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DOMESTIC MARITAL ROLE EXPECTATIONS: A COMPARISON OF SINGLE  
AMERICAN AND CHINESE COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

I-fan Tso

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Family Relations

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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I-fan Tso

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ABSTRACT

Domestic Marital Role Expectations: A Comparison of Single  
American and Chinese College Students

by

I-fan Tso - Master of Science

Utah State University, 1969

Major Professor: Dr. C. Jay Skidmore  
Department: Family Relations

The purpose of the study was to compare the anticipations of the domestic marital role of single American and Chinese college students. The respondents consisted of 158 Utah State University students, 88 male and 70 female; and 135 Tunghai University students, 58 male and 77 female.

A questionnaire was devised to obtain their attitudinal responses, using the F test. The critical level was 0.05. The findings seemed to indicate that students of both sexes and nationalities tended to define marital roles in the area of domestic responsibilities similarly. In the majority of cases anticipated role for the husband was that of breadwinner and for the wife that of homemaker though no responsibility was considered as belonging to the wife alone, or the husband alone.

(63 pages)

## INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

Culture is the way of life of a society. It includes patterned behaviors, knowledge, and attitudes which its members share. Though every society has its own culture, the family is the basic unit of culture in all parts of the world. In World Revolution and Family Patterns, Goode (1963, p. 1) indicated that family systems today around the world seem to be toward ". . . fewer kinship ties with distant relatives and a greater emphasis on the 'nuclear' family unit of couple and children."

In the past, role differentiation followed sex lines. The husband usually took the instrumental role and the wife the expressive role. Urbanization, industrialization, and the employment of women are changing the roles which were traditionally defined. Blood, a family sociologist (1964), expressed the view that when the marital roles are performed in accordance with the other spouse's expectations, the feelings are positive, leading to marital adjustment and personal ease, and vice versa.

The author was interested in finding out what attitudes young people have toward division of labor and the difference in role expectations of single college students in the East compared with those of college students in the West, as the knowledge of this area was very limited.

Three hypotheses were set up to meet this purpose:

1. American college students, male and female, tend to emphasize sharing the fulfillment of selected domestic responsibilities more than do to their counterparts at Tunghai University.
2. Female students tend to emphasize sharing more than do the male student in their attitudes toward selected domestic responsibilities at both universities.
3. American male students tend to expect involving themselves more in the selected domestic responsibilities in their future marriages with their future spouses than do their counterparts at Tunghai University.

#### Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined as they apply to the present study:

Marital role: the part played by a husband or a wife in a marriage; a collection of rights and duties of a husband or a wife. In this study the role refers to the duties only.

Division of labor: It refers to the performance of family responsibilities.

Domestic responsibility: a formal organizational role held by a member of a family. The responsibilities include

the care of children, housekeeping tasks, management of finance, and arrangement of family social life.

**Instrumental role:** the part performed by the father as a breadwinner and his concern with relations of the family to the external society.

**Expressive role:** the part performed by the mother as an emotional supporter, and tension reliever, and her concern with the solidarity of the family.

**Role expectation:** the anticipation toward the part that a husband or a wife may play.

**Nuclear family:** a group consisting of a husband, a wife, and their children.

**Extended family:** a social group consisting of at least two generations, related by descent, marriage, or adoption.

**Broken home:** the family in which the parents' marital status is (1) separated but not divorced, (2) divorced, both remarried, (3) divorced, neither remarried, (4) divorced and mother remarried, and (5) divorced and father remarried.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most studies dealing with marital roles indicate that household responsibility is an important area for the maintenance of the family. Various terms have been used to describe the area and the tasks which are a part of marital role performance. Task performance, homemaking responsibilities, household duties, housekeeping responsibilities, and domestic tasks, are terms commonly used. In the work of Parsons and Bales (1955), the term division of labor, was used to describe the appropriate functions of husbands and wives. This concept originally came from Durkheim (1960). To him the division of labor was the chief source of social solidarity. Parsons and Bales (1955) accepted this idea and applied it to the family; however, this is intended to describe roles in decision making rather than task execution. Blood (1964, p. 270) defined division of labor somewhat differently:

The division of labor in the home is concerned with the division of responsibility between husband and wife for the tasks involved in running a home. Marriage is also profoundly affected by the nature of the couple's participation in the division of labor outside the home, that is, in the occupational system . . .

Bowman (1965), Christensen (1958) and Leslie (1967), however, have stated they have observed that in the past there has

always been a clear-cut division of labor by sex in all societies. The husband usually is the breadwinner and the wife takes care of the household responsibilities except the heavy outside tasks. This is rooted in biological differences and is reinforced by the particular cultures involved.

In the United States, Nye and Hoffman (1963, p. 7) indicated that "Census data show a steadily increasing proportion of women in paid employment over a sixty-year period." This is the period from 1900 to 1960. He also reported that as household responsibilities have to be taken care of and in a modern industrial society, cheap labor is not easily available, husbands are often drafted into domestic service. As a result, husbands of working wives usually do more housework than husbands of non-working wives. Some couples make this transition smoothly but others experience difficulties along the way. However, that a more flexible division of labor, a more equalitarian relationship so far as domestic position is concerned is emerging is supported by Axelson (1963), Nye and Hoffman (1963), Hill (1964), Bowman (1965), and Christensen (1958). Parsons and Bales (1955, p. 339) holds an optimistic point of view toward this trend:

. . . sex roles are both holding to and breaking away from tradition. Though this is a time of great transition, the changes are accomplished by a certain amount of continuity and stability.

Others, like Landis (1965) and Bowman (1965), feel that the role conflict is inescapable. Axelson (1963, p 195) even points out that:



The movement of the wives into the labor market has obviously not been made without some cost in satisfactory interpersonal adjustment. The husbands of working wives indicate a significantly greater amount of poor marital adjustment.

