

## A) Introduction

1. The article "Divorce Among Sociologists Married to Sociologists" explores the divorce rate of male sociologists. No actual hypothesis was formulated due to the fact that the authors "stumbled" upon a correlation while doing a study on religious apostasy and divorce.
2. The data were obtained using a mailed questionnaire. The questionnaires were sent out randomly to 760 members of the American Sociological Association. The data were specifically formed by analyzing the 334 (out of 353) returned questionnaires.
3. The authors found that male sociologists who had married women with sociology degrees were more likely to divorce than male sociologists who had married women with other degrees.

## B) External Validity

1. a) Individuals  
b) The population of substantive interest is male sociologists who have ever married.  
c) Not given  
d) Sampling frame: "Male fellows and active members listed in the 1967 membership directory of the American Sociological Association" (58)  
e) Method: Questionnaires were mailed out randomly to 760 members of the American Sociological Association. The sampling of the members of the ASA can be considered probabilistic due to the random mailing of the questionnaires.  
f) No information given  
g) The response rate to the first mailed out questionnaire was 353 out of the original 760 sent out. The researchers then did a second mailing, which used a shorter questionnaire. This upped the response rate to 429 out of 760 questionnaires. However, the authors chose to use the longer questionnaires because the shorter version excluded necessary marital history information. The actual number of questionnaires used for the study was 334 out of 353. Although not directly stated, I assume the 19 questionnaires that were excluded were done so because the respondents had never been married. The total rate of completion was 46%, which is very low. The authors also mention that the N varies from one analysis to the next because of the failure of some subjects to answer all of the questions.  
h) The authors state that the low rate of completion of the longer questionnaire could be considered a bias in the sample. However, they concluded that a biased sample in this case is unlikely because the comparison of responses to the long questionnaire with data already obtained from the "universe" showed very little difference on variables measured. Another possible problem that the authors addressed was one of the return rate among divorced persons. They suggested that there may have been a lower response rate for divorced persons because they might have been reluctant to answer personal marital history questions. However, the authors stated that this should "not have varied systematically by first wife's college major." (58) Therefore, it should not be a major concern for this study.
2. a) The major restriction imposed by the researchers was the requirement that the subject be married at some point. This is obviously justified due to the fact

that they were studying divorce rates. The other embedded restriction centered around the subjects' sex. The subjects were all men; but this can be attributed to the time frame. I assume there weren't many female members of the ASA in 1967. There was no restriction concerning geographic areas or organizational units mentioned.

- b) If the units of analysis (ASA members) were selected as the authors state, they should generalize to the desired population (male sociologists). However, the authors fail to give adequate information concerning the techniques used for randomizing the survey distribution. Thus, it is hard to conclude if a generalization can be made from the data.
- c) Mailed surveys always have an amount of bias. Many people don't complete questionnaires when coordinators are not present. In addition, many people fail to send mailed surveys/questionnaires back. Usually those who do send their surveys back have strong beliefs about the topic in question. Therefore, careful measures should be employed when using mailed surveys (i.e. follow-up letters) to minimize bias. None of these measures are mentioned in the article.
- d) Not enough information is given; one can only assume that the sample is representative.
- e) The information concerning sampling is very vague, so making an evaluation is difficult. However, there is major cause for concern with only a 46% response rate. This low response rate may cause a problem when generalizing to a larger population.
3. a) This research can be applied to male sociologists. More specifically, it can be applied to male members of the American Sociological Association. In 1967, most of the members of the ASA were probably white, middle-aged (mid 30's to early 60's), highly educated, and in the middle class range.
- b) These findings could conceivably be applied to men in other professions that marry sociology majors. The professions would have to fit into a category along the same lines as sociology, for instance, a college professor or a doctor. In addition, the profession would have to contain men with similar characteristics of the male sociologists. For example, the men should be white, well educated, etc... These populations should produce similar results due to their likeness to the intended population. However, this may not be true if there is something inherent in sociologists that cause marital instability.
- c) I would be hesitant to apply these results to today's society.

C) Construct Validity of Measures of Variables

1. Variables

<u>Concept</u>	<u>Control Variables</u>
✓ Religiosity	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire (Fragments 4-10 on Table 3, p 61)
✓ Stability of Parent's Marriage	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire (Fragments #3 on Table 3, p 61)
✓ Occupation	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire (Fragments 12 and 13 on Table 3, p 61)
✓ Community Size	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire
✓ Age	
✓ Date of Marriage	

✂ Table Continued on next pg.

- (Fragment #11 on Table 3, p 61)
- ✓ Self-Report on the Questionnaire
- ✓ Questions on the Questionnaire  
(Fragments 1 and 2 on Table 3, p 61)

#### Independent Variables

<u>Concept</u>	<u>Operationalized</u>
✓ First Wife's College Major	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire
✓ First Wife's Education Level	(Categories given in Table 2, p 59)
	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire
	(Categories given in Table 1, p 59)

#### Dependent Variables

<u>Concept</u>	<u>Operationalized</u>
✓ Divorce Percentages Among Male Sociologists	✓ Questions on the Questionnaire

2. a) 1) Religion- The author does not state the general principles employed to measure this. However, I assume that they had very specific principles considering the original study was examining the relationships between religious apostasy and divorce. The do, however, explain why they use religion as a control variable. "Both our data and a great deal of other evidence indicate that lack of religious commitment is associated with marital instability." (64)
- 2) The authors do not give this information. No questions or attributes from the questionnaire are included in the text.
- 3) The general ideas or end results after dichotomizing are reported in Table 3. The examples given specifically deal with 3 aspects of religion; which include religious commitment, religious affiliation, and religious preference.

