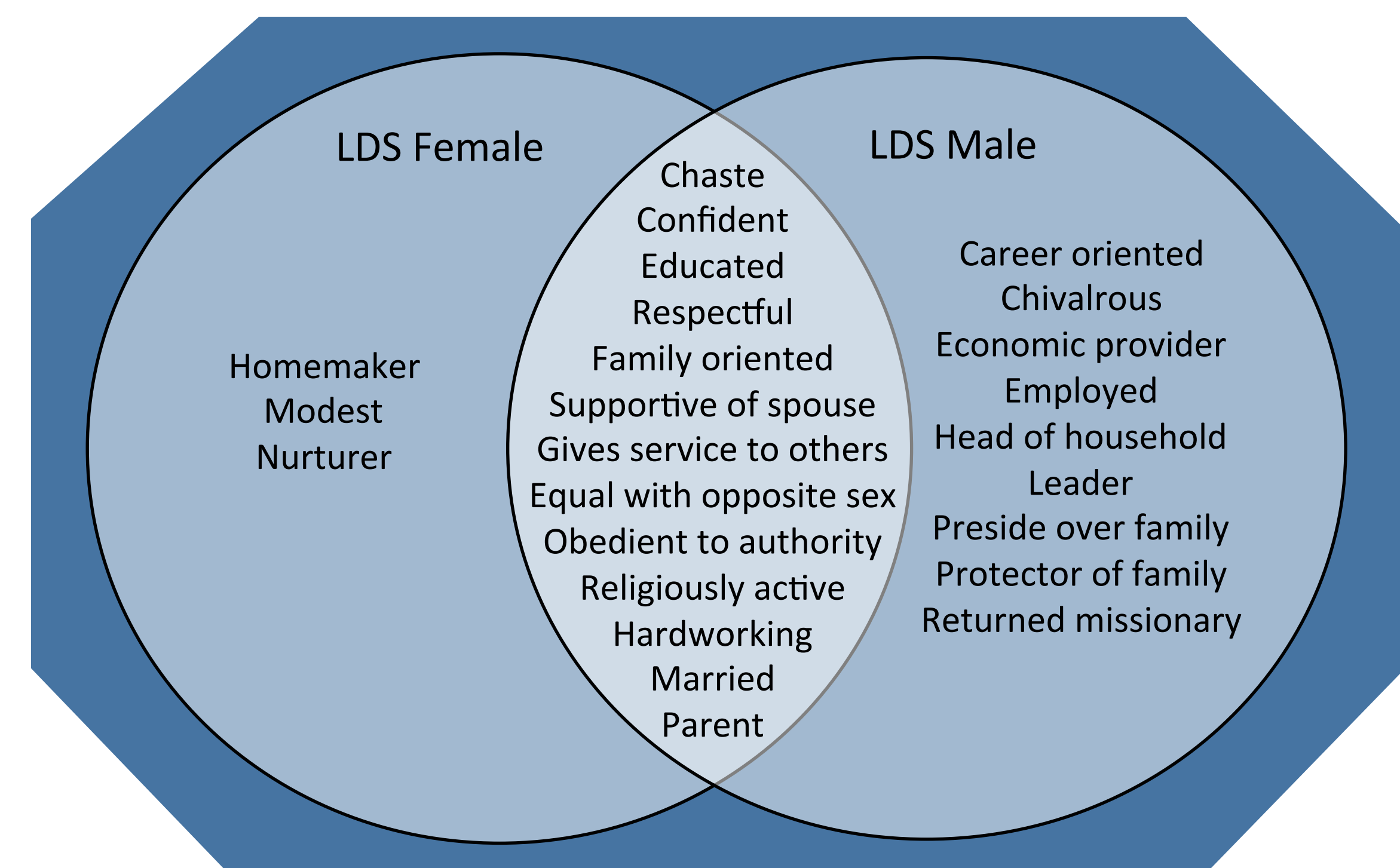# #GenderRoles:
Modeling Gender Among LDS Students

I. Cultural Consensus

This study compares religious (LDS) and secular (USA) gender roles as perceived by USU students. Using cultural consensus analysis (CCA) we mapped agreement of shared cultural norms and values, and in doing so begin to understand the varying cultural models of gender.

We created 33 cards containing terms elicited from informant interviews, and conducted pile sorts with 33 participants. They were asked to pick out and sort cards indicative of four different gender roles (USA-, USA-M, LDS-F, LDS-M). We then performed CCA to analyze the data. Because each pile sort contained the same set of terms, we can to compare the answer keys for the different gender roles, as shown below.

