DISSERTATION

YOUNG ADULTS' MARITAL ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS: THE ROLE OF

PARENTAL CONFLICT, DIVORCE AND GENDER

Submitted by

Elizabeth J. Christensen

Department of Psychology

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Doctoral Committee:

    Advisor: Lee Rosén

    Ernie Chavez
    Tracy Richards
    Toni Zimmerman

ABSTRACT

YOUNG ADULTS' MARITAL ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS: THE ROLE OF

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Previous research has documented the importance of measuring personal and collective attitudes toward marriage and personal intentions to marry. The results of this study add to the literature by helping to further underscore the important relationship between marital attitudes and intentions, and the early childhood experiences of young adults. These results suggest that parental conflict is a better predictor of intentions and attitudes toward marriage than either gender or parental divorce. High to moderate levels of parental conflict were more strongly associated with increased fears/doubts about marriage and lowered intent to marry and high parental conflict was more strongly linked to holding more negative attitudes toward marriage in young adults. The results further underscore the importance of considering the long-term effects that experiencing moderate to high levels of parental conflict as a child may have on shaping negative attitudes. Contrary to expectations, women did not hold more positive attitudes toward marriage in general, nor, did they endorse stronger desires to marry. Results indicated that men are more likely to hold more negative attitudes toward marriage than women. Compared with students whose parents are not divorced, adult children of divorce (ACOD) reported significantly higher levels of conflict in their homes while growing up. These results have important implications for practitioners, particularly those who specialize in premarital counseling.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is not a term that is particularly easy to define or operationalize. Marriage can refer to a protected, publicly decreed contractual relationship that receives special rights and protections under the U.S. Constitution, but it can also be described as an intensely private experience that is defined by the love of two people (Ripley, Everett, Worthington, Bromley & Kemper, 2005). Marriage's sacred vows are viewed as a permanent sacrifice for some, while others see them as alterable agreements (Kollock, P., Blumstein, & Schwartz, 1994). The word has both religious and secular meanings. Some cohorts (particularly younger ones) view marriage as an "old-fashioned" and outdated tradition, while others believe it to be a critical part of living a fulfilled life and are actively involved in political initiatives to protect the "sanctity of marriage" (Ripley et al., 2005). Although the meaning assigned to marriage may vary from person-to-person, the continued appeal of becoming legally married can be seen by current research estimates, which predict that close to 90% of Americans will choose to marry at some point during their lifetime (Copen, Daniels, Vespa & Mosher, 2012; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004). Although marriage continues to be a popular option for most people, the fact that 50% of U.S. marriages end in divorce indicates that couples continue to struggle with successfully maintaining lifelong commitments (Jackl, 2013).

While the "traditional" marital values (i.e. sacrifice, commitment, responsibility) held by the American mainstream may comprise the bulk of societal messages about marriage, recent work has focused on a steadily growing subset of the population whose beliefs and behaviors present a challenge to mainstream marital convention (Amato, 2004; Cherlin, 2004). Contemporary scholarship reveals that young adults are increasingly choosing to delay marriage

(Amato, 2004; Jones & Nelson, 1996), holding more negative attitudes toward marriage, engaging in premarital cohabitation (Dennison & Koerner, 2008) and are placing greater importance on marital self-expression and independence than on more "traditional" values like obligation and dyadic commitment (Amato, 2004; Bumpass, Martin, & Sweet, 1991 & Ripley et al., 2005; Hall, 2006).

These documented changes in the way young adults conceptualize the institution of marriage come at a time of tremendous cultural transformation (Cherlin, 2004). This cultural shift is evidenced by political gains made by the gay rights movement, which has helped get gay marriage legally recognized in twenty states and the District of Columbia. Furthermore, cohabitation, a form of relationship that was once disparaged and even outlawed 50 years ago, now precedes legal marriage for over 60% of couples (Copen, Zucker & Ostrove, 1998). Additional trends include, the rising number of single parent headed households, advances in birth control, greater support for domestic egalitarianism and the increasing prevalence of dual-earner families (Amato, 2004). Continued research and exploration into the potential effects that these political and cultural shifts may have on the marital attitudes, beliefs and intentions of young adults will be critical to furthering understanding of this important topic. Before expounding upon the various individual, familial and cultural factors associated with the development of the marital attitudes, beliefs, and intentions, it is necessary to define these constructs and examine the existing research.

Twenty years ago, Nock (1995) conducted a large-scale content analysis of census data, nationwide polls, judicial mandates and religious policies concerning marriage. Nock endeavored to add to the field of marital research by reporting the marital ideals that are collectively held by the majority of Americans. Nock's findings revealed seven commonly held beliefs about

marriage: the belief that marriage is a voluntary act, marriage should be entered into by adults, marriage is heterosexual, parenthood is part of marriage, marriage is monogamous, the husband is considered to be the head of the household, and marriage typically involves adhering to ascribed gender roles (Nock, 1995). Contemporary analysis of current government policies, religious doctrines and popular opinion would likely reveal changes in cultural held marital beliefs, which may be indicative of greater intergenerational variation on several of Nock's marital domains (i.e. less support for male governance of the household and less support for heterosexual hegemony). Given the possibility of significant attitudinal change, it seems incumbent upon researchers to continue to study cohort trends.

Marital Attitudes and Beliefs

One common criticism of marital attitude research relates to the confusing, and often-contradictory nature of the findings that have previously been reported by experts in the field. Critics contend that progress in scholarship has been hampered by widespread inconsistency in the measures and methods utilized to study attitudes and beliefs (Amato, 2007; Cherlin, 2004; Willoughby & Weiser, 2004). Recently conducted meta-analyses have suggested that the majority of previous research has failed to ground its empirical investigations within a broadly constructed and clearly articulated theoretical framework, which has greatly constrained generalizability (Hall, 2006; Willoughby & Weiser, 2004). Increasingly, researchers have used the theory of Symbolic Interactionism as a foundation for developing comprehensive, easily understandable sub-theories that are appropriate for use in the field of attitudinal research. These broad-based frameworks are designed to assist researchers in understanding the process by which attitudes and beliefs cease to be just of series of static cognitions and emotions, and become personally held beliefs that shape our behavior (Hall, 2006; Johnson, 2011).

Review of current scholarship reveals that key concepts like; attitudes, beliefs, values, expectations and ideals, are rarely operationalized and often used interchangeably (Willoughby & Carroll, 2010; Riggio & Weiser, 2008). Willoughby (2014) noted that the term "marital belief" had been used to denote a wide variety of concepts including, the importance of marriage as a social institution, to the age at which a person plans to marry, to expectations regarding marital happiness such as marital timing. For the purpose of this review, the terms "marital attitude," and "marital belief" will be used interchangeably and will refer to the positive or negative evaluation of the general concept of marriage (Riggio & Weiser, 2008; Willoughby, 2014). Attitudes vary in strength (i.e., highly negative to highly positive), are dimensional and may change over time. Although attitudes are typically expressed as either negative or positive appraisals, they may sometimes be expressed ambivalence and/or doubt, particularly in cases where an individual holds two conflicting attitudes of similar strength (Hall, 2006).

Attitudes that are strongly and consistently reinforced over time may become firmly held values. For the purpose of this study, "values" will be defined as deeply embedded and highly regarding principals and beliefs that are used to guide behavior and decision-making. Values are generally thought to stable across the life-span, although the salience of a particular value may shift during different phases of a person's life (Bergman, 1998). Riggio and Weiser (2004) used a free association technique to test the association between marital satisfaction and the schematic strength or *embeddedness* of individual marital attitudes. Riggio found that individuals who held highly embedded negative attitudes about marriage were significantly more likely to demonstrate ineffective interpersonal behaviors and we more likely to report negative relational outcomes (i.e., higher conflict, less satisfaction; relationship dissolution) than individuals with held less embedded attitudes (Riggio & Weiser, 2004). While the aforementioned study and others like it,

have begun to explore the theorized link between attitudes and behavioral outcomes, more research into the cognitive and interactive mechanisms that underlie these associations is necessary (Baucom, Epstein, Daiuto, Carels, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996; Van Lange, Rusbult, Drigotas & Arriga, 1997).

The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism contends that personal belief systems are shaped and influenced by both micro-level factors (i.e., personality, family dynamics, interpersonal relationships) and macro-level factors (i.e., such as media messages, religious doctrine, cultural mores). The individual, their immediate relational world, and the larger societal institutions, are all involved in the reciprocal and interactive process of collective and personal meaning-making (Hall, 2006). Thus, the meaning and value that an individual assigns to the concept of marriage is shaped by their personal experience, relational experiences and finally by their adherence (or lack thereof) to culture messages (Willoughby et al., 2013). For example, a young adult's negative beliefs about marriage may have been influenced at the micro level by their exposure to high levels of parental conflict and/or at the macro level by exposure to television media that features unhappily married couples.

