Once bitten, twice shy? Gender differences in the remarriage decision after a gray divorce

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Citation for this version and the definitive version are shown below.

**Citation to Publisher Version:** Crowley, Jocelyn Elise. (2019). Once bitten, twice shy? Gender differences in the remarriage decision after a gray divorce. *Sociological Inquiry* 89(1), 150-176. [https://doi.org/10.1111/soin.12253].

**Citation to this Version:** Crowley, Jocelyn Elise. (2019). Once bitten, twice shy? Gender differences in the remarriage decision after a gray divorce. *Sociological Inquiry* 89(1), 150-176. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.7282/t3-ax4b-z914].

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“Once Bitten, Twice Shy? Gender Differences in the Remarriage Decision after a Gray Divorce”

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This work was supported by the Michael J. and Susan Angelides Public Policy Research Fund, The Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University.

There are no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgments: I would like to thank Patricia Sheffield and M.B. Crowley for their assistance with this manuscript.

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“Once Bitten, Twice Shy? Gender Differences in the Remarriage Decision after a Gray Divorce”

ABSTRACT

Gray divorces, or divorces at and over the age of 50, are increasing in the United States. This article explores this population’s interest in remarrying after a divorce by sex within the context of a prospective, role exit theoretical framework. In-depth, qualitative interviews with 40 women and 39 men who have experienced a gray divorce were analyzed using grounded theory methodology. There were significant gender differences with respect to receptivity to remarriage among those who had undergone a gray divorce. More specifically, the most common theme expressed by women involved firmly rejecting remarriage as a part of their futures. The remaining themes articulated by women were conditional pro-remarriage views and then even less commonly, unconditional pro-remarriage views. In contrast, the most common theme among men was that they remained very open to remarriage, either unconditionally or under specified conditions; only a small number rejected the prospect entirely. These findings highlight the differences in the remarriage decision from both the female and male perspectives for this population.
Introduction
Increasing numbers of Baby Boomers are experiencing a gray divorce, or a divorce at age 50 and older (Wu and Schimmele 2007). In fact, during the period 1990-2010, the gray divorce rate doubled, even while the divorce rate for other age groups stabilized (Brown and Lin 2012; Kennedy and Ruggles 2014). Currently, one out of every four divorces is gray (Brown and Lin 2012). With the rise in gray divorce, there is now an entirely new set of mid-life adults who are single and whose next family formation decisions will drive the evolving landscape of social relationships across the United States into the future.

Once their marriages have dissolved, the gray divorced population has numerous options regarding repartnering. Both women and men could remain single for the rest of their lives, date or not date, or live apart together (LAT). However, if they desire a co-residential living arrangement, they have two central options, the first of which is cohabitation. Research has shown that between the years 1994-2012, the acceptance rate of cohabitation among the over 50 population group in general increased from 20% to 46% (Brown and Wright 2016). Cohabitation has many advantages for older couples, including financial autonomy, the retention of individual Social Security and pension benefits, and the protection of inheritances for children from previous marriages. Living together therefore represents a type of partnership that has significant attractiveness among those in mid-life (Brown, Bulanda, and Lee 2012).

The second major co-residential option is remarriage. Cherlin (2009) argues that the divorced population in general is not giving up on marriage, as it remains a highly desirable institution in American society. Indeed, remarriage is much more common than cohabitation for both women and men who want to repartner by sharing a household after a gray divorce (Brown
et al. Forthcoming). Remarriage is fundamentally different than cohabitation in that it involves not only a legally binding agreement between a couple, but a set of moral, cultural, and societal expectations regarding the obligations that each partner has toward the other (Johnson, Caughlin, and Huston 1999; Noel-Miller 2011). Documenting the reasons behind the desirability of this formal status for men and women after the stress of a gray divorce is a compelling area of research inquiry in that it tells us about the relative attractiveness of remarriage by an ever-growing part of the population, and therefore the types of relationships that are likely to unfold for this group going forward. In addition, these reasons mapped out by sex can help us better understand the expectations regarding gender and spousal roles in modern American marriages among those in this population group.

Overall, then, this research investigates the qualitative attitudes about remarriage among heterosexuals who have experienced a gray divorce in the United States. It specifically aims to, (a) build upon prior theoretical work on the process of family role transitions, particularly as it relates to individuals’ prospective analyses of their life choices; (b) probe men’s and women’s perceptions of the appeal of remarriage after a gray divorce, chiefly through the construct of gender.

**Role Exit Theory and Gendered Conceptualizations of Remarriage**

The institution of marriage provides both spouses with specific roles to play within the context of the family. Divorce, on the other hand, brings a disruption to these roles, and for many, represents a significant period of emotional adjustment (Lloyd, Sailor, and Carney 2014). This is especially true when the divorce is unwanted by one partner, but initiated by the other partner nonetheless; in the United States, women are more likely to be mid-life divorce initiators.

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1 Domestic partnerships and civil unions are also available in some states but are only a fraction of legally binding arrangements in comparison to remarriage.
with men as non-initiators (Sweeney and Horwitz 2001; Montenegro 2004; Author 2018; Author Forthcoming). Once divorced, however, there can be new opportunities for role change once again. Men and women can reflect on potential future marriages and decide whether they would benefit from these new legal unions in specific ways. Depending on how they view the institution itself, they might seek out marriage again.

Of course, transitioning from divorced to remarried represents a substantial role change for all involved individuals. While divorce might be out of one’s control, the decision to remarry involves individuals taking affirmative action with other like-minded individuals. Ebaugh (1988) constructed a four-stage theory of role exit that provides an important framework for analyzing such transformations, i.e., in this case, exiting the divorced role and entering the remarried role. First, individuals start to have initial doubts about their current roles and display cues to others about their current state of discomfort. Second, they attempt to acquire information about alternatives to potentially making a change, such as “experimenting with” or “trying on” a new identity. Third, individuals face a tipping point, where some event or other significant, transformative process prompts them to make a commitment to leave their former roles. Fourth, they discard trappings of their previous roles and embrace the multi-faceted components of their newly chosen roles.

