Gender and Power in Demand/Withdraw Patterns of Marital Interaction

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

GENDER AND POWER IN DEMAND/WITHDRAW PATTERNS OF MARITAL INTERACTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY 1997
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I greatly appreciate the distinctive knowledge, guidance, and encouragement provided by Dr. Ana Ulloa Estrada. Her willingness to engage in lively discussion from the beginning provided a dynamic context for my learning process. Also, I am grateful for Dr. Deborah Holmes for her flexibility in assuming the chair of my committee and for her clarity in supervising my statistical analyses and manuscript revisions. In addition, thanks are extended to Dr. William Pinsof for his vision and leadership in the larger psychotherapy project.

Sincere thanks are extended to the coding group: Greg Bailey, Tim Beecher, and Inna Meerson. Your considerate and timely viewing of the tapes, and generous attitude throughout the process was crucial to completion of this project.

I am buoyed constantly by the love of my family and friends; thank you for your kindness and support. Finally, I am blessed with the joyful companionship of my husband, Dave Martin; thank you for your love, patience, and playfulness.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. iii
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................ v
ABSTRACT .................................................................................. vi

Chapter

I. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ........................................... 1

Demand/Withdraw Patterns of Marital Interaction ......................... 4
Power ........................................................................ 13
Population Sampled .................................................................... 15
Current Investigation ................................................................. 16
Hypotheses ........................................................................ 17

II. METHOD ................................................................................ 19

Setting ................................................................................ 19
Participants ........................................................................ 19
Procedure ........................................................................ 21
Measures ........................................................................ 21

III. RESULTS ................................................................................ 28

IV. DISCUSSION .......................................................................... 35

APPENDIX - COUPLES PROBLEM SOLVING RATING SHEET .......... 44
REFERENCES ................................................................................ 47
VITA ............................................................................................ 51
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Reliability Statistics for the Couples Conflict Rating Scheme</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations for Demand and Withdraw Scores as a Function of Gender</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations for Demand and Withdraw Scores as a Function of Power</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Means and Standard Deviations for Demand, Withdraw, and Constructiveness Scores by Couple Type</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Analysis of Variance for Total Demand/Withdraw</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Analysis of Variance for Total Constructiveness</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

Economic power and gender was examined in relation to demanding, withdrawing, and constructive behaviors in 34 distressed couples seeking marital therapy. Data consisted of spouses self-report of marital adjustment, observer coding of 15-minute, videotaped problem-solving interactions, and socio-economic status as a measure of economic power. Husbands were more withdrawn than wives overall, while no significant difference in demanding behaviors was noted. Wife demand/husband withdraw was significantly greater than husband demand/wife withdraw. Partners with higher economic power were more withdrawn, while lower power partners were not significantly more demanding. Across couple types (wife dominant, \( n = 12 \); husband dominant, \( n = 15 \); and equal, \( n = 5 \) ), no differences in total demand/withdraw were found. Surprisingly, equal power couples were the least constructive of all couples, while wife dominant couples were the most constructive. Results are discussed in terms of demand/withdraw behaviors and power imbalance in the marital relationship.
CHAPTER I
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Demanding and withdrawing communication patterns have been identified as corrosive behaviors to marital adjustment and stability. One partner presses the other for change or for a request through demanding, nagging, or criticizing, while the other partner withdraws from the interaction, refusing to interact, or not responding in an effort to avoid engagement. While more recently identified as the demand/withdraw pattern of interaction (Christensen & Heavey, 1990), other labels such as the pursuer-distance pattern (Fogarty, 1976), the rejection-intrusion pattern (Napier, 1978), and the "pulling and leaning back" pattern (Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988, p. 232) have been used to identify this phenomenon in the literature. Similar to demandingness and withdrawal, Gottman and Krokoff (1989) identified negative conflict engagement behaviors, such as criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling, to be detrimental to long-term marital stability. In addition, Roberts and Krokoff (1990) identified withdrawal by husbands in distressed marriages to be predictive of wives' hostility. Collectively, these studies have supported gender stereotyped roles, with wives being more demanding than husbands, and husbands being more withdrawing than
Incorporating the theorizing of Kelley (1979), Christensen (1987) distinguishes interaction processes of marital conflict, such as demanding and withdrawing behaviors, from the structure of marital conflict. The structure of a conflict refers to features of the people and situation that occasion and define the conflict, whereas interaction processes refer to how a couple resolves the conflict. Of particular interest in the present study are the structural variables of gender and power which have been related to marital interaction behaviors.

Gender differences in interaction studies have been attributed to sex-role socialization and physiology, relatively stable attributes of the individual. Sex-role conditioning suggests that from childhood women are socialized toward greater interpersonal closeness and intimacy which lead to their desire for highly relationship-oriented lives. In contrast, men are socialized toward autonomy and achievement and tend to strive for greater independence (Gilligan, 1982; Rubin, 1983). These differences are then manifested in adult relationships, with women feeling threatened by separation and men fearing attachment and intimacy.

Aspects of biological functioning are also hypothesized to underlie differences between husbands' and wives' interactional styles. Gottman and Levinson (1988) summarize
evidence for this perspective, citing physiological stress reactivity, rather than socialization differences, as the cause of gender stereotyped interaction patterns. Due to greater physiological reactivity, men may find emotionally laden conflict discussions more stressful than women, and therefore, men are more likely to minimize or to avoid these noxious interactions. Physiological arousal theory suggests that gender differences in biology may contribute to the observed patterns of men withdrawing during marital conflict, and women, being less physiologically aroused by the negative affect, maintaining or escalating the conflict.

Power in the marital relationship has been operationalized through measures of economic and educational resources, and as who pressures for change in the relationship. The distribution of power in the marital dyad has been linked to marital satisfaction and interaction patterns. For example, greater use of coercive control techniques and lower marital satisfaction has been found more often in couples' with unequitable distribution of economic power (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983).

