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Opinions on Divorce in Georgia between Different Demographic Groups

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in
Anthropology

By Rachel Melcher

Under the mentorship of Dr. Heidi Altman

Abstract

Divorce has always been a divisive topic; indeed, divorce rates differ wildly among members of different demographic groups. What of their opinions, though? What are the differences in opinions on divorce in Georgia between separate different demographic groups? My research suggests that the different lines of thought are drawn largely on religious and ethnic lines, rather than such factors as gender, age or annual household income.

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Introduction

Georgia instituted no-fault divorce laws in 1973, thus replacing a system in which a person had to prove ‘fault’ in order to divorce their spouse (and if both were found to be ‘at fault’, they would not be granted a divorce), on grounds such as adultery, desertion and cruelty, in response to the growing idea that marriages often end due to the end of a viable relationship between spouses rather than because of the ‘fault’ of one spouse and the ‘innocence’ of another (Wright and Stetson 1978:575). In the course of my research, I am asking if there are differences in opinions on divorce in Georgia between separate demographic groups. How do opinions on divorce in Georgia presently differ between members of separate age groups, financial groups, genders, ethnicities and religions? Does age play a significant role in opinions on divorce, since a person’s age may mean that they grow up with different cultural norms? What significance does religion or gender have in forming opinions on divorce?

There has in the past been research done upon the evolution of divorce laws in the United States, including discussion of how the implementation of no-fault divorce laws have impacted divorce patterns around the United States, and how changes in divorce were already occurring before the implementation of the no-fault laws. There has also been research done on a country-wide basis on how divorce is influenced by participants’ demographic groups. However, there does not appear to have been any research done on divorce in Georgia in particular; the few studies that I have found focusing on one state in particular have always been different states. There also has not been any research done in the past upon the way demographics might influence someone’s opinions on divorce.

When I began this research, I had a somewhat different goal in mind. I was initially planning to research how people’s opinions on divorce have changed over time since the no-fault

divorce laws were implemented in Georgia. While I still think that approaching the project from that angle would have had its own merit, I think that approaching the project from this angle allows for more relevancy. I plan to run a survey in order to answer the questions at hand here. My hope is that the conclusions I derive from my research and survey data will allow people of different demographic groups to have a greater understanding of one another, even if it is only from the perspective of divorce. Our views on marriage and divorce inform our views on family and what a 'family household' should look like. Whether or not it turns out that people of different demographic groups in Georgia are more or less alike than they previously believed, I do hope to be able to foster a sense of greater understanding between them.

Methods and Theory

I conducted a survey in order to gain my data, which I ran over Qualtrics; the survey is, of course, available in the appendices for anyone wanting to examine it. The survey is thirty-six questions long. The first question ascertains whether the survey-taker was both eighteen years old or older and a current resident of Georgia. The second through sixth questions gathered demographic data on the participants, of the following categories: age, gender, ethnicity, income level and religion. The seventh through thirty-sixth questions asked the participants what they thought of several issues related to divorce. The topic of these questions include what the participants thought was the likelihood of divorce for married couples of differing levels of education, or if both were highly- or not-so-highly-educated, and what the participants thought was the likelihood of divorce for married couples belonging to differing religions or ethnic groups. Other topics touched upon in the survey were what the participants thought were acceptable reasons for a married couple to divorce and whether they thought it appropriate for a couple with children to divorce.

The only requirements to take the survey was that the participant must both be eighteen years old or older and a current resident of the state of Georgia. I sought as varied a base of respondents as possible, the better to accurately represent Georgian demographics. I did not seek respondents from the country at large—that seemed too broad a focus, and focusing solely on Georgia far more manageable.

The independent variables in this research were the demographic data collected over the course of the survey, this data being the respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, annual household income and religion. By age, respondents were split into eight potential categories: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75-84, and ≥ 85 . By gender, they were split into three categories: male, female and other. By ethnicity, they were split into fourteen potential categories, and the respondents were able to choose as many as fit them. By annual household income participants were split into thirteen potential categories, and by religion, into thirty-three potential categories.

The dependent variables in this research were the participants' responses to the questions in the survey that did not gather demographic data. My goal in conducting this research was to ascertain if there were any differing opinions on divorce between members of differing demographic groups, and these questions in conjunction with the questions gathering demographic data are vital to answering that question.

I utilized a combination of Durkheimian social integration theory and cognitive anthropology to analyze my data. Social integration theory operates on the principle that members of a community will engage in dialogue with each other in order to achieve a kind of social harmony, the implication being that they will try to achieve this harmony by forming a single, cohesive narrative which all members of the community outwardly adhere to (United Nations 2005).

Cognitive anthropology is a more quantitative application of anthropological theory, and thus more suited to analyzing survey data. Cognitive anthropology focuses primarily on studying how people organize and utilize culture, providing a link between “human thought processes and the physical and ideational aspects of culture” (Simova 2009). It places more emphasis on the rules of behavior instead of on the behaviors themselves. Instead of claiming “that it can predict human behavior [it] delineates what is socially and culturally expected or appropriate in given situations, circumstances, and contexts” (Simova 2009).

Literature Review

Though I have not found any research on divorce that focuses on Georgia in particular, that is not to say that no research exists. Most of the research I’ve found pertaining to the United States has focused on the nation as a whole. Before the institution of no-fault divorce laws, divorce was granted only on the grounds of factors such as adultery, desertion, or cruelty. It is questionable whether the institution of no-fault divorce laws has actually made the divorce process more accommodating, considering that there remain the battles over alimony, child custody, and property settlements (Wright and Stetson 1978:575). However, in nearly every state in the United States, divorce rates were already rising before the enactment of no-fault divorce laws. Sometimes, the enactment of these laws would cause a spike in divorce rates, but this spike only lasted for a couple of years (Ellman and Lohr 1998:358). In fact, divorce rates in the country actually decreased by roughly 10% in the 1980s. There are four factors believed to explain this phenomenon. One, is that people began to opt to marry later on in life, after receiving more schooling. Two, is that with the rise of the availability of contraception and abortion, premarital pregnancy rates went down; marriage due to premarital pregnancy was decreasing at the same time, suggesting changing cultural views towards what the “proper” behavior is when a couple

becomes pregnant outside of wedlock. Three, is that the population had been getting older; older couples who have been married for greater periods of time (and have passed through the “high-risk” years of marriage) are less likely to divorce. The fourth and final factors was that cohabitation outside of marriage was on the rise; in effect, couples could get divorced without ever having been married, and thus the official divorce statistics may not be entirely reliable (Furstenberg 1994:30-31).

Today, determining the commonality of divorce is, unfortunately, not as straightforward as it appears. There are several states who do not submit their statistics to the federal government on a regular basis. For instance, in 2004, California, Hawaii, Georgia, Louisiana, and Indiana didn’t submit their data at all. The United States Census uses data from those states that did participate “to publish an annual crude divorce rate, which is the number of divorces per 1,000 people in the population” (Amato 2010:650).

As for research pertaining to differing opinions between demographic groups on divorce, I haven’t been able to find any research on that either so far, but I have found research pertaining to demographic factors in divorce.