In further elaborations of Ebaugh’s model in a variety of settings, other scholars have noted that not every life transition requires that individuals pass through all four stages; instead, they might skip stages under certain conditions or not fully complete the exit process (Altier, Thoroughgood, and Horgan 2014). In addition, depending on the exact nature of the transition under consideration, modifications of the model might be necessary (Drahota and Eitzen 1998). In the case of remarriage here, both of these points are relevant in that this is a prospective study
whereby individuals are contemplating potential role change—without the final execution of stage four due to the necessity of first finding a new partner—rather than many other studies on role exit, which are retrospective in nature and the adoption of new roles is complete (Månsson and Hedin 1999; Decker, Pyrooz, and Moule Jr. 2014). In addition, the prospective decision of moving from a divorced to a remarried status makes other modifications to the theory, in particular an emphasis on individuals’ stated attitudes about potential new spousal behavior and receptivity to change rather than their visible actions, also necessary.

Remarriage is a common practice in the United States, and 30% of individuals ages 50 and older will marry two times or more in their lifetimes (Lewis and Kreider 2015). The limited research on the topic of remarriage in mid-life after a gray divorce, or those moving from a divorced role to a remarried role, has taken two forms: (1) one quantitative analysis on the attractiveness of remarriage for both men and women who have experienced a gray divorce; and (2) several qualitative analyses on the reasons offered for remarriage but only among mostly women in mid-life and not necessarily composed of only those who have experienced a gray divorce.

First, Brown et al. (Forthcoming) have analyzed role changes after a gray divorce for both sexes using quantitative survey data. This research is significant in that it speaks to the issue of remarriage by focusing on the following factors: cohort, age at divorce, and gender differences. In terms of a specific cohort, members of the Baby Boomer generation were the first in the United States who embraced multiple relationship statuses when they were younger, including cohabitation and marriage, and these past practices might lead them to be open to diverse family forms as they grow older (Cherlin 2004; Cherlin 2009). This is especially true in recent years, as Americans across the age spectrum have grown more accepting of a whole
variety of family structures (Brown and Wright 2016). Age at divorce, or divorce at age 50 and older, might also shape their relative receptivity to remarriage as their formulated impression of the importance of marriage, whether good or bad, is quite recent. In addition, at this age, most of their children are now adults, thereby freeing them to make the remarriage decision more on their own terms rather than contingent on the needs of their offspring.

Finally, gender differences are also important. The first gender difference has to do with the probability of remarriage. Women outnumber men in the over 50 age group and men tend to marry women who are younger than them, both of which make mid-life women less likely to remarry numerically (England and McClintock 2009; Brown et al. Forthcoming). The second gender difference relates to the roles men and women assume in heterosexual marriages. According to the gender constructionist theoretical framework, heterosexual marriage remains highly prescriptive about the sexual division of labor within marriages, with men as breadwinners and women as homemakers and caregivers (Horne et al. 2018). However, mid-life women need not accept these expectations. Indeed, numerous scholars have noted that some older women eschew remarriage due to reasons related to many aspects of spousal caregiving, whereas men embrace remarriage because they want to be cared for in multiple aspects of their lives (Noel-Miller 2011; Author 2018). In addition, women have strong mid-life friendships before and after a gray divorce, and therefore may not need spouses as supportive individuals in their lives going forward (McLaughlin et al. 2010). Men, on the other hand, tend to reap the rewards of earlier marriages in that their wives maintain social networks with family and friends; they therefore may rationally need to or want to reproduce as many of these benefits as possible in a new remarriage (Milardo 1987; McLaughlin et al. 2010; Greif and Deal 2012; Author 2018).
By analyzing a specific cohort, and focusing on a targeted age at divorce as well as gender differences, Brown et al. (Forthcoming) find that among the gray divorced population, the majority remain single. However, as described earlier, among those who choose co-residential partnerships, remarriage is much more common than cohabitation, and men are more likely to remarry than women. They also find that a variety of life course variables matter in predicting remarriage rather than remaining divorced, including the number of years since an individual’s marital dissolution (statistically significant and positive for both men and women), whether this is a second or higher order remarriage (statistically significant and positive for women only), and the individual’s current age (statistically significant and negative for both men and women). Critically, however, this research does not help us understand the full spectrum of reasons women and men have in mind as they ponder the prospect of remarriage.

The second type of research, because it is qualitative, is useful in that it presents a full spectrum of reasons offered for remarriage by the Baby Boomer generation in mid-life (cohort effects), but has the drawback of including studies that do not necessarily restrict their samples to those who have experienced a gray divorce (age at divorce effects). In addition and most notably with respect to gender differences, almost all of this research focuses on women and only at times very small numbers of men. With these study limitations in mind, in pondering their exits from their roles as divorced to remarried individuals, some women held anti-remarriage attitudes, or views that were completely against the idea of remarriage. More specifically, due to the emotional pain caused by their former marriages, they wanted to lead the rest of their lives autonomously, without the constraints of another legally binding marital union (Määttä and Uusiautti 2012). There were no men discussed in this work with anti-remarriage views. In the

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2 Some of these studies include those who divorced before the age of 50 or combine widows and divorced individuals in their samples.
context of Ebaugh’s role exit model, those with anti-remarriage attitudes were those who were not even considering a role change from being divorced to being remarried.