Women's greater demandingness also has been attributed to their role as "seeker of changes" (Christensen & Heavey, 1990, p. 80) in relationships. Women's greater desire for more changes in their relationships relative to men may be due to their higher relative burden of domestic and child-rearing responsibilities, even when both spouses are
employed full-time (Biernat & Wortman, 1991; Robinson, Yerby, Fieweger, & Somerick, 1977). Higher status and power awarded to men by the larger society allows them to avoid conflict engagement and change, where women, having less say and more investment in change, seek conflict engagement as a means to rectify their lower power position.

A presentation of the literature on demand/withdraw marital interaction related to gender and power issues follows.

Demand/Withdraw Patterns of Marital Interaction

Christensen (1987, 1988) proposed that socialization differences in desired levels of intimacy are a core conflict for couples which lead to dysfunctional interaction processes. In a study of 142 heterogenous couples, he explored the relationship between intimacy and independence (conflict structure), demand/withdraw interaction (process), and marital satisfaction. Married and living together couples were recruited in four samples: 55 couples were solicited through advertisements and announcements to the general community; 32 couples comprised a medically-stressed sample of parents with at least one child with diabetes; 24 couples sought therapy for relationship problems; and 31 couples were recruited for a study of violent couples. The author anticipated that greater levels of wife demand/husband withdraw would follow from the wife's greater desire for intimacy and the husband's greater desire for
independence. Intimacy versus independence was measured by the Relationship Issues Questionnaire (Christensen & Sullaway, 1984a), demand/withdraw interaction processes by the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (Christensen & Sullaway, 1984b), and marital adjustment by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), all self-report measures. In addition, the Hollingshead index of social status (1975) was used to assess relative power between spouses.

Results indicated that marital adjustment was correlated negatively with demand/withdraw communication and greater differences in desired intimacy, and correlated positively with mutual constructive communication. Also, women reported more often than men that they desired more closeness, whereas men more often wanted independence. As expected, greater disparity in the level of desired intimacy of the partners was related to greater levels of demand/withdraw communication in the relationship, with women taking the demanding role more often, and men the withdrawing role. The power measure of relative status was not significantly correlated with either intimacy level or demand/withdraw communication. Unfortunately, no further analyses or interpretations were explored to clarify the power construct with respect to the mixed sample and to the exclusive use of self-report measures. In summary, Christensen (1987) found evidence that "the structural asymmetry (who wants independence and who wants more
closeness) predicts the roles in the interaction sequence (who demands and who withdraws) (p. 260)."

A follow-up study by Christensen and Shenk (1991), examined psychological distance (closeness/independence) and demand/withdraw interaction patterns across three groups of couples who varied in their levels of marital distress: divorcing (N = 22), clinic (distressed couples seeking marital therapy, N = 15), and nondistressed couples (N = 25). Rank ordered differences in the dependent variables were expected across the three groups. Specifically, divorced couples were predicted to have the lowest levels of mutual constructive communication, the highest levels of mutual avoidance and demand/withdraw interaction, and the greatest discrepancies between partners' desired levels of psychological distance. In contrast, nondistressed couples were expected to have the highest levels of mutual constructive communication, the lowest levels of mutual avoidance and demand/withdraw interaction, and the least discrepancies between partners' desired levels of psychological distance. Distressed couples scores were expected to fall between the divorced and nondistressed samples. Divorcing couples had separated during the last year and were recruited through the Los Angeles County Conciliation Court. Self-referred clinic couples were obtained from private practice sources and from a Seattle marital therapy research project. Public newspaper, radio,
and community announcements were used to obtain the nondistressed sample. The same measures were used as in the previous study (Christensen, 1987), although some modifications to the calculation of subscales was made to the Relationship Issues Questionnaire and the Communication Patterns Questionnaire.

Results differentiated the distressed from nondistressed groups. Clinic and divorcing couples reported significantly less mutual constructive communication, significantly more avoidance, and significantly greater demand/withdraw interaction than the nondistressed sample. Also, distressed couples reported greater discrepancy in partners' desired closeness/independence than nondistressed couples. Overall, wife demand/husband withdraw was significantly more likely than husband demand/wife withdraw interaction across all groups. Contrary to prediction the two distressed groups did not significantly differ on the demand/withdraw variable.

In summary the above studies (Christensen, 1987, Christensen & Shenk, 1991) suggest that communication and closeness/independence incompatibility both play a role in marital discord, perhaps working together dynamically: greater incompatibility leads to greater discord, and a greater need for communication skills to resolve differences (Christensen & Shenk, 1991).

In a subsequent study, Christensen and Heavey (1990)
examined another structural variable; the impact of which partner originates a request for change on the demand/withdraw pattern of interaction. They predicted that couples' interaction patterns would parallel the imbalance of power in the relationship. These predictions were based upon the least interest principle (Waller & Hill, 1951); the spouse who has the most invested in the conversation has the least say in the outcome. More specifically, in the context of marriage, the wife is in a lower power position due to her greater desire for change (Margolin, Talovic, & Weinstein, 1983) and because what she wants, greater closeness and intimacy, requires the cooperation of her partner. The husband, ascribed higher status and power by society, utilizes his position to avoid conflict engagement and change.

To test the influence of requests for change on demand/withdraw behaviors, Christensen and Heavey (1990) asked 31 pairs of married parents to identify areas of change in child rearing practices desired in the other for use in two separate problem-solving discussions. All parents had a son aged 7 to 12 years, and greater than half of the sons in the study were diagnosed and receiving psychostimulant treatment for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Parents alternated requests for change in their partner through two discussions in which the demand/withdraw interaction pattern was assessed. In
addition to a modified self-report version of the Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQSF), a parallel global observational measure was developed to code the two 6-minute videotaped discussions.