In analyzing Nye's general finding of poor marital adjustment when the wife is working, Axelson (1963, p. 193) indicates that:

. . . Approximately 60 per cent of the husbands of non-working and part-time working wives indicated good marital adjustment while only 38 per cent of wives employed full time indicated good adjustment . . . when the comparison is made only between husbands of non-working wives and those whose wives work full time, the difference between the better and poorer degrees of marital adjustment, becomes statistically significant.

To ease the adjustment, Landis (1965, p. 89) suggests that boys should be encouraged to show an enthusiasm in household responsibilities:

. . . the adolescent boy's interests should not all be channeled into vocational preparation; some should be channeled toward home, family, and parenthood.

Some studies of marital roles with respect to division of labor and expectations of it have been conducted for the same purpose:

Dunn (1960) used a Marriage Role Expectation Inventory to test a group of high school students. Later Moser (1961) used the same inventory to test another group of high school students. The results of these two studies showed that there was a general trend toward equalitarian relationships in the future families in the United States. Sex of the students was found closely related to the differences in their marriage role expectations. Between the two studies, Dunn's sample seemed to favor a fused

division of labor instead of a clearly defined one. She also found that female students expected to take more household responsibilities than the male students expected them to. The majority of both sexes expected to take more household responsibilities, especially if the wife worked outside the home. The endorsement of equalitarian norms was least noted in the two areas that were most clear-cut in the older male-dominated family system - those specifying that the husband should be the breadwinner and the wife should be the homemaker. Lovejoy's (1961) study of Washington State University students showed that sex roles in the family today are not so clearly defined as they once were and showed that both men and women believe that decision-making in the family, including household tasks, should be a joint matter. He also indicated that "In all instances the female felt that decisions should be joint ones to a greater extent than did the male." (Lovejoy, 1961, p. 45)

Dyer and Urban (1958) used a group of Mormon students as their subjects. They found that there was less agreement on marital roles between single men and women students than between married students. They also found that single men expected to take care of financial affairs except in the area of spending for family necessities. Fused division, however, was evidenced in the area of household responsibilities. Single men expected to help their future spouses with the laundry, and dish washing, and single women expected to help their future spouses with heavy work around the house.

Mortz (1950) found that among the married college students, husbands and wives tend to define marital roles in much the same way. Husbands are expected to be concerned with meeting their wives' personality needs and to carry their share of household, parental, and social responsibilities. The wives are expected to be subordinate to their husbands and to concentrate on the care of husband, children, and home.

Geiken (1964) revised Dunn's Marriage Role Expectation Inventory into a Family Responsibility Inventory and used it to test two selected samples. Among the three aspects of marital roles, authority patterns, child care tasks and housekeeping responsibilities, housekeeping responsibilities are the least shared. The extent of sharing was greater in those families in which wives worked fulltime. The findings among high school subjects showed that the housekeeping tasks would be the least shared and that girls generally expected that household responsibilities should be shared to a greater extent than did the boys.

Studies in three dissertations used single college students as subjects. McCarrey (1960) found that young men expected to share the household responsibilities with their future spouses and to have the wives work outside the home. Gould (1962) found that among his subjects sex was the only variable significantly related to marriage role expectations. Male students expected their future spouses to take care of most of the household responsibilities, limiting their own roles

to outdoor and heavy household work. He also reported similar results to those found in Geiken's (1964) study: housekeeping tasks are the responsibilities least expected to be shared. Bodarky (1960) interviewed fifty students at University of Florida, 25 male and 25 female. He found that the students were realistic in their appraisal of their anticipated marriage roles except in the control of money. More than half of the students expressed their wish for a relationship of sharing in their future families.

The study of Blood (1965) in the Detroit area and south-eastern Michigan is one of the most extensive to be completed. They found that there is a sharp division of labor along traditional sex lines: Husbands take care of a few outdoor and heavy tasks and leave the rest of the household tasks to their wives. Though highly specialized, the families were considered to be equalitarian because both husbands and wives participated in household responsibilities. The higher the income of the husbands the fewer the household responsibilities they performed and the more their wives performed. They also found that the roles of husband and wife in farm families were different than those in urban families. To learn if this conclusion could be generalized for other areas, Burchinal and Buader (1965) made a study in Des Moines and in several small towns

and rural areas in Iowa. Their results showed that some roles show highly sex-stereotyped patterns for husband-wife division of labor. This agreed with the findings of Blood and Wolfe. The part that was different from the findings of Blood and Wolfe was that " . . . null differences in husband-wife role prevail among families living in different residential strata in Iowa." (Burchinal and Bauder, 1965, p. 530)

Cross-culturally, three studies were conducted continuously. All of them used college students as their subjects. Arkoff, Meredith, and Dong (1963) found that the marital role attitudes of the Causasian-American males and females were not significantly different from each other. The Japanese-American females were not significantly different from females of the Causasian-American group. But, " . . . the Japanese-American males were found to be more male-dominant in their conception of marriage than the Japanese-American female, Causasian-American female, and the Caucasian-American male." Arkoff, Meredith, and Iwahara (1964) increased the scope of the research of Arkoff, Meredith, and Dong (1963) by adding some Japanese subjects from Nara Gakugei University and Yokohama National University. The results showed that both the Japanese female and the Japanese-American female had equalitarian attitudes toward marriage. The Japanese males and the Japanese-American males were more male dominant, with the latter notably higher. The Japanese-American females were significantly less

equalitarian than the other females and the Japanese females were the highest so far as the equalitarian attitudes were concerned. Kalish, Maloney, and Arkoff (1966) further extended the research of Arkoff, Meredith, and Iwahara (1964) further by adding some subjects from California State College at Los Angeles with the belief that those subjects would be less influenced by the traditions of Japan. Males tended to be more male dominant in marriage role attitudes and Japanese-American males in Hawaii seemed notably high in this regard.