Some researchers have found that age is an important factor in divorce, in that the older a person is in this day and age, the less likely they are to be divorced than those younger than them. Divorce literature also associates higher levels of education with lower rates of divorce. This same study also linked higher levels of income to a heightened divorce rate among study participants, but noted also that if the income of both parties was high enough to allow for each party to own expensive assets, the divorce rate began to drop off (Furtado et al 2013:1023; 1025). In this study, Furtado and her fellow researchers used census data as their primary source

of data, thus incurring little risk to those whose data was involved in the study; however, the researchers make no mention of trying to minimize risk.

Another study conducted by Professors Fu and Wolfinger of the University of Utah suggests that marriages between partners of different ethnic groups are more likely to end in divorce than endogamous marriages; it also notes that, according to survey data, endogamous marriages between African-Americans have a higher dissolution rate than endogamous marriages between Whites. The study also notes, however, that women's marital data tends to be more reliable than men's (Fu and Wolfinger 2011:1099; 1105-1107). This study successfully utilized data from the 1995 and 2002 surveys of the National Survey of Family Growth. Use of the data poses little risk to those whose data is being reported upon, but Fu and Wolfinger make no mention of attempting to minimize risk. When conducting research of my own, it will be interesting to see how perceptions stand up against reality.

Research suggests that somewhere between 32% and 34% of first marriages of non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women end within the first ten years, and that somewhere around 47% of African-American women's first marriages end in divorce within the first ten years. There has been research done with non-Hispanic White and African-American women that suggests that the risk of marital disruption due to age at marriage or extramarital pregnancy varies between these two groups. However, there has not been much research done on Hispanic women to this effect (Phillips and Sweeney 2005:296-297). A study conducted by Dr. Phillips of Rutgers University and Dr. Sweeney of the University of California found that White and African-American women were more likely than Mexican-American women to have cohabitated with their partners before marrying. The study also found that Mexican-American women tend to be the youngest at the age of marriage, and are least likely to marry a man who was married

beforehand. African-American women tend to have a higher age at the time of their first marriage, and are most likely to report that their parents were divorced by age 14. Mexican-American women have the lowest rates of divorce, at just 27.5% divorce rates within the first ten years of the first marriage. However, it was shown that Mexican-American women born in the United States were far more likely to experience marital disruption than Mexican-American women born outside of the United States (Phillips and Sweeney 2005:302).

There is also research on divorce that focuses on cultures as a whole, rather than simply on ethnic groups. Divorce varies according to cultural values. Three main conclusions are drawn from research studying the connection between divorce and culture. One: as a society becomes more industrialized and individualized, divorce rates show a tendency to increase. Two: as women in a society become more educated and financially independent, divorce rates tend to increase. Three: when religion is a major part of a society, divorce rates tend to be lower than when it is not. These assumptions can be rather simplistic, though; even in the same culture/society, perspectives on divorce “may differ because there is considerable variance in the communication patterns within cultures” (Afifi et al 2013:240). More individualistic cultures focus more on the individual person and their specific goals, with the group and their goals coming in second. This greater focus on the self may be more conducive to people leaving unhappy marriages for their own sakes. By contrast, more collectivist cultures tend to “have more conservative attitudes towards divorce due to their focus on group level goals. As opposed to highly individualistic cultures, people in collectivistic cultures may be more likely to stay in marriages even if they are not satisfied with the union” (Afifi et al 2013:241).

A 2014 article explores the impact conservative Protestantism can have on divorce rates. The article cites high risk factors for divorce as being “early age at marriage (particularly the

wife's age at marriage), early age at first birth, premaritally conceived birth, premarital cohabitation, lower educational attainment, lower household income, and African-American ethnicity" (Glass and Levchak 2014:1007), while going on to note that regardless of their denomination, spouses who regularly attend religious services and whose religious affiliations are similar have been found to be less likely to divorce. At the same time, the probability of divorce has been found to be particularly high when conservative Protestant women are married to men who don't share their faith. The study demonstrates that communities with large populations of conservative Protestants actually have higher divorce rates than many other communities "both because conservative Protestants themselves exhibit higher divorce risk and because individuals in communities dominated by conservative Protestants face higher divorce risks" (Glass and Levchak 2014:1031-1034).

Glass and Levchak go on to hypothesize that what links religious conservatism and higher levels of divorce is the tendency among conservative Protestants to forgo higher education in favor of getting married and having children. Having children early in young marriages, among couples who have not been particularly well-educated, along with lower rates of maternal employment, can lead to financial problems capable of straining the stability of a marriage (Glass and Levchak 2014:1034).

Another study touches on some of the same factors in divorce as Glass and Levchak's study. It helps put their study into perspective to know that sixty percent of women's first marriages will break up if they did not finish high school, and that slightly over one-third of women's first marriages will break up if they have graduated college (Raley and Bumpass 2003:249). This study also notes that more than sixty percent of marriages formed before the age of twenty end in divorce, whereas roughly forty percent of marriages formed after the age of

twenty-two end in divorce. It would seem that two years can make quite a large difference in whether or not a marriage stays together, perhaps because those two years may mean the difference between completing or not completing college. On the whole, since 1980, marital instability seems to have increased among people who have not finished high school, but not among those who have graduated college (Raley and Bumpass 2003:250-251).

A study conducted by Dr. Amato of Pennsylvania State University touched on the factors of pre-marital cohabitation and wives' employment in divorce. After couples begin cohabitating, there arise obstacles to ending the relationship, such as shared pets, possessions or children. Therefore, these couples may marry even if they would not have married were they not cohabitating. It has been noted, though, that couples who were engaged prior to cohabitating experience lower levels of marital disruption and in fact enjoy greater relationship stability after marriage than those couples who cohabitated before getting engaged (Amato 2010:652).

The same as pre-marital cohabitation, Dr. Amato noted that wives' employment can affect a marriage, but with certain conditions. Wives' employment or lack thereof has the potential to spark conflict about the household division of labor. Unfairness in the household division of labor, whether actual or perceived, is "associated with decreased marital happiness among spouses and an increased likelihood of divorce" (Amato 2010:652). Wives' work hours also tend to have a negative effect on spouses' perception of problems in the marriage. However, wives' earned income has the ability to improve the marriage overall by alleviating economic problems. It is suggested, therefore, that wives' employment have both positive and negative effects that cancel each other out and has no net effect on the stability of a marriage. At the same time, a woman having employment and income of her own makes it easier for her to leave an unhappy marriage. Research has indicated that a woman having employment increases the risk of

divorce in already-unhappy marriages, but not in marriages where there are no pre-existing problems (Amato 2010:652).

There have been noted to be at times large disparities in the divorce rates between different regions of the United States. The divorce rate has generally been higher in the West than in the East, and to a lesser extent it's been higher in the South than in the North. This can be attributed to any one (or more) of multiple factors. There are those who "attribute it largely to variation in the age distribution and marital status composition of the population; others attribute it largely to differences in the ethnic, racial, and religious composition of the population" (Glenn and Shelton 1985:641). For instance, Catholics and Jews, who have relatively low divorce rates, are concentrated in the Northeast, whereas African-Americans, who have relatively high divorce rates, are concentrated in the South. However, geographical variation in divorce isn't particularly well-understood.

