HER VALUE ORIENTATIONS, HIS VALUE ORIENTATIONS, AND MARITAL DISSOLUTION RISK

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ABSTRACT

Theories of demographic change have invoked evolving values as a cause of increases in marital dissolution. Prior empirical work has found associations between value-related measures and marital dissolution risk, but results have been conflicting, particularly regarding the relative importance of the value orientations of wives versus that of husbands. In this paper I outline six distinct perspectives on the relationship between value orientations and marital dissolution, derived from prior literature. I also discuss limitations in previous empirical approaches that render them unable to differentiate between those perspectives and thus unable to provide an accurate view of how value orientations of husbands and wives predict marital dissolution risk. I use multiple modeling strategies to test those perspectives, including a typological approach that distinguishes the predictions of the various theories in a way that allows for clear, intuitive empirical tests of the predictions produced by each perspective. Results show that value orientations of both spouses predict dissolution risk and that the observed effects of one spouses' values are contingent on the orientation of the other. The highest dissolution risk is observed among couples in which the husband holds a traditional orientation whereas the wife's orientation is more modern.

American marriages experienced a nearly uninterrupted trend of rising rates of marital dissolution from the mid-to-late 19th century through roughly 1980 (Cherlin 1992). Since 1980 those rates have seen an extended flattening (Goldstein 1999) and even a slight decline for the first time in recent history (Heaton 2002), although rates remain historically high for the U.S. Those trends in divorce are one feature of a dramatic transformation in American family formation and structure that is also reflected in rates of premarital cohabitation, marriage, and fertility (Thornton, Axinn, and Xie 2007).

Many scholars—such as Lesthaeghe (1983), Cherlin (1992), and Thornton, Axinn, and Xie (2007)—link the transformation of American and European families during the past 100+ years to broad value shifts. Specifically, they emphasize a change in relative emphasis from authoritarian and collectivist values to individualistic and egalitarian ones. The increased divorce rate is seen as an outgrowth of the greater emphasis on individual choice and well-being over collective obligations and social convention. Of course, American society is not monolithic, and values vary substantially across the regions of country (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006) and among individuals and couples (Thornton and Young-DeMarco 2001). The value change theories suggest that we should expect married couples whose members espouse more individualistic and egalitarian values to experience greater risk of marital dissolution than those whose members who are more authoritarian and/or collectivist.

However, those broad predictions are challenged by a) views that focus on sex-specific effects of attitudes and b) views that assert that in modern marriage different types of marital "bargains" can be created and that the fit of partners' outlooks and values are more important than their particular content. The various views create conflicting predictions for how husbands' and wives' values should each influence marital dissolution risk and how the impacts of the values held by one spouse may be contingent on the values held by the other. In this paper I discuss prior research on the effects of partners' values on marital outcomes and outline six specific perspectives on those effects. I also discuss limitations in previous empirical approaches that render them unable to differentiate between those perspectives and

thus unable to provide an accurate view of how value orientations of husbands and wives predict marital dissolution risk. Finally, I use multiple modeling strategies to test the hypotheses generated by the various perspectives. Results from those analyses illustrate the limitations of studies that that lack information on both partners. The analytic strategies most notably include a typological approach that distinguishes the predictions of the various theories in a way that allows for clear, intuitive empirical tests of the predictions.

BACKGROUND

VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND MARITAL DISSOLUTION

Various theorists' descriptions of the cultural forces that have helped drive demographic transition contain many similar themes. Fundamentally they invoke a transformation in the meaning and purposes of marriage from an authoritarian institution with collective ends, to a more egalitarian partnership whose durability is dependent on its ability to provide individual fulfillment to each partner. They argue that, over time, normative strictures weakened, and "communal or family authority and exchange patterns [gave] way to the principle of individual freedom of choice" (Lesthaeghe 1983:411). Marriage in the U.S. has become both less normatively obligatory and less of an economic union based on specialization of production, transforming into an affective companionship of choice, with increased emphasis on mutual love and emotional support (Bellah et al. 1985; Coontz 2005). This change from more "traditional" value orientations to more "modern"[1] broadens increases the legitimate grounds for divorce. Cherlin (1992) claims that this shift of emphasis to individual fulfillment initially increased emphasis on the nuclear family, which was viewed as the primary source of that fulfillment. But, this shift carried with it the seeds of increased marital instability since, "there is no reason why individualism should stop with the nuclear family—after all, obligations to spouses and children can conflict with personal desires as well" (Cherlin 1992:38).

Marital dissolution risk can be seen as being mechanically influenced by two sources, (1) marital quality and (2) the barriers to exit. If barriers to leaving (whether legal, normative, or economic) are

absolute, then relationship quality matters little for relationship stability, but as those barriers decline, stability becomes increasingly dependent on marital quality. Broad value change from a collective to an individualistic ethos led to a reduction in the normative and legal barriers to divorce, which, combined with increasing acceptance of women's employment and economic self-sufficiency, allowed individuals greater freedom to leave a bad marriage. Those value shifts and may also increase the number of marriages that are, or at least are perceived as, being "bad" (Wilcox and Nock 2006). Thus, the quality of a marriage is dependent not solely on what the marriage produces, but on what the expectations for the relationship are. And as expectations change, the partners' behavior may not change at a rapidly enough to keep pace, thus producing a growing gap between expectations and reality. So value orientations may affect divorce risk both through impacts on barriers to exit and through the probability that relationship quality will fall short of expectations.