LDS Female — LDS Male

Chaste
Confident
Educated
Respectful
Family oriented
Supportive of spouse
Gives service to others
Equal with opposite sex
Obedient to authority
Religiously active
Hardworking
Married
Parent

Homemaker
Modest
Nurturer

Career oriented
Chivalrous
Economic provider
Employed
Head of household
Leader
Preside over family
Protector of family
Returned missionary

II. Different But Equal

There is strong consensus for both LDS female and LDS male gender roles. The overlap of LDS gender models revolves primarily around the importance of faith and family, and values perpetuated by the church. Women were primarily defined by motherhood and homemaking, with men responsible for the protection of and economic provision of their families. Yet LDS respondents spoke of how these roles are "different but equal", with motherhood in juxtaposition to the priesthood:
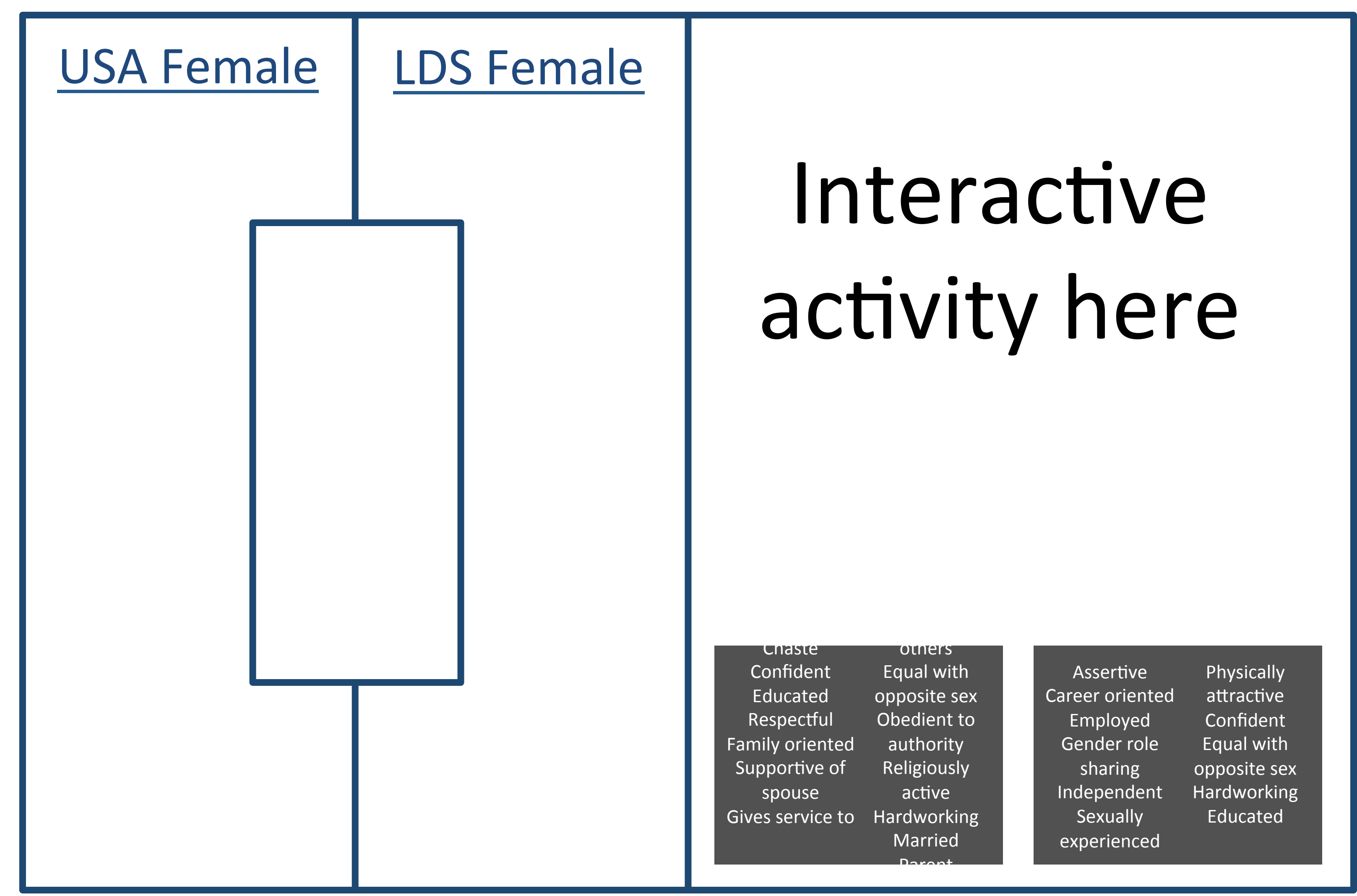
"[As women], we are given such a divine gift to love, care and nurture. Men need a little bit more help with that, and [so they have] the priesthood. They have to bless other people, and so that's kind of how they are giving that love to the world. The Lord just helps us in different ways."

III. Can't Have It All…

Eigenvalue ratios above 3 indicate cultural consensus. Expressed graphically, a tight cluster of informants also indicates cultural consensus. Based upon our data, there is high cultural consensus for the LDS female gender role but not for the American role. Competency scores indicate how well each informant is knowledgeable of the shared model.