#### Items

##### Religious Commitment

- ✓ Husband not committed at all to a religious ideology in late adolescence

##### Religious Affiliation

- ✓ Husband affiliated with a religious ideology in late adolescence
- ✓ Husband's mother affiliated with a religious organization
- ✓ Husband's children under 12 did not attend religious services at the time of survey

##### Religious Preference

- ✓ Husband had no religious preference in late adolescence
- ✓ Husband had no religious preference at time of survey
- ✓ Husband's mother had no religious preference

- 4) No information given here
- 5) The amount of information concerning the measurement of religion was minimal, but based on what was given, I had a problem with the operationalization. For instance, the father's affiliation and preference were excluded. No reason was given for this. Also, the word "committed" is

ambiguous. Essentially, no explanations were given for what they used, and why; making evaluation difficult.

- b) 1) Age of husband and wife at marriage- (None of the other variables were hard to measure, so I chose an interesting one) The authors made no direct comment about this issue, except for the broad statement that age at marriage may be a factor that causes marital instability. It is widely known that the age at marriage is significant because getting married young usually leads to divorce. On a separate note, having an older wife can be a factor that leads to marital instability if she is more accomplished than the man. Another possibility is that men are more likely to leave an older woman for a younger woman.
- 2) The specific questions used were not given in the text, nor were the possible attributes.
- 3) Once again, the authors report the dichotomies formed after data collection (or the fragments of the questions) in Table 3.

#### Items

- ✓ First wife 19 or younger and husband 25 or younger at time of marriage
- ✓ First wife older than husband

4) No information

5) The measurement seems appropriate. It is straightforward enough that there should not be a problem.

#### D) Internal Validity

1. The article "Divorce Among Sociologists Married to Sociologists" had no immediate hypothesis. The authors "stumbled" upon the finding that male sociologists whose first wives have degrees in sociology are more prone to divorce. After finding this correlation, the authors proceeded to test for spuriousness by looking at a few specific control variables prior to forming an elaboration model. An important variable examined by Glenn and Keir was the amount of the first wife's education. They concluded that "large discrepancies in the amount of education of husband and wife were associated with marital instability or maladjustment." (59)

#### Findings

##### Divorce by First Wife's College Major (Table 2, p 59)

The authors looked at the percentage of ever-married male sociologists who had ever been divorced, by first wife's college major. The majors examined were: Sociology, Other Social and Behavioral Sciences, Physical and Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering, Education, Business, Administration, and Music and Art, whose divorce rate percentages were 24.2% (n = 33), 6.3% (n = 79), 7.4% (n = 27), 0.0% (n = 7), 4.3% (n = 46), 0.0% (n = 3), and 14.3% (n = 21) respectively. The difference in the divorce rate between the sociology majors and the other majors was 17.2%. It was statistically significant at  $p = .001$ , which means that it was very unlikely that the results were due to chance. Also, the degree of association was good,  $\tau\text{-}b = .048$ .

##### Divorce by First Wife's Education (Table 1, p 59)

The authors looked at percentage of ever-married male sociologists who had ever been divorced by first wife's education level. The categories employed by the authors were: 12 years of school or less, some college but no degree, Bachelor's

degree, Master's degree, and Doctorate, and their divorce rate percentages were 37.5% (n = 24), 14.0% (n = 57), 9.8% (n = 132), 10.0% (n = 88), and 14.3% (n = 28) respectively. "The educational discrepancy varied inversely with the amount of the wife's education as expected." (59) The percentage of those divorced who married a woman with 12 years of school or less was the highest by a fairly large amount. However, the other percentages varied little. The next highest percentage was in the category of a woman with a Doctorate. No specific values other than the percentages were given; and the authors concluded by saying that the differences between the college categories were not statistically significant.