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IMPORTANCE OF WIVES' MODERN VALUES. The broad stories above do not differentiate between husbands' values and wives' values, but simply assume that more modern values are likely to be associated with greater risk of marital dissolution. However, other theoretical and empirical work contests that assumption, suggesting that effects may be gender-specific. One perspective is that it is fundamentally wives' adoption of less authoritarian values that is most relevant to marital dissolution risk (Wilcox and Nock 2006). Men were historically in the position of greater power and were less limited by marriage in pursuing their own self-benefitting ends. Consequently, adoption of individualistic attitudes by men would present less of a challenge to predominant marital arrangements.

The idea that everyone, men and women, should be free to pursue their own individual well-being on their own terms represented a challenge marital systems in which wives were expected to be obedient to men. At one extreme, women were seen as property, with the taking of the husband's name at marriage signifying a transfer of ownership of a woman from her father to her husband. Mace (1992) notes that this hierarchical relationship with the husband having comprehensive power was not the only method devised

to avoid the "concept of equal partnership and of the two-vote marriage" (p. 17). A second is the "separate spheres" marriage, where the wife had certain autonomy within the domestic realm, whereas the husband was in charge of the public sphere, including earning income outside the home (Becker 1991). This arrangement also tended to place the husband in a higher power position within the relationship and limited women's life choices. Such a limitation is inconsistent with individualistic values and ultimately came under increasing criticism for being inegalitarian (Bellah 1985).

Wilcox and Nock (2006) argue that women's egalitarian expectations lead to lower perceived marital quality. In a study of changes in individuals' marital attitudes over time, Amato and Booth (1995) find such adoption to be associated with reduced marital satisfaction. Heaton and Blake (1999) find women's attitudes, but not men's, to be a strong predictor of marital dissolution, which they speculate may reflect men's greater power position and the inability of egalitarian women to get their desired outcomes met.

IMPORTANCE OF HUSBANDS' MODERN VALUES. An alternative perspective on gender role conflict places men's values as the lynchpin. But this work suggest that, contrary to predictions cited in the introduction, married couples are actually likely to experience lower dissolution risk if husbands hold more, rather than less egalitarian attitudes. Research by Kaufman (Kaufman 2000; Kaufman and Taniguchi 2006) finds that husbands' egalitarian attitudes are associated with both greater marital happiness and lower risk of divorce, an association not found for women's marital dissolution. One possible explanation is that adoption of egalitarian role expectations is more universal for women, and it is men who tend to lag. Goldscheider and Waite (1991) argue that the greatest threat to contemporary marriage is inequity, and that it is men's attitudes and behavior that are the primary barrier to the availability of equitable marital relationships. Similarly, in a response to Wilcox and Nock, Springer (2007) highlights the importance of husbands' emotional work and contributions to household labor as determinants of wives' marital happiness in their findings. This suggests that egalitarian husbands are more able to flexibly negotiate marital arrangements and provide support that wives expect (Bollman, et al. 1997).

SIMILARITY VERSUS CONTENT. Each of the preceding perspectives suggests a universal (at least within the context of contemporary American marriages) effect of values on marital stability, though the perspectives don't necessarily agree on what that direction is. But if American marriage has undergone a process of "deinstitutionalization" wherein normative definitions of what marriages should be have loosened (Cherlin 2004), this implies that couples have a range of opportunities available to them for defining marital expectations. This view suggests that the content of spouses' values may be less important than the homogeneity of those values and the resulting expectations. This is consistent with work showing that greater between-spouse attitudinal and behavioral similarity is associated with a reduced risk of marital dissolution (Clarkwest 2007; Hohmann-Marriott 2006; Lichter and Carmalt 2009), likely reflecting a greater ability for spouses to meet each other's expectations when those expectations are shared (Pasley, Kerpelman, and Gilbert 2001). It is worth noting that the most commonly cited reasons for divorce include having little in common, unresolved differences, and diverging interests and goals (Amato and Previti 2003), each of which relate to ideational/behavioral discrepancies between partners.

FIT VERSUS SIMILARITY. The preceding perspective assumes that similarity and fit are synonymous. But it is possible that a couple's value orientations may be compatible without being similar. For instance, the discussion above about whether the content of men's or women's value orientations is more important suggests that the primary source of lack of fit occurs between inegalitarian men and egalitarian women. That coupling produces a clear potential for disparate expectations that are likely to cause conflict. Greenstein (1995) finds that unequal division of household labor is associated with greater dissolution risk for egalitarian wives, but not for those who are "traditional." This suggests that couples' value orientations would be compatible if a) they both hold inegalitarian expectations, b) they both hold egalitarian expectations, or c) the wife holds inegalitarian expectations and the husband holds egalitarian ones. In fact, the potential for unmet expectations may be the lowest for that final, dissimilar, pairing than for the two pairings of similar couples, as the egalitarian husband may exceed his wife's expectations more often—and vice versa—than in any other group. That story is consistent with the findings from

Bowen and Orthner's (1983) study of a small sample of military couples, in which the couples with a "traditional" husband and a "modern" wife had the lowest average marital quality. All other pairings had levels of quality similar to one another.

EMPIRICAL ISSUES IN PRIOR RESEARCH

As suggested above, empirical work exists that is consistent with each of the perspectives above. Some of the perspectives could both be simultaneously true (e.g., it is possible that both content and fit matter), but others conflict (e.g., that only wives' or only husbands' values matter). One major limitation of prior empirical research on the topic is that many analyses of the effects of attitudinal content examine only the attitudes of one spouse (e.g., Amato and Booth 1995; Greenstein 1995; Kaufman 2000; Kaufman and Taniguchi 2006). Unobserved heterogeneity will bias those results if spouses' traits are correlated. The attitudes of one spouse tend to be positively correlated with those of their partner both because individuals have a propensity to select partners who are like themselves (Kalmijn 1998) and because of partners' tendency to become more alike over time (Clarkwest 2007; Kalmijn 2005). As a result, if the characteristics of both spouses matter, then the observed effects of one spouse will be confounded by the effects of the other spouse's traits when the latter remain unobserved.