Glenn and Shelton suggest that the differing divorce rates between different regions of the United States may have to do with the levels of social integration in each region.

In the Durkheimian sense, social integration involves high consensus on certain rules of behavior (norms) and effective means to ensure that most people conform to the norms most of the time. Where there is high social integration, the actions of each individual tend to complement the actions of others; the different actors play reciprocal roles; and the behavior of individuals is highly predictable because most people act most of the time as others in the group expect them to act. The absence of social integration is anomie, or normlessness, and a lack of coordinated, reciprocal, and predictable behavior of individuals. Total absence of social integration in any human aggregation is improbable,

and human groups and aggregations fall on a continuum between highly integrated and hardly integrated. [Glenn and Shelton 1985:643].

Residential movement and growth in population has been higher in the West and Southwest than other parts of the country, keeping social integration relatively low. Though the authors suppose that it may be possible that “the migration to rapidly growing parts of the country may be selective of personality types unusually prone to marital difficulties or even of persons whose marriages are already in trouble” (Glenn and Shelton 1985:642), their theory is instead that the relatively higher levels of divorce in these areas has to do with the lower levels of social integration. Namely, social integration has the largest impact on marriage and divorce rates in that where levels of social integration are higher, the norms of conduct concerning marital obligations are also stronger. The effective enforcement of these norms work to prevent discontented spouses from seeking a divorce or separation from their partner for reasons not socially approved of (Glenn and Shelton 1985:643). Though this study is an older one, I believe that it still has value in determining why divorce rates might be lower in certain regions of the country than in others.

A study conducted in the 1990s notes that under fault laws, though alimony, property distribution and child support were supposedly awarded to the “innocent” party, the law treated genders very differently. Men were usually responsible for alimony and child support, while women were usually held responsible for child custody. Nakonezny, Shull and Rogers also cite the historic role of religion and education in divorce, noting that historically a person who is observant of a religion and has attained higher education tends to be less likely to divorce. One explanation for this may be that views on divorce are derived from “theological and subcultural views on marital dissolution and family values” (Nakonezny et al 1995:478). However, the study

concluded that, among the three variables of income, education and religiosity, only median family income was a significant predictor for post-no-fault divorce rates. The divorce rate rose significantly as median family income rose. This suggests that, as no-fault divorce laws have removed many of the legal and economic costs of divorce, “there has occurred an increase in divorce among high-income families who can now expect more equitable settlements of property and spousal support” (Nakonezny et al 1995:486). The study found religiosity not to be a significant correlate of divorce, suggesting that the power of religious views to prevent the dissolution of marriage has weakened since the fault-divorce days. There could be any number of reasons why this study found religiosity not to be associated with divorce, when other studies *have* found religiosity in one form or another to be a positive or negative correlate of divorce. It could be that the different time periods in which the studies were conducted account for the disparity. It could also be that since this study focused on religiosity in general, and not one religion or one denomination of one religion in particular, this accounts for the differences in the different studies’ findings.

There is a strong association between socioeconomic status and divorce, but the relationship is more complicated than it appears at first glance. Socioeconomic measures often work in tandem with such factors as the length of the marriage and the stage of the marriage cycle, interactions between the couple, the wife’s income level, the wife’s participation in the labor force, the husband’s employment status, and monetary assets. In this study, Mullins and his co-authors posited that in the United States, the higher the level of cultural diversity in an area, the higher the rates of divorce are going to be. There has traditionally been a higher level of cultural homogeneity in the eastern portion of the United States, which has been occupied by European settlers and their descendants for the longest amount of time. The divorce rate in the eastern

portion of the United States is lower than that of the western portion, which is associated with higher geographic mobility. To back this up, the study found that living in the Plains region of the United States was negatively associated with the divorce rate, while living in the West or the South was positively associated with the divorce rate (Mullins et al 2012:25). These differences can be partially but not wholly explained by differences across the regions in religious composition. For instance, the northeast has a large concentration of Catholics and Jews, but the relatively low divorce rates in that region don't necessarily reflect "the overwhelming dominance of any one denomination whose normative expectations oppose divorce" (Mullins et al 2012:22).

There has even been a study conducted on twins, finding that the risk of divorce was significantly higher for identical twins who were the children of divorced parents than it was for fraternal twins who were the children of divorced parents. The study suggests that a person's likelihood to divorce may actually be linked to genetic factors, that divorce "runs in the family" not only on the environmental level, but on the genetic level as well, though it does stress that no single factor can ever really account for someone's likelihood to divorce (McGue and Lykken 1992:371-372).

Ultimately, I am conducting research on people's opinions on divorce, rather than the statistical likelihood that someone will get a divorce. It is interesting to note this information in light of what I discovered through my data, in that there sometimes seems to be a connection between certain groups' behaviors and their opinions on divorce, and that sometimes their opinions on divorce seemed to be in stark contrast with the statistical likelihood of them eventually seeking a divorce.

Analysis

I selected eleven dependent variable questions from my survey for analysis, using SPSS to analyze them. In SPSS, I used Pearson's chi-square to determine asymptote significance, a measure of statistical significance. If the asymptote significance is lower than .05 (5%), this indicates statistical significance; anything higher than that indicates a lack of statistical significance. As you may observe in Table 1 in Appendix B, there were several categories among the independent variable questions (those questions gathering demographic data) that either had no respondents check them off or had so few respondents select them that I was forced to jettison the categories that had no respondents (or, in one case, a category that had very few respondents) and collapse the remaining into fewer categories. For instance, from the many categories under ethnicity, for the purpose of analysis I collapsed them into 'white' and 'non-white.' Also, under gender, 'other' had so few respondents select it (191 respondents selected 'female', 36 selected 'male', and just 2 selected 'other') that I was forced to eliminate it in analysis, as its presence would have had the potential to create the illusion of statistical significance where there was none.

The dependent variable questions I chose to analyze are divided into four categories. The first category is 'Circumstances for Divorce', in which is included the question 'Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Check all that apply.' This question is relegated to its own category due to it generating far more data than the other questions were capable of on their own. The second category is 'Circumstances for Marriage', covering questions that asked respondents whether they thought a couple should marry under specific questions. The questions covered in this category are 'Do you think that, when a couple becomes pregnant out of wedlock, they should marry?' and 'Do you think that someone should wait until they have completed their education, be it from high school or college (if they have

attended college) to marry?’ The third category is ‘Questions Surrounding Divorce’, covering questions that ask the respondents their opinions on topics surrounding divorce, but *not* about the likelihood of divorce under specific circumstances. The questions covered in this category are ‘Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?’ and ‘What are your family’s views on divorce, as a whole?’ The fourth category is ‘Likelihood of Divorce’, covering questions that ask respondents their opinions on the likelihood of divorce under specific circumstances. There are six questions in this category. The first three are ‘Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?’, ‘Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?’, and ‘Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other?’ The latter three are ‘Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated, both of them in possession of at least a master’s degree?’, ‘Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?’ and ‘Do you believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities?’