There were also those with conditional pro-remarriage attitudes, or views that reflected a desire for remarriage but with qualifications. For example, some of these women described agreeing to remarriage only if they could bring their own substantial financial resources into the new union; in this way, they refused to be bound to providing traditional household and caregiving responsibilities in return for economic support. Alternatively, these women discussed their choice to ultimately remarry only if they could negotiate a division between paid and unpaid work with their new partners that they considered fair (Schmiege, Richards, and Zvonkovic 2001; De Jong Gierveld 2002; Clarke 2005; Määttä and Uusiautti 2012; Canham et al. 2014). However, other women did not mention caregiving but rather only a desire to be considered equals with their spouses in their remarriages, which for them represented a marked change in interpersonal dynamics from their previous marriages (Watson, Bell, and Stelle 2010). There were no men discussed in these studies with conditional pro-remarriage views. In Ebaugh’s role exit model, these participants with conditional pro-remarriage attitudes skipped over stage one, which pertains to doubts about one’s current role—in this case being divorced. That is, no studies reported participants who referenced their displeasure with the divorced role as a motivation to get remarried. Instead, they moved directly to stage two, attempting to define what they might want in acquiring a new role, in this case being remarried. Since remarriage cannot be “experimented with” or “tried on” as a life status, those with conditional pro-remarriage views instead articulated a set of behavioral criteria for future spouses that they had individually developed for potential remarriage.
Finally, some individuals had unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes, or views that contained only positive feelings about remarriage. On this point, many women discussed their strong desire for love, romance, and friendship within the institution of a future marriage without imposing any requirements on their new partners in these unions (Schmiege, Richards, and Zvonkovic 2001). Religious traditions as well as qualifications for certain governmental benefits might have pointed them in this direction versus other types of living arrangements, but remarriage as a whole was chiefly a vehicle for their much-desired need for human connection (De Jong Gierveld 2002). These women frequently noted that they learned important lessons regarding topics like communication from their first marriages and were therefore committed to doing whatever was necessary to make their remarriages work (Määttä and Uusiautti 2012).

There was only one man with unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes described in these studies who pointed to religious considerations when he discussed his strong desire to remarry (De Jong Gierveld 2002). Within the context of Ebaugh’s model, stage three usually involves a tipping point—typically critical events or transformative moments of enlightenment—that make individuals move more decidedly toward a new role. In the case of a prospective remarriage, however, having unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes represented the culmination of individuals’ capacities to define a positive state of mind toward the remarried role going into the future. They were ready and eager to meet a new partner.

This project probes the prospective attitudes of both sexes regarding remarriage after a gray divorce. More specifically, this analysis explores whether women in this sample reflect and/or contribute to the full range of remarriage attitudes as laid out above in the previous literature, as well as their relative prevalence. In addition, it adds the attitudes of men to this

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3 De Jong Gierveld’s study (2002) also includes some who have chosen other living arrangements besides remarriage.
body of research, which is critical in that as described, there has been almost no qualitative research on the remarriage beliefs of men who have experienced a gray divorce. In sum, this role exit analysis maps out the different attitudes the gray divorced population has to the prospect of remarriage, with a primary emphasis on how gender shapes and differentiates these belief systems.

**Methodology**

**Context**

This research project draws upon a larger data collection effort undertaken to understand the gray divorce experiences of heterosexual women and men across the United States (Author 2018). It involved conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with individuals who had experienced at least one gray divorce in their lives. The four main topical modules for this larger project included the causes of their mid-life marital splits as well as their interest in repartnering; their current and future financial concerns; the strength and nature of their social support networks; and lastly, their views on divorce in general and their life plans going forward. In addition to these substantive inquiries, I also collected basic sociodemographic characteristics from each participant. I completed and recorded these interviews over the telephone from 2014-2015. They lasted approximately one hour in length; afterwards, I had all of them professionally transcribed.

**Recruitment and Sample**

To qualify for this study, an individual had to meet three criteria: 1) Experienced a divorce at age 50 or older (whether a first, second, or later divorce); 2) Lived in the United States; and 3) Spoke English. Although the number of people experiencing a gray divorce in the United States is growing, its incidence is still low in the population at large. This makes these individuals difficult to find, recruit, and sample using traditional methods (Tourangeau 2014). I
therefore used the social networking site Facebook for recruitment purposes (Author 2017), a method that is now becoming more common in scholarly research (Rife et al. 2016). I ran advertisements on Facebook targeting all individuals by age, geography, and spoken language on both mobile and desktop devices. For those using a mobile device, the advertisement appeared on their news feeds. For those using a desktop, Facebook placed the advertisement either in their news feeds or in the right column of their pages. All of these advertisements had the headline “Study of Mid-life Divorce,” along with additional information regarding the characteristics of the participants desired. Interested individuals then clicked on the advertisement link and were asked again about their qualifications to participate, offered more information about the study, promised confidentiality, and given the opportunity to provide their contact information for follow-up.

The recruitment took place over a total of 13 days in four distinct waves (overall from July 23, 2014 through February 9, 2015). I recruited both men and women in the first two waves of data collection (July 23, 2014-July 28, 2014 for wave one, interviewing 12 men and 21 women, and August 19, 2014-August 21, 2014 for wave two, interviewing 5 men and 9 women). Securing small sets of participants in waves was a way to reduce the time from the collection of these individuals’ contact information and their actual interviews. After this second wave, I recognized that I had not reached data saturation, meaning that these latter participants were still offering new information about their gray divorce experiences and remarriage views (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011). Therefore, I went back into the field and completed the final two waves of data collection, the third of men only (from January 5, 2015-January 6, 2015, interviewing 23 men) and the fourth of women only (from February 6, 2015-February 7, 2015, interviewing 10 women).
It is important to note that because Facebook advertising allows individuals to sign up over a period time without a stop-point, over the course of the four waves of data collection, a total of 167 individuals responded and self-certified that they met the criteria for participation. This meant that many more names were collected than were needed for this project (21 men and 38 women in wave one; 6 men and 34 women in wave two; 46 men in wave three; and 22 women in wave four). However, due to issues such as bad contact information, no response when contacted, and refusal once contacted, not all of these self-certified interviewees could be reached. Setting these aside, in a given wave where there were excessive numbers of potentially reachable participants, I randomly selected men and women to interview. The final sample of 80 was composed of 40 men and 40 women. Since the goal of this particular project was to map out beliefs and attitudes toward remarriage before these individuals did so, I excluded the one man who had remarried by the time of his interview from this analysis, leaving a final sample of 39 men and 40 women, or a total of 79 individuals.