To avoid this type of confounding it is necessary to observe the characteristics of both spouses. However, even when the traits of both spouses are available, issues of collinearity between a) wife's values, b) husband's values, and c) direction-specific dissimilarity complicate efforts to simultaneously test each of the predictions suggested above. In fact the designs employed in some prior work analyzing the effects of levels of and differences in spouses' educational attainment on marital dissolution (Phillips and Sweeney 2005) exhibit precisely this problem. The following section explains the typological approach employed by the present study to address this issue.

TYPOLOGIES OF COUPLES

Thornton, Axinn, and Xie (2007) discuss the perception of a package of values related to individualism and egalitarianism as being widely perceived as *modern* in juxtaposition to more *traditional* collectivist

and authoritarian values. This paper employs those terms as a shorthand to distinguish those packages of values that were relatively more prevalent within the U.S. in the late 1800s/early 1900s from those relatively more prevalent in the U.S. in the late 1900s/early 2000s, recognizing that the terms traditional and modern are not necessarily accurate descriptors of value variation within contexts in other eras and geographic regions. As suggested above, we might typologize couples into 4 types, using a two-by-two matrix of "modern" and "traditional" values. The preceding perspectives each make different predictions for how marital dissolution risk is likely to vary across couples types. Table 1 presents the predictions for six different perspectives:

A. Modern values (in either spouse) increase marital dissolution risk
B. Wives' modern values increase dissolution risk
C. Husbands' modern values reduce dissolution risk
D. Both wives' and husbands' values influence dissolution risk, but inversely
E. Dissimilarity increases dissolution risk
F. Poor fit of traditional husbands/modern wives increases dissolution risk

Within each of the six typologies, the upper left hand box contains the predicted dissolution risk of couples with a traditional husband and a traditional wife (TradH/TradW), while the lower right hand box contains the predicted risk for pairings of a modern husband and a modern wife (ModH/ModW). Arrows denote direction of increasing risk from lower to higher levels. For Perspective A (modern values always increase dissolution risk), risk increases as you move along a diagonal from the upper left hand box to the lower right hand box. The off-diagonal boxes (TradH/ModW and ModH/TradW) have predicted levels of risk between those of the two boxes on the diagonal.

If only wife's modernism increases risk (Perspective B), then risk rises as you move from left to right; there is no predicted change moving vertically. By contrast, if only husband's values matter, with egalitarianism reducing risk (Perspective C), then risk increases as you move from the bottom boxes to the top boxes, with no predicted changes moving horizontally. Perspective D combines Perspectives B and C: risk rises as you move from the bottom left (ModH/TradW) to the upper right (TradH/ModW), with the two similar matches (TradH/TradW and ModH/ModW) having intermediate levels of risk.

A perspective that assumes that only similarity matters (Perspective E), predicts that the greatest risk will occur in dissimilar couples (TradH/ModW, ModH/TradW)—that is, in the upper-right and lower-left boxes. Perspective F predicts that the highest risk will occur among TradH/ModW couples—couples in which unmet expectations are likely to occur—with all other couples having lower risks. The methods section describes the process used to categorize couples and test for cross-type differences in the risk of marital dissolution.

DATA, MEASURES, AND MODELS

DATA

The analyses presented here use data from three waves of the National Survey of Families and Households (Sweet and Bumpass 2002). The NSFH is a nationally representative sample of the U.S. population, with an oversample of racial minorities and nontraditional families. The interview waves occurred in 1987-1988, 1992-1994, and 2001-2003. The sample used for those analyses is composed of heterosexual couples who were married at the time of the Wave 1 interview (N = 5,626). Their marital stability is tracked through the subsequent two waves. Sample weights are used to ensure representativeness of the sample. The unit of analysis in this article is the dyad and I use survey responses of both spouses.

Missing data are a potential concern when using the NSFH (Sassler and McNally 2003). About one fifth of all married Wave 1 respondents were not interviewed in any subsequent waves. Marital dissolution outcomes are, of course, unobserved, for the sample members who attrit. But the perceived dissolution risk at Wave 1 of respondents that remain after attrition is similar to that of the Wave 1 sample as a whole, and Bumpass (2002) finds respondents' perceptions of divorce risk in NSFH to be accurate predictors of actual risk, suggesting that selective attrition on the outcome may not be large.

To address selection that can be predicted on the basis of observables I used multiple imputation to replace data missing for couples interviewed after Wave 1 because of item nonresponse or failure to interview the primary respondent's spouse (16% of sample couples). Multiple imputation eliminates

nonresponse bias that is conditioned on observed traits. It also produces appropriate standard errors (Acock 2005). The results presented in this article were derived from joint analyses of those 10 imputed datasets produced using Stata's -ice- command, following procedures outlined in Rubin (1987) and Royston (2005).

VALUE-RELATED MEASURES

The analyses use four measures of attitudes, behavior, and preferences to reflect partners' values, derived from a range of items in the NSFH. Two are based on expressed attitudes, one on behavior, and one on expressed personal desires. The following 8 attitudinal measures related to family formation, sexual behavior, and gendered roles within families were identified.