Except the study conducted by Kalish, Maloney, and Arkoff (1966), all the studies above were conducted in the United States. A review of literature indicates that though there were studies made of marital roles in general, the ones dealing with household responsibilities are limited, particularly those of expectation toward household responsibilities. No study regarding domestic responsibilities was found in Taiwan. Cross-culturally, no study on this aspect has been located by the author. When summarizing the findings, it became evident that much work needs to be done in this area. Results of some studies appear to be contradictory. An example of this would be that while McCarrey (1960, p. 3049) reported that "premarital expectations are apparently somewhat romantically realistic.", an opposite result was reported by Bodarky (1960).

Young men today seem to favor an equalitarian relationship and a fused division of labor in the family with the tendency toward division of labor in household responsibilities to be the least shared, while, generally, sex was the independent variable.

## PROCEDURE

In the present study the questionnaire was selected because it is effective in giving information about a person's anticipation of future plans. It was also selected because it facilitates data collection, which shows subjects that are thousands of miles apart.

### Questionnaire

A four-page questionnaire which consists of two major divisions, was used in the present study. Division 1 is composed of 36 items, which can be further divided into four sub-groups:

1. General housekeeping tasks, 15 items;
2. Family finance, 4 items;
3. Child care tasks, 12 items;
4. Miscellaneous responsibilities, 5 items.

The subjects were asked to express their opinions on each item by circling one answer from the questionnaire: (1) husband alone, (2) husband mostly, (3) both, (4) wife mostly, and (5) wife alone. Division 1 is the scale used to test the hypotheses of the present study.

Section 2 of the questionnaire includes items of personal information and family background. These items were expected to be the most important

influences on subjects' attitudes toward domestic marital role expectations.

The questionnaire is based on a study made by Geiken (1964). The reliability and validity of her inventory were not available in the study but were appraised by the present author's graduate committee.

The original questionnaire was used in 1968 in a study of the attitudes of American and Chinese subjects in the author's research methods class. From the suggestions and recommendations of the subjects, a study of literature in the field and of other tests, a revised questionnaire was constructed. The revised questionnaire was then presented to all the professors of the author's graduate committee at Utah State University, Logan, Utah, for additional comments and suggestions. Upon completion of this revision, the questionnaire was mimeographed and prepared for distribution.

#### Subjects

Approval of the project and assurance of support were obtained from professors and instructors in the College of Arts and of Social Sciences at Utah State University, at Logan, Utah, and of Tunghai University, Taichung, Taiwan. Cooperation was promised by the head residents of the following sororities: Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Omicron Pi, Chi Omega, Delta Delta Delta, Kappa Delta, and Sigma Kappa.



The questionnaires were introduced in the following manner.

At Utah State University, Logan, Utah, the author

1. made personal visits to classes, explained the purpose of the questionnaire, and solicited the cooperation of the students. Questionnaires were then distributed.

2. Made visits to the Utah State University dormitories, where the purpose of the study was explained to the head residents, who were asked to distribute the questionnaires to all single students

3. Made visits to the sororities on the campus of Utah State University, explained the purpose of the study to the presidents, and asked them to distribute questionnaires to the sorority members.

At Tunghai University mimeographed questionnaires were sent by the author to Professor Ju-chi Hsi. He distributed them to professors and instructors who explained the study to the students and requested their cooperation.

The questionnaires were filled out and returned to the individuals who distributed them. They were then returned to the author.

The total number of questionnaires distributed at Utah State University was 400. The usable number returned to the author was 158, 88 male and 70 female. The total number of questionnaires distributed at Tunghai University was 300. The useable number returned to the author was 135, 58 male and 77 female. All of the subjects were students

majoring in Education, Business, or Social Science, enrolled in the school year of 1968.

It was assumed that the sample was representative of the students of Utah State University although it was not a random sample. Many of the completed questionnaires were not usable because of the following reasons: (1) students classified as graduate, special, non-American, non-Chinese, married, widowed, and divorced, (2) the questionnaires filled out by students who had taken a class or classes in the area of family life or child development were omitted because enrollment in these classes would in all probability influence their attitudes, (3) since Utah State University requires that students take 10 to 15 credits in English, Family Life, Landscape, Architecture, Languages, Music, Philosophy, Plant Science, Speech, or Theatre Arts, and female students were very often enrolled in family life and child development classes, cutting down considerably the number of possible female subjects, consequently visits to the dormitories and sororities were made to obtain sufficient usable questionnaires.

#### Analysis of Data

In section I of the questionnaire an arbitrary system of weights ranging from one to five was assigned to the response positions ranging from husband alone, husband mostly, both, wife mostly, to wife alone.

A low total score indicated that the husband would be willing to perform most of the domestic responsibilities, and a high total score indicated that the wife would be willing to perform most of the domestic responsibilities. The lowest possible score on the 36-item scale was 36, which meant that the husband would be willing to accept all the domestic responsibility. The highest possible score on the 36-item scale was 108, which meant that the wife would be willing to accept all domestic responsibility. Scores nearest 108 were rated as expressing the most positive attitudes insofar as willingness to share the domestic responsibility with their future spouses.

Two steps were used to test the hypotheses.

As a first step, the F test was used to test the three hypotheses and the results for hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were computed. The 0.05 level of significance was selected for the critical level.

The three hypotheses were stated in null forms because ". . . it is better fitted to our statistical techniques . . ." as Borg (1963, p. 32) suggested. As a second step, the mean scores of the 36-items as well as the mean scores of the four sub-groups were computed separately in order to compare the differences evidenced between them.

The information from section 2 of the questionnaire was compiled for tabulation. This compilation consisted of programming the collected information on IBM cards. The cards were then sorted by a sorting machine in order that the response of the subjects from Utah

State University as well as from Tunghai University could be obtained and presented in the form of tables, as shown in the next chapter.

## RESULTS

### The Hypotheses

In the present study the statistical method used was F test.

The three major hypotheses and the F rated for each as presented below.