**Data Analysis**

For this study, in addition to a series of background and sociodemographic questions, I asked all participants the single primary question and follow-up probe, “Would you consider remarrying again? Why or why not?” 4 After their answers were transcribed, I read their responses multiple times. I employed the sensitizing concepts of “remarriage opportunities” and “remarriage barriers” for each sex as suggested by the literature to analyze the data (Blumer 1986). I then used open coding procedures with the help of the software program Atlas.ti to compile and systematize the results (Strauss and Corbin 1990). For example, “desiring companionship, so as to fulfill God’s plan,” “remarrying only if the right partner qualifications

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4 The data collected for the background and sociodemographic questions are contained in Table 1. Question wording can be obtained from the author or online at the journal’s website as Appendix A.
are found, such as closest confidante,” and “producing unwanted dependence and responsibilities” were some of the codes found in the data.

During the analysis, I refined the themes using focused coding; I proceeded by allowing these codes to be linked to broader attitudes about remarriage and by continuing my consultation with the relevant literature (Charmaz 2005). In this way, I linked each of these codes to their corresponding attitudes toward remarriage. For example, the code “desiring companionship, so as to fulfill God’s plan,” was tied to unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes, “remarrying only if the right partner qualifications are found, such as closest confidante,” was linked to conditional pro-remarriage attitudes, and “producing unwanted dependence and responsibilities” was tied to anti-remarriage attitudes. Participants had the opportunity to express more than one reason why they held beliefs within each set of attitudes. I then utilized selective coding to piece together how all of these focused codes related to each another. This enabled me to produce a coherent analytical framework for understanding how all of these ideas “hung together” and generated a different spectrum of attitudes toward remarriage for men versus women, also known as the “story line” of the data (Corbin and Strauss 2008). In the findings presented below, I use actual quotations from these interview participants as they discussed their attitudes toward remarriage. This is in accordance with Geertz’s (1973) idea of “thick description,” whereby the people actually experiencing an event draw upon their most authentic words in describing their own circumstances. In the presentation of the findings, I assigned all of the participants their own pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Lastly, it is important to have confidence in the trustworthiness of these qualitative data as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), as well as to point out all limitations in this regard. First, in terms of data credibility, while the participants did not review their full interview
transcripts, which would have been ideal, I consistently returned to them for the clarification of their ideas when necessary. Second, factors affecting transferability that need to be considered related to this study include but are not limited to the motivations and constraints of participants providing the information; the nature of the interactions between the researcher and each participant during the phone interviews; the hour length of each interview session in terms of the burden on the participant; and the effect of the period of time over which the data were collected. The data are dependable in that by using the Atlas.ti software program, I engaged in the code-recode method to insure the stability of the thematic findings. Finally, with respect to the data’s confirmability, I relied on a reflexive journal throughout the project to constantly be aware of my own biases as I interpreted the findings.

Findings

Considered together, participants in this study were relatively advantaged in comparison to a nationally representative sample of the gray divorced population.\(^5\) Also notably, the men in this study shared many similar characteristics with the women (see Table 1). On average, the participants were about 58.8 years old, with their ex-spouses being 56.7 years old. They were married for approximately 24.2 years before they experienced their gray divorces, and had been married on average 1.5 times. About half of the men (54%) and a little over half of the women (63%) lived with their ex-spouses before marriage. More women (73%) initiated their divorces than men (36%). The majority of the sample had children from their marriages, with an average of about two each. The overwhelming majority of participants had health insurance at the time of their interviews (95%), but only 8% of the total sample had long-term health care insurance policies in place. There were about 1.7 people residing within each participant’s house. The

\(^5\) For more on the sociodemographic characteristics of a 2010 nationally representative sample of the gray divorced population, see Brown and Lin (2012).
average time from their divorces to their interviews was approximately 2.4 years, and only 6% were currently living with another romantic partner. One of the most important differences between the sexes pertained to median household income, with men having a total of $80,000 in income and women only reporting a total of $70,000. The majority of both men and women had at least some college, with more men obtaining graduate or professional degrees than women. With respect to religion, the majority of participants were Protestant and Roman Catholics. Finally, almost all of the participants were white.

[Tables 1 and 2 about here]

Overall, the results suggest that after a gray divorce, women are much less open than men to remarriage (see Table 2). More specifically, the order of prevalence in themes for women was as follows: 48% anti-remarriage, 28% conditional pro-remarriage, and 24% unconditional pro-remarriage. In direct contrast, men’s articulated themes toward remarriage were only 15.9% anti-remarriage, 27.3% conditional pro-remarriage, and 56.8% unconditional pro-remarriage. Notably, within each category of themes, there was some overlap of reasons offered by women and men, although the details often diverged; there were also substantial differences as well.

**Anti-remarriage attitudes**

Those with anti-remarriage views were individuals who had not even entered Ebaugh’s stage one of role exit whereby they were even considering leaving their divorced status. This was the most common theme for women in this entire analysis. Similar to previous research, some of their reasons had to do with never wanting to go through the emotional turmoil from their failed marriages again (Määttä and Uusiautti 2012). Betty, 64-years-old, went through extraordinary pain during her divorce. She had discovered that her husband was a serial adulterer over the course of their 33-year marriage. In the beginning, she was too afraid to leave,
even though the first of his affairs began only seven years into the marriage. This was because she was the primary caregiver for their two small children and was not working for pay. In this way, she was 100 percent reliant on her husband for their family income and therefore felt powerless to change her circumstances. Because of these factors, at first, she was willing to work on the marriage and even wanted to go to counseling with him, but he refused.

My friends asked me [whether I will get remarried] and I said [no]…[If] I would have had a wonderful marriage and my spouse might have [died, then it might be possible]…but I did not have a good marriage…I will never put myself in that situation again…I just want to be a good mom and a good grandma some day.

When she finally could not take it anymore, she announced her decision to file for divorce. He seemed surprised given that she had stayed with him so long, and asked her, “You don’t love me anymore?” and she said, “You took the last piece of my heart.” Part of the reason Betty and other women like her were able to reject remarriage so forcefully may be due to the strong social networks many women have both during and after a divorce (Miller et al. 1998; Shapiro 2003; Author 2018). In this case, Betty referenced her friends as probing her about the possibility of remarriage, and her response as being satisfied with having the social roles of mother and grandmother rather than wife. With this support system, she became completely independent in many ways and unwilling to look back.