(i) It's better if the husband earns the living and the wife takes care of the home
(ii) Young kids are worse off if their mothers work
(iii) Approval of mothers working when children are under five years of age
(iv) Children under three years of age are harmed by being in day care
(v) Belief that domestic tasks should be shared equally if both husband and wife are employed outside the home
(vi) Acceptance of cohabitation if couples plan to marry
(vii) Acceptance of cohabitation of couples have no plans to marry
(viii) Acceptance of 18 year-olds having sex

Responses are on a five item scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Factor analyses were performed to determine to what extent the list could be reduced to the smallest number of sub-measures. Seven of the eight measures were found to be highly correlated with a single underlying attitudinal construct. The one item with no substantial association to that construct was domestic task sharing attitudes (Item v). This pattern held for both husbands and wives. The remaining items were standardized and averaged into a single index of modern family-related attitudes (α = .75 for wives, α = .79 for husbands). The index itself was also standardized to have a weighted mean of zero and standard deviation of one. Because higher values on the measure reflect more progressive beliefs, the index is referred to as a *progressive attitudes* index, though it could equally well be reversed and referred to as a *conservative values* index.

Because it does not load together with the other items, I analyze *domestic task sharing* attitudes separately. This is an element of clear practical importance to couples and is an obvious source of potential conflict between partners.

The third measure related to modern/traditional value orientation is behavioral: *religious participation* (also referred to in the paper as *religiosity*). The decline in the power of religious authority has been cited as one of the factors accompanying (either as a symptom or cause) of the rise of individualistic values (e.g., Bellah et al. 1985; Popenoe 1996). This is coded as an ordinal variable with the categories of frequency of attendance at religious services (0,1,2): *none*, *less than weekly*, and *weekly or more*.

The final measure is *desired family size*. Fertility is a strong demographic correlate of values in modern America (Lesthaeghe and Neidert 2006), reflecting a movement from marriage being child- and fertility-centered to being focused on the individual partners and their dyadic relationship.

The four measures each capture empirically differentiable value-related dimensions. The strongest correlation between any pair of measures is about -.40 (-.41 for wives, -.42 for husbands) between progressive attitudes and religious participation.

TYPOLOGY CREATION. In order to create typologies, it is necessary to split couples into "traditional" and "modern" categories along each of the four axes described above. Any cut-point is necessarily somewhat arbitrary, so the definitions of traditional vs. modern are, more accurately, "more traditional" versus "more modern"—that is, relative to individuals in the other category, not what is traditional vs. what is modern in some objective sense. The cut-points used here were decided upon using criteria of cell-size and, where relevant, meaningfulness of the distinction. The cell-size is most relevant for the wife-husband discrepant couples. Partners' traits are positively correlated—because of either positive assortative mating or because they become more like one another, what Oppenheimer (1998) refers to as "adaptive socialization" (or both)—so couples are more likely to end up in the couple-similar cells than in the couple-discrepant cells. Each measure has a different distribution and the position of reasonable cut-points occurs at different points in the modern/traditional spectrum across the four measures and,

consequently, the proportion of the sample considered traditional or modern varies across measures. Cut-points were chosen independently of and without regard to results produced.

Because the *progressive attitudes* index has no meaningful cut-points, individuals are categorized as *progressive* or *conservative* by whether they are above or at/below the median on the pooled (including both husbands and wives) distribution of the index. The index is roughly symmetrically distributed, so the mean (0.00) and median (0.08) are very similar. The median value for wives (0.13) is slightly higher than that for husbands (0.03). Most couples are in either the both-progressive (32.4%) or both-conservative (37.2%) categories. The remaining couples are split nearly evenly between progressive wife/conservative husband (18.1%) and conservative wife/progressive husband (12.3%) categories.

The large majority of respondents agreed that spouses should share tasks equally (89% of wives, 83% of husbands). The major split was whether they "strongly agreed" (the top category) or only "agreed"—the latter suggesting some reticence on fully endorsing the statement. So the modern/ traditional distinction used for this measure is "strongly agree" versus all other categories. The resulting distribution across the four couple types was 12% both egalitarian, 27% wife-egalitarian/husband not, 14% husband egalitarian/wife not, and 47% neither egalitarian.

The dividing line used for attendance at religious services is *any* versus *none*. Other distinctions, such as regularly (e.g., weekly or several times per month) vs. not regularly are also possible. But any versus none is the cleanest distinction, and also produces minimum cell sizes that are larger than those produced by a weekly vs. less-than-weekly distinction. This is particularly important because partner similarity stronger for religious participation is very high, reducing the cell-size in the off diagonals. Both partners attend in 68% of couples, compared to 14% in which neither attends, 12% wife-yes/husband-no, and 6% husband-yes/wife-no. Note that, unlike the preceding measures of expressed attitudes, husbands are more likely than wives to be in the modern category.

The modal family size in the U.S. is currently two children, down substantially from decades earlier. In the analyses below, family size preferences are defined as traditional if they are greater than two, and modern if they are two or less. Roughly half of both husbands and wives individuals fall into each

category. In 37% of couples both partners prefer a smaller family, both prefer a larger family in 35%, 13% are husband-large/wife-small, and 15% are wife/large/husband-small.

In the typology-based multivariate analyses, indicators are included the respective categories.

OTHER PREDICTORS OF MARITAL DISSOLUTION RISK

The multivariate analyses adjust for a range of factors that have been tied to marital dissolution risk in prior studies. One important group of factors included in the analyses is past family formation experience, including age at marriage, previous divorces, parental divorce, cohabitation experience, and presence of children in the household. Age at marriage is measured in years. The remaining variables are dichotomous indicators. Separate indicators are created for each spouse.