While the media plays a role in the transmission of various societal values, many experts assert that early social learning is critical to the development of marital beliefs and values (Hall, 2006; Jones & Nelson, 1996). The Social Learning theory proposes that a child's observations of their parents' marriage contribute significantly to the formation of a set of fundamental beliefs, values and judgments about married life. While peers, the media and societal messages, may influence attitude development in childhood, the close proximity and level of exposure children have to their parents' marital relationship explains establishes it as the model and primary socialization agent (Jones & Nelson, 1996). Thus, the degree to which the parents' relationship

provided a primarily negative or positive model of married life will effect the extent to which

their children hold favorable or unfavorable marital attitudes in young adulthood (Booth &

Edwards, 1999; Boyer-Pennington et al., 2001) The assertion that parental dynamics

significantly impact children's attitudes and beliefs about marriage, is supported by correlational

research that has investigated marital conflict. Researchers in this area have found that children

who witnessed high levels of conflict and dissatisfaction in their parents' marriage are more

likely to become adolescents who report having doubts about their ability to feel satisfied and

fully committed to their future marriages (Amato & Booth, 2001; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Jones

& Nelson, 1996; Markland & Nelson, 1993).

Mueller and Pope (1977) coined the term "transmission hypothesis," to describe this

kind of intergenerational proliferation of dysfunctional behaviors and beliefs. This process

involves messages being sent either directly or indirectly to the child who then internalizes their

parents' negative marital attitudes and proclivity for inter-partner conflict. This cycle of

dysfunctional beliefs and behaviors is maintained as the child becomes a young adult, who is

more likely to struggle with trust (Christensen & Brooks, 2001), intimacy, fear of failure

(Webster et al. 1995), interpersonal problems (Amato & Keith, 1991) and conflict resolution

(Amato, 1996).

Despite the marital conflict and divorce that many young adults have experienced as

children, research continues to demonstrate that, unmarried young adults tend to hold

unrealistically idealized marital expectations (Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty, & Willoughby, 2004;

Johnson, 2011; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Examples of these unrealistic expectations include:

marital satisfaction increasing with parenthood, possessing instinctive knowledge about the

needs of one's partner, the belief that high levels of sexual chemistry and romance will be

maintained throughout the marriage, and being able to change your spouse by pointing out their undesirable qualities (Larson, 1988; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). Researchers contend that this disconnect between the unglamorous day-to-day work that it takes to maintain a "real-life" marriage and the "happily ever after" stereotype steadfastly clung to many college-aged adults, may be deleterious to the health and longevity of their future marriages (Jackl, 2003; Johnson, 2011; Larson, 1988). In fact, research indicates that individuals who harbor highly unrealistic expectations are at greater risk for experiencing dissatisfaction in their marriages (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Hawkins, et al., 2004; Larson, 1988; Laner & Russell, 1994).

Many early childhood experts urge us not to let mass media off the hook for its role in promoting what they consider to be a distorted version of romantic relationships (Hall, 2006; Jones & Nelson, 1996; Livingstone, 1987; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). They warn about the effects of the highly romanticized versions of marriage that are so commonly displayed in certain movie genres and popular TV series (Jones & Nelson, 1996; Hall, 2006; Segrin & Nabi, 2002). These types of portrayals cultivate an idealized view of marriage via portrayals that include, ample physical and emotional intimacy, romance, happiness and physical attractiveness (Segrin & Nabi, 2002). The results of a recent study conducted by Segrin and Nabi (2002) support the link between exposure to "relationship-themed TV programming" and unrealistic expectations. They found that young adults who reported watching "relationship-themed" TV shows (i.e., soap operas, sitcoms) expressed greater intentions to marry, hold unrealistic marital expectations, and spend more time fantasizing about marriage than those who preferred to watch reality-genre programming. This susceptibility to internalizing the ideals portrayed by the romanticized TV family, also known as a "family romance" (Livingston & Kordinak, 1990), is strongest among those children (from divorced or single parent homes) whose early development was marred by

the lack of a suitable role model (Jones & Nelson, 1996; Wallerstein, 1987). These children often grow up still clinging to their TV stereotype as a promise of the ideal marriage and family.

Not only are these unrealistic beliefs potentially destructive to future relationships, they are also incredibly difficult to alter. Johnson (2011) used a pre-post design to assess the effectiveness of a marital education program. She found that many of her young adult students held unrealistic beliefs about marriage. By presenting information and lectures designed to expose the students to the difficulties that commonly arise in most marriages (sexuality, building intimacy, communication etc.), she was hoping to deflate their belief bubble, helping them to adopt a more realistic understanding of what marriage entails. Unfortunately, the individuals who endorsed inflated beliefs about marital bliss on the pre-test responded similarly on the post-test (Johnson, 2011). Research has also provided support for the idea that an individual's personal beliefs and attitudes about marriage can be linked to long-term marital functioning. Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found that spouses who did not believe in the life-long commitment aspect of marriage behaved in ways that confirmed to their lack of steadfastness. The spouse who held this belief concerning the provisional nature of marriage was more likely to keep a separate bank account and engage in extramarital affairs.

The possibility that studying attitudes and beliefs about marriage can not only help assess current attitudinal trends but also help researchers predict future marital behavior is an exciting prospect that has not been adequately explored.

Intent to Marry

Intent to marry describes, as one might assume, an individual's expectation or plan to marry in the future. Despite the growing rates of divorce and decline in marriage rates, research continues to demonstrate that a considerable majority of young adults intend to marry (Johnson,

2011; Manning, Longmore & Giordano, 2007; Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). Researchers contend that the high rate of intent to marry among young adults can be linked to the elevated status that is commonly ascribed to married persons in our culture (Day, Kay, Holmes & Napier, 2011; DePaulo & Morris, 2005). While married people are seen in a favorable light, single adults are often negatively perceived and stereotyped as immature, lonely, insecure and unhappy (DePaulo & Morris, 2005). Studies investigating intentions to marry have documented response style patterns associated with certain demographic and lifestyle variables, specifically age, ethnicity, parental marital status, ethnicity, religiosity and feelings about cohabitation.

Factors Associated with Intent to Marry

Age

Studies have shown that adolescents and emerging adults report the highest intentions to marry (Meir, Hill & Ortyl; 2009). This desire to marry has been found to steadily increase from early adolescence to late adolescence and young adulthood, when people are most likely to describe marriage as a highly prized and anticipated achievement (Gassonov, Nicholson, Knoch-Turner, 2008). Age has also been found to be negatively associated with holding idealistic expectations for marriage (Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is another factor associated with young adults' plans for marriage. Survey research has documented a trend of lower expectations for getting married in African-American adolescents, who report feeling less confident that marriage will be a part of their future when compared with Caucasian peers (Crissey, 2005; Gassanov, et, al., 2008). In addition, research has shown that among adolescents who intend to marry, African-American, Asian American, and

Native-American adolescents all report that they believe they will get married later than their Caucasian peers (Plotnick, 2007).

Marital values may also be influenced by the cultural norms and values to which the individual ascribes (Ripley et al., 2005). For example, Caucasian young adults tend to report more highly valuing self-actualization and negotiation in a marriage than Asian Americans who tend to highly value collectivist marital values that include self-sacrifice and dyadic commitment (Hui & Yee, 1994; Ripley et al., 2005; Van Lange, et al., 1997).

Religiosity

The reported strength of one's religious conviction has also been found to influence expectations of marriage in adolescents and young adults. Higher rates of religiosity have been found to help predict higher expectations for being married in the future. Religion has also been found to be positively associated with the belief that marriage is an important, life-long achievement (Anicete & Soloski, 2011). Research involving marital values has shown that religiously conservative individuals tend to place a higher value on marital vow commitments and individual sacrifice within a marriage than do less religious persons (Ripley, et al., 2005). Additionally, religious affiliation has been found to be inversely associated with marital conflict (Curtis & Ellison, 2002), adultery (Burdette, Ellison, Sherkat & Gore, 2007) and likelihood for divorce (Brown, Orbuc, & Bauerkeister, 2008).

Parental Divorce

Having experienced parental divorce is another factor that has been shown to affect the way that young adults think about the institution of marriage. Because divorce has been found to be positively associated with the presence of high levels of inter-spousal turmoil, it is not surprising that it would play a part in shaping a child's intentions, attitudes, and beliefs about

marriage. Several studies have found that young adults who come from divorced homes are likely to hold less positive attitudes and express lowered intentions to marry (Boyer-Pennington, Pennington & Spink, 2001; Gabardi & Rosén, 1991; Long, 1986; Wallerstein, 1987). The results of another study conducted by Jones and Nelson (1996) did not support the previous assertions, as they found that young adults from divorced families reported similar expectations as young adults from intact families.

Cohabitation.

The drop in divorce rates over the past two decades has corresponded to a steadily increasing trend toward cohabitation. For example, by the early nineteen nineties, 60% of first marriages began with cohabitation (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Given this increase, the effects that cohabitation may have on intent to marry and marital attitudes and expectations are important to consider. In general, cohabitating partners tend to value individualism, autonomy, equality and equity more highly than non-cohabiters. On the other hand, cohabitating couples tend to place less importance on religious involvement and commitment to traditional family values (Kasearu, 2010; Nock, 1998).

While the vast majority of young adults still expect to get married, many of them consider cohabitation as an important step in the process of committing one's life to another (Manning, Longmore & Giordano, 2007). The idea that cohabitating is a step in the direction of marriage has been supported by the results of several studies of young adults (Berrington, 2001; Brown, 2000). These studies have consistently documented the association between cohabitating and heightened expectations for marriage. In other words, young adults who report that they are currently cohabitating express a higher likelihood that they will marry than their counterparts who are not currently cohabiting (Bumpass, Sweet & Cherlin, 1991; Gassanov, et al., 2008).