Other women departed from previous research in terms of why they were now rejecting remarriage; these women did so because of their development of a strong need for complete freedom and autonomy in their lives, both of which were impossible in their marriages (Sakraida 2005; Thomas and Ryan 2008). For example, Christine, 64-years-old, rejected remarriage by stressing that it was independence in multiple arenas—financial, household, and caregiving—that she desired going forward.

No, [I will not get remarried]. First of all, I don’t need anyone financially. He
wouldn’t help me financially…I’ve become so independent and so set in my ways that the thought of doing someone else’s laundry just does not appeal to me. I want to open the refrigerator and see food that I want in there. I don’t want to cook a meal if I don’t have to. I don’t want to do anything I don’t have to do for another person. I’ve become very selfish and…I can't see what someone else could possibly offer me.

Christine was married to her husband for 31 years. While she stayed at home raising their son and daughter, her husband worked as a physician. She suspected that he started cheating on her 20 years into the marriage. Ultimately, he ended up admitting that he was having an affair with his neighbor, who was also Christine’s best friend; he was the one who initially filed for divorce. After this experience, Christine simply did not want financial entanglements with someone who was unfaithful, nor did she want to perform housekeeping or caregiving tasks for anyone who could potentially let her down. She ultimately went back to work, relaunched her career as nurse, and became 100 percent self-reliant.

Conversely, the least common theme among men encompassed anti-remarriage attitudes; like some of the women in this study, these typically involved men never wanting to go through the painful experience of any future divorces again. Dennis, 59-years-old and married to his wife for 35 years, declared that he simply could not go through the emotional turmoil of another divorce in the event that his next marriage did not work.

[The divorce] was just too hard…The intertwining of everything in our lives [was very tight]. It was very hard to break up and I don’t think that I could ever do it again.

Dennis was extremely heartbroken that he and his wife grew apart and ultimately decided to part ways. He described his marriage as close in the beginning; however, over time, she became extremely religious and rigid regarding her commitment to fundamentalist Christianity. Since he was agnostic, he could not conform to her desires regarding his everyday choices, such as which movies to see, what activities would be suitable for the family, and which people with whom
they could interact. The sadness over the end of their marriage when she filed for divorce was almost too much to bear.

Keith, 55-years-old, also feared significant emotional hurt after he had been married to his first wife for 18 years, a union that had ended because he found out about her affair with another man.

I just felt that I gave [the marriage everything]…and the divorce [was so difficult.] going through sitting in front of a judge… I’m thinking, you know, I built all this for this person…[First] she was a pen pal [and] I went overseas to [Hong Kong to] get her and got her here…Then [after] that, last year, she decided to do something like that [and cheat on me]; it was really heart-wrenching to me.

Keith’s wife was originally from the Philippines, but was working as a domestic helper in Hong Kong when he reached out to her through a pen pal club. They corresponded, and eventually he left the United States for Hong Kong to meet her and ultimately got married. After all of this effort, she had devastated him deeply with her affair and he had to file for divorce. In many of these male cases, then, the potential for various types of emotional pain was the great deterrent to future remarriage.

**Conditional pro-remarriage attitudes**

Echoing previous research, those with conditional pro-remarriage views skipped stage one of Ebaugh’s model; they did not discuss doubts about being divorced when they considered the possibility of remarriage. They all moved directly to stage two, which involved weighing the costs and benefits of a change. Because remarriage is not something that can be “experimented with” or “tried on” in the classic sense of Ebaugh’s model, these costs and benefits took the form of certain behavioral criteria that they laid out for their future spouses that might make them exit their divorced role and remarry. As reflected in previous research, one set of women with these conditional pro-remarriage attitudes exhibited a desire for a new distribution of marital labor in
the wake of their divorces (Schmiege, Richards, and Zvonkovic 2001; De Jong Gierveld 2002; Clarke 2005; Määttä and Uusiautti 2012; Canham et al. 2014). In other words, they indicated that they would only remarry if they could negotiate particular combinations of paid labor, housework, and/or caregiving that were fairer to them going forward. Margaret, 56-years-old, regretted that she did most of all three types of work in her previous marriage. She, like many other mid-life women, also benefitted from strong social supports in the form of friends and family that mitigated the need to remarry (Greif and Deal 2012).

I don’t know [about remarriage]. See, right now I’m in a situation where my sister’s husband passed away last December…[My sister] actually moved in two years ago last October, so she was here for a year with [my ex-husband] here and then [he] left. So I have my sister. All my girlfriends are like, you guys have the best relationship because you have a sister-wife. I mean, what more beautiful situation is this?...She and I get along great. It’s not like we’re picking up underwear…We work together. We read each other’s minds. It’s like we have the same interests. We clean the house the same. She loves gardening. I love doing dishes. It just works... Neither of us thought we’d ever be in this situation…[Remarriage is] not totally off the table [but unlikely].

Margaret declared that she was not completely opposed to remarriage, but that her last marriage had severely affected her. Her husband was an alcoholic who was unable to contribute financially to the family, thus prompting her to file for divorce; going forward in any new marriage, that dynamic would have to change. In addition, in living with her sister, she found a more equitable distribution of housework that she would now demand in any new union.

For other women, some of their conditional pro-remarriage attitudes had to do with locating a man with the right character qualifications; this finding departed from previous research on reasons for mid-life remarriage. For example, Diane, 51-years-old, held out hope to remarry a new version of her ex-husband, who had committed adultery among other troubling behaviors while they were together.

It is interesting because actually I was looking forward to our 25th anniversary and everything because I always did adore him, despite everything like the drinking
…We’re still kind of friends; we still talk. Sometimes the more we talk, the more he reminds me of why I decided to go through [with] the divorce, you know, the whole attitude and behavior…I don’t think he’ll change enough for me to actually want to go back with him…[But] if there [were] a change in him, perhaps [we could get back together].

Interestingly, Diane, married for 25 years, still had strong feelings about her ex-husband; she was very upset when he filed for divorce. However, because of her negative experiences with him, she set the bar high for the character he would have to develop in order for a remarriage to take place.

For the men with conditional pro-remarriage attitudes, their central requirement was locating a partner with distinct character qualifications, just like some of the women. Charles, age 53, asserted that he would only pursue remarriage if he found someone who could be his closest confidante.