Tables 2 through 17 in Appendix B cover ‘Circumstances for Divorce.’ There was one instance of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents of different genders. In this instance, women were far more likely than men to select ‘Child Abuse’ as an acceptable reason for a married couple to seek a divorce (Though in both cases, the majority of

respondents believed it an appropriate reason). There was also one case of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents of different age groups. In this case, it is made that the oldest respondents to the survey were the most likely to select 'Irreconcilable Differences' as an appropriate reason to seek a divorce. Respondents aged 18-35 believed 'Irreconcilable Differences' to be an appropriate reason to seek a divorce 37.7% of the time, respondents aged 36-45 20.3% of the time, respondents aged 46-55 49.3% of the time, and respondents aged 56-85 58.8% of the time.

In the category 'Circumstances for Divorce', there were seven instances of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents of different ethnicities. Respondents identifying as 'Non-White' were somewhat more likely to respond that they did not believe that there was any acceptable reason for a married couple to divorce (Though both white and non-white respondents overwhelmingly believed that there *was* an acceptable reason for couples to divorce; non-white respondents responded that there was no acceptable reason to divorce 7.4% of the time, and white respondents 1.4% of the time). Respondents identifying as 'White' were considerably more likely to believe that 'Spousal Abuse/Domestic Abuse', 'Marital Rape', 'Child Abuse', 'Adultery', 'Desertion', and 'Conviction of a Crime' were acceptable reasons for a couple to divorce. In some cases the figures were almost perfectly reversed, such as with the choice of 'Marital Rape' (where 72.9% of white respondents believed it an acceptable reason to divorce whereas 74.1% of non-white respondents did not believe it an acceptable reason to divorce) and 'Desertion' (Where 29.6% of non-white respondents believed it an acceptable reason to divorce whereas 28.0% of white respondents did not believe it an acceptable reason to divorce).

In the category 'Circumstances for Divorce', there were also seven instances of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents based on their religious affiliation, on whether they thought 'Irreconcilable Differences', 'Marital Rape', 'Child Abuse', 'Desertion', 'Bankruptcy', 'Conviction of a Crime' or 'Other' were acceptable reasons for a married couple to seek a divorce. In all of these cases, respondents identifying as 'Other' in their religious affiliations were the most likely to believe that these circumstances constituted acceptable reasons for a couple to divorce. Respondents identifying as 'Conservative Christianity' were the least likely to believe these reasons acceptable for a couple to divorce in every case but that of 'Other', where respondents identifying as 'Mainline Christianity' were the least likely to believe that there was another reason not listed that was an acceptable one for a couple to seek a divorce.

Tables 18 and 19 cover the category 'Circumstances for Marriage.' In this category, there were two instances of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents, one in gender and another in age. Respondents identifying as 'male' were far more likely to state that they believed that a couple, having gotten pregnant outside of wedlock, should marry, and were also more likely to state that they believed that whether a couple should marry under those circumstances depended on the circumstances. Respondents identifying as 'female', on the other hand, were the most likely to state that they believed that a couple should *not* marry simply because they had gotten pregnant outside of wedlock. Respondents aged 18-35 and 46-55 were more likely to believe that a person should wait until after completing their education to marry. Interestingly, respondents aged 18-35 were also the most likely to believe that a person should not wait until after completing their education to marry. Respondents aged 36-45 and 56-85 were

most likely to believe that whether a person should wait until after completing their education to marry depended on the circumstances.

Tables 20 through 23 cover the category ‘Questions Surrounding Divorce.’ There were four instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion: one according to age, one according to ethnicity, and two according to religious affiliation.

The question ‘Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?’ had two instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, one according to age group and the other according to religious affiliation. Respondents age 46-55 and 56-86 were the most likely to believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children (though every age group largely believed that it is acceptable), respondents aged 18-35 and 56-85 were the most likely to believe that it is not acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children, and respondents aged 36-45 were most likely to select ‘Other.’ Respondents who have ‘Other’ as their religious affiliation were the most likely to believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children (though once again, this was the majority across the board), respondents identifying as ‘Mainline Christianity’ were the most likely to say that it is not acceptable, and respondents identifying as ‘Conservative Christianity’ were most likely to select ‘Other.’

The question ‘What are your family’s views on divorce, as a whole?’ also had two instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, one according to ethnicity and the other according to religious affiliation. Respondents identifying as ‘Non-White’ were the most likely to state that their families both believe it acceptable and unacceptable for a couple to divorce, whereas respondents identifying as ‘White’ were the most likely to state that their family considers it acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under specific

circumstances. Respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Other’ were the most likely to state that their family either considers it acceptable or unacceptable for a couple to divorce; respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Conservative Christianity’ were the most likely to state that their family considers it acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under specific circumstances.

Tables 24 through 31 cover the category ‘Likelihood of Divorce.’ There were eight instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, two according to gender (though one of these was only a borderline case of statistical significance), one according to age, two according to annual household income and three according to religious affiliation.

The question ‘Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?’ had two cases of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, one according to annual household income and the other to the respondents’ religious affiliation. Respondents whose annual household income was over \$100,000 were the most likely to respond that they believe that a couple who married before one or both parties finished their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited. Respondents whose annual household income was <\$5,000-\$39,999 were the most likely to respond that they do not believe that a couple who married before one or both parties finished their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited. Respondents whose annual household income was \$40,000-\$69,999 were most likely to state that they do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorce, and respondents who answered ‘N/A’ on annual household income were the most likely to report that they believe it depends on the circumstances. There was a rough consensus between respondents of different

religious affiliations on marrying before finishing high school being a factor more likely to make a couple divorce; the percentages ranged between 58.1% and 61.0% in favor of couples being more likely to divorce under these circumstances. Respondents identifying as ‘Conservative Christianity’ were far more likely to believe that this has no bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing, and was by far the least likely to state that they believed it depended on the circumstances.

The question ‘Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?’ also had two cases of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, one according to age and the other according to religious affiliation. Respondents aged 36-45 were the most likely to state that they believe that a couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs; they were also the most likely to state that they don’t believe this has any bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorce. Respondents aged 56-85 were the most likely to respond both that they do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce under these circumstances, and that they believe it depends on the circumstances. Respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Conservative Christianity’ were the most likely to state both that they believe that a couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce and that they believe this has no bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing. Respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Other’ were the most likely to state both that they do not believe that a couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce, and that they believe it depends on the circumstances.

Under the question ‘Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other?’, there was one instance of statistical significance in the respondents’ difference of opinions, according to the respondents’ gender. Men were more likely to believe both that a couple was more likely to divorce under these circumstances and that it has no bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing, whereas women were more likely to believe that a couple is not more likely to divorce under these circumstances.