Research has also demonstrated that cohabitating couples set lower standards for their partners and report feeling less committed to the relationship when compared with married couples (Larson, 2001). Even cohabiting couples that express a strong intent to marry their partner express significant worries related to the longevity of the relationship (Bumpass & Lu, 1991). However, some studies have shown that factors related to cohabitation vary across different ethnic groups. For example, Phillips and Sweeney (2005) found that Mexican American and Black women who cohabited prior to marriage did not endorse the high rates of marital disruption (divorce/separation) that previously cohabitating White women reported.

Recently published studies have also revealed a distinction between the marital outcomes of couples who were engaged prior to their cohabitation and those couples who were not. The results of several studies demonstrate that married couples that were engaged prior to cohabitation endorse higher rates of relationship satisfaction and report less conflict within the marriage (Brown, 2003; Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006). One explanation offered for this finding is that couples that have made a formalized vow of engagement prior to the cohabitation are more apt to have a higher level of commitment, which they can utilize during stressful adjustment periods (Stanley, et al., 2006).

Factors Associated with Marital Intent and Attitudes

The primary purpose of the current study is to explore specific constructs that may be associated with intent to marry and marital attitudes and beliefs. Three central factors that will be explored are parental divorce, parental marital conflict and gender.

Parental Divorce.

The steadily growing divorce rate has made divorce a popular topic among researchers who have generated a significant amount of research on this topic over the past several decades.

When compared with children from intact families, children from divorced families' score lower on a variety of emotional, behavioral, social, health and academic outcomes on average than their peers from intact families (Frisco, Muller & Frank 2007; Hango & Houseknecht, 2005; Sun & Li, 2002). Their teachers report an increase in conduct problems, and children from divorced families report lowered self-esteem and reduced long-term health (Tucker, Friedman, Schwartz, Criqui, Tomlinson-Keasey, Wingard, & Martin, 1997) than children from families that have not experienced divorce. Research that has followed these children into adulthood paints a similarly gloomy picture. Adults with divorced parents report reduced levels of psychological well-being, are more likely to abuse alcohol, demonstrate lower educational attainment, are more likely to drop out of college, tend to have more financial problems and experience more problems in their own marriages (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Teachman, 2002; Turner, & Kopiec, 2006).

Examination of the current literature reveals that children from divorced families often struggle with intimate relationships as young adults. Young adults from divorced families get married sooner, report more unhappiness with their marriages, and are more likely to divorce than their same-aged peers from intact families (Amato, 1996; Chase-Lansdale, Cherlin & Kierman, 1995). Gabardi and Rosén (1991) found that college students from divorced families were more likely to report having trust issues and intimacy problems in their current relationships compared with students whose parents were still married. Tasker (1992) found that the adult children from divorced families reported feeling less committed to marriage, had lower expectations for marital happiness, held more negative attitudes toward marriage and reported lower intentions to marry than young adults from intact families (Tasker, 1992).

Greenberg and Nay (1982) conducted a study designed to assess what they termed, "the intergenerational transmission of marital instability." Their results showed that college students

from divorced families were more likely to have positive attitudes toward divorce than their peers from intact families. They found that individuals from divorced homes were more likely to get divorced in the future than participants from intact homes. These results were later reinforced by Boyer-Pennington and colleagues' (2001) research, which showed that participants from divorced families were significantly more likely to predict that they would get divorced in the future.

Interparental Conflict

Recent studies have examined how the quality of the family relationships and the levels of parental conflict prior to the divorce affect the level of difficulties and disruption for the child post-divorce. This is an essential area of research because twenty to thirty percent of children experience high conflict during their parents' marriage (Amato & Booth, 1997; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995). Studies have shown that children who have witnessed conflict in the form of family violence are more likely to demonstrate impaired psychological functioning, as defined by higher rates of depression, which were predicted to affect their ability to transition smoothly in adolescence and beyond (Cloksey, Figueredo, & Kosi, 1995).

Additionally, O'Brien, Margolin and John (1995) found that children who were highly involved, as intermediaries, in their parents' marital conflict were more likely to report lower levels of mental health. One study found that children who entered into parental arguments had higher rates of depression, hostility, anxiety and low self-esteem than those who sought to remove themselves from the conflict by utilizing outside support systems (extended families, school resources, etc.). Following the devastating break-up of their family unit, children from high-conflict families may be used as pawns in a horrific game of retribution. They may even be utilized to act as the messenger for the hostile party (Buchanan, Maccoby & Dornbusch, 1991).

Researchers have also found that the dissolution of high-conflict unions is associated with a significant increase in the psychological wellbeing of the child (Amato, 2010). Several studies suggest that there are several potential positive consequences of divorce, especially in the case of high-conflict marriages. For example, multiple researchers have found that children were better off on a variety of outcomes if the parents in the high-conflict marriages chose to divorce rather than stay married (Amato & Booth, 1997; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995) Conversely, researchers have found that divorce in low-conflict marriages has been shown to correlate with negative outcomes for the children involved, who report greater problems in their intimate relationships, less social support and reduced well-being overall when compared with children from high-conflict dissolved marriages (Booth & Amato, 2001). This finding has not been sufficiently explicated and more research is necessary to explore the intermediary processes related to the transmission of problematic behaviors (Booth & Amato, 2001).

One study investigating the perceived association between family conflict, parental divorce and lowered marital expectations found no significant relationship between negative early-childhood experiences and the presence of more pessimistic views about marriage in their young adult sample (Amato & Booth, 2000). These results present a challenge to the intergenerational transmission theory and underscore the need for additional research to be done in this area. It seems appropriate to look at whether the young adult's attitudes, beliefs and intentions for marriage are affected by the level of conflict present in their parent's marriages. Future research will need to examine whether these effects remain into adulthood (Amato, 2010).

Gender

A large amount of research has documented gender differences related to intentions to and expectations for marriage. Women report greater intentions to marry, expect to marry

younger and express more positive attitudes toward marriage and childrearing than do men. For example, Gassov, et al. (2008) surveyed non-married male and female young adults and reported that the odds of a woman reporting that there was "some chance" or better of them getting married in the future was 40% greater than for males. Additionally, women have been found to more closely tie their personal identity and individual satisfaction (Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, Crisp & Redersdorff, 2006) to their marital satisfaction than men, indicating that women view their marriages as more characteristic parts of their self-concept than do men (Day et al., 2011).

Many researchers argue that the meaning and practice of marriage has changed most radically for women (Amato, 2007; Campbell, et al., 2012). Since the 1960's the decision-making power of women has been enhanced by improvement in birth control, increased representation in the labor force and changes in divorce laws (Popenoe, 1993; Teachman, Polonko, & Scanzoni, 1999). Advancements in birth control gave women the opportunity to make choices about if and when to have children. The ability to delay childrearing afforded women the opportunity to pursue higher educational and occupational advancement. The financial independence women began to achieve in the 1980's and 90's marked a gender shift in the meaning of marriage, and marriage began to be viewed less as an obligation and more as a personal choice (Rogers, 2004). Marriage became a personal choice designed to solidify the commitment of two romantically involved persons, rather than a contractual obligation designed to produce social, cultural and financial gains (Johnson, 1999). Additionally, the no-fault divorce laws instituted in the 1970's made divorce less costly, less complicated and less stigmatizing (Pinsof, 2002).

The accumulated effects of 30 years of activism are evidenced by a culture-wide change that has occurred in people's allegiance to firmly defined gender roles. Recent research has

documented the presence of a "new normative order" among younger cohorts whose collective endorsement of egalitarian gender roles, dual-earner households and cohabitation, reflects a broad departure from the traditional marital values endorsed by the majority of older adults (Manning, et al., 2007; Olgetree, et al., 2006). While this overall trend reflects a generational attitude shift, research has documented important gender differences in the strength of support for egalitarian gender roles within the context of household marital responsibilities (Bus, 1996; Cole, Zucker, & Ostrove, 1998; Hofstede, 1996; Nock, Wright & Sanchez, 1999).

Although young adults as a group tend to endorse egalitarian gender roles, women's views have consistently demonstrated a more liberal orientation toward gender roles than men. Overall, women are more likely to support same-sex marriage, single-parenthood and cohabitation before marriage, than their male counterparts (Bryant, 2003). Compared with women, men as a whole show more support for traditional social structure and less support for alternative family arrangements, like cohabitation and gay marriage (Day et al., 2011). Researchers have proposed that men are more vigorous defenders of traditional marriage values because the economic and social advantages conferred upon married persons favor males. While the aforementioned trends have benefited the social and economic status of both married and non-married women, they have not produced similar gains for men (Day et al., 2011). Thus, the recent challenges to the definition of marriage present more of a threat to men than women, as men stand to lose more power and privilege (Day et al., 2011; Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011; Sidanius & Pratt, 1999). Men are also more likely to evaluate gender equality progress by comparing our current situation to the past, whereas women are more likely to compare the current state of inequality with their future goal of full equality (Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011).

While there has been a slight increase in the amount of time that men report engaging in household labor, women are still responsible for the majority of household labor (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2010; Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011). In keeping with these results, women continue to expect that they will be responsible for spending a larger amount of time doing household chores and engaging in childcare (Eibach & Ehrlinger, 2010). While research has shown that wives who are employed for fewer hours report spending more time on housework and childcare compared with wives who spend more hours, the husbands' participation in housework and childcare is unaffected by the amount of time men spend at their place of employment (Eibach & Erlinger, 2010).