No, [remarriage is] not off the table. But, it would have to be [something special]. I have some best friends and so this would have to be the newest, greatest best friend I’ve ever had in my entire life. So if she were more than all of my best friends put together, then I might consider it…I’d be looking for a best friend, where there is a match in values on several levels and someone who’s comfortable attending worship on Sunday morning.

Charles had a 24-year marriage to one wife, and only a brief, three year marriage to his most recent wife. Marrying for the third time would not be easy for him. He still had strong feelings for his second wife, but he could not live with her because she was an alcoholic. After numerous trips to the emergency room caused by her drinking, as well as her lack of desire to get help, Charles knew that he had to move forward with his life. They both mutually agreed to a divorce.

In thinking about the future, he would consider remarriage, but only to someone he considered his “best friend.”
Ronald, also 53-years-old, described the type of character criteria that he would have to perceive in a partner in order to consider remarriage. In his case, his new wife would have to be a mirror image of himself.

She’d have to be special…Here’s how it would have to be. It would have to be that I met someone who could almost complete my sentences and that [she] knew what I was thinking before I said it…I hate to use [these] words at the age of 53—I’m not 21 anymore and expecting love at first sight—but…it would have to be someone [who] would be considered a soul mate, [or] someone [who] knew me…It would have to be something phenomenal.

He acknowledged his role in his gray divorce, admitting that he both did not spend enough time with his wife and that he drank too much; both behaviors prompted her to file for divorce. Now that he was sober, he was open, albeit in a small way, to a new marital relationship, but only under the specific condition that his partner reflect and affirm almost all of his thoughts.

**Unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes**

Those holding unconditional pro-remarriage views represented individuals in Ebaugh’s stage three of role exit, where they were at a tipping point in terms of deciding to move out of the divorced role and into the remarried role. In these cases, rather than be a critical event or transformative moment of enlightenment, the tipping point represented their ability to articulate a completely positive state of receptivity toward remarriage in the future. They were now just waiting for the right partner to come along. Unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes represented the least common theme among women in this study. For the small number of women articulating this view, they echoed previous research by reporting the desire for companionship (Schmiege, Richards, and Zvonkovic 2001; De Jong Gierveld 2002). Janice, 61-years-old, and married to her former husband for 36 years before initiating a divorce, put it this way.

Being alone this last year—my daughters [in their twenties] are both gone—and being totally alone [has made me consider remarriage]. I miss the companionship, and if that's what someone wanted, then yes, I would consider that again.
Janice described her first marriage as falling apart due to a growing divergence in their interests, as well as her husband’s infidelity. She also indicated that she was an extrovert, and after her daughters left to lead their own lives, she confronted an uncomfortable silence in her home that she wanted to rectify with remarriage. She was thus different from many of the other women in the study in that she lacked a strong social support network and this perhaps also prompted her to consider remarriage.

Barbara, 55-years-old, also expressed the importance of companionship, but she specified it as being contained only within the lifelong commitment of marriage versus living together.

I think part of [being married] is spiritual as opposed to just living together. [It is] just more of a commitment to one another…I guess I look at when you are just living together, it’s so easy to just say,… “It’s not working out; let’s just go our separate ways.” But I think with marriage, it’s more of a commitment and [you] try to work things out.

Barbara had been married for 21 years and described her union as deteriorating because her husband could not locate steady employment. They were always under severe financial stress while they were together. However, after they parted when she filed for divorce, they remained friends, and Barbara found herself wanting to build another relationship within the structure of the marital institution.

In contrast, men overwhelmingly remained open and optimistic about the possibility of remarrying to be with a new love and companion; this was by far their most commonly reported theme in this analysis. Part of this motivation might be due to the fact that mid-life men lack the strong social networks of support that are common among older women, and that many men lose adult family members and adult friendships to their wives after a gray divorce, often because their wives are no longer doing their social planning (Cooney and Dunne 2001; McLaughlin et al. 2010; Greif and Deal 2012; Author 2018). Men also suffer from reduced contact with their
mostly adult children after a gray divorce, as their sons and daughters tend to side with their mothers (Kalmijn 2015; Author 2018). All of these factors compel them to place a premium on remarrying after their marital dissolution.

Some men echoed this perspective through a religious lens, as described in previous research (De Jong Gierveld 2002). Paul, age 56, argued that he was extremely receptive to remarriage because it was God’s intention that he not remain alone after a 33-year union. Paul had become more religious over the past several decades due to a series of illnesses. In his early thirties, Paul reported that he fought a battle with testicular cancer; not long after, Paul faced another trial with bladder cancer. Fortunately, he beat them both. Later, when he turned 40, he faced another medical challenge when he had a stroke, but this did not stop his optimism.

[I want to be remarried] because I look at my life, [and] I didn’t see this [divorce] coming… I’m looking for happiness again…I know that this isn’t God’s plan for me just to get married and have a miserable divorce and then go be alone by myself for the rest of my life…I think I need to share my life, my story. [I need to] encourage people that there’s life after such things. I want someone [who is] going to receive me for who I am. I am who I am. I don’t change. I’m authentic. Whether you like me or not, it’s who I am.

For Paul, each medical challenge brought him closer to God. He converted from Catholicism to non-denominational Christianity and practiced his faith every day. Notably, his wife also faced a health scare with a breast cancer diagnosis. However, once cured, she turned away from God and wanted to live her life “partying” with her friends. He could not change her outlook, and ultimately Paul had to agree with her request to divorce. Going forward, he did not see any costs to remarriage, and stated that any future wife would just need to accept him for who he was.

Other men had the same desire for companionship but articulated it from a secular perspective in terms of wanting a loving relationship. For example, Donald, 52-years-old, had been married twice, with his second marriage lasting 18 years and producing two children. He...
unequivocally supported remarriage because to him, it gives individuals reliable and loving relationships.

After 29 years of marriage with two different women, believe it or not, I like being married… I like having somebody to come home to. I like having somebody to talk to… You know, [I want somebody with whom] I can tell… my secrets, my greatest fears, my desires, you know, stuff like that… And that’s something that stays between me and my wife.