Christensen & Heavey (1990) found support for the conflict structure hypothesis. While mother demand/father withdraw pattern of interaction was significantly more likely to occur than the father demand/mother withdraw pattern, a significant shift in the pattern occurred during the different topic situations. Specifically, during discussion of the mother’s issue (requesting a change in the father), the pattern of mother-demand/father-withdraw interaction was much more likely than father-demand/mother-withdraw pattern. In contrast, during discussion of the father’s issue (requesting a change in the mother), there was no significant difference in demand/withdraw roles. From the observational data, across both interactions, fathers were found to be significantly more withdrawn than mothers overall, and while mothers were more demanding than fathers, this difference was not significant. Both, mothers and fathers were more demanding during discussions of their own issues, and more withdrawing during discussions of changes requested by their partner.

From the significant interaction of demander gender by issue, the authors concluded that the "woman’s role as demander results from her position in the social structure
as a seeker of changes rather than from any inherent gender difference in demandingness (Christensen & Heavey, 1990, p. 80)." Men's inclination to avoid intimacy empowers them against their partner who wants more change and intimacy (Jacobson, 1989), whereas women may be at a power disadvantage for wanting more from the marital relationship.

In a follow-up study, Heavey, Layne, & Christensen (1993) again utilized two problem-solving discussions specifying the identified area of change, but significantly improved the research methodology from the 1990 study by (a) expanding the topic of change beyond child-rearing behaviors, (b) through matching the level of change requested by each spouse to ensure equitable requests, and (c) through adding a 1 year follow-up period to assess marital satisfaction. Also, measures of satisfaction with the problem-solving discussions and measures of anxiety were added. Similar to the previous study, couples were recruited as part of a larger study of pre-school age children with internalizing or externalizing problems, or neither. Both observational and self-report data were collected to assess the demand/withdraw communication pattern.

This study replicated many of the earlier findings which partially support the conclusion that who makes the request for change influences the demand/withdraw interaction pattern. Self-report indices by the couples
indicated a significant main effect for roles; wife demand/husband withdraw was more likely than husband demand/wife withdraw. However, this main effect was not confirmed by observer ratings. Notably, both self-report and observer indices replicated the significant interaction of roles by issue on wife demand/husband withdraw; when discussing issues identified for change by wives, women were much more likely to be demanding and men were much more likely to be withdrawing than the reverse. In contrast, no systematic differences in the roles taken by men and women were found when discussing issues identified for change in husbands. Only self-report data by the couples found women to be more demanding than men overall, whereas observational data did not support women’s unilateral demandingness. The total amount of demandingness and withdrawingness by men and women was the same across the two discussions, with again, both spouses being more demanding on their own issue and more withdrawing on their partner’s issue.

For the additional variables, a significant positive relationship was found between spouses’ satisfaction with discussions and individual demandingness. Also, satisfaction with discussions was significantly related to global relationship satisfaction. Both men and women were more anxious during discussion of the husband’s issue than during the wife’s issue. One year later, husbands’ demandingness and positive behavior predicted a positive
change in wives' global satisfaction, however, wives' demandingness predicted a decline in wives' satisfaction over time.

Heavey, et al. (1993) conclude that the additive effects of gender differences in conflict style plus the extant structure of the conflict contribute to demandingness in women and withdrawing in men. However, the premise that the roles adopted in the interaction pattern follow from the individual's relative power position in the relationship was not empirically determined, but based upon assumptions regarding power, namely that women "typically" have less power than men (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). Measures of power were not utilized to assess whether these women in fact were operating from a power deficit. While their assumptions about power imbalances among their sample of couples are based upon trends in the larger society, it is likely that many couples differ from social norms in the distribution of power between them, which may lead to different interpretations of women's demandingness and men's withdrawal. Rather than assigning women and men to positions of status and relative power based solely upon gender, it is critical to measure and interpret gender and power variables individually, as is done in the proposed study. In the absence of clear measurement, the present interpretations regarding power influences on the demand/withdraw pattern of marital interaction appear
preliminary and suspect, at best.

**Power**

The impact of power in marital communication is often discussed, but not as often measured in interaction research. Most studies of power in close relationships utilize samples of professional relationships in organizational settings or undergraduate dating relationships (Sagrestano, 1992). Consistent with power assumptions by Heavey and Christensen (1990), men generally have more power and resources, occupy higher status roles in society, and tend to be more effective than women when using power (Berger, Wagner, & Zelditch, 1985; Eagly, 1987; Johnson, 1976; Unger, 1978). The limited research addressing power, gender, and marital relationships is reviewed below.

In a review and critique of the literature on power and satisfaction in marriage, Gray-Little and Burks (1983) concluded that coercive control techniques differentiated satisfied from unsatisfied couples. In a separate study, Falbo and Peplau (1980) assessed power strategies and gender differences in 200 collegiate dating couples. They found that direct and bilateral power strategies were used more often by powerful persons and more by men, whereas indirect and unilateral strategies were used more often by less powerful persons and more by women (Falbo & Peplau, 1980). This pattern of direct approaches by men is inconsistent
with men's tendency toward greater withdrawal during negative emotional engagement. Likewise, the finding that women utilize more indirect strategies is inconsistent with observation of women's demandingness during marital conflict.

In a rare exception to studies of non-intimate relationships and students, Aida & Falbo (1991) examined 42 married couples and the relationships among resource power, marital adjustment, and power strategies. Two groups were created based upon differences in the balance of power in the marital relationship. The authors defined partners with equal power balance as those reporting equal responsibility for providing financial resources for the family. Traditional couples were those reporting that the husband bore primary responsibility for providing family income, evidence of unequal power distribution. It was hypothesized that equal partners would have greater marital satisfaction than traditional partners. Also, no gender differences in type of power strategies used were expected for equal partners. Whereas, traditional husbands were expected to report using more direct and bilateral strategies, and less indirect and unilateral strategies than traditional wives. Couples were recruited through several sources: the Travis county marriage records of Austin, TX, employees and spouses of a small business in Austin, and references by friends and acquaintances of the first author. A modification of Falbo
and Peplau's (1980) power strategies model (Power Strategy Scales; Sawin, 1985) was used to measure power strategies. All measures were self-report.