2. The authors state an interesting finding surrounding the analysis of the elaboration model. They found that the "risk factors" that they examined had a multiplicative effect on the divorce rate as opposed to an additive effect. Essentially, they are claiming that the risk factors "enhanced" the divorce rate rather than just adding to it. For instance, the "added" percentage for divorce when a sociology major has an occupation that is other than a housewife is 22.8%. However, the actual data showed the percentage to be 30.0%. This difference is attributed to the multiplicative effect. This kind of effect occurred in 9 of 13 cross-tabulations. The authors don't state the importance of this discovery, except to say that it's rare and could be due to chance.
3.
  - a) Yes, the conclusion is supported by an appropriate statistical result. The authors most likely used chi-square to calculate the p-value.
  - b) Yes, the direction of causality implied in the article is justified. The temporal order specifies the direction of causality appropriately. One can assume reasonably that the wife obtained her degree prior to divorce.
  - c) An elaboration model was used by the researchers to control for extraneous variables. (See Table 3, p 61)
  - d) The findings of this correlational study could not have been influenced by various extraneous variables. For instance, maturation and history can not be a problem due to the short period of time required for filling out a survey. The Hawthorne and placebo effect are irrelevant because no "treatments" are being conducted. Also, the subjects presumably are not suffering from lack of social contacts. In addition, a personal relationship effect is not a cause for concern due to the impersonal nature of a survey. Lastly, regression to the mean, mortality, and selection bias are irrelevant. They are not a problem because the study was short, had no comparison group, didn't use a pre-test, and was not done on an extreme population.
  - e) A survey does not control for a significant <sup>number</sup> amount of variables. This is because not many factors are held constant, and randomization is not used. Therefore, only a few things were held constant. These were, sex of the subject, the profession they were in, and their educational levels. Essentially, a survey is a poor framework for controlling organismic variables.
  - f) Glenn and Keir encountered several problems that they concluded to be negligible because they were able to adequately explain the problems away. For example, they had 3 comparisons obtained from the elaboration model which yielded differences in the wrong direction. They state that this could be due to sampling error and small N's ( the cell sizes were 1, 8, and 11). Lastly, Glenn and

Keir specifically identified the possible problem of marital instability being caused by male sociologists who marry their students. However, when they reexamined the questionnaires concentrating on the dates given for degrees, etc..., this was not a cause for concern.

- g) The authors are frank and admit that they did not test for every extraneous variable, and that their finding could be attributed to some untested variable closely correlated with sociology. This was the extent of their discussion. In addition, the authors found that the "wife's majoring in sociology was not associated with divorce if her father was not a non-manual worker or craftsman, or if the husband never lived in a community with 50,000 or more people during his childhood." (60) No explanation is offered concerning these findings.
- h) There are several threats to internal validity that the authors do not address. They are on-stage effects and reliance on memory. When using surveys, people are aware that they are being studied, which opens the door for on-stage effects. Social desirability is a distinct possibility in a study involving divorce and religion. It is possible that subjects felt pressured to put down a religious preference. Society expects certain things, and the issue of religion is one emphasized frequently in every-day life. A more salient problem would be that of "faking bad". In this case, the sociologist being studied may find humor in trying to outwit the researchers and may have put down bogus answers. An entirely different threat to internal validity is that of reliance on memory. Some of the questions asked about specific dates, town sizes, and information about an ex-wife, are subject to memory failure. Other than these things, the researchers bring up many of their other faults. Basically, I think they should redesign the study, and use a shorter survey that can be conducted over the telephone. This might increase the response rate. In conclusion, I don't have any reasonable solutions, and my only other advice would be to try to eliminate as much as is feasible, the organismic variables.
- i) Overall, the internal validity is pretty good due to the elaboration model. It provides a better understanding of the finding that male sociologists married to female sociology majors are more prone to divorce. Several problems are apparent, but with further testing that "iron out the wrinkles" the findings would have more validity. I believe the findings are replicable.

*unless these  
are controlled  
being discussed  
with the  
sociology - major  
w/ threats they do*

#### E) Overall Evaluation

1. The methods used in this correlational study seem appropriate. The elaboration model really adds strength to the finding that divorce among male sociologists is more frequent when they are married to a woman who majored in sociology. The set-up was logical and well thought out. However, the presentation of the data was poor. The important numbers needed for examining an elaboration model were not displayed. In addition, the actual control variables they tested for were not listed in the text. A separate problem I had with this study was the small number of respondents. The response rate for the mailed survey was only 46%; which seems hardly adequate. Lastly, the techniques used for randomizing the distribution of the surveys were not mentioned. This makes the evaluation of their design difficult. Overall, the study provides a good base for further exploration, but I would strongly hesitate to put complete faith in the findings.

2. In the introduction, the authors speculate that the divorce rate is higher among male sociologists married to women with sociology majors because there may exist a certain characteristic inherent in people attracted to sociology that would make marriage difficult. The authors also state their findings may suggest a plausible contradiction to the generalization that similar interests are conducive to marital stability. Glenn and Keir further explore these issues in their discussion. In the discussion they proceed to provide three possible explanations for the high rate of divorce among male sociologists married to female sociology majors. The explanations given were: 1- "College-educated husbands and wives with the same academic specialty may generally be prone to divorce, regardless of the specialty." 2- "Female sociology majors may have generally high divorce rates regardless of the occupations and academic specialties of their husbands." 3- "The marriage of a sociologist to another trained person in sociology may be a uniquely unstable kind of relationship." (63) Explanations number 2 and 3, were deemed most likely based on the background evidence of religious commitment being associated with marital instability. Sociologists are usually not known for being religiously committed. However, the authors are quick to point out that their data does not support the claim of religiosity influencing marital instability among sociologists. The wife's having no religious preference and the husband's having no religious preference did not have a multiplicative effect on the divorce rate. However, despite this data, explanations number 2 and 3 can not be ruled out. In conclusion, the authors speculate that "Pre-college characteristics that strongly predispose a person toward marital instability"(67) exist, and that these divorce-prone people are attracted to sociology. The framework presented by Glenn and Keir is largely based on educated guesswork. As recognized by the authors, much more research would have to be done in order to discover the causation of the high divorce rate among male sociologists married to sociology majors.
3. There really are not any ethical issues.
4. The article addresses an interesting correlational finding, but does not offer anything generally insightful. The one thing of value it does offer is an example that goes against the generalization of like interests being necessary for marital stability.
5. The article analysis was difficult, and I struggled with the internal validity section. In the future, I would suggest going over that section more in class, by using several examples. In addition, if possible try to change the syllabus to allow for a return of the internal validity assignment with remarks. That would be extremely useful.