Donald in many ways took responsibility for his second divorce, even though it was his ex-wife who initiated it. He was a truck driver, so he spent many days on the road. When he would come home, he would need to sleep and if he did not get enough, admitted to becoming grouchy. He also suffered from undiagnosed sleep apnea at the time, which compounded his moodiness. His wife, who sold health insurance, finally gave up on making him happy, had an affair, and filed for divorce. Although he was devastated, Donald insisted that his next marriage would be even better.

**Discussion**

With the aging of the Baby Boomer generation, scholars have noted the prominent rise in the number of gray divorces across the country. A significant question pertains to what happens to this cohort at this specific age and after this particular life event. That is, one option is that this set of individuals may value being divorced; another option among many might be that they prefer to exit from this role and become legally bound to another through remarriage. Drawing upon role exit theory, this study explored this population’s qualitative attitudes about this potential transition from divorce to remarriage from a gender-based perspective.

In analyzing the beliefs of 79 heterosexual individuals who had experienced a gray divorce in their lifetimes, the most common theme expressed by women involved strong anti-remarriage attitudes. These women reflected views presented in previous research that
highlighted women who wanted to avoid the emotional pain that they had experienced in their previous marriages. However, other women in this study added to this prior work by arguing that they wanted complete independence in their unfolding lives in a variety of ways, such as in controlling their finances and not wanting to be homemakers and caregivers in a new marriage. Next, these women favored remarriage only under certain conditions. Similar to previous research, some women were insistent that paid work, housekeeping, and/or caregiving all be negotiated fairly if they were going to remarry someone new again. However, this study included new insights into the conditional pro-remarriage perspective by showing that some women would only remarry if they could find a partner with certain desirable characteristics. Finally, this study found that rarely did women express unconditional pro-remarriage perspectives. When they did, their views echoed previous research in terms of desiring long-term companionship.

This study also found that most men approached the issue of remarriage completely differently than did the women. In fact, the most common theme expressed by men involved unconditional pro-remarriage views; the next most common theme for men involved conditional pro-remarriage attitudes. For those with unconditional pro-remarriage attitudes, some echoed the limited previous research on men in stating that religion was a primary factor in motivating them toward remarriage. A new finding in this thematic category for men related to their strong desire for future companionship. Also introduced for the first time were viewpoints articulated by those men with conditional pro-remarriage views, who, like some of the women in this study, declared that they were looking for new wives, but only if they had specific character traits or qualities. The least common theme articulated by men, and also a novel finding, involved their anti-remarriage attitudes; in their minds, this was a way to avoid repeating the emotional
upheaval, distress, and sadness from their previous relationships. Overall, then, while there was some overlap in their reasoning, men and women reassemble their post-gray divorce lives in very different ways in terms of planning their future living arrangements, with significant numbers of women tending to rebuff remarriage and many men moving to embrace it (King and Scott 2005; Brown, Bulanda, and Lee 2012; Vespa 2012; Brown et al. Forthcoming).

Overall, this study makes three important contributions to our knowledge about remarriage among the gray divorced population. First, it demonstrates the complexity behind the role exit decisions outlined by Ebaugh (1988) for those considering the transition from being divorced to being remarried. Those with anti-remarriage views were not even considering leaving their divorced role, and therefore had not even entered the role exit process. Those with conditional pro-remarriage attitudes skipped Ebaugh’s stage one, in that they did not express doubts about their current divorced status. Instead, those with conditional pro-remarriage attitudes were in Ebaugh’s stage two, articulating the behavioral criteria for their next partners that would be necessary for them to consider the possibility of role exit. Those with pro-remarriage views were already in Ebaugh’s stage three, but in this case the tipping point represented the development of a positive sense of receptivity toward remarriage whenever the right opportunity emerged. Overall, this analysis demonstrates that in addition to retrospective analyses of role exit, we can apply Ebaugh’s framework effectively to prospective life changes as well. In this case, Ebaugh’s stages help define the attitudinal perspectives that are currently in play as people contemplate if and under what conditions they would ever complete stage four: the actual act of remarriage.

Notably, while Ebaugh outlines a straightforward, individualistic theory of decision-making regarding the role exit process, it is also important to recognize that contextual factors
are extremely critical in guiding these choices as well. In the case presented here, the cohort effects of being part of the Baby Boomer generation with their newly claimed, expansive freedoms provided this group with clear options regarding their partnership futures. That is, no participant in this study described being constrained in terms of their choices. In addition, their age at divorce shaped the way they both looked at their past marriages and thought about how they wanted to reconstruct the remaining years of their lives given the insights they had gained.

Second, gender shapes the decision to remarry in important ways for the gray divorced population. The gender differences found here are consistent with research across age groups on the predictors of remarriage. That is, numerous studies have documented that men of all ages are much more likely to remarry than women (Coleman, Ganong, and Fine 2000; Brown and Lin 2012). For the older population, however, scholars have claimed that the main cause of these differences are issues surrounding caregiving. Broadly speaking, men have been depicted as wanting to be cared for, and thus desirous of remarriage, whereas women have been portrayed as wanting to escape caregiving tasks, and thus avoidant of remarriage (Brown et al. Forthcoming). However, this study provides evidence that ideas around caregiving represent only a small part of the story as to how men and women perceive remarriage after a gray divorce. In fact, both sexes would consider remarriage for a variety of reasons, and both sexes reject it for multiple reasons as well.

Third, the divergence in preferences for remarriage has important implications for this group’s well-being in the latter parts of their lives. Researchers have demonstrated that the transition from being divorced to remarried improves individuals’ physical and psychological well-being, such as self-rated health and depression levels, across wide-ranging age groups (Williams 2003; Dupre and Meadows 2007; Hughes and Waite 2009; Sweeney 2010). However,
other research cautions that these well-being effects are not realized throughout the middle of the life course for everyone (Williams and Umberson 2004) and that men may gain more from remarriage than women (Williams 2003; Williams and Umberson 2004). While scholars need to do more research in this area to sort out these effects more definitively, if these divergent preferences to remarry between men and women continue to hold, significant, gender-based disparities in well-being might become a more consequential social problem over time.

