THE MEANING OF 'I DO': A MIXED METHODS EXAMINATION OF

NEWLYWEDS' MARITAL EXPECTATIONS

by

KELLY CAMPBELL

(Under the Direction of David W. Wright)

ABSTRACT

A mixed methods approach was used to investigate newlyweds' marital

conceptualizations including their expectations of infidelity and divorce. Two hundred

and seventy-six newlywed individuals completed an online qualitative assessment, and a

subset of 213 completed quantitative assessments. Marriage was primarily conceptualized

in terms of love, friendship, and lifelong commitment. Individuals were more likely to

hold conservative views of marriage if they were highly religious, Republican, had

emotionally stable personalities, and if they had not experienced premarital cohabitation

and/or sex. Approximately 50% of newlyweds expected to experience infidelity and 72%

indicated some expectation of divorce. They were less likely to expect infidelity if they

were religious and more likely to expect it if they believed their spouse would engage in

extramarital sex. They were more likely to expect divorce if they had less agreeable

personalities, if their parents had divorced, and if they had low levels of relationship

satisfaction and/or commitment.

INDEX WORDS: Newlyweds, Marriage, Marital expectations, Infidelity, Divorce,
                 Symbolic interaction, Mixed methods, Online survey

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KELLY CAMPBELL

B.A., The University of British Columbia, Canada, 2000

M. A., The University of British Columbia, Canada, 2003

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KELLY CAMPBELL

Major Professor:	David W. Wright	
Committee:	Jerry Gale	
	Leslie G. Simons	

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mom, Eileen Campbell, who has always emphasized education. She is an exceptional role model and the reason I strive to do well.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Americans marry for love. This statement may not surprise most people, but when placed in a historical context, the idea of marrying for love is unusual (Coontz, 2005). Prior to the mid 1800s, the majority of people married for social, economic, and political reasons (Coontz, 2005; Pinsof, 2002). Marriage partners were not chosen by the individuals getting married but by their family members. After the Industrial Revolution, the basis of marriage began shifting toward love and personal fulfillment, and social and political leaders feared that the institution of marriage was in jeopardy. Indeed, marriages based on love and personal choice are more fragile and unstable than marriages based on social, economic, or political motives. When love fades, infidelity and divorce become viable options. Current infidelity and divorce rates reinforce this point. Depending on how infidelity is defined, estimates indicate that 25-60% of men and 15-40% of women participate in extramarital sex at some point in their marriage (Atwood & Seifer, 1997; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994) and approximately 50% of first marriages end in divorce (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; National Center for Health Statistics, 2005).

The shift in the purpose of marriage is not the only factor that has led to high rates of infidelity and divorce. Other changes such as the increasing human lifespan have created longer marriages and greater opportunity for infidelity or divorce to occur. As the human lifespan and length of marriage increased, divorce came to outrank death as the

main reason for marital termination (Pinsof, 2002). In 1900, two-thirds of marriages

ended with the death of one partner, particularly when women died during childbirth.

However, by 1974, divorce outranked death as the most common way to terminate a

marriage (Pinsof, 2002). By the end of the 20th century, divorce was considered both a

common and culturally acceptable way to terminate marriage.

Cultural norms related to unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childrearing have also

changed in recent years (Bachrach, Hindin, & Thomson, 2002; Ingoldsby, 2002; Putnam,

2000; Stanfield & Stanfield, 1997). Prior to 1960, it was culturally stigmatized to engage

in these practices outside of marriage. The 1960s provide a good marker to make

comparisons because although intimate beliefs and practices began changing around the

start of the century, the most rapid changes began circa 1960 (Popenoe, 1993). This is

largely because birth control became more widely available. Americans today are

significantly more likely to approve of and practice sex outside the context of marriage

(Axinn & Thornton, 2002). Cohabitation was considered inappropriate in 1960 when

only 5% of adults took part in such living arrangements. Today, approximately half of all

adults will ever cohabit and 32% of households in the U.S. currently consist of an

unmarried man and woman (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Ingoldsby, 2002). Since 1970, the

number of cohabiting Americans has increased by 400 percent. Out-of-wedlock

childbearing has also increased tremendously from 1960 when only 5% of babies were

born outside of marriage, to today with one-third of all babies being born to unwed

mothers (Bachu, 1999; Qian, Lichter, & Mellott, 2005).

Although marriage is more unstable than ever, Americans continue to marry in

large numbers. It is expected that 85% of adults in the U.S. will marry at some point in

their life (Bachrach et al., 2002; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004) and 94% of Americans

expect to marry an ideal partner or their "soul mate" (Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). In

fact, Americans marry at higher rates than people in all other parts of the world (Rutter &

Schwartz, 2000). It is likely that Americans marry with good intentions: they hope to

maintain a monogamous, lifelong partnership with the person they love. In other words,

they marry "for better or worse, till death do [they] part". Yet, given the high rates of

infidelity and divorce, there appears to be incongruence in the way Americans

conceptualize marriage (i.e., as a monogamous, lifelong partnership) and how they

behave in marriage (i.e., infidelity and divorce). The following chapter presents what is

currently known about Americans' beliefs and practices toward marriage, infidelity, and

divorce. The literature is framed in a sociohistorical context, focusing on how today's

patterns are different from the past. A discussion of personality leads the review because

it is important to understand how each person's established traits impact relationship

processes.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature about marriage, infidelity, and divorce are reviewed. These topics will be addressed within a sociohistorical perspective in order to demonstrate how factors associated with marriage, infidelity, and divorce are different now compared to the past. Prior to reviewing this literature, the topic of personality must first be addressed. Personality is a stable individual characteristic that impacts relationship processes. The review begins with a description of personality and its role in intimate relationships.

Personality

Personality is conceptualized as a set of enduring, heritable traits. These traits are stable, meaning they typically do not change across the lifespan (Donnellan, Larsen-Rife, & Conger, 2005). In this section, two personality models are reviewed. The first is the Big Five, a model based on five characteristics that accurately describes personality worldwide (i.e., it is a universal model of personality) (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005). The second is Sociosexual Orientation, which is a sexuality trait that can also be used to describe individuals worldwide, and which is significantly predictive of infidelity (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991; Schmitt, 2005).

The Big Five

The most well-known and extensively used model of personality is the Big Five. It consists of five personality dimensions: agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion,

and openness, and emotional stability (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005). Agreeableness refers to relationships with other people. Agreeable people tend to be helpful, sympathetic, trustworthy, altruistic, modest, and compliant. Conscientious people are hard and efficient workers. These people tend to be organized, compliant, self-disciplined, competent, and striving for achievement. Extroverted people tend to be gregarious, warm, assertive, active, and inclined toward positive emotions. Openness refers to an individual's intellectual style. Open people tend to be proactive, creative, interested in new ideas, and generally experience a wide range of emotions (i.e., they are in touch with their emotions and do not suppress feelings). Emotionally unstable people experience negative emotions often. They tend to be stressed, worried, anxious, hostile, depressed, and impulsive (McCrae & Costa, 1997; McCrae & Terracciano, 2005).

Of the Big Five personality traits, emotional stability is the most highly predictive of marital processes and outcomes. The marriages of emotionally unstable people are often characterized by low satisfaction and high conflict (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988; Gottman, 1994). These individuals are significantly more likely to commit infidelity (Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999) and divorce (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Agreeableness and conscientiousness have also been explored in the context of infidelity. In general, people who are low on agreeableness and low on conscientiousness are more likely to engage in extramarital sex (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Fernandez & Castro, 2003; Schmitt, 2004; Wright & Reise, 1997). These people lack empathy and trust for their partners and have impulsive, sensation-seeking tendencies. Data from a 13-year longitudinal study of newlyweds (Miller, Niehuis, & Huston, 2006) revealed that partners who perceived their spouses to be agreeable were less likely to experience declines in

love over time; however, perceptions of agreeableness were not predictive of divorce. Buss and Shackelford (1997) studied couples who had been married for one year or less and found that women who were low on conscientiousness and high on narcissism were more likely to engage in extramarital sex compared to men who had the same characteristics. For men however, high openness was a significant predictor of infidelity.

Schmitt (2004) examined the association between personality and risky sexual behaviors in 52 countries. His samples included both dating and married individuals. Although he found a strong association between extroversion and promiscuity, there was only a moderate association between extroversion and infidelity. These findings were true for 38 of the 52 countries he studied and were less applicable to African and Asian regions. Overall, spouses who have similar personality characteristics have greater relationship satisfaction (Kosek, 1996), marital stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995), and a lower propensity to commit infidelity (Orzeck & Lung, 2005). Conversely, spouses with dissimilar personalities experience lower marital satisfaction and are more prone to infidelity and divorce (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Schmitt, 2004).

Sociosexual Orientation

In addition to the Big Five characteristics, personality can be conceptualized in terms of one's sociosexual orientation. Sociosexual orientation refers to the degree to which a person is comfortable having uncommitted sexual interactions (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). This personality characteristic directly influences the way individuals act with their intimate partners. It is therefore particularly important to assess sociosexual orientation when studying marriage, infidelity, and divorce. People with an unrestricted

sociosexual orientation feel that sex outside the context of a committed relationship (i.e.,

nonmanogamous sex) is acceptable. These individuals are more likely to have had many

sex partners across their lifetime, believe sex without love is acceptable, and have more

extraverted, friendly personalities (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991; Wright & Riese, 1997).

Despite being involved in a committed relationship such as marriage, unrestricted

individuals are more likely to date and have sex with alternative partners (Seal,

Agostinelli, & Hannett, 1994; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991), factors which increase the

chances of divorce.

People with a restricted orientation are only comfortable having sex in a

committed relationship and require emotional and psychological attachments with

partners before having sex (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). These individuals consider

their partner's personality and intrinsic characteristics to be the most important factors in

mate selection and are more likely to value partners who are faithful and loyal (Jones,

1998). When presented with decisions about attractive alternative partners, and whether

to date or engage in sexual activities with them, restricted individuals consider their

current partner and commitment level (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). In terms of gender

differences, women are more likely to have a restricted sociosexual orientation, whereas

men are more likely to have an unrestricted orientation (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991;

Schmitt, 2005).

Summary

In summary, personality characteristics such as the Big Five and sociosexual

orientation are powerful predictors of relationship beliefs and practices. They influence

how people approach their intimate relationships and how they behave once involved in a

relationship. People with differing personalities are likely to conceptualize marriage in different ways. For example, personality characteristics might influence a person's decision to marry, including whether they desire marriage, and at what age they marry. Personality will also influence expectations and experiences of infidelity and divorce. The following sections explore Americans' beliefs and practices related to each of these topics.

<div align="center">Marriage</div>

Although Americans conceptualize marriage as lasting "till death do us part", their practices state otherwise (Pinsof, 2002). In this section, information will be presented to help understand the incongruence between American beliefs and practices related to marriage. The section will first provide a definition of marriage that is common in Western societies. Next, literature about the purpose of marriage and the incongruence between marital beliefs and practices will be reviewed.

Defining Marriage

In the context of this paper, marriage is defined as a "mutual and voluntary commitment to a lifelong, monogamous partnership" (Pinsof, 2002, p. 137). This cultural definition of marriage is most relevant to people in Western societies such as North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. According to this definition, it is assumed that partners love one another and have made a personal choice to enter the marital union (Pinsof, 2002).

Purpose of Marriage

In Western societies, the purpose of marriage is personal fulfillment. Marriage is largely based on love, happiness, and companionship, and may also involve political,

social, and/or economic benefits (Coontz, 2005; Ingoldsby, 2002; Pinsof, 2002). In the past however, partners did not marry for love. From the Colonial period through the mid-1800s when the Industrial Revolution took place, the primary basis for marriage in the U.S. was financial gain (Ingoldsby, 2002). Women were valued for their contributions to their husbands' businesses and for performing domestic tasks, including childrearing. They typically did not work outside the home, and were dependent on their husbands for financial security (Pinsof, 2002). Men were valued for their ability to provide financially for their families and benefited economically from marriage because they had a wife to perform domestic duties, which saved them time and money. After the Industrial Revolution, and especially circa 1920 when the automobile became popular, individuals had more freedom to date and spend private time with the opposite sex prior to marriage (Ingoldsby, 2002). This resulted in greater premarital companionship and sexual activity, which led people to select marital partners for romantic love rather than financial gain.

Commitment framework. One way to conceptualize the purpose of marriage is using a theoretical framework developed by Johnson (1999). Johnson proposed that individuals commit to relationships for three distinct reasons: personal, constraint, or moral reasons. Personal commitment means a person is involved in a relationship because they *want* to be and because they find the relationship rewarding. Constraint commitment refers to the idea that people remain in a relationship because they feel they *have* to. Reasons for feeling constrained in a relationship could include financial dependence or social pressure to stay together. Moral commitment involves feeling that one *ought* to persist in a relationship because of promises made to a partner or God. These individuals believe in the sanctity of marriage and view commitment to their

partner as a social or religious responsibility. They are likely to stay together, even when satisfaction is low (Johnson, 1999). As Coontz (2005) noted in her historical analysis of marital practices, the majority of Americans today marry for personal commitment, which is one reason for the relative instability of marriage. With satisfaction as the basis of marriage, individuals are more likely to commit infidelity or divorce when satisfaction declines. Prior to the mid 1800s however, the majority of marriages stayed together for constraint reasons. That is, individuals stayed with their partners because of the economic, social, or political costs of separation (Coontz, 2005).

Summary

Overall then, marriage has shifted from being an institution that benefited families' economic, social, and political positions to an institution based on personal choice and fulfillment. Today, individuals select their own marital partners and they marry for love. According to Johnson's (1999) commitment framework, this would be considered a shift from social or constraint commitment to personal commitment. Individuals marry and stay married because they *want* to, not because they *have* to. The next section focuses on the incongruence between marital beliefs and practices. Researchers recognize that marital instability is largely due to the emphasis placed on love, but it has also resulted from changes in people's practices including unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childrearing.

Marital Attitudes

It seems natural to assume that people's attitudes about marriage would match up with their practices. The literature largely supports this view (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). As noted in the introduction, many practices such as unmarried sex, non-marital

cohabitation, and childbearing outside marriage have become increasingly common. And indeed, Americans today are significantly more likely to approve of these practices (Axinn & Thornton, 2002; Barich & Bielby, 1996; Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Pinsof, 2002). Attitudes toward premarital sex and unmarried childbearing have become more accepting since the mid 1970s (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). Similarly, many young adults believe cohabitation should be used for testing marital compatibility and that unmarried parents are just as effective as married ones (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). It is safe to conclude that Americans' beliefs and practices are congruent regarding unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childbearing. These practices occur more now than they did in the past and people have become more accepting of these behaviors.

However, there are areas in which Americans' beliefs do not match up with their practices. Axinn and Thornton (2002) used data from large, nationally representative surveys to examine young adults' beliefs about marriage. Their data were drawn from the following sources: Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, a nationally representative assessment of high school seniors across the United States collected by the University of Michigan; the General Social Survey (GSS), a nationally representative survey of adults aged 18 and older conducted by the National Opinion and Research Center at the University of Chicago; the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children (IPS), a longitudinal study of women and their children collected by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan; and the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), a survey of adults aged 18 and older that is nationally representative and conducted by the Institute of Survey Research at Temple University. Axinn and Thornton used these data to conduct a historical analysis about marital attitudes between 1976 and

1994. They concluded that beliefs about marriage remained relatively stable across time. There were no significant changes in Americans' views that married people are happier than single people and that having a high-quality marriage is of utmost importance.

In general, people value marriage; however, individuals with different demographic characteristics perceive marriage in different ways. One study by Tucker (2002) compared the marital conceptions of African, Mexican, and Caucasian Americans. Her study used a telephone sample of 3407 individuals, drawn from regions across the United States to assess marital expectations, values, and perceptions. Tucker found that people from all ethnic groups emphasized the importance of being married. Mexican American men placed the greatest value on being married, and Mexican American women expressed the lowest desire to be married. Tucker hypothesized this discrepancy was due to the increasing financial earning power of Mexican American women, which was contrasted with the traditional views typically held by men in this group. Tucker also asked whether respondents felt social pressure to marry. Overall, participants reported little social pressure to marry but women reported more pressure than men, and Mexican women reported feeling the most pressure to marry.

Marital beliefs also vary for people of different religious backgrounds, education levels, political orientations, and ages. People high in religiosity hold more pro-marriage views than less religious people (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). Education is related to marital views in that people with low education levels are more likely to have pessimistic beliefs about marriage. Political orientation is predictive of marital views with Republicans expressing more traditional, pro-marriage attitudes than Democrats (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). For example, eighty-seven percent of Republicans

believe couples with children should be married, compared to 68% of Democrats. Age is predictive of marital attitudes in that older individuals are more likely to hold affirmative and traditional views about marriage, whereas younger individuals have more pessimistic and liberal opinions about marriage (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). For example, compared to people older than 35 years, people aged 18 to 35 are more likely to believe that marriage is old-fashioned and unnecessary for childrearing. Younger adults are also more likely to believe that spouses "should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason" (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005, p. 7).

It is important to note that the findings in the preceding paragraph were reported by the National Fatherhood Initiative, an organization with a goal of keeping fathers involved with childrearing. As a result of this agenda, some survey questions were asked in a leading manner. For example, as evidenced by the above question, participants were asked whether "either spouse should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason", which could invite even participants who favored divorce to select anti-divorce responses. According to these data, although young adults demonstrated more pessimistic beliefs about marriage and divorce, it is unclear whether these beliefs are guiding decisions about marriage, infidelity, and divorce.

Findings from more objective data sources (i.e., the National Survey of Families and Households, Census reports) (Bernstein, 2004; Raley, 2002) indicate that two-thirds of unmarried young adults aged 20-29 years view marriage as a better alternative to remaining single. However, they recognize the pros and cons of marriage. Married people were perceived to have more financial and emotional security and to have better sex lives (pros). They were also perceived to have less freedom, independence, and contact with

family and friends (cons). In general, single adults who are involved in committed relationships view marriage in more positive terms than adults who are not involved in a steady relationship (Raley, 2002). Correspondingly, Tucker (2002) found that married individuals favor marriage over long-term committed relationships.

Summary

This literature has shown that behaviors related to unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childrearing have changed over time and that Americans' attitudes are consistent with these changes. That is, as these practices have become increasingly common, attitudes toward these practices have become more accepting. This section also explored the incongruence in Americans' conceptualizations of marriage and their practices related to marriage. Even though changing social norms have made it okay to engage in unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childrearing, Americans continue to value marriage and marry in high numbers. They also vow to maintain monogamous, lifelong partnerships. So why do Americans commit infidelity and divorce with such high frequency? The following sections on infidelity and divorce attempt to answer this question.

<div align="center">Infidelity</div>

Approximately 90% of Americans believe infidelity is unacceptable, yet estimates indicate that 10-60% of spouses engage in extramarital sex (Atwood & Seifer, 1997; Johnson, Stanley, Glenn, Amato, Nock, & Markman, 2002; Laumann et al., 2004). Doing so is associated with adverse relationship outcomes such as depression, anger, jealousy, partner violence, spousal homicide, and divorce (Buunk, 1997; Daly & Wilson, 1988; 2002; Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999). Given these negative effects, it is perhaps surprising that infidelity rates are so high. This section reviews what is currently known

about intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of infidelity. Little consensus exists among researchers about how to conceptualize infidelity, so the section begins with a definition.

Defining Infidelity

Infidelity is hard to define. While most researchers agree that sexual intercourse should be included in definitions of infidelity, some researchers also believe that emotional bonds with another partner should qualify (Allen, Atkins, Baucom, Snyder, Gordon, & Glass, 2005). To resolve this concern, researchers often ask participants about "affairs", which is an umbrella term that allows for subjective interpretations (Allen et al., 2005). This approach is advantageous because people vary in terms of what they consider to be extramarital behavior. For instance, one couple might classify flirting or participating in online chat sessions as infidelity. Other couples might only define infidelity in terms of sexual intercourse with another partner and may consider flirting or chat sessions to be normal behaviors. Given that little consensus exists about how to define infidelity, the studies reported here used a variety of operational definitions.

Intrapersonal Predictors

People commit infidelity for intrapersonal, interpersonal and contextual reasons. In terms of intrapersonal reasons, demographic variables such as gender, age, education, religiosity, political orientation, and race are correlates of infidelity. Men are more likely than women to commit infidelity and middle aged people are the least likely to commit infidelity (Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001). Individuals with a higher education level tend to have more accepting attitudes about extramarital sex but do not necessarily commit infidelity at higher rates (Allen et al., 2005). People who are high on religiosity

and who have a conservative political orientation are less likely to commit infidelity (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Atkins et al., 2001; Cochran, Chamlin, Beeghley, & Fenwick, 2004). Finally, Latin and African Americans are more likely than Caucasian individuals to engage in extramarital sex (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Cochran et al., 2004; Treas & Geisen, 2000).