Excellent,  
A paper

A for course

Vaux, K. Pages. 57 to 67

1969 "A year of heart transplants. An ethical valuation." *Postgraduate Medicine* 45: 201.

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*JK*  
*AT*

## DIVORCE AMONG SOCIOLOGISTS MARRIED TO SOCIOLOGISTS\*

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In a study of correlates of divorce in a sample of American sociologists, male sociologists whose first wives were sociology majors were found to be substantially more likely to have been divorced than male sociologists whose first wives had degrees in other fields. This finding rules out the categorical validity of the generalization that common interests are conducive to stability of marriages. Prevalence of an unusually secular orientation among sociology major wives is offered as a tentative explanation.

This paper reports a fortuitous research finding, namely, that male sociologists whose first wives have degrees in sociology have been unusually prone to divorce. This finding is fortuitous in the sense that no theory and no hypothesis led us to it. Rather, we stumbled upon it while studying the relationship between religious apostasy and divorce from data on a sample of sociologists. For control purposes, we coded all the variables from the questionnaire which we thought might bear an important relationship to divorce. Educational level of both husband and wife, and the relationship between the two, are known to be related to probability of divorce, so of course we coded the

amount of education of the first wife. Almost as an afterthought, we also coded the wife's college major, although we doubted that it was very important. We expected either no relationship or a somewhat lower divorce rate among the sociologists married to sociology majors, given the widespread belief that similarity of the interests of husband and wife is conducive to marital adjustment.<sup>1</sup>

The unexpected finding that the sociologists married to sociology majors were, as a whole, more prone to divorce than the sociologists married to other college graduates is at least interesting, and it may be important. If it did not result from sampling error and is not spurious, it rules out the categorical validity of the generalization that com-

\* We are indebted to Adreain Kirkpatrick for several helpful suggestions. A grant from the National Science Foundation fi-



mon or similar interests are conducive to marital stability. It may also prompt speculation about the effects of studying sociology and about the characteristics of people attracted to the discipline.

Before we indulge our speculative inclinations, however, we must discuss the size and adequacy of the sample and, insofar as the data allow, test for spuriousness in the relationship.

### THE SAMPLE

The data were gathered by Glenn and Weiner in the fall of 1967 for a study of the background correlates of orientations to sociology.<sup>2</sup> A questionnaire was sent to a random sample ( $N = 760$ ) of the male fellows and active members listed in the 1967 membership directory of the American Sociological Association. Returns from the first mailing were 353 usable questionnaires, and a second mailing increased the returns to 429. However, a shorter questionnaire which did not include some of the marital history questions was used for the second mailing, and, therefore, the  $N$  for the study of divorce is only 334, the number of ever-married persons who completed the longer questionnaire.

Given the rather low rate of completion and return of the longer questionnaire (46 percent), substantial bias in the sample is possible. However, comparison of the responses to the long questionnaire with data on the universe on every variable reported in the 1967 membership directory revealed negligible differences.<sup>3</sup> Although there may

<sup>2</sup> Other reports of analyses of these data are in Glenn and Weiner (1969) and Weiner (1968).

<sup>3</sup> The "universe" data from the directory were not quite complete, since some information was not reported for some members (see Weiner, 1968). Nevertheless, the com-

have been greater differences on other variables, it does not seem likely that any bias appreciably altered the relationships among the variables studied here. For instance, the return rate may have been lower among divorced persons because they were reluctant to respond to the rather personal marital history questions, but there is no apparent reason why any such difference should have varied systematically by first wife's college major.

Of course, some respondents who completed most of the questionnaire failed to answer some questions. For each analysis reported here, we kept the  $N$  as large as possible by including all of the respondents for whom we had all of the data needed for that comparison or cross-tabulation. Therefore, the  $N$  varies somewhat from one analysis to another.

### PERCENTAGE DIVORCED BY AGE

Ordinarily, a study of divorce rates requires controls for age, or better yet, for date of first marriage. Obviously, the longer the time elapsed since a person's marriage, the longer he has been exposed to the possibility of divorce, and many never-divorced persons who have been married only a short time will eventually be divorced. Therefore, if rates and patterns of divorce in different marriage cohorts are the same, at any given time a larger percentage of the persons in the older cohorts will have been divorced.

In our sample, however, the percentage of ever-married men who had ever been divorced varied little by age—an indication that a larger percentage of the younger cohorts will eventually be divorced. For instance, 14.8 percent of the ever-married respondents below age 45 had been divorced, compared with

12.6 percent of those 45 and older.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, wife's college major varied little by husband's age.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, age does not have to be held constant simultaneously with each other control variable—an important advantage in view of the small N.