Some of the research hypotheses were supported. As hypothesized, equal partners were more satisfied with their marriage than traditional partners, and equal partners reported fewer power strategies overall in influence attempts. Satisfied partners were less likely to use indirect strategies, however, no other power strategies were significantly related to marital satisfaction. Contrary to Falbo and Peplau’s (1980) study of dating relationships, no significant gender differences were found for the type of strategies used. However, traditional wives tended to use more of all the strategies than traditional husbands. These findings support the conclusion that power distribution in marriage is related to marital satisfaction, and also that gender differences in the type of strategies used in dating relationships may not hold true for married couples.

Population Sampled

Few studies have examined the demand/withdraw communication pattern with a homogenous sample of distressed couples seeking marital therapy, particularly those identifying they are at risk for divorce. Christensen (1987, 1988) examined a heterogenous sample of married and living together couples obtained from four sources: a community sample, a medically stressed sample, a distressed
sample seeking marital therapy, and couples recruited for a study of marital violence. Couples in the Christensen and Heavey studies (1990; Heavey, et al., 1993) were recruited as part of larger studies of children with externalizing or internalizing disorders. In contrast, Christensen and Shenk's (1991) study was the only one to measure differences between the three groups examined: divorcing couples from a state mediation center, distressed couples from private practice and a separate research endeavor, and non-distressed couples solicited from the community.

Current Investigation

The current investigation seeks to extend the results of Christensen and Heavey (1990; Heavey, et al., 1993), and Aida and Falbo (1991), through exploration of the relationship between gender stereotyped demand/withdraw interaction patterns and power in a distressed sample of couples seeking marital therapy to avert divorce. This study differs from previous efforts in its inclusion of a measure of power, in its examination of a unique sample of highly distressed couples seeking marital therapy, and in its use of a combination of self-report and observational measures. Note that most previous studies relied exclusively upon self-report measures and, also, differences were found in studies utilizing self-report and observational measures of marital interaction (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey, et al., 1993).
Hypothesis 1 - Gender. It is expected that the demand/withdraw pattern of marital interaction will vary as a function of gender, based on the findings of Christensen and Heavey (1990; Heavey, et al., 1993). (a) On an individual level, wives' demand scores are expected to be significantly greater than husbands' demand scores. In addition, husbands' withdrawal scores are expected to be significantly greater than wives' withdrawal scores. (b) On a dyadic level, the wife demand/husband withdraw composite score is anticipated to be significantly greater than the husband demand/wife withdraw composite score.

Hypothesis 2 - Power. It is expected that the demanding and withdrawing behaviors will vary as a function of relative power, as measured by the Hollingshead Four Factor Index of Socio-Economic Status. Based upon theorizing by Christensen and Heavey (1990), partners with higher Hollingshead SES scores than their partner are expected be significantly more withdrawn in the interaction. In contrast, partners with lower SES scores are expected to be significantly more demanding in the interaction than their partners.

Hypothesis 3 - Couples' Power Type. (a) It is expected that the demand/withdraw pattern of interaction will vary as function of couples' power type (husband dominant, wife dominant, and equal). Specifically, the demand/withdraw composite score will be significantly higher in couples in
which the husband has more power than wives (husband dominant), than in couples in which the wife has more power than the husbands (wife dominant), than in couples in which the husband and wife have relatively equal power status in the relationship (equal partners).

(b) In addition, it is expected that constructive communication behaviors will vary as a function of couples' power type. Specifically, the constructive score will be significantly lower in couples in which the husband has more power than wives (husband dominant), than in couples in which the wife has more power than the husbands (wife dominant), than in couples in which the husband and wife have relatively equal power status in the relationship (equal partners).

In summary, couples with husbands having greater power than wives will have the highest demand/withdraw composite scores and the lowest constructive scores. In contrast, couples with equal power status will have the lowest demand/withdraw composite scores and the highest constructive scores.
CHAPTER II.

METHOD

Setting

The current investigation is part of a larger study of marital therapy process and outcome, conducted at the Family Institute, an independent, not-for-profit affiliate of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. The Family Institute offers individual, marital, and family therapy services to the public, through the staff and clinic practices. Staff therapists are highly experienced, full-time psychotherapists, who also supervise and teach in one of the Institute’s graduate or postgraduate training programs. Clinic therapists are enrolled in one of the graduate or post-graduate training programs at the Institute and are supervised by a staff member. Services are provided by clinic therapists on a sliding fee schedule.

Participants

This study examines characteristics of 34 married, heterosexual couples (34 females, 34 males). Couples were recruited primarily through phone intake procedures at the Family Institute. In addition, couples may also have responded directly to advertisements placed in local newspapers and a parenting magazine. Couples seeking
marital therapy for marital distress were invited to participate in a marital research project during the intake interview. An attrition rate for couples refusing the invitation to participate in research is not available. Demographic information was collected during the intake interview, in addition to other intake procedures. Twenty-one couples were White, 6 were Latino, 1 was African-American, 2 were mixed Asian and White, and 3 were mixed Latino and White. The mean ages of wives and husbands were 33.85 years (SD = 6.56) and 36.36 years (SD = 7.77), respectively. The mean number of children was 1.33 (SD = 1.45). The mean socioeconomic status level of families was 46.9 (SD = 12.5; determined using Hollingshead, 1975). Of five social strata described by Hollingshead (1975), the mean for this sample falls in the second highest category; medium sized business owners, minor professionals, and technical workers.