1. American college students, male and female, evidence no difference in emphasis on sharing in the fulfilling of selected domestic responsibilities in comparison with their counterparts at Tunghai University.

2. Female students at both universities evidence no difference in their expectations toward domestic responsibilities as compared to males.

3. American and Chinese male college students showed no difference in their attitudes toward involving in the domestic responsibilities in their future marriages with their future spouses.

Results for the three hypotheses were:

Hypothesis 1, F Calc. = 4.005

Hypothesis 2, F Calc. = 3.066

Hypothesis 2, F Calc. = 12.45

Since  $F_{0.95}(1, 330) = 3.89$ , Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3 were rejected. The indication is that a difference in attitude toward

fulfillment of selected domestic responsibilities exists between American college students and Chinese college students. Differences were also evident between American male students and Chinese male students insofar as involving themselves in domestic responsibilities with their future spouses was concerned. Statistically, although rejection of Hypothesis 2 is not proper, differences are indicated between female and male students.

Comparisons of attitudes of the students at Utah State University and Tunghai University revealed that USU subjects differed from Tunghai subjects in their attitudes toward fulfillment of selected domestic responsibilities; USU male subjects differed from Tunghai male subjects insofar as their involving themselves in the domestic responsibilities in their future marriages. Female subjects differed from the male subjects in their expectations toward domestic responsibilities at both universities. The arithmetic mean was computed for all USU subjects, all the male subjects; all USU male subjects and all Tunghai male subjects. Results are given in Table 1.

The 36-item scale was divided into five categories of general housekeeping tasks, child care, family finance, miscellaneous, and male-oriented items. All the subjects, regardless of sex or nationality, preferred to have the female taking care of general housekeeping tasks and child care tasks most of the time. The Chinese subjects would have

Table 1. Arithmetic mean for all the sub-groups

Sub-groups	N	Mean score
USU subjects (male and female)	158	120.792
Tunghai subjects (male and female)	135	122.164
Female subjects (USU and Tunghai)	147	120.263
Male subjects (USU and Tunghai)	146	121.909
USU male subjects	88	120.168
Tunghai male subjects	58	124.549

the wife mainly taking care of family finance affairs while the American subjects preferred the male to take care of it mostly. For all the subjects, husbands would mainly decide where the family will live and make decisions affecting the family as a whole while the wife would mainly take care of buying gifts for holidays and birthdays for the children, relatives, and friends. Setting social dates with other couples for the USU subjects is a responsibility mainly for the wife but the opposite view was held by Tunghai subjects.

Personal Information and Family Background of the Subjects  
in the Present Study

In the present study attitudes toward domestic responsibilities of 88 American male students, 70 American female students, 58 Chinese male students, and 77 Chinese female students, were compared. A total of 99 American students and 100 Chinese students were in the 18-, 19-, or 20- year age group. Table 2 presented the range as well as the average age of male and female subjects in USU and Tunghai University.

Table 2. Range and average age of male and female subjects in USU and Tunghai University

	USU male	USU female	Tunghai male	Tunghai female
Youngest	20	20	19	20
Average	23	23	22	25
Oldest	30	29	25	31

Table 3 indicates that 73 per cent of USU male and 61 per cent of USU female were born and raised in rural area and towns which consisted of populations from 2,500 to 20,000 people. Among the subjects at Tunghai University, 52 per cent of male subjects and 68 per cent of female subjects were raised in city or large city which consisted of populations from 20,000 to 100,000 people or more. In comparison to male subjects, more females



Table 3. Size of community where male and female subjects at USU and Tunghai University were reared

Community size	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Rural <sup>a</sup> area	26	30	14	20	14	24	9	44
Town <sup>b</sup>	38	43	29	41	14	24	16	21
City <sup>c</sup>	14	16	19	27	10	17	18	23
Large city	10	11	8	11	20	34	34	44
Total	88	99	70	100	58	100	77	100

<sup>a</sup>Under 2,500 people, open country, farm

<sup>b</sup>2,500 people -- 20,000 people

<sup>c</sup>20,000 people --100,000 people

<sup>d</sup>More than 100,000 people

were brought up in cities of 20,000 to 100,000 population and large cities of over 100,000 population. Except for the Tunghai females, over 90 per cent of USU subjects and Tunghai male subjects came from families in which the parents had been married only once. USU females had the highest per cent (8.5) of subjects who came from broken homes. The per cent for the other three sub-groups were all below 3 per cent.

The parents of more than 20 per cent of the USU subjects had businesses of their own while about 20 per cent of the parents of Tunghai subjects were government employees. More Tunghai subjects than USU

subjects reported that their father's occupation was farming. Table 4 indicates that greater percentage of Tunghai subjects reported that their fathers were deceased, or retired, or that they did not know their fathers' occupations.

Table 4 Father's occupation of male and female subjects in USU and Tunghai University, grouped in nine categories

Father's occupation	USU male number	USU female number	Tunghai male number	Tunghai female number
Unskilled or semi-skilled labor	3	0	1	0
Skilled manual labor	11	4	4	5
Semi-skilled white	11	6	5	5
Skilled white	7	6	2	0
Professional	11	9	5	10
Proprietor	21	27	9	14
Government employee	8	5	12	14
Farm	2	6	8	15
Military service	11	6	4	3
Don't know deceased or retired	3	1	8	11
Total	88	70	58	77

The educational level of the parents in both samples was in general higher among female subjects than among male subjects. Tunghai females had the highest percentage of fathers whose educational level was classified as graduate (43 per cent). They also had the highest percentage (72 per cent) of fathers whose educational level was classified as having some college or above. USU females had the highest percentage (66 per cent) of mothers whose educational level was classified as having some college or above. Tunghai males had a fairly large group of fathers (21 per cent) who had only graduated from the elementary school. There were 17 per cent of Tunghai females' mothers who received professional school's education, which is the highest among the four sub-samples. These findings are further specified in Table 5.