#### PERCENTAGE DIVORCED BY WIFE'S EDUCATION

Several studies have found that large discrepancies in the amount of education of husband and wife were associated with marital instability or maladjustment (e.g., Scanzoni, 1968; Burgess and Cottrell, 1939), and our data are generally consistent with these findings. Since all of the husbands were highly educated, and most had doctorates,<sup>6</sup> the educational discrepancy varied inversely with amount of wife's education. As expected, the percentage ever-divorced was highest, by a considerable margin, among those respondents whose first wives had completed no more than 12 years of school (Table 1). Above that level, however, amount of wife's education made little difference. Although the highest divorce rate was among the sociologists whose first wives had doctorates, none of the differences between pairs of the college levels approached statistical significance.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> From age 35 through age 54, the percentage ever-divorced for five-year intervals varied by less than three points, from 15.4 to 18.3. The percentage for the ever-married respondents below age 35 was 8.1, and for those over 54 it was 6.9.

<sup>5</sup> Fifty-three percent of the respondents whose first wives were sociology majors were 45 years old or older, compared with 44.6 percent of those whose first wives had other specified majors.

<sup>6</sup> Only 7.2 percent of the respondents failed to report a date of doctorate, and some of those undoubtedly had doctorates.

<sup>7</sup> However, other evidence indicates that

TABLE 1  
PERCENTAGE OF EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EVER BEEN DIVORCED, BY AMOUNT OF FIRST WIFE'S EDUCATION

	%	(N)
12 years of school or less	37.5	(24)
Some college but no degree	14.0	(57)
Bachelor's degree	9.8	(132)
Master's degree	10.0	(88)
Doctorate	14.3	(28)

Among the sociologists whose first wives had college degrees, those whose wives had majored in sociology were more prone to divorce than those whose wives majored in any of the other fields shown in Table 2. Only in music and art did the percentage divorced come within ten points of that in sociology. Of all of the wives with specified majors other than sociology, only seven

TABLE 2  
PERCENTAGE OF EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EVER BEEN DIVORCED, BY FIRST WIFE'S COLLEGE MAJOR

	%	(N)
Sociology	24.2	(33)
Other social and behavioral sciences, humanities	6.3	(79)
Physical and biological sciences	7.4	(27)
Mathematics, engineering	0.0	(7)
Education	4.3	(46)
Business administration	0.0	(3)
Music, art	14.3	(21)

women with post-graduate degrees are somewhat more prone to divorce than those with only one degree (Udry, 1966: Figure 2).

All tests of significance reported in this paper are one-tailed.

percent had been divorced. The difference in the divorce rate between the sociology majors and all other specified majors was 17.2 percentage points—a statistically significant difference ( $p = .001$ ). Clearly, the degree of association was great enough to be important ( $\tau\text{-}b = .048$ ),<sup>8</sup> and it is unlikely that it resulted from random sampling error.

There were not enough sociology-major wives with bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees for reliable evidence on differences in divorce by highest degree. However, the divorce rates in these three levels—30.8 ( $N = 13$ ), 13.3 ( $N = 15$ ), and 40.0 percent ( $N = 5$ ), respectively—show that it was not just the wives with post-graduate degrees, who presumably might have been professionally competitive with their husbands, who accounted for the high divorce rate among male sociologists married to sociology majors.

#### TESTS FOR SPURIOUSNESS

A number of the coded variables other than amount of wife's education and her college major were associated with percentage divorced. Several of these were dichotomous, and we collapsed the others into dichotomies before using them in cross-tabulations. We made sure that the collapsing did not obscure any pronounced departures from linearity in the relationships, and we collapsed at the points which tended to maximize the measured association with percentage divorced.

We first chose for controls those variables on which there was a difference in percentage divorced of at least ten points and a  $\tau\text{-}b$  of at least .02. Then, we added two other characteristics of the first wife which were moderately associated with divorce (the last

two entries in Table 3), not because they could explain much of the association of wife's major with divorce but because we suspected that they might interact with the independent variable and affect its relationship to divorce. The control variables and their relationships to percentage divorced are shown in Table 3.

We computed the percentage of ever-married respondents who had ever been divorced by first wife's college major (dichotomized into sociology versus all other specified majors) and each control variable. Space limitations preclude presentation of all of the data. Rather, we can only summarize the findings and present examples of the cross-tabulations.

In 23 of the 26 comparisons at each level of each control variable, the respondents whose first wives were sociology majors had the higher divorce rates.<sup>9</sup> The smallest such difference was 4.6 percentage points, all of the others being rather substantial. In one of the three comparisons which revealed a difference in the other direction, the  $N$  in one of the cells was only one, so the percentage cannot be considered reliable. The other two exceptions may also have resulted from sampling error, since each involved a cell with a rather small  $N$  (8 and 11). However, in our sample, if not in the universe, the wife's majoring in sociology was not associated with divorce if her father was not a nonmanual worker or craftsman or if the husband never lived in a community with 50,000 or more people during his childhood and adolescence.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This difference existed and was substantial at at least one level of each control variable.