I also adjust for partners' education, total household income, and race. Education levels are coded ordinally in four categories: *no high school degree*, *high school graduate*, *some college*, and *four-year college graduate*. Household income is specified as the log of total income in the analyses. A large literature has documented substantial differences between the marital dissolution risks of African American couples and those of other groups (Clarkwest 2006; Kposowa 1998; Tzeng and Mare 1995). The analyses include an indicator with a value of 1 if the individual 1 identifies as African American and 0 otherwise. Prior studies have shown similar marital dissolution risks between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites after accounting for differences observable risk factors (Phillips and Sweeney, 2005) and there are few members of other ethnoracial groups in the NSFH sample, so for the sake of parsimony I limit the race/ethnicity measures to the African American indicator.

OUTCOME AND ANALYTIC APPROACH

I use Cox proportional hazard models to estimate how spousal dissimilarity and other characteristics at Wave 1 predict subsequent marital dissolution. Relationship changes such as marital dissolution can impact one's value orientations (Moors 2002). The longitudinal design used here helps avoid problems related to causal ordering, though, as discussed later, the analyses are not immune to threats to causal interpretation. Couples' marital stability is observed for up to 16 years after the initial interview. In the

event history analyses, a marriage is considered dissolved at the date of divorce or of separation not followed by reunification. Reunifications may occur after the date of last observation, but they are too rare to have any substantive effect on the results. Marriages in which no dissolution was observed (87% of all couples) are treated as censored either at the date of final interview or, for couples that experienced the death of one of the spouses (7% of the sample), at the date of that death. Because of financial constraints, NSFH interviewed only a subsample (roughly half) of all respondents in Wave 3. This leads to variation across couples in the date at which observations are censored if no marital disruption is observed. Event history models, such as those used in Cox proportional hazard analyses, are well-equipped to handle censored data (Klein and Moeschberger 1997).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the sample. The top panel contains figures for the variables measured at the couple level. Those include the marital dissolution rate of 13% for the sample. The bottom panel contains means and standard deviations for the spouse-specific measures. Overall, wife and husband averages are similar for most measures. Husbands tend to be a couple of years older than wives, while wives have slightly more egalitarian task sharing attitudes and higher rates of religious participation.

Estimates of the relationship between value-related measures at baseline and subsequent marital dissolution risk are presented in Table 3. These models also contain the battery of control variables discussed earlier. For the sake of parsimony, I omit the point estimates for those variables, but the results are consistent with expectations. For example, dissolution risk is positively associated with premarital cohabitation experience, prior divorce, parental divorce, and young age at marriage. The risk is also higher among African Americans.

The table contains results of Cox proportional hazard models using varying specifications of spouses' value-related traits that illustrate how the apparent relationship between value orientations and marital dissolution can changes depending on: (a) whether the gender of the respondent is taken into

account, (b) whether the traits of both or only one spouse are examined, and (c) whether only the individual traits are considered if between-partner similarity is modeled as well. Model 1 presents results using only traits of primary respondents, without gender distinctions. Model 2 models gender-specific associations for primary respondents, Model 3 adds characteristics of primary respondents' spouses, and Model 4 allows associations of each respondent's characteristics with marital dissolution to be contingent on the corresponding traits of their spouse.

Model 1's approach of including only primary respondents is consistent with many analyses where data are present only for one spouse. This model can test only the predictions from Perspective A that, overall, individuals with more modern values tend to have an elevated risk of marital dissolution. The findings modestly support the prediction. More progressive attitudes on the 8-item index and non-attendance at religious services are both associated with an elevated risk of marital dissolution. Coefficients for the other two measures, however, fall short of statistical significance and have coefficients opposite the direction predicted by Perspective A.

In Model 2, each of the value-related measures is replaced by two gender-specific measures for the primary respondents. In each case, if the primary respondent is of the specified gender, then the measure takes the value of the corresponding variable used in Model 1, otherwise it takes a value of zero. For example, one measure captures wives' task sharing attitudes and a second captures task sharing attitudes of husbands. Because only the traits of the primary respondent are included, the value is zero for the given variable if the couple's primary respondent is not of the specified gender. This model provides a test of the differing importance of wives' and husbands' value-related traits as predictors of dissolution risk, allowing a comparative assessment of Perspectives A through D.

Results of this model do not suggest that either gender's value orientations are notably more important than the other's. Two characteristics are statistically significant predictors of dissolution risk—one of wives (church attendance) and one of husbands (task sharing attitudes). And, for both husbands and wives the four value-related measures are jointly significant as dissolution predictors. The one significant individual predictor of dissolution risk among husbands' value-related measures is domestic

task sharing, with more egalitarian attitudes being associated with lower dissolution risk. This, together with the fact that that single significant predictor of lower dissolution risk among wives' value-related traits is greater church attendance—is consistent with Perspective D's suggestion that direction of impact of values depends on the gender of the individual possessing them.

As described earlier, those results may be confounded by associations of primary respondents' traits with the traits of the other spouse, which are unaccounted for. Model 3 adds those spousal traits. The set of value orientation variables used are identical to those used in Model 2, except that, rather than having a zero value in cases where the primary respondent is not of the gender indicated, the variables take on the value of the partner of the indicated gender, whether that partner is the primary or secondary respondent. Results from Model 3 show that the conclusions related to the relative importance of wives' and husbands' value orientations can vary substantially depending on whether or data for both spouses are used rather than those of just one. In Model 3 the two statistically significant predictors are both wives' traits. Progressive attitudes on the 8-itme scale are associated with a higher risk of marital dissolution, and egalitarian task sharing attitudes are marginally associated with a higher risk. The fours wives' value measures are jointly significant, whereas those of husbands are not, contrary to results from Model 2. These results are more consistent with Perspective B, which emphasized the role of wives' attitudes.