Most of the subjects considered childhood happiness as well as the marital happiness or their parents to be above average. More USU than Tunghai subjects (Table 7) graded their parents' marriage as very happy in their childhood. More USU subjects as presented in Table 8 considered their childhood to be very happy in comparison to Tunghai subjects.

No USU or Tunghai subjects showed their family financial status as very wealthy or very poor. Among the male Tunghai subjects, 21 per cent considered their families poor. More USU than Tunghai subjects (Table 9) considered their families to be wealthy, the largest percentages of all sub-samples classified their families as of average financial status.

Table 5. Mother's education of male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in nine categories

Mother's education	USU male number	USU female number	Tunghai male number	Tunghai female number
Blank or "0"	0	2	8	1
Some	1	1	1	2
Elementary school graduate	3	0	19	11
7, 8, 9, grade	5	3	8	8
10, 11, 12 grade	45	15	0	3
Some college	19	24	11	33
College graduate	13	17	7	8
Graduate	1	1	2	11
Professional school	1	1	2	0
Total	88	70	58	77

In Table 6 present information of the educational background of the fathers.

Table 6. Father's education of male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in nine categories

Father's education	USU male number	USU female number	Tunghai male number	Tunghai female number
Blank or "0"	0	2	3	0
Some	2	1	1	0
Elementary school graduate	7	4	12	6
7, 8, 9 grade	4	2	9	3
10, 11, 12 grade	27	15	0	0
Some college	22	15	11	14
College graduate	14	15	5	8
Graduate	12	15	13	33
Professional school	0	1	4	13
Total	88	70	58	77

Table 7. Self-rated happiness of childhood of male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in five levels

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very happy	28	32	29	41	14	24	22	29
Happy	43	49	27	39	32	55	34	44
Average	16	18	10	14	9	16	19	25
Unhappy	0	0	3	4	3	5	2	2
Very unhappy	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	88	100	70	100	58	100	77	100

Table 8. Parents' marital happiness as rated by male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in five levels

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very happy	35	40	31	44	22	38	24	31
Happy	27	31	16	22	13	22	33	43
Average	19	22	16	22	18	31	13	17
Unhappy	6	7	6	9	5	9	4	5
Very unhappy	1	1	1	1	0	0	3	4
Total	88	100	70	100	58	100	77	100

Table 9. Family financial status as rated by male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in five levels

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very wealthy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wealthy	21	24	19	23	6	10	13	17
Average	64	73	48	69	40	69	62	81
Poor	3	3	3	4	12	21	2	3
Very poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	88	100	70	100	58	100	77	100

Table 10 indicates that USU females considered their relationship with their fathers as very close. Female subjects, in general, had a higher percentage in the "very close" group. Table 11 shows that over half of the Tunghai subjects, both male and female, felt that they were very close to their mothers.

Table 10. Self-rated relationship with father-by male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very close	22	25	22	31	15	26	20	26
Close	30	34	20	29	25	43	34	44
Average	25	28	18	26	12	21	15	19
Distant	5	6	5	7	2	3	4	5
Very distant	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	5
Not involved	4	5	3	4	2	3	1	1
Total	88	100	70	100	58	100	77	100



Table 11. Self-rated relationship with mother - by male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very close	24	27	25	36	33	57	48	62
Close	40	45	20	29	19	33	22	29
Average	21	24	20	29	5	9	6	8
Distant	3	3	3	3	1	2	0	0
Very distant	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0
Not involved	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
I am not sure	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	88	99	70	100	58	100	77	100

Table 12 indicates that over one-half of the USU subjects were affiliated with the LDS Church. Over one-half of the Tunghai subjects had no religion of their own. Of the remaining USU and Tunghai subjects the second largest group was Protestant and the third was Catholic.

Table 12. Church membership of male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in six categories

Church membership	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Catholic	14	16	4	6	5	9	11	14
Jewish	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Protestant	16	18	12	17	11	19	24	31
LDS	50	57	47	67	0	0	0	0
Buddism	1	1	0	0	3	5	9	12
Other	2	2	4	6	1	2	0	0
None	4	5	3	4	38	66	32	42
Total	88	100	70	100	58	101	77	100

Table 13 seems to indicate that more USU subjects than Tunghai subjects did domestic work at home. Both USU and Tunghai female subjects had a fairly high percentage who classified themselves as belonging to a group who did a below average amount of domestic work at home. Tunghai and USU male subjects considered the domestic work they did at home to be average.

Table 13. The amount of domestic work that male and female subjects did at home, grouped in five levels

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Excessive	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	3
More than average	16	18	10	14	7	12	5	6
Average	57	65	37	53	29	50	26	34
Below average	11	13	21	30	17	29	34	44
Completely lacking	1	1	1	1	4	7	10	13
Total	88	100	70	99	58	100	77	100

Table 14 seems to indicate that more male subjects came from families in which the father was definitely the dominant individual. USU subjects had a higher percentage of families in which neither the father nor the mother was dominant in comparison to that of Tunghai subjects. The families where father tended to be dominant comprised the largest group of Tunghai subjects.

Table 14. Family dominance pattern as rated by male and female subjects of USU and Tunghai University, grouped in five levels

Rating	USU male		USU female		Tunghai male		Tunghai female	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Father was definitely the dominant one	18	20	7	10	11	19	9	12
Father tended to be dominant	24	27	16	23	19	33	26	34
50-50	32	36	31	44	14	24	26	34
Mother tended to be dominant	9	10	9	13	7	12	9	12
Mother was definitely the dominant one	3	3	2	3	1	2	1	1
I am not sure	2	2	5	7	6	10	6	8
Total	88	98	70	100	58	100	77	101

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### Discussion

#### Hypothesis 1

The results of the F test indicated that a difference existed between the subjects tested at Utah State University and those tested at Tunghai University insofar as their attitudes toward sharing in the fulfillment of selected domestic responsibilities were concerned. The results listed in Table 1 further indicated that the subjects at Utah State University seemed more willing to share the selected family responsibilities with their future spouses than the subjects at Tunghai University. The reason for this difference may be that Chinese families are traditionally patriarchal. Men worked outside of the home and women worked inside. Apparently, male help in the area of domestic responsibilities is due to the influence of the western society, and only recently a fused division of labor has begun to emerge. The foremost reason that the fused division of labor appears is that in an industrial society " . . . When time gets short, both partners are pressed into service to the extent of their ability and availability." (Blood, 1964, p. 274) Another reason is that in modern marriage companionship is emphasized as Blood (1964) indicates. Since the

trend toward women working outside the home is less advanced in Taiwan, and since domestic help, which is not costly, is more easily obtainable than in the United States, wives are able and available to handle the domestic responsibilities without the necessity of involving their husbands in the performance of those responsibilities.