<sup>10</sup> Among the wives whose fathers were nonmanual workers or craftsmen, the divorce rate was 22.5 percent.

<sup>8</sup>  $\tau\text{-}b$  computed from a 2 x 2 table is

TABLE 3  
 PERCENTAGE OF EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EVER  
 BEEN DIVORCED, BY SELECTED CONTROL VARIABLES

	Difference in Percentages	Level of Significance*	Tau-b
1 First wife 19 or younger and husband 25 or younger at time of marriage (54.2%, N = 24) versus all others (10.7%, N = 252)	43.5	.001	.121
2 First wife older than husband (26.7%, N = 30) versus all others (13.0%, N = 246)	13.7	.04	.032
3 Husband's parents divorced or separated (28.9%, N = 38) versus all others (11.5%, N = 288)	17.4	.004	.025
4 Husband had no religious preference at time of survey (24.0%, N = 125) versus all others (7.1%, N = 197)	16.9	.001	.057
5 Husband had no religious preference in late adolescence (30.7%, N = 75) versus all others (7.3%, N = 247)	23.4	.001	.088
6 Husband's mother had no religious preference (35.0%, N = 20) versus all others (11.8%, N = 304)	23.2	.005	.027
7 Husband not at all committed to a religious ideology in late adolescence (24.4%, N = 123) versus all others (6.6%, N = 196)	17.8	.001	.064
8 Husband affiliated with a religious organization in late adolescence (5.4%, N = 167) versus all others (21.8%, N = 147)	16.4	.001	.059
9 Husband's mother affiliated with a religious organization (10.2%, N = 235) versus all others (21.2%, N = 85)	11.0	.009	.021
0 Husband's children under 12 did not attend religious services at time of survey (21.2%, N = 118) versus all others with children under 12 (6.5%, N = 108)	14.7	.002	.044
1 Husband did not live in a community of 50,000 or more people during childhood or adolescence (5.4%, N = 111) versus all others (17.3%, N = 214)	11.9	.003	.028
2 First wife's father a nonmanual worker or craftsman (9.7%, N = 238) versus all others (19.4%, N = 72)	9.7	.02	.016
3 First wife had an occupation (19.1%, N = 146) versus first wife had no occupation except housewife (8.3%, N = 181)	8.8	.01	.018

The value of the control variable (the side of the dichotomy) associated with divorce and the first wife's being a sociology major—each of which may be designated a "risk factor" for divorce—generally had a multiplicative rather than an additive "effect" upon the divorce rate.<sup>11</sup> That is, each risk factor made more difference in the rate when the other was also present. Stated differently, if it is assumed that each risk factor influenced the divorce rate, each factor enhanced the influence of the other rather than just adding to it. Examples of this kind of interaction are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

In Table 4, for instance, the first wife's being a sociology major made

among the husbands who lived in a community of 50,000 or more sometime during childhood or adolescence, the rate was 19.3 points greater among those whose first wives were sociology majors.

<sup>11</sup> Of course, the word "effect" is used here in a statistical rather than in a causal sense.

more difference if she had an occupation other than housewife, and her having an occupation other than housewife made more difference if she was a sociology major. Those marriages subjected to neither risk factor had the very low divorce rate of 2.3 percent. Adding the risk factor of the wife's being a sociology major increased the divorce rate by 13.1 percentage points, and adding the risk factor of the wife's having an occupation other than housewife increased it by 7.4 points. Assuming additiveness of the effects of the two risk factors, the "expected" divorce rate with both risk factors present is the sum of 2.3, 13.1, and 7.4, or 22.8 percent. In fact, however, the divorce rate with both risk factors present was 30.0 percent—an excess of 7.2 percentage points over that predicted by the assumption of additiveness. The data in Table 5 show an even more marked departure from additiveness, the excess divorces with

TABLE 4  
PERCENTAGE OF EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EVER  
BEEN DIVORCED, BY FIRST WIFE'S OCCUPATION AND  
FIRST WIFE'S COLLEGE MAJOR

	Not Sociology	Sociology	Difference
Housewife only	2.3 (88)	15.4 (13)	-13.1
Other occupations	9.7 (93)	30.0 (20)	-20.3
Difference	-7.4	-14.6	

TABLE 5  
PERCENTAGE OF EVER-MARRIED RESPONDENTS WHO HAD EVER  
BEEN DIVORCED BY RESPONDENT'S RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE IN LATE  
ADOLESCENCE AND FIRST WIFE'S COLLEGE MAJOR

	Not Sociology	Sociology	Difference
All preferences	9.0 (144)	13.6 (22)	-4.6
No preference	14.7 (34)	50.0 (10)	-35.3
Difference	-5.7	-36.4	

both risk factors present being 30.7 percentage points.

In sample data, such a pattern of "multiplicative effects" will occur fairly often by chance. However, this pattern appeared in nine of our 13 cross-tabulations (and also usually appeared when pairs of control variables were cross-tabulated with one another), and with both risk factors present, the mean excess of the divorce rate over that predicted by the assumption of additiveness was 15.2 percentage points. We know of no precise way to determine the probability that such an overall pattern would occur through sampling error if the effects of the risk factors in the universe were perfectly additive, but it is undoubtedly very small.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, none of the control variables explains the relationship between the first wife's college major and percentage divorced. It appears that either the wife's being a sociology major or at least one unmeasured variable highly correlated with her being a sociology major is a rather strong influence for divorce.