Couples met the following criteria for inclusion in the study: (a) The couples were married for a minimum of 1 year; (b) Marital dissatisfaction and the possibility of divorce were identified as problems by at least one member of the couple during intake; (c) Both partners were available and consented to full participation in the research protocol and in treatment; (d) Improvement in the relationship was desired by each partner in order to avoid separation or divorce; and (e) Insufficient criteria for either partner for a DSM-IV
diagnosis of Major Affective or Psychotic Disorders. Participants seeking services by a staff therapist were offered the incentive of a $15.00 reduction in each marital therapy session fee in return for their participation in the research. Eleven of the 34 couples saw a staff therapist.

Procedure

Prior to the first therapy session, couples met with a trained, graduate-level research assistant to complete self-report measures and to participate in a video-taped problem-solving task. The research assistants were trained in standard interviewing techniques and participated in several role-play discussions prior to leading meetings with couples. Of the self-report measures collected, this study utilized the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976). Using the DAS, the research assistant and the couple identified a continual area of disagreement to be discussed during the interaction task. The research assistant directed a brief discussion to clarify the issue and the different opinions held by each of the partners. Once this was accomplished, the research assistant prompted the couple to discuss this problem toward resolution, and videotaped the couple’s discussion for 15 minutes. After the problem-solving task, the research assistant administered a brief questionnaire to assist the couple in making the transition out of the problem-solving task.

Measures
Couples Conflict Rating Scheme (CCRS). The CCRS (Heavey, 1994) is an observational rating system which consists of 19 behavioral dimensions that are rated by observers on a 9-point relative scale (Appendix). Four trained coders rated the 34 15-minute videotaped problem-solving tasks twice; once for each spouse as described below. Couples were coded in random order.

The coding group consisted of the author, a second graduate student, and two undergraduate students. Half of the raters were women and half were men to balance the effects of gender stereotyped perceptions. Before coding the interaction, each rater was assigned a specific spouse to observe. Two of the raters were assigned the husband and the other two the wife. Each rater subsequently tracked the target subject while viewing the 15 minute interaction in its entirety. After viewing the entire 15 minute interaction, raters indicated the extent to which a spouse displayed the behavior on the scale ranging from Not At All (1), Somewhat (5), to A Lot (9). Raters then viewed the interaction a second time, tracking the spouse not watched the first time. Spouse assignment to each rater was counterbalanced to account for order effects from (a) watching the wife before the husband or visa versa; and from (b) the influence of observing the interaction twice. Counterbalancing was also used to exclude stable pairs of raters. All raters coded both spouses, thus, aggregated
scores reflect ratings by all coders.

Of the 19 dimensions, 15 items focus on individuals in the interaction and 4 focus on the dyad. Over time, a variety of calculations have been used to summarize the CCRS items into subscales. The most recent version (Heavey, Christensen, & Malamuth, 1995) was utilized by this study due to the improved mean internal consistency alpha scores reported therein. Individual ratings of interest were summarized into three subscales: Demand, Withdraw, and Constructiveness. Demand was created by averaging the ratings for blames (item 14; blames, accuses, or criticizes the partner and uses critical sarcasm or character assassinations), and pressures for change (item 15; requests, demands, nags, or otherwise pressures for change in the partner). The Withdraw subscale was consists of the ratings for avoidance (item 2; avoids discussing the problem by avoiding engagement, minimizing the problem, denying existence of the problem, shifting topics, or being vague or ambiguous to obscure or confuse the other partner) plus ratings for withdraws (item 1; withdraws, avoids eye contact, becomes silent, refuses to discuss topic, or disengages from discussion) less ratings for discussion (item 13; tries to discuss the problem, is engaged and emotionally involved in the discussion whether it makes him or her happy or upset). Constructiveness consists of ratings for positively engages discussion (item 3),
constructively expresses feelings (item 5), and supports/validates partner (item 7) less ratings for negatively engages discussion (item 4), destructively expresses feelings (item 6), and dominates discussion (8).

Heavey and colleagues report mean internal consistency alphas for Demand, Withdraw, and Constructiveness subscales as .69, .77, and .90, respectively (Heavey, Christensen, & Zumtobel, unpublished; Heavey, Layne, & Christensen, 1993). For this project, mean internal consistency scores were somewhat higher (see Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability Statistics for the Couples Conflict Rating Scheme

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>M</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Internal Consistency</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdraw</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructiveness</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inter-Observable Reliability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdraw</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructiveness</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.92</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Range of All Items (excluding Anxiety)</strong></td>
<td>.71-.92</td>
<td>.63-.93</td>
<td>.67-.92</td>
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<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inter-observer agreement for the CCRS is computed by
alpha coefficients using each of the raters scores for the aggregated rating dimensions (see Christensen & Heavey, 1990, p. 76; Smith, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1990, pp. 792-793). Previous studies report inter-observer alphas for Demand, Withdraw, and Constructiveness subscales as .89, .81, and .82, respectively. Inter-observer alphas for this project were .93, .90, and .92, respectively (Table 1). Inter-observer reliability for all items on the CCRS ranged from .67 to .92, excluding ratings of wives' Anxiety. Previous studies have also found low reliability on the Anxiety item (C. L. Heavey, personal communication, October 5, 1995).

Four demand/withdraw variables were calculated for analysis. Wife demand/husband withdraw was created by summing ratings of the wife's demandingness with ratings of the husband's withdrawal. Husband demand/wife withdraw was created by summing ratings of the husband's demandingness with ratings of the wife's withdrawal. The total demand/withdraw subscale was created by summing wife demand/husband withdraw subscale with the husband demand/wife withdraw subscale. Finally, the total constructiveness subscale was created by summing wife constructiveness and husband constructiveness.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale, (DAS). The DAS (Spanier, 1976), a 32-item self-report questionnaire, is a global measure of marital adjustment. The DAS provides a global score or four theoretically and empirically derived factors
for analysis: consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affectional expression. High reliability (.96) and good convergent validity (.86-.88) has been established (Spanier, 1976). Mean total scale scores for married and divorced couples are 114.8 (SD = 17.8) and 70.7 (SD = 23.8), respectively. The mean total scale score for this sample was 78.8 (SD = 17.9).