Rogers and Amato (2000) conducted a 20-year meta-analysis that revealed that a husband's increased participation in housework was related to decreases in marital discord scores for the couple. Despite, the impact that gender role sharing has been shown to have on reducing marital discord (Amato & Rogers, 2003), enhancing marital satisfaction (Amato, Johnson, Booth & Rogers, 2003; Stevens, Kiger, Riley, 2001) and reducing the expectation of divorce in women (Frisco & Williams, 2003), research continually shows an inverse relationship is true for men. In fact, despite findings showing that as a group men actually report enjoying housework more than women do (Dempsey, 2001), higher than average levels of participation in domestic upkeep have been found to be associated with decreased levels of marital satisfaction for men (Amato & Rogers, 2000; Stevens et al., 2001) and increased divorce proneness for these men (Amato et al., 2003). Cross cultural research findings that demonstrate more male support for existing social and gender hierarchies reinforce this view (Day et al., 2011; Sidanius, Levin, Liu & Pratto, 2000).

The factors that contribute to marital satisfaction differ for men and women. Studies have shown that women tend to place higher value on emotional intimacy and tend to desire more emotional sharing and more commitment in relationships than men (Orsaon & Schilling, 1992); whereas, men tend to place more emphasis on sexual intimacy and tend to endorse the importance of engagement in shared activities (Orosan & Shilling, 1992). More recently, Ripley and colleagues (2005) conducted a series of three studies designed to examine the marital value priorities of male and female young adults. They found that women were more likely to believe that values like self-actualization, negotiation, and mutual agreement were the most critical contributors to marriage satisfaction. In contrast, men were more likely to endorse dyadic harmony, individual sacrifice and value consensus as being most important to sustaining marriage harmony.

Research has also produced results that suggest that gender may play a significant role in determining the attitudinal impact of parental divorce. These recent investigations have found that parental divorce affects the psychosocial wellbeing of women in a variety of negative ways while men show no signs of these negative impacts (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Nock et al., 1999). Unmarried women with divorced parents report lower relationship commitment, lower expectations for marital commitment and less confidence in marital longevity. Pre-marital confidence in marital longevity is particularly important to marital outcome research, as low confidence (Amato, 1996; Whitton, Rhoades, Stanley, Markman; 2008) has been robustly associated with higher levels of marital disruption (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Nock et al., 1999) and increased depressive symptoms (Whitton et al. 2007), during the first years of marriage. These observations can be contrasted with studies that fail to demonstrate any association

between parental divorce and relationship commitment and confidence in men (Whitton et al., 2008).

Current Study and Hypotheses

Previous research has documented the importance of measuring personal and collective attitudes and intentions to marry. Examining the attitudes that young adults hold toward the institution in general allows researchers to track normative generational shifts in the alteration of the meaning of marriage for younger cohorts. Accurate measurement of marital expectations may also serve to assist therapists and educators in identifying individuals who may be holding unrealistically high expectations for marriage, a factor which has been strongly correlated with reduced marital satisfaction (Eidelson & Epstein, 1982; Hawkins, et al., 2004; Johnson, 2011; Laner & Russell, 1994; Larson, 1988).

As aforementioned, intentions to marry are strongly associated with the individual's eventual decision to marry (Waller & Mclanahan, 2005). Awareness of these intentions of young adults can help researchers predict future behavioral trends across subsections of society and reveal important information about the influence life experiences may have on altering a person's intent to marry. While previous literature has traditionally viewed attitudes as directly influencing intent to marry, more recent research has found that other factors, such as age, gender, conflict, parental divorce, and cohabitation, may help to predict marital intentions and to inform relational outcomes (Amato, 2001; Willoughby, 2004) . It is vital for research to explore these relationships between marital attitudes, intent to marry, and key demographic variables.

The following hypotheses are explored in this study:

1. Women will score higher on the Intent to Marry Scale than men.

2. Women will express more positive attitudes toward marriage than men.

3. Individuals from divorced families will score higher on Fears/Doubts Scale then individuals whose parents are not divorced.

4. Individuals reporting higher levels of parental marital conflict will score higher on the Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale, as well as on a Fears/Doubts measure.

Regarding additional potential correlations between the aforementioned demographic factors, intent to marry, and marital attitudes and beliefs, past research has generated contradictory findings. For this reason, no additional specific hypotheses are offered at this time. Additionally, the interaction between gender and parental divorce in the predictions of intent to marry and marital attitudes was explored.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

Data collection occurred at a large public university in the western United States, where participants were recruited from several introductory psychology courses. Six hundred and nineteen students participated in data collection between September and November of 2013. In exchange for their participation, participants received credit toward introductory psychology course requirements. Participants completed a series of scaled questions designed to assess their intentions, attitudes and beliefs about marriage. There were 139 males, 455 females, 2 transgendered persons and 2 who identified as other. Ages ranged from 17 to 38 years old (M =18.99, SD = 1.93). In terms of ethnicity and race, 77.7% of the sample self-identified as Caucasian/White, 8.2% as Multiracial, 7.3% as Latino/Hispanic, 2.4% as Asian American, 1% as African American/Black, .3% as American Indian, .3% as Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, .2% as Middle Eastern, and .8% as Other. Three hundred and ninety one students (63.2%) identified as freshman, 132 (21.3%) identified as sophomores, 54 (8.7%) identified as juniors, 29 (4.7%) identified as senior or beyond. In terms of sexual orientation, 92.2% of the sample identified as Heterosexual, 3.2% Bisexual, 1.9% Gay/Lesbian and .8% as Other. With respect to relationship status, 54.8% of the sample identified as single, 43.6% as dating/in-a-relationship and 1.6% identified as married. Finally, 25.8% of the sample (160 participants) indicated that their parents were currently divorced, while 72.1% of the sample (446 participants) reported that their parents were not divorced

Measures

Demographic Information Measure. Descriptive information about the sample was gathered using a Demographic Information Form developed for this study. This form collected information about the respondents' age, gender, sexual orientation, year-in-school, race/ethnicity, relationship status, mother's level of education and father's level of education. Additionally, respondents were asked whether their parents were divorced. Those who answered in the affirmative were then prompted to answer a question regarding their age when their parents divorced. See Appendix E for this measure.

The Marital Scales. This comprehensive instrument consists of three measures that are designed to assess intent to marry, negative attitudes toward marriage, positive attitudes toward marriage, fears and doubts about marriage and expectations for aspects of marriage.

Intent to Marry Scale (IMS). This measure was developed by Park and Rosén (2013) to assess for intent to marry. The scale is composed of three items and asks respondents to indicate how much they agree with statements about their intent to marry. Response options were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree)* to 6 (*strongly agree)*, with possible score totals ranging from 0 to 18. The IMS has a single factor structure, which has demonstrated acceptable fit indices (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00, TLI = 1.00), and excellent factor loadings (.91 to .81) (Park & Rosén, 2013). According to Park and Rosén (2013), the Intent to Marry Scale demonstrated good reliability (α = .91; see Appendix A for a copy of the scale).

General Attitudes toward Marriage Scale (GAMS). This ten-item measure was developed by Park and Rosén (2013). It consists of three subscales: Positive Attitudes (PA), Negative Attitudes (NA) and Fears/Doubts (FB). The Positive Attitudes (PA) subscale consists of four questions designed to assess favorable attitudes about marriage in general. The Negative

Attitudes (NA) subscale consists of three questions designed to assess for negative attitudes toward marriage in general. The Fears/Doubts scale consists of three questions that are designed to assess for fears and doubts about marriage in general. Response options were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree)* to 6 (*strongly agree)*. Total GAMS scores range from 0 to 60, Positive Attitude subscale scores range from 0-24, Negative Attitude subscale scores range from 0 to 18 and Fears/Doubts subscale scores range from 0-18. The GAMS has a three-factor structure and strong fit indices (CFI = .97, RMSEA = .06, TLI = .96), with factor loadings ranging from .67 to .78 (Park & Rosén, 2013). Previously conducted research had demonstrated excellent inter-item consistency for the fullscale, with a Cronbach's alpha of (α) of .84. (Park & Rosén, 2013). Additionally, subscale analyses also demonstrated good internal consistency, with alphas of 0.81, 0.85, and 0.79, respectively (Park and Rosén, 2013; see Appendix B for a copy of the scale).

   Aspects of Marriage Scale (AMS). This 23-item measure was developed by Park and Rosén (2013) and measures the degree to which certain qualities/aspects of marriage are associated with marital success. This scale comprises six different aspects of marriage; Romance, Respect, Trust, Finances, Meaning and Physical Intimacy. Response options were rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree)* to 6 (*strongly agree),* with possible total scale scores ranging from 0 to 138. The first subscale, "Romance," consists of three items and is designed to assess the belief that romance is an important aspect of a successful marriage. Scores on the Romance subscale range from 0 to 18. The second subscale, "Respect," consists of five items and is designed to assess the belief that fidelity and communication are important aspects of a successful marriage. Scores on the Respect subscale range from 0 to 30. The third subscale, "Trust," consists of five items and is designed to assess the belief that trust and commitment are

important aspects of a successful marriage. Scores on the Trust subscale range from 0 to 30. The fourth subscale, "Finances," consists of three items and is designed to assess the belief that financial stability is an important aspect of a successful marriage. Scores on the Finances subscale range from 0 to 18. The fifth subscale, "Meaning," consists of four items that assess the belief that holding shared values is important aspects of a successful marriage. Scores on the Meaning subscale range from 0 to 24. The sixth subscale, "Physical Intimacy," consists of three items that assess the belief that sexual intimacy is important to a successful marriage. Scores on the Physical Intimacy subscale range from 0 to 18. The AMS has a six-factor structure and strong fit indices (CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07, TLI = .92), with factor loadings ranging from .65 to .92 (Park & Rosén, 2013). Previous research demonstrated excellent internal consistency (α = .91, Park & Rosén, 2013; see Appendix C for a copy of the scale).