Other intrapersonal variables such as personality, family of origin characteristics, sexual history, and attitudes about intimate relationships have been examined in connection with infidelity. Individuals who have less conscientious and less agreeable personalities are more likely to commit infidelity (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Fernandez & Castro, 2003; Wright & Reise, 1997). People who come from families characterized by divorce or remarriage are also more likely to engage in extramarital sex (Atkins et al., 2001). Individuals who engage in premarital sex, who cohabit prior to marriage, and who participate in first intercourse at a young age are also more inclined toward infidelity (Amato & Rogers, 1997). Finally, individuals with an insecure attachment orientation and those who believe in sexual variety (i.e., who have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation) are also more likely to commit infidelity (Buunk, 1980; Seal et al., 1994; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991).

Interpersonal Predictors

Researchers have considered a variety of interpersonal correlates of infidelity. They find that individuals who perceive their marriages to be in distress are more likely to have affairs. Distressed marriages include those in which partners report low marital satisfaction, low sexual satisfaction, high conflict, and/or a lack of partner support (Atwood & Seifer, 1997; Glass & Wright, 1992). At times, partners report engaging in

extramarital sex because they believe their partner has already had an affair (Buunk,

1980). Dissimilarity of spouses is also associated with infidelity. The more dissimilar

spouses are in terms of personality and education, the more likely they are to engage in

extramarital sex (Forste & Tanfer, 1996; Schmitt, 2004; Wiggins & Lederer, 1984). In

addition, spouses who are high in autonomy or who report leading separate lives, report

greater incidence of extramarital sex (Treas & Geisen, 2000).

People who believe their needs are not being met by their spouse are more likely

to engage in extramarital sex (Prins, Buunk, & VanYperen, 1993). Yet, in terms of

equity, partners who believe they are overbenefited (i.e., receiving more outcomes than

they deserve) also report higher incidence of extramarital sex. Equitable relationships, in

which both partners are receiving the outcomes they deserve, are associated with a

reduced likelihood that either partner will engage in extramarital sex. Equity is also

linked to power in that people who are less dependent on their partner for rewards

(satisfying outcomes) have more power in a relationship and are more inclined toward

extramarital sex (Prins et al., 1993).

Contextual Predictors

Contextual correlates of infidelity refer to environmental factors that predispose

partners toward extramarital sex. Some studies find that increasing one's social status or

making career advances increase the likelihood of infidelity (Atwood & Seifer, 1997;

Glass & Wright, 1992). Life changes such as these are typically associated with a higher

income and increased opportunities for travel, which lead to time away from one's spouse

and greater access to alternative partners. The nature of a person's employment is also

related to infidelity. People who work in jobs that require touching, personal discussions,

and one-on-one time with other individuals are more prone to engage in extramarital sex (Treas & Giesen, 2000).

Spouses' exposure to alternative partners has been studied extensively by researchers who examine contextual reasons for infidelity. Factors such as employment status, geographic region, and sex ratios have been found to correlate with infidelity. Employed people are more likely than stay-at-home spouses to engage in extramarital sex because they have access to larger numbers of alternative partners (Glass, 2003; South, Trent, & Shen, 2001; Wiggins & Lederer, 1984). In the past, men had significantly more opportunity for extramarital sex than women, but today, with the majority of women in the workforce, infidelity rates among women are on the rise.

In terms of geographic region, people who live in urban areas, as opposed to rural, less populated regions, are also more likely to engage in extramarital sex (Treas & Giesen, 2000). The reason for this finding is twofold. First, people who live in metropolitan areas generally have more liberal attitudes about extramarital sex. Extramarital sex is more common in these areas and is therefore less stigmatized. In addition, metropolitan areas have larger numbers of people, which creates both an environment of anonymity and an abundance of alternative partners with whom to commit infidelity. Finally, individuals who live in areas where the sex ratio is imbalanced (i.e., an overabundance of one sex) are more likely to experience infidelity in their marriage (South et al., 2001). Sex ratios also impact divorce rates. When there are more women than men in a given society, the divorce rates are likely to be higher (Barber, 2003). Such is the case in the United States and in most parts of the world, with the sex rate being comparatively lower than it was in 1960.

Summary

Researchers have identified a variety of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of infidelity. Although these factors help researchers understand why people engage in extramarital sex, questions remain about the incongruence between beliefs and practices. Americans overwhelmingly disapprove of extramarital sex, and believe married individuals should not have sex with partners other than their spouse. Yet, many Americans practice extramarital sex. Given that most people disapprove of infidelity and considering the disastrous effects of infidelity for individuals, couples, and families (i.e., psychological distress, partner violence, divorce, etc.), why do so many Americans engage in extramarital sex? Is it possible that attitudes toward infidelity are more accepting than survey results suggest? The following section will identify a second area in which American beliefs do not match up with their practices: divorce.

Divorce

Recent estimates indicate that approximately fifty percent of marriages beginning today will end in divorce and that 20% are terminated within the first five years (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). Reasons for the rise in divorce are plentiful and include high expectations placed on spouses and the marital relationship, an increase in the number of women in the workforce, and the implementation of no-fault divorce laws. Each of these predictors is reviewed in this section. The section concludes with a discussion of how Americans perceive divorce and whether they consider it to be a possibility in their own marriage.

High Expectations

Young people today have higher expectations for marriage than they did in the past. While people in the past married for reasons other than love, the majority of Americans today choose partners for personal fulfillment (Sprecher, Aron, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, & Levitskaya, 1994; Coontz, 2005). They seek passionate, exciting marriages. These romantic ideals, typical of individualistic cultures are problematic because passion and satisfaction fade over time (Houston & Houts, 1998). The increasingly individualistic nature of American society is also causing people to spend less time with family and friends and to rely more on their spouses for friendship and emotional support (Putnam, 2000). These demanding expectations on the marital relationship are difficult to fulfill and often lead to dissatisfaction (Attridge & Berscheid, 1994; McNulty & Karney, 2004). In fact, the percentage of people who report being happy in their marriage has declined by 20% in the past 25 years (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004), while the amount of reported problems and conflicts has increased (Amato, Johnson, Booth, & Rogers, 2003). One national survey found that only 33% of intact marriages were happy (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). Taken together, these high expectations and demands on the marital relationship have led to lower satisfaction, greater instability, and an increased likelihood of divorce.

Women in the Workforce

High divorce rates are partly due to the greater financial independence of women that has resulted from their participation in the workforce. Women no longer need marriage for economic reasons as they did in the past, which enables them to terminate an

unhappy marriage (Fitch & Ruggles, 2000; Rogers, 2004). Using Johnson's (1999)

commitment framework, women now commit to marriage because they *want* to (personal

reasons), not because they *have* to (constraint reasons). Their presence in the workforce

has also provided women with access to alternative partners, which increases their

likelihood of infidelity and divorce (South et al., 2001). In 1960, over 80% of women

stayed home to care for children preschool age or younger. Today, fewer than 50% of

women remain unemployed during this time period (Teachman, Polonko, & Scanzoni,

1999). Forty-two percent of homes consisted of a sole male breadwinner in the 1960s,

compared to 15% by 1988 (Popenoe, 1993). This transition of women into the work force

creates strains on marriage that were less common in the past. For instance, spouses now

experience more stress spillover between work and home (Rogers & May, 2003), which

negatively impacts marital satisfaction and stability (Amato et al., 2003). When both

partners are employed, tasks such as coordinating schedules, meals, and childcare take

time and energy away from the marital relationship. These tasks, combined with work

related stress put pressure on the relationship and increase the likelihood of divorce

(Amato et al., 2003).

No-Fault Divorce Laws

The no-fault divorce laws played an important role in the rise of divorce (Pinsof,

2002). These laws were established in the 1970s, as divorce was becoming increasingly

more common, and allowed spouses to cite "irreconcilable differences" as their reason

for marital termination (Glick, 1975). The laws made divorce easier to attain, less

culturally stigmatizing, and less psychologically distressing (Pinsof, 2002). As attitudes

toward divorce became more relaxed, the likelihood of obtaining a divorce increased

even further (Amato & Rogers, 1997). That is, the easier divorce is to obtain, the more likely divorce will be considered an option when individuals experience a decline in marital satisfaction. Children who come from divorced families are also more likely to get divorced, which is another indirect, cyclical effect resulting from the recent cultural shifts toward divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Tallman, Rotolo, & Gray, 2001).

Demographic Predictors

Various demographic characteristics are associated with divorce. As mentioned, children who come from divorced families are more accepting of divorce and are more likely to divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Tallman et al., 2001). When neither spouse is religious or when only one spouse is religious, the chances of divorce are higher (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). It is worthwhile to note that although religious people are more likely to remain married, they are not necessarily happier in their marriages (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). Education is correlated with divorce in that individuals who have little education are more likely to divorce, especially compared to college graduates who tend to have the most happy and stable marriages (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004). There are also regional variations in divorce rates with people who live in the south and west being most likely to divorce (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). The reason for high divorce rates in the south is likely due to the younger than average age of marriage, typical of individuals in this region. Marrying at a young age, particularly before age 25, increases the chance of divorce (Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004). People who live in the west are more likely to divorce because they hold more liberal attitudes about marriage and divorce (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). Finally, cohabiting with a partner prior to marriage

increases the likelihood of divorce, unless partners only cohabit with their future spouse (i.e., if they do not have previous cohabiting partners other than their spouse) (Teachman, 2003), and/or if are engaged to their future spouse when they begin cohabiting (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005; Stafford, Kline, & Rankin, 2004).

Beliefs about Divorce

The preceding paragraphs identified reasons for the rise in divorce. Given that divorce is more common now than it was in the past, it is important to address whether individuals are more likely to expect divorce in their own relationships. As mentioned in the marital literature section, Axinn and Thornton (2002) used data from the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, the General Social Survey (GSS), the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children (IPS), and the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) to assess American attitudes about marriage and divorce between 1976 and 1994. They found that the percentage of respondents who thought it was "very likely" they would stay married once they got married changed little across time. In the mid 1970s, 65.8% of women thought they would stay married compared to 62.6% in the mid 1990s. The percentage of men believing they would stay married was identical in the mid 1970s and 90s at 56.7%. Similarly, the idea that marriage is a lifelong commitment did not significantly change over time. In the mid 1980s, 72.1% of women agreed with this statement, compared to 73.2% in the mid 1990s. Men too experienced little change in this attitude with 77.9% agreeing in the mid 1980s and 78.4% agreeing in the mid 1990s.

Unfortunately, these data came from the National Survey of Families and Households, which was first enacted in 1987-1988. Data are not available for the decades in which divorce was less common. It is also important to note that the survey

participants were drawn from the general population aged 18 and over, which makes it impossible to distinguish between the attitudes of single versus married participants. However, based on these findings, it is safe to conclude that despite the increasing divorce rate, individuals do not expect divorce in their own relationships.

Summary

This section outlined reasons for the increase in divorce since the 1960s. These reasons included higher demands placed on the marital relationship, greater economic independence of women, more relaxed laws for obtaining divorce, and various demographic characteristics (i.e., having divorced parents, being less religious, having less education, residing in the south or west, and premarital cohabitation). Although divorce is a much more common today than it was in 1960, Americans are no more likely to expect divorce in their own marriage (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). This discrepancy between beliefs and practices underscores the importance of examining newlyweds' conceptions of marriage, particularly their expectations of infidelity and divorce as they transition into married life.

Overall Summary of Research

As this review has demonstrated, cultural norms related to marriage and divorce have changed considerably since 1960 (Pinsof, 2002; Popenoe, 1993). Practices such as cohabitation, premarital sex, birth control, out-of-wedlock childbearing, and divorce have increased exponentially (Atwood & Seifer, 1997; Bachrach et al., 2002; Raley, 2002). One reason for the high rates of infidelity and divorce is that Americans base their marital decisions on personal fulfillment; whereas in the past, they married more for economic, political, and social reasons (Coontz, 2005; Pinsof, 2002). The purpose of marriage has

therefore shifted from being a family-organized, social obligation to an individual, voluntary option.

With personal fulfillment as the basis for marriage, infidelity and divorce are considered viable options when spouses no longer feel satisfied in their marriage. This cultural shift has led to a divergence between social conceptualizations of marriage (i.e., as a monogamous, lifelong partnership) and social practices related to marriage (i.e., infidelity and divorce). Given these cultural changes, it becomes crucial to understand how newlyweds are conceptualizing marriage. By identifying the processes involved in newlyweds' decisions to marry and by understanding their opinions about marriage, infidelity, and divorce, researchers will gain insight into whether newlyweds enter marriage with the expectation of a monogamous, lifelong partnership. Newlyweds *may* enter marriage believing infidelity and divorce are probable. If this is the case, a societal shift might be needed in the way Americans conceptualize marriage.

This review has not addressed the influence of children on marital relationships. Research generally shows that children are a protective factor for marriage, meaning spouses are less likely to divorce when they have children (White, 1990). This finding is particularly true during the first few years of marriage and when children are aged three years or younger (Fergusson, Horwood, & Lloyd, 1990; Remez, 1990; White, Booth, & Edwards, 1986). After that, and especially for spouses who have teenage children, the protective influence disappears. In fact, the presence of teenage children elevates the risk of divorce (Remez, 1990; White, 1990). Considering the complex influence children have on marital relationships, this review has focused on literature pertaining to spouses without children, who are also the focus of the current study.

Current knowledge on the topic of newlywed marital conceptualizations is limited. American attitudes about the purpose of marriage and divorce have been assessed using quantitative measures in large, national surveys such as the National Fatherhood Initiative Survey, the General Social Survey, and the National Survey of Families and Households (Axinn & Thornton, 2002; National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005). These surveys focus on adults in the general population over the age of 18, and have not examined the attitudes of newlyweds exclusively. When the opinions of both married and unmarried individuals are assessed together, it becomes difficult to understand how people think about marriage, infidelity, and divorce at the time of marriage. Surveys that assess opinions of the general population are less informative because unmarried participants are speculating about how they will feel once married and participants who have been married several years could have changed their views since the early years of marriage.

Although researchers have addressed the changes affecting American families since 1960, little empirical work has investigated how these changes affect perceptions about marriage, infidelity, and divorce. For example, scholarly works in this area tend to be theoretically focused (Pinsof, 2002) or based on large national surveys (i.e., Census data, the General Social Survey, the National Survey of Family Growth, the National Survey of Families and Households) (Axinn & Thornton, 2002; Popenoe, 1993; Raley, 2002; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). Theoretical papers focus on whether increases in divorce and fragmented families have put families at risk for extinction. Empirical studies based on large social surveys report statistics and do not explore the meanings individuals make about marriage, infidelity, and divorce. Therefore, while

scientists are aware of social trends, they know little about how these trends influence personal beliefs and marital expectations. The following section explicates the interrelationship between societal processes and individual perceptions using social exchange, evolutionary psychology, and symbolic interaction theories.

Theoretical Framework

The goal of this study is to understand the meanings people make about their own marriage, and the possibility of infidelity, and divorce. One of the best theories for investigating how cultural meanings influence social behavior is symbolic interaction (White & Klein, 2002). Symbolic interaction is commonly used in mixed methods studies such as this one, which involve both qualitative and quantitative data (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). In addition to symbolic interaction, social exchange and evolutionary theories are relevant to this study. Much research on mate selection and relationship patterns has been guided by these theories and so it is important to review the central ideas of each. Social exchange and evolutionary theories complement symbolic interaction and help explain how newlyweds conceptualize marriage. Symbolic interaction is the overarching theory guiding this study and as such, it is reviewed in the greatest depth at the end of this section.

Social Exchange

According to social exchange theory, individuals seek to maximize their rewards and minimize costs in intimate relationships (Nye, 1979). Rewards refer to the benefits obtained from a relationship that fulfill one's needs and provide satisfaction and enjoyment. Needs and benefits are subjectively evaluated and vary depending on the person. For example, one person might consider sexual satisfaction to be important in

maintaining happiness and fulfillment. Another person might place high importance on financial security and desire monetary resources from their partner. Individuals will feel satisfied if their partner is able to fulfill their important needs. Costs refer to expenditures or rewards that are unavailable due to one's involvement in a relationship. Satisfying relationships are ones in which the rewards exceed the costs (i.e., the relationships are profitable). If an individual is responsible for the rewarding outcomes experienced by their partner, their partner will feel dependent on them. If both partners are responsible for the rewarding outcomes experienced by the other, a state of mutual dependency or interdependency exists (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals who are in costly relationships and who have attractive alternative partners will be less dependent on the relationship, and will be more likely to experience infidelity or divorce.

A person determines their relationship expectations through comparisons with other relationships, including one's prior involvements and involvements of friends and family (Nye, 1979; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). Comparison level (CL) is a concept used to evaluate relationship satisfaction and is based on profit. Individuals compare their profit to what they expect to obtain, and to the profit of other people in similar relationships (i.e., social comparison) (Nye, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Therefore, individuals who incurred high profit in their previous relationships, and who are aware of others who obtain high profit from their relationships will have a high comparison level and will be harder to satisfy. Individuals who have been involved in few profitable relationships, and who are unaware of others in profitable relationships, will have a low comparison level and be easier to satisfy. Individuals are predicted to feel satisfied if they obtain relationship outcomes that fall at or above their CL. When the outcomes of a given

relationship fall below the CL, individuals will feel unsatisfied and will likely seek out alternative partners.

Comparison level for alternatives (CL-alt) is a standard used to evaluate other relationship options. CL-alt involves a comparison of the profit obtained from one's current relationship to the perceived profit available from alternative relationships (Nye, 1979; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). If profit in the current relationship is high, the individual is more likely to remain with their partner. If, however, the individual perceives there to be a more profitable alternative available, he or she will leave the current partner to seek out a partner who can provide the most profit. When few profitable alternatives are available, one will be more dependent on the current relationship for rewarding outcomes.

Commitment is generally higher for individuals who perceive few quality alternatives. Quality of alternatives is defined as the perceived desirability of alternatives to a relationship. Alternatives must be both desirable and available to be considered a relationship threat (Levinger, 1999; Rusbult et al., 1998). Desirable alternatives are those that individuals find attractive, and who are perceived as being able to fulfill important relationship needs. Available alternatives do not necessarily refer to other intimate partners. Examples of alternatives could include relationships with family and friends, or being alone without any partnership.

Using social exchange theory, Rusbult (1983) developed the investment model to explain commitment. The investment model asserts that commitment can be predicted by considering the collective influence of relationship satisfaction, alternatives, and investments (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1998). As mentioned, satisfaction results from

having a partner who exceeds one's expectations in terms of need fulfillment.

Alternatives refer to options outside the relationship that can fulfill needs better than the

current partner. Investments refer to the amount of irretrievable resources put into a

relationship. These can include time, money, intimate disclosures, and linking one's

personal identity to a relationship. Investments strengthen commitment because they

increase the personal costs of terminating a relationship (Le & Agnew, 2003).

Accordingly, a highly committed individual will perceive high levels of satisfaction and

investments, and low quality alternatives to the relationship. The investment model has

been used by researchers to predict commitment, and to explain how commitment

influences the likelihood of infidelity and relationship termination (Le & Agnew, 2003;

Rusbult, Weiselquist, Foster, & Witcher, 1999).

Evolutionary Psychology

According to the evolutionary perspective, humans are primarily concerned with

reproduction and passing on their genes to as many healthy offspring as possible (Buss,

1994; 1998; Fenigstein & Peltz, 2002). Men and women differ in the amount of time

needed for this task. Men have a goal of dispersing their genes to numerous women, in

the hopes of producing maximal numbers of offspring. The amount of time needed for

successful reproduction is small and might only involve a single occasion of intercourse.

Women, on the other hand, generally have responsibilities for both bearing (9 months)

and raising children (18+ years). Unlike men, parental certainty for women is guaranteed

due to internal fertilization. Although DNA tests provide one means of determining

biological relatedness, they have yet to be used as a common method of determining

paternity. Therefore, it is easier for men to pass on their genes without parental investment beyond the act of intercourse.

Based on this theory, men are more likely than women to engage in extramarital sex because they have more to gain from casual, promiscuous sexual interactions (Bailey, Gaulin, Agyei, & Gladue, 1994; Linton & Wiener, 2001; Wright & Reise, 1997). Men who mate with numerous women will produce more offspring than men who mate with few women. As the years pass, men who are less promiscuous are likely to be eliminated from the population through natural selection. Men who mate with many women will produce offspring who will also have a promiscuous sexual orientation. However, the reverse is true for women. Women are more likely to require commitment from their partners prior to engaging in sexual intercourse. Women are interested in securing mates with resources who are willing to commit to long-term childrearing. Women who are able to secure such mates will produce healthy offspring that will survive into future generations. Women who are unable to secure long-term, resourceful partnerships will be less successful with reproduction, and will be selected out of the population. As time goes on, women who are less promiscuous will be more likely to survive.