Four-Factor Index of Social Status. Hollingshead's (1975) index of socio-economic status was used in this investigation to rate each partners' relative resource power. The status score was calculated by multiplying the scale value for occupation by a weight of five and the scale value for education by a weight of three. Computed scores range from 8 to 66. The higher the score, the higher the status its member is accorded by other members of our society. Convergent validity with the General Social Survey by the National Opinion Research Center is reported as .93. This scale did not include individual scores for subjects working solely in the home or full-time graduate students. According to the scoring guidelines, a value is assigned to an entire family based upon the average scores of both spouses, unless one of the spouses is unemployed or does not work out of the home. Due to the lack of direction provided by this scale or related literature in assigning individual scores to underemployed individuals, the most appropriate scoring was assigned by this author. Work-at-home females
(N = 3) were given an occupation code of zero. Comensurate with their research and teaching responsibilities, doctoral students (N = 3) were given an occupational score equivalent to an assistant teacher.
CHAPTER III.

RESULTS

The means and standard deviations for demand and withdraw scores as a function of gender are presented in Table 2. Two one-tailed paired samples t-tests, conducted on all 34 couples in the sample, were used to compare wives' and husbands' problem-solving behaviors. Contrary to the research hypothesis, no significant difference between wives' (M = 5.01) and husbands' (M = 4.55) demand scores was found, t(33) = -1.14, ns. However, husbands' withdraw scores (M = 0.43) were significantly higher than wives' withdraw scores (M = -1.53), t(33) = 2.62, p < .01, as predicted. Withdraw scores were calculated as the sum of withdraw and avoids, less discussion. Since, wives' withdraw scores were negative, it may be more appropriate to state the converse, that wives discussed issues more than husbands overall. This issue will be explored further in the discussion section. On the dyadic level, wife demand/husband withdraw scores were compared to husband demand/wife withdraw scores using a one-tailed paired samples t-test. Consistent with expectations, wife demand/husband withdraw scores (M = 5.44) were significantly higher than husband demand/wife withdraw scores (M = 3.02),
Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for Demand and Withdraw Scores as a Function of Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife Demand</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Demand</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Withdraw</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Withdraw</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Demand/</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Withdraw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Demand/</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Withdraw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n = 34 couples, all couples in the sample.

$t(33) = -2.55$, df = 33, p < .01.

Means and standard deviations for demand and withdraw scores as a function of power (higher, lower) are presented in Table 3. Two one-tailed paired samples t-tests were used to compare higher power partners' from lower power partners' demand and withdraw scores. Power position was measured by ratings of socio-economic status (Hollingshead, 1975). Couples with equal power (n = 5) and couples for whom power information was not available (n = 2) were excluded, leaving a sample size 27 for this analysis. Contrary to the hypothesis, differential levels of power were not associated with significant differences in level of demandingness (higher M = 4.56; lower M = 4.62), $t(26) = -0.12$,.
Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for Demand and Withdraw Scores as a Function of Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Higher Power Spouse</th>
<th>Lower Power Spouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdraw</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( n = 27 \) couples classified as husband or wife dominant, excluding couples classified as equal.

In contrast, higher power partners (\( M = 0.11 \)) were found to be significantly more withdrawn in the problem-solving interaction than lower power partners (\( M = -1.63 \)), \( t(26) = 2.01, p < .03 \), as expected. Again, due to the negative withdraw value for lower power partners, lower power partners may discuss issues more than higher power partners.

Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for demand, withdraw, and constructiveness scores by couple type. Two one-way ANOVAs were conducted (\( n = 32 \)) to examine whether type of power relationship varied by total demand/withdraw and total constructiveness scores. Contrary to expectations, no significant relationship was found between type of power relationship and total demand/withdraw

\(^{1}\) To increase statistical power, a multiple regression analysis was also completed. Power differential was not found to be significantly related to demandingness.
Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for Demand, Withdraw, and Constructiveness Scores by Couple Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Couple</th>
<th>Total Demand-W withdraw</th>
<th>Wife Demand</th>
<th>Husband Demand</th>
<th>Wife Withdraw</th>
<th>Husband Withdraw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.0 (3.1)</td>
<td>5.4 (1.7)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Dominant</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.9 (5.7)</td>
<td>4.7 (1.4)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Dominant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5 (3.7)</td>
<td>5.1 (1.4)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Couple</th>
<th>Marital Adjustment</th>
<th>Total Constructiveness</th>
<th>Wife Demand/ Husband Withdraw</th>
<th>Husband Demand/ Wife Withdraw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Dominant</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Dominant</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Marital Adjustment measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) for n = 32 couples. This sample does not include data for two couples for whom power information was not available.
scores, $F(2, 29) = .54$, ns, (see Table 5). Surprisingly, a significant relationship was found between couple type and total constructiveness in the opposite direction of that predicted. Namely, wife dominant couples displayed greater constructive behaviors ($M = 2.00$), than husband dominant couples ($M = -1.47$), which were greater than equal couples ($M = -10.30$), $F(2, 29) = 3.32$, $p < .05$, (see Table 6). Again, negative constructiveness scores suggest that equal couples were significantly more destructive, expressing more negative feelings and negatively engaging their partner than in wife dominant couples.

Table 5. Analysis of Variance for Total Demand/Withdraw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sign. of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couples Type</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>581.15</td>
<td>20.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>582.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Analysis of Variance for Total Constructiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sign. of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple Type</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>535.92</td>
<td>267.96</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2343.34</td>
<td>80.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2879.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific a priori contrasts were conducted to examine further relationships between type of power distribution and demand/withdraw scores. Analyses were guided by two theories: 1) husband dominant couples would differ from all other couples; 2) couples with one dominant partner would differ from couples with equal economic power. From the planned contrasts, two trends, one in wife withdraw scores, and one in husband demand scores, were identified across types of couples. In the first contrast, there was a trend for wife withdraw scores to be greater in wife dominant couples than in husband dominant couples, $t(29) = 2.06, p = .08$. Also, wife and husband dominant couples were not significantly different from equal couples in wife withdraw scores, $t(29) = -1.08, p > .05$. Although not statistically significant, the data suggest that wives' withdrawing behavior may increase (or active discussion may decrease) when wives are dominant rather than when husbands are dominant.