The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC-C). The Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC-C), originally developed by Grych, Seid and Fincham (1992), is a 48-item self-report measure designed to measure children's perceptions of their parents' arguments. The CPIC-C comprises nine subscales, seven of which combine to form the higher order scales; Conflict Properties (Frequency, Intensity, Resolution), Threat (Perceived Threat, Coping Efficacy) and Self-Blame (Self-Blame, Content).

For this study, only the 18 items that comprise the Conflict Properties scale (which together measure duration, frequency and resolution of perceived interparental conflict) were used. The Conflict Properties scale has been found to be most useful for predicting adjustment outcomes in adolescents (Bickham & Fiese, 1997; Kline, et al., 2003). Additionally, Bickham and Fiese (1997) extended the use of the scale beyond children and found that it yielded reliable and valid results when used with young adults ages 17 to 21. Previous research has demonstrated

good internal consistency for this scale, yielding alphas ranging from .83 to .90 and subscale alphas of .85 and .90 (Bickham & Fiese, 1997; Dadds, Atkinson, Blums & Lendich, 1999; Grych et. al., 1992; Kline et. al, 2003). The wording of the questions was slightly modified to reflect the retrospective nature of this study. Participants were prompted to recall aspects of parental conflict they witnessed when they were school age children (8 to 12 years old). Response options consist of, *true, sort of true* and *false*, with item scores ranging from 1 to 3. Scores on the Conflict Properties scale range from 0 to 58, scores on the Frequency, Intensity and Resolution subscales range from 0 to 18. (See Appendix D for a copy of the scale).

Procedure

Participants in this study received a web-delivered consent form that described the study, outlined any potential risks and benefits associated with participation, and provided assurance of confidentiality. This page also reminded participants that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could discontinue the online survey at any time. Participants filled out a series of online forms, including a demographics section, the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS), the General Attitudes toward Marriage Scale (GAMS), the Aspects of Marriage Scale (AMS) and a modified version of the Children's Perception of Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC-C). After completing the surveys, participants received online debriefing forms that explained the study's purpose, included information about the university counseling services, and provided the contact information of the primary investigator. (See Appendix 2) Participant response sets were each given a unique ID number to ensure that the participants' names would not be linked with their data. All procedures and methods used in this study were approved by the Colorado State University Human Subjects Committee/Institutional Review Board.

RESULTS

Reliability Analysis. The internal consistency of the Marital Scales (IMS, GAMS, AMS) and CPIC-C- (Conflict Properties) were each assessed by calculating inter-item correlations. A Cronbach's alpha between .70 and .80 is typically considered "respectable," while values above .80 are typically considered "very good" or "excellent" (DeVellis, 2003). The Intent to Marry Scale (IMS) demonstrated excellent internal consistency with an alpha score of .92. The GAMS demonstrated a very good inter-item consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .84. Subscales exhibited similarly respectable internal consistencies, producing alphas of .82 (Positive Attitudes), .79 (Negative Attitudes), and .73 (Fears/Doubts). The AMS also exhibited excellent internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. Subscale alphas consisted of .74 for Romance, .96 for Respect, .87 for Trust, .86 for Meaning, .75 for Physical and .61 for Finances. The CPIC-C demonstrated excellent internal consistency with an alpha score of .94. CPIC-C subscale alphas consisted of .88 for Frequency, .85 for Intensity and .90 for Resolution.

Correlation Analyses. To assess the association between the alphas of the various Marital Scales, correlation analyses were run to examine the strength of the relationship between each of the Marital Scales. Table 1 displays scale means, standard deviations and intercorrelations.

IMS scores were positively correlated with GAMS total scores (r=.60, p<.001) and AMS total scores (r=.27, p<.001). GAMS and AMS demonstrated a moderate positive correlation as well (r=.33, p<.001). Overall, these correlations results offer evidence of good construct validity. Subscale correlations for the Marital Scales are presented in Table 2. For the GAMS subscales,

Positive Attitude correlations ranged in strength from $r= .16$ to $r= .57$, Negative Attitude correlations ranged in strength from $r=.10$ to $r=-.51$, and Fears/Doubts correlations ranged in strength from $r=.05$ to $r=-.44$. For the AMS subscales; Romance correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.15$ to $r=.76$, Respect correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.05$ to $r=.92$, Trust correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.10$ to $.92$, Finances correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.10$ to $r=.46$, Meaning correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.14$ to $r=.83$, and Physical Intimacy correlations ranged in strength from $r=-.09$ to $r=.76$.

The association between CPIC-C scores and each of the Marital Scales (IMS, GAMS, MAS) was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Average scores on CPIC-C were significantly negatively correlated with IMS scores ($r=-.11$, p<.05). CPIC-C scores were also found to negatively correlate with total GAMS scores ($r=-.21$, p<.001), and the GAMS-Positive Attitudes subscale ($r=-.17$, p<.001). Additionally, a significant positive correlation was observed between CPIC-C scores and scores of the GAMS-Fears/Doubts subscale ($r=.18$, p<.001) as well as the GAMS-Negative Attitudes subscale ($r=.17$, p<.001). The CPIC-C scores were not significantly correlated with total AMS scores or with scores on any of the AMS subscales.

Interparental Conflict and Divorce

Independent Samples T-test

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare CPIC scores for participants whose parents were currently divorced with those whose parents were not divorced (see Table 3 for detailed results). Results revealed that scores differed significantly for participants with divorced parents ($M=22.31$, $SD=8.57$) and those whose parents are not divorced ($M =12.10$, $SD=9.04$; $t (549)=11.33$, p<.001, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in means was very

large (η^2=.501). This result shows that participants whose parents are divorced reported having witnessed significantly more interparental conflict (CPIC-C) during childhood than participants with non-divorced parents.

Intent to Marry

Independent-Samples T-Tests

A series of planned comparison t-tests were conducted to compare group differences in Intent to Marry (IMS) scores for gender and parental divorce status. The first of these independent samples t-tests compared IMS scores between men and women. Detailed results of this analysis can be found in Table 4. Contrary to our original hypothesis there was no significant difference found between the intent to marry scores (IMS) for women (M = 16.59, SD = 2.91) and for men (M = 16.02 SD = 3.53, t(574)=-1.88, p=.061, two tailed). Another independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the Intent to Marry Scale scores for ACOD (adult children of divorce) with those whose parents were not divorced. There was no significant difference in scores for participants with divorced parents (M = 16.07, SD = 3.38) and participants whose parents were not divorced (M = 16.47, SD = 3.01; t(588)=-1.33, p=.18, two tailed) Detailed results of this analysis can be seen in Table 5.

One-Way Analysis of Variance

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to further explore the relationship between intent to marry (IMS scale), and interparental conflict (CPIC-C scale). Participants were divided into three groups according to the level of interparental conflict they reported witnessing as children. Members of the Low Conflict group scored 8 or less, members of the Moderate Conflict group, scored between 9 and 19, and members of the High conflict group scored 20 and above on the CPIC-C. There was a statistically significant difference in IMS scores for the

groups, varying interparental conflict (F (2, 535) = 4.47, p =.012). Despite reaching statistical

significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size,

calculated using eta squared, was .02. Detailed results of this analysis can be seen in Table 6.

Post-Hoc Analyses

Given that the significant main effect found in the overall analysis of variance test, post-

hoc analyses were conducted examine the differences in intent to marry scores for each of the

three CPIC-C groups. Post-Hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean

score for the Low Conflict group (*M*=16.89, *SD*=2.63) was significantly higher than the

Moderate Conflict group (*M*=15.98, *SD*=3.46, *p*<.05). The Low Conflict group was not found to

significantly different from the High Conflict group (*M*=16.36, *SD*=3.16, *p*>.05). Finally, the

Moderate and High Conflict groups did not differ significantly from each other. (See Table 7 for

detailed results).

Positive Attitudes Toward Marriage

Independent-Samples T-Tests

A series of planned comparison t-tests were conducted to among group differences in

Positive Attitudes scores for gender and parental divorce. An independent-samples t-test was

conducted to among the Positive Attitudes scores for men and women. There was no significant

difference in positive attitude scores for men (*M* = 19.19, *SD* = 4.14) and women (*M* = 19.49,

SD = 4.15; *t*(588)=-.74, *p*=.46, two tailed); see Table 8 for detailed results). Results indicated that

participant scores on the Positive Attitudes subscale were not significantly different between

individuals with divorced parents (*M* = 19.06, *SD* = 4.15) and individuals whose parents were

not divorced (*M* = 19.45, *SD* = 4.30; *t* (600)=-.97, *p* =.333, two-tailed; see Table 9 for detailed

results).