According to evolutionary theory, women have an added incentive to remain monogamous to their partners. Recall that parental certainty is guaranteed for women but not for men. Research indicates that men are more jealous when their wives commit sexual infidelity (i.e., sexual intercourse with another partner), whereas women are more jealous of emotional infidelity (i.e., deep emotional attachments to another partner) (Buss, 1994). The reason men and women feel threatened by different types of infidelity is related to genetic fitness. Men run the risk of raising a child who is not their own when

their wives engage in sexual intercourse with other men. Women are most threatened by emotional infidelity because they risk having the father's resources allocated to another woman's offspring. Women have more to lose from engaging in extramarital sex (i.e., other men will be reluctant to commit resources for raising children who are not their own), and so have an added incentive to remain monogamous to their partners. In addition, because men risk paternity uncertainty, they value chastity in a mate and attempt to control women's interactions with the opposite sex. While social norms have changed over time, and men can now use paternity tests to determine whether a child is their own, cultural norms change much faster than evolutionary patterns (Crawford, 1998). Therefore, recent technological advances have enabled men to determine the paternity of a child, but evolutionary patterns will take thousands of years to change.

Birth control methods provide another example of how today's social norms may influence future evolutionary patterns. Theorists typically assume that due to their greater investment in offspring, women should not engage in risky sexual behaviors for fear of pregnancy. However, the widespread use of birth control pills and other advances in women's contraceptives have enabled women to engage in sex, including infidelity, without the risk of pregnancy that existed in the past (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen, 2001). These social changes, coupled with the increase of women in the workforce (more exposure to alternative partners, more financial freedom) have created a shift in terms of the risk associated with extramarital sex for women. Women now have less to lose from engaging in infidelity than they did in the past.

Barash and Lipton (2001) also proposed a non-traditional view related to women's reproductive strategies. Whereas most theorists assume women have more to

gain from remaining monogamous to one partner, Barash and Lipton proposed that women who have multiple sex partners have an evolutionary advantage due to sperm competition. With more than one man's sperm competing for egg fertilization, the strongest sperm should win out, thereby producing the most genetically fit offspring. Although data are not currently available for the United States, it is estimated that in 4-12% of babies in Great Britain are conceived from sperm competition. This would require that a fertile female have sexual intercourse with at least two men during a five day span.

Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic interaction theory is centrally focused on the shared meanings created through social interactions (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). The theory asserts that humans develop and understand their self-concepts by engaging in social interactions with others. It is through socialization and interactions that individuals come to understand their own identities and realize how relationships work (Berger & Kellner, 1984; Berger & Luckman, 1966; LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). This section identifies the central assumptions and concepts of symbolic interaction and shows how the theory can be used to study marital conceptualizations. The concepts and assumptions are derived from a chapter written by LaRossa and Reitzes (1993) in the *Sourcebook of family theories and methods: A contextual approach*. Symbolic interaction theorists organize their ideas in a variety of ways, but the approach used in the Sourcebook is preferred and is the predominant text used by family scholars.

Assumptions

Symbolic interaction theory can be described according to seven assumptions. The first three assumptions are based on the idea that meanings influence human behavior. Assumption one states that individuals take action based on the conscious meaning they ascribe to a behavior. Rather than operating at an instinctual level, humans consciously process information before acting. The second assumption states that people develop meanings through their social interactions with other people. The third assumption is that individuals interpret their world (i.e., themselves, their relationships, and their environment) according to cultural symbols and that they use cultural meanings to understand how other people might interpret the world.

The fourth and fifth assumptions are focused on the idea of self-concept. Symbolic interaction theory assumes individuals do not have a self-concept from birth, but instead acquire their self-concepts through interactions with other people. That is, values, social norms, and ideas about how the world works are developed through socialization and interactions with people in different environments. The fifth assumption states that a person's self-concept, including their personal values and beliefs, guide behavior. People choose actions that are congruent with their values and beliefs and avoid actions that go against their views.

The final two assumptions center on the theme of personal freedom versus social constraint. The sixth assumption states that human actions are constrained by social norms. Individuals choose behaviors that correspond to the values and norms of their culture. However, the final assumption states that individuals do not passively respond to

their environment. Instead, they interact with other people on a daily basis and influence

social settings through the subjective meanings they assign to their interactions.

These assumptions can be applied to the study of marital conceptualizations. First,

researchers should recognize that individuals engage in behaviors such as getting

married, committing infidelity, or getting divorced because they associate meanings with

these actions. Meanings are derived from the norms and practices of their culture and

from interactions with people in their social networks. Societies use symbols to represent

their shared meaning systems. For example, the North American cultural tradition of

getting married often involves a church and minister (representing the sanctity of

marriage), a white dress (representing virginity and birth), wedding rings (representing

eternal love), vows (representing the promises to one's spouse), and a celebration

(representing the importance of family and friends in the couple's life). When people

attend weddings, they expect to see these symbols and recognize the meanings associated

with them. The wedding event is only one example of how culturally symbolic meanings

are imbedded in and reinforced by human interactions; but this process of meaning-

making and reinforcement operates on a daily basis in a variety of ways.

Concepts

Symbolic interaction is based on the interrelated concepts of identities, roles,

interactions, and contexts (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). These concepts vary in their level

of analysis with identities at the most micro (individual) level and contexts at the most

macro (societal) level. The concept of *identities* refers to the meanings a person ascribes

to their different roles. For example, a wife may perceive her role to involve providing

her husband with friendship, support, and sexual intimacy. The identities of individuals

are hierarchically organized in that some are more salient than others. Individuals will seek to excel at their primary identities. That is, if a woman views her primary or most salient identity to be a wife, she will frequently and intensely enact behaviors that correspond to her role as a wife. Individuals determine their primary identities based on commitment or the social cost of terminating a particular identity. The greater the social cost of giving up an identity, the more time and energy a person will devote to excel in that identity.

Roles refer to positions people occupy that have culturally prescribed expectations. People often hold more than one role such as when a woman views herself as a wife, mother, sister, and friend. In North America, the culturally influenced expectations for a wife include providing care for a husband and children and contributing to the home in terms of cooking and cleaning and/or finances. The expectations for different roles are determined by the culture in which an individual lives and through the interpersonal negotiations that occur within particular relationships. For instance, North Americans have general ideas about the role husbands and wives play in marital relationships. Although spouses will be guided by these cultural expectations (i.e., monogamy, etc.), the specific behaviors associated with each role get further negotiated within each marital relationship. Individuals may associate various identities to a certain role. In the role of wife, a woman may perceive herself to hold the identities of sexual partner, homemaker, and friend. Again, these identities will be based on cultural expectations as well as individual interactions.

Interactions represent the manner in which people create and reinforce social meanings. Through daily interactions, people arrive at definitions of themselves, others,

and their environments. Individuals represent their identities by communicating with others, both verbally and nonverbally. At the same time, they learn about other people's roles through their interactions. For example, when a couple begins dating, each partner is playing a role in the relationship. The expectations for these roles are culturally derived and based on each partner's previous experiences. In a heterosexual relationship, the man might initially perceive his role to involve tasks such as opening doors, paying for dates, and keeping a well-groomed appearance. As the relationship progresses, the couple might negotiate different identities for each partner, based on their personal preferences and the meaning system they develop together.

Contexts refer to the manner in which environments and situations shape behavior (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Bronfenbrenner (1993) identified an interconnected set of environments that influence behavior: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The microsystem is defined as the immediate environment in which individuals directly interact with other individuals and objects. It includes physical, social, and symbolic components. Examples include interactions between intimate partners or interactions with family members or peers. The mesosystem refers to two or more microsystems that concurrently influence people. Examples include the influence of work and/or peers on a person's intimate relationship. The exosystem refers to two or more environments that do not impact individuals directly, yet still affect individuals' experiences in their microsystems. Examples include an individual's partner's workplace or an individual's partner's family. Macrosystems refer to the patterns of micro, meso, and exo systems in a given culture or social structure. Examples of macrosystems include entire countries or socio-cultural structures that vary depending on the era or historical

period. The study of marital conceptualizations requires a consideration of how these various contextual systems influence the meanings people make and the behaviors they engage in. Symbolic interaction theory can help researchers understand how culture and socialization influence the beliefs and expectations newlyweds have for their own marriages.

Theoretical Linkages

Social exchange, evolutionary psychology, and symbolic interaction are predominant frameworks in the study of intimate relationships (Perlman & Campbell, 2004). Although they offer different explanations for human behavior, they are interrelated. Each explains dyadic interactions, but they focus on different levels of analysis. Symbolic interaction is macro and cultural in its focus, assuming that individuals develop meanings and identities through socialization (Mead, 1934). Social exchange is focused more at the dyadic level, assuming that individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their relationships (Nye, 1979). Evolutionary psychology is more focused at the individual level and assumes people are born with genetic predispositions that impact their beliefs and practices in intimate relationships (Buss, 1994). Evolutionary and sociocultural perspectives influence each other in that people who adapt well to cultural norms reproduce and pass on their traits to subsequent generations. Evolved characteristics are therefore shaped by culture (Tooby & Cosmides, 1989). By examining people in different cultures, scientists can identify characteristics that are universal or based on evolution, from those that vary by culture and are therefore socialized.

Research Questions

As evidenced in the preceding review, incongruence exists between Americans' beliefs and practices regarding marriage, infidelity, and divorce. Many practices such as unmarried sex, non-marital cohabitation, and childbearing outside marriage have become increasingly common and Americans' attitudes toward these practices have also become more accepting (Axinn & Thornton, 2002; Barich & Bielby, 1996; Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Pinsof, 2002). Although social beliefs about these practices have become more relaxed, thereby giving Americans socially acceptable alternatives to marriage, the vast majority of Americans continue to value marriage and marry in high numbers. Given that alternatives exist, what motivates young adults to marry? Additionally, Americans conceptualize marriage as a monogamous, lifelong partnership. Yet, divorce and infidelity rates are high. Evidently, incongruence exists in the way marriage is conceptualized and practiced.

One way to examine this incongruence is by investigating newlyweds' conceptions of marriage, including the micro and macro processes influencing their beliefs and practices. Researchers who investigate marital conceptions often approach the topic using either the micro *or* macro perspectives, but rarely integrate the two (Tucker, 2002). It is necessary however to consider individual, interpersonal, and socio-cultural processes when studying marital conceptions. As Bachrach, Hindin, and Thomson (2002) noted, "Interaction of individuals at the dyadic, group, and institutional levels can contribute to the evolution of attitudes and values at the individual and social levels and lead to behavioral change" (p. 10). In other words, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and

contextual processes are interconnected and collectively influence behavior. Turner (2002) reinforced this point by stating:

> Explanations of changing marital behavior…have focused primarily on aggregate level processes. At the same time, psychological studies of the changing nature of romantic involvements (e.g., greater likelihood of divorce) have given inadequate consideration to the impact of structural forces. An understanding of the apparent inconsistency between marital beliefs and behaviors, however, requires a conceptual and methodological framework that incorporates both levels of analysis. (p. 167)

Symbolic interaction is an ideal theory for investigating how cultural meanings and practices (macro processes) influence individuals' perceptions and interactions (micro processes) (White & Kline, 2002). The theory is fitting for studies that use both qualitative and quantitative methods or what is known as a mixed method designs. Hunter and Brewer (2003) note that theories must be thoughtfully selected in mixed methods research because such studies can both generate (qualitative component) *and* test (quantitative component) theory. Qualitative methods are typically employed for exploratory studies, when little is known about the phenomena under investigation. In the case of marital conceptualizations, little is known about newlyweds' perceptions of their own marriage and their perceived likelihood of infidelity or divorce. However, much is known about the predictors of infidelity and divorce. Therefore, a qualitative study of newlyweds' marital conceptions should include quantitative assessments to examine whether participants differ based on the known predictors of infidelity and divorce. The current study uses quantitative measures to examine potential differences among

participants and to inform and expand on their qualitative responses. The specific research questions guiding the study are:

1. *Given that unmarried sex, cohabitation, and childbearing are now culturally acceptable, and considering the high rates of infidelity and divorce, why are newlyweds choosing to marry?* To help answer this question, the following questions will also be explored:

    a. How certain are newlyweds at various time points (i.e., before marriage, on their wedding day, after marriage) that they want to be married?

    b. What are newlyweds' opinions about raising children outside the context of a marital relationship?

2. *How do newlyweds conceptualize marriage?* To help answer this question, the following questions will also be explored:

    a. How do marital conceptualizations vary for newlyweds with different personalities (Big 5, sociosexual orientation), relationship characteristics (satisfaction, commitment), and demographic variables (ethnicity, religious orientation, political orientation, education, relationship history, and age of marriage)?

    b. What are newlyweds' expectations for their spouse and marriage?

3. *What are newlyweds' expectations about infidelity in their own marriage?* To help answer this question, the following questions will also be explored:

    a. How do newlyweds' expectations of infidelity in their own marriage vary based on the intrapersonal characteristics of personality (Big 5,

sociosexual orientation) and demographic variables (gender, race, religious and political orientation, employment status, attachment style, and relationship history)?

b. How do newlyweds' expectations of infidelity in their own marriage vary based on interpersonal characteristics (relationship satisfaction, commitment, perceptions of spouse's personality similarity, and likelihood of spouse having an affair)?

c. How do newlyweds' expectations of infidelity in their own marriage vary based on contextual characteristics (quality of alternatives and living in an urban versus rural environment)?

4. *What are newlyweds' expectations about divorce in their own marriage?* To help answer this question, the following questions will also be explored:

a. How do newlyweds' expectations of divorce in their own marriage vary based on the intrapersonal characteristics of personality (Big 5), experiences of infidelity, and demographic variables (education, religious orientation, employment status, and experiences of parental divorce and premarital cohabitation)?

b. How do newlyweds' expectations of divorce in their own marriage vary based on interpersonal characteristics (relationship satisfaction, investments, commitment, and perceptions of spouse's personality similarity)?

c. How do newlyweds' expectations of divorce in their own marriage vary based on contextual characteristics (quality of alternatives and

area of residence including regional variations and living in an urban versus rural environment)?

In the current study, qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, but priority was given to the qualitative component. That is, the research questions lended themselves to a detailed, qualitative investigation of how newlyweds conceptualize marriage. However, it was important to understand the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors influencing participants' responses. Intrapersonal variables such as demographic characteristics, relationship history, and personality traits influence individuals' beliefs and practices related to marriage, infidelity, and divorce. Similarly, interpersonal characteristics such as relationship satisfaction and commitment, and contextual variables such as access to alternative partners are likely to impact individuals' marital views and behaviors. Quantitative assessments for each of these characteristics were used to identify how newlyweds' conceptions of marriage differ based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods procedures, which use both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer research questions, are both complex and relatively new to social science research (Creswell, 2003). Due to their complexity, these designs have the advantage of providing a more complete understanding of the phenomena being studied. Yet their relative newness means that fewer guidelines are available for conducting such studies (Creswell, 2003). The current study employed a mixed methods approach because little was known about how newlyweds conceptualize marriage and the most comprehensive understanding of the topic could be attained using both methods. In addition, the overarching framework of this study was symbolic interaction theory, which is centrally focused on the meanings individuals make about themselves and their environments. The theory lends itself well to mixed methods because participants can qualitatively explain in their own words what marriage means to them. However, in order to gain the most complete understanding of newlyweds' conceptions of marriage, quantitative measures were necessary to explore the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics influencing their beliefs.

Creswell (2003) outlined different strategies for researchers to use in mixed methods studies. The strategies vary based on: 1) whether the qualitative and quantitative data are collected sequentially or concurrently, 2) the priority given to each type of data, 3) the stage at which integration of the two methods occurs, and 4) whether a theoretical

perspective is used to guide the study. Based on these criteria, the current study employed a "concurrent triangulation strategy" (p. 217), which is the strategy used most often in mixed methods research. It requires the qualitative and quantitative data to be collected concurrently. It also allows priority to be given to the qualitative data and for integration of the methods to occur at any phase of the collection, analysis, or interpretation process. Finally, it allows for a theoretical perspective to guide the study. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the concurrent triangulation strategy that was used in this study.

Figure 1

Concurrent Triangulation Strategy

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

| QUALITATIVE | + | QUANTITIATVE |
| data collection | | data collection |

| QUALITATIVE | ←————————→ | QUANTITATIVE |
| data analysis | | data analysis |

Data results compared

Quantitative inform QUALITATIVE results
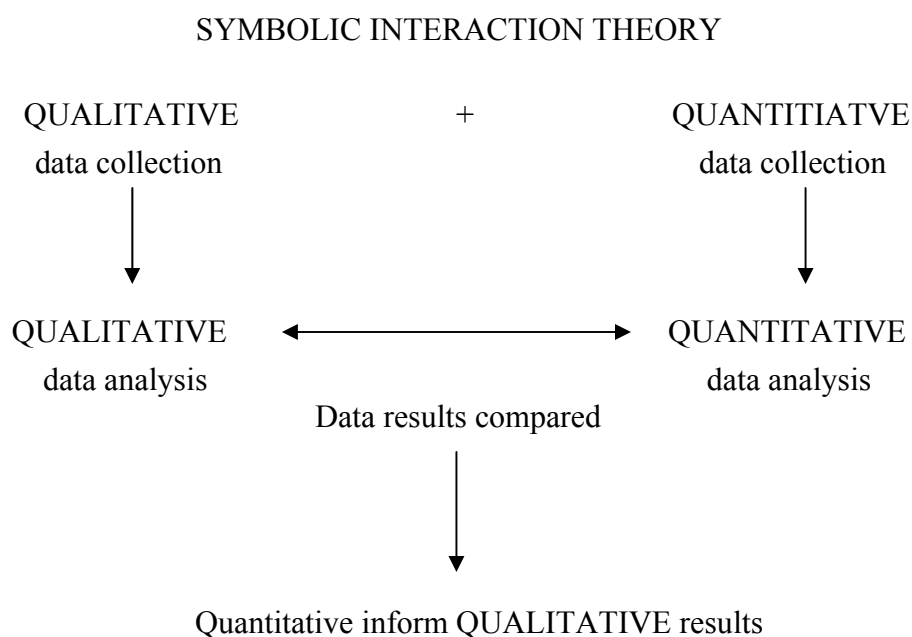
Role of the Researcher

Given that this study included a qualitative component and that the researcher coded open-ended survey responses, it was important to be aware of her own subjectivities. The researcher is an educated, Caucasian, liberal-minded researcher from western Canada. She is the first person in her family to graduate from college and she

received her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in family studies from The University of British Columbia. In terms of her specific ethnicity, her father is Greek (born in Greece but immigrated to Canada with his family when he was 3 years old) and her mother is third generation Canadian with ancestors from Britain. The researcher's parents divorced when she was seven years old and she was raised in a home with her mother and sister, with whom she is extremely close. She did not experience feelings of stigma when her parents divorced and they have always supported her choices about relationships and marriage. For example, they embraced her past and current partners into the family and never pressured her toward marriage or toward remaining single.

The researcher's family is open-minded and accepting of a variety of viewpoints and lifestyles. Although not religious, the researcher and her family are very spiritual. They respect nature, enjoy meditation, and believe "God" is the collective energy of all things. The researcher's perspective is different from some of the more Christian, conservative views that are common in the southern U.S. For example, the researcher has been involved in an unmarried heterosexual relationship for 7 years and is currently cohabiting with her partner. She does not have any immediate plans for marriage because she believes most people marry for love and personal fulfillment. Because she is able to attain love and fulfillment without marriage, she does not perceive there to be a reason to get married. Although many Americans hold values and attitudes similar to her own, others do not. In this study, she expected to read survey responses reflecting views that were both similar to and different from her own. It was important for her to remain aware of her subjectivities while analyzing the data and drawing conclusions.

In terms of motivations for the study, the researcher believes that the socially constructed ideal of marriage as a monogamous, lifelong relationship is unrealistic for many people to uphold. Although some people are inclined toward monogamous, lifelong partnerships (e.g., people who are more agreeable, conscientious, and have a restricted sociosexual orientation), marriage is less practical for other people (e.g., those who are less agreeable and conscientious and have an unrestricted sociosexual orientation). The researcher believes a majority of people get married because they have been socialized to believe it is the "right" or "normal" thing to do and they do not question whether marriage is a good choice for them. If adults perceive there to be socially acceptable alternatives to marriage (e.g., permanent single hood, cohabiting relationships, open relationships), the researcher believes fewer people would get married and as a consequence, the rates of infidelity and divorce would be reduced.

Participant Requirements

The target population for this study consisted of newlywed individuals who: 1) had been married for two years or less, 2) were in their first marriage, and 3) did not have children. Two years was chosen as the preferred time frame because it allowed newlyweds to be out of the "honeymoon" phase and to perceive varying levels of marital satisfaction. It also allowed enough time for newlyweds to consider (or experience) infidelity if their needs were not being met in the marriage, and to begin considering separation or divorce. The study was also limited to individuals in their first marriage because the goal was to understand the perceptions of marriage and divorce for people who had not already experienced divorce (i.e., do they believe marriage is for a lifetime?). Finally, the sample was limited to those who did not have children because

children can function to keep a marriage together (i.e., staying together for the sake of the kids) as well as promote divorce (i.e., when individuals do not want to raise children in high conflict homes) (White, 1990). Individuals who met the above three criteria were invited to participate in the study. The researcher aimed to obtain 100-300 participants.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were recruited online through professional listserv announcements and web site postings. Listserv and web site managers were contacted by the researcher and asked for permission to post the study announcement (see Appendix A for the study announcement). In some cases, managers preferred that the researcher post the announcement herself and in other cases, they offered to post for her. The announcement was made on the following listservs: the Department of Child and Family Development list at the University of Georgia, the Graduate Student Association list of UGA, the Graduate and Professional Scholars list of UGA, the Family Studies list managed through the University of Kentucky, the diversity and teaching in psychology list managed through Ball State University, and the qualitative research for the human sciences list managed through UGA. The announcement was posted on the following web sites: TheNest.com, Newlyweds.meetup.com, Groups.Yahoo.com, MySpace.com, and CraigsList.com. Each of these web sites, with the exception of Craig's List, has message boards for posting announcements that are targeted toward newlyweds. For CraigsList.com, the researcher posted her study announcement in a classified section titled "General Community", where people post information that is relevant to the general public. The announcement described the study, outlined participant criteria, and provided a link to the online consent form and survey.