In the second planned comparison, husband demand scores for wife dominant and husband dominant couples were not significantly different, $t(29) = .92, ns$, while there was a trend for husband demand scores for equal couples to be greater than in couples in which one partner was dominant,

---

2. A priori planned contrasts were conducted to determine whether wife demand/husband withdraw, individual withdraw, or individual demand scores varied significantly by couple type.
$t(29) = -3.07, p = .06$. Although not significant, this analysis suggests that husbands may be more demanding when dominance is lacking in the relationship.

In order to determine whether differences in marital adjustment contributed to differences identified by power distribution, a one-way ANOVA was conducted on marital adjustment (DAS) scores across power groups. No significant differences were found $F(2, 29) = .24, ns$. 
CHAPTER IV.

DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of gender and power on demanding and withdrawing behaviors in distressed couples seeking marital therapy. Results of demand and withdraw analyses provide mixed support for previous gender based theories of interaction (Christensen, 1987; Gottman, 1988). Women were slightly more demanding than men, however, not significantly so, while men were found to be significantly more withdrawn. Relatively similar levels of demandingness by men and women suggest that sex role socialization or women's role as "seeker of changes" cannot be solely responsible for the occurrence of this behavior. Notably, participants reported significantly lower levels of marital adjustment than previous investigations (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey, et al., 1993). DAS scores for this sample (M = 78.8; SD = 17.9) were lower than similar clinic couples (Christensen & Shenk, 1991; M = 87.3, SD = 17.9) and just above scores reported for the standardization sample of divorced couples (Spanier, 1976; M = 70.7; SD = 23.8). Also, individual demand and withdraw variables were analyzed separately in contrast to previous examinations of distressed couples which focused exclusively upon linked
dyadic scores (Christensen & Shenk, 1991). The current result suggests that similar levels of demandingness may be more characteristic of distressed couples at risk for divorce than less distressed couples.

While husbands were significantly more withdrawn than wives', the mean wives' withdraw score was negative (M = -1.53). As noted in the results section, withdraw scores are the sum of avoids and withdraws less discussion. When a subscale score is negative the converse of the scale may actually be a more appropriate interpretation. A negative withdrawal value for wives suggests that wives may discuss more, or be more engaged, in the problem-solving discussion than husbands.

On the dyadic level, overall demand-withdraw behaviors were consistent with previous investigations of distressed couples (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Christensen & Shenk, 1991; Heavey et al., 1993); wife demand/husband withdraw was greater than husband demand/wife withdraw. Unfortunately, observed demand/withdraw behaviors can not be compared to Christensen & Shenk's study of clinic couples due to their exclusive use of a self-report measure of demand/withdraw behaviors. While limited, a comparison of this study to Heavey's most recent study provides an rough assessment of the magnitude of differences in marital adjustment and
demand/withdraw behaviors (Heavey, et al., 1995) (Table 7).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Study (n = 34)</th>
<th>Heavey et al. (1995) (n = 48)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
<td><strong>SD</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Adjustment</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Demand/</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Withdraw</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband Demand/</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife Withdraw</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Marital adjustment measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS).

Statistical comparison indicated that couples in the current study were not from the same population as the Heavey, et al. (1995) sample in terms of wife demand/husband withdraw scores, $t(80) = 3.29$, $p < .05$, and marital adjustment, $t(80) = -7.97$, $p < .05$. In contrast, the husband demand/wife withdraw scores for the two studies were not significantly different, $t(80) = 1.71$, $p < .05$, and one cannot conclude that these two samples were drawn from

3. Heavey, et al. (1995) report greater internal consistency in the demand and withdraw subscales than previous investigations using the CCRS (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey, et al., 1993). The difference is the subtraction of the discussion item from the withdraw subscale, rather than adding it to the demand subscale. Subjects consisted of 31 married and 17 dating couples recruited as part of a longitudinal study of male-female relations.
different populations on this measure. In addition, this sample reported less variability in DAS scores, but greater variability in demand/withdraw scores than the 1995 sample.

In the current study, differences as a function of relative power were found only for withdrawal behaviors. Namely, partners with greater economic power in the relationship were found to be significantly more likely to withdraw from the interaction than less powerful partners. As suggested by previous studies, higher power partners may be withdrawing from conflict in order to preserve their position of power in the relationship (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Heavey, et al., 1993). However, lower power partners’ withdraw scores were negative. This suggests that differences may be related to greater discussion on the part of lower power partners, rather than greater withdrawal by higher power partners. This analysis, however, improves upon previous investigations since couples’ power distribution was measured, rather than inferred, from culturally determined gender stereotypes. Note that the number of wife dominant and husband dominant couples was almost equal (see Table 4) for the sample examined. Whether the interpretation focuses on withdrawing or discussing behaviors, economic power, rather than gender, may be more valuable to understanding differences in couples’ problem-solving behaviors.

Lower power partners were not found to be more
demanding, however they did engage in discussion more than their higher power partners. Results did not support the theory that lower power partners are more demanding in order to reconcile their one-down position (Jacobson, 1983). Similarly, the theory that greater demandingness by women, relative to men, is related to their lower power position was not supported (Christensen & Heavey, 1990).