For the question ‘Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?’, there were two instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ difference of opinions, one according to gender and the other according to annual household income. The one that occurs according to gender is actually a case of borderline statistical significance, as the asymptote significance number is .055 (normally the number has to be .05 or smaller to be considered truly ‘significant’), but I considered this one close enough to .05 to warrant mentioning. Men were far more likely to believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither parties are particularly highly-educated, whereas women were more likely to believe both that couples are not more likely to divorce under these circumstances, and that it does not have any bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing. Respondents whose annual income level is \$100,000 or higher were the most likely to believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither parties are particularly highly-educated. Respondents who answered ‘N/A’ were the most likely to believe that a couple is not more likely to divorce under these circumstances, and respondents whose annual income level is \$40,000-\$69,999 were the most likely to state that they do not believe this has any bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing.

Lastly, the question ‘Do you believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities?’ had one instance of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion, this time according to religious affiliation. Respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Conservative Christianity’ were the most likely to believe that a couple is more likely to divorce under these circumstances, that a couple is *not* more likely to divorce under these circumstances, and that this does not have any bearing on a couple’s likelihood of divorcing. Respondents whose religious affiliation is ‘Mainline Christianity’ were the most likely to believe that it depends on the circumstances.

As a whole, there were thirty instances of statistical significance in the respondents’ differences of opinion for the questions I chose to analyze. Twelve of these instances were according to religious affiliation. Eight were according to ethnicity. Four were according to age. Three (or four, if you include the borderline case of statistical significance spoken of earlier) were according to gender. Two were according to annual household income.

Conclusion

From the results of my research, it appears that differences in thought upon divorce are drawn largely on lines of religious affiliation and ethnicity, rather than upon age, gender or annual household income. That annual household income had the least amount of instances of statistical significance in the difference of opinions between respondents was not particularly surprising. Thanks to the vagaries of today’s economy, an individual can be well-off financially one day and then become significantly less well-off within a short amount of time. An individual’s current household income does not necessarily reflect the standard of living they are accustomed to, nor their values. That age and gender do not appear to play a particularly

significant role in formulating a person's opinions on divorce was more surprising, but as it stands, that I thought so seems only to be a sign of my own preconceived notions, and the results of my research that which gives the lie to them. It may also represent a flaw in the way I distributed my survey, as the majority of my respondents were between the ages of 25 and 55 (with significantly smaller numbers of respondents falling into the other age groups) and the vast majority of my respondents were women, with only 36 men and 2 respondents identifying as 'Other' present.

Existing literature has found that, in the United States, the first marriages of African-American women are more likely to end in divorce within ten years than those of non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women—the rates are 47% for African-American women and somewhere between 32% and 34% for non-Hispanic White and Hispanic women (Phillips and Sweeney 2005:296). It should be noted that I say 'women', as women's marital data tends to be more reliable than men's (Fu and Wolfinger 2011:1099). It is interesting, then, that my research has found that 'Non-White' respondents were more likely to state that a potential reason to divorce (such as adultery, child abuse and marital rape) was *not* an acceptable reason for a couple to seek a divorce. The reason for this disparity could possibly be that though an individual might believe in certain societal rules and seek to abide by them in order to maintain social harmony, conditions in their marriage might become so unbearable to them that they are willing to break the rules set down by their community in order to escape.

Existing literature also links conservative Protestantism to divorce under specific circumstances, such as foregoing higher education in favor of early marriage and childrearing, and when Protestant women are married to men who don't share their religious beliefs (Glass and Levchak 2014:1007; 1034). My research found that respondents identifying as 'Conservative

Christianity' in their religious affiliations actually do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if the members possess differing religious beliefs or if the couple married before one or more of the parties involved finished high school.

Beyond comparing my research results with pre-existing literature, I was able to pick out a few trends. As mentioned earlier, respondents identifying as 'Non-White' are less likely to believe that a potential reason for a couple to divorce is actually an acceptable reason for a couple to divorce, whereas respondents identifying as 'White' are more likely to believe that a potential reason for divorce is an acceptable reason. In addition, respondents identifying as 'Non-White' were more likely to state that their family either believes that it is acceptable or unacceptable for a couple to divorce without condition, while respondents identifying as 'White' were most likely to state that their family believes it acceptable for a couple to divorce, with conditions.

Respondents whose religious affiliation is identified as 'Conservative Christianity' were the most likely to state that they believe that a potential reason for a couple to divorce is *not* an acceptable reason, whereas respondents whose religious affiliation is identified as 'Other' were the most likely to state that they believe that a potential reason for a couple to divorce is an acceptable reason for that couple to seek a divorce. Respondents whose religious affiliation is identified as 'Conservative Christianity' were also the most likely to state that their family does consider divorce acceptable under certain circumstances, and the least likely to state that they believe it acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children (And in that case, were the most likely to pick 'Other' as the answer to the question). They were the most likely to believe that couples with differing religious beliefs, couples whose members are of differing ethnicities, and couples whose members (either one or both) are not particularly highly educated are more

likely to seek a divorce. Respondents whose religious affiliation is listed as 'Other' were conversely the most likely to state that they believe it acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children, that their family does believe it acceptable for a couple to divorce, were the most likely to believe that couples whose members are not particularly highly educated or are of differing religions are not more likely to divorce, and overwhelmingly believe that a couple being of differing ethnicities either has no bearing on their likelihood of divorce, or that it does, but only under certain circumstances. Respondents identifying as 'Mainline Christianity' typically fell in between 'Conservative Christianity' and 'Other' in the percentages.

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from these trends. It can be assumed that non-White communities in Georgia feel that there are fewer acceptable reasons for a couple to divorce, and that whether or not they feel it acceptable for a couple to divorce, it must either be completely acceptable or completely unacceptable, without conditions or any ambiguity. The societal rules state that there are few truly acceptable reasons for a couple to divorce, but the higher rates of divorce among African-American women, at least, would suggest that while there are few truly acceptable reasons for a couple to divorce, if the choice is one between staying in an unhappy marriage or leaving, leaving is the preferred path. However, there is a danger in generalizing under these circumstances, as the number of non-White respondents to my survey was so small as compared to the number of White respondents, and the term 'Non-White' covers a vast range of diverse communities. If in future I could run the survey again and find a way to collect a more representative sample of Georgia's ethnic demographics, then these statements could be re-evaluated.

Conservative Christians are also shown to have a narrow range of what constitutes an acceptable reason for a couple to divorce. At the same time, as a whole they do seem to feel it

acceptable for a couple to divorce under certain circumstances, suggesting an unwillingness to bar the door entirely against the possibility of divorce. Their beliefs that a couple is more likely to divorce if one or both members is not particularly highly educated, if the members are of differing religions or ethnicities are beliefs actually borne out by past statistical research. This would suggest that the group consensus among the conservative Christian community is that while divorce is usually not approved of, it is not completely unacceptable, and if the belief is that divorce is more likely under certain circumstances, better to acknowledge as much than ignore it.