The consent form indicated that the time required for the study was approximately 60 minutes. Participants could create a password to enter the survey and use it in order to complete the questions across multiple time periods. They were asked *not* to complete the questionnaire with the help of their spouse because sensitive topics were addressed and the researcher believed participants would be most honest if they did not consult their partners. They were informed that participation was voluntary and that all responses would be kept confidential. Those who were willing to participate were given the option of completing the questionnaire online or in hardcopy format. Individuals who chose to complete the questionnaire online could begin the survey after agreeing to the consent form (i.e., clicking on the 'I Agree' option at the bottom on the web page). Individuals who preferred to complete a hardcopy of the questionnaire were asked to contact the researcher by email or telephone. No individuals chose this option. Finally, participants were informed that upon completing the survey, they could enter a draw for a $100.00 gift card.

The data were collected between June and November 2007. This study was part of a larger research project and the information reported here pertains to this study's particular research questions.

<div align="center">Measures</div>

The goal of this study was to understand how newlyweds think about marriage, and to examine their expectations of infidelity and divorce in their own relationships. In order to do this, participants completed a qualitative assessment consisting of 30 open-ended questions, nine quantitative measures, and 20 demographic questions (see Appendix B for a complete version of the questionnaire used in this study). Altogether,

the survey consisted of 250 questions. Due to the long length, participant fatigue was a concern. The questions were therefore presented in order of importance with the qualitative questions presented first. Each component of the questionnaire is outlined below.

Qualitative Assessment

There were 30 questions in the qualitative portion of the survey that were written by the researcher and derived from the literature about beliefs and practices related to marriage, infidelity, and divorce (see pp. 138-141 of Appendix B) (Axinn & Thornton, 2002; Coontz, 2005; Ingoldsby, 2002; Pinsof, 2002; Tucker, 2002). Most of the questions were open-ended and allowed participants to type their responses in the space provided. However, four questions (5, 15, 18, and 25) were closed-ended and were included because they fit with the central themes of this section and/or because they introduced the open-ended questions that followed. The central themes addressed by questions in this section were perceptions of: the ideal marriage (2 questions), the purpose of marriage/decision to marry (11 questions), childbearing and marriage (2 questions), socialization about marriage (2 questions), marital stability (2 questions), social support related to the marriage (1 question), divorce (4 questions), infidelity (3 questions), and the future of the relationship (3 questions). Some additional open-ended questions were included in other parts of the survey to give participants the option of elaborating on their quantitative responses.

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are evaluated according to *trustworthiness*, which involves establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings (Tobin & Begley, 2003). Credibility

resembles internal validity and refers to the researcher's ability to accurately explain, describe, or represent the participants' qualitative responses. In the current study, credibility was established in two ways. First, the researcher joined an online community for newlyweds (www.thenest.com) and had the opportunity to interact with some of her participants through message board postings. In this way, she was able to discuss the survey with participants, clarify points, and better understand their perspectives. Second, due to the mixed methods nature of the study, the researcher was able to cross reference some of her qualitative findings with results from the quantitative measures. The quantitative assessments informed the qualitative data and helped the researcher most accurately represent the participants' perspectives.

Transferability is similar to external validity and refers to the generalizability of the research findings (Tobin & Begley, 2003). In the current study, transferability was addressed by recruiting a large number of participants ($N = 276$) from regions across the United States. Qualitative studies typically have smaller sample sizes in which transferability/generalizability is a concern. However, the current sample size allowed for some generalizations to be made about newlyweds.

Dependability is comparable to reliability and involves keeping accurate records of the research process (Tobin & Begley, 2003). Researchers are expected to thoroughly and clearly describe each step involved with their studies so that other researchers can examine and evaluate the methods used. In qualitative research, this includes identifying the researcher's subjectivities and being aware of how these could influence the findings. Researchers should be explicit about their position on the topic and should be self-critical as they analyze the data and draw conclusions. The current study addressed dependability

by outlining the role of the researcher, including how her subjectivities could impact the findings and conclusions (pp. 46-48). The researcher also kept a journal about her research, including her thoughts and feelings about the study as it unfolded. In addition, the steps involved with every aspect of the research process (i.e., literature review, theory, methods, results, discussion) were explicitly described, with reasons provided for the researcher's choices.

Finally, confirmability is similar to the quantitative notion of objectivity or neutrality (Tobin & Begley, 2003) and refers to the idea that data interpretations should be logically derived from participants' responses. The interpretations should not involve an imposition of the researcher's ideas but should accurately reflect the participants' perspectives as they are represented in the data. Confirmability was evaluated by assigning 15 random segments of the qualitative data to the researcher's major professor, who was familiar with the study. In order to assess the coding accuracy, he read each research question, the participant's response, and the codes assigned by the researcher. After comparing his own interpretations with those of the researcher, he determined that her codes accurately reflected the participants' responses. Therefore, credibility and confirmability were supported.

Quantitative Assessment

Attitudes about marriage and divorce. Twenty questions were used to assess attitudes about marriage and divorce that were not covered in the qualitative portion of the survey (see pp. 142-144 of Appendix B). These questions were primarily close-ended (e.g., Likert scale, multiple choice) with the exception of questions 13 and 17-20, which allowed participants to elaborate on their responses. For questions 1-12, participants used

a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (don't agree at all) to 8 (agree completely) to indicate their opinions about marriage and divorce. Seven of these questions were derived from a national opinion survey conducted by the National Fatherhood Initiative. Two questions (10, 11) were adapted from Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, a nationally representative assessment of high school seniors across the United States (Axinn & Thornton, 2002) and one question (12) was adapted from the Intergenerational Panel Study of Parents and Children (IPS), a longitudinal study of white women and their children (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). Two questions (3, 8) were written by the researcher. The remaining nine questions required multiple choice responses. Of these, six questions (13-17) were derived from the National Fatherhood Initiative survey and the other three (18-20) were written by the researcher. Although these questions had not been formally assessed for validity and reliability, they had been used in national opinion surveys and were determined by the researcher to have face validity.

Relationship history. Relationship history was assessed using eleven questions about the participants' parents' relationship and the participants' history of cohabitation and marriage (see p. 145 of Appendix B). Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7-9 were derived from the National Fatherhood Initiative survey. The remaining four questions (2, 6, 10, and 11) were written by the researcher. Questions 1-5 addressed whether the participant's parents married, divorced, and were satisfied in their marriage (if they married). Question six asked participants if they had ever been married to someone other than their spouse. This question was included to verify that participants had never been married before. Questions 7-10 assessed premarital cohabitation and question 11 asked participants about their mother's opinion of divorce. This final question was included because mothers'

attitudes provide a more reliable indicator than participants' attitudes of whether divorce will be considered (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). The questions in this section had not been formally assessed for validity and reliability but were primarily used to collect demographic information and were derived from national surveys.

Personality. Goldberg (1992) developed a 100-item scale to assess the Big Five personality traits of agreeableness, conscientiousness, extroversion, openness, and emotional stability. Each of the Big Five dimensions is assessed using 20 items and the scale takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. The scale is valid and reliable and has been cited extensively in social science research (the Social Science Citation Index shows a total of 716 citations for Goldberg's study). Saucier (1994) used Goldberg's scale to develop a shorter version of the Big Five scale, termed Mini-Markers (MM), that takes approximately 5 minutes to complete (see p.146 of Appendix B). Participants are asked to read a list of 40 adjectives (8 items for each personality trait) and to indicate whether the adjective is descriptive of their personality using a 9-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 (extremely inaccurate) to 9 (extremely accurate). This scale has demonstrated a robust factor structure, acceptable internal consistency (.90 for extroversion and conscientiousness, .75 for emotional stability, .79 for agreeableness, and .80 for openness), criterion validity (i.e., concurrent and predictive), and external validity (Dwight, Cummings, & Glenar, 1998; Saucier, 1994). Internal consistencies were comparable in the current study with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .86 for extroversion, .81 for conscientiousness and emotional stability, .80 for agreeableness, and .73 for openness. The shorter length makes Saucier's scale ideal for studies in which other measures are being used because it minimizes the time required for completion.

According to the Social Science Citation Index, Saucier's (1994) article has been cited in 132 peer reviewed papers.

Marital expectations. It was important to assess participants' expectations about their partner because as noted in the literature review, spouses are expected to be a primary source of satisfaction, friendship, and support (Putnam, 2000). Individuals who begin marriage with relatively high expectations experience the most dramatic decrease in marital satisfaction in the 3-4 years that follow (Attridge & Berscheid, 1994; McNulty & Karney, 2004). McNulty and Karney (2004) developed a 9-item measure in which participants rate their agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) with statements about how their partner is likely to behave in the future (see p. 147 of Appendix B). Responses are summed such that the range of possible scores is from 7 to 63, with higher scores indicating more positive expectations. This measure demonstrated adequate internal consistency (overall α coefficient = .71 for husbands and .80 for wives) and between-subjects variability. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was comparable at .71 for the entire sample. Although this measure has not been formally tested for validity and reliability, it provided a short assessment of marital expectations and contained items that corresponded with the purpose of the current study.

Investment Model Scale. Participants completed the Investment Model Scale (IMS), a self-report questionnaire with four subscales designed to measure commitment (7 items), and three commitment predictor variables of satisfaction level (10 items), quality of alternatives (10 items), and investment size (10 items) (Rusbult et al., 1998) (see Appendix B, pp. 148-152). The commitment predictor subscales consist of five facet items and five global items. The facet items are not statistically analyzed, but are

included to facilitate the participant's comprehension of global items and to increase

reliability. Participants record item responses using a 9-point Likert scale, with options

ranging from 0 (do not agree at all) to 8 (agree completely). The IMS has good

psychometric properties and has been tested in numerous studies with thousands of

participants in different regions of the world (Le & Agnew, 2003, Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult

et al., 1998). Through these studies and its initial validation study, the scale has

demonstrated good construct, predictive, and external validity. It has also demonstrated

high reliability with alpha coefficients for commitment level ranging from .91 to .95,

satisfaction level ranging from .92 to .95, quality of alternatives ranging from .82 to .88,

and investment size ranging from .82 to .84 (Rusbult et al., 1998). Alpha coefficients in

the current study were .69 for commitment level, .93 for satisfaction level, .81 for quality

of alternatives, and .76 for investment size.

Infidelity. Drigotas, Safstrom, and Gentilia (1999) developed an infidelity

assessment that accounted for the socially undesirable nature of infidelity by presenting

the topic in a relatively neutral manner. Participants are first asked about less serious acts

of infidelity such as flirting and are then presented with questions about sexual activity

(see pp. 153-154 of Appendix B). The scale consists of 11 questions that are designed to

assess both emotional and physical aspects of infidelity. Participants are asked to think of

a person they have been attracted to other than their spouse. For 10 of the 11 items, they

respond to questions about this other person using a 9-point Likert scale with options

ranging from 0 (not at all, never) to 8 (extremely, very often). Question 6 asks them to

identify who initiated the mutual attraction with response options of 0 (other person), 1

(equal), and 2 (me). As expected, the scale was correlated with the Investment Model

Scale and was inversely predictive of commitment from Time 1 to Time 2, indicating that

the measure had adequate criterion validity (Drigotas et al., 1999). Responses were factor

analyzed and found to load on a single factor, with the exception of items 2 and 6, which

assessed the *other* person's attraction and the initiator of infidelity. In the current study,

the researcher factor analyzed all the items, excluding 2 and 6, and found that they loaded

on a single factor (Eigenvalue = 6.294), which accounted for 70% of the variance. The

alpha coefficient for the 9 items in Drigotas et al.'s study was .93, which compared well

with .95 in the current study. Two questions were added by the researcher to assess the

likelihood that participants and their partners might engage in infidelity. These questions

were open-ended and participants recorded their responses using a percentage scale from

1 to 100. Pearson's correlation coefficients indicated that infidelity expectations for self

and partner were significantly associated (r = .538, *p* = .000). These items were not used

to compute participants' composite infidelity scores, but were presented in the infidelity

section of the survey.

   Sociosexual orientation. Participants completed the Sociosexual Orientation

Inventory (SOI) to assess their degree of comfort engaging in uncommitted sexual

interactions (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991) (Appendix B, p. 155). The scale consists of 7

items to measure: the participant's past sexual behavior (2 items), their expected future

behavior (1 item), and their general attitudes about whether an emotional commitment is

a necessary prerequisite for having sex (4 items). The items are scored in different ways.

For questions 1-3, participants provide a number to identify/estimate their past and future

sexual partners. Participants select from 8 multiple choice options in question 4. For the

final three questions, participants respond using a 9-point Likert scale with options

ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). The items are summed to yield an overall score. Participants with lower scores have a restricted orientation whereas those with higher scores have an unrestricted orientation.

Since its inception in 1991, the SOI has been used extensively in social science research. Simpson and Gangestad (1991) established convergent and discriminant validity in their initial validation study. Internal consistency was acceptable with an overall alpha coefficient of .73. Test-retest reliability was also established ($r = .94$). Their study has been cited 189 times and researchers have established reliability and validity of the scale in all continents of the world (Schmitt, 2005). Therefore, the SOI has also demonstrated good external validity. However, in the current study, the scale did not demonstrate adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .28$). This is likely because the items are less relevant to a newlywed sample (i.e., "How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next five years?), and assess both past and future sexual partners, which may be unrelated, given that participants are currently in monogamous relationships. Despite its lack of internal consistency, the scale is still useful in the current study as a measure of general sexual attitudes.

Attachment. The Multi-Item Measure of Adult Romantic Attachment (MIMARA) is a 36-item scale developed by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) that is designed to measure attachment in the context of intimate relationships. The authors examined 482 items across many attachment measures from published and unpublished research to identify common underlying dimensions. After factor analyzing these items, they concluded that all items loaded on one of two dimensions: avoidance or anxiety. These dimensions could be used to differentiate participants into one of four attachment styles:

secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Using the factors with the highest loadings,

they developed the 36-item MIMARA scale that contains 18 items to assess the

avoidance dimension (questions 1-18) and 18 to assess the anxiety dimension (questions

19-36) (see pp. 156-157 of Appendix B). The two subscales are uncorrelated ($r = .11$).

Participants use a 7-point Likert scale with options ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to

7 (agree strongly) to indicate how they generally feel in romantic relationships. The

MIMARA has demonstrated adequate concurrent, convergent, discriminant, and

predictive validity (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Simonelli, Ray, & Pincus, 2004). It

has also demonstrated good internal consistency with alpha coefficients of .94 for the

avoidance subscale and .91 for the anxiety subscale. In the current study, Cronbach's

alpha coefficients were comparable at .92 for avoidance and .91 for anxiety.

Social desirability. Responses based on social desirability are often a concern

when administering self-report questionnaires, particularly when surveys address socially

stigmatized topics such as infidelity. Therefore, participants completed questions from

the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) which includes two scales, one

for self-deception (20 items) and the other for impression management (20 items)

(Paulhus, 1984; 1991). Paulhus recommends using the impression management subscale

in self-report surveys that ask about personal characteristics because these items show the

greatest increase in mean scores when assessed in an anonymous versus public context.

The scale has demonstrated adequate reliability with alpha coefficients ranging from .77

to .85 (Paulhus, 1991), as well as good criterion validity (i.e., concurrent and predictive),

and external validity (Li & Bagger, 2006; Paulhus, 1991). It has thus far been used in

approximately 237 studies (Li & Bagger, 2006). Although the current study was designed

to ensure anonymity of responses and social desirability is less of a risk in such

situations, sensitive topics were addressed and so it was important to include questions

from the impression management subscale (see p. 158 of Appendix B). Participants were

asked to indicate their agreement with six statements on a Likert scale with response

options ranging from 1 (not true) to 7 (very true). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for

these six items was .56.

Demographic Characteristics

In addition to the qualitative and quantitative assessments, some demographic

information was collected from each participant (see pp. 159-161 of Appendix B). They

were asked to identify their sex and their partner's sex by selecting either male or female.

They indicated their age and partner's age in years and their own and partner's racial

background by selecting one of six options (e.g., European/White American, African

American, Hispanic or Latino, Native American, Asian, or a self-identified "other"

category). Participants were asked to identify their sexual orientation, education level,

religious orientation, employment status, political orientation, and whether they were a

student. To assess regional variations, they were asked to name the city or town in which

they were raised, to indicate whether it was urban, suburban, or rural, to identify whether

their current residence is urban, suburban, or rural, and to indicate in which part of the

country they currently reside. Participants also identified their wedding date, length of

marriage, length of dating their spouse prior to marriage, and age when they married.

Finally, participants were asked whether they had final comments to add to the survey.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study involved both qualitative and quantitative research methods, but

priority was given to the qualitative component. The central research questions were

qualitatively analyzed and these results are presented first. Statistical tests were then used

to provide a more holistic picture of newlyweds' marital conceptualizations and to

examine variations based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics.

Before presenting the research findings, this section begins by describing the participants'

demographic information.

Participants

Two hundred and seventy-six participants completed the qualitative portion of the

survey and 213 completed the quantitative portion. The qualitative questions were

collected at the beginning of the survey and the demographic questions were collected at

the end, after the quantitative questions. Therefore, the following demographic

characteristics are based on a sample of 213 participants.

Demographic Characteristics

The sample consisted of 197 women and 16 men ranging in age from 20 to 47

years, with a mean age of 27.5 years (SD = 4.62 years). Participants reported the age of

their partners, which ranged from 20 to 49 years, with a mean of 29 years (SD = 5.37

years). Eight-four percent identified as European/White, 6% as Asian, 4% as

Hispanic/Latino, 2% as African American/Black, 1% as Native American, and 3% as

"other". They reported on the race of their partners and indicated that 85% were European/White, 6% were Asian, 3% were Hispanic/Latino, 2.5% were African American/Black, .5% was Native American, and 3% were "other". Ninety-five percent identified as heterosexual, 4% as bisexual, .5% as lesbian, and .5% as asexual. A majority were college educated with 17.5% having 1-3 years of college, 43% being college graduates, 26.5% having a Masters degree, 7.5% having a Ph.D., and 5.5% having a G.E.D. or high school diploma. For employment status, 66% were working full time, 7% were working part-time, 12% were students with jobs, 5% were students without jobs, and 10% were unemployed and not in school. A majority were Christian (52%), 18.5% indicated no religious preference, 7.5% were Agnostic, 6% were Atheist, 2% were Jewish, 1.5% were Buddhist, 1% was Hindu, .5% was Muslim, and 11% were "other". Twelve percent considered themselves to be very religious, 27% were fairly religious, 32% were slightly religious, and 29% were not religious at all. For political orientation, 22% were Republican, 42% were Democrat, 20% were Independent, and 16% were "other". Participants also indicated where they were currently residing and in which type of environment they were raised. As evidenced in Table 1, the majority were raised and currently residing in suburban areas.

Marital History

On average, participants had been married for .86 years (SD = .70 years), with a median and mode of 1 year. Thirty-one percent had been married for less than 1 year, 55% had been married for at least one year, 13% were married for 2 years, and 1% was married just over 2 years. Of those married less than one year, a majority had been married for 4 months or less (see Table 2). The average age at the time of marriage was

26.46 years (SD = 4.67 years), with a range of 18 to 45 years, and a median and mode of

25 years. They were dating their spouses for an average of 39.64 months (SD = 31.26

months) or approximately 3.3 years before marriage. The median length spent dating

before marriage was 34 months or approximately 2.8 years, and the mode was 24 months

or 2 years.

Relationship History

Seventy-two percent of participants cohabited with their partner prior to marriage

and 28% did not. Those who cohabited did so for an average of 21.18 months (SD =

23.85 months), with a median of 14 months and a mode of 24 months. Forty-seven

percent were engaged to their partner at the time they moved in together. Participants

who cohabited with partners other than their spouse (22%, n = 47) were asked to indicate

their total number of cohabiting partners. As presented in Table 3, most had cohabited

with only one other person. Eighty-four percent had had sexual intercourse prior to

marriage. As part of the relationship history questions, participants were asked about their

parents' marriage. Ninety-two percent had parents who had married prior to their birth,

2.8% had parents who married after their birth, and 5.2% had parents who never married.