As noted earlier, some researchers have argued that the similarity of partners' values may be more important than the content of those values. Empirically, this implies that, rather than values exerting a particular impact across all types of couples, the effect of the values of one spouse on a couple's dissolution risk is contingent on the values of the other spouse. Model 4 adds between-spouse interaction terms for each of the four value-related variables to Model 3, which capture how the association of one spouse's traits with dissolution risk vary linearly depending on other's corresponding traits.

The similarity hypothesis suggests that having scores toward one end of a value scale will have more beneficial effects on relationship stability if one's spouse also has scores toward that same end of the scale. That is, Partner A's high score on Measure X produces relatively lower dissimilarity risk if Partner B's score is also high than if it is low. If true, we should observe negative values for the interaction terms.

We do observe precisely that for both the liberal attitudes scale and religious participation in Model 4, where between-partner interaction terms are added for each of the four measures, though no significant association for the other two terms.

Care should be taken in interpreting the coefficients for the uninteracted variables in Model 4. They reflect the effect of each spouse's traits when the other has a score of 0 on the measure. For the liberal attitudes scale 0 is the overall mean, whereas for religious participation 0 signifies that the individual does not attend religious services. Thus, the positive coefficients for uninteracted religious participation measures imply that higher religious participation by one spouse increases dissolution risk in couples where the other spouse does not attend religious services, but is more protective if the other spouse does attend.

Note that the coefficients for the interaction terms for the other two value-related measures—domestic task sharing and desired family size—are very close to zero. This does not necessarily imply that between-partner fit is unimportant for those traits, but rather that similarity does not necessarily imply fit. The linear interaction terms are unable to distinguish types of fit that go beyond simple similarity/dissimilarity. The typology-based analyses presented below provide an opportunity to uncover more nuanced patterns.

TYPOLOGY RESULTS

Table 4 presents results of a single model like those presented above, but with indicators categories in each typology replacing the linear value-related measures. Three indicators of couple-type (ModW/TradH, TradW/ModH, and ModW/ModH) were included for each value-related area, with one type, TradW/TradH omitted as the comparison category. I present results in a somewhat non-conventional fashion in order to facilitate observation of how the patterns of results match up with the predictions presented earlier. The table contains one two-by-two box for each value-related domain. A fifth box at the bottom of the table averages coefficients for corresponding couple types across measures to provide a more comprehensive picture of the dissolution risk of different combinations of couple characteristics.

Each cell corresponds to one couple type, and the number within each cell reflects the log odds of the covariate-adjusted difference in average marital dissolution risk between the type in question relative to couples classified as TradW/TradH on the measure. Because TradW/TradH couples are the comparison group, the value in each of the upper-left hand boxes is zero. Statistically significant differences between cells are noted, though only in the cell with the higher risk, in order to minimize clutter. For noting statistical significance compared to other couple types, cells are referred to as *a* through *d*, where *a* is the upper left-hand box (TradW/TradH), *b* is the upper right-hand box (ModW/TradH), *c* is the lower left-hand box (TradW/ModH), and *d* is the lower right-hand box (ModW/ModH).

The pattern that is consistent across all of the value-related measures is that the highest dissolution risk is observed among ModW/TradH couples (upper right-hand cell). This is consistent with the predictions of Perspective F. Differences between the remaining types vary by the particular trait. Contrary to Perspective A, modern value orientations do not appear to universally raise dissolution risk, but rather only for wives in cases in which husbands are more traditional. Couples with two partners with traditional orientations have statistically lower risks than couples with two partners with modern orientations on only one of the four measures. Their estimated risks are insignificantly higher than those of ModW/ModH couples on one of the four and almost exactly zero on another, and jointly across the four measures the dissolution risk for the two types of couples is marginally significant, but not statistically differentiable at $p < .05$.

There is also no consistent evidence that either wives' or husbands' value orientations matter more than the other's overall. Rather, a wife's value orientation appears to matter a lot if her husband has a traditional value orientation (see differences between ModW/TradH and TradW/TradH couples), but very little if he has a more modern orientation (compare ModW/ModH and TradW/ModH). As for husbands, a more modern orientation is associated with lower dissolution risk if their wives also have modern orientations, but if their wives are more traditional, then husbands' modern orientation is either unassociated with dissolution risk or with a slightly elevated risk.

Finally, between-spouse dissimilarity *per se* does not seem to be particularly associated with elevated dissolution risk, as the risk for "dissimilar" TradW/ModH couples is not generally different from that of either of the two "similar" types, TradW/TradH and ModW/ModH. Those couples appear to be able to work out a marital arrangement amenable to relatively high relationship stability. It is the couples with a modern wife and a traditional husband have a notably, consistently, higher difficulty maintaining their relationship, suggesting a lack of compatibility in those gender-specific value orientations.

CONCLUSIONS

Results of this study illustrate a complex relationship between individuals' value orientations and their risk of marital dissolution. Methodologically, the marked differences in results across models with different specifications demonstrate the importance of (1) taking into account the traits of both spouses in analyzing potential causes of marital dissolution and (2) considering the possibilities of gender-specific and interacting, contingent effects.