### Hypothesis 2

Though the mean score differences for sex are smaller than those for nationalities, the results in Table 1 also indicate that the female subjects at both universities expected to share the selected domestic responsibilities with their future spouses to a greater extent than did the male subjects. The reason may be that as the sexes are becoming more nearly equal in opportunity and more nearly alike in function. In order to endow women with the freedom to seek their personal fulfillment outside the home, men find themselves faced with the necessity of taking over some of the domestic responsibilities which the culture in which they were reared originally defined as feminine. Many men find little satisfaction in helping with household responsibilities because of this attitude. On the other hand, even though some women can assume complete responsibilities in the domestic area, some help from their spouses would give them a more secure feeling of equality with their husband. For this reason they are more sensitive and more willing to share the responsibilities with their spouses.

### Hypothesis 3

The majority of American families are nuclear. This means that when the wife is working the husband in the American family is often forced to help in performing household responsibilities. Families in Taiwan, however, very often consist of three generations. For those Chinese families which do not have domestic help outside the home, grandparents share many child care tasks as well as housekeeping responsibilities.

Competition for entering high school as well as universities is much stronger in Taiwan than in the United States. As domestic help is not difficult to obtain, parents in Taiwan usually do their best to relieve their children of domestic responsibility. This situation may account for the fact that when 20 per cent of the male subjects (Table 9) of Tunghai graded the family financial status as poor only 14 per cent (Table 13) reported that they did more than average domestic work at home. In the United States helping at home is common, and children get this type of training when they are young. In a way this offers them a better opportunity to face the reality of home living than that given Chinese students. Table 13 also indicates that in the present study 86 per cent of USU subjects in comparison with only 68 per cent of Tunghai subjects reported that they had done at least an average amount of domestic work at home. This may be the reason why the

American male students expect to involve themselves more in domestic responsibility in their future families than their counterparts at Tunghai.

Though generally age is considered an index of maturity it does not necessarily follow that those who are older are more mature and that they are more realistic as far as their expectation toward domestic responsibility is concerned. Therefore, even though Table 2 shows that the average age of all the Chinese subjects (23.5 per cent) were older than all the American (23 per cent), it is doubtful if the age can be used as a factor to explain the small differences in mean score between the sexes and between the nationalities. Religious affiliation and place of rearing of the subjects may also represent bias factors, but this subject has not been treated in the present study. However, as a few extreme cases can bias the average sharply, the standard deviation in Table 21 did offer some empirical explanation about the small differences of the average mean scores between the sexes and nationalities.

According to Table 15, Tunghai males showed the largest standard deviation in mean score. Tunghai females showed the second largest standard deviation. The conclusion can be drawn that in the present study more Tunghai subjects than Utah State University subjects have extreme attitudes both ways. While some of the Tunghai subjects felt that some selected domestic responsibilities should be handled by husband alone others felt that



Table 15. Mean score and standard deviation of the sub-samples

Sub-samples	Mean score	Standard deviation
USU males	120.168	6.845798
USU females	121.577	4.697385
Tunghai males	124.549	9.245519
Tunghai females	120.367	7.476479

they should be handled by wife alone while the subjects at Utah State University expressed similar attitudes toward who should take care of these responsibilities.

Another factor which may have had some influence on the average mean score of the 36-item scale for the sub-groups is that the total items of general housekeeping tasks, family finance, child care tasks, and miscellaneous are not equal. Consequently the categories which consist of more items influence the total score of the 36-item scale more than the categories which consist of only a few items. When the average mean scores for different sub-groups were computed and then divided by the number of items in the category, different attitudes toward different categories were found between the two different nationalities, and the sexes, and between the male subjects of Utah State University and the male subjects of Tunghai University. (See Tables 16,

17, and 18.) The reason for these differences is that in pure sharing, the attitudes can be expressed in two ways. One of them is that the subject expects to take care of half of the selected domestic responsibilities all by himself (or herself) and the other is that he (or she) expects to share all the responsibilities with his (or her) future spouse. Either way, the total score for the 36 items should be 108. When 108 is divided by 36, the result is 3 points. In using 3 points as an index, it was found that in comparison with the subjects at Tunghai University, the American subjects at Utah State University, male and female, tended to emphasize sharing only in the area of child care tasks and setting of social dates with other couples. They expressed the attitude that the general housekeeping tasks, buying holiday and birthday gifts for the children, relatives, and friends should be mainly the wife's responsibility and family finance, deciding where the family will live, as well as decisions affecting the family as a whole should be mostly decided by the husband. The subjects at Tunghai University seemed to emphasize sharing in the area of general housekeeping tasks and buying holiday and birthday gifts. Family finance and decisions affecting the family as a whole should be mostly the wife's responsibilities. The wife should also have more to say about the decision of where the family is to live. Setting social dates with other couples, however, should be decided mainly by the husband.