Those whose religious affiliations fall under 'Other', on the other hand, both take a more tolerant approach to the topic of divorce and do not seem to consider it acceptable to assert that a couple's differences are likely to end their relationship. Like non-White communities, however, respondents whose religious affiliations fall under 'Other', cover such a vast range of differing religious beliefs and diverse communities that generalizing seems unfair.

As I said earlier, respondents whose religious affiliation is listed as 'Mainline Christianity' tend to fall in between these two extremes. As a whole, they are more likely to believe that a particular reason to divorce is an acceptable one, and believe it acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children; their families treat divorce as acceptable under certain circumstances. They believe a couple more likely to divorce if one or neither are particularly highly educated, and believe that whether a couple is more likely to divorce due to differences of religion or ethnicity depends on the circumstances. What this suggests is a society that encourages tolerance towards divorce, but does hold that factors either within or outside of a couple's control might make them more likely to divorce.

At the risk of sounding redundant, I do think that this research had its flaws. If in future the survey could be re-conducted, and this time with a way to ensure a more representative sample of Georgia's demographic groups across age, gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity and annual household income, the results I glean might be somewhat different.

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Appendix A: The survey in entirety

Part 1

What is your age?

- 18-24
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76-85
- Greater than 85

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

What is your ethnicity? (Please check all that apply.)

- African-American
- Asian-American
- East Asian
- Filipino
- Hispanic
- Inuit
- Latino
- Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian
- Native American
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- North African
- White
- Other _____

What is your annual household income?

- Under \$5,000
- \$5,000-\$9,999
- \$10,000-\$19,999
- \$20,000-\$29,999

- \$30,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$69,999
- \$70,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-\$89,999
- \$90,000-\$99,999
- More than \$100,000
- N/A _____

What is your religion?

- Christian
 - Catholic
 - Baptist
 - Methodist
 - Lutheran
 - Presbyterian
 - Episcopalian/Anglican
 - Pentecostal
 - Mormon/Latter Day Saints
 - Jehovah's Witness
 - Seventh-day Adventist
 - Assembly of God
 - Eastern Orthodox
 - Evangelical
 - Mennonite
 - Nondenominational
 - Quaker
 - Other _____
- Muslim
 - Sunni
 - Shi'a
 - Sufism
 - Other _____
- Judaism
- Sikh
- Hindu
- Unitarian
- Wiccan
- Pagan

- Buddhist
 - Atheist
 - Agnostic
 - Humanist
 - Scientology
 - Other_____
-

PART 2A

Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Check all that apply.

- None
- Irreconcilable differences
- Spousal abuse/Domestic abuse
- Marital rape
- Child abuse
- Adultery
- Desertion
- Bankruptcy
- Conviction of a crime (either one or both spouses being convicted of a crime)
- Other_____

SCENARIO: A married couple divorces because one party owns a cat, the other party is severely allergic to cats, and the former can't be persuaded to separate with the cat in spite of their spouse's allergy. Does this constitute irreconcilable differences?

- Yes
- No

SCENARIO: A person claims that they will harm their spouse because their spouse is threatening to leave them. Does this constitute domestic abuse?

- Yes
- No

SCENARIO: A person claims that they will commit suicide to convince their spouse to remain married to them. Does this constitute domestic abuse?

- Yes
- No

Do you believe that it is possible for someone to rape their spouse?

- Yes
- No

SCENARIO: A married person engages in an emotional relationship with a person not their spouse over the Internet, but the two never meet in person. Does this constitute adultery?

- Yes
- No

Do you believe that a married person having sex with someone who is not their spouse is only adultery if the act is voluntary, or also if it is not voluntary?

- I believe that adultery has occurred only if a married person has voluntarily had sex with someone who is not their spouse.
- I believe that adultery has occurred if a married person has voluntarily *or* involuntarily had sex with someone who is not their spouse.

SCENARIO: A person abandons their spouse without that person's provocation or consent. After eight months without either seeing or hearing from them, the spouse who was left behind files for divorce. Will that person be able to obtain a divorce on grounds of desertion?

- Yes
- No

PART 2B

Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?

- Yes
- No
- Other _____

Do you think that a divorce should be easy to obtain or difficult to obtain?

- I think that a divorce should be easy to obtain.
- I think that a divorce should be difficult to obtain.
- I think that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you think that it is acceptable for someone, having divorced, to remarry?

- I do think that it is acceptable for someone, having divorced, to remarry.
- I do not think that it is acceptable for someone, having divorced, to remarry.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that getting a divorce sets a pattern, that a person who gets a divorce is more likely to get a divorce in the future than a person who has never been divorced?

- I do believe that divorce sets a pattern, and that a divorced person is more likely to divorce again if they remarry than a person who has never been divorced before.
- I do not believe that divorce sets a pattern, and that a divorced person is more likely to divorce again if they remarry than a person who has never been divorced before.
- I believe that it depends upon the circumstances.

Do you think that, when a couple becomes pregnant out of wedlock, they should marry?

- I do think that a couple, having become pregnant out of wedlock, should marry.
- I do not think that a couple, having become pregnant out of wedlock, should marry for that reason alone.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple who married because they became pregnant is more likely to divorce than a couple who did not marry simply because they became pregnant?

- I do believe that a couple who married because they became pregnant is more likely to divorce than one who did not marry for that reason.
- I do not believe that a couple who married because they became pregnant is more likely to divorce than one who did not marry for that reason.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you think that someone should wait until they have completed their education, be it from high school or college (if they have attended college) to marry?

- I do think that a person should wait until they have completed their education to marry.
- I do not think that a person should wait until they have graduated from college to marry.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their college education, if they attended college, is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished college?

- I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their college education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.
- I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their college education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?

- I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.
- I do not believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

Are your views on divorce influenced by your religious beliefs?

- Yes, my views on divorce are influenced by my religious beliefs.
- No, my views on divorce are not influenced by my religious beliefs.
- My views on divorce as influenced by my religious beliefs only under certain circumstances. _____
- I do not belong to any religion. My views on divorce are influenced by my moral and ethical beliefs.
- I do not belong to any religion. My views on divorce are not influenced by my moral or ethical beliefs.
- My views on divorce are influenced by my moral and ethical beliefs, but only under certain circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?

- I do believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.
- I do not believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe that it depends on the circumstances. _____

What are your family's views on divorce, as a whole?

- My family believes that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce.
- My family does not believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce.
- My family does believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under certain circumstances. _____

Do you believe that it is acceptable for a couple to cohabitate without having first married, or without any intentions of marrying?

- I believe that it is acceptable for a couple to cohabitate without first having married, or without any intentions of marrying.
- I do not believe that it is acceptable for a couple to cohabitate without having first married, or without any intentions of marrying.
- I believe that it is acceptable, but only under certain circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple who cohabitated before marrying knows each other better than a couple who did not cohabitate before marrying, and is less likely to divorce?

- I do believe that a couple who cohabitated before marrying knows each other better than a couple who did not cohabitate before marrying, and is less likely to divorce.
- I do not believe that a couple who cohabitated before marrying knows each other better than a couple who did not cohabitate before marrying, and is less likely to divorce.
- I don't believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe it depends upon the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple who waited until marrying to have sex and cohabitate is less likely to divorce?