Substantively, evidence from the typological model using both spouses traits refutes claims that egalitarian attitudes always increase marital dissolution risk and that it is primarily the value orientations of the spouse of one gender that are relevant to a couple's marital dissolution risk. The association between value orientations and marital dissolution risk does appear to vary somewhat depending on the possessor's gender, but no categorical statement can be made about whether wives' or husbands' orientations are more important than the other's. Observed associations are highly dependent on the ideology of one's spouse. A wife's modern orientation only appears to matter if the husband is traditional. Whereas a husband's modern orientation tends to be associated with lower divorce risk if his wife is also modern and are not strongly associated with dissolution risk if his wife possesses a traditional orientation.

The contingent effects suggest that between-spouse fit in value orientation matters, but that fit is more than a simple issue of similarity or dissimilarity. The particular type of dissimilarity is critical. On average, dissimilar couples have higher dissolution risks, but this effect is largely confined to elevated

risks in couples with traditional husbands and modern wives. Dissolution risks do not appear to be particularly high among couples with a modern husband and a traditional wife.

Although the models include a range of important control variables and value orientations are measured prior to observed marital outcomes, this does not necessarily show that the orientations measured causally impact dissolution risk. Other unobserved factors could account for the observed associations. Alternative explanations could no doubt be generated, but the pattern of effects does not seem obviously explicable by omitted variables. For instance, Clarkwest (2007) notes that his finding that spousal dissimilarity in value orientations predicts greater subsequent marital dissolution risk could reflect the fact that spouses in a low functioning relationship may be less likely to become similar over time (and thus be observed to be more dissimilar at any particular point in time), meaning that dissimilarity is a sign of relationship functioning rather than an influence on quality and, in turn, stability. However, it seems more difficult to explain why the particular combination of a traditionally-oriented husband and modern-oriented wife exhibits higher risks of marital dissolution without some recourse to arguments that fundamentally involve value-conflict related challenges to relationship functioning.

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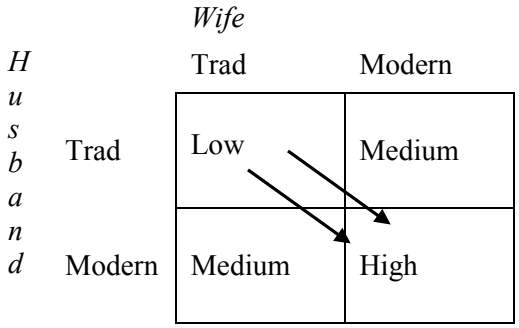
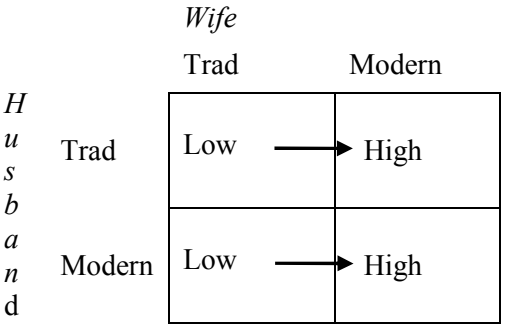
Table 1. Six Perspectives' Predicted Marital Dissolution Risk for Different Couple Types

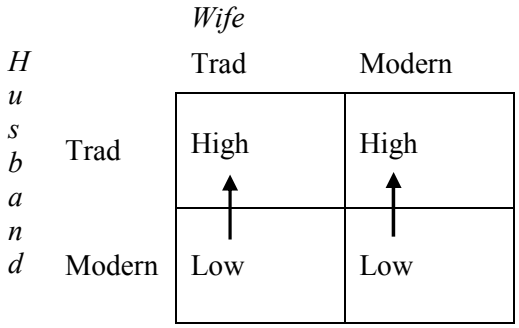
A) Modern Values Increase Risk



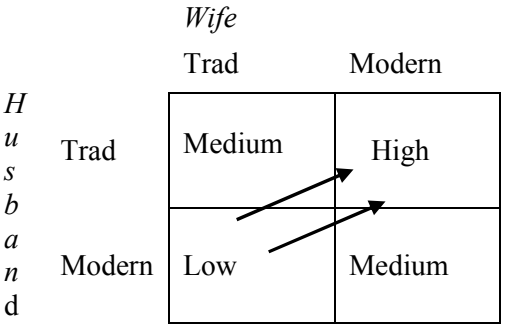
B) Wives' Modern Values Increase Risk



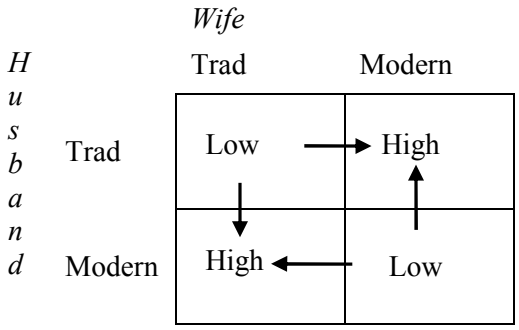
C) Husbands' Modern Values Reduce Risk



D) Values Matter Inversely, Depending on Gender



E) Partner Dissimilarity Increases Risk



F) Poor Fit of Traditional Husband and Modern Wife

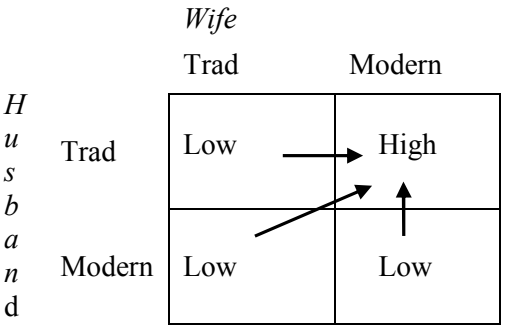


Table 2. Descriptive Statistics, by Gender

	Couples	
	Mean	St. Dev.
Marital Dissolution	0.13	(0.33)
Household Income (log)	47,908	(57,020)
Minor Children in Household	0.52	(0.50)
Multipartner Fertility	0.13	(0.33)