One-Way Analysis of Variance

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to further explore the relationship between negative attitudes, as measured by the Positive Attitudes subscale of the GAMS, and interparental conflict, as measured by CPIC. Participants were divided into three groups according to the level of interparental conflict they reported witnessing as children. Members of the Low Conflict group scored 8 or less, members of the Moderate Conflict group scored between 9 and 19, and members of the High Conflict group scored 20 and above on the CPIC. There was a statistically significant difference in Positive Attitude scores for the three groups (F $(2, 549) = 10.14$, $p < .001$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference between in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .04 (See Table 10 for detailed results).

Post-Hoc Analysis

Given that the significant main effect found in the overall analysis of variance test, post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine the differences in positive attitudes scores for each of the three CPIC-C groups. Post-Hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Low Conflict group ($M=20.44$, $SD=3.96$) was significantly different from the Moderate Conflict group ($M=18.69$, $SD=4.59$, $p < .05$). The Low Conflict group was also found to be significantly different from the High Conflict group ($M=18.86$, $SD=3.99$, $p < .05$). The Moderate and High Conflict groups did not differ significantly from each other (See Table 11 for detailed descriptive results).

Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

Independent-Samples T-Tests

A series of planned comparison t-tests were conducted to among group differences in Negative Attitudes scores for the variables of gender and parental divorce. The results demonstrated that men ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 3.18$) reported holding significantly more negative attitudes about marriage than women ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 3.27$, $t(589)=2.14$, $p=.03$, two tailed) The magnitude of the differences in the means was moderately large (eta squared=.105). The results revealed a significant difference in the levels of negative attitudes toward marriage for participants with divorced parents ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 3.36$) and those whose parents are not divorced ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 3.36$); $t(601)=1.97$, $p =.049$, two-tailed; see Table 12 for detailed results). The magnitude of the difference in means was moderately large ($\eta^2=.09$). Results suggested that participants with divorced parents hold significantly more negative attitudes toward marriage than participants with non-divorced parents.

Regression Analysis and Mediation Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the ability of interparental conflict (CPIC), gender and parental divorce to predict negative attitude toward marriage scores (see Table 13 for detailed results). The model was statistically significant ($R^2 = .044$, $F(3,534) = 8.197$, $p >.001$), indicating that 4.4% of the variance in Negative Attitude scores was explained by the model (which includes Divorce, Gender and CPIC-C). Of the three variables, CPIC-C ($\beta =.196$, p>.001) made the only significant unique contribution. Neither divorce ($\beta =-.002$, p=.958) nor gender ($\beta =-.641$, p=.056) made a significant contribution to the model, suggesting that CPIC-C is the best predictor of negative attitudes toward marriage.

A series of four regression equations was used to test for meditation. The results of the meditational analysis suggest that parental conflict mediates the relationship between negative attitudes toward marriage and parental divorce. In other words, these results indicate that conflict is the mechanism by which divorce impacts negative attitudes (See Table 14 for detailed results).

One-Way Analysis of Variance

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to further explore the relationship between negative attitudes, as measured by the Negative Attitudes subscale of the GAMS, and interparental conflict, as measured by CPIC. Participants were divided into three groups according to the level of interparental conflict they reported witnessing as children. Members of the Low Conflict group scored 8 or less, members of the Moderate Conflict group scored between 9 and 19, and members of the High Conflict group scored 20 and above on the CPIC. There was a statistically significant difference in Negative Attitude scores for the three groups (F (2, 548) = 8.55, $p < .001$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between the groups was small. The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .03 (See Table 14 for detailed results).

Post-Hoc Analysis

Given that the significant main effect found in the overall analysis of variance test, post-hoc analyses were conducted to examine the differences in negative attitudes scores for each of the three CPIC-C groups. Post-Hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Low Conflict group (*M*=3.44, *SD*=2.95) was significantly different from the Moderate Conflict group (*M*=4.61, *SD*=3.7, $p < .05$). The Low Conflict group was also found to be significantly different from the High Conflict group (*M*=4.71, *SD*=3.35, $p < .05$). The

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Moderate and High Conflict groups did not differ significantly from each other (See Table 15 for detailed descriptive results).

Fears and Doubts about Marriage

Independent-Samples T-Tests

A series of planned comparison t-tests were conducted to among group differences in Fears and Doubts about Marriage scores for the variables of gender and parental divorce. Results indicated that scores on the Fears/Doubts subscale were not significantly different for men ($M = 7.89$, $SD = 4.95$) and women ($M = 8.05$, $SD = 4.90$; $t(586)=-.33$, $p=.74$, two tailed; see Table 16 for detailed results). Additionally, results revealed that participant scores on the Fears/Doubts subscale were not significantly different for people with divorced parents ($M = 8.58$, $SD = 5.27$) compared with people whose parents are not divorced ($M = 7.87$, $SD = 4.76$; $t =1.56$ (598), $p =.12$, two-tailed; see Table 17 for detailed results).

One-Way Analysis of Variance

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to further explore the relationship between the fears and doubts about marriage (GAMS-FD), and interparental conflict (CPIC-C). Participants were divided into three groups according to the level of interparental conflict they reported witnessing as children; members of the Low Conflict group scored 8 or less; members of the Moderate Conflict group scored between 9 and 19, and members of the High Conflict group scored 20 and above on the CPIC-C. There was a statistically significant difference in Fears and Doubts scores for the three groups (F (2, 548) = 8.64, $p <.001$). Despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference between in mean scores between the groups was relatively small ($\eta^2=.03$).

Post-Hoc Analysis

Given that the significant main effect found in the overall analysis of variance test, post-hoc analyses were conducted examine the differences in intent to marry scores for each of the three CPIC-C groups. Post-Hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Low Conflict group (*M*=6.91, *SD*=4.76) was significantly different from the High Conflict group (*M*=8.98, *SD*=4.99, *p* < .05). The Low Conflict group was not found to significantly different from the Moderate Conflict group (*M*=8.06, *SD*=4.77, *p* > .05). Finally, the Moderate and High Conflict groups did not differ significantly from each other (See Table 18 for detailed results).

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine the effects of gender, interparental conflict, and parental divorce on young adults' intentions and attitudes toward marriage. A strong positive correlation was found between intent to marry (IMS) and favorable attitudes toward the marriage (GAMS), indicating that holding favorable attitudes toward marriage in general is associated with having a stronger desire to marry in the future. Additionally, participants who reported greater intent to marry (IMS), were more likely to report having more favorable attitudes toward marriage (GAMS), as well as placing a greater importance on the collective value of romance, respect, meaning, financial stability, respect, and physical intimacy (AMS) to a successful marriage.

Contrary to expectations, women did not express significantly greater intent to marry (IMS) than did their male counterparts. This finding does not support our original hypothesis and conflicts with previous research indicating that young adult females are more likely to report greater intent to marry than their male counterparts (Gassov, et al. 2008; Jennings et al.; Willoughby, 2010). Additionally, women did not differ from men in the amount of marital fears and doubts they reported. Although a review of the literature suggested that women tend to hold more positive views toward marriage (Carroll et. al, 2007, Willoughby & Dworkin, 2009), the positive attitudes subscale results did not differ between men and women. One possible reason for these discrepant findings is related to difficulties inherent in measuring marital attitudes (Dennison & Koerner, 2006; Tasker & Richards, 1994; Stone & Hutchinson, 1992). In discussing the confusing and often contradictory findings in the area of marital attitude research,

Dennsion and Koerner (2006) pointed to uses of scales that fail to distinguish between personal attitudes about one's own marriage and attitudes about the institution of marriage in general (Burgyone & Hames, 2002). In the present study, a significant association was found between gender and negative attitudes toward marriage scores (GAMS-NA), with men being more likely to hold more negative attitudes toward marriage than women. This result is consistent with previous research that reported a link between gender and marital attitudes in college students (Jennings et al., 1991). While the data collected for the purposes of this study were inconclusive regarding potential reasons for this attitudinal discrepancy between men and women, it is possible that men may hold more negative views toward marriage in general due to recent societal, cultural and political changes that have changed the way younger generations relate to "marriage" as a concept. The rise in dual-earning households and in cohabitation, as well as a general de-stigmatization of divorce has contributed to a shift toward more egalitarian gender and domestic roles whose adoption may cost men more power and privilege than women (Day et al., 2011; Fetterolf & Eagly, 2011; Kapinus & Johnson, 2002).

My results indicate that having divorced parents is not related to intent to marry in emerging adulthood. While many researchers have found evidence suggesting that young adults who come from divorced homes are more likely to express lower intentions to marry (Gabardi & Rosén, 1991; Long, 1986; Thornton, 2001; Trent & South, 1992; Wallerstein, 1987), our results are supported by a significant body of research that has failed to replicate these findings (Kozuch & Conney, 1995; Boyer-Pennington, Pennington & Spink, 2001; Forehand et al., 1994).