### DISCUSSION

There are at least three possible general explanations for the unusually high divorce rate among male sociologists married to sociology majors, namely (1) college-educated husbands and wives with the same academic specialty may generally be prone to divorce, regardless of the specialty, (2) female sociology majors may have generally high divorce rates regardless

of the occupations and academic specialties of their husbands, or (3) the marriage of a sociologist to another person trained in sociology may be a uniquely unstable kind of relationship.<sup>13</sup> Only additional research would allow a confident choice among these alternatives, but we can bring some relevant evidence to bear on them.

We can find nothing in the literature which gives much theoretical or empirical support to alternative #1, and it is inconsistent with the widely held view that similarity of interests is conducive to adjustment in marriage. We have found no evidence bearing directly on the effects of similarity of the vocational or academic interests of husband and wife, but it might seem that a wife with training in the same field as that of her academician husband would be better able to understand and participate in his career. If so, the husband's career and marriage would be less separate and less competitive with one another

<sup>13</sup> These three alternatives are not exhaustive of the possibilities, nor are they mutually exclusive, since any two or all of them could be valid. One possible explanation outside of the framework of these alternatives which occurred to us was that perhaps many of the sociologists married to sociologists had married their students and that professor-student marriages tend to be unstable. Our reasoning was that such marriages may typically result from the girl's attraction to her future husband in his role as professor, that the status of professor tends to have a halo effect, and that the wife may tend to become disillusioned when the halo effect is gone and his most salient role from her perspective is that of husband. However, when we examined the questionnaires from all divorced sociologists whose first wives were sociology majors and compared the husbands' job histories with the wives' dates and sources of degrees, we found only one wife likely to have been a student in the department in which her husband was employed.

<sup>12</sup> In cases such as this, it is common for sociologists to use one of the nonparametric tests which utilize pairs of values, such as the sign test. However, such use would be questionable here since the several pairs of expected and real values are not independent of one another.

for his time and interest. On the other hand, if the wife is highly independent in her thinking about the field, she may be inclined to criticize and argue with the husband and thus give him less ego support than if she were trained in another field (cf. Aller, 1962). Furthermore, marital companionship may typically be more satisfying if it provides diversion from "shop talk" and from preoccupation with vocational concerns. Although explanation #1 seems to us less likely to be valid than either #2 or #3, it is at least plausible enough to justify studies of the stability of academically homogamous marriages in fields other than sociology.

Explanations #2 and #3 both assume that there is some prevalent characteristic (or characteristics) among persons trained in sociology (either the females, or both sexes) which is conducive to divorce. This might be a characteristic conducive to maladjustment in marriage, to a willingness and readiness to turn to divorce as a solution to a less than satisfactory marriage, or to both. In this case, the literature provides considerable theoretical and empirical support of the explanation. Both our data and a great deal of other evidence indicate that lack of religious commitment is associated with marital instability (e.g., Landis, 1949; Weeks, 1943), and sociologists are unusually lacking in religious commitment (Glenn and Weiner, 1969). We have found no evidence on the religiosity of undergraduate sociology majors, but we suspect that they have tended to have relatively little of it.<sup>14</sup> Further-

<sup>14</sup> Among the college-graduate first wives of our respondents, 24.3 percent of the so-

more, those who marry sociologists are not likely to be perfectly representative of all sociology majors, and they may tend to be less religious than the other female majors.

Such simple explanations, unfortunately, are rarely consistent with all of the evidence, and this one is no exception. Among the wives in our sample, having no religion did not bear a strong relationship to divorce, the divorce rate of the "no religion" wives being only 3.1 percentage points higher than that of the other wives.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the husband's having no religion and the wife's having no religion—each of which was to some extent a risk factor—did not have a multiplicative effect upon divorce. Rather, the rate was lower in those cases in which both spouses had no religion (16.7 percent,  $N = 48$ ) than in those in which one had a religious preference and the other did not (25.3 percent,  $N = 83$ ).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, a difference in religiosity between husband and wife seems to have a greater adverse effect upon marital stability than a common lack of religiosity. This being the case, unusual instability of the marriages of sociologists to sociologists could hardly have been a simple function of husband and wife both tending to lack religious commitment.

However, this negative evidence is an insufficient basis for rejecting the hypothesis that persons trained in sociology very often have some characteristic detrimental to marital stability. The characteristic could be an orientation, attitude, or value (or a number of such

with 16.7 percent of those with other specified majors.

<sup>15</sup> Of course, this difference did not ap-

characteristics) not highly associated with lack of religiosity, or perhaps more highly associated with it among males than among females. For instance, it could be the alleged ability, or inclination, of the sociologically trained person to stand outside of the established order and critically and rationally examine the legitimating assumptions and myths of its institutions (Berger, 1971). Sociology may liberate the person from "the-world-taken-for-granted" and thus lessen his commitment to such institutions as marriage. He or she may tend to question such generally unquestioned assumptions as that marriage is a lifetime commitment and that marital stability is preferable to instability. The more keenly one is aware of the relativity of the norms and role expectations of marriage, the less likely he or she may be to comply with them when there is motivation to do otherwise. Thus, the secular, "liberated" person may be less likely than others to perform his or her marital role to the satisfaction of the spouse, and when friction and maladjustment occur in the marriage, he or she may be less reluctant to seek a divorce.