Those with parents who married used a Likert scale to indicate how happy they believed

their parents' marriage to be. Responses ranged from 1 (completely happy) to 7

(completely unhappy). As presented in Table 4, perceived marital satisfaction varied

greatly. Twenty-seven percent of the married parents ended up divorcing and 73% were

still married. For participants whose parents divorced, their mean age at the time of

divorce was 10 years old (SD = .85 years), with a median of 8.5 years and a mode of 7

years. Forty-one percent reported feeling little to no stigma from their parents divorce,

33% felt some stigma, and 26% felt a great deal of stigma.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics for Area of Residence

Area of residence	Percentage
Area in which participants were raised	
Urban/City	27%
Suburban	54%
Rural	19%
Area of current residence	
Urban/City	40%
Suburban	54%
Rural	6%
Region of the country currently residing	
East	17%
West	25%
North	3%
South	30%
Midwest	15%
Northeast	10%

Table 2

Length of Marriage for Participants Married Less than One Year

Months married	Percentage
Less than 1	4.5%
1	13%
2	17%
3	15%
4	7%
5	5.5%
6	4%
7	4%
8	4.5%
9	5.5%
10	9%
11	11%

Table 3

Number of Cohabiting Partners Other Than Spouse

Number of participants	Number of previous cohabiting partners
32	1
10	2
2	3
2	4
1	15

Note. Information in this table is based on 22% of the total sample (n = 47) who cohabited with partners other than their spouse prior to marriage.

Table 4

Participants' Perceptions of Their Parents' Marital Satisfaction

Reports of parents' marital satisfaction	Percentage
Completely Happy	12%
Very Happy	23%
Somewhat Happy	20.5%
Neutral	11.5%
Somewhat Unhappy	13.5%
Very Unhappy	11%
Completely Unhappy	8.5%

Qualitative Analyses

Each of the qualitative questions took the researcher approximately 15 hours to analyze. The analysis was guided by symbolic interaction theory, in that the researcher tried to remain explicitly aware of how participants' responses were influenced by cultural norms. She was constantly comparing her findings to cultural beliefs and practices and made memos throughout the analysis to comment on her observations. Inferences about the connections between theory and participants' responses are explicated in the discussion chapter.

Content analysis was used to categorize the data in Atlas.ti (a qualitative software analysis program). Content analysis involves examining the text to identify and quantify the concepts present (Weber, 1990). In this study, it involved reading through all responses to a particular qualitative question and inductively identifying categories. Rather than coding the data word-for-word, the researcher looked for *themes* in participants' responses. For example, one participant indicated that her chances of divorce were low because she got to know her husband very well before marriage. This response was coded as "protective factor against divorce". The themes were organized using a codebook in Atlas.ti. As themes continued to emerge, they were compared to previous themes to examine whether they could be collapsed into an existing category or should stand on their own. This process is referred to as the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The constant comparative method was useful because no prior work had examined newlywed conceptions of marriage, so there was no established coding scheme from which to work. Therefore, the researcher read through and openly coded the data several times before deciding on the final themes.

The next phase of analysis involved "axial coding" to examine relationships among the themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this phase, the researcher did not work with the data directly, but examined the codebook to identify relationships among the themes. She re-organized the themes by grouping them into broad conceptual categories. These broad categories are reported in the qualitative results below and examples from each category are given to highlight the most common themes. The qualitative results are based on a sample of 276 participants.

1. Why Are Newlyweds Choosing To Marry?

This question was answered using data from two of the qualitative/open-ended survey questions. The first question asked participants to think back to before they were married and to identify their reasons for getting married. There were 1245 responses in total, which were classified into 68 codes. These 68 codes were further organized into 12 categories: 25.5% of responses described relationship characteristics (e.g., companionship, shared values/beliefs, trusting relationship), 15.5% described personal reasons for getting married (e.g., love, happiness), 12% described long-term stability (e.g., lifelong commitment, security, stability), 9.5% described partner characteristics (e.g., desirable partner, attracted to spouse, soul mates), 9% described being better with their partner or not wanting to be alone (e.g., can't imagine life without partner, don't want to be alone, better together than apart), 8% indicated it was the right time (e.g., been together a long time, it was the next step, it was the right time), 5% described wanting to start a family, 4% indicated practical reasons (e.g., legal benefits, immigration reasons, financial benefits), 3.5% described family or societal expectations (e.g., follow tradition, family pressure, social acceptance), 3.5% wanted public recognition of their relationship,

3.5% described religious reasons, and 1% indicated marrying for unwise reasons (e.g., to change their partner's character, they were given an ultimatum, they were unsure why they married).

The second question used to identify reasons for marriage involved giving participants a list of seven possible reasons for their decision to marry. They were asked to rank order the list in terms of importance in their decision to marry by assigning a "1" to their primary reason(s), a "2" to their secondary reason(s), and so on. If a factor played no part in their decision to marry, they could assign it a "0". Eighty-one percent indicated their primary reason for marriage was love, 13% indicated long-term stability, 5% indicated religious reasons, 3% indicated to have children, 2% indicated social pressure, 2% indicated legal reasons, and 1% indicated financial reasons.

2. How Do Newlyweds Conceptualize Marriage?

To answer this question, participants were asked to identify their core beliefs about marriage. There were 1265 responses in total, which were classified into 80 codes. These 80 codes were further organized into five categories: 84% described characteristics of the relationship (e.g., marriage should be a loving, supportive relationship; marriage takes a lot of hard work to succeed; marriage is based on honesty and trust), 9% described societal views on marriage (e.g., society is better because of marriage, marriage should only be between a man and woman, people divorce too easy these days), 3% described personal benefits of marriage (e.g., marriage should make you happy, you should be better *with* your partner than without, the costs of marriage should not outweigh the benefits), 2% described characteristics of the spouse (e.g., I believe you should marry your best friend or soul mate; it is important to find the right person; if a

spouse cheats or is abusive, divorce should be considered), and 2% described family beliefs (e.g., marriage is a first step toward creating a new family, marriage involves having children, we got married because our families wanted us to).

Given that most of the marital beliefs were classified as "characteristics of the relationship" (84%), it was important to examine the sub-categories within that code. There were a total of 1061 responses in the "relationship characteristics" category that could be further classified into six sub-categories: 32.5% described friendship characteristics (e.g., marriage should be based on a deep friendship, partners need to support each other emotionally and be friends, it is necessary to have good communication in marriage), 21% described commitment and a long-term outlook (e.g., marriage is about a life-long commitment, marriage is meant to last forever, spouses should share a view of the future), 17% described the effort involved in marriage (e.g., marriage is hard work, marriage is about compromise and getting through the good times and bad, marriage is about teamwork and taking care of each other), 15.5% identified characteristics that applied only to lovers (e.g., marriage is based on love; marriage is about sex, passion, and intimacy; my spouse should be my top priority, above all else), 13.5% described values about marriage (e.g., marriage is based on fidelity and loyalty, marriage is about a promise made to God/in front of God, marriage should be an equal partnership between two people), and .5% described financial beliefs (e.g., marriage allows people to obtain financial benefits they otherwise could not attain, marriage is a business partnership, marriage provides financial security).

3. What Are Newlyweds' Expectations About Infidelity In Their Own Marriage?

Participants were asked to assign a percentage value for their expectations of experiencing infidelity. They first estimated the percentage chance that *they* would engage in an intimate interaction with someone other than their spouse. Then, they estimated the percentage chance that *their spouse* would engage in an intimate interaction with someone else. As shown in Table 5, fifty-one percent of participants indicated there was some chance greater than zero that they might engage in infidelity. Participants believed there was a greater chance (56%) that their spouse might engage in infidelity. In terms of average scores, the mean expectation for self was 6.94% (SD=15.40), and the mean expectation for their spouse was 9.79% (SD=19.88).

Participants were also asked to describe their thoughts about infidelity. There were 605 responses in total, which were classified into 55 codes. These 55 codes were organized into five categories: 41% indicated that infidelity is unacceptable (e.g., it is wrong, unnecessary, unacceptable, a deal breaker), 27% described the consequences of it (e.g., infidelity breaks trust in a relationship, it is unforgivable and hurtful, it ruins relationships), 21% described why it happens (e.g., the person who commits infidelity has issues to work through, infidelity is indicative of relationship problems, it is understandable in some situations), 9% described it as preventable (e.g., communicate to spouse if needs are not being met, break up before you do it, get it out of your system before marriage), 2% described experiences of it (e.g., parents experienced infidelity, infidelity occurred in their past relationships), and one person was unsure what to think.

Table 5

Participants' Reports of Expected Infidelity

Question	Percent
_____% chance I would have an intimate interaction with someone other than my spouse	
0%	51%
1-5%	22%
6-10%	8%
11-20%	6%
21-30%	5%
31-99%	7%
100%	1%
_____% chance my partner would have an intimate interaction with someone other than me	
0%	44%
1-5%	27%
6-10%	10%
11-20%	7%
21-30%	4%
31-99%	7%
100%	1%

4. What Are Newlyweds' Expectations About Divorce In Their Own Marriage?

Participants were asked to estimate the percentage chance that they could experience divorce in their own relationship. As shown in Table 6, twenty-eight percent of participants thought there was 0% chance of experiencing divorce. On average, they perceived there to be 12.82% chance (SD=19.19%) of experiencing divorce. They were also asked if they expected to remain married to their current spouse for life. Ninety-seven percent said yes and 3% said no.

Participants were asked to describe their beliefs about divorce. There were 715 responses in total, which were classified into 43 codes. The 43 codes were organized into seven categories: 30% described when it's okay (e.g., in cases of unhappiness, if partners grow apart, when there are dealbreakers such as infidelity and abuse), 20% indicated it should be a last resort (e.g., spouses should seek counseling first, exhaust all other options, avoid divorce if possible), 15.5% described positive effects of divorce (e.g., it can provide a new beginning, it is a good option to have, it is sometimes the best thing to do), 12.5% expressed judgmental attitudes toward divorce (e.g., people take marriage too lightly, God doesn't like divorce, divorce is too common), 10.5% described how to prevent it (e.g., be proactive to prevent divorce, work hard to stay married, know your partner well before marriage, cohabit before marriage), 6.5% described why it happens (e.g., people marry too young, people lack problem solving skills, marriage is hard, it takes two to keep a relationship going), 5% described the consequences of it (e.g., divorce is difficult to deal with, it is expensive, people shouldn't remarry if they divorce), and 1 person had no opinion.

Table 6

Participants' Expectations of Divorce

Question	Percent
_____% chance that you (i.e., the participant) and your spouse could divorce at some point?	
0%	28%
1-5%	30%
6-10%	10%
11-20%	14%
21-30%	6%
31-99%	11.5%
100%	.5%

Quantitative Analyses

In order to elaborate on the qualitative findings and examine variations based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics, statistical analyses were performed using SPSS. Several independent variables were used to answer the research questions and collinearity was a concern. It was necessary to examine the unique association of each, controlling for the other variables. Standard multiple regression analyses enabled the researcher to investigate the unique association between each of the independent variables (i.e., demographic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics) and the dependent variables (expectations/beliefs about marriage, infidelity, and divorce) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Questions 3a-3c examined the

association between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics (independent variables) and infidelity expectations (dependent variable). The dependent variable for these research questions was the same, so the questions were answered with a single multiple regression analysis. However, the results are divided into three sections, and are presented under the appropriate sub-headings. Similarly, questions 4a-4c used a single dependent variable (i.e., divorce expectations) and were assessed using one regression analysis. These results are also presented in separate sections under the appropriate sub-headings. Responses from 213 participants were used for the quantitative analyses.

1a. How Certain Are Newlyweds at Various Time Points (i.e., Before Marriage, on Their Wedding Day, After Marriage) That They Want To Be Married?

Using a percentage estimate, participants reported how certain they were of their decision to get married 6 months prior to their marriage, on their wedding day, 6 months after the wedding (if this applied), and 1 year after the wedding (if this applied). They were also asked to estimate how certain their partner was of his or her decision to marry at these same time points. Frequency analyses were used to examine participants' responses. As presented in Table 7, participants believed their partners' degree of certainty was higher than their own at each time point.

Table 7

Participants' Mean Reports of Marital Certainty

Time point	Participants' degree of marital certainty		Perceptions of partners' degree of marital certainty	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Six months prior to marriage	88.97%	19.87%	92.57%	14.74%
Wedding day	94.28%	16.74%	97.84%	7.24%
Six months after wedding	91.95%	17.48%	94.50%	14.07%
One year after wedding	89.33%	24.25%	94.09%	17.54%

1b. What Are Newlyweds' Opinions About Raising Children Outside the Context of a Marital Relationship?

Participants responded to various questions to assess their attitudes and beliefs about marriage and divorce. Of these, three questions pertained to their opinions about raising children out of wedlock (Attitudes about Marriage and Divorce Assessment, questions 1, 4, and 14). Two questions required them to use a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (don't agree at all) to 8 (agree completely), and one question was multiple choice. Frequency statistics were used to analyze their responses. Participants agreed slightly with the statement "In the absence of violence and extreme conflict, parents who have an unsatisfactory marriage should stay together until their children are grown" (Mean = 3.58, SD = 2.77). They also agreed slightly with the statement "couples who have children ought to be married" (Mean = 3.48, SD = 2.76). In the multiple choice question,

participants were asked to identify the most important characteristic of a good marriage. Fifty-seven percent indicated that the most important characteristic was to promote the well-being of the partners, whereas 39% thought it was equally important that marriage be used for raising good children. A summary of these results is presented in Table 8. The Likert-scale items are presented according to scale anchor points, with cumulative percents included to indicate the spread.

2a. How Do Marital Conceptualizations Vary for Newlyweds with Differing Demographic Characteristics (Race, Religion, Degree of Religiosity, Political Orientation, and Education), Personalities (Big 5, Sociosexual Orientation), Relationship History (Parental Divorced, Premarital Cohabitation, Premarital Sex), and Relationship Characteristics (Satisfaction, Commitment)?

The marital conceptualizations dependent variable was measured with ten items from the Attitudes about Marriage and Divorce assessment (see Appendix B, p. 142-143, questions 1-5, 7-10, and 12). These questions were designed to distinguish conservative from liberal views on marriage. Higher mean scores indicated more conservative views (questions 3, 5, and 8 were reverse coded). Participants with conservative views were more likely to agree with the following statement: "Parents should stay together even if they do not get along" and less likely to agree with "It is unrealistic to expect marriages to last in today's modern society". The ten items were highly correlated and as such, a composite score was used to represent marital conceptualizations. A standard multiple regression analysis was used to test whether the independent variables of demographic characteristics (i.e., race, religion, degree of religiosity, political orientation, and education), personality, sociosexual orientation, relationship history (i.e., parents

divorced, premarital cohabitation, and premarital sex) and relationship characteristics (i.e., satisfaction, commitment) were associated with the dependent variable of marital conceptualizations.

The demographic characteristics were categorical variables and needed to be dummy coded into two groups for the analysis. The groups were created by comparing the majority group to the remaining groups. For race, participants were categorized as either European/White American or as an ethnic minority (i.e., African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian, and "other"). For religion, they were categorized as either Christian or non-Christian. For degree of religiosity, they were categorized as high (i.e., very and fairly religious) or low (i.e., slightly religious, not religious). For political orientation, they were categorized as Republican or non-Republican (i.e., Democrat, Independent, Other). Although a majority of participants were Democratic, the literature suggests that Republican individuals differ in their marital views. Therefore, Republican participants were used as the comparison group. For education, they were categorized as having a college degree(s) (i.e., college graduate, Masters degree, Ph.D.) or less than a college degree (i.e., Grade 12 or G.E.D. completion, 1-3 years of college).

The regression model was significant (R^2 = .375, adjusted R^2 = .300; p = .000). Participants who had conservative marital conceptualizations were more likely to be highly religious (ß = .862, p = .001), Republican (ß = .575, p = .027), and to have emotionally stable personalities (ß = .031, p = .014). They were less likely to have cohabited prior to marriage (ß = -.517, p = .076) or to have had premarital sex (ß = -.657, p = .045). A summary of this analysis is shown in Table 9.

Table 8

Participants' Opinions about Raising Children Out-of-Wedlock

Question	Percent	Cumulative Percent
In the absence of violence and extreme conflict, parents who have an unsatisfactory marriage should stay together until their children are grown.		
0 = Don't Agree at All	21%	21%
4 = Agree Somewhat	22%	68%
8 = Agree Completely	14%	100%
Couples who have children ought to be married.		
0 = Don't Agree at All	23%	23%
4 = Agree Somewhat	18%	67%
8 = Agree Completely	11%	100%
Which of the following is in your opinion the more important characteristic of a good marriage:		
Promotes the happiness and well-being of the married individuals.	57%	57%
Produces children who are well-adjusted and who will become good citizens.	1%	58%
The two are about equally important.	39%	97%
Neither is an important characteristic of a good marriage.	3%	100%

Note. Anchor points are presented for the first two questions (options ranged from 0 to 8).

Table 9

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Marital Conceptualizations

(Dependent Variable) from Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Characteristics

(Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
European/White	.017	.310	.004
Christian	.187	.254	.063
High religiosity	.862	.254	.289**
Republican	.575	.258	.167*
Earned college degree(s)	-.051	.498	-.007
Personality			
Openness	-.011	.016	-.052
Conscientiousness	-.012	.014	-.063
Extroversion	-.005	.012	-.030
Agreeableness	.006	.017	-.025
Emotional stability	.031	.013	.212*
Unrestricted sociosexual orientation	-.006	.004	-.095
Parental divorce	-.035	.266	-.010
Cohabited before marriage	-.517	.289	-.161+
Premarital sex	-.657	.325	-.166*
Relationship satisfaction	.017	.019	.090
Relationship commitment	.003	.027	.012

Note. $^+p < .10$. $*p < .05$. $**p < 0.01$.

2b. What Are Newlyweds' Expectations for Their Spouse and Marriage?

Quantitative marital expectations were assessed using a 9-item Marital Expectations questionnaire developed by McNulty and Karney (2004). Frequency statistics were used to examine responses for each of the questions. Participants in this study had expectations that were comparable to those reported by McNulty and Karney, although that study assessed husbands and wives separately and used an 8-point scale with a slightly smaller range. In the current study, men and women were assessed together and the potential range of responses was from 0 to 72. Higher mean scores indicated more positive expectations. Responses ranged from 16 to 72, with a mean of 48.33 (SD = 9.73) (see Table 10). These compare to McNulty and Karney's findings in which men had a mean of 45.5 (SD = 6.5) and women had a mean of 43.9 (SD = 8.6), with a potential range of 7 to 63. In both studies, newlyweds generally had high expectations (McNulty & Karney, 2004).

3a. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Infidelity Vary Based on the Intrapersonal Variables of Demographic Characteristics (Gender, Race, Religious Orientation, Degree of Religiosity, Political Orientation, and Employment Status), Personality (Big 5, Sociosexual Orientation, Attachment Style), and Relationship History (Parental Divorce, Premarital Cohabitation, Premarital Sex)?

A single multiple regression analysis was used to answer questions 3a-3c. Similar to question 2a, the categorical demographic predictors were dummy coded into two groups. For gender, participants were categorized as male or female. For race, they were categorized as European/White American or as an ethnic minority (i.e., African

American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Asian, and "other"). For religious

orientation, they were categorized as Christian or non-Christian. For degree of religiosity,

they were categorized as high (i.e., very religious, fairly religious) or low (i.e., slightly

religious, not religious). For political orientation, they were categorized as Republican or

non-Republican (i.e., Democrat, Independent, "other"). For employment status, they were

categorized as employed or unemployed. Attachment style was also a categorical variable

with four options: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. All participants in the

current study were classified as either fearful or preoccupied. The two categories of

fearful and preoccupied were therefore dummy coded as 0 and 1.

The regression model was not significant (R^2 = .353 adjusted R^2 = .023; p = .414),

however one of the intrapersonal variables was predictive of infidelity expectations.

Christian participants were significantly less likely to expect to engage in infidelity (ß = -

.322, p = .061). A summary of these results is presented in Table 11.

Post-hoc analysis. Participants completed a measure to assess their experiences of

infidelity. Although the overall model examining intrapersonal, interpersonal, and

contextual influences on infidelity *expectations* was not significant, the researcher wanted

to examine whether these variables predicted infidelity *experiences*. A composite score

for infidelity experiences was calculated using the Infidelity Assessment (Appendix B, p.

153-154, questions 1-11). This measure assessed a broad range of extramarital behaviors

including: having thoughts about a person other than one's spouse, flirting with the other

person, and having an emotional and physical connection with that person (see Table 12).

The regression model was significant (R^2 = .501, adjusted R^2 = .233; p = .041).

Individuals were significantly more likely to have engaged in infidelity if they had an

open personality type (ß = .234, *p* = .090) or a less stable personality type (ß = -.331, *p* = .035). They were significantly less likely to have engaged in infidelity if they were highly religious (ß = -.465, *p* = .013) or had parents who divorced (ß = -.278, *p* = .052). A summary of these results is shown in Table 13.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Marital Expectations

Item	Mean	SD
My partner will always take time for me when I need him/her.	6.72	1.64
My partner will rarely make mistakes.	3.16	2.08
My partner will agree with me about the important things.	5.79	1.70
My partner will always get along well with my family.	5.77	2.07
My partner will sometimes lose his/her temper.	4.83	2.39
My partner will never disappoint me.	3.06	2.33
My partner will always take care of me.	6.68	1.70
My partner will always be attractive to me.	6.26	1.64
My partner will always make me happy.	5.97	1.97

Note. Response options ranged from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 8 (Strongly agree).