Table 16. Comparison of mean score of nationality, attitudes toward domestic responsibilities and miscellaneous items

Responsibilities	USU (N = 158)	Tunghai (N = 135)
General housekeeping tasks	3.718	3.611
Family finance	2.726	3.198
Child care tasks	3.265	3.9
Male oriented items <sup>a</sup>	2.349	2.566
Deciding where the family will live	2.72	2.9
Decision affecting the family as a whole	2.97	3.01
Buying gifts for holiday and birthday for the children, relatives, and friends	3.47	3.33
Setting social dates with other couples	3.09	2.65

<sup>a</sup>Those tasks include:

1. planning how to use the money,
2. making repairs on household equipment,
3. emptying the garbage,
4. being concerned with politics and world affairs.

These were the items which stand out as strongly male oriented in the present study.

Table 17. Comparison of mean score of male and female attitudes toward domestic responsibilities and miscellaneous items

Responsibilities	Male (N=146)	Female (N=147)
General housekeeping tasks	3.691	3.641
Family finance	2.896	2.991
Child care tasks	3.325	3.32
Male oriented items <sup>a</sup>	2.424	2.471
Deciding where the family will live	2.76	2.83
Decisions affecting the family as a whole	2.97	3.00
Buying gifts for holiday and birthday for the children, relatives, and friends	3.4	3.41
Setting social dates with other couples	2.82	2.95

<sup>a</sup>Those tasks include:

1. planning how to use the money
2. making repairs on household equipment
3. emptying the garbage
4. being concerned with politics and world affairs.

These were the items which stand out as strongly male oriented in the present study.

Table 18. Comparison of mean score of USU male and Tunghai male attitudes toward domestic responsibilities and miscellaneous items

Responsibilities	USU (N=88)	Tunghai male (N=58)
General housekeeping tasks	3.695	3.703
Family finance	2.708	3.183
Child care tasks	3.254	3.494
Male oriented items <sup>a</sup>	2.303	2.609
Deciding where the family will live	2.65	2.95
Decisions affecting the family as a whole	2.98	2.97
Buying gifts for holiday and birthday for the children, relatives, and friends	3.44	3.35
Setting social dates with other couples	3.12	2.36

<sup>a</sup>These tasks include:

1. planning how to use the money
2. making repairs on household equipment
3. emptying the garbage
4. being concerned with politics and world affairs.

These were the items which stand out as strongly male oriented in the present study.

According to Table 16, in the area of general housekeeping, family finance, decisions affecting the family as a whole, and setting social dates, female subjects tended to emphasize sharing more than did the male subjects. Among those responsibilities, female subjects seemed to feel that general housekeeping tasks and decisions affecting where the family is to live are mainly their responsibility rather than that of their future husbands. Though they were willing to share, they agreed with the male subjects that family finance, deciding where the family is to live, and setting social dates with other couples should be mostly the husband's responsibility. The female subjects wished to share more than the male subjects expected to in the area of planning how to use the money, making repairs on household equipment, emptying the garbage, and being concerned with politics and world affairs, but their attitudes showed agreement with those of the male subjects toward child care tasks and the buying of holiday and birthday gifts: that they should be mostly taken care of by the wife.

Table 18 indicates that the male subjects at Utah State University tend to involve themselves more in general housekeeping tasks, child care tasks and the setting of social dates than do their counterparts in Tunghai. Though male subjects at both universities agreed that general housekeeping tasks and child care tasks should be mostly the wife's responsibility, the male subjects at Tunghai University disagreed with their counterparts at Utah State University that the setting of social dates should be mostly the responsibility of the husband rather than

that of the wife. They were also more willing to share the responsibilities of planning how to use the money, making of repairs on household equipment, emptying the garbage, in being concerned with politics and world affairs, and in deciding where the family is to live with their future spouses than were the male subjects at Utah State University. They seemed to prefer that the wife be responsible for family finance. Male subjects at both universities seemed to feel exactly the same way about decisions affecting the family as a whole; they felt that the husband should assume that responsibility mostly. Both agreed that buying of holiday and birthday gifts should be mainly the wife's responsibility and most of the subjects seemed to prefer to have their future spouses take care of the responsibility of setting social dates without involving them too much in it.

### Conclusion

In the present study when the average mean scores for the 36-item scale were computed, the findings in Table 2 seemed to support the hypotheses that:

1. American college students, male and female, tend to emphasize sharing in fulfillment of selected domestic responsibilities more than do their counterparts at Tunghai University.
2. Female students tend to emphasize sharing more than do

male students in their attitudes toward selected domestic responsibilities at both universities.

3. American male students tend to expect involving themselves more in the selected domestic responsibilities in their future marriages with their future spouses than do their counterparts at Tunghai University.

On the whole, students of both sexes and nationalities tended to define marital roles in the area of domestic responsibilities similarly. For the majority, the appropriate role for the husband was that of breadwinner and for the wife that of homemaker. Except for a few male-oriented items, most of the items in the scale elicited attitudes showing that the responsibilities should be of the wife's.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Suggestions for further development of the present study or one of a similar nature are:

1. Use of the present hypotheses with larger and more heterogeneous samples in order that results will not be limited for their generalization.
2. Use of subjects who have been married for a period of time to determine whether or not their expectations influenced the marital adjustment.
3. Use of religious affiliation as an independent variable and comparison of different religious group.

The author suggests that research need not be limited to the expectations of the marital roles with respect to the division of labor only. Studies seeking for similarity rather than differences as well as studies with respect to decision making and power structure will also be valuable.

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## APPENDIX

This study is being made in the interest of securing and understanding the marital role expectation of single college students. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Assume in your future family, both you and your spouse are going to work outside the home. Whom would you expect to perform these tasks? Please circle.