	Wives		***Husbands***	
	Mean	St. Dev.	Mean	St. Dev.
Previous Divorce	0.16	(0.36)	0.17	(0.38)
Previous Cohabitation	0.15	(0.36)	0.17	(0.37)
Parents Div/Sep	0.13	(0.34)	0.12	(0.32)
Age at Marriage	23.79	(7.42)	26.34	(8.10)
African American	0.07	(0.25)	0.07	(0.25)
Educational Attainment (1-4)	2.47	(1.00)	2.56	(1.08)
Expressed Attitudes				
Progressive Attitudes	0.04	(1.01)	-0.04	(0.99)
Egalitarian Task Sharing Atts	4.24	(0.75)	4.04	(0.77)
Religious Participation (1-3)	1.25	(0.76)	1.11	(0.78)
Desired # of Children	2.92	(1.59)	2.91	(1.63)
N	5626		5626	

All values calculated using sample weights.

Table 3. Cox Proportional Hazards Estimates of Marital Disruption Risk by Value Orientation Measures

	(1) Primary Respondent, Non Gender-Specific		(2) Primary Respondent, Gender-Specific		(3) Both Spouses, Gender-Specific		(4) Both Spouses, Interaction	
Variables	β	(St. Err.)	β	(St. Err.)	β	(St. Err.)	β	(St. Err.)
Non-Gender Specific								
Progressive Attitudes Index	0.088 *	(0.044)						
Egalitarian Task Sharing Atts	-0.077	(0.053)						
Religious Participation	-0.127 *	(0.053)						
Desired # of Children	0.029	(0.031)						
Wife Characteristics								
Progressive Attitudes Index			0.094	(0.061)	0.139 *	(0.057)	0.167 **	(0.059)
Egalitarian Task Sharing Atts			0.022	(0.078)	0.115 †	(0.060)	0.036	(0.309)
Religious Participation			-0.150 *	(0.072)	-0.083	(0.081)	0.136	(0.094)
Desired # of Children			-0.003	(0.040)	0.020	(0.036)	0.019	(0.064)
Husband Characteristics								
Progressive Attitudes Index			0.095	(0.065)	-0.041	(0.059)	-0.010	(0.061)
Egalitarian Task Sharing Atts			-0.191 **	(0.074)	-0.086	(0.057)	-0.151	(0.338)
Religious Participation			-0.085	(0.081)	-0.094	(0.078)	0.241 *	(0.119)
Desired # of Children			0.065	(0.045)	0.044	(0.033)	0.041	(0.056)
Interaction								
Progressive Attitudes Index							-0.106 *	(0.047)
Egalitarian Task Sharing Atts							0.021	(0.077)
Religious Participation							-0.272 **	(0.080)
Desired # of Children							0.001	(0.015)
Additional background controls[a]	Yes		Yes		Yes		Yes	
N	5,626		5,626		5,626		5,626	

Sample weights used.

[a]Additional Background controls consist of the log of household income at time 1, whether there were minor children in the household at that time, multple partner fertility, cohabitation history, past divorces, parental divorces, identification as African American, educational attainment, and age at marriage.

**p < .01, *p < .05, †p < .10

Table 4. Cox Proportional Hazard Estimates of Marital Dissolution Risk of Different Couple Types

1) Progressive values index

		Wife	
Husband		Traditional	Modern
	Trad	0	0.42[a**] (0.15)
	Modern	0.29[a†] (0.16)	0.33[a*] (0.13)

2) Task sharing attitudes

		Wife	
Husband		Traditional	Modern
	Trad	0	0.23[a* c*] (0.10)
	Modern	-0.15 (0.15)	-0.01 (0.14)

3) Religious Participation

		Wife	
Husband		Yes (Trad)	No (Mod)
	Yes (Trad)	0	0.29 [a†d†] (0.17)
	No (Mod)	0.10 (0.12)	-.04 (0.12)

4) Desired family size

		Wife	
Husband		Lg (Trad)	Sm (Mod)
	Large (Trad)	0	0.29[a*] (0.13)
	Small (Mod)	0.10 (0.13)	0.13 (0.11)

5) Joint results

		Wife	
Husband		Traditional	Modern
	Trad	0	0.31[a**c**d**]
	Modern	0.09	0.11[a†]

$^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{\dagger}p < .10$

[a]Dissolution risk is statistically higher than Trad/Trad couples.
[b]Dissolution risk is statistically higher than Wife-Modern/Husband-Trad couples.
[c]Dissolution risk is statistically higher than Wife-Trad/Husband-Modern couples.
[c]Dissolution risk is statistically higher than Modern/Modern couples.

Note that these results are from a single model that jointly includes indicators for each of the four domains. Coefficents in the "Joint results" are the average of coefficients in the corresponding cells in the other four boxes. Significance levels reflect the joint significance of differences between the sums of the sets of four coefficients. Coefficients represent log odds of marital dissolution relative to that of Trad/Trad couples. Figures in parentheses in boxes 1 through 4 are standard deviations.

ENDNOTES

[1] The use of "traditional" and "modern" in this paper are used as a shorthand way of comparing predominant value orientations within a specific and narrow historical context, differentiating values that were relatively more prevalent in the United States in the late 19th/early 20th centuries from those that became relatively more prevalent in the late 20th/early 21st centuries. The terms are not meant to do not apply universally across other time periods or geographic contexts.