Table 11

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Infidelity Expectations (Dependent

Variable) from Intrapersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Gender	-7.985	9.160	-.132
European/White	3.088	6.041	.084
Christian	-8.215	4.265	-.322[+]
High religiosity	8.429	5.284	.321
Republican	4.335	4.042	.155
Employed	3.410	6.436	.083
Personality			
Openness	-.079	.289	-.041
Conscientiousness	-.098	.241	-.064
Extroversion	-.045	.200	-.033
Agreeableness	.207	.312	.103
Emotional Stability	-.151	.261	-.099
Unrestricted sociosexual orientation	.111	.131	.140
Preoccupied attachment style (vs. Fearful)	1.097	4.507	.038
Parental divorce	-2.390	4.162	-.086
Cohabited before marriage	4.145	5.023	.155
Premarital sex	4.518	5.859	.128

Note. [+]$p < .10$.

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Newlyweds' Experiences of Infidelity

Question	Mean	SD
Felt attraction toward person	6.23	2.10
Attraction they had for you	6.32	2.18
Felt arousal in their presence	4.79	2.56
Time spent thinking of them	4.16	2.42
Time spent flirting with them	4.44	2.62
Did couple things together	2.97	2.58
How tempted to be emotionally intimate	3.51	2.62
How emotionally intimate were you	3.18	2.62
How tempted to be physically intimate	3.54	2.95
How physically intimate were you	2.49	2.73
Composite infidelity score	3.93	2.14

Note. Response options ranged from 0 (Not at all, never) to 8 (Extremely, very often).

3b. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Infidelity in Their Own Marriage Vary Based on Interpersonal Characteristics (Relationship Satisfaction, Commitment, Perceptions of Spouse's Personality Similarity, and Likelihood of Spouse Engaging in Infidelity)?

As reported for question 3a, a single multiple regression analysis was used to answer questions 3a-3c. The model was not significant ($R^2 = .353$ adjusted $R^2 = .023$; $p = .414$), however one of the interpersonal variables was predictive of infidelity

expectations. Participants were significantly more likely to expect to engage in infidelity if they expected their spouse to engage in infidelity (ß = .491, *p* = .008). A summary of these results is presented in Table 14.

Post-hoc analysis. As described in the post-hoc section of question 3a, a second regression model was used to examine whether infidelity experiences were associated with the predictor variables. This regression model was significant (R^2 = .501, adjusted R^2 = .233; *p* = .041); however, none of the interpersonal variables were significantly associated with infidelity experiences. A summary of these results is shown in Table 15.

3c. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Infidelity in Their Own Marriage Vary Based on Contextual Characteristics (Quality of Alternatives and Living in an Urban Versus Rural Environment)?

The same multiple regression analysis used in questions 3a and 3b was also used here. As reported, the model was not significant (R^2 = .353 adjusted R^2 = .023; *p* = .414). None of the contextual characteristics were predictive of infidelity expectations. A summary of these results is presented in Table 16.

Post-hoc analysis. As described in the post-hoc sections of questions 3a and 3b, a second regression model was used to examine the association between infidelity experiences and the same predictor variables. The regression model was significant (R^2 = .501, adjusted R^2 = .233; *p* = .041) with quality of alternatives (ß = .316, *p* = .036) significantly predicting experiences of infidelity. A summary of these results is shown in Table 17.

Table 13

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Infidelity Experiences (Dependent Variable) from Intrapersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Gender	-.301	1.335	-.031
European/White	1.541	1.007	.246
Christian	.173	.646	.041
High religiosity	-1.991	.770	-.465*
Republican	-.749	.592	-.165
Employed	1.692	1.034	.238
Personality			
Openness	.073	.042	.234[+]
Conscientiousness	-.016	.036	-.062
Extroversion	-.007	.029	-.029
Agreeableness	.024	.046	.073
Emotional Stability	-.083	.038	-.331*
Unrestricted sociosexual orientation	-.033	.020	-.253
Preoccupied attachment style (vs. Fearful)	-.183	.661	-.039
Parental divorce	-1.282	.641	-.278*
Cohabited before marriage	-.635	.748	-.145
Premarital sex	.836	.861	.146

Note. [+]*p* < .10. **p* < .05.

Table 14

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Infidelity Expectations (Dependent

Variable) from Interpersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Satisfaction	.675	.412	.428
Commitment	-.809	.496	-.362
Perceived personality similarity between self and spouse	-.266	.903	-.045
Expectation that spouse will have a physically intimate interaction with another person	.321	.115	.491*

Note. *$p < 0.05$.

Table 15

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Infidelity Experiences (Dependent

Variable) from Interpersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Satisfaction	.011	.062	.043
Commitment	.037	.074	.101
Perceived personality similarity between self and spouse	-.030	.134	-.031
Expectation that spouse will have a physically intimate interaction with another person	.008	.018	.075

Table 16

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Infidelity Expectations (Dependent Variable) from Contextual Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Quality of alternatives	.297	.267	.179*
Area of residence (urban vs. rural)	-1.187	8.918	-.020

Note. *p < .05.

Table 17

Summary of Multiple Regression Results Predicting Infidelity Experiences (Dependent Variable) from Contextual Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Quality of alternatives	.086	.040	.316*
Area of residence (urban vs. rural)	1.714	1.307	.175

Note. *p < .05.

4a. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Divorce in Their Own Marriage Vary Based on the Intrapersonal Variables of Demographic Characteristics (Religiosity, Education, and Employment Status), Personality (Big 5), Relationship History (Parental Divorce and Premarital Cohabitation), and Experiences of Infidelity?

A single multiple regression analysis was used to answer questions 4a-4c with divorce expectations as the dependent variable. For question 4a, the categorical demographic predictors were dummy coded into two groups. For degree of religiosity,

participants were categorized as high (i.e., very religious, fairly religious) or low (i.e., slightly religious, not religious). For education, they were categorized as having a college degree(s) (i.e., college graduate, Masters degree, Ph.D.) or less than a college degree (i.e., Grade 12 or G.E.D. completion, 1-3 years of college). For employment status, they were categorized as employed or unemployed.

The model was significant (R^2 = .537 adjusted R^2 = .469; p = .000). Participants were more likely to expect divorce if their personalities were less agreeable (ß = -.179, p = .012) or if their parents divorced (ß = .115, p = .090). A summary of the regression results is shown in Table18.

4b. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Divorce in Their Own Marriage Vary Based on Interpersonal Characteristics (Relationship Satisfaction, Investments, Commitment, and Perceptions of Spouse's Personality Similarity)?

The same regression model from question 4a was also used here. The model was significant (R^2 = .537 adjusted R^2 = .469; p = .000). Participants were more likely to expect divorce if they were less satisfied (ß = -.497, p = .000) or less committed to their relationship (ß = .162, p = .054). A summary of these regression results is shown in Table19.

4c. How Do Newlyweds' Expectations of Divorce in Their Own Marriage Vary Based on Contextual Characteristics (Quality of Alternatives and Area of Residence Including Regional Variations and Living in an Urban Versus Rural Environment)?

The same multiple regression analysis used in questions 3a and 3b was also used here. The model was significant (R^2 = .537 adjusted R^2 = .469; p = .000), but none of the

contextual characteristics were predictive of divorce expectations. A summary of these results is presented in Table 20.

Table 18

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Divorce Expectations (Dependent Variable) from Intrapersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
High religiosity	-1.131	2.732	-.032
Earned college degree(s)	4.376	5.480	.054
Employed	3.936	3.901	.067
Personality			
Openness	-.148	.179	-.059
Conscientiousness	-.091	.149	-.042
Extroversion	.129	.128	.068
Agreeableness	-.468	.183	-.179*
Emotional Stability	.006	.134	.003
Parental divorce	4.755	2.784	.115[+]
Cohabited before marriage	.272	3.017	.007
Experiences of infidelity	.269	.589	.031

Note. [+]$p < .10$. *$p < .05$.

Table 19

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Expectations of Divorce

(Dependent Variable) from Interpersonal Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Satisfaction level	-1.118	.217	-.497**
Investment size	.040	.184	.016
Commitment level	-.550	.283	-.162*
Perceived personality similarity between self and spouse	.358	.603	.041

Note. $*p < .05. **p < 0.01.$

Table 20

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Expectations of Divorce

(Dependent Variable) from Contextual Characteristics (Independent Variables)

Independent variable	B	SE B	β
Quality of alternatives	.198	.156	.090
Area of residence (urban vs. rural)	1.625	5.384	.020
Area of residence (region of the country)	4.226	2.823	.102

Social Desirability

It was important to examine whether social desirability influenced participants'

responses on the questionnaire. A correlation matrix was computed to examine the

association between social desirability (assessed using 6 items from the Balanced

Inventory of Desirable Responding, Paulhus, 1984; 1991) and each of the dependent variables used in the regression analyses. Results indicated that participants were significantly more likely to use socially desirable responses on the quantitative marital attitudes assessment ($r = .221$, $p = .002$), infidelity expectations report ($r = -.188$, $p = .007$), and infidelity experiences assessment ($r = -.267$, $p = .000$). These results indicate that newlyweds reported overly conservative views when asked about their marital conceptualizations. They also understated their reports of infidelity expectations and experiences. Responses about divorce expectations were not significantly influenced by social desirability ($r = -.442$, $p = .550$).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

As noted throughout this paper, marriage is popular in American society. The vast majority of adults will marry and they expect to marry their true love (Bachrach et al., 2002; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004; Whitehead & Popenoe, 2001). The idea of marrying for love is a relatively recent phenomenon in American history (Coontz, 2005). Although marriages based on love are personally fulfilling, they are also unstable.

Infidelity and divorce rates ranging from 15-50% (Atwood & Seifer, 1997; Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Laumann, et al., 1994; National Center for Health Statistics, 2005) support this point and demonstrate incongruence in the way marriage is conceptualized (i.e., as a monogamous, lifelong partnership) and practiced (i.e., infidelity, divorce). The purpose of this study was to explore the incongruence by examining newlyweds' conceptions of marriage, including their expectations of infidelity and divorce. A secondary goal was to examine whether conceptualizations and expectations varied based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics.

This chapter will highlight key findings and identify the strengths and limitations of this study. Results are presented about newlyweds' reasons for marriage, marital conceptualizations, and expectations of infidelity and divorce. For each topic, the central qualitative findings are described, variations based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics are noted, and theory is used for interpretation. Brief

summaries of the theory and methods used in this study are presented below to help introduce the chapter.

This study was primarily guided by symbolic interaction theory, which focuses on how culture influences individuals' beliefs and practices (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993; White & Klein, 2002). The theory proposes that individuals create meanings about themselves and their environments through social interactions. This study sought to understand newlyweds' beliefs about marriage, infidelity, and divorce, and symbolic interaction fit well with this goal. Theories of social exchange and evolutionary psychology were also helpful in understanding newlyweds' perceptions. Each theory will be drawn on throughout this chapter to help interpret and explain the study findings.

The current study employed a mixed methods approach because little was known about how newlyweds conceptualize marriage and the most comprehensive understanding of the topic could be attained using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative questions were used to elicit detailed information about marital conceptualizations, whereas quantitative assessments helped identify intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of these conceptions. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that the qualitative and quantitative results worked synergistically to give a complete understanding of the phenomena being studied. As such, the findings in this section are presented in an integrated manner, in order to demonstrate how the qualitative and quantitative results complement each other.

Reasons for Marriage

This section presents information about reasons for marriage, including newlyweds' perceptions of childbearing and marriage, and factors influencing their

decisions to marry. As mentioned in the introduction, North American cultural norms related to unmarried sex, birth control, cohabitation, and childbearing began changing around 1960 (Bachrach et al., 2002; Ingoldsby, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Stanfield & Stanfield, 1997). Beliefs and practices regarding these behaviors became more liberal, making marriage an option rather than a necessity. Yet still, 85% of adult Americans will marry at some point (Bachrach et al., 2002; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004). This study sought to first identify the motivations for marrying, given that socially acceptable alternatives to marriage exist.

Childbearing and Marriage

In order to examine newlyweds' perceptions of marital alternatives, participants were first asked to describe their beliefs about raising children outside the context of a marital relationship. Results indicated that they did not believe marriage was a necessary precursor for having children. Only 1% thought the primary purpose of marriage was to raise children. A majority (57%) thought the purpose of marriage was mainly for happiness of the partners. However, a good portion of the sample (39%) indicated it was *equally* important that marriage be used for raising children. Results therefore suggested that newlyweds did not believe marriage was *required* for childbearing, but many thought it was beneficial for children to be raised with married parents.

Decision to Marry

Newlyweds were asked to think back to before they married and to describe in their own words, their reasons for marrying. They identified various reasons including characteristics of their relationship and partner (e.g., friendship, trust, shared values, being soul mates), personal reasons (e.g., love, happiness), long-term stability, fear of

being alone, good timing, starting a family, legal and financial benefits, and social and religious reasons. The most commonly mentioned reasons were the strong friendship they had with their spouse, love, happiness, and lifelong commitment. Newlyweds were also asked to identify their primary reason(s) for marriage using a list of options provided by the researcher (i.e., love/satisfaction, long-term stability, financial, religious, legal, family, and social reasons). As expected, they overwhelmingly selected love (81%) as their *primary* reason for marriage, followed by long-term stability (13%). Overall, these results support predictions made by the literature that people marry for love and personal fulfillment (Coontz, 2005; Pinsof, 2002).

Theory

These findings can be explained according to symbolic interaction theory, which suggests that culture influences the meanings people make about themselves, their relationships, and their environments (LaRossa & Reitzes, 1993). Participants were asked to identify their views about childbearing out-of-wedlock. Their perspectives were generally liberal. They believed the primary purpose of marriage was for happiness of the partners, not for raising children. This fits with cultural views that marriage is not a necessary precursor for having children (Axinn & Thornton, 2002). They also qualitatively identified their primary reasons for marriage. These centered on friendship, love, and personal fulfillment. This fits with Western views that marriage should be based on love and egalitarian principles, such as friendship (Pinsof, 2002). It also fits with the Western emphasis on individualism. Individuals base their marital decisions on personal gratification (Coontz, 2005).

Marital Conceptualizations

In this study, marital conceptualizations were examined by asking about marital beliefs, attitudes, and expectations. The goal was to gain a full understanding of how newlyweds *think* about marriage. To achieve this goal, newlyweds were first asked to qualitatively describe their core beliefs about marriage. Next, they were asked to complete quantitative assessments about their attitudes and expectations. The noteworthy findings from each of these analyses are presented here. A discussion of theory concludes the section and helps summarize and explain newlyweds' marital conceptualizations.

Beliefs

Participants qualitatively identified their core beliefs about marriage. Similar to their *reasons* for marriage, a majority (84%) of their responses described characteristics of the relationship. The most commonly mentioned belief was that marriage should be based on love. The theme of friendship and being best friends with one's spouse also emerged repeatedly from the data. Participants indicated that marriage should be a loving, supportive relationship, and that good communication was essential. Another theme related to relationship characteristics was lifelong commitment and that marriage is meant to last forever. The marital conceptualizations of love, friendship, and lifelong commitment had also been described as reasons for marriage. Clearly, these are central to newlyweds' marital decision making and how they generally think about marriage.

Other beliefs related to the relationship were that marriage is hard work and takes effort from both partners to succeed. Participants indicated that spouses should be a top priority for each other, above everything else including eventual children. Marriage was also thought of in terms of intimacy, sex, and passion. Related to this, the concepts of

monogamy and trust were reported as indispensable in marriage. Many indicated that infidelity and broken trust would provide reason to seek counseling or get a divorce. Participants described religious values as well, indicating that marriage is about a promise made to or in front of God. Finally, a few participants described the practical, financial benefits of marriage. They thought partners should share finances and that marriage allows people to obtain financial security they otherwise could not attain.

Newlyweds held beliefs about marriage that were not directly reflective of relationship characteristics. They described social, family, and personal functions of marriage. For example, they believed society is better because of marriage. Some thought marriage should only be between a man and woman, whereas others thought that everyone should have a right to marry. In terms of family, some indicated that marriage was a first step toward creating their own family or that marriage is about having children. Personal beliefs about marriage were generally framed in terms of benefits marriage can provide to the individual. These comments often exemplified social exchange principles. For example, some indicated that in marriage, you should be better *with* your spouse than without. Others mentioned that the costs of marriage should not outweigh the benefits.

Conservative Versus Liberal Views

Another way marital conceptualizations were examined in this study was by distinguishing between liberal and conservative views. Participants with conservative views were more likely to believe parents should stay together even if they do not get along, and that couples who marry should make a lifelong commitment, to be broken only under extreme circumstances. Those with liberal views were more likely to believe

marriage should no longer be considered a lifelong commitment that lasts until death, and that it is unrealistic to expect marriages to last in today's modern society. Results indicated that conservative views were more common among individuals who were religious, Republican, and who had emotionally stable personality characteristics (as assessed by the Big Five). They were also more common for those who had not cohabited or had sex prior to marriage. Therefore, marital conceptualizations, as assessed by conservative-liberal views, varied based on intrapersonal characteristics. These findings support previous research on conservative marital views (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005).

Expectations

A final way of assessing marital conceptualizations in this study was to ask participants about their expectations. Researchers have noted that young adults and newlyweds have unrealistically high expectations for their spouse and marriage (McNulty & Karney, 2004; Popenoe & Whitehead, 2004; Putnam, 2000; Sprecher et al., 1994). High expectations are hard to satisfy and generally lead to disappointment and marital conflict (Amato et al., 2003; Attridge & Berscheid, 1994; Houston & Houts, 1998). Results were consistent with previous research, indicating that newlyweds in the current study held overly optimistic expectations (McNulty & Karney, 2004). They believed their spouse would *always* make them happy, make time for them, take care of them, and be attractive to them.

Theory

Symbolic interaction theory can help explain some of these findings. In terms of core beliefs about marriage, a majority of participants described friendship, love, and

long-term commitment. These findings were similar to newlyweds' *reasons* for marriage and are likely influenced by cultural definitions of marriage (Coontz, 2005). That is, in American society, marriage is romanticized through the media and partners are expected to be a friend, lover, and lifelong partner (Putnam, 2000). An analysis of conservative versus liberal views found that conservative views (i.e., believing spouses should remain married even if unhappy) were more common among religious and Republican individuals, and those who had not engaged in premarital cohabitation or sex. These beliefs are likely influenced by religious doctrines that do not support divorce. These findings are also consistent with previous research that conservative views are more common among religious and Republican individuals (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005), and that religious individuals are less likely to engage in premarital cohabitation or sex (Teachman, 2003). Participants also reported on their marital expectations and these were found to be unrealistically high. Expectations were likely influenced by culture. The American emphasis on passionate, satisfying marriages may lead individuals to develop idealistic expectations for their own relationships (Knee et al., 2003; Sprecher & Metts, 1999; Weaver & Ganong, 2004).

Social exchange principles were also exemplified in participants' marital conceptualizations. For example, when newlyweds were asked about their core marital beliefs, they often described the benefits associated with marriage including love, satisfaction, and financial gain. Social exchange can also help explain why unrealistic expectations are formed and how these lead to marital dissatisfaction. People form expectations for their own relationships by making comparisons with other people's relationships (Nye, 1979). When individuals view romanticized depictions of

relationships in the media, they develop similar expectations for their own spouse and marriage. According to social exchange theory, individuals feel satisfied when they obtain relationship outcomes that fall at or above their expectation levels. If outcomes fall short of expectations, which is likely when they are high, individuals feel unsatisfied and seek out alternative partners.

<center>Infidelity</center>

In the current study, it was important to examine infidelity expectations because there is a greater risk now, compared to the past that individuals will seek out alternative partners if their needs go unmet. This is true for two reasons. First, marriage is now based on personal fulfillment. If individuals' needs are not being met, they may feel entitled to seek out alternative partners who can fulfill their needs (Nye, 1979). Second, individuals now have less to lose from infidelity because divorce is no longer stigmatized (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Pinsof, 2002). If an affair is discovered by a spouse and divorce is sought, no great stigma will result. Yet, the relaxed views of divorce could mean individuals have more strict standards regarding infidelity (Johnson et al., 2002). For example, they may believe that unhappy partners should divorce rather than commit infidelity. These contrasting perspectives, one predicting a greater occurrence of infidelity and the other predicting less, are illustrated well in the following passage by Druckerman (2007):

> Although Americans believe cheating is common, our expectations of marriage have risen so much that we have trouble believing our own spouse would ever be unfaithful. When we discover that a partner has strayed, it's so world shattering that we head into a kind of post-traumatic stupor. Americans weren't always so willfully naïve about affairs. Women of my grandmother's generation didn't

usually fret about whether their marriages were personally fulfilling or not. But

since it became much easier to divorce in the 1960s, we've been holding our

marriages – and our lives – to an extremely high standard. We strive for perfect

health and fitness, and we expect emotionally satisfying marriages and complete

fidelity. Though previous generations may have been more sanguine about the

challenges of monogamy, nowadays any slip is – at least theoretically – grounds

for divorce. Adultery robs us of the happy ending that we believe – despite all the

evidence to the contrary – is our due. This outsize preoccupation with monogamy

doesn't seem to do Americans much good. We cheat in roughly the same

proportion as many of those foreigners who are calmer about infidelity. Our high

expectations for personal happiness might even make us more likely to cheat.