This research does, of course, have its limitations. Central is the recruitment bias associated with using Facebook for this sample. As previously detailed elsewhere (Author 2017), recruitment bias takes two forms. This first is undercoverage in that this study by design excluded non-Facebook users. This means that those without access to social media on the Internet could not or did not participate in the study. The second is self-selection bias into the study. Self-selection likely produced a sample with more extreme viewpoints on the topic of gray divorce than non-participants. Moreover, those who participated might be different from non-participants in another important way: the sample might be biased more heavily toward those who are more socially engaged in general, or, alternatively, it might be biased more heavily toward those who have more virtual rather than “real” social ties in their lives. In addition, as described above, self-selection generated a sample that was relatively advantaged in terms of education and household income; participants were also overwhelmingly white. To the extent that other racial groups are more or less likely to remarry, this study might not be as applicable to them in assessing the desirability of remarriage as a future life choice (Siordia 2014). In addition, all sampled individuals were heterosexual, which is most likely the result of the

6 Facebook does not collect race/ethnicity data on its users. However, some research shows that the percentage of Internet users who also use the social networking site is relatively equal across racial/ethnic groups. The fact that whites are the largest population group in the United States most likely affected the sample composition here. http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/demographics-of-key-social-networking-platforms-2/. Accessed on 5/12/17.
government only recently giving gay and lesbian couples the right to marry and thus remarry in the United States. Future research should look toward expanding the range of views presented here by encouraging more diverse participants.

Other limitations were that I could only present the perceptions of one-half of each couple here; this meant that there was no way to independently verify the details of their divorces. New research using spousal dyads would be helpful in this area. In addition, the majority of these participants had experienced their gray divorces relatively recently in relation to their interviews. Perhaps with more time, their views on remarriage would change. Finally, the sample examined the attitudes toward remarriage only among those who had not yet remarried at the time of their interviews. It thus excludes those in the gray divorced population who might have extremely pro-remarriage attitudes and who thus quickly remarried.

**Conclusions**

Despite these limitations, these findings demonstrate that for those experiencing a gray divorce in the United States, remarriage represents a complicated decision. As shown here, women and men perceive remarriage’s relative attractiveness in very different ways. Mapping out the reasons behind these preferences helps us know more about expectations regarding gender and spousal roles in modern American marriages among this ever-increasing population group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>58.5 (4.9)</td>
<td>59.2 (5.3)</td>
<td>58.8 (5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Ex-Spouse</td>
<td>54.3 (7.5)</td>
<td>59.0 (7.4)</td>
<td>56.7 (7.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Married Before Gray Divorce</td>
<td>22.2 (10.6)</td>
<td>26.1 (11.0)</td>
<td>24.2 (10.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Total Divorces</td>
<td>1.5 (.68)</td>
<td>1.5 (.88)</td>
<td>1.5 (.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants who Lived Together Before Marriage</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that Ended in a Gray Divorce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants who Initiated Divorce*</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants with Biological/Adopted Children</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from this Marriage?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Total Children from Focal Marriage</td>
<td>1.7 (1.3)</td>
<td>1.8 (1.5)</td>
<td>1.7 (1.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants Who Have Health Insurance Now</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants Who Have Long-term Care Insurance</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Persons in Household**</td>
<td>1.4 (.7)</td>
<td>2.0 (1.2)</td>
<td>1.7 (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years from Divorce to Interview</td>
<td>2.2 (1.5)</td>
<td>2.6 (2.7)</td>
<td>2.4 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants Currently Cohabiting</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income***</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
<td>$70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native-American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) are presented for continuous variables and proportions are presented for categorical variables. *Initiated Divorce: Excludes 2 men who reported the divorce decision to be mutual. **Average Number of People in Household: 1 man reported this number as varying. ***Household Income: 3 women refused. Percentages might not add up to 100% due to rounding.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anti-remarriage Attitudes</th>
<th>Conditional Pro-remarriage Attitudes</th>
<th>Unconditional Pro-remarriage Attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>TOTAL: 48%</td>
<td>TOTAL: 28%</td>
<td>TOTAL: 24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Avoiding a repeat of emotional turmoil, due to a bad marriage</td>
<td>--Remarrying only if new distribution of paid labor, housework, and/or caregiving responsibilities is present</td>
<td>--Desiring companionship, so as to avoid loneliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Producing unwanted dependence and responsibilities</td>
<td>--Remarrying only if the right partner qualifications are found, such as one who is different than previous husband</td>
<td>--Wanting a lifelong commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>TOTAL: 15.9%</td>
<td>TOTAL: 27.3%</td>
<td>TOTAL: 56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Avoiding a repeat of emotional turmoil, due to interwoven lives</td>
<td>--Remarrying only if the right partner qualifications are found, such as closest confidante</td>
<td>--Desiring companionship, so as to fulfill God’s plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>--Fearing emotional hurt</td>
<td>--Remarrying only if the right partner qualifications are found, such as a new partner who is the mirror image of himself</td>
<td>--Desiring companionship, to have a loving relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Lewis, Jamie M. and Rose M. Kreider 2015. Remarriage in the United States: American Community Survey Reports. 1-27, Adapted from Table 1. United States Census Bureau.


Appendix A.—Online Publication Only

Interview Protocol for Included Sociodemographic Questions:

1. Can you please tell me your current age? How old is your ex-spouse (from your most recent gray divorce)?

2. How many times have you been divorced? Are there any children from any of these marriages?

Now thinking about your most recent gray divorce,

3. In what year was your divorce finalized? How many years did that marriage last?

4. Did you live together before getting married?

5. Who initiated the divorce?

Now thinking about other issues that might affect you,

6. Do you currently have health care insurance?

7. What about your potential long term health care needs, such as nursing home care? Do you currently have long-term care insurance?

8. How many people live in your household right now?

9. Are you currently cohabiting with a romantic partner?

10. What is your total household income?

11. What is the highest level of education that you have received?

12. What is your religious affiliation, if any?

13. How would you identify yourself by race?