A priori hypotheses were not supported for the influence of the couples' power structure on demand/withdraw and constructiveness scores. No significant difference for total demand/withdraw behaviors was found across wife dominant, husband dominant, and equal power groups. However, exploratory analyses were able to identify two interesting trends. Wives' withdrawing behaviors tended to be lower and more negative in husband dominant couples than in wife dominant and equal couples. This finding suggests that when wives lack dominance they cannot afford to withdraw from the discussion. In the second trend, husbands' demand scores in the equal power group were greater than both wife dominant and husband dominant groups. This finding suggests that a lack of structure in the relationship may be related to an increase in husbands' demandingness. A separate analysis confirmed that differences between equal power, wife dominant, and husband dominant groups were not due to differences in reported levels of marital distress.
Total constructiveness scores varied significantly across power groups in the opposite direction anticipated. As noted in the results section, constructiveness scores for equal and husband dominant couples was negative, suggesting that these couples destructively expressed feelings and negatively engaged in discussion. Partners with equal economic power exhibited significantly greater destructiveness, than husband dominant couples, with husband dominant couples more destructive than wife dominant couples. This result contradicts previous findings. For example, Aida and Falbo (1991) found that equal power couples report fewer power strategies and the highest levels of marital satisfaction. Also, previous studies have found wife-dominant couples the most unhappy (see review Gray-Little & Burks, 1983). It has been hypothesized that in the absence of a power hierarchy, unhappily married, equal power couples may exhibit destructive communication due to the greater demand for negotiation and exchange to resolve differences (Scanzoni, 1979).

Another interpretation of couples with equal power is that they may be less inhibited in the problem-solving discussions and more likely to assert their differences in problem-solving discussions than other couples. Equal couples may come to the problem-solving situation eager to address issues without a facade of "good manners" present in other couples early in therapy. These more destructive
couples appear similar to less regulated couples. Gottman (1993) defines unregulated couples as those engaging in more negative behaviors than positive behaviors. In his balance theory of marriage, Gottman (1993) suggests that a ratio of less than five times the positivity to negativity is dysfunctional to couples' relationships. While equal couples in this sample reported slightly higher marital adjustment scores than all other couples which would suggest other positive resources in the relationship, they exhibited significantly fewer constructive behaviors. Given the lack of clarity of these relationships and the growing number of dual-career couples in the general population, further exploration of equal couples appears warranted.

In contrast to equal power couples, it is possible that the influence of one partners' greater economic power, in wife dominant and husband dominant couples, may create structure in the relationship from which differences can be discussed more constructively in highly distressed couples. Women's focus on reciprocal relationships may contribute to the high level of constructiveness found in wife dominant couples compared to husband dominant couples.

In summary, economic power and gender are important variables to understanding demanding, withdrawing, and constructive behaviors in distressed couples. Husbands were more likely to be withdrawn overall than wives across all groups. However, when couples were grouped by a single
measure of power, husbands were slightly more demanding (and less withdrawn) in power balanced relationships than in power imbalanced relationships. Husbands' demanding and withdrawing behaviors appear influenced by the economic power distribution of the relationship, while, wives' demand behaviors appear less sensitive to economic power differences. In addition, power balanced couples exhibited the least amount of constructive communication. Equal power in distressed couples may pose a particular challenge to intervention given their significantly lower levels of constructive communication.

This study highlights the importance of studying distressed couples and the weakness of interpreting patterns of interaction based upon gender stereotypes. While thought provoking, these findings are limited by several factors. First, as a construct, power has been described as multidimensional and lacking cohesiveness (Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson, & Gottman, 1993). A single measure of economic status only scratches the surface of the power construct and by no means presents a definitive statement on its impact upon couples' behaviors. Second, couples' in this study may be endowed with unique characteristics which distinguish them from other distressed couples due to their willingness to participate in psychological research. Third, this study examined a highly selected group of distressed couples seeking marital therapy. Therefore, interpretations of
these findings to couples with other characteristics is not warranted. Lastly, this study is limited by the few number of equal power couples present in the sample. A greater number of equal power couples may have produced clearer relationships to the other wife and husband dominant couples on key variables of interest.

Future studies would contribute greatly to understanding the relationship between economic power and couples' problem-solving behaviors by examining couples which represent all power distributions equally across a range of marital adjustment. A study of this nature would address the problem of anchoring extreme behaviors on the observational coding system while being able to explore relationships to power imbalance. As noted previously, future investigations of equal power couples appear crucial given the prevalence of dual career couples and the lack of understanding of their unique attributes and patterns.
APPENDIX

COUPLES PROBLEM SOLVING RATING SHEET
APPENDIX
COUPLES PROBLEM SOLVING RATING SHEET

Rater Name: ______________  Date: ______

Tape ID: ___________ Couples ID: _______ Code: Man  Woman

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDIVIDUAL RATINGS</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Some-what</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Withdraws</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Avoids Discussing Topic</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Positively Engages Discussion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Negatively Engages Discussion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Constructively Expresses Feelings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Destructively Expresses Feelings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Supports/Validates Partner</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dominates Discussion</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Expresses/Displays Hard Negative Feelings (Anger, Contempt, Disgust)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Expresses/Displays Soft Negative Feelings (Sadness, Disappointment, Despair, Fear, Hopelessness)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Expresses/Displays Positive Feelings (Joy, Caring, Affection, Humor)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Shows Signs of Anxiety</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Discussion: Tries to discuss the problem (e.g. is engaged and involved in the topic at hand).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Blame: Blames, accuses, or criticizes partner.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX

COUPLES PROBLEM SOLVING RATING SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DYADIC RATINGS</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>A Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Pressure for Change: Requests, demands, nags, or otherwise pressures for changes in partner.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Amount of Open Conflict</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Seriousness of Issue</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Degree of Resolution of Problem</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Positive/Negative Escalation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Negative Esc. = Escalation.

4. Esc. = Escalation.
REFERENCES


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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Cheryl L. Stenzel has been read and approved by the following Committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

Dec. 2, 1996                      Deborah L. Holmes
Date                                Director’s Signature