Results demonstrated that adult children with divorced parents (ACOD) tend to hold more negative attitudes toward marriage than young adults from non-divorced families. This finding is in keeping with previous attitudinal research that suggested ACOD may be less

optimistic about their relationship longevity and may hold more negative views about marriage in general (Jennings et al., 1991; Tasker, 1992; Valerian, 2002)**.** Contrary to the original hypothesis, ACOD did not endorse holding more Fears/Doubts about marriage then respondents whose parents were not divorced. This result conflicts with this study's predictions and presents a contrast to several longitudinal studies conducted by Wallenstein and her colleagues (Wallenstein, 1987; Wallenstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallenstein & Lewis, 2004) who found a significant relationship between having divorced parents and holding more fears about future marriage. One reason that may account for this is the difference in the measurement of marital attitudes. Wallenstein conducted her 25 year longitudinal study using semi-structured interviews, where participants were asked open-ended questions and prompted to elaborate on general feelings related to the concept of marriage (i.e., "how do you feel about marriage"). While qualitative methods have the advantage of generating results that can be more elaborate and nuanced than survey data, this sampling technique has been shown to increase the risk of experimenter bias. Since Wallenstein's observers were not blind to condition (i.e., children of divorce/intact families), it is possible that they may have been primed to over-pathologize the responses offered by the participants from divorced families (Amato, 2003). Additionally, one-third of the participants enrolled in Wallerstein's sample reported being actively engaged in psychotherapy (Wallerstein & Lewis, 2004). Our sample was drawn from a non-clinical population and consisted of college students whose active pursuit of higher education suggests that they are more likely to possess the personal resources and social support to more readily overcome the adverse effects of early childhood experiences (Amato, 2003; Jennings et al, 1991). In fact, a growing body of research has generated support for the possibility that children from divorced families may actually receive positive benefits from the experience, including;

closer relationships with family members, increased independence, enhanced social support network and increased empathy (Burgyone & Hames, 2002; Conway et al., 2003; Riggio, 2004).

Interparental conflict, as measured by the Children's Perceived Interparental Conflict Scale (CPIC-C), was found to predict the greatest amount of variance in young adults' intentions and attitudes toward marriage, as measured by the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS), the Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage Scale (GAMS-NA), the Positive Attitudes Scale (GAMS-PA) and the Fears and Doubts Scale (GAMS-FD). Results reveal a significant inverse relationship between CPIC-C and reported levels of negative attitudes and fears about marriage, suggesting that that individuals who perceived their parents to be engaged in frequent, long lasting, and often unresolved conflict are likely to harbor more worries and negative attitudes about marriage as young adults. Additionally, CPIC-C scores were significantly negatively correlated with positive attitude scores, indicating that individuals who experienced moderate to high levels of conflict are less likely to hold favorable views about marriage. Interestingly, young adults whose parents engaged in a moderate amount of conflict expressed significantly less desire to marry than individual from both the low and high conflict groups. This result is noteworthy and further investigation into factors that may potentially mediate this relationship would help to further explicate this finding.

These results revealed that perceived levels of interparental conflict were highly correlated with marital intentions, attitudes and fears, irrespective of the parental marital status and gender of the participants. That finding is particularly important because it supports the idea that divorce itself may not be as useful in predicting attitudes toward marriage as the level of conflict exhibited by the parents. While this finding is intriguing and likely worthy of further

investigation, it is important to note the variance accounted for by mean comparison in our regression analyses were relatively small.

Additionally, we found that participants who reported witnessing a moderate to high level of interparental conflict as children were significantly more likely to hold more negative attitudes toward marriage than those participants whose parents had no-conflict or low-conflict marriages. The fact that there was no difference between the negative attitude scores held by respondents from moderate conflict homes and those from high conflict homes seems to suggest that witnessing your parents engage in a moderate amount of conflict as a child is enough to deleteriously affect marital appraisals made later in young adulthood. Interestingly, results indicated that participants from both high and low-conflict groups expressed similarly high intentions to marry, whereas the respondents from the moderate conflict group expressed considerably lower intentions to marry than the low-conflict group.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The implications of the present study are limited by its reliance on self-report data that were gathered from an undergraduate population at a major research institution. The generalizability of the results may be limited due to the homogenous nature of our sample that consisted of participants who identified as mostly white, female, heterosexual, undergraduate students with non-divorced parents. Given that participants were all drawn from an introductory psychology student research pool, this sample is considered to be one of convenience. Taking into account that participants self-selected to be part of this study, it is possible that students with a particular interest in divorce and/or marriage may be disproportionately represented in our sample. Likewise, some individuals may have avoided the study due to adverse reactions to the subject matter, potentially limiting generalizability of the results.

The retrospective nature of questions contained on the modified Children's Perception of Conflict Scale has the potential to incur significant measurement error. The modified CPIC-C asks the participant to recall potentially painful details related to parental conflict they witnessed as children (ages 8 through 12), a difficult task that may have led to guessing and the reporting of potentially biased recollections. Given the difficulty of the task, participants may have been more likely rely on recently observed interparental behavior as a reference (Whitton et al., 2008). Another issue to consider is that the questions ask participants to provide information related to potentially traumatic childhood events, some of which may be painful or deeply buried in their memories. Thus, it is conceivable that participants' with particularly chaotic family backgrounds may have chosen not to answer the questions.

Limitations and Conclusions

The results of this study add to the literature on marital attitudes and intentions by helping to further underscore the important relationship between marital attitudes and intentions and the early childhood experiences of young adults. These results suggest that it is childhood interparental conflict, not divorce, that is more strongly associated with increased fears and doubts about marriage, lowered intent to marry, and is more significantly predictive of negative attitudes toward marriage in young adults. Our results further underscore the importance of considering the long-term effects that experiencing moderate to high levels of conflict as a child may have on shaping negative attitudes.

These results have several important implications for practitioners, particularly those who are providing premarital couples counseling. Interparental conflict has been associated not only with shaping the attitudes and intentions of ACOD but also with reduced marital satisfaction, increased risk of divorce, problems with social adjustment, conflict prone interpersonal styles

(Amato, 1996; Barber & Eccles, 1992). These results support the need for practitioners to spend adequate time thoroughly assessing the level of interparental conflict experienced by their clients and its effects on their intentions and attitudes toward marriage.

TABLES

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Variables of Interest

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. IMS	16.39	3.15	1	.60**	.27**	-.11*
2. GAMS	43.21	9.91	.60**	1	.33**	-.21**
3. AMS	123.96	15.68	.27**	.33**	1	-.05
4. CPIC-C-C	14.44	9.90	-.11*	--.21**	-.05	1

*Note. *p < .05, ** p <.001*

Table 2

Correlations Matrix for the IMS, GAMS subscales: Positive Attitudes, Negative Attitudes, Fears and Doubts, AMS subscales and Interparental Conflict

	IMS	G1	G2	G3	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	CP
IM	1	.57	-.46	-.38	.26	.20	.25	.13	.25	.23	-.11
G1	.57**	1	-.51	-.44	.45	.35	.33	.16	.38	.27	-.17
G2	-.46**	-.51**	1	.40	-.30	-.22	-.29	-.10	-.25	-.26	.17
G3	-.38**	-.44**	.40**	1	-.15	-.05	-.10	-.11	-.14	-.09	.18
A1	.26**	.45**	-.30**	-.15*	1	.70	.75	.41	.70	.76	-.04
A2	.20**	.35**	-.22**	-.05	.70**	1	.92	.39	.83	.69	-.02
A3	.25**	.33**	-.29**	.-10*	.75**	.92**	1	.43	.79	.70	-.04
A4	.13**	.16**	-.10*	-.11**	.41**	.39**	.43**	1	.46	.43	-05
A5	.25**	.38**	-.25**	-.14**	.70**	.83**	.79**	.46**	1	.65	-.07
A6	.23**	.27**	-.26**	-.09*	.76**	.69**	.70**	.43**	.65**	1	-.03
CP	-.11*	-.17**	.17**	.18**	-.04	-.02	-.04	-.05	-.07	-.03	1

Note. * indicates *p*<.05, ** indicates *p*<.001. IM=Intent to Marry, G1=Positive Attitudes, G2=Negative Attitudes, G3 = Fears/Doubts, A1=Romance, A2=Respect, A3= Trust, A4=Finances, A5= Meaning, A6=Physical Intimacy, CP=Interparental Conflict

Table 3

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Participants with Divorced Parents and Participants with Non-Divorced Parents on the Scale Measuring Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divorced	128	22.31	8.57
Non-Divorced	423	12.10	9.04
Total	551	14.48	9.91

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
11.33	549	.000

Table 4.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Participants on the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	136	16.02	3.53
Female	440	16.59	2.91
Total	601	16.39	3.14

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
-1.88	574	.061

Table 5.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Participants with Divorced Parents and Participants with Non-Divorced Parents on the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS)

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divorced	151	16.07	3.38
Non-Divorced	437	16.47	3.01
Total	588	16.37	3.17

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
-1.33	588	.184

Table 6.

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage and the Participants' Scores on the Intent to Marry Scale (IMS).

	Score on Intent to Marry Scale		
Amount of Perceived Conflict	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Low	196	16.89	2.63
Moderate	170	15.98	3.46
High	170	16.13	3.32
Total	536	16.36	3.16

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	87.88	2	43.94	4.47	.012
Within Groups	5239.63	533	9.83		
Total	5327.51	535			

Tukey Post-Hoc Test Results:

Mean differences are statistically significant at the .05 level between:
Low Conflict and Moderate Conflict

Table 7.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Participants on the Scale Measuring Positive Attitudes Toward Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	138	19.19	4.14
Female	452	19.49	4.15
Total	590	19.42	4.15

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
-.739	588	.460

Table 8.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Participants with Divorced Parents and Participants with Non-Divorced Parents on the Scale Measuring Positive Attitudes Toward Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divorced	159	19.06	4.15
Non-Divorced	443	19.45	4.30
Total	603	19.34	4.26

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
-.969	600	.333

Table 9.