After all, aren't we entitled to an affair, if that's what it takes to be fulfilled?

(p. 273)

Attitudes and practices regarding infidelity are somewhat conflicting. It was

therefore important to examine newlyweds' beliefs, expectations, and experiences of

infidelity. Each of these topics is reviewed sequentially in this section. A plethora of

research has also identified intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of

infidelity (Allen et al., 2005). These were examined in the current study and the

statistically significant results are reported here. This section concludes with a theoretical

discussion of the infidelity findings.

Beliefs

In this study, newlyweds were qualitatively asked to describe their thoughts about

infidelity. The most common response (41%) was that infidelity is unacceptable or

inexcusable. Many described the consequences of infidelity such as breaking trust, destroying relationships, and being painful to deal with. Several described why it happens and mentioned that partners fail to communicate their needs, do not successfully work through problems, and make poor choices regarding marriage (i.e., do not marry for the right reasons). Some described problems with the perpetrator. They believed individuals who committed infidelity were selfish, weak, and had poor communication skills. Others stated that relationship problems were the cause of infidelity. Some described circumstances in which infidelity would be acceptable including "when it's an accident", or when partners have already agreed that it is okay. Many thought it was preventable as long as partners communicate their needs and are committed to working through issues. Other prevention methods included "get it out of your system before marriage" or "break up before you do it". Some participants described experiences of infidelity, which included parental experiences, and personal experiences in past and current relationships.

Expectations

Participants were asked to estimate the chance of having a physically intimate interaction with someone other than their spouse. Approximately fifty percent indicated some chance greater than zero. On average, they reported a 7% chance of infidelity, and 1% reported a 100% chance. They were also asked to estimate the likelihood of their spouse engaging in an intimate interaction with someone else. These results were more pessimistic. Fifty-six percent thought there was some chance greater than 0% that their spouse would engage in infidelity. On average, they reported 10% chance of infidelity on the part of their spouse and 1% reported 100% chance. Results from the qualitative responses indicated that at least 3 participants had already experienced an affair in which

their spouse had committed infidelity. Collectively, these findings suggest that approximately half of newlyweds have some expectation of infidelity on the part of themselves and their spouse.

Experiences

Although newlyweds had somewhat low expectations of infidelity, an analysis of their *experiences* revealed that many had already engaged in some form of extramarital behavior. Participants were asked about a range of behaviors including feelings of attraction and arousal toward another person, flirting, and engaging in emotional and physical infidelity. Most people admitted feeling attracted to another person. They had also spent time thinking about and flirting with the person. Fewer individuals reported being emotionally and/or physically intimate with the person, but many were tempted to do so. It is important to note that responses on the infidelity expectations and experiences assessments were influenced by social desirability. These reports were therefore conservative; people were more likely to expect infidelity and to have experienced extramarital sex.

Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Contextual Predictors

Previous research has identified intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of infidelity. It was important to examine these characteristics in the current study. Results indicated that individuals were less likely to expect to engage in infidelity if they were Christian. They were more likely to expect it if they thought their spouse was going to engage in infidelity. In terms of experiences, individuals were more likely to have engaged in infidelity if their personalities were characterized by openness or emotional instability. Curiously, individuals whose parents had not divorced were also

more likely to have participated in extramarital sex. This could be because those whose

parents divorced might recognize the fragility of marriage and be more careful, choosing

not to engage in behaviors that would threaten their relationship. Quality of alternatives

predicted infidelity in that those who perceived of many relationship alternatives were

more likely to have engaged in extramarital sex. Participants were less likely to have

committed infidelity if they were religious or had parents who divorced. In summary,

results indicated that infidelity *expectations* varied based on intrapersonal and

interpersonal characteristics (i.e., religion and spousal expectations of infidelity), whereas

experiences varied based on intrapersonal and contextual characteristics (i.e., personality,

religiosity, parental divorce, and quality of alternatives).

Theory

These findings can partially be explained by symbolic interaction theory. First,

individuals were qualitatively asked to describe their thoughts about infidelity. The most

common response was that infidelity is unacceptable and inexcusable. This view is likely

influenced by social norms that infidelity is inappropriate (Johnson et al., 2002).

Individuals were then asked to estimate the percentage chance of engaging in infidelity.

Although 50% had some expectation of infidelity for themselves, they were more likely

to expect infidelity from their spouse. Recall that participants in this study were largely

female. It is possible that women responded to the infidelity assessment based on cultural

views about men being more likely than women to engage in extramarital sex (Allen et

al., 2005; Drukerman, 2007). In examining variations based on intrapersonal,

interpersonal, and contextual characteristics, this study found that religious individuals

were less likely to expect infidelity or to have experienced it. This finding may be related

to religious doctrines that condemn infidelity and the influence of these doctrines on people's beliefs and practices. Another finding related to intrapersonal variations was that infidelity was more common for participants with divorced parents. Symbolic interaction theory would predict that after witnessing social interactions between parents that were less than ideal, participants may have learned not to rely on one person for need fulfillment. Finally, it is important to note that all the infidelity responses were influenced by social desirability. This finding in itself demonstrates the influence of social norms (i.e., infidelity as taboo) on individuals' beliefs and behaviors.

The infidelity findings can also be interpreted according to social exchange principles. This theory predicts that partners seek to fulfill each other's needs (Nye, 1979). When partners are able to do this, they experience interdependence and feel satisfied (Rusbult et al., 1998; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals in the current study were more likely to expect to engage in infidelity if they thought their partners might do the same. Based on this scenario, interdependence and satisfaction are low because needs are being met outside the relationship. Therefore, it is expected that a person would look to alternative partners for need fulfillment. Individuals who are in unsatisfying relationships (i.e., in which needs are not being met), and who perceive of high quality alternatives, will be less dependent on the relationship, and more likely to commit infidelity. This theory also helps explain why experiences of infidelity were higher for those who had many relationship alternatives.

Evolutionary psychology explains that individuals have a goal of reproducing as many offspring as possible (Buss, 1994; 1998; Fenigstein & Peltz, 2002). Men require less time than women for this task (i.e., a few minutes versus several years) and so have

more to gain from extramarital sex (Bailey et al., 1994; Linton & Wiener, 2001; Wright & Reise, 1997). Women have greater incentive to be monogamous because they have more to lose if their partner chooses an alternative relationship. They cannot risk having a father's resources allocated to another woman. New partners will also be less willing to devote resources toward raising children who are not their own. However, some evolutionary theorists propose that women who have sex with multiple partners are at an advantage because sperm can compete for egg fertilization (Barash & Lipton, 2001). The majority of predictions made by this theory are related to gender differences in extramarital sex and unfortunately this study had too few men to reliably examine gender differences (Note: gender was examined as a predictor of infidelity and was found not to be statistically significant, but the power for these analyses was low and results must be interpreted with caution). However, the theory does help explain why individuals with open personalities and many relationship alternatives would commit infidelity. These individuals are open to a variety of experiences and have many individuals with whom to mate, which enhances their reproductive goals. It also helps explain why emotionally unstable individuals would be more prone to extramarital sex. Perhaps these individuals (in this study, primarily women) do not rationally consider the risks associated with losing a partner if they engage in infidelity.

<center>Divorce</center>

This study sought to investigate newlyweds' divorce expectations because as noted in the literature review, divorce is common. Approximately fifty percent of marriages will end in divorce and 20% will end within the first five years (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; National Center for Health Statistics, 2005). Divorce became increasingly

common in the 1960s and 70s for several reasons including high demands being placed

on the marital relationship, greater economic independence of women, and no-fault

divorce laws (Fitch & Ruggles, 2000; Pinsof, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Rogers, 2004).

Individuals in the current study have therefore been raised in a culture of divorce. It was

important to examine whether this social trend has impacted how newlyweds think about

divorce as they enter marriage. Is divorce a part of their marital conceptualizations? Do

divorce expectations vary based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual

characteristics? This section summarizes the central findings related to marital certainty,

beliefs and expectations about divorce, and variations based on intrapersonal,

interpersonal, and contextual characteristics. Theory will be used to explain and interpret

the findings on divorce.

Marital Certainty

Due to the prevalence of divorce in American society, it was important to

examine newlyweds' marital certainty. Participants were asked to indicate how sure they

were at various time points (i.e., before marriage, on their wedding day, after marriage)

about their decision to marry, and how certain they believed their partners to be. Results

indicated greatest certainty on their wedding day for both themselves and their spouses.

The lowest reported certainties for both self and spouse were six months prior to the

wedding date and one year after the wedding. Responses from qualitative questions that

are not reported in this study, but were part of the larger project can provide insight into

these findings. Many couples reported episodes of high tension and conflict in their

relationship leading up to the wedding. The stress was related to wedding plans (e.g.,

juggling multiple tasks), feeling as though the wedding date was approaching too quickly,

and dealing with family issues about the wedding. The slight decrease in certainty one year after the wedding was likely due to the natural declines in satisfaction couples experience as they move out of the "honeymoon" phase (Attridge & Berscheid, 1994; Houston & Houts, 1998). Qualitative responses also indicated that couples experienced stressors related to finances, health, and family soon after their wedding. Participants mentioned episodes of high conflict, ups and downs, and affairs committed on the part of their spouse. These patterns and events could all contribute to feeling uncertain one year into marriage.

Beliefs

Participants were asked to describe their beliefs about divorce. Many believed it was okay in some circumstances such as when partners are unhappy, have grown apart, or experience abuse and/or infidelity. In these cases, they thought divorce was a good option to have, that it was beneficial to people, and could provide a new beginning. They could understand why divorce happens, stating that people marry too young, lack problem solving/communication skills, and that marriage is hard work. They believed that in general, marriage is taken too lightly and divorce is considered too quickly. They emphasized that it should be a last resort and that couples should exhaust all other options, including therapy, before divorcing. Many expressed judgmental sentiments about people who divorce and described moral implications of divorce. For example, some stated that "God doesn't like divorce" or that individuals who divorce should not have a right to remarry. Others described ways to prevent divorce such as knowing a partner well before marriage, cohabiting before marriage, and working hard to stay married. Finally, many described the adverse effects of divorce such as emotional pain,

problems for children, and financial troubles. Collectively, these findings demonstrated both positive and negative views of divorce.

Expectations

Participants were then asked to estimate the percentage chance that they might experience divorce. Seventy-two percent reported some chance greater than 0% and on average, they perceived there to be 13% chance of experiencing divorce. When asked if they expected to remain married to their spouse for life, 3% indicated they did not. These results support the notion that newlyweds enter marriage with some expectation of divorce. Surprisingly, a small percentage of participants were already seeking divorce. The qualitative and quantitative results presented throughout this section provide insight into why divorce was being considered. For example, the qualitative responses indicated that some participants had already experienced an affair in their marriage, and many were experiencing both chronic and acute stressors. Their beliefs about divorce were also somewhat liberal in that divorce was considered a good option to have, particularly if partners are unhappy. Results in the following paragraph also help explain why newlyweds expected divorce.

Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Contextual Predictors

Researchers have identified various intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual predictors of divorce. It was important to examine each of these in the current study. Results indicated that individuals were more likely to expect divorce if their personalities were less agreeable, if their parents divorced, and if they were less satisfied or committed in their relationship. Divorce expectations therefore varied based on intrapersonal (i.e., personality, parental divorce) and interpersonal (i.e., satisfaction, commitment)

characteristics. With the exception of personality, these characteristics have been found to predict divorce in previous research (Amato et al., 2003; Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Rusbult et al., 1998; Tallman et al., 2001). The finding of divorce expectations being higher for those with less agreeable personalities is new. Previous research has found this characteristic to predict infidelity, but not divorce (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Fernandez & Castro, 2003; Schmitt, 2004; Wright & Reise, 1997). It is possible that newlyweds who are less agreeable expect divorce, and that this pessimistic attitude combined with an unfriendly personality leads to marital dissatisfaction (for both partners) and divorce. This topic will need to be explored in future research, particularly among newlyweds as a warning sign of divorce.

Theory

Results in this section can partially be explained by symbolic interaction theory. First, a majority of newlyweds had at least some expectation of divorce. These expectations likely stem from a culture in which divorce is common and not stigmatized. Social desirability did not significantly influence participants' reports of divorce expectations, which reinforces the idea that cultural views shape individuals' perspectives. Participants could therefore respond honestly to questions about divorce. In terms of intrapersonal variations, they were more likely to expect divorce if their parents divorced. This fits with symbolic interaction theory's central premise that social interactions, including past experiences, shape meanings and identities. In other words, participants who had witnessed and experienced divorce with their parents were more likely to expect it for themselves.

Social exchange theory can be used to explain the divorce findings as well. According to the theory, individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs in their relationships (Nye, 1979). Satisfying relationships are ones in which the rewards exceed the costs. Individuals who are in costly, unsatisfying relationships will feel less committed and will be more likely to divorce (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, Rusbult et al., 1998). This helps explain why participants believed divorce was acceptable if partners were unhappy. However, individuals in this study were also cognizant of the costs of divorce including emotional, familial, and financial problems. Therefore, beliefs about divorce centered on a rational analysis of the pros and costs associated with staying in the marriage. Divorce expectations were higher for individuals who reported low levels of satisfaction and commitment. This fits with exchange principles. Individuals are more likely to expect divorce when they are unhappy and less committed to their spouse.

Strengths and Limitations

As with any research, the current study had both strengths and limitations. This section will highlight these attributes and will suggest avenues for future research where appropriate. Although several limitations are noted, the contributions of this research greatly outweigh the costs. Namely, this study provided a first examination of newlyweds' marital conceptualizations and did so using a mixed methods design.

The data for this study were collected online, which is both a strength and limitation. Qualitative researchers have traditionally relied on interviews, observations, and documents to collect data (Creswell, 2003). These methods provide rich and detailed descriptions necessary for qualitative research. However, internet data collection had the advantages of being anonymous, cost effective, and geographically wide ranging

(Whitley, 2002). It allowed participants to write responses in their own words and to complete the survey at a time they found convenient (Creswell, 2003). Online data collection also saved the researcher time because it eliminated the manual transferring of data into electronic format. These characteristics were important in this mixed methods study because a large number of participants were recruited from regions across the U.S. Participants were disclosing personal information about sensitive topics so anonymity was important. It was also helpful to have survey responses already "transcribed" by the participants. This enabled the researcher to recruit over 200 participants, which would have been impossible if personal interviews with each person were required.

The disadvantages associated with online responses included a loss of detail that would have been available through traditional qualitative methods. The researcher could not ask participants to elaborate on points, was unable to use follow-up questions, and could not adjust the questions once the study had begun. It was also more difficult to establish credibility and rapport with participants. In order to address this last point, the researcher joined TheNest.com, a web site for newlyweds, and interacted with some of her participants online. She was available for questions once her participants completed the survey. Some participants noted that the survey was too long and that it made them think about things they had not previously considered, including "depressing" topics such as infidelity and divorce. The researcher was sympathetic to their concerns and informed them about her choices for including certain questions on the survey. Additional concerns related to online studies were that the researcher had little control over the environment in which participants completed the surveys. Participants were instructed to complete the surveys without the help of their spouses but they may have ignored this instruction

and/or elicited the help of additional people. They may also have been distracted by telephone calls, television programs, or other environmental disruptions.

Another limitation of this study involved selection bias. Individuals volunteered to participate and newlyweds in unsatisfying relationships may have been less likely to volunteer. This study may have also excluded individuals of a lower socio-economic status (SES) and those who did not have regular computer access (Couper, Tourangeau, Conrad, & Crawford, 2004). One way to address this concern was to offer hardcopy questionnaires as an alternative to completing the survey online. Although this tactic would not help people from lower SES groups learn about the study, it would at least enable individuals without regular computer access to participate. However, the study announcements were posted entirely online and no participants contacted the researcher for hardcopy versions of the survey. Future studies will need to examine the topic of marital conceptualizations among individuals in lower SES groups.

The data used in this study were derived from self-report questionnaires, and responses based on social desirability are a concern with this type of data collection. Social desirability is also a concern when sensitive topics such as infidelity are being assessed. The researcher included questions from a valid and reliable measure of social desirability, the Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR) (Li & Bagger, 2006; Paulhus, 1984; 1991). She found that responses on the marital attitudes and infidelity assessments were influenced by socially desirable responding. Newlyweds reported overly conservative views when asked about their marital conceptualizations and underreported their infidelity expectations and experiences. These results should therefore be interpreted with some caution.

Individuals were asked to report on their couple relationships. The data were only representative of one partner's perception of the relationship. The researcher decided to include only one member of each couple because the survey addressed sensitive topics, which partners may wish to keep secret from one another. If both partners were completing the survey, they might not be as honest in their responses. However, because a majority of participants in this study were female, the results were less representative of men's viewpoints. In order to address this concern, the researcher is keeping the survey online for several more months and is currently recruiting male participants. Future researchers may wish to investigate inter-spouse agreement on marital conceptualizations and expectations of infidelity and divorce.

A big strength associated with this study is that it involved a mixed methods design. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study helped establish internal validity because the researcher was able to cross reference responses (Tobin & Begley, 2003). Mixed methods also had the benefit of providing the most complex, holistic understanding of marital conceptualizations (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). The researcher was able to not only learn about marital conceptualizations from participants' open-ended responses, but to also examine intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual variations using the quantitative assessments. This strategy offered richness that would not have been captured from one method alone.

In short, the benefits associated with this study included participant anonymity, geographic diversity, efficiency for the researcher in terms of financial cost and time, and a mixed methods approach, which provided a holistic understanding of the topic under study. These benefits outweighed the costs, which were largely related to online methods.

The most significant limitation of this study was that fewer participants were male and/or from low income groups. It is hoped that continued data collection will help incorporate more males into the sample. However, marital conceptualizations will need to be investigated with individuals from lower SES populations in future research. Methods that do not involve online recruitment and data collection will help with this endeavor.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This study provided a first examination of newlyweds' marital conceptualizations, including their expectations of infidelity and divorce. An overwhelming majority of newlyweds conceptualized marriage in terms of love and personal fulfillment, which is consistent with previous research (Coontz, 2005; Pinsof, 2002). Conservative conceptualizations varied based on intrapersonal characteristics and in general, newlyweds had unrealistically high marital expectations. These high expectations could lead to dissatisfaction, infidelity, and divorce (Amato et al., 2003; Attridge & Berscheid, 1994; Houston & Houts, 1998). Approximately half of newlyweds expected to experience infidelity and several had already experienced some form of infidelity. Infidelity expectations and experiences varied based on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics. Nearly 75% had some expectation of divorce and these expectations varied based on intrapersonal and interpersonal characteristics. Overall, results from this study suggested that infidelity and divorce are part of the way newlyweds think about marriage.

It is hoped that these results will inspire future research on marital conceptualizations. The topic is worthy of further exploration, particularly among culturally diverse populations. As noted, there is a need for understanding how

individuals in low income groups think about marriage, infidelity, and divorce. Similarly, much can be gained from examining this topic among ethnic minorities in the U.S. and individuals in other countries. By studying this topic among culturally diverse groups, researchers can begin to disentangle sociocultural versus evolutionary based explanations for beliefs and practices related to marriage. Practitioners and family life educators can also use these findings to develop programs for teenagers and young adults. Individuals can be taught skills for maintaining healthy, happy relationships and for making careful and deliberate choices about marriage. Programs such as these will improve the quality of intimate relationships and at the same time help lower the incidence of infidelity and divorce.

An eventual goal from this research will be to foster a variety of socially acceptable life paths including permanent single hood, cohabiting relationships, open relationships, and marriage. According to symbolic interaction theory, social norms influence individuals' beliefs and practices (White & Kline, 2002). When socially acceptable alternatives exist, individuals will not marry simply because "it is the next step" or "the right thing to do". They will make choices that best suit their needs, which will inevitably result in a happier society with lower rates of infidelity and divorce.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: STUDY ANNOUNCEMENT

Greetings!

I would like to solicit your participation in an online study about marriage. In order to participate, you must be married for two years or less, be involved in your first marriage, and not have children.

Participation in this survey will require about 60 minutes, depending on how much you write. At the end of the survey, you will be given the option to enter a draw for a $100 gift card. If you are interested in helping with this study, please click on the link below and complete the survey.

https://src.ibr.uga.edu/surveys/campbell/.htm

Sincerely,

Kelly Campbell
Doctoral Student
Child and Family Development
University of Georgia

APPENDIX B

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Kelly Campbell and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Child and Family Development at The University of Georgia. I invite you to participate in a study to help identify how newlyweds think about marriage. My advisor for this project is Dr. David Wright.