Eigenvalue Ratio = 9.8

Eigenvalue Ratio = 2.3

LDS Female

USA Female

Average Competency = .68

Average Competency = .48
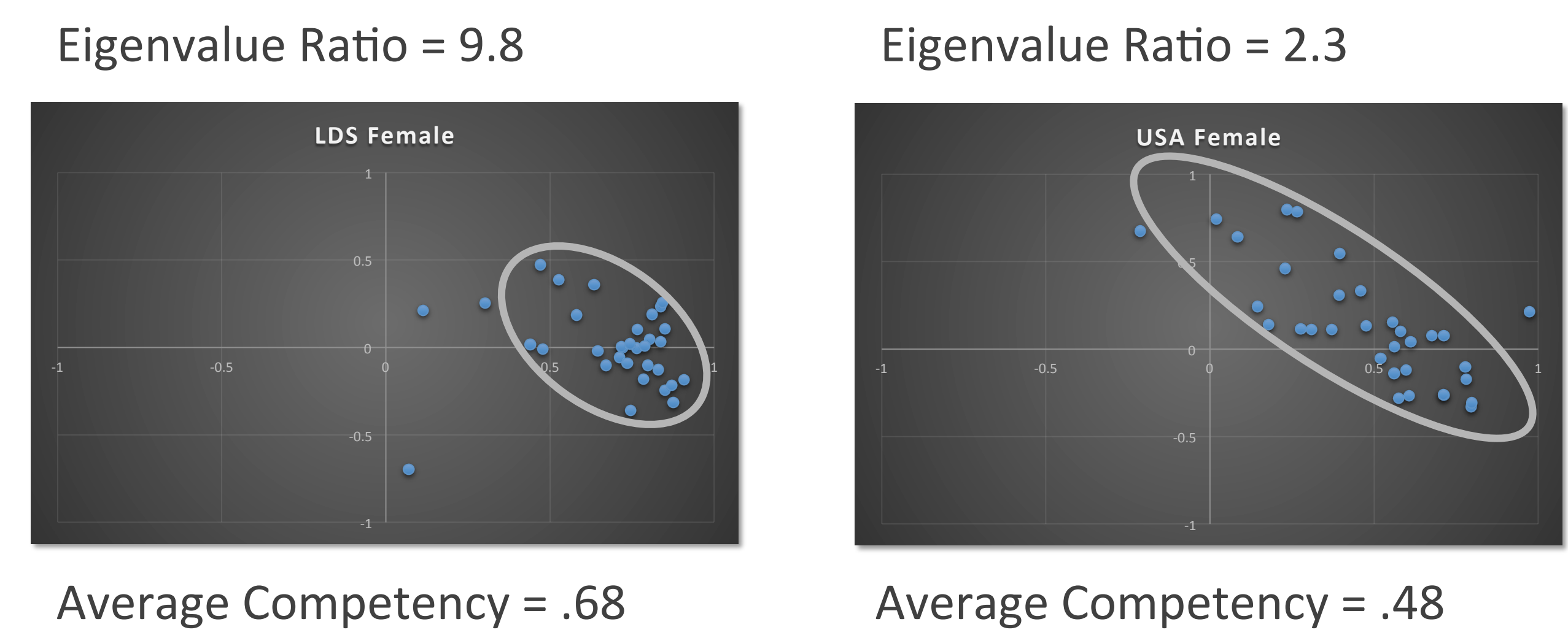
Many participants view the American model as trying to "have it all," being both career driven and family oriented. There are also many conflicting views: the USA female as both submissive *and* assertive; chaste *and* sexually experienced; unmarried *and* supportive of spouse. Others mentioned that there were two roles: a "traditional" role like that of the LDS, and the role of the working woman, who is independent, career oriented, attractive, employed, sexually experienced, equal with opposite sex, and unmarried.

USA Female | LDS Female

Interactive activity here

Chaste
Confident
Educated
Respectful
Family oriented
Supportive of spouse
Gives service to

others
Equal with opposite sex
Obedient to authority
Religiously active
Hardworking
Married
Parent

Assertive
Career oriented
Employed
Gender role sharing
Independent
Sexually experienced

Physically attractive
Confident
Equal with opposite sex
Hardworking
Educated

IV. Gender Models

We find that secular models have less cultural consensus. American gender roles operate at a higher level of cultural abstraction than LDS gender roles. This makes it hard for participants to define what those roles are. The LDS Church positions itself counter to American society when it comes to gender and the family, causing LDS students to be unsure as they navigate broader American gender roles:

"I feel like with [American] women there's a less defined role because there's still people who believe in the classic, [a woman] should be a mother and take care of her children. [But there are others who] have the strong view that she should be career [driven], [and a] go getter kind of person."

"…And I think looking at Heavenly Father, we see exactly what we want the male to be like, and exactly, kind of why you imagine why it's so hard to define the female role."

In the LDS Church, gender roles are seen as divinely and naturally separated. But because neither role functions without the other, they are viewed as intrinsically equal, allowing them to share value based gender roles. While we find shared cultural models of LDS gender roles, there is variation in which these roles are enacted.

In the next phase of our research, we will look at cultural *consonance* to see how students negotiate these sometimes conflicting and overlapping roles, and the health effects of doing so.

"**Satan** is trying to destroy the family, making the **woman** become the **man**."

"**Guys** aren't expected to be *dads* as much as **women** are expected to be *mothers*, which is **weird**, how does one work without the other?"

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