HA for husband alone                      B for both                      WA for wife alone  
Hm for husband mostly                      WM for wife mostly

- HA HM B WA WM 1. Doing the grocery shopping.  
 HA HM B WA WM 2. Making repairs on household equipment.  
 HA HM B WA WM 3. Doing the laundry  
 HA HM B WA WM 4. Planning the meals.  
 HA HM B WA WM 5. Preparing the meals.  
 HA HM B WA WM 6. Doing the ironing.  
 HA HM B WA WM 7. Doing the dusting.  
 HA HM B WA WM 8. Keeping the clothes in repair.  
 HA HM B WA WM 9. Drying the dishes.  
 HA HM B WA WM 10. Washing the dishes.  
 HA HM B WA WM 11. Washing the windows.  
 HA HM B WA WM 12. Serving the meals or keeping the house orderly when we have guests.  
 HA HM B WA WM 13. Rearranging the furniture.  
 HA HM B WA WM 14. Cleaning up after guests have left.  
 HA HM B WA WM 15. Emptying the garbage.  
 HA HM B WA WM 16. Managing the family's money matters.  
 HA HM B WA WM 17. Paying the bills.  
 HA HM B WA WM 18. Planning to use the money.  
 HA HM B WA WM 19. Spending the money.  
 HA HM B WA WM 20. Bathing and dressing the children.  
 HA HM B WA WM 21. Feeding the children.  
 HA HM B WA WM 22. Spending time with the boys in the family.  
 HA HM B WA WM 23. Staying home with the children during part of the weekend.  
 HA HM B WA WM 24. Guiding the children's activities.  
 HA HM B WA WM 25. Spending time with the girls in the family.  
 HA HM B WA WM 26. Babysitting in the evening.  
 HA HM B WA WM 27. Caring for the children when they are sick.  
 HA HM B WA WM 28. Decisions concerning the children, such as where they will go and what they may do.  
 HA HM B WA WM 29. Disciplining the children.  
 HA HM B WA WM 30. To decide how many children you are going to have.  
 HA HM B WA WM 31. Shopping for clothes for the children.  
 HA HM B WA WM 32. Being concerned with politics and world affairs.

- HA HM B WA WM 33. Deciding where the family will live.
- HA HM B WA WM 34. Decisions affecting the family as a whole, such as when meals are served and when radio is turned on.
- HA HM B WA WM 35. Buying gifts for holidays and birthdays for the children, relatives, and friends.
- HA HM B WA WM 36. Setting social dates with other couples.



Please answer all the following questions by either filling the blanks or circling one of the answers. Please do not sign your name and your identity in this project is protected.

Personal Information:

I. Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ (year)

II. Sex: 1. male  
2. female

III. Nationality: 1. American  
2. Chinese  
3. Others

IV. Year in college: 1. Freshman 4. Senior  
2. Sophomore 5. Graduate  
3. Junior 6. Special

V. Marital status: 1. Single 3. Widowed  
2. Married 4. Divorced

VI. List the age of your brother(s).

\_\_\_\_\_

List the age of your sister(s).

\_\_\_\_\_

VII. Your religious preference:

- |               |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Catholic   | 5. Budism                       |
| 2. Jewish     | 6. Other _____ (please specify) |
| 3. Protestant | 7. None                         |
| 4. LDS        |                                 |

VIII. In what size community did you live during your childhood?

1. rural area (under 2,500 people, open country, farm)
2. town (2,500 people--20,000 people)
3. city (20,000 people--100,000 people)
4. large city (more than 100,000 people)

IX. Have you ever had doubts about your chance of having a successful marriage?

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. frequently   | 3. rarely |
| 2. occasionally | 4. never  |

- X. In the home in which you were reared do you feel that the domestic work you did was:
1. excessive
  2. more than average
  3. average
  4. below average
  5. completely lacking
- XI. If you have completed a course or courses on this campus in child development and marriage or family relations please specify by title:
1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
- XII. How would you grade the happiness or unhappiness of your childhood?
1. very happy
  2. happy
  3. average
  4. unhappy
  5. very unhappy

### Home and Parents

- I. Your parents' present marital status: if both are living now, if not, at time of death of one:
1. married only to each other
  2. separated but not divorced
  3. divorced, both remarried
  4. divorced, neither remarried
  5. divorced and mother remarried
  6. divorced and father remarried
  7. mother remarried after father deceased
  8. father remarried after mother deceased
  9. other \_\_\_\_\_ (please explain)
- II. The number of years of education that your father completed  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 The number of years of education that your mother completed  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- III. Describe your father's main occupation \_\_\_\_\_

- IV. How would you describe the dominance pattern between your father and mother in the home? (dominant: to make the decisions that concern the family as a whole)
1. father was definitely that dominant one
  2. father tended to be dominant
  3. it was about 50-50
  4. mother tended to be dominant
  5. mother was definitely the dominant one
  6. I am not sure
- V. What is your relationship with your parents or step-parents at the present time? If you had a step-parent, check the one that you lived with since you were a child.
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) With your father (or step-father)  | (with your mother (or step-mother))    |
| 1. very close                          | 1. very close                          |
| 2. close                               | 2. close                               |
| 3. average                             | 3. average                             |
| 4. distant                             | 4. distant                             |
| 5. very distant                        | 5. very distant                        |
| 6. not involved (dead, separate, etc.) | 6. not involved (dead, separate, etc.) |
| 7. I do not know                       | 7. I do not know                       |
- VI. In regard to happiness in marriage, how would you consider your parents' happiness or unhappiness in marriage to be:
1. very happy
  2. happy
  3. average
  4. unhappy
  5. very unhappy

## VITA

I-fan Tso

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: Domestic Marital Role Expectations: A Comparison of Single  
American and Chinese College Students

Major Field: Family and Child Development

## Biographical Information:

Person Data: Born at Kuen Ming, China, March 5, 1943,  
daughter of Chao-pu and Shen-gene Tso.

Education: Attended elementary school in Hong Kong and Taipei,  
Taiwan; graduated from the Second Girls' Middle School,  
Taipei, Taiwan in 1961; received the Bachelor of Art  
degree from Tunghai University, Taichung, Taiwan,  
with a major in Sociology, in 1965; fulfilled the require-  
ments for the Master of Science degree, specializing  
in Family and Child Development, at Utah State Uni-  
versity in 1969.