Several sociologists and social philosophers have asserted or implied that objective, scientific scrutiny of social institutions tends to undermine them. One of the most straightforward assertions is made by Davis, who writes: "Dependent as it is upon subjective faith, religion withers like a leaf when the scientific attitude is brought to bear on it. . . . If the public in general undertook an analysis of religious behavior, using systematic research tools, it would be the death of religion. . . ." (Davis, 1948: 536).

And since Davis argues earlier in the same chapter (pp. 506-509) that

tion, he apparently believes that widespread sociological sophistication in regard to religion would undermine the integration of society. If Berger, Davis, and several other authors are correct, then social institutions (and thus society) can stand just so much secularism and rational scrutiny of the legitimating myths and assumptions. The institution of marriage should be no exception.

Again, however, the hypothesis encounters some rather inconsistent evidence. If a kind of secularism distinctly detrimental to marital stability is prevalent among sociologists and if there are no strong offsetting influences, then male sociologists, including those who do not marry sociology majors, should have unusually high divorce rates. In fact, however, the overall divorce rate in our sample was not high relative to that of the total adult male population and not markedly higher than that of all well-educated professionals, at least in the age range of 45 through 54. A 1960 census report (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963: Table 7) gives the percentage of ever-married males aged 45 through 54 who were still living with their first wives. For all white males the percentage was 72.6, and for white professional and technical workers with at least 16 years of schooling it was 86.6.<sup>17</sup> In comparison, of our ever-married respondents in the same age range, exactly 80 percent (N = 95) were still living with their first wives.<sup>18</sup> We have already pointed

<sup>17</sup> We use census data on whites to compare with our data because less than two percent of our respondents were nonwhite.

<sup>18</sup> The 95 percent confidence limits are 72 and 88 percent. Three of the respondents not living with their first wives were wid-



out that bias in the returns of our questionnaire may have led to an underestimation of the percentage of sociologists who had ever been divorced, but nevertheless, it seems likely that the divorce rate of male sociologists was somewhere between that for all males and that for other well-educated professionals.<sup>19</sup> If so, it can be characterized as only moderately high.

Perhaps the divorce rate of male sociologists is not extremely high because of the prevalence among them of several characteristics believed to be conducive to marital stability. These include moderately high incomes, high occupational prestige, high economic and job security, and at least the possibility of choosing work patterns which do not greatly impede or disrupt family interaction. Furthermore, given the common impression that American marriage requires greater commitment and adjustment on the part of the wife, "liberation" from commitment to traditional norms and values may not be greatly conducive to divorce if it occurs only with the husband. Certainly, in some respects the traditional role expectations are less demanding of the husband. Therefore, it may be only the characteristics of the female sociology majors which are of crucial importance.

If, as we suspect, female sociology majors (or at least those who marry sociologists) tend to have a secular orientation conducive to divorce, then the question arises as to whether this is a result of exposure to sociology or of selective recruitment. The state-

ments of Davis, Berger, and others on the "liberating" effects of sociology suggest the former, but tentative inferences about the female majors from data on male sociologists point to the selective recruitment interpretation. According to Glenn and Weiner (1969), lack of religion among the sociologists they studied was to a large extent a matter of selective recruitment, since many of them reported having no religion in late adolescence, when presumably most of them had been exposed to little or no sociology. Although we have pointed out that any characteristic of female majors conducive to divorce in their marriages to male sociologists cannot be a simple lack of religion, it may nevertheless incline females toward sociology in much the same way that a lack of religion, or some highly correlated characteristic, apparently inclines males.

It is also relevant that our data on divorce indicate, in the case of the males, that characteristics existing in adolescence (presumably before exposure to college-level sociology) were more predictive of divorce than characteristics which arose later. For instance, although having no religion in adolescence was rather highly associated with divorce (30.7 percent divorced,  $N = 75$ ), those persons who rejected religion after adolescence had only a moderately higher divorce rate (13.8 percent,  $N = 58$ ) than those who still had a religious identification at the time of the survey (7.1 percent,  $N = 197$ ).<sup>20</sup> Perhaps religiously-based values are often retained after religion

percentage of the "unstable" marriages in the census data.

<sup>19</sup> The uncertainty in this conclusion is not only because our data are subject to

<sup>20</sup> The difference in the divorce rate between those who had no religion in late adolescence and those who rejected religion later in life was not statistically significant by conventional criteria, but it is not very

is rejected, and values rejected at a conscious level may continue to influence behavior.

If, for both sexes, it is generally the pre-adult, pre-college characteristics which strongly predispose a person toward marital stability or instability, then sociology probably tends to attract persons prone to divorce rather than itself being a marked influence for divorce. However, evidence on this issue is tenuous and indirect, and the possibility that sociological training often increases the probability of divorce is by no means ruled out.

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