- I do believe that a couple who waited until marrying to have sex and cohabitate is less likely to divorce.
- I do believe that a couple who waited until marrying to have sex and cohabitate is less likely to divorce.
- I don't believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- I believe it depends upon the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other?

- I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other.
- I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.

Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated, both of them in possession of at least a master's degree?

- I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated.
- I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.

Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?

- I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.
- I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.

Do you believe it acceptable to deny a party in a divorce alimony if they have committed adultery?

- I believe it acceptable to deny a party in a divorce alimony if they have committed adultery.
- I do not believe it acceptable to deny a party in a divorce alimony if they have committed adultery.
- I believe that it depends upon the circumstances of the adultery. _____

Do you believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities?

- I do believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities.
- I do not believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- It depends on the circumstances. _____

Do you believe that a married couple whose members are more than ten years apart in age are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members are not more than ten years apart in age?

- I do believe that a married couple whose members are more than ten years apart in age are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members are not more than ten years apart in age.
- I do not believe that a married couple whose members are more than ten years apart in age are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members are not more than ten years apart in age.
- I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.
- It depends on the circumstances. _____

Appendix B

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics			
Variables	Yes	No	
Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Check all that apply.			
• None	5	236	
• Irreconcilable differences	91	150	
• Spousal abuse/Domestic abuse	207	34	
• Marital rape	163	78	
• Child abuse	186	55	
• Adultery	195	46	
• Desertion	162	79	
• Bankruptcy	26	215	
• Conviction of a crime (either one or both spouses being convicted of a crime)	106	135	
• Other	11	230	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean
Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?			1.42
• Yes	164	74.9%	
• No	19	8.7%	
• Other	36	16.4%	
Do you think that, when a couple becomes pregnant out of wedlock, they should marry?			2.27
• I do think that a couple, having become pregnant out of wedlock, should marry.	20	9.2%	
• I do not think that a couple, having become pregnant out of wedlock, should marry for that reason alone.	119	54.6%	
• I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	79	36.2%	
Do you think that someone should wait until they have completed their education, be it from high school or college (if they have attended college) to marry?			1.85
• I do think that a person should wait until they have completed their education to marry.	101	49.5%	
• I do not think that a person should wait until they have graduated from college to marry.	33	16.2%	
• I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	70	34.3%	
Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?			1.94

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited. 	123	60.3%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited. 	5	2.5%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	4	20.6%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that it depends on the circumstances. 	34	16.7%	
Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?			2.33
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs. 	89	43.6%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs. 	26	12.7%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	22	10.8%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that it depends on the circumstances. 	67	32.8%	
What are your family's views on divorce, as a whole?			2.36
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My family believes that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce. 	56	27.6%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My family does not believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce. 	17	8.4%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My family does believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under certain circumstances. 	130	64.0%	
Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other?			2.26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other. 	47	23.2%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other. 	56	27.6%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	100	49.3%	
Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if			2.6

they are both highly educated, both of them in possession of at least a master's degree?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated. 	8	4.0%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if they are both highly educated. 	64	32.0%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	128	64.0%	
Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?			2.29
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated. 	48	24.0%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated. 	47	23.5%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	105	52.5%	
Do you believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities?			2.68
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities. 	35	17.5%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities. 	44	22.0%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing. 	71	35.5%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It depends on the circumstances. 	50	35.0%	
What is your age?			3.26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-24 	14	6.1%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25-35 	55	24.0%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36-45 	59	25.8%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46-55 	67	29.3%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 56-65 	28	12.2%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66-75 	5	2.2%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76-85 	1	0.4%	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater than 85 	0	0%	
What gender do you identify as?			1.85

• Male	36	15.7%	
• Female	191	83.4%	
• Other	2	0.9%	
What is your ethnicity? (Please check all that apply.)	Number		
• African-American	12		
• Asian-American	1		
• East Asian	0		
• Filipino	1		
• Hispanic	2		
• Inuit	0		
• Latino	1		
• Middle Eastern/Southwest Asian	1		
• Native American	1		
• Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1		
• North African	0		
• South Asian	0		
• White	214		
• Other	0		
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean
What is your annual household income?			9.28
• Under \$5,000	4	1.8	
• \$5,000-\$9,999	4	1.8	
• \$10,000-\$19,999	7	3.1	
• \$20,000-\$29,999	6	2.6	
• \$30,000-\$39,999	7	3.1	
• \$40,000-\$49,999	13	5.7	
• \$50,000-\$59,999	16	7.0	
• \$60,000-\$69,999	21	9.2	
• \$70,000-\$79,999	21	9.2	
• \$80,000-\$89,999	26	11.4	
• \$90,000-\$99,999	25	11.0	
• More than \$100,000	72	31.6	
• N/A	6	2.6	
What is your religion?			6.43
• Christian: Catholic	10	4.4%	
• Christian: Baptist	110	48.0%	
• Christian: Methodist	45	19.7%	
• Christian: Lutheran	4	1.7%	
• Christian: Presbyterian	7	3.1%	
• Christian: Episcopalian/Anglican	4	1.7%	

• Christian: Pentecostal	3	1.3%	
• Christian: Mormon/Latter Day Saints	0	0%	
• Christian: Jehovah's Witness	1	0.4%	
• Christian: Seventh-Day Adventist	0	0%	
• Christian: Assembly of God	1	0.4%	
• Christian: Eastern Orthodox	0	0%	
• Christian: Evangelical	0	0%	
• Christian: Mennonite	0	0%	
• Christian: Nondenominational	16	7.0%	
• Christian: Quaker	1	0.4%	
• Christian: Other	5	2.2%	
• Islam: Sunni	0	0%	
• Islam: Shi'a	0	0%	
• Islam: Sufism	0	0%	
• Islam: Other	0	0%	
• Judaism	0	0%	
• Sikh	0	0%	
• Hindu	0	0%	
• Unitarian Universalism	1	0.4%	
• Wiccan	0	0%	
• Pagan	2	0.9%	
• Buddhist	1	0.4%	
• Atheist	7	3.1%	
• Agnostic	7	3.1%	
• Humanist	1	0.4%	
• Scientology	0	0%	
• Other	3	1.3%	

*In asymptote significance, a number of less than .05 is indicative of statistical significance. A number of greater than .05 is indicative of a lack of statistical significance.

Circumstances for Divorce

Table 2. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Child Abuse		
Gender		
Asymptote Significance: .042		
	Male	Female
Yes	69.4%	83.8%
No	30.6%	16.2%

Table 3. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?
Irreconcilable differences

Age				
Asymptote Significance: .001				
	18-35	36-45	46-55	56-85
Yes	37.7%	20.3%	49.3%	58.8%
No	62.3%	79.7%	50.7%	41.2%

Table 4. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
None		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .039		
	White	Non-White
Yes	1.4%	7.4%
No	98.6%	92.6%

Table 5. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Spousal Abuse/Domestic Abuse		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .000		
	White	Non-White
Yes	91.6%	40.7%
No	8.4%	59.3%

Table 6. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Marital Rape		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .000		
	White	Non-White
Yes	72.9%	25.9%
No	27.1%	74.1%

Table 7. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Child Abuse		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .000		
	White	Non-White
Yes	82.7%	33.3%
No	17.3%	66.7%

Table 8. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Adultery		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .000		
	White	Non-White
Yes	86.4%	37.0%
No	13.6%	63.0%

Table 9. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Desertion		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .000		
	White	Non-White
Yes	72.0%	29.6%
No	28.0%	70.4%

Table 10. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?		
Conviction of a crime		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .005		
	White	Non-White
Yes	47.2%	18.5%
No	52.8%	81.5%

Table 11. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?			
Irreconcilable differences			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .000			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	48.3%	27.0%	78.1%
No	51.7%	73.0%	21.9%

Table 12. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?			
Marital Rape			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .012			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	75.0%	65.0%	90.6%
No	25.0%	35.0%	9.4%

Table 13. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?			
Child Abuse			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .014			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	86.7%	83.9%	87.5%
No	13.3%	16.1%	12.5%

Table 14. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce?			
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Desertion			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .007			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	70.0%	65.7%	93.8%
No	30.0%	34.3%	6.3%

Table 15. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Bankruptcy			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .000			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	11.7%	4.4%	40.6%
No	88.3%	95.6%	59.4%

Table 16. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Conviction of a crime			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .000			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	53.3%	34.3%	84.4%
No	46.7%	65.7%	15.6%

Table 17. Under what circumstances do you consider it acceptable for a couple to divorce? Other			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .027			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	0.0%	5.1%	12.5%
No	100.0%	94.9%	87.5%

Circumstances for Marriage

Table 18. Do you think that, when a couple becomes pregnant out of wedlock, they should marry?		
Gender		
Asymptote Significance: .001		
	Male	Female
I do think that a couple, having become pregnant out of wedlock, should marry.	25.0%	6.0%
I do not think that a couple, having become pregnant	34.4%	58.7%

out of wedlock, should marry for that reason alone.		
I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	40.6%	35.3%

Table 19. Do you think that someone should wait until they have completed their education, be it from high school or college (if they have attended college) to marry?				
Age				
Asymptote Significance: .028				
	18-35	36-45	46-55	56-85
I do think that a person should wait until they have completed their education to marry.	57.6%	44.0%	54.0%	34.4%
I do not think that a person should wait until they have graduated from college to marry.	22.0%	14.0%	15.9%	9.4%
I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	20.3%	42.0%	30.2%	56.3%

Questions Surrounding Divorce

Table 20. Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?				
Age				
Asymptote Significance: .037				
	18-35	36-45	46-55	56-85
Yes	72.3%	69.1%	80.0%	79.4%
No	13.8%	3.6%	4.6%	14.7%
Other	13.8%	27.3%	15.4%	5.9%

Table 21. Do you think that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce when they have children?			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .015			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
Yes	80.4%	68.7%	90.6%
No	12.5%	8.4%	3.1%
Other	7.1%	22.9%	6.3%

Table 22. What are your family's views on divorce, as a whole?		
Ethnicity		
Asymptote Significance: .015		
	White	Non-White
My family believes that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce.	25.4%	57.1%
My family does not believe that it is acceptable for a	7.9%	14.3%

couple to divorce.		
My family does believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under certain circumstances.	66.7%	28.6%

Table 23. What are your family's views on divorce, as a whole?			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .000			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
My family believes that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce.	30.6%	17.9%	61.3%
My family does not believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce.	8.2%	8.1%	9.7%
My family does believe that it is acceptable for a couple to divorce, but only under certain circumstances.	61.2%	74.0%	29.0%

Likelihood of Divorce

Table 24. Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?					
Annual Household Income					
Asymptote Significance: .004					
	<\$5,000-\$39,999	\$40,000-\$69,999	\$70,000-\$99,999	>\$100,000	N/A
I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.	46.2%	57.8%	54.5%	75.8%	40.0%
I do not believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.	11.5%	2.2%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%
I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	23.1%	28.9%	24.2%	11.3%	0.0%

I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	19.2%	11.1%	21.2%	11.3%	60.0%
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Table 25. Do you believe that a couple who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited until one or both parties finished high school?			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .022			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
I do believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.	60.0%	61.0%	58.1%
I do not believe that who married before one or both parties completed their high school education is more likely to divorce than a couple who waited.	0.0%	2.4%	6.5%
I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	14.0%	26.0%	9.7%
I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	26.0%	10.6%	25.8%

Table 26. Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?				
Age				
Asymptote Significance: .023				
	18-35	36-45	46-55	56-85
I do believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.	42.4%	54.0%	44.4%	28.1%
I do not believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.	16.9%	6.0%	11.1%	18.8%
I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	3.4%	20.0%	12.7%	6.3%

I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	37.3%	20.0%	31.7%	46.9%
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Table 27. Do you believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs (such as them belonging to two different religions or one of them belonging to a religion while the other does not) is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs?

Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .010			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
I do believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.	32.0%	53.7%	22.6%
I do not believe that a married couple with differing religious beliefs is more likely to divorce than a couple who does not have differing religious beliefs.	18.0%	8.1%	22.6%
I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	10.0%	11.4%	9.7%
I believe that it depends on the circumstances.	40.0%	26.8%	45.2%

Table 28. Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other?

Gender		
Asymptote Significance: .040		
	Male	Female
I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other.	32.3%	20.6%
I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if one of them is significantly more highly educated than the other.	9.7%	31.2%
I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	58.1%	48.2%

Table 29. Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?

Gender	
Asymptote Significance: .055 (This is technically only a borderline case of statistical significance, but was close enough that I felt it worth talking about in the analysis)	

	Male	Female
I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.	41.4%	21.3%
I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.	13.8%	24.9%
I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	44.8%	53.8%

Table 30. Do you believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated, in possession of a high school diploma or less?					
Annual Household Income					
Asymptote Significance: .003					
	<\$5,000- \$39,999	\$40,000- \$69,999	\$70,000- \$99,999	>\$100,000	N/A
I do believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.	13.0%	20.0%	24.6%	32.3%	0.0%
I do not believe that a couple is more likely to divorce if neither of them are particularly highly educated.	34.8%	20.0%	18.5%	21.0%	100.0%
I do not believe that this has any bearing on a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	52.2%	60.0%	56.9%	46.8%	0.0%

Table 31. Do you believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities?			
Religion			
Asymptote Significance: .044			
	Mainline Christianity	Conservative Christianity	Other
I do believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose members do not belong to different ethnicities.	12.0%	21.7%	10.0%
I do not believe that a married couple whose members belong to different ethnicities are more likely to divorce than a married couple whose	22.0%	23.3%	16.7%

members do not belong to different ethnicities.			
I do not believe that this has any bearing upon a couple's likelihood of divorcing.	28.0%	38.3%	36.7%
It depends on the circumstances.	38.0%	16.7%	36.7%