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage and Scores on the Scale Measuring Positive Attitudes Toward Marriage.

	Score on Intent to Marry Scale		
Amount of Perceived Conflict	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Low	199	20.44	3.96
Moderate	176	18.69	4.59
High	175	18.86	3.99
Total	550	19.37	4.25

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	354.64	2	177.32	10.14	.000
Within Groups	9562.21	547	10.14		
Total	9916.84	549			

Tukey Post-Hoc Test Results:

Mean differences are statistically significant at the .05 level between:
Low Conflict and Moderate Conflict
Low Conflict and High Conflict

Table 10.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Participants on the Scale Measuring Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	138	4.69	3.18
Female	453	4.01	3.27
Total	591	4.17	3.26

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
2.14	589	.03

Table 11.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Participants with Divorced Parents and Participants with Non-Divorced Parents on the Scale Measuring Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divorced	160	4.69	3.36
Non-Divorced	443	4.08	3.36
Total	603	3.36	3.36

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
1.974	601	.049

Table 12.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses for Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

Predictor	B	SE(B)	β	*t*	Sig. (*p*)
Conflict	.065	.016	.196	4.15	.000
Gender	-.641	.335	-.081	-1.91	.056
Parental Divorce	-.019	.367	-.002	-.053	.958

Note: R^2 = .044, p=<.001

Table 13.

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

A. Parental divorce as a predictor of negative attitudes

Predictor	B	SE(B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Parental Divorce	-.611	.309	-.080	-1.974	.049

Note: R^2 = .006

B. Parental divorce as a predictor of parental conflict

Predictor	B	SE(B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Parental Divorce	-10.208	.901	-.435	-11.331	.000

Note: R^2 = .190

C. Parental conflict as a predictor of negative attitudes

Predictor	B	SE(B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Parental Conflict	.058	.014	.168	3.996	.000

Note: R^2 = .028

D. Parental conflict and parental divorce as predictors of negative attitudes

Predictor	B	SE(B)	β	t	Sig. (p)
Parental Conflict	.058	.014	.168	3.996	.000
Excluded: Parental Divorce				-.050	.960

Note: R^2 = .028

Table 14.

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage and the Participants' Scores on the Scale Measuring Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage

Amount of Perceived Conflict	Score on Negative Attitudes Scale		
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Low	200	3.44	2.95
Moderate	176	4.61	3.77
High	175	4.71	3.35
Total	551	4.22	3.40

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	192.481	2	96.241	8.552	.000
Within Groups	6166.818	548	11.253		
Total	6359.299	550			

Tukey Post-Hoc Test Results:

Mean differences are statistically significant at the .05 level between:
Low Conflict and Moderate Conflict
Low Conflict and High Conflict

Table 15.

Participants' Mean Scores on the Scale Measuring Negative Attitudes Toward Marriage, By Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage and By Whether Their Parents Had Divorced

Parents Divorced	Level of Conflict Within the Marriage			
	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Yes	n=10	n=35	n=83	n=128
	3.10	5.49	4.54	4.69
No	n=188	n=140	n=92	n=420
	3.44	4.41	4.87	4.08
	n=198	n=175	n=175	n=548
Total	3.42	4.63	4.71	4.22

Table 16.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Male and Female Participants on the Scale Measuring Fears/Doubts about Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	138	7.89	4.95
Female	450	8.05	4.90
Total	588	8.01	4.90

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
-.330	586	.74

Table 17.

T-Test of Difference Between the Mean Scores of Participants with Divorced Parents and Participants with Non-Divorced Parents on the Scale Measuring Fears and Doubts about Marriage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Divorced	158	8.58	5.27
Non-Divorced	442	7.87	4.76
Total	600	8.06	4.91

T-Test for Equality of Means

t	df	2-tailed Sig.
1.56	598	.120

Table 18.

Analysis of Variance Addressing the Relationship Between the Participants' Perception of Conflict Within Their Parents' Marriage and the Participants' Scores on the Fears and Doubts Scale

	Score on Fear/Doubts Scale		
Amount of Perceived Conflict	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Low	200	6.91	4.76
Moderate	175	8.06	4.77
High	174	8.98	4.99
Total	549	7.93	4.90

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	403.96	2	201.98	8.64	.00
Within Groups	12759.41	546	23.67		
Total	13163.37	548			

Tukey Post-Hoc Test Results:

Mean differences are statistically significant at the .05 level between:
Low Conflict and High Conflict

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INTENT TO MARRY SCALE (IMS)

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.
* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. I intend to get married someday.
2. I want to marry.
3. I do not hope to marry.*

APPENDIX B

GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARD MARRIAGE SCALE (GAMS)

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.
* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. Marriage is beneficial.
2. I am fearful of marriage.*
3. People should not marry.*
4. I have doubts about marriage.*
5. Marriage is a "good idea".
6. I do not have fears of marriage.
7. Marriage makes people happy.
8. Most marriages are unhappy situations.*
9. Marriage is important.
10. Marriage makes people unhappy.*

For researchers, factors and items are as follows:
Positive Attitudes: 1, 5, 7, 9
Negative Attitudes: 3, 8, 10
Fears/Doubts: 2, 4, 6

ASPECTS OF MARRIAGE SCALE (AMS)

0-6 Likert scale: 0=strongly disagree, 1=moderately disagree, 2=slightly disagree 3=neither disagree or agree, 4=slightly agree, 5=moderately agree, 6=strongly agree.
* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a good marriage.
2. Romance is important for a successful marriage.
3. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a good marriage.
4. Trust is important for a good marriage.
5. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a good marriage.
6. Commitment is valuable for a successful marriage.
7. Financial stability is important for a good marriage.
8. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a healthy marriage.
9. Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage.
10. Shared values between partners are valuable for a good marriage.
11. Communication is important for a good marriage.
12. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a healthy marriage.
13. Financial stability is not valuable for a successful marriage.*
14. Emotional support is important for a healthy marriage.
15. Romance is not valuable for a good marriage.*
16. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is valuable for a successful marriage.
17. Commitment is not valuable for a healthy marriage.*
18. Communication is valuable for a successful marriage.
19. Financial stability is important for a healthy marriage.
20. Trust is valuable for a successful marriage.
21. Respect between partners is important for a successful marriage.
22. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a healthy marriage.
23. Sexual intimacy is not valuable for a successful marriage.*

Factors and items are as follows:
Romance: 2, 9, 15
Respect: 3, 11, 18, 21, 22
Trust: 4, 6, 14, 17, 20
Finances: 7, 13, 19
Meaning: 1, 8, 10, 16,
Physical Intimacy: 5, 12, 23

CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION OF INTERPARENTAL-CONFLICT SCALE (CPIC-C)

In every family there are times when the parents don't get along. When their parents argue or disagree, children can feel a lot of different ways. Thinking back to when you were a child (between the ages of 8-12), we would like to know what kinds of feelings you had when your parents had arguments or disagreements. (0= False, 1= Sort of True, 2=True)
* indicates reverse-scoring.

1. I never saw my parents argue*
2. My parents argued and disagreed a lot
3. My parents were often mean to each other even when I was around.
4. I often witnessed my parents fighting
5. My parents hardly ever argued*
6. My parents often nagged and complained about each other around the house.
7. My parents would get really mad when they argued
8. When my parents argued that would say mean things to each other
9. When my parents argued they would yell a lot
10. My parents hardly ever yelled when they had a disagreement.*
11. My parents have broken or thrown things during an argument.
12. My parents have pushed or shoved each other during an argument.
13. When my parents argued they usually worked it out.*
14. Even after my parents stopped arguing they would stay mad at each other.
15. When my parents disagreed about something they usually came up with a solution.*
16. When my parents argued they usually made up right away.*
17. After my parents stopped arguing, they would be friendly toward each other.*
18. My parents were still mean toward each other after they had had an argument.

Demographic Questions

1) What is your age? (in years)

2) What is your gender? (please choose one)
    ___ Male
    ___ Female
    ___ Transgender
    ___ Other (Please specify: _____)

3) What is your year in school?
    ___ Freshman
    ___ Sophomore
    ___ Junior
    ___ Senior
    ___ Fifth Year or above

4) What race/ethnicity do you identify with the most? (please choose one)
    ___ African American/Black
    ___ Alaska Native
    ___ American Indian/Native American
    ___ Asian American
    ___ Caucasian/White
    ___ Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
    ___ Latino or Hispanic
    ___ Middle Eastern American
    ___ Other (Please specify: _____)

5) What is your sexual orientation? (please choose one)
    ___ Heterosexual
    ___ Gay/Lesbian
    ___ Bisexual
    ___ Other (Please specify: _____)

6) What is your relationship status? (Pick the one that best described your current situation)
    ___ Single
    ___ Dating Non-Exclusively
    ___ In Exclusive Relationship
    ___ Living with my partner
    ___ Married
    ___ Widowed
    ___ Separated
    ___ Divorced

7) Are your biological parents divorced?

   ___ Yes
   ___ No
   ___ Never Married
   ___ Don't Know

If so, how old were you when your parents divorced?
   ___ years old
   ___ Don't Know

8) What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?

   ____Elementary school
1.   ____Some high school

2.   ____High school

   ____Some college
   ____Two year degree
   ____Four year degree