In order to understand how newlyweds think about marriage, I will ask you to respond to some general questions about marriage and your relationship. I will also be asking questions about your personal beliefs and practices. Some of these questions deal with sensitive issues such as your opinions about infidelity and divorce. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. In addition, you may stop answering questions or discontinue participation at any time. Finally, I will ask you to provide some demographic information about yourself (gender, age, etc.) and your partner. The questionnaire will take between 25-60 minutes to complete, depending on how much you write, You will be able to stop and start the survey, so you do no have to complete it all at once. If you complete the survey in more than one session, you will be taken back to where you left off when you revisit the site. Once you complete the questionnaire, you be given an option to enter a draw for a $100 Gift Card. Your contact information for the draw will **<u>NOT</u>** be connected to your questionnaire responses so the anonymity of your questionnaire responses will be maintained. You will **<u>NOT</u>** be required to provide any other identifying information. I ask that you **<u>DO NOT</u>** complete this questionnaire with the help of your spouse.

You can expect to gain knowledge from participating in this research study. You will learn more about the research process and may learn more about your marital relationship.

As a participant in this study, you should read and understand the following statements:
Only men and women who are older than the age of 18 should participate in this study.

Your participation is voluntary. Your may refuse to participate or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Please note that Internet communications can be insecure. We cannot guarantee your privacy and confidentiality while the data is transmitted to us over the Internet. However, once we receive the completed surveys, any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential except as required by law. All records from this study will be kept in a password protected computer. If you are not comfortable with the level of confidentiality provided by the

Internet, please feel free to print out a copy of the survey, fill it out by hand, and mail it to me at the address given below, with no return address on the envelope.

The researchers do not foresee any risks to you for participating in this study. It is possible that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the research questions. If you experience any distress as a result of your participation in this research, you may contact me or my advisor for assistance, counseling referrals, or resources.

Thank you for your consideration!

Kelly Campbell
Child & Family Development
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Click on the "I agree" button below to indicate that you have read this form and understand the information above. By clicking on the "I agree" button, you are providing an online signature for your consent to participate in the study.

I AGREE

Disclaimer: The contents and opinions expressed on this Web page do not necessarily reflect the views of nor are they endorsed by The University of Georgia or the University System of Georgia.

Qualitative Questions

In this study, I am trying to understand how newlyweds think about marriage. I consider this topic to be extremely important. In order to study this, I need you to be completely honest in your survey responses.

Remember that all of your responses will be kept confidential. Please respond to the questions below by typing your answers in the space provided.

1. In thinking about people you personally know, such as your friends and family members, can you think of anyone who has an ideal marriage? If so, how many couples do you know with an ideal marriage and what is their relation to you (i.e., friends, family members, coworkers, etc.)?

2. If you listed people in question 1, what makes their marriages ideal? If you did not list anyone in question 1, please move onto question 3.

3. In thinking about friends and/or family members who are married and close to your age, why do you think most of these people get married?

4. As you think back to before you married, what were your reason(s) for getting married? Be specific.

5. Below is a list of reasons why some people get married. From the list, please rank order **your** reasons for getting married. Assign the number 1 to your **primary** reason for marrying and a 7 to the least important factor in your decision to marry. If a factor played no part in your decision to marry, assign it a "0".

   _____ Financial reasons
   _____ Religious reasons
   _____ Legal benefits
   _____ To have children
   _____ Love and satisfaction
   _____ Long-term stability
   _____ Social pressure to marry (from family/friends/church/society, etc.)

6. Are there <u>any</u> other reasons you decided to get married? Please describe these reasons and identify their importance in your decision to marry (i.e., of **primary** importance, **secondary** importance, etc.).

7. As you think back to before your marriage, what key events led to the decision to marry?

8. At what age did you first start thinking about marriage for yourself?

9. At what age did you decide that your current spouse was the person you were going to marry?

10. Using a percentage scale from 1-100%, please indicate how certain you were at various time periods that you wanted to be married:

    I was _____% certain 6 months prior to marriage.

    I was _____% certain on the day of my marriage.

    I was _____% certain 6 months after marriage (or if married less than 6 months, use the present day).

    I was _____% certain 1 year after marriage.

Comments:

11. Using a percentage scale from 1-100%, please indicate how certain you think your spouse was at various time periods that he/she wanted to get married:

    He/she was _____% certain 6 months prior to marriage.

    He/she was _____% certain on the day of my marriage.

    He/she was _____% certain 6 months after marriage (or if married less than 6 months, use the present day).

    He/she was _____% certain 1 year after marriage.

Comments:

12. What are your plans for having children?

13. What are your views about having children without getting married?

14. In this study, beliefs are defined as your own personal views. Using this definition, please identify your core beliefs about marriage:

15. Of the beliefs you identified in question 13, which is/are the most important?

16. Overall, who was the most influential in helping you develop your beliefs about marriage? From the list, please rank order the relative contributions of each person or institution in determining your views on marriage. Assign the number 1 to your **primary** influence and a 5 to the least important influence on your beliefs. If a factor had no influence on your beliefs, assign it a "0".

　　　_____ Family
　　　_____ The media (i.e., television, internet, movies, magazines, etc.)
　　　_____ Religious/spiritual institution
　　　_____ Coworkers
　　　_____ Friends

17. Other than those listed in question 15, were there other people or things that shaped your beliefs about marriage and getting married?

18. How supportive are your family members and friends of your marriage?

19. Under what conditions might you consider divorce? (select all that apply):

　　　a) If you were extremely unhappy with your marriage for a long period of time
　　　b) If your partner was physically or mentally abusive toward you
　　　c) If your partner had an affair
　　　d) If you and your partner grew apart
　　　e) If your partner developed a serious alcohol or substance abuse problem
　　　f) If you no longer loved your spouse
　　　g) If you and your partner argued constantly
　　　h) Other: _____

20. What are your beliefs about divorce?

21. How did you develop these beliefs about divorce?

22. What do you imagine for your relationship in 20 years from now?

23. What do you imagine for your relationship 40 years from now?

24. What do you imagine for your relationship 60 years from now?

25. Considering everything (the way you are, the way your partner is, the way the world is), what do you think are the chances that you and your spouse could divorce at some point? Indicate by assigning a percentage for the likelihood of it happening: _____% chance.

Comments:

26. What are your thoughts about infidelity?

27. How did you develop these thoughts about infidelity?

28. From the following list, identify the conditions that would need to be present for you to engage in some type of infidelity (select all that apply):

    a) If you found out your spouse had had an affair
    b) If your spouse was not meeting your needs
    c) If someone you had been attracted to for a long time was also attracted to you
    d) If you knew that no-one would ever find out
    e) If you had some drinks at a party and someone you considered VERY attractive was interested in you
    f) If you were about to leave or divorce your spouse
    g) If you were on vacation without your spouse
    h) If you and your spouse were in different countries for an extended period of time

Comments:

29. What keeps your marriage going when you are feeling angry or sad about the relationship?

30. Do you have highs and lows in your marriage or are things pretty much the same across time?

Attitudes about Marriage and Divorce

Please indicate your responses to the following items about marriage and divorce.

	Don't Agree at all		Agree Somewhat		Agree Completely				
1. In the absence of violence and extreme conflict, parents who have an unsatisfactory marriage should stay together until their children are grown.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. Couples who marry should make a lifelong commitment, to be broken only under extreme circumstances.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. Marriage should no longer be considered a lifelong commitment, that lasts until death.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. Couples who have children ought to be married.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. Either spouse should be allowed to terminate a marriage at any time for any reason.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Most married couples I know have happy, healthy marriages.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. There should be a waiting period of about a year between divorce filing and the time when a divorce can be granted to give the couple a chance to reconsider their decision to divorce.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. It is unrealistic to expect marriages to last in today's modern society.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. It is a good idea for couples considering marriage to live together in order to decide whether or not they get along well enough to marry to one another.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10. Married people are happier than single people.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11. There are few good marriages these days.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12. Parents should stay together even if they do not get along.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

13. Which of the following is in your opinion the more important characteristic of a good marriage:

   a) Promotes the happiness and well-being of the married individuals.
   b) Produces children who are well-adjusted and who will become good citizens.
   c) The two are about equally important.
   d) Neither is an important characteristic of a good marriage.

   Comments:

14. When you decided to marry your current spouse, did you have feelings of romantic love toward him/her?

   a) Yes, very strong
   b) Yes, fairly strong
   c) Yes, but not strong
   d) No

15. Would you marry the same person if you had to do it over again?
   a) Yes
   b) No

16. Do you expect to be married to your current spouse for life?

   a) Yes
   b) No

Comments:

17. Since you married your current spouse, have you ever seriously considered filing for a divorce?

   a) Yes
   b) No

Comments:

18. Since you married your current spouse, have you ever seriously considered having an affair?

   a) Yes
   b) No

Comments:

19. When you said your wedding vows, did you use the words "till death do us part"?

    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) Not sure/can't remember

Comments:

20. Are you involved in an open marriage, in which you are expected or allowed to engage in emotionally or physically intimate interactions with a person/people other than your spouse?

    a) Yes
    b) No

Comments:

Relationship History

1. Did your two parents marry one another?

       a) Yes, before I was born.
       b) Yes, after I was born.
       c) No, they never married.

2. If they married, how happy do you think your parents' marriage was overall?

Completely happy						Completely unhappy
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. Have your parents ever divorced one another?

       a) Yes
       b) No

4. If yes, how old were you when your parents divorced? _____

5. If yes, how much stigma did you feel because your parents became divorced?

       a) None or hardly any
       b) Some, but not a great deal
       c) A great deal

6. Aside from your current spouse, have you ever been married to another person?

       a) Yes
       b) No

7. Did you cohabit with your spouse prior to marriage?

8. If yes, for how long?

9. If yes, had you and your spouse-to-be decided to marry when you started living together?

10. Have you ever cohabited with romantic partners other than your spouse? If yes, how many partners?

11. Did you have sexual intercourse with anyone prior to marriage?

12. How accepting is your mother of divorce?

Personality Assessment

Please use this common list of human traits to describe yourself as accurately as possible. Describe yourself as you see yourself at the present time, not as you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you are generally or typically, as compared with other persons you know of the same sex and of roughly your same age.

Before each trait, please write a number indicating how accurately that trait describes you, using the following rating scale:

INACCURATE				?		ACCURATE		
Extremely	Very	Moderately	Slightly		Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

_____ Bashful	_____ Energetic	_____ Moody	_____ Systematic
_____ Bold	_____ Envious	_____ Organized	_____ Talkative
_____ Careless	_____ Extraverted	_____ Philosophical	_____ Temperamental
_____ Cold	_____ Fretful	_____ Practical	_____ Touchy
_____ Complex	_____ Harsh	_____ Quiet	_____ Uncreative
_____ Cooperative	_____ Imaginative	_____ Relaxed	_____ Unenvious
_____ Creative	_____ Inefficient	_____ Rude	_____ Unitellectual
_____ Deep	_____ Intellectual	_____ Shy	_____ Unsympathetic
_____ Disorganized	_____ Jealous	_____ Sloppy	_____ Warm
_____ Efficient	_____ Kind	_____ Sympathetic	_____ Withdrawn

On a scale of 1 to 10, how similar are the personalities of you and your partner?

Extremely									Extremely
Dissimilar	Very	Moderately	Slightly	Slightly	Moderately	Very		Similar	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Marital Expectations

The following items refer to expectations about your marital relationship and how you think your partner will be in the future. Please read the statements and indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree.

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>								<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>
1. My partner will always take time for me when I need him/her.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. My partner will rarely make mistakes.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. My partner will agree with me about the important things.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. My partner will always get along well with my family.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. My partner will sometimes lose his/her temper.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. My partner will never disappoint me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. My partner will always take care of me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8. My partner will always be attractive to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. My partner will always make me happy.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

<u>Investment Model Scale: Relationship Commitment</u>

Please indicate the degree to which each of the following statements pertain to your current relationship.

	<u>Don't Agree at all</u>				<u>Agree Somewhat</u>		<u>Agree Completely</u>		
1. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. I feel very attached to our relationship – very strongly linked to my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. I want our relationship to last forever.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7. I am oriented toward the long-term future future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Investment Model Scale: Relationship Satisfaction

Please indicate the degree to which each of the following statements pertain to your current relationship.

	Don't Agree at all				Agree Somewhat			Agree Completely	
1a) My partner fulfills my needs for intimacy (sharing personal thoughts, secrets, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
b) My partner fulfills my needs for companionship (doing things together, enjoying each others company etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c) My partner fulfills my sexual needs (holding hands, kissing, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d) My partner fulfills my needs for security (feeling trusting, comfortable in a stable relationship, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
e) My partner fulfills my needs for emotional involvement (feeling emotionally attached, feeling good when another feels good, etc).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. I feel satisfied with our relationship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. My relationship is much better than others' relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. My relationship is close to ideal.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. Our relationship makes me very happy.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Investment Model Scale: Quality of Alternatives

Please indicate the degree to which each of the following statements pertain to your current relationship.

	Don't Agree at all			Agree Somewhat			Agree Completely		
1a) My needs for intimacy (sharing personal thoughts, secrets,etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
b) My needs for companionship (doing things together, enjoying each other's company, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c) My sexual needs (holding hands, kissing, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d) My needs for security (feeling trusting, comfortable in a stable (relationship, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
e) My needs for emotional involvement (feeling emotionally attached, feeling good when another feels good, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are very appealing.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. My alternatives to our relationship are close to ideal (dating another, spending time with friends or on my own, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. If I weren't dating my partner I would do fine. I would find another appealing person to date.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. My alternatives are attractive to me (dating another spending time with friends or on my own, etc.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

	Don't Agree at all		Agree Somewhat			Agree Completely		

6. My needs for intimacy, companionship etc. could easily be fulfilled in an alternative relationship.

0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

Investment Model Scale: Relationship Investments

	Don't Agree at all			Agree Somewhat			Agree Completely		
1a) I invested a great deal of time into our relationship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
b) I told my partner many private things about myself. (I disclose secrets to him/her).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c) My partner and I have an intellectual life together that would be difficult to replace.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d) My sense of personal identity (who I am) is linked to my partner and our relationship.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
e) My partner and I share many memories.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2. I put a great deal into our relationship that I would lose if the relationship were to end.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3. Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I would lose all of this if we were to break up.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4. I feel very involved in our relationship – like I have put a great deal into it.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5. My relationships with friends and family members would be complicated if my partner and I were to break up (e.g., partner is friends with people I care about.).	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Compared to other people, I know, I have invested a great deal in my relationship with my partner.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Infidelity Assessment

There are times within romantic relationships when we are attracted to other people. Part of being human is being aware of and attracted to people. Sometimes that attraction is mutual and sometimes it is not. When it is mutual it often leads to certain flirting behaviors. I want you to think of a person since the beginning of your current relationship that you were **most** attracted to besides your partner. I **do not** want you to name the other person, but please respond to the following general questions about this other person you were attracted to.

1. How attractive did you find this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    attractive   attractive

2. How attractive do you think this person found you?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    attractive   attractive

3. How much arousal did you feel in their presence?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    No   A great deal
    arousal   of arousal

4. How much time did you spend thinking about this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    No   A great deal
    time   of time

5. How much flirting occurred between the two of you?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    No   A great deal
    flirting   of flirting

6. Who initiated the mutual attraction between the two of you?

    0 = Other person   1 = Equal   2 = Me

7. How often did you and this person do "couple" things together (e.g., spend time together, talk on the phone)?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Never   Very often

8. How tempted were you to be emotionally intimate (e.g., share feelings, emotions) with this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    tempted   tempted

9. How emotionally intimate were you with this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    emotionally intimate   emotionally intimate

10. How tempted were you to be physically intimate (e.g., kissing, sexual activity) with this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    physically intimate   physically intimate

11. How physically intimate were you with this person?

    0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8
    Not at all   Extremely
    physically intimate   physically intimate

12. What are the chances that you or your spouse could have a physically intimate interaction with someone else? (indicate by assigning a percentage value for the likelihood of it happening):

    _____% chance I would have an intimate interaction with someone other than my spouse

    _____% chance my partner would have an intimate interaction with someone other than me

    Comments:

Sociosexual Orientation Inventory

Please answer all of the following questions honestly. For the questions dealing with behavior, type your answers in the blank spaces provided. For the questions dealing with thoughts and attitudes, select the appropriate number on the scales provided.

1. With how many different partners have you had sex (sexual intercourse) within the past year? _____

2. How many different partners do you foresee yourself having sex with during the next five years? (Please give a *specific, realistic* estimate) _____

3. With how many different partners have you had sex on *one and only one* occasion?
   _____

4. How often do you fantasize about having sex with someone other than your spouse? (Choose one).

   a. never
   b. once every two or three months
   c. once a month
   d. once every two weeks
   e. once a week
   f. a few times each week
   g. nearly every day
   h. at least once a day

	I strongly disagree								I strongly agree
5. Sex without love is OK.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6. I can imagine myself being comfortable and enjoying "casual" sex with different partners.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7. I would have to be closely attached to someone (both emotionally and psychologically) before I could feel fully comfortable having sex with him or her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Adult Attachment Scale

The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. I am interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just what is happening in your current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Agree Strongly

_____ 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.

_____ 2. I worry about being abandoned.

_____ 3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.

_____ 4. I worry a lot about my relationships.

_____ 5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.

_____ 6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.

_____ 7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be really close.

_____ 8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.

_____ 9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.

_____ 10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him//her.

_____ 11. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.

_____ 12. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.

_____ 13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.

_____ 14. I worry about being alone.

_____ 15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.

_____ 16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

_____ 17. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed			Agree Strongly

_____ 18. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.

_____ 19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.

_____ 20. Sometimes I feel that I force my partner to show more feeling, more commitment.

_____ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.

_____ 22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

_____ 23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.

_____ 24. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

_____ 25. I tell my partner just about everything.

_____ 26. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.

_____ 27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.

_____ 28. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.

_____ 29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.

_____ 30. I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.

_____ 31. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.

_____ 32. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.

_____ 33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.

_____ 34. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.

_____ 35. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.

_____ 36. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR): Impression Management

Using the scale below as a guide, write a number beside each statement to
indicate how true it is.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not true			Somewhat			Very true

_____ 1. I sometimes tell lies if I have to.

_____ 2. There have been occasions when I have taken advantage of someone.

_____ 3. I always obey laws, even if I'm unlikely to get caught.

_____ 4. I have received too much change from a salesperson without telling him or her.

_____ 5. I have taken sick-leave from work or school even though I wasn't really sick.

_____ 6. I don't gossip about other people's business.

<u>Demographic Questions</u>

We would now like to ask some questions about you. These are some of the most important questions in this survey. Please take the time to answer these questions, you are almost done!

1. Are you: Male   or   Female

2. Is your partner: Male   or   Female

3. How old are you? _____ years

4. How old is your partner?

5. Please indicate your ethnic background (Circle one)

    a) European/White American   d) Native American
    b) African American   e) Asian
    c) Hispanic or Latino   f) Other: _____

6. Please indicate the ethnic background of your partner (Select one)

    a) European/White American   d) Native American
    b) African American   e) Asian
    c) Hispanic or Latino   f) Other: _____

7. What is your sexual orientation (Select one)

a) Heterosexual   d) Bisexual
b) Gay   e) Transgender
c) Lesbian   f) Asexual
                        g) Other

8. What was the last grade in school you completed?
       a) None or early kindergarten
       b) Grades 1-8
       c) Grade 12 or GED
       d) College 1-3 years
       e) College Graduate
       f) Master's Graduate
       g) Ph.D. Graduate

9. What is your religious preference?

    a) Catholic   b) Baptist
    c) Methodist   d) Lutheran
    e) Other Protestant f) Mormon
    g) Jewish   h) Muslim
    i) Hindu   j) Buddhist
    k) Agnostic   l) Atheist
    m) No preference   n) Other

10. How religious do you consider yourself to be?

    a) Very religious
    b) Fairly religious
    c) Slightly religious
    d) Not religious at all

11. Are you currently employed?

    a) Yes, I am working full time
    b) Yes, I am working part-time
    c) Yes, but I am currently a student
    d) No because I am a student
    e) No, I am currently unemployed

12. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or other?

13. Are you a student?   Yes   or   No

14. In what town/city and state were you raised? _____

15. In what type of area were you raised most of your life?

    a) Urban/City
    b) Suburban
    c) Rural

16. In what type of area are you currently living?

    a) Urban/City
    b) Suburban
    c) Rural/Small town or country

17. In what region of the country are you currently living?

    a) East
    b) West
    c) North
    d) South
    e) Midwest
    f) Northeast

18. When did you get married? (Indicate date)

19. How long have you been married? (Indicate in years and/or months):

20. How long before the marriage had you been romantically involved with the person you married? _____ months.

21. How old were you when you married your current spouse? _____

Do you have any final comments to add about this survey:

Thank you for completing this survey! If you would like to enter the draw for a $100 Gift Card, please proceed to the following page. In order to protect the anonymity of your survey responses, the contest information will be kept separate from your survey responses. I thank you again for participating in this study!

<u>Gift Card Contest Entry Form</u>

Name:

Email Address:

Phone Number: