
Attitudes toward marriage: Embeddedness and outcomes in personal relationships

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Abstract

This study examines marriage attitudes, attitude embeddedness, personal relationship outcomes, and parental marital status and conflict using 400 undergraduate students. In a conceptual replication of Prislin and Ouellette (1996), more embedded marriage attitudes are more predictive of evaluations of general marriage issues and relationship quality scenarios than less embedded attitudes. Consistent with findings that marriage attitudes influence relationship quality (Amato & Rogers, 1999), more embedded attitudes predict relationship conflict, commitment, desirability of alternatives, and expectations of relationship success. Recollections of high parental conflict are associated with greater relationship conflict, and individuals with divorced parents report more negative marriage attitudes. Future research on relationship attitudes, their strength, and consequences of parental divorce and conflict for offspring marriage attitudes is discussed.

Relationship theorists have become increasingly interested in examining relationship attitudes and beliefs as features of relationship schemata, including relations with outcomes in personal relationships (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992). Marriage attitudes are likely to be enmeshed in a complexly structured cognitive schema that contains beliefs and feelings about romantic relationships acquired through experience (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). A basic premise of social cognition and relationship schema theories is that individuals build cognitive representations of critical events, including personal relationships, which they rely on as bases of perception, interpretation, and behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). Although features of relationship schema may operate outside of conscious awareness (Fletcher, Rosanowski, & Fitness, 1994), consciously expressed feelings and evaluations of

relationships are also linked to relationship outcomes, including interaction behaviors and dissolution (Amato & Rogers, 1999; Fincham & Bradbury, 1990). Previous research also suggests that parental marital status and conflict may influence individuals' relationship attitudes and their strength (Amato & DeBoer, 2001), with stronger attitudes more predictive of features of romantic relationships (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Riggio & Fite, 2006). The present study examines how marriage attitudes varying in embeddedness—the strength of an attitude based on its cognitive interconnections with other concepts (Prislin & Ouellette, 1996)—relate to evaluations of marriage scenarios and issues, general expectations of relationship success, and outcomes in romantic relationships. We also examine parental marital status and recollections of parental conflict in relation to attitudes, embeddedness, and outcomes.

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Strength of relationship attitudes

Relationship theorists have argued that in addition to emotional experiences, cognitive interpretations of relationship events are proximal determinants of personal motives within

intimate relationships (Rusbult, Yovetich, & Verette, 1996). Reflecting the meaningful influence of relationship attitudes on relationship maintenance and stability, longitudinal research indicates that positive divorce attitudes are harmful to marital quality over time and are related to the occurrence of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1999). Attitudes that view divorce as not necessarily harmful or negative, or attitudes that marriage is not necessarily positive or beneficial, may affect behaviors and attitudes within personal relationships, particularly when attitudes are strong. Stronger attitudes are more stable and predictive of behavior (cf. Eagly & Chaiken, 1998), and attitudes that are specific, evaluatively extreme, important, self-relevant, or chronically accessible are more resistant to persuasion and more likely to guide behavior than other attitudes (Ajzen, 2001). Strong relationship beliefs may be chronically accessible so that attitudes are more easily activated and more frequently used to process perceptions and guide behavior, including in an automatic fashion (Fletcher & Fitness, 1993; Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1991; Fletcher et al., 1994). Recent research indicates that accessibility of commitment to current relationships moderates relations between commitment and relationship stability over time (Etcheverry & Le, 2005).

Interattitudinal connections are one important feature of attitude strength, including *embeddedness*, conceptualized as connections between an attitude and other units of the cognitive system (Prislin & Ouellette, 1996). This conceptualization suggests that activation of one system element triggers activation of other elements; with highly embedded attitudes containing more elements, events or social situations are more likely to activate those attitudes (Higgins, 1996). Highly embedded attitudes are hence stronger because they are more likely to influence perception and behavior. Prislin and Ouellette (1996) also suggested that ambiguous situations will activate a highly embedded attitude, whereas less embedded attitudes might not be activated as readily unless situations are highly relevant. Other research suggests that stronger attitudes are more likely to influence evaluations and behaviors

that are related less directly to the central attitude issue (Crano & Chen, 1998).

Prislin and Ouellette (1996) operationalized attitude embeddedness as the number of free associations generated in response to the attitude object, and hypothesized that highly embedded attitudes would exert greater influence on evaluations in a wider range of situations than less embedded attitudes. They found that whereas attitudes toward the death penalty predicted evaluations of scenarios highly relevant to capital punishment (e.g., an execution) for participants high and low in embeddedness, attitudes were predictive of evaluation of more ambiguous, less centrally relevant scenarios (e.g., the right to live) only for high-embeddedness participants. They also found that highly embedded attitudes predicted behavioral intentions toward an issue-related service project, whereas less embedded attitudes did not.

In an investigation of the strength of attitudes about divorce, Riggio and Fite (2006) found that highly embedded divorce attitudes were more likely than weaker attitudes to be used in evaluating general issues not directly involving a personal relationship (e.g., state legislation affecting the difficulty in obtaining a divorce), and that more positive divorce attitudes were related to poorer relationship outcomes (e.g., greater conflict, less closeness), especially stronger attitudes. Similarly, Etcheverry and Le (2005) found that higher accessibility of commitment cognitions moderated relations between commitment and relationship behaviors involving accommodation and willingness to sacrifice for one's relationship. Individuals possessing highly embedded marriage attitudes may use such attitudes more frequently in processing information about romantic relationships in general and in processing information within current personal relationships, with the valence or emotional tone of the attitude more strongly influencing outcomes in those relationships. Highly embedded positive marriage attitudes may be influential for behavior within personal relationships as individuals strive to avoid dissolution and maintain the quality of the relationship, whereas highly embedded negative marriage attitudes may affect beliefs

about relationship commitment and maintaining less than satisfying relationships. Stronger marriage attitudes may lead to attitude-consistent interpretations of ambiguous situations in personal relationships, including interpretations of one's own and partners' behaviors, thus ultimately affecting relationship outcomes (Etcheverry & Le, 2005).

Regardless of marriage attitude valence, highly embedded attitudes would be expected to have a stronger influence on indirect attitudes (Crano & Chen, 1998), and thus be linked more strongly to general relationship beliefs and actual relationship behaviors and outcomes than less embedded attitudes. Furthermore, direct experience with the parental marital relationship, the primary model of male–female romantic relationships (Bandura, 1986), also should be linked to offspring relationship attitudes and their strength (Fazio, 1989). Individuals from divorced families experience different personal relationship outcomes than individuals from intact families, and report more negative views of marriage, more positive views of divorce, and greater acceptance of nontraditional family forms (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Tasker & Richards, 1994). Marriage attitudes may be more embedded for adult offspring of divorce and for individuals raised in high-conflict families, where marital discord and dissatisfaction may have been particularly salient.

The present study

The present study used self-report methodology to focus on three separate but related issues. First, in a conceptual replication of Prislín and Ouellette (1996), and Riggio and Fite (2006), we examine embeddedness and use of marriage attitudes in evaluating personal relationship scenarios and issues not centrally relevant to marriage (H1). Second, we examine relations between marriage attitudes, embeddedness of those attitudes, general expectations of relationship success, and outcomes in current romantic relationships (including quality and conflict) (H2, H3, H4). Finally, we compare marriage attitudes, embeddedness, and relationship outcomes of individuals from intact and divorced families of origin with varying levels of paren-

tal marital conflict (H5). We propose several hypotheses:

- H1: *We expect individuals with highly embedded marriage attitudes to be more likely to use those attitudes in evaluations of ambiguous issues and relationship scenarios than those with less embedded attitudes.*
- H2: *We expect highly embedded marriage attitudes to be more strongly related to general expectations of relationship success than less embedded attitudes.*
- H3: *We expect highly embedded marriage attitudes to be more strongly related to specific features of current relationships, including expectations of relationship success, features of relationship quality, and conflict than less embedded attitudes.*
- H4: *We expect more negative marriage attitudes to be related to more negative outcomes in current romantic relationships, including lower expectations of success, lower quality, and greater conflict. We expect individuals with strong, negative marriage attitudes to report the most negative relationship outcomes compared to other groups.*
- H5: *We expect parental divorce and higher levels of parental conflict to be related to more embedded and more negative attitudes, lower general expectations of relationship success, and more negative relationship outcomes.*

Method

Participants

Participants are a convenience sample of 400 heterosexual undergraduate students (34% men, 66% women) at two large, urban state universities in southern California, United States (M age = 21.9 years, SD = 2.9, range = 17–33). Although using a convenience sample is not

ideal, survey researchers commonly use convenience samples and consider the nature of the sample in interpretation of results (McBurney, 2001). We recruited participants from the introductory psychology participant pool and from other upper- and lower-division courses in psychology. Participants received written and oral informed consent (emphasizing anonymity and confidentiality) and experimental participation or extra credit. Of the total sample, 277 participants are currently involved in romantic relationships, with 20% describing relationships with partners to whom they are married, engaged, or living together; 67% an exclusive dating relationship; and 13% a non-exclusive dating relationship. Approximately 36% of participants are White, 31% Hispanic, 22% Asian, and 8% African American (3% Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, American Indian, or mixed heritage).¹

Measures

Marriage attitude and embeddedness. We measured embeddedness of marriage attitudes using the free association method (Prislin & Ouellette, 1996). We gave all participants two sheets of paper with 40 lines and instructed them to write all single-word expressions that came to mind when they heard the stimulus word. To ensure that participants understood the task, the experimenter presented an example of free association to the word *egg* (e.g., *bacon, chicken*). All participants completed two free association tasks, lasting 2 min each. The experimenter asked 8 participants in the front of the room to write on an index card “an important issue currently facing young people in the United States today.” The experimenter collected the cards and placed them in a large envelope. The experimenter withdrew one card and said the word *war*.² After the first

task, the experimenter instructed participants to turn to the next page and then withdrew a second card from the envelope and said, “Marriage.” We operationalize attitude embeddedness as the number of words participants wrote in response to “Marriage.”

We measured attitude toward marriage by asking participants to rate the word *marriage* on five 9-point semantic differential scales (*bad–good, undesirable–desirable, negative–positive, harmful–beneficial, strongly oppose–strongly favor*). Participants rated eight other attitude objects (e.g., democracy, capital punishment, etc.) as well, with *marriage* rated fifth. We summed responses to the five items to indicate overall attitude toward marriage, with lower scores indicating more negative attitudes. Internal consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) for the current sample is .91.

General issues and romantic relationship scenarios.

Participants evaluated two general issues and two relationship scenarios varying in degree of relatedness to marriage (Riggio & Fite, 2006, based on procedures Prislin & Ouellette, 1996, followed; see the Appendix). Participants indicated their degree of agreement with the position expressed in each issue and the outcome in each scenario using a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *neither agree nor disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*). Six judges (Ph.D. research psychologists) previously evaluated the relevance of issues and scenarios to marriage. The judges rated Issue 1 (importance of forming supportive groups in modern society) as low in relevance to marriage ($M = 3.3$ on a 7-point scale); they rated Issue 2 (political action to make obtaining a divorce more difficult in California) as more relevant ($M = 5.2$). Scenario 1 described a couple in a short-term dating relationship and their decision to break up ($M = 3.0$); Scenario 2 described a married couple contemplating divorce, rated as highly relevant to marriage ($M = 6.8$).

General expectations of relationship success.

Participants answered three items asking them to report the likelihood that they would experience a “successful, happy, loving marriage,”

1. Based on ethnicity data 69% of participants provided ($n = 276$).

2. The practice free association task used the term *war* in all sessions to add realism to the task, as the cards participants completed almost always contained a statement or phrase referring to the war in Iraq (with data collected during 2004–2006). Riggio & Fite (2006) followed the same procedures. Although the term “War” “primed” all participants, it is possible that the negative connotation of the word may affect results.

an unhappy marriage, and divorce during their lifetime using a 9-point scale (1 = *very unlikely*; 9 = *very likely*). We summed the three items to indicate general expectations of relationship success. Reliability analysis indicates $\alpha = .73$.

Relationship outcomes. Participants involved in current romantic relationships completed three self-report instruments describing their relationships:

1. *Expectations of current relationship success.* Participants answered seven items concerning likelihood of success of their current relationship (i.e., likelihood of marriage, breakup, dating someone else in the next year, maintaining the relationship for 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, etc.). We summed the items to indicate current expectations of relationship success ($\alpha = .96$).
2. *Current relationship conflict* (adapted from the *Parental Conflict Scale*, PCS, Peterson & Zill, 1986), a nine-item measure of nature, duration, and severity of conflict in relationships. Participants indicated how often they and their partner argued about responsibilities, drinking or drug use, use of leisure time, other men or women, and so on, using a 4-point scale (1 = *rarely*, 4 = *frequently*). Respondents also indicated how often arguments with partners became physical ($\alpha = .67$).
3. *Investment Model Scale* (IMS; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998), a 37-item measure of commitment to and satisfaction with one's current romantic relationship, as well as the quality of available relationship alternatives and perceived investment in the relationship. Participants indicated their degree of agreement with 15 items using a 4-point scale (1 = *don't agree at all*; 4 = *agree completely*), and with remaining items using a 9-point scale (0 = *don't agree at all*; 8 = *agree completely*). Reliability

analyses indicates alphas of .94 (IMS Satisfaction), .87 (Alternatives), .88 (Investment), and .94 (Commitment).

Parental marital conflict. Participants completed the unadapted PCS a second time to describe marital conflict between parents, beginning in childhood to the present. We asked participants with divorced parents to describe parents' relationship before, during, and after separation. Participants indicated parental marital status and age at divorce. Alpha is .75.

Procedure

To prevent participant reactivity and based on recommendations of Prislin and Ouellette (1996) for assessment of attitude embeddedness in a manner as free as possible from influence of related subject matter, participants completed measures in two separate sessions. Participants first evaluated issues and relationship scenarios and completed relationship outcome measures and general expectations of relationship success. Approximately 2 weeks later, participants completed embeddedness, attitude, and parental marital status and conflict measures, in that order. We did not tell participants that the two sessions were related, and they each had different titles. We did not include experimental and extra credit participants who did not sign up or show up for the second session. We debriefed participants after collecting all measures.

Results

We followed hierarchical regression procedures Aiken and West (1991) recommend (including "centering" of data, where the mean is subtracted from all scores) and Prislin and Ouellette (1996) use. First, we examine marriage attitude, embeddedness, and the Attitude \times Embeddedness (A \times E) interaction in predicting evaluations of issues and scenarios, and relationship outcomes. Second, because we hypothesize that highly embedded attitudes are more strongly related to issue and scenario

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Current	1.3	0.46	General expectations	21.1	4.8
Type	3.8	0.93	Current expectations	46.3	15.4
Age	21.9	2.9	Conflict	13.0	3.1
Parents' Marital Status	1.3	0.45	IMS Satisfaction	48.1	11.3
Attitude	39.3	6.3	IMS Alternatives	29.5	12.4
Embeddedness	17.3	5.8	IMS Investment	40.4	11.5
			IMS Commitment	44.9	12.8

Correlations	Parents' marital					
	Current	Type	Age	status	Attitude	Embeddedness
Embeddedness ^a	-.09	-.07	-.02	.04	.11*	
Attitude	-.09	-.06	-.07	-.11*		
Issue 1	-.05	.05	.02	.02	.17***	.04
Issue 2	.07	.09	-.07	-.03	.18***	.03
Scenario 1	.00	.05	.01	-.04	.07	-.03
Scenario 2	-.07	-.07	-.07	.04	-.18***	-.04
General expectations	-.13*	-.13*	-.03	-.16**	.32***	-.09
Current expectations		-.34***	.07	-.01	.25***	-.05
Conflict		-.05	-.04	-.02	-.09	.06
IMS Satisfaction		-.19***	-.02	.03	.23***	-.01
IMS Alternatives		.19***	.09	.01	-.32***	.01
IMS Investment		-.25***	-.04	-.05	.27***	.05
IMS Commitment		-.28***	.02	-.03	.28***	-.05

Note. *N*s = 371–400 for issues, scenarios, and general expectations; *N*s = 274–277 for relationship outcomes. For current (1 = *yes*, 2 = *no*); type (1 = *married*, 2 = *engaged*, 3 = *live together*, 4 = *exclusive dating*, 5 = *nonexclusive dating*); parental marital status (1 = *married*, 2 = *divorced*). IMS = Investment Model Scale.

^aResidual of embeddedness predicted by practice free association.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

evaluations and relationship outcomes than less embedded attitudes, we examine attitude as a predictor of evaluations and outcomes separately for participants low, moderate, and high in attitude embeddedness. Participants expressed moderately positive marriage attitudes ($M = 39.3$, maximum = 45, $SD = 6.3$, skewness = -1.4) and produced an average of 17.3 ($SD = 5.8$) associations to the word *marriage* (see Table 1). Embeddedness is normally distributed (skewness < 1) and there is no difference in variability of issue and scenario evaluations (Levene's, all *ps ns*, $df = 1, 368$). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparing high- and low-embedded groups formed by median split ($Mdn = 17$) indicates no differ-

ence on marriage attitude, $F(1, 398) < 1$, and attitude and embeddedness do not vary between individuals currently involved in a relationship or not. To control for individual differences in responsiveness to free association measures, all analyses use the standardized residual of embeddedness after its prediction by free association to *war*.

Issue and scenario evaluations

We use hierarchical and simple regression models to test all hypotheses; all analyses use sex, current relationship status (*yes* or *no*), and type of relationship (*no relationship* = 0) as covariates. We also use age as a covariate in

Table 2. Prediction of issue and scenario evaluations and relationship outcomes from marriage attitudes, embeddedness, and the Attitude \times Embeddedness interaction

Variable	Marriage Attitude (A)	Embeddedness (E)	A \times E	R^2
	β	β	β	
Issue 1	.17***	.03	.06	.04*
Issue 2	.20***	.06	-.02	.05**
Scenario 1	-.06	.00	-.03	.01
Scenario 2	-.21***	-.01	-.01	.09***
General expectations	.30***	-.12*	.07	.14***
Current expectations	.21***	-.12*	.01	.18***
Conflict	-.10 [†] , a	.10 ^a	-.18**	.07**
IMS Satisfaction	.20***	-.10 [†]	.04	.10***
IMS Alternatives	-.29***	.03	.02	.15***
IMS Investment	.23***	-.05	-.10 [†]	.15***
IMS Commitment	.24***	-.13*	.02	.18***

Note. $N_s = 371-400$ for issues, scenarios, and general expectations; $N_s = 274-277$ for all relationship outcomes. β for variable at entry. IMS = Investment Model Scale. R^2 and significance based on the full regression model including covariates sex, current relationship (yes or no), and type of relationship. Relationship outcomes also include age as covariate.

^aBeta becomes significant ($p < .05$) in full model.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

analyses of relationship outcomes.^{3, 4} First, we constructed regression models predicting evaluation of each issue (general issues not directly involving personal relationships) and scenario (scenarios involving a dating couple and a married couple) from marriage attitude, embeddedness, and the A \times E interaction term. Multiple regression indicates that marriage attitude significantly predicts evaluations of both issues ($\beta_s = .17$ and $.20$, respectively, $ps < .001$), and Scenario 2 ($\beta = -.21$, $p < .001$; see Table 2). Results for Scenario 1 are not significant. Embeddedness and the interaction are

not predictive of any evaluations. R^2 for full models is significant for issues and Scenario 2 ($ps < .05$).

To test the hypothesis that highly embedded attitudes are more strongly related to issue and scenario evaluations than less embedded attitudes (H1), we performed regression analyses predicting evaluations from marriage attitude for individuals low, moderate, and high in embeddedness. Because we are interested in particularly weak and strong attitudes, we define high and low embeddedness as scores in the lower and upper 30% of the distribution (both $ns = 121$; moderate $n = 158$).⁵ For participants low in embeddedness, regression indicates that marriage attitude did not predict issue or scenario evaluations (see Table 3). For participants moderate in embeddedness, regression indicates that attitude significantly predicts evaluations of Issue 2 ($\beta = .26$) and

3. We find significant sex differences on several variables, including attitude, $F(1, 398) = 5.24$, $p < .05$, and embeddedness, $F(1, 398) = 3.77$, $p = .05$, with women reporting more positive attitudes ($M = 39.8$) and greater embeddedness ($M = 17.7$) compared to men ($M_s = 38.3$ and 16.5 , respectively). Women also report significantly greater IMS Commitment ($M = 46.6$) than men ($M = 40.8$), $F(1, 274) = 12.03$, $p < .01$. No other sex differences are significant.

4. We use type of relationship as a covariate because of its significant relations with relationship outcomes (see Table 1); we use age as a covariate in analyses of relationship outcomes because of its significant association with type of relationship ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$).

5. Although marriage attitude is positively related to the residual measure of embeddedness (see Table 1), embeddedness groups do not significantly differ on marriage attitude, $F(2, 390) < 1$ and $F(1, 271) < 1$, for all participants and those in current relationships, respectively.

Table 3. Prediction of issue and scenario evaluations and general expectations of relationship success from marriage attitudes for individuals low, moderate, and high in attitude embeddedness

Embeddedness	β	R_a^2	R_b^2	R_{change}^2	F_{change}
Low ($n=109-121$)					
Issue 1	.12	.01	.03	.02	1.61
Issue 2	.12	.03	.04	.01	1.54
Scenario 1	-.07	.01	.01	.01	< 1
Scenario 2	-.15	.04	.07	.02	2.67
General expectations	.19*	.04	.07	.04	4.33*
Moderate ($n=146-158$)					
Issue 1	.08	.01	.02	.01	< 1
Issue 2	.26**	.01	.08*	.07	9.89**
Scenario 1	.03	.01	.01	.00	< 1
Scenario 2	-.23**	.04	.09**	.05	8.87**
General expectations	.34***	.07*	.18***	.11	20.81***
High ($n=116-121$)					
Issue 1	.34***	.02	.13**	.11	13.71***
Issue 2	.20*	.03	.07 [†]	.04	4.46*
Scenario 1	-.18*	.01	.05	.03	3.75*
Scenario 2	-.26**	.06	.12**	.06	8.38**
General expectations	.39***	.06 [†]	.20***	.14	20.18***

Note. $N_s = 371-400$. β for marriage attitude at entry; R_a^2 for model with all covariates (sex, current relationship (yes or no), and type of relationship); R_b^2 for full model (covariates + attitude); R_{change}^2 and F_{change} for marriage attitude at entry. [†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Scenario 2 ($\beta = -.23, ps < .01$), but not Issue 1 or Scenario 1. Marriage attitude predicts evaluations of all issues and scenarios for individuals high in embeddedness ($ps < .05$). Although interaction results in overall models are not significant, results of separate regressions confirm H1, which predicted stronger relationships between marriage attitude and evaluations for attitudes high in embeddedness, particularly evaluations more directly related to marriage, and they replicate the pattern of results Prislin and Ouellette (1996) found, with only highly embedded attitudes predictive of ambiguous issue and scenario evaluations.

General expectations of relationship success

To test the hypothesis that highly embedded attitudes are more strongly related to general expectations of relationship success than less embedded attitudes (H2), we constructed a

hierarchical regression model predicting general expectations from marriage attitude, embeddedness, and the $A \times E$ interaction term. Results indicate significance of R^2 in the full model and that marriage attitude ($\beta = .30, p < .001$) and embeddedness ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$) both significantly predict general expectations (see Table 2). The interaction is not significant.

Based on significant prediction of general expectations by attitude and embeddedness, we performed separate regression analyses predicting general expectations of relationship success from marriage attitude for individuals low, moderate, and high in embeddedness. Regression indicates that marriage attitude is predictive of general expectations for individuals low ($\beta = .19, p < .05$), moderate ($\beta = .34, p < .001$), and high in embeddedness ($\beta = .39, p < .001$) (see Table 3). A comparison of betas for individuals low and high in embeddedness indicates a significant difference between the

effects ($Z = -1.69, p < .05$).⁶ These results partially confirm H2, which predicted stronger relationships between more highly embedded marriage attitudes and general expectations of relationship success.

Outcomes in current relationships

We examine only participants reporting that they were currently involved in personal relationships in analyses for relationship outcomes ($n = 277$). To test the hypothesis that highly embedded attitudes are more strongly related to current relationship outcomes than less embedded attitudes (H3), hierarchical regression models examine relations between marriage attitude, embeddedness, and relationship outcomes. Regression indicates that marriage attitude significantly predicts outcomes: expectations of success in current relationship ($\beta = .21$), IMS Satisfaction ($\beta = .20$), Alternatives ($\beta = -.29$), Investment ($\beta = .23$), and Commitment ($\beta = .24, ps < .001$; see Table 2). Results also indicate prediction of current expectations ($\beta = -.12$) and Commitment ($\beta = -.13$) by embeddedness ($ps < .05$). The interaction significantly predicts conflict ($\beta = -.18, p < .01$), with attitude ($\beta = -.15, t = -2.36, p < .05$) and embeddedness ($\beta = .12, t = 1.95, p = .05$) significant in the full model. R^2 s for full models are significant ($ps < .01$). Although the interaction is only significant for conflict, prediction of current expectations and commitment by attitude and embeddedness supports each in relation to these outcomes.

We also use regression analyses to predict relationship outcomes from marriage attitude separately for individuals low ($n = 82$), moderate ($n = 111$), and high ($n = 84$) in embeddedness. Results indicate that for participants low in embeddedness, marriage attitude significantly predicts IMS Investment ($\beta = .33, p < .01$; see Table 4). Results for other relationship outcomes are not significant. For participants moderate in embeddedness, results indicate that marriage attitude significantly

predicts current expectations of relationship success ($\beta = .24$), Satisfaction ($\beta = .26$), Alternatives ($\beta = -.36$), Investment ($\beta = .28$), and Commitment ($\beta = .28, all ps < .01$). For participants high in embeddedness, results indicate that marriage attitude significantly predicts current expectations ($\beta = .21$), conflict ($\beta = -.31$), Alternatives ($\beta = -.22$), and Commitment ($\beta = .22, all ps < .05$) (results for Satisfaction are marginal, $\beta = .20, p < .09$). In contrast to results for participants low and moderate in embeddedness, attitude is not predictive of Investment. These results partially supported H3, with relations between marriage attitudes and relationship outcomes varying depending on attitude embeddedness.

To test the hypothesis that the most negative relationship outcomes are associated with strong, negative marriage attitudes (H4), we use three 2×3 (positive or negative marriage attitude by high, moderate, or low embeddedness) ANOVA procedures to compare relationship outcomes of embeddedness and attitude groups. Because extremity of marriage attitude valence is not of interest (cf. Fazio, 1995), we form positive and negative attitude groups through a mean split (i.e., scores above mean as positive); embedded groups are as previously defined. All analyses use sex, age, and type of relationship as covariates. First, we conducted two univariate ANOVAs to examine current expectations of relationship success and conflict. For expectations, results indicate a significant main effect of marriage attitude valence, $F(1, 268) = 19.31, p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .07$, with participants with positive attitudes reporting greater expectations of success in current relationships (see Table 5). Effects of embeddedness (power = .27) and the interaction are not significant (power = .08). For conflict, results indicate main effects of attitude valence, $F(1, 268) = 5.82, p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and embeddedness, $F(2, 268) = 3.02, p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and a significant interaction, $F(2, 268) = 5.23, p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$ between attitude valence groups when attitudes are less embedded. Post hoc tests using Bonferroni correction indicate that individuals with highly embedded, negative attitudes report lower current expectations compared to low and moderate, with individuals with highly

6. Computed based on Rosenthal (1991) using $Z = Z_{r_1} - Z_{r_2} / \sqrt{[(1/N_1 - 3) + (1/N_2 - 3)]}$.

Table 4. Prediction of relationship outcomes from marriage attitudes for individuals low, moderate, and high in attitude embeddedness

Embeddedness	β	R_a^2	R_b^2	R_{change}^2	F_{change}
Low ($n=82$)					
Current expectations	.18	.12*	.14*	.03	2.49
Conflict	.06	.04	.04	.00	< 1
IMS Satisfaction	.08	.11*	.12*	.01	< 1
IMS Alternatives	-.18	.12**	.14**	.03	2.52
IMS Investment	.33**	.11*	.21*	.11***	9.18**
IMS Commitment	.18	.15**	.18**	.03	2.72
Moderate ($n=110-111$)					
Current Expectations	.24**	.12**	.18***	.06	7.30**
Conflict	-.06	.01	.01	.00	< 1
IMS Satisfaction	.26**	.05	.11*	.07	8.20**
IMS Alternatives	-.36***	.05	.18***	.13	16.69***
IMS Investment	.28**	.09*	.17***	.08	9.69**
IMS Commitment	.28**	.10*	.18***	.08	10.27**
High ($n=83-84$)					
Current expectations	.21*	.16**	.20***	.04	4.17*
Conflict	-.31**	.03	.12*	.09	7.81**
IMS Satisfaction	.20 [†]	.05	.08	.04	3.11 [†]
IMS Alternatives	-.22*	.12*	.17**	.05	4.20*
IMS Investment	.06	.10*	.11 [†]	.00	< 1
IMS Commitment	.22*	.14**	.19**	.05	4.46*

Note. $N_s = 274-277$. β for marriage attitude at entry; R_a^2 for model with all covariates (sex, age, and type of relationship); R_b^2 for full model (covariates + attitude); R_{change}^2 and F_{change} for marriage attitude at entry. IMS = Investment Model Scale.

[†] $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

embedded, negative attitudes reporting the greatest level of conflict, with less difference embedded positive groups, and those with moderately embedded negative attitudes report lower expectations than those with moderately embedded positive attitudes. Individuals with highly embedded, negative attitudes report greater conflict compared to all groups except those with moderate-embedded negative attitudes. Differences among the three positive attitude groups are not significant.

Second, we used a 2×3 multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to examine IMS scores. Multivariate results indicate a significant main effect of marriage attitude valence, $F(4, 262) = 10.60, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$, but no effect of embeddedness, $F(8, 524) = 1.33,$

power = .61, or the interaction, $F(8, 524) = 1.01, \text{power} = .48$. Univariate tests provided by MANOVA indicate that individuals with positive marriage attitudes report significantly greater IMS Satisfaction, $F(1, 265) = 16.92$; Investment, $F(1, 265) = 24.88$; and Commitment scores, $F(1, 265) = 34.64$; and lower Alternatives scores, $F(1, 265) = 24.38$, all $ps < .001$, than those with negative marriage attitudes (see Table 5). Univariate tests also indicate that individuals high in embeddedness report significantly lower relationship commitment than those with less embedded attitudes, $F(2, 265) = 4.10, p < .05$. Post hoc tests indicate that individuals with highly embedded, negative attitudes report lower satisfaction and commitment relative to all three positive attitude groups; lower investment

Table 5. Mean relationship outcome scores for individuals low, moderate, and high in embeddedness with positive and negative marriage attitudes

Valence	Attitude embeddedness						F ^a	F ^b
	Low		Moderate		High			
	Positive (n = 52)	Negative (n = 30)	Positive (n = 66)	Negative (n = 45)	Positive (n = 58)	Negative (n = 26)		
Current expectations	2.20 _c (15.1)	-4.36 (13.5)	4.44 _{a,b} (15.3)	-4.55 _a (14.9)	2.76 (15.5)	-8.91 _{b,c} (13.5)	19.3*** (.07)	1.24
Conflict	-.01 _a (3.0)	-.49 _b (2.9)	-.35 _c (3.2)	.17 (2.7)	-.45 _d (3.0)	2.20 _{a,b,c,d} (4.0)	5.8* (.02)	3.02* (.02)
IMS								
Satisfaction	1.00 _a (11.5)	-1.34 (10.3)	3.52 _{b,d} (10.2)	-3.96 _d (11.7)	2.32 _c (9.8)	-6.54 _{a,b,c} (12.0)	16.9* (.06)	1.27
Alternatives	-2.69 _{d,e} (12.0)	6.27 _{a,e} (12.2)	-4.04 _{a,b,c} (11.7)	4.23 _{b,d} (11.6)	-2.11 (11.8)	5.06 _c (11.9)	24.4*** (.08)	< 1
Investment	2.41 _{a,c} (10.9)	-5.97 _{a,b} (9.2)	3.00 _{b,d} (10.2)	-3.10 (10.8)	2.32 (11.7)	-6.20 _{c,d} (14.1)	24.9*** (.09)	< 1
Commitment	2.20 _{a,d} (11.9)	-3.60 (12.1)	5.40 _{b,c} (9.2)	-4.75 _{d,e} (13.0)	2.21 _c (12.3)	-9.86 _{a,b,c} (13.6)	34.7*** (.12)	4.10* (.03)

Note. All variables are centered (M = 0). IMS = Investment Model Scale. Standard deviations are in parentheses; η^2 in parentheses for F values. F values provided by multivariate analysis of variance for IMS scores (df = 1, 265 for attitude; 2, 265 for embeddedness). Degrees of freedom for conflict and current expectations = 1, 268 for attitude and 2, 268 for embeddedness. Total α for all significant univariate tests = .09; without Conflict, $\alpha < .05$. All analyses use covariates sex, age, and type of relationship. Means with the same letters are significantly different.

^aUnivariate tests for attitude. ^bUnivariate tests for embeddedness.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

compared to low- and moderate-embedded positive groups; and greater desirability of alternatives than individuals with moderate-embedded positive attitudes. Individuals with moderately embedded negative attitudes report lower satisfaction and commitment, and greater alternatives, than those with moderately embedded positive attitudes. Positive attitude groups are not different from each other. These results provide additional support for stronger relations between more embedded marriage attitudes and relationship outcomes (H3), particularly conflict and commitment, and for relations between negative marriage attitudes and negative relationship outcomes (H4).

Parental marital relationships, attitude embeddedness, relationship cognitions and outcomes

To test the hypothesis that parental divorce and higher parental marital conflict are related to more embedded attitudes among offspring (H5), we conducted a series of 2 (parents married vs. divorced) \times 3 (low, moderate, and high parental conflict) ANOVAs for relationship outcomes, marriage attitudes, and embeddedness. We use a total of 394 participants to examine attitude features and general expectations (parents married = 282, divorced = 112, M age at divorce = 7.1 years). Parental conflict ranged from 9 to 36 ($M = 14.0$, $SD = 4.1$, $Mdn = 13$, 75th percentile = 16) and was slightly positively skewed (skewness = 1.5). To form groups of low, moderate, and high parental conflict, we designate scores of 12 or lower as low, scores from 13 to 15 as moderate, and scores of 16 or above as high conflict. Riggio (2004) used a similar method of forming conflict groups using the PCS. We include only participants involved in current romantic relationships ($n = 272$) in analyses of relationship outcomes (parents married = 192, divorced = 80).

ANOVA indicates that participants with divorced parents report greater levels of parental conflict ($M = 16.9$, $SD = 5.0$) than those with married parents ($M = 12.9$, $SD = 3.1$), $F(21, 375) = 84.1$, $p < .001$. We used three univariate 2×2 ANOVAs to examine group

differences in marriage attitude, embeddedness, and general expectations of relationship success. First, ANOVA indicates a main effect of parental marital status for marriage attitudes, $F(1, 367) = 6.73$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, with individuals with divorced parents reporting more negative attitudes ($M = -1.02$, $SD = 6.9$) than those with married parents ($M = .73$, $SD = 5.6$). Second, ANOVA indicates a main effect of parental marital status for general expectations, $F(1, 367) = 8.54$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, with individuals with divorced parents reporting lower expectations for success ($M = -1.27$, $SD = 5.3$) than those with married parents ($M = .51$, $SD = 4.6$). Results for embeddedness and the interaction are not significant nor are results for conflict.

We used univariate 2×2 ANOVAs to examine group differences in expectations of current relationship success and conflict; only results for conflict are significant. Results indicate a main effect of parental conflict group for relationship conflict, $F(1, 367) = 8.54$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, with individuals from low-conflict families reporting lower conflict ($M = -.65$, $SD = 3.0$) than those from moderate- ($M = .45$, $SD = 3.4$) or high-conflict families ($M = .49$, $SD = 3.0$). A 2×2 MANOVA examined IMS scores, with no significant results. Although H5 is largely unsupported, results suggest that parental marital status is related to marriage attitudes and expectations of relationship success and that recollections of parental conflict are related to relationship conflict.

Discussion

Attitude embeddedness as an indicator of attitude strength

The current results indicate that marriage attitudes that are more strongly embedded are more likely to influence evaluations of marriage issues and personal relationship scenarios, and that marriage attitudes and their embeddedness are related to outcomes in personal relationships. Consistent with the findings of Prislin and Ouellette (1996), highly embedded attitudes are more likely to be used

than less embedded attitudes in evaluations of issues and scenarios only ambiguously related to the issue of marriage, providing additional evidence for embeddedness as a meaningful indicator of attitude strength. Whereas Riggio and Fite (2006) found that positive divorce attitudes are related to negative relationship outcomes, these results indicate that negative attitudes toward *marriage*, arguably a more meaningful attitude for most people, are also related to negative relationship outcomes, supporting that specific relationship attitudes about lifelong commitment and partnership may be used in interpreting relationship events and guiding interpersonal behaviors (Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). The results also contribute to the growing literature supporting the importance of commitment attitudes to the quality of intimate relationships (Amato & Rogers, 1999). The additional finding that embedded attitudes are more strongly related to relationship outcomes suggests that individuals use stronger attitudes more frequently in interpreting relationship events, with strong attitudes more likely to affect motives and behaviors in relationship interactions (Rusbult et al., 1996).

Attitude embeddedness

Issue and scenario evaluations. Although the interaction between attitudes and embeddedness is not fully supported in relation to issue and scenario evaluations, current results do indicate that individuals with marriage attitudes low in embeddedness are not likely to rely on those attitudes in evaluating issues about marriage not directly involving a relationship, nor in evaluating relationship scenarios, including a married couple contemplating divorce. Individuals with moderately embedded marriage attitudes are only likely to use them in evaluating issues and scenarios more directly related to the central issue of marriage (a bill making divorces more difficult to obtain, a divorcing couple). In contrast, individuals with highly embedded attitudes use them in evaluating all issues and scenarios, including a very general issue (the meaning of personal relationships to life) and a scenario involving a short-term dating couple. These

findings suggest that highly embedded marriage attitudes are more likely to be used in evaluating situations that are less directly related to the central idea of marriage.

Marriage attitudes are also predictive of individual judgments of the likelihood of experiencing a happy or unhappy marriage, and a divorce, regardless of embeddedness (although comparison of effects suggests greater prediction by stronger attitudes). These findings support the role of cognitive representations of relationships, including attitudes toward marriage, as bases of estimation of the likelihood of specific relationship events (Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). Individuals with more positive attitudes toward marriage view their marriages (current and future) as likely to be happy and successful; individuals with negative marriage attitudes do not have such positive expectations. Given the important role of expectations in guiding behavior (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977), expectations about having successful relationships or not may be particularly important cognitions for relationship perceptions and behaviors.

Relationship outcomes. The results for relationship outcomes are less clear than those for issues and scenarios, suggesting complexity of relations between relationship attitudes and outcomes. Prislin and Ouellette (1996) found that highly embedded attitudes are related more strongly to behavioral intentions than less embedded attitudes, and Riggio and Fite (2006) found that highly embedded, specific relationship attitudes toward divorce are related to closeness and conflict in romantic relationships. Similarly, this study found that marriage attitudes are predictive of relationship outcomes, especially stronger attitudes. More embedded, negative marriage attitudes are related to greater conflict, less satisfaction, and less commitment in current relationships, as well as a higher desirability of alternative relationships and lower expectations of relationship success; attitudes low in embeddedness are not related to these important outcomes. Individuals reporting highly embedded, negative marriage attitudes arguably describe the lowest quality relationships, characterized by greater conflict and lower

commitment and satisfaction compared to individuals with positive attitudes. Although negative marriage attitudes may be reflective of current relationship satisfaction (i.e., people less satisfied express more negative marriage attitudes), it is also possible that marriage attitudes, like other features of cognition, serve to influence and guide perceptions and behavior in personal relationships (Fletcher & Thomas, 1996), especially attitudes that are strong (Etcheverry & Le, 2005). The separation of measures in the current study also supports this conclusion, with attitudes assessed 2 weeks after participant reports of relationship qualities. These results are also consistent with longitudinal research documenting deleterious effects of negative marriage attitudes on marital quality and stability (Amato & Rogers, 1999), findings that support the role of relationship attitudes in affecting behavior in current relationships (Amato & DeBoer, 2001).

Although less and moderately embedded, rather than highly embedded, marriage attitudes are predictive of reports of investment in relationships, an examination of mean differences between groups suggests a rather powerful effect of marriage attitudes overall on investment in current relationships, with negative attitudes related to less investment. Marriage attitudes are likely to involve beliefs and evaluations of interdependence (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990), or the intertwining of individual and partner goals, and the effort and sacrifice required to meet mutual goals (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult et al., 1996). The results suggest that individuals who feel positively about long-term commitments involving true interdependence, of which marriage is the epitome, are more likely to invest time and effort in relationships and behave in a committed manner. Individuals who feel negatively about marriage, believing it is not “positive,” “desirable,” or even “good,” are less likely to invest in relationships and may be less likely to become interdependent with partners. Given that we also consider relationship type, the results suggest an important role of marriage attitudes in relationship investment, and perhaps motives toward relationship interdependence—a crucial feature of relationship intimacy, commitment, and stability (Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, & Hannon, 2001).

Because the concept of marriage, and perhaps relationship commitment in general, is more associated with other cognitions for individuals with more embedded attitudes, their behavior in relationships is more likely to reflect their marriage attitude, whether it is positive or negative. Individuals with embedded positive attitudes may frequently be concerned with maintaining relationship closeness and satisfaction, and with avoiding conflict and the possibility of dissolution, resulting in higher quality relationships than individuals with negative marriage attitudes. Although it may be the case that individuals who experience poor relationship outcomes develop more embedded, more negative attitudes, it is also possible that individuals with embedded negative attitudes may instigate or perpetuate relationship conflict because their negative attitude toward commitment colors their perception and interpretation of relationship events. Because they are less concerned with commitment and dissolution, these individuals may also be more reactive to conflict cues in relationships, thus experiencing higher conflict and lower satisfaction. Importantly, these results support that stronger marriage attitudes are more strongly linked to relationship outcomes, supporting the role of dominant relationship cognitions in guiding behaviors within relationships (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Fletcher et al., 1994).

Parental marital relationships, attitude embeddedness, and relationship outcomes

The current study also provides interesting findings concerning relations between the parental marital relationship and marriage attitudes. First, individuals from divorced families report lower general expectations of relationship success than individuals from intact families, consistent with research indicating that adult offspring of divorce are more pessimistic about lifelong marriage and evaluate divorce less negatively than young adults from intact families (Amato & Booth, 1991). Also consistent with research indicating relations between chronic parental conflict and relationship difficulties for offspring (Amato & Booth, 1991), results indicate that greater parental conflict is

associated with increased conflict in current relationships. These results suggest that offspring learn and eventually use dysfunctional interaction patterns between parents in their own personal relationships (Dadds, Atkinson, Turner, Blums, & Lendich, 1999).

Although other qualities of romantic relationships like satisfaction and commitment do not vary between individuals from intact and divorced families, individuals who experienced parental divorce report more negative views toward marriage. Although the effect was small, this supports the meaningful relation between parents' relationships and their decision to maintain their marriage or not and their children's formation of relationship attitudes. As a primary model of marriage and male–female romantic relationships, elements of parents' marital relationship influence formation of cognitive representations of relationships (Fazio, 1989), a mechanism that is perhaps largely responsible for the intergenerational transmission of divorce (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Bandura, 1986). These results suggest that parental divorce is particularly important for relationship attitude valence for offspring (Amato & DeBoer, 2001), less so than recollections of parental conflict (Amato & Booth, 1991, 1997).

General conclusions

The current study makes three important and unique contributions. First, it provides evidence for the importance of embeddedness as an indicator of attitude strength. Although results do not fully support the moderation of attitudes by embeddedness, the findings do suggest that relations among marriage attitudes, evaluations of specific events, and outcomes associated with marriage attitudes vary depending on attitude embeddedness. Importantly, the current study examines a meaningful attitude associated with social and psychological consequences—attitudes toward marriage—rather than attitudes concerning less personally relevant issues (e.g., the death penalty) or relationship attitudes that may be less salient (e.g., attitudes about divorce).

Second, this study suggests an important role of specific relationship attitudes in the

quality of intimate relationships. More negative attitudes toward marriage are related to lower satisfaction with intimacy, companionship, and sexuality in relationships; to fewer feelings of commitment and less desire to maintain the relationship; to greater desirability of alternative relationships for fulfilling relationship needs; and to more relationship conflict. These negative outcomes are especially pronounced when negative attitudes are stronger, particularly for conflict and commitment and expectations about the relationship's success. These results suggest that negative marriage attitudes are associated with less pleasure experienced in response to intimacy, commitment, and attachment, and perhaps as such are related to fewer relationship maintenance behaviors, including behaviors involving accommodating the needs of one's partner. Attitudes that are very strong may be relied upon excessively in processing information about relationships and guiding relationship behaviors; when such attitudes are negative, they may lead to frequent negative interpretations and negative actions and reactions in relationships. Future research should focus on specific relationship behaviors that may be associated with relationship attitudes and their strength, including conflict negotiation and intimacy behaviors.

Finally, the current study provides evidence consistent with much previous research examining effects of parental divorce and conflict on personal relationship outcomes for offspring. Although individuals from divorced families are not more likely to develop particularly embedded attitudes than those from intact families, they are likely to have lower expectations of relationship success in their lives and more negative attitudes toward marriage. These results support the importance of marriage attitudes in influencing relationship behaviors and outcomes, and how parental marital relationships affect development of such attitudes. The development of relationship cognitions is perhaps a psychological mechanism underlying the intergenerational transmission of divorce, with stronger relationship cognitions likely to be used in guiding perceptions and behavior within relationships. Potential applications may involve actively

changing marriage (and other commitment-related) attitudes so that they are less negative and perhaps less strong in affecting relationship perceptions and behaviors.

Limitations and future research

In addition to reliance on self-report methodology and the correlational nature of the data, one limitation of this study is the measurement of parental conflict based on participant recollections. Although memory lapses and current attitudes affect retrospective reports (Lewinsohn & Rosenbaum, 1987), other studies have relied on recollections of parental conflict in examining offspring outcomes (e.g., Amato & Booth, 1991). Furthermore, offspring perceptions of qualities of parents' relationships are important to many aspects of well-being, including personal relationships (Cherlin, Chase-Lansdale, & McRae, 1998), and these results suggest that perceptions of parental conflict are related meaningfully to outcomes in relationships.

The use of undergraduate students as a convenience sample limits the generalizability of the current findings. Although fairly ethnically diverse, the sample has a rather young average age and a limited age range. In addition, a minority of the sample are involved in personal relationships involving greater commitment (marriages and engagements), with most participants reporting on exclusive dating relationships. Additional research focusing on different populations (including additional college student populations, noncollege populations, older adults, and different ethnic groups) may provide clarification of the role of relationship attitudes in intimate relationships. Participants of different ethnicities may be particularly likely to have different ideas about marriage and intimate relationships. Research should also examine relationship attitudes within marriages, including in the process of making relationship commitments (e.g., the decision to get married or cohabitate).

Future research may investigate further the relations between relationship attitudes and their strength and relations with intimate relationship behaviors through observations of

romantic partner interactions. Laboratory and naturalistic observation may provide additional evidence supporting the link between attitudes and actual relationship behaviors, as would longitudinal examination of relationship stability. Future research may also focus on other relationship attitudes, including beliefs about self-competence in relationship and other indicators of attitude strength, including self-relevance, complexity, and working knowledge, and further investigations of accessibility (Etcheverry & Le, 2005). Implicit measures of relationship attitudes should also be utilized. Research may also examine further how strength and valence of relationship attitudes are related to specific features of parental marital relationships, including violence between parents. Finally, future research may address the degree to which individuals consciously acknowledge marriage and divorce attitudes as relationship cognitions that play a role in their intimate relationships (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990; Fletcher et al., 1994). How directly individuals relate marriage and divorce attitudes to their own and parents' relationships may contribute to the complexity of relations between relationship cognitions and behaviors.

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Appendix

Issue 1: Modern society should be organized so as to encourage its members to form strong, supportive groups. Living in harmony with other people gives human beings a sense of identity that is important to having a good life. Interpersonal relationships provide the most meaningful rewards to one's life.

Issue 2: A group of political activists is trying to pass a bill that would make obtaining a divorce much more difficult in the state of California. Their position includes possible civil or criminal penalties for people who try to force a divorce on an unwilling spouse, or a spouse who simply wants to remain married. Making it more difficult to obtain a divorce is important because divorce is harmful to families and societal values.

Scenario 1: Bill and Jackie have only been dating for a few months. Although one of them has expressed little interest in developing a committed relationship, the other is enthusiastic

and cares deeply about continuing the relationship. After discussion, they have decided to break up. They are unlikely to date each other again in the future.

Scenario 2: Helen and David have been married for 9 years and have 2 children. Their

marriage has been dissatisfying for several years even though they have been attending marriage counseling for quite a while. They fight all the time, and both suspect that the other has been unfaithful. They decide to get a divorce.

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